BIBLE

Stefano Vuaran

STORYTELLING AND LEADERSHIP

The Kings of Judah in the Books of Chronicles

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The Kings of Judah in the Books of Chronicles

Bible - 1

Religious Studies

Abstract

The book of Chronicles, describing the events of the kingdom of Judah, expresses value judgments on individual rulers. Three types can be identified in the text: explicit and direct judgments, through recurring formular expressions; the explicit but indirect judgments, formulated by the voice of the characters who interact with the sovereign in the literary work and who express the position of the author; implicit judgments, through cultural patterns. By applying the perspective of the human sciences, in particular of social psychology, specifically the social identity theory, to these judgments, it's possible to reach conclusions regarding the message that the Chronicler intends to address to the leadership of the Persian province of Yehud. This is invited to promote the identity of the Israelite people starting from the relationship with Yhwh, specifically in the care of the temple in Jerusalem, the fundamental element of identity. In presenting his agenda, the Chronicler places himself on the line of the prophets, defending the relationship between Yhwh and the people, interpreting the divine word of the past and updating it, so that Israel can find the way to prosperity and peace.

Keywords: Social identity, leadership, temple

Il libro delle Cronache, mentre descrive gli eventi del regno di Giuda, esprime giudizi di valore sui singoli monarchi. Nel testo si possono individuare tre tipologie: giudizi espliciti e diretti, attraverso espressioni formulari ricorrenti; giudizi espliciti ma indiretti, formulati tramite i personaggi che interagiscono con il sovrano nell'opera letteraria e che esprimono la posizione dell'autore; giudizi impliciti, attraverso motivi di carattere culturale. Applicando a questi giudizi la prospettiva delle scienze umane, in particolare della psicologia sociale, nello specifico la teoria dell'identità sociale, è possibile giungere a conclusioni in merito al messaggio che il Cronista intende rivolgere alla leadership della provincia persiana di Yehud. I leader sono invitati a promuovere l'identità del popolo ebraico a partire dal rapporto con Yhwh, in particolare nella cura del tempio di Gerusalemme, elemento fondamentale di tale identità. Nel presentare la sua agenda, il Cronista si pone sulla linea dei profeti, difendendo il rapporto tra Yhwh e il popolo, interpretando la parola divina del passato e attualizzandola, perché Israele possa trovare la via della prosperità e della pace.

Parole chiave: Identità sociale, leadership, tempio

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BIBLICAL ABBREVIATIONS

Hebrew Bible

1 Chr	1 Chronicles
1 Kgs	1 Kgs
1 Sam	Samuel
2 Chr	2 Chronicles
2 Kgs	2 Kgs
2 Sam	2 Samuel
Ct	Canticle of Canticles
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy
Ex	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Hag	Haggai
Hos	Hosea
Jdg	Judges
Jer	Jeremiah
Josh	Joshua
Is	Isaiah
Lam	Lamentations
Lev	Leviticus
Mal	Malachi
Mic	Micah
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Prov	Proverbs
Ps	Psalms
Qoh	Qohelet (Ecclesiastes)
Zech	Zechariah

New Testament

2 Cor	2 Corinthians
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
Heb	Hebrews
Lk	Gospel of Luke
Mt	Gospel of Matthew

INTRODUCTION

The collection of books which make up the Hebrew Bible includes, among others, literary works which were composed with the aim of collecting, reformulating and handing on the memories and facts about the historical events of the people of Israel, interpreting them from a particular point of view that was essentially theological. The events recounted there cover a broad span of time which begins with the creation of the universe (Gen 1) and extends to Nehemiah's second mission to the province of Yehud (Neh 13). The aim in this presentation of Israel's past is not historiographical, that is, it does not offer a chronological sequence of information and fact. Rather, it is theological: through recounting the facts of the past, the authors intend to define the identity of Israel, particularly the characteristics of its religion founded on the cult of Yhwh, the national divinity, and to map out an interpretation of the reality which the addressees are invited to accept and to hold as normative or at least exemplary for their present.

The past events of Israel as a nation and of its leading figures are the object, direct and indirect and under various aspects, of numerous biblical texts and are the subject and the background of many prophetic oracles, psalms and sapiential sayings. Some of these memories are treated in isolation. However, the majority have been included within a flow of events in narrative form. Within this flow, the part of Israelite history covering the period of the monarchy from the death of Saul until the Babylonian Exile represents a particular case since it is treated not in a single literary work but in two compilations in narrative form which are the expression of two different schools of thought. The more ancient one comprises the biblical books of Samuel and Kings. According

to the usual opinion of exegetes, these form part of the so-called "Deuteronomic History"[1]. The other overall presentation of the Israelite monarchy which was composed after the preceding one is contained in the biblical book of the Chronicles[2].

The question which is the starting point of the present study is this: why was Chronicles written when there already existed an historical-theological work on the same subject? In other words, what concrete situation, what need had been the stimulus behind a second work on the monarchy? Until a few decades ago, Chronicles was reckoned to be a doublet of little value. However, more recent biblical studies have changed this assessment so the present work forms part of this movement of rediscovery and re-evaluation of this biblical text which is generally hardly known.

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[1] The present work does not enter into the merit of the research on the so-called "Deuteronomic History" and its relationship with the Pentateuch: the expression and the equivalent formulae "Deuteronomist work", "the Deuteronomist" and "Dtr", are employed here to indicate the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings (especially the last two) in a traditional and conventional way without the intention of taking a position on specific questions with regard to this complex of writings. What interests the present study is only the relationship of this work with Chronicles of which it is the principal source. Therefore, we shall also employ for it the term *Vorlage* as an interchangeable alternative to the expressions given above.

[2] The Hebrew text of Chronicles has always been regarded as a unity: there is no disruption to the continuity between the end of 1 Chr and the beginning of 2 Chr. The Greek translators of the LXX were the first to divide the text into two parts, being followed in that by the other ancient translations. It was only with the printed editions of the fifteenth century that the Hebrew text was also divided into two "books" (cf. S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville [KY] 1993, 1-2). Therefore, in the present study, the expressions "book of Chronicles" and "books of the Chronicles" are considered equivalent. Moreover, the term "Chronicler" indicates the author of the single text of Chronicles without entering into the problem of the debated and now abandoned identification with the author of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Thus too, the term "author" is not intended to refer only to an individual figure but also, and rather, to a collective author, a social group which inherits, reformulates and transmits already-existing narratives organising them into a textual arrangement represented by the present two books of Chronicles.

The question behind this study is not strictly literary; rather, it concerns the history. For this reason, we shall be adopting an appropriate approach which will lead not so much to a greater knowledge of Chronicles from the linguistic or literary point of view but rather to an examination of the reality facing the Israelite people during the historical period of their composition. To this end, the point of view adopted will be derived from the area of the social sciences. In the last half-century, they have been engaged in profitable dialogue with the field of literary texts providing important results for the comprehension of the social and historical reality lying at the base of their production. The first chapter of the study will introduce the approach of studying the Bible with the aid of the social sciences.

For the correct employment of the social sciences, it is necessary both to know the text and also the society in which it arose. The second chapter, therefore, will consist of an introduction to the books of Chronicles with regard to the literary and historical aspects which are the concern of the present study so as to contextualise the text and its author, namely, the Chronicler, in their appropriate historical-social frame.

The subsequent three chapters, from three to five make up the study proper which consists in the application of the social approach to a specific aspect of Chronicles correlated with the historical context and with the readership to whom the books are addressed: the author's value judgements on the protagonists of the narrative, the kings of Judah. These judgements reveal the Chronicler's world of values which is founded on his theological vision of history: but they also help us to discover the message he intended for his readers, offering them models of behaviour on which to align their modes of thought and decisions for action. The study will consist in the identification and analysis of the judgements that emerge from the text. These are subdivided into three types of expression: explicit and direct judgements; explicit but indirect judgements made through the contributions of characters in the literary work; implicit judgements through *motifs* of a cultural character. Each type is given its own chapter.

Finally, the general conclusions will provide a summary of the results gathered from the analysis of the three types of judgement, delineating the features of the Chronicler's conception of leadership which he promoted in the Israelite society of his time.

Chapter 1

THE SOCIAL APPROACH TO THE BIBLICAL TEXTS

For almost fifty years, exegetical research has been enriched by contributions which come from an approach to the biblical text driven by perspectives which belong to the social sciences. In fact, especially from the nineteen seventies (even if pioneering works were not lacking in the past) an ever-greater application of socio-scientific theories to biblical studies has gradually been developed[1].

The social sciences recognise in the human being the existence of several levels of identity. The fundamental identity is the personal one which is possessed in a particular way by each individual human being; it is what characterises and distinguishes the individual from all the

[1] This is not the place for a survey of the history of research in this area: there are numerous summaries of this type which offer overviews and attempt to summarise the situation with regard to studies which are actually on-going and so in need of continual updating. Simply to give some examples, wholly incomplete and solely indicative, we can note the summaries (in chronological order) of: J.H. Elliott, *What is Social-scientific Criticism?* (GBS. New Testament Series), Fortress, Minneapolis (MN) 1993, 17-35; J.C. Exum-S.D. Moore, *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies*, in J.C. Exum-S.D. Moore (eds.), *Biblical Studies/Cultural Studies. The Third Sheffield Colloquium* (JSOTSup 266), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1998; M. Pesce, *Approccio secondo le scienze umane*, in G. Ghiberti-F. Mosetto (eds.), *L'interpretazione della Bibbia nella Chiesa*, Elle Di Ci, Leumann (TO) 1998, 195-221; P.F. Esler, *Social-Scientific Models in Biblical Interpretation*, in P.F. Esler (ed.), *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in its Social Context*, Fortress, Minneapolis (MN) 2006; P.F. Esler-A.C. Hagendorn, *Social-Scientific Analysis of the Old Testament. A Brief History and Overview*, in P.F. Esler (ed.), *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in its Social Context*, Fortress, Minneapolis (MN) 2006, 15-32; S. Guijarro Oporto, *El uso de las ciencias sociales en la interpretación de la Biblia*, in *Asociación de Biblistas Mexicanos* 16 (2007) 9-32. For a critical survey of some studies: C. Balzaretti, *Scienze sociali ed esegesi*, in *Rivista Biblica* 48 (2000) 335-352.

other members of the human species. Next, starting out from personal identity, other levels of identity are constructed determined by the interrelations among individuals: according to the roles they play in society, each person assumes and presents themselves with different faces according to the contexts and belongs simultaneously to multiple collective realities which are called social groups. Participation in a social group implies the sharing of elements in common among its members. This creates a new level of identity which is called collective or social identity. In particular, social psychology has studied the way in which the collective identity is constructed, maintained and modified over time. Such an approach is represented by the theory of social identity[2].

I. THE THEORY OF SOCIAL (OR COLLECTIVE) IDENTITY

In the nineteen sixties and seventies, the Jewish psychologist of Polish origin, Henri Tajfel[3], carried out a series of studies on the ways in which human groups are created. Through numerous experiments, he was able to observe how individuals who are placed within a group that is constituted arbitrarily and set in relation with other groups develop spontaneously behaviour which points towards self-segregation, glorifying their own characteristics and denigrating those of the others. The "us/them" opposition appears in the human way of thinking and acting almost instinctively and with great rapidity even if the group was formed on common bases that were completely superficial. In a famous experiment Tajfel formed his groups on the basis of the mere preference for the works of Klee or Kandinskij. The mechanisms which come into play

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[2] For a succinct but exhaustive account of the theory of social identity in relation to the study of biblical texts: P.F. Esler, *An Outline of Social Identity Theory*, in J.B. Tucker-C.A. Baker (eds.), *T&T Clark Handbook to Social Identity in the New Testament*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, London et al. 2014, 13-39.

[3] The theory of social identity was outlined by Tajfel in various articles published in the volume edited by him in H. Tajfel (ed.), *Differentiation between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, Academic Press, London 1978.

are not the same as in simple interpersonal relationships: the intergroup and intragroup relations possess their own specific dynamics. Starting from these studies, Tajfel and his student, John Taylor, elaborated the "Social Identity Theory" (abbreviated to SIT). Thus, the field is that of social psychology.

The SIT begins from the presupposition that there is a fundamental distinction between social situations in which the individuals interact as individuals and those in which they act as members of groups that are different but have relations with one another. On the other hand, however, there is a *continuum* between interpersonal dynamics and intergroup dynamics, since, in the real world, the individual always has preconceived ideas and attitudes which are expressed in various social categories. The social identity is that part of one's identity which a person has in relation to their belonging to a group. This belonging is in three dimensions:

a. cognitive: the awareness of belonging to a particular group;
b. evaluative: the value judgement, positive or negative, attributed to this belonging;
c. emotional: the emotional weight which is directed towards the group and towards the "others" who are related to the group.

The SIT seeks to identify and explain the modalities of differentiation of one group from the others and of the construction of one's own positive social identity. The social identity of an individual is formed through three social psychological processes:

1. social categorisation: the social environment is arranged in groups of people within a structured whole which gives meaning to the individual on the basis of criteria of various types (gender, age, religion, politics, level of education ... going as far as tastes in aesthetics and sport, etc.); in doing this, the individual accentuates the differences between groups, often attributing qualitative judgements to them;
2. identification: the various belongings to several groups are interiorised by the individual in such a way as to form their social identity which is, therefore, constituted by multiple belongings that are arranged among themselves in a hierarchical way;

3. social comparison: the individual makes continual comparisons both with the *ingroup* and with the *outgroup* members, with attributions of a valorial type on the basis of which attitudes are then adopted for or against one's own group or else in comparison with the reality external to the group.

In its relationships with others, a group will tend to create or preserve its own distinctive character, maintaining or emphasising the differences and underlining its own positive aspects. Thus, there arise those social judgements which act as stereotypes (*bias*): people are perceived on the basis of their membership of a particular group. However, these prejudices are not immutable; on the contrary, they vary notably according to the particular social context and the state of the relations between the groups.

Movements in this direction become all the more necessary the more the group feels itself inferior, by comparison, with respect to various points of view (less power, less ability, lower cultural level...): it will then set in motion strategies that differ according to the particular situation, with a broad sweep of possible actions, from the reinterpretation of its own characteristics in a more positive sense ("social creativity") to the strong, even violent, reaction in order to change reality ("social competition").

After Tajfel's death in 1982, J.C. Turner continued the study of social identity, focusing not only on the comparison with other groups but also on the processes within the group: social identity arises not just through comparison with the outside; it is also constructed through the actions which the group carries out in comparisons with itself. According to Turner, therefore, social identity is not only a part of personal identity; it also constitutes the socio-cognitive basis of the group's behaviour: it is the actual mechanism which makes the group's behaviour possible. Thus, Turner elaborated his own theory connected with the SIT and called "self-categorisation theory"[4]. This states that, within

[4] Turner expounded his extension of the theory of social identity as a theory of self-categorisation in 1987 in the five contributions which appeared in the volume edited by him, *Rediscovering the Social Group*.

the individual group, social identity is formed through three processes:

1. self-categorisation: *ingroup* social categories are formed through the perception, by at least two people, of similarities between themselves and differences by contrast with other people: the basic categories are gender, family, social class, religion, ethnicity; when these categories are recognised, the individuals internalise with the category everything that has already been given in the culture of membership as connected with this category;

2. de-personalisation: the individual members of the group perceive themselves as interchangeable exemplars of a social category rather than as individual personalities in a kind of self-stereotyping: that is, stereotypes are developed which do not have reference to the others but to their actual own group with the aim of reinforcing the identity and emphasising the differences with the outside. That does not involve the loss of one's personal identity but rather the passage to another level of identity, to a more inclusive degree of abstraction. Thus, there is no lessening of identity but, on the contrary, an enlargement;

3. salience: among the various memberships of many groups, one can become preeminent in the perception of the self, immediately influencing behaviour as well. Salience can change according to the conditions and situations in which different self-categorisations can be dominant.

In the theory of self-categorisation some factors assume a specific function. A fundamental role is fulfilled by the norms, that is, the regularity in attitudes and behaviour that are characteristic and, therefore distinctive, of a group[5]. The norms are responsible for the conformity of the individual with the group through the uniformity of behaviour. They are, therefore, a load-bearing factor in the group's identity. We do not mean here just the prescriptive norms: the uniform way in which the members of a group already behave have the force of descriptive norms which affect the behaviour of the individual. Consequently, their force does not lie in violence or in punishment but in their link with the

[5] Cf. M.A. Hogg-S.A. Reid, *Social Identity, Self-Categorization, and the Communication of Group Norms*, in *Communication Theory* 16 (2006) 7-30.

identity of the group. The internalisation of these norms brings the individual to feel them as part of their own identity and so a fundamental factor which is assumed and performed spontaneously[6].

Thus understood, the norms are joined together and represented in the figure of the "prototype", that is, the individual, real or symbolic, who assumes in himself completely all the characteristics of the group so as to become their ideal point of reference. The individual members are valued positively or negatively on the basis of their correspondence with the prototype[7]; in fact, the cohesion of the group is in relation to the mutual perception of being similar to one another in relation to the characteristics of the prototype. From that, they also derive their interpersonal attraction and the degree of personal self-esteem. However, that does not mean that the prototype is a fixed and static reality: it can change depending on the context and the modifications which take place in the history of the group. In any case, the prototype is the figure of reference who is normative because in him one can see realised fully the norms of behaviour which the individual members are called to put into practice in order to be full members of the group[8].

From the point of view of the group identity, the figure of the prototype is closely connected with that of the leader[9]: just as the prototype is the ideal and normative reference for the group, so the leader is the concrete and visible point of reference who seeks to have social influence over the group, presenting himself as close to the prototype in the fulfilment of the aims and the shared identity of the group, or else using his influence to modify the characteristics of the prototype to his own advantage. The leader, therefore, is central in the process of creation, coordination and control of the relations of self-categorisation in such a

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[6] Cf. *ibid.*, 12.

[7] Cf. J.C. Turner et Alii, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford-New York 1987, 60-61.

[8] Cf. Hogg-Reid, *Social Identity*, 11.

[9] On the role of the leader: S.A. Haslam, *Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach*, Sage, London 20042.

way that the group assumes a precise identity and attains the aims for which it exists: he can be described as "promotor of identity".

The norms are one of the four elements which form the body of beliefs which the group shares[10], that is, the body of beliefs which the members are aware of sharing and which they consider as definitors of the group's identity. The other three types of beliefs are values, objectives and ideology. The beliefs are central on account of the range of sense which they provide and because they constitute the foundation of the decisions which are concretely taken in the life of the group.

In the identity of the group, an important role is also played by the temporal dimension[11]: it lives in history and its members are in a state of continual change. The group lives in the present; it has objectives and plans for the future; it shares a common history in the past. This last dimension in particular furnishes elements for the social identity through a special form of memory and elaboration of the past which takes the name of "collective memory" or "social memory" and which often finds concrete expression in the drafting of traditions, oral and written. In this way, the individual member perceives himself within a reality that transcends the boundaries of time and feels himself in continuity with the members who have already lived their lives and with those who will follow him in the temporal journey: the "we" of the group precedes and survives the "I" of the individual member. For the same reason, the group is able to set objectives and strategies which look far forward into the future beyond the biological lives of the present members. The importance of time for social identity is dictated also by the fact that the members can modify identity ideas and behaviour while they adopt them from those who precede them and hand them on to those who follow. Changes can also happen in the occurring of

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[10] The function of beliefs for the identity of the group has been studied especially by D. Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs: A Conception for Analyzing Group Structure, Processes, and Behavior*, Springer, Berlin-New York 1990).

[11] In particular, see S. Condor, *Social Identity and Time*, in W.P. Robinson (ed.), *Social Groups and Identities: Developing the Legacy of Henri Tajfel*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford-Boston (MA) 1996, 285-316.

significant events which constitute transitions in the group's identity. The account that expresses and crystallises the collective memory contains the witness to ideas and events which are reread and represented in such a way as to reinforce and orientate the identity of the group from the point of view of its leadership: thus, tradition has not only a cognitive function but, above all, a pragmatic and rhetorical one; it is not only the model of a society; it is the model for the construction and preservation of that society[12].

The history of the group can run into problems and conflicts: that happens when the intragroup consensus is not strong and doubts are raised about the common definition of the identity social categories. Especially important for the resolution of conflicts turns out to be the interpretation of the past in order to provide the "authentic" significance for the present and to address future objectives. Here too, the role of the leader emerges in all its power.

II. SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY AND BIBLICAL STUDIES

Although belonging to the discipline of social psychology, social identity theory can be profitably employed as a general framework for the interpretation of written texts in order to seek the identity elements they contain. To achieve this, it is not to be employed on its own because it is not a purely psychological analysis on living subjects; rather it is to be yoked with other historical and literary methodologies. The present work intends to study the book of Chronicles precisely with the

[12] In the words of Schwartz, who is chiefly concerned with the function of the image of Abraham Lincoln in the collective national memory of the people of the United States, we can say that social memory acts as a "*template* that organizes and animates behaviour and a *frame* within people locate and find meaning for their present experience" (B. Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2000, 18; author's italics).

aid of this particular perspective[13]. This opens, therefore, the methodological question on the ways in which this tool can be used. This is not a new venture; it has already been tackled in the past with biblical texts of both Testaments. Here, I am referring particularly to the work of two scholars, the already-cited Philip F. Esler and Coleman A. Baker, who offer two different ways of working but ones that I believe to be complementary.

Esler's point of view[14] combines the SIT with cultural anthropology: comparative studies of the world of the Ancient Near East and the people of the Mediterranean provide the general frame which forms the original context in which the writings of the Old Testament were composed. Starting from area studies, Esler identifies the basic cultural categories employed by biblical man when he reasoned about his relations with others and acted in society: the centrality of the family and the village, the importance of the group, the concepts of honour and infamy, the pattern of provocation-response behaviour, the limited availability of goods, and the structure of social relations (clientelism, patrilinearity, *élite*s). In this way, the Anglo-Australian scholar has analysed numerous texts of the Old and New Testaments, tracking down these categories in order to explain the behaviour of the characters and the chosen narratives of the authors/redactors in terms of the affirmation or defence of their social identity.

Baker[15], on the other hand, establishes an interesting dialogue between the SIT and methods properly literary in order to gather what function a character or a narrative assume within a text with the aim of

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[13] An account of the prospects for the application of these approaches to Chronicles is also to be found in the recent works of E. Ben Zvi and L. C. Jonker (in the bibliography; see especially: L.C. Jonker, *Textual Identities in the Books of Chronicles: The Case of Jehoram's History*, in G.N. Knoppers-K.A. Ristau [eds.], *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake 2009, 201-206).

[14] Esler's methodology is described with respect to the Old Testament in: P.F. Esler, *Sex, Wives, and Warriors*, Cascade Books, Eugene (OR) 2011, 35-76.

[15] C.A. Baker, *Peter, Paul, and Recategorization in the Book of Acts: Identity, Memory and Narrative in Early Christianity*, Pickwick Publications, Eugene (OR) 2011, 1-31.

defining the identity of the group producing the text or for whom the text is destined. This works especially well for the analysis of prototypical figures who become models of thought and behaviour for the group from which they are taken as points of reference. In his doctoral thesis, Baker tackles the figures of Peter and Paul in the Acts of the Apostles in this light.

For both pathways, a knowledge of the events and of the historical environment in which the texts arose is presupposed. In the following chapter, therefore, I shall give space and importance to the historical and social context which is both the background and the starting point from which the Chronicler performed his interpretative activity on the history of Israel.

I find Baker's approach interesting and possibly profitable in being able to provide keys with which to read the biblical book that is the object of our study. Furthermore, the work of the Chronicler presents a peculiarity with respect to other biblical texts: it is a *relecture* or rereading of the history of Israel composed at a time when a history already existed, namely, the books of Samuel and Kings. The focus of this research will be the question of leadership which, in Chronicles, is embodied in the kings of Judah. The figures of the Davidic sovereigns will be read in the optic of the social approach so as to shed more light on the collective identity of the Israelite people during the period in which this literary work was composed.

Chapter 2

THE BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES

Research on the book of the Chronicles is relatively recent[1]. For a long time, studies on the historical books of the Bible focused fundamentally on the Deuteronomist's work, linked directly with the Pentateuch and found in the Hebrew Canon among the *Nebiim*. Included in the *Ketubim*, Chronicles was considered a collection of lesser historical elements with a limited historical perspective, an addition to the great Deuteronomistic narrative preceding it which goes from Genesis to the Babylonian Exile. The title of the Greek version, Παραλειπόμενα, expressed the perception of their value: a mere collection of events gathered together because they "remained" outside the main work[2]. This disparaging judgement was often maintained throughout the centuries[3].

[1] The most recent historical survey on the reception of Chronicles from antiquity to the present day is provided in J.-L. Ska, *The Book of Chronicles through the Ages: A Cinderella or a Sleeping Beauty?*, in J. Jeon-L.C. Jonker (eds.), *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible* (BZAW 528), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2021, 15-50. An introduction in Italian, less extensive but very rich, can be found in C. Balzaretti, *Dalla storiografia cronistica al libro delle Cronache*, in *I libri «storici» dell'Antico Testamento. Seminario per studiosi di Sacra Scrittura, Roma, 22-26 gennaio 2018* (Biblicum 4), Gregorian & Biblical Press, Roma 2018, 121-143.

[2] On the names attributed to the book of Chronicles in antiquity, see G.N. Knoppers-P.B. Harvey (Jr.), *Omitted and Remaining Matters: On the Names Given to the Book of Chronicles in Antiquity*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 121 (2002) 227-243.

[3] For example, Spinoza stated that the Chronicles are not worthy of consideration compared with the books of Samuel and of the Kings; he even went so far as to express his astonishment at their inclusion in the Hebrew Canon (*Tractatus theologico-politicus*, X, 127, publ. ed. G. Gawlick-F. Niewöner, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1979, 344. 346). Influencing subsequent biblical research, Wellhausen judged the Chronicler a

From the rise of modern exegesis, scholars approached the Chronicles from three standpoints: the historicity of their content[4]; the comparison with the parallel work of Samuel-Kings[5]; the link with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah because of the apparent continuity represented by the Edict of Cyrus which is recorded at the end of 2 Chr and the beginning of Ezra[6].

This focus changed only in the second half of the twentieth century. Today, the Chronicles are examined as an independent work with its own shape. Consequently, it has obtained greater appreciation. The three fields of enquiry in previous research have been abandoned or corrected: interest in the historicity of the events narrated has been replaced by a content-based and theological approach, centred on the message

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secondary author who had flattened the sublimity of the characters of the Hebrew history, distorting them for his own purposes connected with the cult, especially with regard to King David (J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte Israels*, Georg Reimer, Berlin 1878, 181). Torrey described the Chronicler (whom he maintained was also the author of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah) a "thoroughly untrustworthy" author (C.C. Torrey, *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah*, J. Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Giessen 1895, 52) who included in his works "forgeries", "pure imagination" and "unfounded invention" (*ibid.*, 49-50).

[4] J.G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, 4 voll., Weidmann, Leipzig 1780-1783; W.M.L. de Wette, *Beiträge zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Schimmelpfennig, Halle 1807; W.F. Albright, *The Date and Personality of the Chronicler*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 40 (1921) 104-124.

[5] Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*; G. von Rad, *Das Geschichtsbild des Chronistischen Werkes* (BWANT 54), Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1930; M. Noth, *Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studien*, *Teil 2: Die sammelnden und bearbeitenden Geschichtswerke im Alten Testament* (SKG 18,2), Niemeyer, Halle 1943. Von Rad and Noth were the first scholars to approach the Chronicles without expressing a value judgement on the author's presentation of events; rather, they sought to understand the message which he intended from the standpoint of his interpretation of history.

[6] L. Bertholdt, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in sämmtliche kanonische und apokryphische Schriften des alten und neuen Testaments*, Johann Jacob Palm, Erlangen 1813; F.K. Movers, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die biblische Chronik. Ein Beitrag zur Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Tobias Habicht, Bonn 1834.

transmitted by Chr and on the aim of its interpretation of history[7]. The Chronicler's dignity as a real author has been restored. His linguistic and literary techniques, the literary genres and rhetorical tools used or created by him, have been analysed, abandoning the simple comparison with the Dtr, generally to Chr's disadvantage, and the search for his presumed own sources[8]. Finally, the difference of author from Ezra-Neh is now taken for granted because of differences in form and content[9].

In recent decades, therefore, Chronicles has been studied in depth and reassessed as a literary work important for the reconstruction of the history of the Jewish religion. It is no longer a poor relation but a text with its own literary dignity, theological content and an original message to transmit[10]. Studies on it have multiplied, with different approaches and under numerous aspects. Particularly important for the present work is a series of studies on the relationship between the Chronicler and his time which consider his literary work within the social reality of which he was a part[11].

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[7] T. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung: Untersuchungen zur literarischen Gestaltung der historischen Überlieferung Israels* (FRLANT 106), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1972; S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (BEATAJ 9), Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main-Bern-New York-Paris 1989 [Hebr. orig. 1973].

[8] P. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* (WMANT 42), Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1973; R. Mosis, *Untersuchungen zur Theologie des chronistischen Geschichtswerkes* (Freiburger theologische Studien 92), Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 1973.

[9] The first study that seriously questioned the common authorship of Chr and Ezra-Neh was S. Japhet, *The Supposed Common Authorship of Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah Investigated Anew*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 18 (1968) 330-371. After her, this position was shared by an ever-increasing number of scholars until it has found a consensus that is now unanimous.

[10] Among the scholars who have concerned themselves specifically with Chronicles in numerous contributions beyond the already-mentioned T. Willi and S. Japhet, see H.G.M. Williamson, W. Johnstone, S. McKenzie, G.N. Knoppers, R. Klein, I. Kalimi, P.C. Beentjes, and, among the Italian scholars, T. Lorenzin and C. Balzaretti.

[11] Particularly important in this regard are the numerous studies of G.N. Knoppers, E. Ben Zvi and L.C. Jonker.

I. THE TEXT OF CHRONICLES

The book of the Chronicles is presented as a second narrative of the history of the Israelites from the death of Saul (1 Chr 10) to the tragedy of the Exile, concluding with the Edict of Cyrus permitting the return from Babylon to Jerusalem (2 Chr 36,22-23). Before turning our attention to the author and his aim in composing his literary work, we shall look at two preliminary aspects: the composition of the text (sources and internal unity) and its form (genre and structure).

A. The composition of Chronicles: sources and internal unity

How was the book of Chronicles written? How did it reach its present form? These questions touch on two aspects of the history of the text: the sources available to the Chronicler and the possibility of redactional activity subsequent to him.

1. The sources available to the author

If we examine the content of Chronicles, its closeness to the last section of the Deuteronomic History, from 1 Sam 31,1 to 2 Kgs 25,21, becomes evident. More or less half of the text of Chronicles is reported in Sam-Kgs[12]; the rest is made up of its own material and, to a much lesser degree, quotations from other texts such as Ezra 1,1-3a in 2 Chr 36,22-23 and parts of Psalms 96; 105 and 106 in 1 Chr 16,8-36.

The relationship between Chronicles and the Deuteronomist's work is very close but, at the same time, dialectic since our author does not limit himself to a mere copying of his main source. The parallel passages often coincide in detail with minimal variations; however, when he thinks it necessary, the Chronicler intervenes freely, introducing modifications in connection with his own theology and the message to be transmitted to the addressees.

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[12] I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2005, 1.

Scholars debate the nature of these differences. The discoveries at Qumran have brought to light the existence of passages of the Dtr that agree with the MT of Chr and not with the MT of Sam-Kgs that has come down to us[13]. The texts from Qumran and the ancient versions in Greek, Latin and Syriac witness to the fact that the textual history of Sam and Kgs was not linear. Consequently, in the face of the differences between these and Chronicles, we must not conclude automatically that these are deliberate changes made by the Chronicler, but could hypothesise the existence of a *Vorlage* that was partly different from the MT[14]. However, a close comparison demonstrates that this possibility can be proved in only a limited number of cases. Even if different in some details, the text of Sam-Kgs available to the Chronicler was substantially complete and similar to that which has come down to us.

The studies carried out[15] have shed light on the method he adopted with regard to his *Vorlage*: he takes up whole passages; omits others;

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[13] W.E. Lemke, *The Synoptic Problem in the Chronicler's History*, in *The Harvard Theological Review* 58 (1965) 349-363, presents a dozen cases that can be explained by the presence of a plurality of recensions of Samuel-Kings that were circulating before the definitive establishment of the consonantal text, calling 4QSam[a] particularly into support.

[14] Three scholars in particular tackle the complex theme of the relationship between the MT of Sam-Kgs and the book of Chronicles: S.L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler's Use of the Deuteronomistic History* (HSM 33), Scholars Press, Atlanta (GA) 1984; I. Kalimi, *Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten: Literarisch-historiographische Abweichungen der Chronik von ihren Paralleltexten in den Samuel- und Königsbüchern* (BZAW 226), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1995; R.F. Person (Jr.), *The Deuteronomic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World* (SBLAIL 6), Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta (GA) 2010.

[15] The reference here is to the position of A.G. Auld, *Kings without Privilege: David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1994, in which the scholar maintains that Sam-Kgs is not the *Vorlage* of Chr which, instead, must be sought in a third, shorter, text ("common inherited text": p. 4), which the two historians would have utilised independently from each other and at different periods, expanding it with other sources and enriching it with their own theology. Auld's thesis has received numerous criticisms for the insufficient foundation of its proof: see, among others: S.L. McKenzie, *The Chronicler as Redactor*, in M.P. Graham (ed.), *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 263), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999, 86-87; G.N. Knoppers, *Book Review: Auld, Kings without Privilege*, in *Ashland Theological Journal* 27

he modifies the formulation of entire phrases to harmonise them with passages of the Mosaic Law, especially Deuteronomy; in some cases, he alludes to the events narrated in Sam-Kgs presupposing knowledge of them on the part of his readers[16]. With regard to the specific object of this work, the Chronicler takes up formulations of judgement on the kings, discourses and events which concern them, but, at times, he modifies their presentation in order to express a personal interpretation different from that provided by the Dtr. Particularly important, therefore, is the way in which he employs his source: where he follows it and where not, where and how he accepts its judgement (historical and theological): in full, in part, with reservations, with modifications, or rejecting it entirely.

One question is how the position of the Chronicler is shaped in relation to the Dtr: does he intend his own work as a replacement for the earlier history? Scholars are not unanimous on this point[17]. If one

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(1995) 118-121; I. Kalimi, *Kings with Privilege: The Core Source(s) of the Parallel Texts between the Deuteronomistic and Chronistic Histories*, in *Revue Biblique* 119 (2012) 498-517.

[16] By way of example, we can cite four passages: 1 Chr 11,3, in the context of David's anointing, is deliberately modified in relation to 2 Sam 5,3 to recall the prophetic anointing by Samuel which, however, is recounted only in 1 Sam 16,1-13; 1 Chr 12,1 alludes to David's flight from Saul which is omitted by our author; 1 Chr 12,20-21 refers to the preparations for the final battle between Saul and the Philistines, preparations reported by 1 Sam 29 but not by 1 Chr; in 2 Chr 30,6-9, Hezekiah invites the northern tribes to resume the worship of Yhwh in Jerusalem and announce as a consequence the return of the exiles from Assyria, but in 2 Chr the deportation of the northern tribes is not recounted.

[17] For example, K.A.D. Smelik, *The Representation of King Ahaz in 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28*, in J.C. de Moor (ed.), *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (OtSt 40), Brill, Leiden et al. 1998, 184, and G. Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted: Omissions in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible* (FRLANT 251), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2013, 256-257, argue in favour of a substitutionary understanding of Chr; on the other hand, I. Kalimi, *Was the Chronicler a Historian?*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (JSOTSup 238), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 87, G.N. Knoppers, *The Relationship of the Deuteronomistic History to Chronicles: Was the Chronicler a Deuteronomist?*, in M. Nissinen (ed.), *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (VTSup 148), Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2012, 331-336, and E. Ben Zvi, *Chronicles and Samuel-Kings: Two Interacting Aspects of one Memory System in the Late Persian/ Early Hellenistic Period*, in U. Becker-H. Bezzel (eds.), *Rereading the Relecture? The*

considers the almost literal repetition of whole sections, it becomes difficult to suppose an intention to replace the Dtr: our author does not compose a completely new story from the beginning but links it directly to what the readers already know. At the same time, however, he offers a different theological frame in which to understand the events narrated. Thus, it is more plausible that Chr be regarded not as a replacement for but as an alternative to the Dtr: it is a rewriting of the previous work carried out to actualise the message in a changed historical context in which the demands to which to respond were different from those in the period of the composition of Sam-Kgs[18].

With respect to the relationship between the Chronicler and Dtr, the present work will follow the general criteria laid down here:

1) when variations between the two historical collections are observed, we must not fall into the naïve position of attributing every case to deliberate changes on the part of the Chronicler since the textual history of the two works has undergone complex development and is still not completely clear;

2) here, the information which is observed and held to be decisive is the presence of textual changes which, following the appropriate analysis, appear to be deliberate and so significant for arriving at the Chronicler's message;

3) since the Chronicler displays great freedom in his dealings with his *Vorlage*, what turns out to be important is not just what he changes but

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Question of (Post)chronistic Influence in the Latest Redactions of the Books of Samuel (FAT II 66), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2014, 41-56, maintain the opposing thesis.

[18] Cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 515-516, and L.C. Jonker, *Reforming History: The Hermeneutical Significance of the Books of Chronicles*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 57 (2007) 24-26. 36-37. According to M.Z. Brettler, *From The Deuteronomist(s) to the Chronicler: Continuities and Innovations*, in D. Assaf (ed.) *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies. Division A: The Bible and Its World*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1994, 87, Dtr and Chr do not differ in nature but because they reflect different socio-politico-religious communities and contexts, particularly a changed attitude to the Torah. We can fully share the statement of Kalimi: "Daraus geht hervor, daß der Chronist sein Werk auf die früheren Schriften gründet, nicht etwa darauf ausgeht, diese zu verdrängen und sein eigenes an ihre Stelle zu setzen" (*Geschichtsschreibung*, 172-173).

also what he retains, assuming that, if he did not consider it suitable to convey his own message, he would have deleted it or else reworked it.

If the Deuteronomistic work is the main source drawn on by the Chronicler, nevertheless almost half his work is made up of his own material. In order to develop this, he has recourse to pre-existent accounts in the oral traditions or in other written sources. He himself notes the texts that he claims to have consulted for the separate periods of the kingdom, attributing some of these to authors in prophetic circles[19]. Furthermore, there are also abundant allusions to other biblical books, especially to the Pentateuch and the Psalter[20]. To describe the ways in which the Chronicler uses these sources, K. Pyschny readopted the term *Traditionsverdichtung*, which was coined by the biblical scholar, C. Frevel, with reference to the book of Numbers and translated by the German scholar as the "concentration or distillation of traditions"[21]: the Chronicle reproduces the earlier written traditions not with explicit citations but with references and allusions. By this means, he inserts into his own work the theological content of the book which is being recalled to the reader's mind. Pyschny identifies two modes of *Traditionsverdichtung* in Chronicles: 1) the author mentions a figure in order to allude to the whole of his message and to interpret in its light the event which is being narrated (e.g. the mention of Jeremiah in 2 Chr 36,15-21 to interpret the

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[19] Cf. W.M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition: From Prophet to Exegete in the Second Temple Period* (JSOTSup 197), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1995, 209-230, and Rainey, A.F. *The Chronicler and His Sources - Historical and Geographical*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (JSOTSup 238), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 30-72.

[20] On this subject, see E. Ben Zvi-D. Edelman (eds.), *What Was Authoritative for Chronicles?*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2011, especially S.J. Schweitzer, *Judging a Book by Its Citations: Sources and Authority in Chronicles*, 37-65.

[21] K. Pyschny, *Concepts of Prophetic Leadership in Chronicles and Their Relation to Prophetic Literature*, in K. Pyschny-S. Schulz (eds.), *Transforming Authority: Concepts of Leadership in Prophetic and Chronistic Literature* (BZAW 518), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2021, 305-312; the concept is defined by C. Frevel, *Traditionsverdichtung - eine Tora im Werden: Einblicke in die gegenwärtige Numeriforschung*, in *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 145 (4/2020) 267-280.

Exile not as an element of punishment, as in the Dtr, but as a moment of reconciliation and restoration); 2) the Chronicler draws on models, ideas and linguistic expressions from the previous and contemporary prophetic literature in order to produce new prophetic utterances in the peculiar style of the speech of charismatic figures (e.g. the various allusions to several prophetic texts in Azariah's speech in 2 Chr 15,1-7).

This extensive employment of previous texts places a question mark over the Chronicler's modes of writing: what degree of authority did he attribute to his sources? Did he consider the texts he mentions or alludes to as in some way "inspired"? Some scholars[22] maintain that the Chronicler conceived his own work as the conclusion of the "canon", that is, of the complex of authoritative works of the Jewish faith[23]. That is, the Chronicler would be performing a synthesis of the previous writings, collecting them into a single story starting from Adam who is cited at the beginning of the genealogies (1 Chr 1,1) and ending up at the Edict of Cyrus, the opening of the book of Ezra which already existed. Within this unified story, the Chronicler would have scattered quotations and allusions to several biblical texts so as to establish in a single perspective the Law and the Prophets which were already held to be authoritative for the faith. Although partly holding to this view, I maintain that the text does not contain sufficient elements for us to be able to speak of the conclusion of a canon. First of all, the Chronicler does

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[22] G. Steins, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphänomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik* (BBB 93), Beltz Athenäum, Weinheim 1995; H.J. Koorevaar, *Die Chronik als intendierter Abschluß des alttestamentlichen Kanons*, in *Jahrbuch für Evangelikale Theologie* 11 (1997) 42-76; A. Hilpert, *Die Komposition der Chronikbücher: Redaktionsgeschichtliche Studien zu 2Chr 10-36* (BZAW 526), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2022.

[23] The use of the term "canon" is potentially ambiguous and requires clarification: it is not necessary to confuse this subject with the question of the placing of the Chronicles at the end of the list of biblical books. Until the fixing of a canon by the Christian Churches, there was no problem with the formulation of lists of the biblical books in which position also assumes a hermeneutical character, and this concept has nothing to do with the (possible) awareness of the Chronicler that he is writing a work which is concluding the corpus of authoritative Jewish writings.

not carry out an overall summary of all the previous books but focuses only on a part of Samuel and Kings[24]. Secondly, if the Torah is his fixed and stable point of reference, the other texts reused by him are certainly considered authoritative but not canonised as immutable since he changes them very freely, omits some parts, adds details and, in some cases, turns the theological vision upside down[25]. Thirdly, nothing in Chronicles leads us to believe that the author intended to put his hand to a work concluding his previous religious heritage; on the contrary, the Edict of Cyrus, placed at the end, is an open finale on to which it is possible to join further works on the subsequent history of the people.

I believe it more probable that the Chronicler intended not to be placed as the final summary of texts held to be authoritative but rather to set out a rereading of the history of the monarchy with a personal interpretation which he recalls and employs starting out from his own theological vision. It is equally very probable that the use of prophetic sources, also recalled explicitly, and the abundance of speeches attributed to charismatic figures are an indication of his intention to place himself within the prophetic milieu, making his own work a sharer in it too[26]. In sum, in his use of previous sources, the Chronicler presents

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[24] Cf. The similar objection raised by Talshir: "Had he been a theologian of the canon we would have expected to find in his work a much clearer picture of the body of books he aimed to close, rather than having to sift through his book for hints and half-hints for the nature of his literary heritage": Talshir, *Several Canon-Related Concepts Originating in Chronicles*, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 113 (2001) 403.

[25] I agree with Kalimi: "Although it is probably true that Chr [= Chronicles] treated the Pentateuch as a canonical book and that the specific texts that he used from this book were generally not altered, the books of Samuel and Kings were by no means canonical for Chr. He did not treat them as immutable, sealed books that one may strive only to explain and comprehend in their given form. On the contrary, these books served him as raw materials for manipulation as he saw fit: he adapted, supplemented, and omitted from them according to his own ideological-theological outlook" (*Was the Chronicler*, 79). With an illuminating expression, Williamson sums up the Chronicler's attitude to his sources thus: "The Chronicler shows himself as the master, not the servant, of his sources" (H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids [MI]-London 1982, 23).

[26] Cf. Y. Amit, *The Role of Prophecy and Prophets in the Chronicler's World* [Hebr. orig. 1983], in M.C. Floyd-R.D. Haak (eds.), *Prophets, Prophecy, and Prophetic Texts in Second*

himself as interpreter of the correct relationship between Yhwh and the people which is expressed and fixed in the Pentateuch and was maintained along the generations thanks to the prophets in whose niche he places himself in order to lend authority to his own interpretation of the tradition.

2. The internal unity of the work

After examining the Chronicler's use of sources, we can ask if the text that has reached us corresponds to the original composition or whether there are additions and different levels of redaction. This theme too is the subject of scholarly debate. From a tendency to parcel out Chronicles with the methods already employed for the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomic History, and so to identify a multiplicity of redactions, scholars have come increasingly to the conviction of the work's substantial unity. This change of position was due to two main factors. On the one hand, the greater consideration of Chronicles as an autonomous work possessing its own literary worth has enabled a liberation from the complex studies of the Documentary Hypothesis in dependence on which the analyses of the redactional history of Chronicles were also carried out[27]. Secondly, in biblical studies in general, especially in the Anglo-Saxon area where Chronicles has been studied more, there has been a growing tendency to consider texts in their final form.

Actually, none of the theories proposed in favour of the redactional plurality of Chronicles contains arguments that are cogent and convincing. On the contrary, the literary studies of the final form of the book bear elements in favour of its origin from a single hand which has developed a whole that is united and coherent both in form and content. Of

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Temple Judaism (LHB/OTS 427), T&T Clark, London 2006, 96-97.

[27] For example, at the end of the nineteen thirties, Welch claimed the existence of two redactions: an Exilic one, under Deuteronomist influence, and a post-Exilic one, priestly in character, in connection with the Pentateuchal sources, D and P: A.C. Welch, *The Work of the Chronicler: Its Purpose and Its Date* (SchL 1938), Oxford University Press, London 1939, 155-160.

particular note are the contributions of L.C. Allen and P. Abadie[28]. The former, entitled "Kerygmatic Units in 1 & 2 Chronicles", causes three aspects of the work to emerge which highlight the literary ability of the Chronicler: the presence of inclusions which define more restricted portions of text; the use of recurrent *motifs*; and the presence of contrasting themes. In his article, "Le livre des Chroniques comme œuvre littéraire", Abadie shows that Chronicles' work of *relecture* is carried out within an overall scheme which is organised in a literary way through "'unités kérygmatiques' structurantes" determined by the recurrence of some terms, and through large literary units defined by techniques of repetition and chronological periodisation. These elements that demonstrate the existence of an overall authorial scheme do not remove the possibility of single, small and circumscribed interventions by subsequent writers, but these do not prejudice the substantial overall unity of the literary work.

B. The form of Chronicles: genre and structure

Having examined the compositional history of Chronicles, we shall now focus on the form of the text by examining two questions: the literary genre of the work and its structure.

1. The literary genre of Chronicles

The Chronicler's approach to his sources leads to the question of the literary genre of his work. All scholars agree in the general description of Chronicles as a composition on an historical subject. However, various proposals, not always mutually exclusive, have been advanced to pin down more precisely the type of narrative in which it is set.

Some scholars consider Chronicles within the Jewish tradition alone and describe the books on the basis of the particular genres produced

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[28] L.C. Allen, *Kerygmatic Units in 1 & 2 Chronicles*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 41 (1988) 21-36; P. Abadie, *Le livre des Chroniques comme œuvre littéraire*, in *Recherches de science religieuse* 90 (2002) 525-553.

by this tradition subsequently. Thus, M. Fishbane considers them a haggadic text which is reinterpreting a history that already exists and has been transmitted (*traditum*) by the religious culture, namely, Sam-Kgs[29]. Other authors prefer the description of *midrash*: the Chronicler is carrying out a rewriting of the Dtr which is not anthological or compilatory but by means of an authentic literary creation which can be considered the inauguration of Jewish *midrash*[30].

According to T. Willi, Chronicles is primarily a work of interpretation or exegesis of the Deuteronomic History which he reckons was considered canonical by the Chronicler[31]. P.R. Ackroyd and R.J. Coggins, on the other hand, claim that our author is fundamentally a theologian who is rereading past history not with an historiographical interest but only to present his own religious interpretation of reality: that is the real heart of the work[32]. S.L. McKenzie and G.N. Knoppers propose using the notion of "rewritten Bible", but they themselves point out the weakness of the description: according to McKenzie, it can be applied to only a part of Chronicles, while Knoppers identifies the problematic nature of the use of the term "Bible" for a period when there was as yet no corpus of

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[29] M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Clarendon, Oxford 1986, 380-407.

[30] Thus Abadie, *Livre des Chroniques*, 552-553. The description of Chr as *midrash* was due originally to Wellhausen (*Prolegomena*, 223) and received a fair amount of acceptance among scholars: of the same opinion, we can cite, among others: Welch, *Work*, 54; Welten, *Geschichte*, 206 (historical *midrash*); Steins, *Chronik*, 30-39, and W. Johnstone, *Guilt and Atonement: The Theme of 1 and 2 Chronicles*, in J.D. Martin-P.R. Davies (eds.), *A word in Season: Essays in Honour of William McKane* (JSOTSup 42), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1986, 125 (haggadic *midrash*).

[31] Willi, *Chronik*, 176-184. 241-244; similarly, also: K. Strübind, *Tradition als Interpretation in der Chronik: König Josaphat als Paradigma chronistischer Hermeneutik und Theologie* (BZAW 201), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1991, and W.M. Schniedewind, *The Chronicler as an Interpreter of Scripture*, in M.P. Graham (ed.), *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 263), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999, 158-180.

[32] P.R. Ackroyd, *The Theology of the Chronicler*, in *Lexington Theological Quarterly* 8 (1973) 101-116; R.J. Coggins, *The First and Second Books of the Chronicles* (CBC), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1976, 5-6.

authoritative writings[33]. Precisely because of the mixture of written and oral traditions in a period in which "Scripture" was still in process of formation, E. Ben Zvi and J.C. Jonker prefer to refer to the concept of "memory", a broader expression which gathers together all the forms of transmission of the foundational accounts of the collective identity of the Israelite people, accounts that at the time of the composition of Chronicles were still fluid[34].

There is no lack of comparisons with the neighbouring cultures, both Near Eastern and the emerging Greek culture. I. Kalimi argues that Chr is basically an historiographical text. He reckons that it possesses analogous characteristics to the other historiographical works of the Near East and of the classical world: the reworking of their sources on the basis of their own vision of history, the didactic purpose, the development of speeches attributed to the characters, and the insertion of fascinating features such as numerical hyperbole[35]. Recently Jonker proposed a possible similarity in purposes and effects between the book of Chronicles and Darius I's inscription at Bistun[36]. J.P. Weinberg claims that, if the Deuteronomic History can be compared to the epic historiography of classical antiquity, Chronicles is close to the biographical genre so that he describes it as "einen Biographien-Zyklus", a collection of royal biographies preceded by an introduction made up of

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[33] S.L. McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles* (AOTC), Abingdon Press, Nashville (TN) 2004, 33-34; G.N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 12), Doubleday, New York 2003, 129-134.

[34] E. Ben Zvi, *Chronicles and Social Memory*, in *Studia Theologica - Nordic Journal of Theology* 71 (2017) 69-90; L.C. Jonker, *From Paraleipomenon to Early Reader Texte imprimé: The Implications of Recent Chronicles Studies for Pentateuchal Criticism*, in C.M. Maier (ed.), *Congress Volume Munich 2013* (VTSup 163), Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2014, 225.

[35] Kalimi, *Was the Chronicler*, 82-89; Id., *An Ancient Israelite Historian: Studies in the Chronicler, His Time, Place and Writing* (SSN 46), Royal Van Gorcum, Assen 2005, 29-39.

[36] L.C. Jonker, "Is the book of Chronicles Yehud's equivalent of Bisitun?", in C. Körting et alii (eds.), *Innovation in Persian Period Judah. Royal and Temple Ideology in its Ancient Near East Setting* (FAT II 144), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2023, 25-42.

genealogies[37]. Knoppers identifies contacts between Greek literature and the genealogies of 1 Chr 1-9[38]. K. G. Hoglund maintains that the Chronicler utilises models and methods drawn from Greek historiography: the use of genealogies, the similarity between the role of the prophets and the figure of the wise counsellor in Hellenic literature, and the reference to sources, genuine or presumed, for particular pieces of information[39].

All the positions outlined here are based on elements that can be found in the text, but none of them manages to account for the work as a whole. There are certainly midrashic and interpretative elements but not such as to justify the description of *midrash* or interpretation/exegesis for Chronicles *in toto*. As for the theological aspect, it is prevalent compared with the historiographical interest since the events are not presented with the aim of sketching a mere history of the Israelite people but on account of the religious significance with which these events are interpreted. However, the identification of a particular literary genre called "theology" is impossible in the Jewish culture in which all literary compositions are pervaded by this aspect. In conclusion, the book of Chronicles escapes from a more precise and omnicomprehensive description. Thus, McKenzie states that it is a work of unique genre and describes it as "a theological rewriting of Bible history for instructional purposes"[40], while Knoppers, having accepted the expression "rewritten Bible" with reservations, affirms that it is a new literary work with unique elements and without parallels, and concludes: "Chronicles needs to be understood as its own work"[41]. Jonker notes that, faced with the

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[37] J.P. Weinberg, *Der Chronist in seiner Mitwelt* (BZAW 239), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1996, 284-287; the description is on p. 287.

[38] G.N. Knoppers, *Greek Historiography and the Chronicler's History: A Reexamination*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003) 627-650.

[39] K.G. Hoglund, *The Chronicler as Historian: A Comparativist Perspective*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (JSOTSup 238), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 19-29.

[40] McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 34.

[41] Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 134.

peculiarity of this work, it is not fruitful to disquisition about its "literary genre", but it is more suitable to ask about its "nature", a term which does not only include the formal aspect but is extended to consider also the purpose for which the work was compiled. Therefore, he coins the expression "reforming history", deliberately ambiguous because it does not identify so much a literary genre under the formal aspect as a way of working defined mainly by the aim which the Chronicler set himself, that is, to reformulate and reorganise the previous traditions in order to redefine the identity of the Israelite people in a period different from that which saw the birth of the Deuteronomic History[42].

All these positions contain elements of truth which McKenzie's formulation attempts to summarise in a periphrasis which turns out, however, to be more like a description than a definition. Thus, I would like to advance a further proposal defining the Chronicles as a "prophetic rereading of history":

– "prophetic": the Chronicler refers to authoritative texts, pre-existent or presented as such, to make his own work to share in their theological status, and transmits his own message through the voice of the numerous charismatic figures who provide the interpretation of the events recounted; like the prophets, the Chronicler too acts with a didactic purpose *vis à vis* his people;
– "rereading": the Chronicler is taking up traditions, written or oral which already exist and are known to the readers in order to provide them with a new interpretation;
– "of history": past history is certainly the subject of the text, but the author's interest is not historiographical: within the events narrated, the theological vision of the Chronicler is unfolded. In them, he finds the corroboration of its soundness and, from that starting point, he provides instructions for the present of his readers.

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[42] Jonker, *Reforming History*, 24-26. 41-42.

2. The structure of the literary work

Although the literary work is subdivided into two books, this does not reflect its internal structure but is subsequent to the composition of the text. The Masoretes considered Chronicles as a single work, placing a single colophon at the end with the total number of the verses. The division into two books goes back to the translation of the LXX and was then taken up in the first printed editions of the Hebrew Bible and perpetuated from then until the present day.

Prescinding, therefore, from the subdivision between 1 and 2 Chr, it is easy to identify a basic tripartite arrangement:
– 1 Chr 1-9: genealogies of the tribes of Israel;
– 1 Chr 10-2 Chr 9: the united monarchy centred on David and Solomon;
– 2 Chr 10-36: the kingdom of Judah.

It is difficult to identify a further structure within this tripartition and tofind markers pointing to smaller sections. Consequently, there is no agreement among scholars who approach the problem with different methods and generally consider only limited portions of the text[43]. T. Sugimo correctly warns against a preliminary methodological error: to examine the structure of Chr on the basis of Sam-Kgs; the Chronicler has produced a different literary work, with its own aims and its own characteristics among which is its autonomous structure with respect

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[43] Thus, for example, Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 260-261, and J.T. Sparks, *The Chronicler's Genealogies: Towards an Understanding of 1 Chronicles 1-9* (SBLAB 28), Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta (GA) 2008, 29-31, concentrate on the genealogies of the first part; Wright has searched for a structure within the section on David (J.W. Wright, *The Founding Father: The Structure of the Chronicler's David Narrative*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117 [1998] 45-59) and Dillard in that on Solomon (R.B. Dillard, *The Literary Structure of the Chronicler's Solomon Narrative*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 30 (1984) 85-93). See also J.W. Wright, *The Fabula of the Book of Chronicles*, in M.P. Graham (ed.), *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 263), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999, 136-155, on the "plot" of Chronicles; and Y. Berger, *Chiasm and Meaning in 1 Chronicles*, in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 14.1 (2014) 1-31, on the chiasmi with a possible structuring function, to which we shall be returning shortly.

to its principal source[44]. Starting from this assumption, C. Balzaretti has suggested a seven-part structure which he developed on the basis of the elements proper to Chronicles: the focus on the cult, the centrality of the narrative of the dedication of the temple, and the exemplary nature of the figures of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah[45]. He claims to have constructed this hypothesis on the basis of the chiasms identified by Y. Berger[46]; however, he criticises Berger for taking the risk of superficiality and forcing the evidence which the search for chiasmi can involve[47].

In fact, for Chronicles, the identification of a structure by purely literary criteria is a complex operation that lacks clear points of support in the text; a structure with thematic criteria would vary according to the point of view chosen with which to identify it; *viceversa*, a presentation that did not assume any criteria would be reduced to a list of passages for its argument[48]. Here, we shall limit ourselves to accepting the more general three-part division which is clear and enjoys a general consensus among scholars. Structural elements in individual portions of the text will be presented in the course of the argument.

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[44] T. Sugimoto, *Chronicles as Independent Literature*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 55 (1992) 61-74, esp. 74.

[45] C. Balzaretti, *Cronache. Introduzione, traduzione e commento* (Nuova versione della Bibbia dai testi antichi 28), San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 2013, 13: genealogy of the people of God (1 Chr 1-9); David, king in Jerusalem (1 Chr 10-21); preparations for the building of the temple (1 Chr 22-29); Solomon and the temple (2 Chr 1-9); from Rehoboam to Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 10-20); from Jehoram to Ahaz (2 Chr 21-28); from Hezekiah to the end of the kingdom of Judah (2 Chr 29-36).

[46] Berger, *Chiasm*.

[47] Balzaretti, *Dalla Storiografia*, 140-141.

[48] See the long table presented by Lorenzin which turns out to be a summary rather than a structure proper (T. Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, Paoline, Milano 2011, 14-20).

II. THE AUTHOR OF CHRONICLES

After concentrating on some aspects of the text, we turn now to consider its author. As has emerged in the previous pages, the Chronicler is revealed not as a compiler or simply a collector of sources available to him but as a real author who produces an autonomous literary work following his own objectives and employing literary techniques with ability and originality. His identity is unknown; he provides no clue to himself. However, we can hold three statements with relative safety.

– The Chronicler hails from the tribe of Levi: the centrality of the temple and his interest in the cult are such as to render certain his membership of the social group which gravitated around the sanctuary. This group could have access to the scribal education necessary to be able to consult archive documents and compose a literary work[49]. It is more difficult to establish whether the Chronicler was a simple Levite or a member of the priestly family: clear indications in this connection do not emerge from the narrative;
– On account of the social function of the text, it is preferable to hold that the Chronicler is a collective author rather than an individual: he never expresses himself in the first person and makes himself spokesman of theological positions that belong to a category of people. It is more plausible, therefore, that the composition of the work should be attributed to this category as a whole[50];

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[49] Some authors seem to outline an alternative between belonging to the priestly/Levitical tribe and scribal education. Consequently, the definition of the Chronicler as a scribe would exclude him from the cultic arena (e.g. Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 20); however, my view is that the two memberships have not to be held to be mutually exclusive and that, on the contrary, in a context where those engaged in the cult also acted as interpreters of the Law, a scribal education was necessary for priests and Levites, and, moreover, it was possible for them to access the archives of temple from which they could collect information for the composition of historical works (cf. K. van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-London 2007, 75-109, esp. 79-80. 90). Guy hypothesises that the Chronicler belonged to prophetic circles but his position is isolated (J. Guy, *United in Exile, Reunited in Restoration: The Chronicler's Agenda*, Sheffield Phoenix Press, Sheffield 2019, 202).

[50] Cf. L.C. Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (UBCS), Baker Books, Grand Rapids (Mi) 2013, 7.

– The distinction between the Chronicler and the author of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is now universally accepted. Those books, therefore, are no longer taken into consideration for defining the characteristics and temporal location of the author of Chr[51].

Particularly important for the approach through the social sciences adopted in this work is the historical contextualisation of the Chronicler. To this we devote the following sections.

A. The dating of the text and of its author

The book of Chronicles does not provide clear and unambiguous clues with which to establish its date of composition. Even if the author intended to refer to contemporaneous events, we do not have enough knowledge to be able to recognise them with security and obtain a hook on to a precise historical period. This uncertainty has given rise to a number of theories which cover a span of around 350 years: from the period immediately following the so-called "Edict of Cyrus" (538 BCE) to the Maccabean period (from 166 BCE). The question is complex and needs caution if dangers are to be avoided. A first risk is the circularity of the arguments, for example, basing a Persian dating of Chronicles on reconstructions of the Persian period made by starting out from Chronicles[52]. A second risk, also unintentional, is the creation of an historical period "made to measure" in order to justify one's own preunderstandings of the text. Finally, a tendency which is found at times among scholars is the elimination from the text of Chr of material which goes against a scholar's own theory, holding it to be a secondary addition

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[51] See, above, p. 27, n. 9.

[52] See, for example, Peltonen's judgement (K. Peltonen, *A Jigsaw without a Model? The Date of Chronicles*, in L.L. Grabbe [ed.], *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* [JSOTSup 317], Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 2001, 261-263) on the model of the "Citizen-Temple Community" elaborated by Weinberg in his studies, *The Citizen-Temple Community* and *Der Chronist in seiner Mitwelt*, where it can be observed that the dating of Chronicles is deduced starting from a reconstruction of Jewish society in the Persian period which is also conjectured from the same starting point.

but without producing real proofs of a textual or literary nature. As we stated in the previous sections, this study maintains the substantial unity of the work, excluding the possibility of subsequent redactions of which there is neither trace nor necessity.

In addition to the question of the criteria to be adopted for dating, the scholar of Chronicles is faced with the problem of the often sparse knowledge of the historical events which took place in the territory of Jerusalem from the end of the Exile to the Maccabean Revolt. In fact, as B. Becking acutely maintains, in this long period, we can identify few historical moments which match the themes of the book so that every theory remains open to challenge and cannot take on an absolute and definitive character[53]. That does not mean that all positions have an equal value: in the following lines, we shall set out the main historical and literary points of reference so as to be able to reach the conclusion which we consider most suitable to explain the greater number of questions posed by the text.

First of all, we have to define the terms *post quem* and *ante quem*. To identify the former, we must consider a series of elements present in Chronicles though not all have the same argumentative force.

1) The latest event recounted in Chronicles is the proclamation of the so-called "Edict of Cyrus" which was issued in 538 BCE: the work is certainly subsequent to this date.

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[53] Taking up the hermeneutical model, "Schlüssel-Schloss", developed by C. Hardmeier (*Prophetie im Streit vor dem Untergang Judas: Erzählkommunikative Studien zur Entstehungssituation der Jesaja- und Jeremiaerzählungen in II Reg 18-20 und Jer 37-40* [BZAW 187], De Gruyter, Berlin 1990, 171-173), the author compares the various dating theories of a text to keys which are trying to open a padlock which represents the period of its composition: when a theory matches an historical context, the key opens the lock and the date sought is obtained. Becking claims that, in the case of Chronicles, the theories can open different locks since the characteristics of the text can be adapted so that they can be explained in different contexts. For example, the redefinition of Israel's identity, an important theme in Chr, can be made necessary at several critical moments, from the reconstruction of the temple immediately after the Exile to the confrontation with the Samaritan schism, to the Maccabean reaction to Hellenism (B. Becking, *More than a Pawn in Their Game: Zedekiah and the Fall of Jerusalem in 2 Chronicles 36:11-21*, in J. Corley-H. Van Grol [eds.], *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of P.C. Beentjes* [DCLS 7], De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2011, 264-265).

2) 1 Chr 29,7 mentions, anachronistically, the "daric" (אֲדַרְכֹנִים), a coin which began to be struck in 515 BCE.

3) In 1 Chr 3,17-24, the genealogy of the Davidic dynasty through Jeconiah continues for six generations in the MT and eleven in the LXX. If one attributes a period of twenty years to each generation, one comes down as far as the final years of the V cent. BCE, if we follow the Hebrew text, or to the first decades of the III cent. BCE if we follow the Greek version[54].

4) There has been an attempt to identify the Shallum of 1 Chr 9,17-19, who is presented as living when the Chronicler is writing, with the Meshullam of Neh 12,25-26, a contemporary of the high priest, Joshua, the governor, Nehemiah, and the scribe, Ezra[55]. However, the synchronisation of these last three characters appears artificial and historically unsustainable, so this argument is not useful in dating Chronicles.

5) According to P. Welten, 2 Chr 26,15 mentions the catapults invented in Syracuse around 400 BCE, and this technology did not reach Judah until the III cent. BCE so that Chronicles could not be prior to this period[56]. However, according to H. G. M. Williamson, the Chronicler is

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[54] An in-depth analysis of David's genealogy has been carried out by Pomykala: he identifies the Hattush of 1 Chr 3,22 with the Hattush, son of Shecaniah, of Ezra 8,2-3, a contemporary of Ezra, the scribe, so as to make the composition of Chr depend on the historical situation of Ezra, who carried out his activities between 408 and 348 BCE; consequently, he dates the Chronicles to a period between 435 and 348 (K. E. Pomykala, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism: Its History and Significance for Messianism* [SBLEJL 7], Scholars Press, Atlanta [GA] 1995, 83-88). Tuell, on the other hand, places the birth of Anani, final name in the genealogy, around 445 BCE (S.S. Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville [KY] 2001, 20). Kalimi, assigning 23-24 years to each generation, goes down to the years 382-376 BCE (I. Kalimi, *The Date of the Book of Chronicles*, in H.J. Ellens et alii [eds.], *God's Word for Our World, Vol. I: Biblical Studies in Honor of S.J. De Vries* [LHB/OTS 388], T&T Clark, London 2004, 366).

[55] Cfr. H.J. Koorevaar, *Chronicles as the Intended Conclusion to the Old Testament Canon*, in J. Steinberg-T.J. Stone (eds.), *The Shape of the Writings* (Siph 16), Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2015, 217-218.

[56] Welten, *Geschichte*, 111-114.

describing here the siege towers; besides, there is evidence that the Persians also had contraptions for hurling rocks[57].

In order to define the *terminus ante quem*, we have to look at the attestations to Chronicles which can be found in other literary texts.

1) The Jewish historian, Eupolemus, who can be placed between 158 and 145 BCE, seems to refer to the Greek version of Chronicles. His work, Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ βασιλέων (title known to Clement of Alexandria in *Stromata*, I, 23,153,4), has not come down to us completely but only thanks to the quotation of passages recorded by other ancient authors[58]. The fragment that interests us is contained in *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX, 30,1-34,18, of Eusebius of Caesarea, and concerns the account of the kingdom of Solomon which is described by Eupolemus with details closer to the narrative of Chr than to that of Sam-Kgs[59]. From that, we would have to conclude that, in the middle of the II cent. BCE, not only had Chronicles already been composed but also translated into Greek and reached a certain degree of authority. However, Eupolemus shows that he also knew traditions other than Dtr and Chr. This is demonstrated by some details which contradict both the historical works: for example, David is called son of Saul, and the high priest during his reign is Eli[60]. Therefore, it is not certain that Eupolemus used the Chronicles in the LXX version.

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[57] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 337-338.

[58] A reconstruction of Eupolemus' work is found in C.R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors. Vol. I: Historians* (SBLTT 20; Pseudepigrapha Series 10), Scholars Press, Chico (CA) 1983, 112-135: five fragments are recorded in the *Stromata* of Clement of Alexandria and in the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius of Caesarea. The passage which interests the present study is the second fragment, on pp. 114-131 of Holladay's volume.

[59] Kalimi (*History of Interpretation: The Book of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition from Daniel to Spinoza*, in *Revue Biblique* 105 [1998] 14-17) identifies eight details reported by Eupolemus and found only in Chr and not in the parallel narrative in Sam-Kgs, a sign of the possible knowledge of Chr by the Jewish historian.

[60] Other discordant elements are listed by Ben Zvi (*The Authority of 1-2 Chronicles in the Late Second Temple Period*, in *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 3 [1988] 72-73 and related notes) and by Steins (*Chronik*, 491-492), who are disturbed by the possibility of looking at Eupolemus in order to date Chronicles.

2) The presentation of David as organiser of the cult in the Book of Sirach 47,9-10 (a text which is reckoned between 200 and 175 BCE) agrees with the description of the founder of the dynasty given by Chr and not by Sam-Kgs. However, this likeness does not solve the problem of the priority between the two works: it does not constitute a proof that Jesus ben Sirach had the text of Chronicles before him since there was possibly a common tradition about David on which both authors drew. Moreover, Ben Sira is distant from Chr in other ways: in Sirach 47,19-21, Solomon is criticised for his sins which are passed over by Chr; and in Sirach 48,17-22, religious reform is not mentioned among the deeds of Hezekiah[61].

3) Dan 1,1-2 (a text that can be dated between 167 and 164 BCE) reports the version of events presented by 2 Chr 36,5-7 in disagreement with 2 Kgs 23,36-24,5: according to the Dtr, Jehoiakim dies in Jerusalem whereas, in 2 Chr and Dan, he is deported by Nebuchadnezzar and all the furnishings of the temple are carried away with him to Babylon. In this case too, however, we can also speculate on the existence of a common tradition.

4) The presentation of Mattathias' priestly 'course' in 1 Maccabees 2,1 (text of the second half of the II sec. BCE) reflects the organisation of the cult in 1 Chr 24,1-19.

5) Qoheleth, composed in the Hellenistic period with Solomon as its pseudepigraphical author, contains in 5,18 and 6,2 linguistic contacts with the apparition at Gibeon reported in 2 Chr 1,11-12 which is partly different from the parallel passage in 1 Kgs 3,11.13.

6) Knoppers has identified some similarities between the description of the temple and of the cult in Chronicles and some works attested in the Dead Sea manuscripts: the *Temple Scroll* (middle of the III cent. BCE), the *War Scroll* (end of the I cent BCE -beginning of the I cent. CE), the *Apocrypha of Joshua* (II cent. BCE-I cent. AD.), the *Commentary*

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[61] In this case too, Ben Zvi (*Authority*, 61-62) and Steins (*Chronik*, 492-493) claim that Sirach 47,9-10 cannot be used for this purpose. On possible elements of contact between Chr and Ben Sira, see C. Mitchell, *Chronicles and Ben Sira: Question of Genre*, in J. Corley-H. Van Grol (eds.), *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of P.C. Beentjes* (DCLS 7), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2011, 1-25.

on Genesis A (between 50 and 25 BCE) and some calendars[62].

If we consider all the clues, we can arrive at relative certainty with regard to the *terminus post quem*, which we can place at the end of the V cent. BCE. By contrast, the elements for the *terminus ante quem* are not cogent and have actually been interpreted in different ways. The scholarly theories can be grouped into three large blocks: two extreme positions, that is, the period immediately following the Exile and the Maccabean or Hasmonean period, and a median position which places Chronicles in the late Persian or the early Hellenistic periods.

I) First Persian period (538-450 BCE)[63]. The scholars in this group claim that the Davidic genealogy of 1 Chr 3,17-24 is secondary, consequently fixing the *terminus post quem* to the appearance of the daric in 515 BCE. However, the historical placing of Chronicles in such an early period raises some problems. First of all, Chr presupposes a temple already completed, and an elaborate and stable cultic structure[64], two elements which cannot have been realised in the first period after the return from Babylon, a delicate time when the temple itself was not regarded as a priority, as Haggai and Zechariah witness. Society as a whole needed more time to attain economic prosperity and the cultural education appropriate to the undertaking of important literary works. Chr quote or allude to texts which needed a long period

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[62] Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 109-111.

[63] Among the authors taking this position are: Welch (*Work*, 155-160), Freedman (*The Chronicler's Purpose*, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 23 [1961] 441), Cross (*A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 [1975] 11-14: several editions, starting from the return from the Exile), McKenzie (*Chronicler's Use*, 25-26: several editions, starting from the return from the Exile), Dillard (*2 Chronicles* [WBC 15], Word Books, Waco [TX] 1987, xix: around 500), Throntveit (*When Kings Speak: Royal Speech and Royal Prayer in Chronicles* [SBLDS 93], Scholars Press, Atlanta [GA] 1987, 97-107: between 527 and 517) and Weinberg (*Chronist*, 281-284: contemporary of the governor, Nehemiah, middle of the V cent.).

[64] The priests are arranged in 24 priestly "courses" (1 Chr 24) and the Levites, also divided into courses (1 Chr 23), were assigned precise roles as singers (1 Chr 25), as gatekeepers and as guardians of the treasury (1 Chr 26).

of gestation before they were established as authoritative[65]; even with respect to the Deuteronomic History, a suitable temporal distance is necessary because the Chronicler was able to reuse its information and, at the same time, no longer perceive its message as significant for his own contemporaries. Another element to be considered is linguistic: in the Persian Empire, written texts were composed solely in Aramaic, the *lingua franca* adopted by the imperial chancellery in place of the numerous national tongues. The revival of Hebrew[66] began only in the IV-III cents. when the weakening of the Achaemenid Empire enabled the national languages to flower again, as witnessed by archaeological and epigraphical discoveries[67].

II) The Seleucid or Maccabean period (from 198 BCE)[68]. We can collect the arguments in favour of this time placement in the following list[69]:

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[65] First of all, that regards the Pentateuch; among the texts quoted at length or alluded to we can list: Ezra 1,1-3a in 2 Chr 36,22-23; Neh 11,3-19 in 1 Chr 9,2-17; Zech 1,2-4 in 2 Chr 30,6-9; Zech 4,10 in 2 Chr 16,9; Zech 8,10 in 2 Chr 15,5; Mal 1,9 in 2 Chr 30,9; Lam influences 2 Chr 30 and 2 Chr 35,25. The Chronicler also quotes parts of some Psalms, but they present their own problems of dating.

[66] The language of Chronicles is classified as "Late Biblical Hebrew" (LBH).

[67] Cf. W.M. Schniedewind, *Adrift: How the Bible Became a Book*, in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5.18 (2003) 54-55. On the use of the Hebrew language in the Persian period, see Id., *How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004, 174-182; at p. 179 Schniedewind tends towards a placing of Chronicles in the Persian rather than the Hellenistic period.

[68] Among the authors who maintain this hypothesis: U. Kellerman, *Anmerkungen zum Verständnis der Tora in den chronistischen Schriften*, in *Biblische Notizen* 42 (1988) 87; G. Steins, *Zur Datierung der Chronik: Ein neuer methodischer Ansatz*, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 109 (1997) 91-92; J. Kegler, *Prophetengestalten im Deuteromomistischen Geschichtswerk und in den Chronikbüchern: Ein Beitrag zur Kompositions und Redaktionsgeschichte der Chronikbücher*, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105 (1993) 496; and I. Finkelstein, *Hasmonean Realities behind Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles* (AIL 34), Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta (GA) 2018, 161-163. We should certainly mention that the first to propose the Maccabean period, freeing himself from the traditional attribution to the scribe, Ezra, was Spinoza (*Tractatus theologico-politicus*, X, 127, publ. ed. G. Gawlick-F. Niewöner, 344).

[69] Cf. Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 29-33.

- the city of Jerusalem would have passed through a period of economic recession throughout the whole of the Persian hegemony, with few inhabitants and without a scribal school; the presence of a library was possible only from the II century onwards, inaugurating a phase of rewriting the Bible which led to the production of other works which later remained outside the biblical canon;
- the Achaemenid Empire, which governed with the aid of a "secret service" that guaranteed control of the territory did not permit a freedom to write such as to allow the composition of a text which challenged the imperial power;
- no certain mention of Chronicles can be attested before the Maccabean period; Eupolemus' description of historical events differs from Chronicles in such a way as not to be able to hold it as a source of his work: also the similarities with Sirach cannot constitute a proof for establishing a priority of Chronicles;
- the Qumran texts witness from the II cent. BCE onwards an activity of rewriting the Bible and the use of hermeneutical rules which find an echo in the Chronicler's methods of composition;
- Chr can be considered the canonical conclusion of the Scriptures;
- אֲדַרְכֹנִים of 1 Chr 29,7 could be a corruption of דַּרְכְּמוֹנִים, attested in Ezra 2,69, and so should not be translated "darics" but "drachmas"[70].

All this leads to place Chronicles in a period subsequent to the Maccabean Revolt when the Jewish people needed a reformulation of their own identity based on the idea of a "greater Israel", politically autonomous and led by a monarchy connected with the temple set-up. Some scholars go so far as to theorise that the Chronicler belonged to the emerging group of the Sadducees, connected with the Hasmoneans and supporters of a reform of Judaism centred on Scripture.

Although interesting (here too we have expressed doubt about the probative value of Eupolemus and Sirach), these arguments are not decisive. The impossibility of the existence of a scribal school in Jerusalem

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[70] Cf. F.M. Cross, *From Epic to Canon: History and Literature in Ancient Israel*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore-London 2000, 166, note 49.

in the Persian period is an assumption that has been challenged by several scholars[71]. That Chronicles was written in favour of the reconstitution of a "greater Israel" as an anti-imperialist and irredentist work is contradicted by the extremely positive presentation of the only Persian king mentioned, Cyrus (2 Chr 36,22-23), and of foreign sovereigns in general. The closeness to some Qumran works does not necessarily make Chr contemporary with the Dead Sea manuscripts[72]. Concerning the hypothesis that Chr was written as a conclusion to the canon, we have already expressed a negative judgement above. Finally, as for the daric, Knoppers notes that the term אַדַּרְכֹנִים occurs also in Ezra 8,27 and observes that the correction with "drachmas" is unnecessary; on the contrary, it does not fit with the context of 1 Chr 29,7: since the daric corresponded to about twenty drachmas, the sum of ten thousand drachmas would turn out to be too low for the purpose of the Chronicler who intended, rather, to highlight the exorbitant amount of money offered for the building of the temple[73]. Furthermore, Klein puts forward an opposite proposal, suggesting to translate דַּרְכְּמוֹנִים of Ezra 2,69 with "darics", a term that is also in Neh 7,70-72[74].

A late dating for Chronicles not only turns out to be without sufficient foundation; it opens the way to further problems. One example concerns the relationship with previous "Scripture": as time went on, the texts which would later be held to be "biblical" were increasingly perceived to be authoritative and so immutable until the point when they were canonised and held to be inspired. If the Chronicler belonged to a later period when this process was at an advanced stage, we could not explain the freedom with which he treats his sources to the point of

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[71] E.g., Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 179, tends towards a placing of Chr in the Persian age rather than the Hellenistic.

[72] Lorenzin inadvertently performs the same operation that he had rejected with regard to Sirach and Eupolemus.

[73] Cf. G.N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 12A), Doubleday, New York 2004, 946-947.

[74] Cf. R.W. Klein, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible), Fortress, Minneapolis (MN) 2006, 536.

sometimes taking positions that are clean contrary to theirs. Precisely the mention of other sources that were not canonised and the possible influence of independent traditions, even oral ones, speaks against the hypothesis of membership of Sadducean circles which were so bound to the written Law as to reject the oral tradition which was propagated by the Pharisees. On the other hand, the content of Chronicles is comprehensible if placed in a context where the works which constitute Scripture enjoy some degree of authority but have not yet been canonised as immutable, with the probable exception of the Pentateuch: a context in which the Jewish people had not yet been marked by the polarisations between Israel and the nations and between the oral and written laws which followed on from the critical events of the Seleucid period.

III) Second Persian period/beginning of the Hellenistic period (450-198 BCE)[75]. The reasons adopted above to reject the two hypotheses of the immediate post-Exilic period and of the later Seleucid dominion take us to the view that the most plausible period of composition is the span of time between the final phases of the Persian period and the beginning of the Hellenistic age. This hypothesis has various advantages: it considers the Jewish people at an historic moment when the temple activity has been re-established and the social fabric has already tackled the problems connected with the return of the exiles;

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[75] The majority of scholars are to be found in this group; here, we mention only some who have had a particular influence on the study of the dating: W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT 21), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1955, x; Willi, *Chronik*, 190: end of the Persian period or beginning of the Hellenistic; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 15-17: IV cent. BCE; R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period*, 2 voll., Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville (KY) 1994 [or. Ger. 1992], vol. II, 545: between 330 and 250 BCE; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 23-28: IV cent. BCE; M.J. Selman, *1 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 10), Inter-Varsity, Leicester-Downers Grove 1994, 70-71: IV cent. BCE, preferably at the beginning; Kalimi, *Date*, 370-371: IV cent. BCE, before Alexander; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 13-16: assumes the first half of the IV cent. as a working hypothesis; Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 116-117: late IV-beginning III cent.; S.J. Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (LHB/OTS 442), T&T Clark, London-New York 2007, 5: IV cent.; Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 6-10: first half of the IV cent.; Hilpert, *Komposition*, 316-317: around the conquest of Alexander.

it envisages a suitable period of time for the elaboration, fixation and attribution of a sufficient degree of authority to the texts referred to by the Chronicler but before their definitive fixation and sacralisation; it puts the composition of Chronicles into a period when the crisis in the Persian Empire had relaxed the control of the central power over the provinces, allowing greater freedom for writing and, therefore, the recovery of the native languages too. Chronicles does not reveal any influences from the Hellenistic culture[76], but S. Japhet correctly observed that neither has the Persian culture left any clear traces there except for the loan of some terms[77]. The attention focused on internal questions rather than foreign affairs leads to the supposition that the international context was relatively stable[78], so tending towards the final Persian period rather than the turbulent beginning of the Hellenistic era. In sum, the *pax Achaemenidica* constitutes the ideal context for understanding the message of the Chronicler[79].

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[76] However, Knoppers identifies some traces which he interprets as contacts and claims that Hellenisation began before Alexander's arrival in Palestine (*Greek Historiography*, 648, and related notes; also, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 103-104). But, according to Kalimi, these traces are so general as not to constitute proof of contact; they could have been developed independently in the two cultural spheres (*Date*, 356-357).

[77] Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 25-26.

[78] Cf. P.B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (HCOT), Peeters, Leuven 2005, 6.

[79] Cf. L.C. Jonker, *The Chronicler's Portrayal of Solomon as the King of Peace within the Context of the International Peace Discourses of the Persian Era*, in *Old Testament Essays* 21 (2008) 662-667. According to G. Garbini, *Hebrew Literature in the Persian Period*, in T.C. Eskenazi-R.K. Kent (eds.), *Second Temple Studies II: Temple Community in the Persian Period* (JSOTSup 175), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1994, 188, the *Pax iranica* guaranteed by the Achaemenid Empire represents the appropriate political situation in which to place a great part of Jewish literary production. Dixon, H. *Writing Persepolis in Judah: Achaemenid Kingship in Chronicles*, in M. Nissinen-C.E. Carter (eds.), *Images and Prophecy in the Ancient Eastern Mediterranean* (FRLANT 233), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2009, 163-194, even maintains that Chronicles can be considered to stand in an ideological relationship with the iconography, symbols and messages of Achaemenid propaganda.

B. The historical context: Yehud in the late Persian period

Traditionally, the Persian period has been considered a sort of "dark age" in the history of Jerusalem and Palestine because of the lack of availability of information that can be gleaned from literature and archaeology compared with other historical periods. However, thanks to the numerous studies that have appeared in recent decades[80], our knowledge has been extended and, though it remains inferior compared with the subsequent Hellenistic age, there is nevertheless enough to sketch out some features. Persian rule in Palestine began with Cyrus' victory over Babylonia in 538 BCE and ended with the conquest of Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. The approximate span of two hundred years between these two dates does not constitute a homogenous period but

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[80] Among the contributions that have tackled this theme in the last thirty years, see, in particular: P.R. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler in His Age* (JSOTSup 101), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1991 (however, this author still considers the Chronicler to be the author of Ezra and Nehemiah as well); K.G. Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah* (SBLDS 125), Scholars Press, Atlanta (GA) 1992; T. Willi, *Juda - Jehud - Israel: Studien zum Selbsverständnis des Judentums in persischer Zeit* (FAT 12), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1995; C.E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (JSOTSup 294), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999; L.L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period*. Vol. I: *Yehud: A History of the Persian Province of Judah* (JSPESup 47) T&T Clark, London-New York 2004; the four volumes, *Second Temple Studies*, edited respectively by P.R. Davies (vol. I: *Persian Period* [JSOTSup 117], JSOT Press, Sheffield 1991), T.C. Eskenazi and R.K. Kent (vol. II: *Temple Community in the Persian Period* [JSOTSup 175], JSOT Press, Sheffield 1994), P.R. Davies and J.M. Halligan (vol. III: *Studies in Politics, Class and Material Culture* [JSOTSup 340], Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 2002) and A. Hunt (vol. IV: *Historiography and History* [LHB/OTS 550], T&T Clark, London-New York 2012); and the three volumes edited by O. Lipschits: *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake [IN] 2006), *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake [IN] 2007) and *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period* (Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake [IN] 2011). For a presentation of the archaeological finds of the period: E. Stern, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible*. Vol. II: *The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732-332 B.C.E.* (ABRL), Doubleday, New York 2001; and O. Lipschits, *Persian Period Finds from Jerusalem: Fact and Interpretations*, in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9.20 (2009) 1-30.

sees the gradual emergence of the city of Jerusalem. It had been reduced to a precarious state during the Exilic period but now was undergoing an ever-increasing up-turn, economic and demographic. One event in particular marks a watershed distinguishing the Persian period into two phases: the elevation of Jerusalem as capital of the province of Yehud in the middle of the V cent. BCE, which powered a gradual improvement in the social and economic conditions of the region. On this second phase we shall concentrate our attention.

According to a reconstruction that goes back to A. Alt, at the same time as Nehemiah's mission in 445 BCE, the empire ordered a substantial change in the status of the region: it established the province of Yehud, with its capital in Jerusalem, separating it from Samaria[81]. Subsequently, this position has been challenged by numerous scholars: in fact, it is based essentially on the books of Ezra and Nehemiah whose historical value is disputed. The contemporary sources have no evidence for such a decision. It is preferable to believe that the existence of the province of Yehud antedates the middle of the V cent. BCE. According to some authors, its establishment should be placed in the early Persian period at the same time as the permission accorded to the Jews to return from Babylonia[82]. According to others, on the basis

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[81] Cf. A. Alt, *Die Rolle Samarias bei der Entstehung des Judentums*, in: A. Alt et alii (eds.), *Festschrift Otto Procksch: Zum sechzigsten Geburtstag am 9. August 1934 Überreicht*, Hinrichs, Helsinki 1934, 5-28; the same position has been expressed by numerous authors including: Willi, *Juda*; and Stern, *Archaeology*, 580-582.

[82] So, e.g., E.M. Meyers, *The Persian Period and the Judean Restoration: From Zerubbabel to Nehemiah*, in P.D. Miller (Jr.) et alii (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross*, Fortress, Philadelphia (PA) 1987, 509-521; and Carter, *Emergence*, 52. E. Stern, *The Persian Empire and the Political and Social History of Palestine in the Persian Period*, in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, 4 voll., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge et al. 1984-2006, vol. I (1984), 70-74, goes for an intermediate solution according to which the province of Yehud would have been established a first time by Cyrus II (538-530 BCE) in the time of Sheshbazzar; it would then have been suppressed when Darius I (522-486 BCE) deposed Zerubbabel; and finally re-established with the nomination of Nehemiah as governor by Artaxerxes I (465/464-424/423 BCE); since there are no documentary proofs, however, this proposal remains purely hypothetical, as Stern himself acknowledges.

of the information in 2 Kgs 25,22-23 and Jer 40,5-6, it should be pushed back to the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar who established the presence of a governor at Mizpah in the person of Gedaliah. The Achaemenid Empire would then have maintained the subdivision of the Babylonian province with Mizpah as the seat of the civil administration until, in the middle of the V century, it was decided to transfer the capital of Yehud to Jerusalem[83]. In any case, the city's change in status is taken for granted as it is demonstrated by the archaeological evidence which witnesses to an increase in population and a gradual expansion from this period. The reason for Jerusalem's elevation to provincial capital is unknown. A change in Achaemenid policy has been proposed: in order to extend control over a region on the border with the increasingly turbulent Egypt, the province of Yehud would have been strengthened with new fortifications (including the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem) and would have undergone the intensification of imperial control through social measures which favoured the solidarity of the population and its fidelity to the empire, such as greater economic investment and the prohibition of mixed marriages[84]. However, this reconstruction has been challenged in that it is based on a partial reading of the archaeological and epigraphic evidence: since Jerusalem was still a small town until the Hellenistic period, it does not seem that the empire invested in it in a particular way[85]. Rather, the transfer of the seat of the governor is to be attributed to a decision internal to the province and carried out for fiscal reasons: placing the administrative capital close to the temple, which had already taken on an extra role as collector of

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[83] Thus A. Lemaire, *Populations et territoires de la Palestine à l'époque perse*, in *Transeuphratène* 3 (1990) 32-40; and O. Lipschits, *The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah under Babylonian Rule*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2005 109-112.

[84] Cf., in particular, Carter, *Emergence*, 114-118; and Hoglund, *Achaemenid*, 236-247.

[85] Cf. O. Lipschits, *Persian-Period Judah: A New Perspective*, in J.C. Jonker (ed.), *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (FAT II 53), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2011, 194-197; and I. Finkelstein, *Persian Period Jerusalem and Jehud: A Rejoinder*, in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 9.24 (2010) 7-11.

taxes, would have guaranteed a better handling of the public finances[86].

In any case, the new centrality of Jerusalem and of the temple in particular made possible a social and cultural development which favoured literary activity[87]. T. Willi has shown how this situation provided the stimulus for a new definition of Jewish identity, in two directions: a process of reappropriation of historical and theological traditions, and a process of integration into the supranational Persian Empire by means of Jewish identity as part of universal humanity[88]. The Jewish elite remodelled their own conceptions of the relationship with Yhwh, of the precise nature of the chosen people and of the significance of kingship, in order to find a way of keeping alive their own traditions in a context without an autonomous kingdom and in contact with alternative cultures and cults. The results, with consequences on the socio-political level, were the affirmation of the unique nature of the Jerusalem temple, the redefinition of the term "Israel", especially with relation to the inhabitants of Samaria, and the theological foundation of the legitimacy of Achaemenid authority which, as chosen by God, was set in continuity with the ancient history of the Jewish people[89].

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[86] Cf. O. Lipschits, *Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.*, in: O. Lipschits-M. Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2006, 34-40.

[87] E. Ben Zvi, *The Urban Center of Jerusalem and the Development of the Literature of the Hebrew Bible*, in W.E. Aufrecht et alii (eds.), *Aspects of Urbanism in Antiquity: From Mesopotamia to Crete* (JSOTSup 244), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield: 1997, 197.

[88] Willi, *Juda*, 35-36; also J.L. Berquist, *Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud*, in O. Lipschits-M. Oeming (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2006, 53-66; E. Ben Zvi, *On Social Memory and Identity Formation in Late Persian Yehud: A Historian's Viewpoint with a Focus on Prophetic Literature, Chronicles and the Deuteronomistic Historical Collection*, in J.C. Jonker (ed.), *Texts, Contexts and Readings in Postexilic Literature: Explorations into Historiography and Identity Negotiation in Hebrew Bible and Related Texts* (FAT II 53), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2011, 95-148; and L.C. Jonker, *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles* (FAT 106), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2016, 65-95. 148-150.

[89] Cf. Willi, *Juda*, 173-175; and L.C. Jonker, *The Rhetorics of Finding a New Identity in a Multi-religious and Multi-ethnic Society: The Case of the Book of Chronicles*, in *Verbum et Ecclesia* 24 (2003) 397-400.

C. The addressees of Chronicles and the aim of the work

The description of the historical context which produced the book of Chronicles leads on to the circumstances of its composition: who were the addressees and what was its purpose? The text is extensive and contains multiple themes, including: the centrality of the cult, the validity of the Davidic dynasty, the relationship between Judah and Israel, the actualisation of the prophetic message, the divine retribution for human actions and the recapitulation of the Twelve Tribes of Israel within a universal story that begins with Adam. Every scholar has highlighted one theme or another in order to try to provide a key to reading that covers everything. Actually, Chronicles presents many facets and constitutes a "summa theologica" which tackles many questions not by means of the speculative genre typical of our western culture but rather with the oriental literary style of the story. The choice of one or several themes to capture the intentions and ideology of the author carries with it the risk of not managing to grasp the theological breadth of the work[90]. Therefore, the present research seeks simply to examine in depth one of the aspects that emerge from the Chronicles, that is, its judgement on the leadership. This is not to make it absolute or to take it as the theme that determines the scope of the work, but rather to seek to provide a contribution in order to arrive at a better overall understanding of the work.

Like all literary works, Chronicles too was directly accessible only to those who possessed a basic education. In the limited demographic and economic condition of the Persian province of Yehud, this was possessed by only a restricted number of people, that is, the scribes belonging to the priestly class and/or to the administrative apparatus. However, that does not mean that the addressees were limited to these

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[90] I agree with Japhet's statement: "Chronicles is not a manifesto devoted to a specific political movement but a more general and comprehensive theological stock-taking, striving to achieve a new religious balance in the face of a changing world" (*I & II Chronicles*, 43-33).

narrow circles: we cannot exclude that, in the post-Exilic Jewish context, works of a religious character could be read publicly, just as the book of Nehemiah records with reference to the Torah[91]. It has been suggested that the Chronicler also intended to cross the borders of the province of Yehud in order to address all those, especially in the territory of the former northern kingdom, who recognised themselves under the name of "Israel", as belonging to the twelve tribes whose historical continuity the author delineates in the genealogies[92]. In fact, as we have already said, one of the central questions is the redefinition of the identity of Israel in a world that has radically changed compared with the monarchical period and after the social and religious drama of the Exile in Babylon. The Chronicler contributes to this process by taking up the texts belonging to the collective memory and rendering them meaningful once again for his contemporaries[93]. Centre and symbol of the collective identity is the temple in Jerusalem around which the people recognise themselves as a unity and which acts as a yardstick to describe the closeness to or distance from the other members of the same social group and to or from Yhwh, supernatural guarantor of their identity.

In the narrative plot, the protagonists are certainly the kings of Judah whose actions and events are described not for the value they have in themselves from a purely political point of view, but rather in a religious key in the light of faithfulness to or distance from the will of Yhwh. If a message arises from this interpretation of history, it is addressed primarily to those in Jewish society at the end of the Persian period who perform the same function as the pre-Exilic kings, namely, they are the leaders with the decision-making power that follows from that. The Achaemenid Empire is not in dispute; it is legitimate in that the sovereignty of its founder, Cyrus, came from Yhwh. However, those who govern the people in day-to-day matters are the members of the local

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[91] Cf. Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 20.

[92] Cf. Y. Levin, *Who Was the Chronicler's Audience? A Hint from His Genealogies*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122 (2003) 234-235.

[93] Cf. Ben Zvi, *On Social Memory*, 117-121

Jewish community who must therefore be able to exercise power according to the divine will. Hence, then, the need for a theological treatise in narrative form which, on the one hand, gives a religious foundation to the reality of post-Exilic Israel and, on the other hand, provides, through the kings of the past, the criteria for good government and the defence of the fundamental values of the chosen people. In this way, the "readers" are called on to move their hearts and actions in search of Yhwh. The outcomes of the behaviour of the various sovereigns of the past exemplify the consequences which derive from the execution or the omission of this searching spirit[94].

D. The leaders of Yehud as recipients of the book of Chronicles

Who are the leaders whom the Chronicler addresses? What is the shape of leadership within the province of Yehud in the second phase of the Persian period? From the time when Jerusalem became the capital, it saw the institution of the administrative apparatus led by a governor; at the same time, there was a religious leadership which managed the temple and its buildings led by the high priest. These two forms of leadership concerned different spheres but were in a reciprocal relationship, especially if we consider the reality of the Achaemenid Empire where some temples, beyond their cultic functions, also performed an economic role recognised by the civil power; this role was not carried out in an autonomous way but in dependence on the governor nominated by the central power and assisted by a group of officials[95]. It could be asked if there were a similar situation in Yehud. Unfortunately, the south-east area of the Persian Empire has not yielded extensive documentation like that of Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and Egypt. From what can be reconstructed, we can certainly say that the empire maintained firm control over the individual provinces through the nomination of a

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[94] Cf. C.T. Begg, *Seeking Yahweh and the Purpose of Chronicles*, in *Louvain Studies* 9 (1982) 139.

[95] Cf. J. Blenkinsopp, *Temple and Society in Achaemenid Judah*, in P.R. Davies (ed.), *Second Temple Studies I: Persian Period* (JSOTSup 117), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1991, 22-24.

governor. These men were often chosen from among the ranks of the ethnic majority group, even if not necessarily from among those who lived there. Thus, what is reported in the book of Nehemiah is not far-fetched: it is possible that a Jewish member of the royal court was sent to Jerusalem as governor among his own fellow Jews[96]. However, ethnic Persians are attested as governors of Yehud, like Bagoses/Bagohi whose name is linked with affairs at the temple of Elephantine. Despite the central control, Yehud (like Samaria too) was situated in a remote area of little importance in the empire. Thus, it was able to enjoy relative freedom, at least until the area became strategic in the context of the confrontation with Egypt[97].

We can observe an evolution in the relationship between the administrative and religious leaderships. In the first phase of the Persian period, the governor exercised greater powers than the priestly class. The books of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah mention the governor, Zerubbabel, and the high priest, Joshua, as those responsible for the rebuilding of the temple, but with greater importance given to the former than the latter, above all in Hag (2,20-23). According to Neh 13,12-13, the governor, Nehemiah, exercised control over the redistributive system connected with the temple storerooms. However, the Levites were involved in the administration as members of the commission for the control of the storerooms (Neh 13,13) and in the government of the local districts (3,17-19). A further sign of the initial political weakness of the priesthood is the fact that the temple did not have the authority to impose taxes independently: its revenues derived from the arrangements expressly decided by the governor (Neh 13) and from the free

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[96] Cf. P.R. Bedford, *Temple Funding and Priestly Authority in Achaemenid Judah*, in J. Jeon-L.C. Jonker (eds.), *Exile and Return: The Babylonian Context* (BZAW 478), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2015, 342; and D. Janzen, *Chronicles and the Politics of Davidic Restoration: A Quiet Revolution* (LHB/OTS 655), T&T Clark, London-New York 2017, 38-41.

[97] Cf. R. Albertz, *The Controversy about Judean versus Israelite Identity and the Persian Government: A New Interpretation of the Bagoses Story (Jewish Antiquities XI.297-301)*, in O. Lipschits et alii (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2011, 499-500.

offering of the population (Neh 10). In receiving taxes, the governor inherited one of the prerogatives which, in the period of the monarchy, belonged to the sovereign[98].

Subsequently, however, changes took place. We cannot describe precisely their evolution; we can only identify some traces. The archaeological finds show that, towards the end of the Persian period, the high priest obtained the permission to coin money: that has been interpreted as the indication of a possible transfer of power from the governor to the priests[99]. Furthermore, when the Jewish community of Elephantine turned to the authorities of Yehud for permission to build a new temple, as a first step, in 410 BCE, they sent their request to the high priest, Johanan; only afterwards, when he failed to reply, did they write in 407 to the governor Bagoses/Bagohi. Although he was Persian, he intervened in internal questions of a religious nature, but, within a short time, his decisions were annulled by Artaxerxes II, who wished to strengthen the provinces bordering troublesome Egypt even by making greater concessions to the local élites[100].

The dialectic between sovereign and priests which we find in Chronicles and the absence of administrative tasks attributed to the Levites in the narrative would make it more plausible that messages concerning the leadership were being sent to the holders of the civil power who were called to respect and promote the values of the collective Jewish identity and act in conformity with the moral and religious precepts preached

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[98] Cf. Bedford, *Temple*, 346.

[99] Cf. P.B. Machinist, *The First Coins of Judah and Samaria: Numismatics and History in the Achaemenid and Early Hellenistic Periods*, in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg et alii (eds.), *Achaemenid History. Vol. VIII: Continuity and Change*, Nederlands Instituut Voor het Nabije Oosten, Leiden 1994, 375-376.

[100] For a reconstruction of the affair, see: Albertz, *Controversy*. Taking his cue from Albertz, Becking hypothesised that the tension with Elephantine and Bagohi's intervention can be considered one of the scenarios suitable for constructing the historical background of the book of Chronicles, placing its composition in this period (B. Becking, *Zedekiah, Josephus and the Dating of the Books of Chronicles*, in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 25 [2011] 217-233).

by the priestly class. However, the two leaderships were not mutually exclusive, and it could be argued that the Chronicler intended to turn to several kinds of addressees at the same time. L.C. Jonker has highlighted how the Chronicler employed a communicative strategy of "multi-faceted communication" in the hope of addressing several addressees, some more immediate and others secondary, the "secondary implied audience"[101]. Jonker has been concerned particularly with the question of identity in Chronicles, gathering his results in the volume *Defining All-Israel in Chronicles* (2016). On the basis of this study, we can identify in the complex society of Yehud a "multi-levelled socio-historical existence", contemporaneously present and reciprocally intersecting, within which we find the theme of the redefinition of the identity of Israel in the late Persian period. The levels are: 1. the province of Yehud as part of the Persian Empire; 2. Yehud in relation to the surrounding provinces, especially to Samaria; 3. the internal dynamics of a tribal kind between Judaeans and Benjaminites; 4. the internal dynamics in the cultic community, under two aspects: the tensions between the Zadokite clergy who had been deported to Babylon and then returned, and the families of Levites who had remained in Judah during the Exile; and the relationship between the Jerusalem temple and the other Yahwistic sanctuaries (Gerizim, Elephantine, Khirbet el-Qom)[102]. Four spheres of leadership correspond to these four levels. Studying the subject further in subsequent contributions, Jonker claims that the Chronicler intended his narrative to address a specific message to each of these[103]:

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[101] L.C. Jonker, *The Cushites in the Chronicler's Version of Asa's Reign: A Secondary Audience in Chronicles?*, in *Old Testament Essays* 19 (2006) 866-870. 875; for example, the Persian officials present in Yehud can be considered secondary addressees (pp. 874-875).

[102] Jonker, *Defining All-Israel*, 71-114; the chapters from 4 to 7 study each of these four levels in depth: ch. 4: "Speaking in the Imperium" (pp. 115-150); ch. 5: "Not Alone in this Provincial World" (pp. 151-192); ch. 6: "Tribal Rivalries of Old" (pp. 193-225); ch. 7: "Defining the Jerusalem Cult" (pp. 226-276).

[103] The whole of his publication *Reflections on Leadership in Achaemenid Yehud: Case Studies from the Chronicler's Imperial, Provincial, Tribal and Cultic Rhetoric*, in K. Pyschny-S. Schulz (eds.), *Transforming Authority: Concepts of Leadership in Prophetic and Chronistic*

- imperial sphere: the descriptions of Solomon as a man of peace, and of the temple as the place where this is realised as a gift of Yhwh, are advancing a subtle polemic against the idea of *pax Achaemenidica* founded on the Persian divinities;
- provincial sphere: the events narrated delineate a dialectical relationship between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel between whom there is continuity under the ethnic profile but discontinuity under the religious aspect; in this way, Yehud's identity is defined in relation to the surrounding provinces, particularly Samaria;
- tribal sphere: the tensions between Judah and Benjamin in the Persian period are resolved with the affirmation of the superiority of the former over the latter through the rushed description of the reign of the Benjaminite, Saul, and the disappearance of his dynasty;
- cultic sphere: in the complicated dispute between the Zadokite priesthood and the Levites, the former receive greater consideration from the Chronicler who raises them almost to the level of descendants of Aaron when it comes to holiness and cultic functions.

This many-sided leadership will be borne in mind in the concluding chapter of this research to enable the adequate interpretation of the data coming from the texts.

III. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH IN THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES

From the point of view of the social sciences, the figure of the sovereign represents the leader of a human political group, in our case the people of Israel. Although focusing on the temple and the priesthood, the book of Chronicles does not confer the role of protagonist of the narrative on members of the priestly sphere, like the high priest, for example, but focuses on the Davidic dynasty and conceives the monarch

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Literature (BZAW 518), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2021, 201-222, tackles the theme of the four spheres of leadership and the chief messages addressed to each.

as one who is called on to carry out the divine will in the social, political and also, partly, sacral-cultic areas. The king is, therefore, the leader, the one who promotes the identity of Israel in the collective environment by sharing its beliefs, especially by acting according to the norms in force within the group.

A. The Chronicler's judgement on the kings as leaders of the people of Judah

As we said in the previous chapter, the leader assumes the function of representing the concrete and visible point of reference of a social group in relation to which he operates to his own advantage, thanks to the influence he receives from his position of power. He, thus, has the ability to confirm or modify the identity of the group, respectively aligning himself with the ideal prototype or, on the contrary, seeking to change the characteristics of the prototype. From the point of view of the studies on social identity, the book of Chronicles can be considered as a description of the series of leaders who succeeded one another during a period that was potentially optimal in the collective memory of Israel, namely, the time of the monarchy, an historical phase in which the people had the possibility of giving full expression to their own collective identity within an autonomous state led by the one whom Yhwh, the national God, had chosen for himself, that is, David and his descendants.

However, the collective memory was aware that this optimal situation had not been fully taken advantage of: some leaders were faithful to the beliefs connected with the collective identity, but others, instead, tried to change them, or, according to the perspective of the immutable will of God, to pollute and betray them, seeking to adopt elements and objectives foreign to those of the group. As leader and promoter of identity, because of the religious dimension connected with this, the king was called to maintain and promote an identity that was already fixed and immutable, not to change it to his own advantage. Thus, the correspondence of the sovereign to the figure of the ideal prototype was not

automatic but depended on his adhesion to a higher and more general model to which he himself was bound to conform, on pain of his presentation as a negative model to be avoided. Hence the author's judgement on the individual sovereigns, presented as corresponding to the judgement of God himself, as is indicated by the expression which recurs as a refrain, בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה "in the eyes of Yhwh". Since, for the Chronicler, social identity is defined in a decisive way by its religious aspect, in relation to the national God, Yhwh, and to what he orders to be done, the valuation of each king is issued chiefly on the basis of his religious policy, with special attention to the temple cult, an aspect emphasized considerably compared with Sam-Kgs. Each king accedes to the throne with a clean slate; it then belongs to him to choose through his own actions to become a good sovereign or a bad one[104]. The Chronicler accompanies the readers through the narrative helping them to understand the reasons for which a positive or negative judgement is later given.

The valuation of the sovereigns is not to be interpreted merely as a pure and simple commentary on the past: in fact, the collective memory has the power to have a bearing on the present of the group who cultivate and transmit it. Narrating and giving a precise interpretation of the events and characters that belong to this memory, the author intends to offer identity traits and characteristics that are also valid for the readers contemporary with and subsequent to him: the people of Israel must not lose its collective memory; on the contrary, it is precisely from the common memory shared by its members that they can discover the factors constituting the "we" of the group which must not be forgotten, let alone betrayed, by giving room to foreign elements. These have to be banned.

As is clear, if we start from the Chronicler's judgement of history, it is possible for us to make room for an analysis with a social approach in the light of the SIT, some fundamental elements of which we can find as we have already introduced them:

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[104] Cf. G.N. Knoppers, *Rehoboam in Chronicles: Villain or Victim?*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990) 432.

1. the "us"/"them" opposition which is expressed in processes of categorisation, identification and social comparison;
2. the centrality of beliefs (values, norms, objectives, ideology), specifically religious ones, for the identity of the people;
3. the importance of norms of behaviour to which to conform to be able to be authentic members of the group;
4. the leader as promotor of an identity which he must be the first to respect, maintaining stable the beliefs of the group (in particular the norm) or restoring them whenever they have been altered;
5. the collective memory as a reservoir of identity from which the author draws in order to influence his readers;
6. the possibility of conflict in the intragroup dynamics.

Our enquiry will enable us to clarify these elements and to shed light on two fundamental factors which need to be analysed with care: what stereotypes (*bias*) come into play in the group's self-categorisation and, mirror-wise in their judgements on strangers; and what is the prototype to which the members of the group are called to conform and that acts as the term of comparison for the assessment of the individual leaders, that is, the kings.

In conclusion, the Chronicler calls on his people to search for the foundational elements of Israel's social identity, not in the figure of the king in himself, since he is fallible and can be the source of wickedness, but elsewhere. The present research seems to locate and define this "elsewhere", investigating within the elements which the author himself provides by praising the just king and condemning the wicked sovereign.

B. Honour and shame/infamy as background to the Chronicler's judgements

A final preliminary element useful for the present study comes from cultural anthropological research on human social behaviour thanks to which we can better outline the understanding of the Chronicler's judgement on the sovereigns. Especially beginning with the contributions of anthropologists like J.G. Peristiany and J. Pitt-Rivers, studies in this area

have highlighted a fundamental characteristic of the Mediterranean cultures: the centrality of the concepts of shame/infamy in the management of social relationships.

The term "honour" indicates the value possessed by a person and by a group both in its own eyes and in its relations with the community as a whole or with other social groups: it is, therefore, a concept understood within concrete social relations[105]. Both the individual "I" and the "we" of the group carry out procedures of self-valuation which, in the social arena, are expressed as claims of one's own right to be considered of value by the community, in particular by the more important social groups[106]. The response to this demand can be a recognition of this value, and so honour, or else a failure of such recognition or even social rejection, and so shame or infamy[107]. The term "infamy" refers to the objective situation of contempt and negative reputation in which those dishonoured find themselves; the concept of "shame", usually preferred in anthropological studies, extends also to the subjective sphere of the persons who have been disgraced. It thus also includes their feelings and the psychological mechanisms which the situation of rejection provokes in them[108]. Studies into the small societies in the Mediterranean area have highlighted the influence that the concepts of honour and shame, and so the processes of social judgement, have on the behaviour or an individual or a group: honour is never given through purchase once for all, but can easily be lost; gaining it and maintaining it are a constant preoccupation. Not even someone who possesses honour through heredity can consider it stable but is always

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[105] Cf. J. Pitt-Rivers, *Honour and Social Status*, in J.G. Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1965, 21.

[106] Cf. *ibid.*, 21-22.

[107] Cf. J.G. Peristiany, *Introduction*, in J.G. Peristiany (ed.), *Honour and Shame. The Values of Mediterranean Society*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London 1965, 11.

[108] Cf. J.G.Peristiany-J. Pitt-Rivers, *Introduction*, in J.G. Peristiany-J. Pitt-Rivers (eds.), *Honor and Grace in Anthropology* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, Series Number 76), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992, 1-176.

having to reaffirm it and, when it has been violated, vindicate it[109].

Since honour is an unstable reality and depends on public opinion, one who has authority in society, even if in a hereditary way and so worthy of honour by birth, is not preserved from the possibility of dishonour but must himself conform to the shared codes of behaviour on pain of risking the loss, together with honour, of popular approval, and so power[110]. However, it is possible to render the honour and so the power of the leader more stable by binding it to the supernatural sphere: the sphere of honour thus comes to intersect with the sphere of the sacred, so that what has value is divine, instead what does not have value falls into the sphere of the anti-divine, that is, it is shaped as existential or moral negativity (respectively, impurity or sin). The leader enjoys "grace", that is, the honour granted by the same divinity, and, therefore, must be recognised also by his subjects[111]. Strengthened by divine favour, the leader can, thus, operate with increased power since legitimacy from on high already constitutes *per se* a guarantee with regard to the choices, which he intends to put into practice of maintaining the order of things or innovating[112].

The Chronicler's judgement on the kings of Judah is situated precisely in this sphere of the sacral legitimisation of the actions of the individual sovereign: although never putting the legitimacy of the king as such in doubt (except for the usurper Athalia: 2 Kgs 11 // 2 Chr 22,10-23,21), both the work of the Deuteronomist and Chronicles assess the existence or not of a divine origin for the individual actions of the ruler, and on the basis of this, they furnish a judgement which invests the king with honour or infamy in the eyes of the readers[113]. How is this possible if the

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[109] Cf. Peristiany, *Introduction*, 11; and Peristiany-Pitt-Rivers, *Introduction*, 4.

[110] Cf. Pitt-Rivers, *Honour*, 22-23.

[111] Cf. Peristiany-Pitt-Rivers, *Introduction*, 6-9.

[112] Cf. *ibid.*, 11.

[113] On the basis of the distinction between shame and infamy offered here, it is preferable to use the term "infamy" for the negative assessment which is attributed to the wicked kings of Judah: since they are the characters of a distant past, long dead, they obviously cannot experience subjective shame in the face of this assessment which therefore remains

king is clothed with a sacral aura which gives him legitimacy in the eyes of the people? The answer lies in the peculiar nature of the relationship between Israel and its God: it is not only the king who has a sacral characteristic; Israel as a whole is the object of a divine choice which separates it from the other peoples as a holy and priestly nation (cf. Ex 19,5-6, of Deuteronomistic origin). Consequently, the honour enjoyed by the entire group of Israel is sacral and derives from divine "grace".

As we said above, in addition to individual honour, there is also a collective honour that has the peculiar characteristic of "social solidarity": every social group possesses a collective honour, shared by all the members, so that a positive action performed by one of its members redounds to the honour of the others, and, in the same way, dishonourable behaviour involves a judgement of shame/infamy for the whole group[114]. The king is not foreign to these dynamics of solidarity.

As Pitt-Rivers summarises it: "the honour of the group resides in its head [...]; the inferior in such a relationship participated in the honour of his chief and was therefore interested in defending it"[115]. The king is the individual in whom the group is symbolised and so is invested with the collective honour in his own person: consequently, he must act so as to maintain or augment the positive value of the group and avoid anything that can lead to the infamy or shame of the group. In the sacral sphere, he must be faithful to the divinity and avoid everything which could jeopardise the divine favour.

Dtr and Chr, therefore, award a negative judgement to the kings who have brought infamy on the Jewish people, injuring the collective honour in the eyes of the other peoples, and who have attracted the divine wrath, thus threatening their very existence. To avoid the dishonourable behaviour of the sovereign having a dangerous effect on the whole of the people, the authors of the two historical works use their judgements to take their distance from him, recognise his negativity and hurl on to

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solely within the ambit of an objective bad reputation, that is, infamy.

[114] Cf. Pitt-Rivers, *Honour*, 35.

[115] *Ibid.*, 36.

the sovereign himself the infamy that would have otherwise fallen on the people according to the principle of social solidarity. In this way, by the acknowledgement of the dishonour of the past, the contemporary readers of the two texts are separated and freed from the "contagion" of infamy; otherwise, the readers, through the principle of the temporal permanence of the social identity, they might have inherited the past infamy that was fixed in the stories making up the collective memory[116].

C. Typologies of the Chronicler's judgement on the kings of Judah

In order to grasp the vision of leadership offered by the Chronicler, we must focus on the passages and aspects of the text which turn out to be the most significant and expressive for communicating the author's own message and, thus, particularly suitable to be the vehicle of identity elements. Therefore, since the author expresses his assessment of the events and figures of the collective memory, we shall examine the manifestations of this assessment in the text. This is found on three levels.

1. *Explicit and direct judgements of the Chronicler on the kings of Judah:* direct observations of the Chronicler inserted in comments which interrupt the narrative. No sooner has a new king appeared on the scene than immediately and explicitly he is introduced with the stereotypical formula: "he did that which is good/evil in the eyes of Yhwh". This same procedure also occurs in Sam-Kgs, but the judgements on the individual monarch do not always agree in the two historical collections[117]. Moreover, the Chronicler

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[116] Cf. texts like Ezra 9,7; Neh 9,26-37; Jer 3,25; Dan 9,8-19; Baruch 1,17-3,8, and the entire book of Lamentations in which the recognition of error and the consequent assumption of infamy are the preliminary step to be free from it and to return to the accepted code of behaviour, that is, the one willed by God who will thus grant his grace to the people once again.

[117] Although the Chronicler takes from the Dtr some modes of judgement on the sovereign, the results do not coincide for each individual sovereign in the two historical compositions. The clearest and best-known case concerns King Manasseh, the destroyer of Hezekiah's reform: in 2 Kgs, he is the wicked king *par excellence* (21,11-15) who provokes the final indignation of God who sends the Babylonians for the destruction of Judah (24,3-4); in 2

also intervenes directly in other ways without the use of this formula.

2. *Explicit but indirect judgements through contributions of characters in the literary work:* speeches or other verbal interventions made by the characters, mostly not found in Sam-Kgs, in which the Chronicler expresses, through the words of others, his own interpretation of events and provides a judgement on them and their protagonists. The actions of almost every king are anticipated or followed by speeches uttered by the king himself, if he is just and not wicked (primarily, David and Solomon, but also "minor" kings like Abijah in 2 Chr 13,4-12 or Jehoshaphat in the prayer of 2 Chr 20,6-12), or else by prophets (e.g. Azariah in 2 Chr 15,1-7 or Jehu in 2 Chr 19,2-3) or priests (e.g. Zechariah in 2 Chr 24,20), or even by adversaries who speak in the name of God (e.g. Pharaoh Neco in 2 Chr 35,21). Here, we shall consider only the speeches of people who interact with the sovereigns, expressing the Chronicler's assessment of them.

3. *Implicit judgements through cultural motifs:* situations, actions and events which are presented within the narrative and are placed in connection with the behaviour of the king (positive or negative). They express an assessment of the sovereign in a way that is not explicit, using symbolic language, through his conformity to or distance from the cultural codes of shared behaviour. Therefore, it is the most delicate level of judgement, to be examined carefully case by case, thanks to the particular contribution of the studies of cultural anthropology, and referring to the differences from and similarities to the Dtr narrative.

From studying the texts, we shall discover the criteria the author applies in order to issue his value judgements. For the identification of these criteria, we presuppose the conception of the Chronicler as the

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Chr, on the other hand, his wickedness is limited to only the initial period of his reign (33,1-10) and, on the contrary, there is an account of his conversion during an imprisonment by the king of Assyria (33,11-13), after which he restores the cult of Yhwh instead of the idolatrous cults which he himself had introduced (33,14-17). The Chronicler generally offers judgements that are less clear-cut, and also describes developments in the behaviour of the same sovereign who, in some situations, shows himself faithful to the voice of Yhwh, in others, disobeys and distances himself from him; even the two kings invested with the greatest positivity, Hezekiah and Josiah, are not exempt from infidelity.

real author of the writing in all its parts: even in the passages he shares with Sam-Kgs, he reveals such a freedom in taking away, leaving or adding details as to enable us to affirm that even the similarities are not due to the mere coping of the *Vorlage*, nor do they occur by chance; they are adopted as elements which contribute fully to the definition of the ideology of the Chronicler.

The conclusions to be reached by the analysis will indicate the characteristics of social identity which the Chronicler is proposing to his readers: they will, therefore, represent a consolidation in our knowledge of the book of Chronicles, a text scarcely considered until now but one which represents an important step in the journey of faith of the people of Israel.

Chapter 3

THE CHRONICLER'S EXPLICIT AND DIRECT JUDGEMENTS ON THE KINGS OF JUDAH

An explicit and direct judgement is contained in those comments of the Chronicler's text in which he expresses in pithy phrases a judgement on the character or behaviour of a figure in the story, especially a sovereign. On the literary level, therefore, these judgements appear as pauses in the narrative[1]. Already in the book of Kings, the Dtr had expressed approval or condemnation of the individual kings of Judah and Israel through the stereotypical formula: "did what is good/evil in the sight of the Lord". The Chronicler takes up this formula and integrates it in his own account. In some cases, he leaves it intact, in others, he adapts it to his own interpretation of the character and/or the events[2]. In other cases, he adds his own explicit judgements without using the formula borrowed from the text of the books of Kings: in these, at times, he also provides an assessment different from that of these previous historiographical works.

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[1] Concerning explicit and direct judgements as a rhetorical device, see: R.K. Duke, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler: A Rhetorical Analysis* (JSOTSup 88), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1990, 135-136.

[2] This process of redeveloping the formula is well known to scholars. D.A. Glatt-Gilad, *Regnal Formulae as a Historiographic Device in the Book of Chronicles*, in *Revue Biblique* 108 (2001) 184-209, presents in detail the differences between the two historiographical works with regard to the formulas of introduction and conclusion to the individual reigns and accounts for them by referring briefly to the ideology of the Chronicler, but the same author claims that his research aims to be starting point for further studies ("opening a window": p. 209). L.C. Jonker, *What Do the 'Good' and the 'Bad' Kings Have in Common? Genre and Terminological Patterns in the Chronicler's Royal Narratives*, in *Journal for Semitics* 21 (2012) 344-345, provides a very summary analysis.

We can, thus, subdivide these comments into two groups: stereotypical formulae borrowed from 1-2 Kgs, made his own by the Chronicler and, at times, modified; the Chronicler's original formulations which almost always contain a personal judgement that is different or non-existent elsewhere.

I. STEREOTYPICAL FORMULA BORROWED FROM THE DEUTERONOMIST: THE MAIN EXPLICIT AND DIRECT JUDGEMENT

It is well known that the books of Kings employ stereotypical phrases when they introduce and conclude the portions of text which regard the individual kings of Judah and Israel. The Dtr employs the introductory formula primarily to express an overall judgement on the qualities of the king and, in this way, introduces him on to the scene of the story. This formula is fairly fixed and provides some general information on the dating of the reign and the assessment of the new king with an overall judgement:

1. Date of accession to the throne calculated in relation to the regnal year of the contemporary king of Israel or Judah: "In year N of Y, king of Israel/Judah, X became king of Judah/Israel";
2. sometimes, there is an indication of his age at the time of his accession to the throne: "X was N years old when he became king";
3. duration of the reign: "He reigned N years";
4. name of the capital, linked, in some cases, to element 1 as place of his accession, in other cases, to element 3 as the sovereign's city of residence;
5. sometimes, his mother's name is mentioned, in some cases making clear her familial, ethnic or geographical origin: "His mother was called Z (daughter of... / of the people of... / of the city of...)";
6. summary judgement on the reign: "He did what is good/evil in the eyes of Yhwh";
7. reference to the previous kings, called "fathers", by imitation ("as did W, his father") or by contrast ("not as his father W did"); in some

cases, the reference is to the family (for example, in the judgement of the kings descended from Ahab and Jezebel: "house of Ahab") or to the founder of the kingdom: David for Judah and Jeroboam for Israel;

8. there is often a general summary of actions assessed positively or negatively which justify the judgement made;
9. in some cases, the king is presented as positive only in part: after the list of positive actions, an element of adversative value (וְ, אַךְ or רַק) introduces a second summary of negative actions or omissions which highlight the inconsistency in the sovereign's behaviour; the relation between contrasting actions can be a simple list or else can have the character of a chronological sequence.

Elements 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 are always mentioned[3]. The presence of 2 and 5 probably depends on the information available to the author whether in the written sources or in the oral tradition. 8 and 9 are also not fixed: in any case, even when they are missing, the Dtr uses the narrative to describe the events and actions of the sovereign which account for the assessment of the ruler which he has made. For the purpose of the present study, the important elements are 6, 7, 8 and 9 which the Chronicler takes up and integrates with his own historiographical work in a different way for each king.

In the book of Kings, the first ruler of Judah described with the stereotypical formula is Asa, Solomon's third successor. All the subsequent sovereigns are introduced on the scene with the same literary expedient except for the usurper, Athaliah.

Moreover, in Chronicles, the formula introduces the reign of Asa at its beginning, but its presence and position in the account varies for some of his successors: it is missing, not only for Athaliah but also for Jehoahaz; for Jehoshaphat, it occurs not in the introduction to the reign but in the concluding verses as a final summary; for Asa himself, furthermore, it is split into two parts between which the Chronicler inserts some

[3] Obviously, element 1 disappears with the fall of the kingdom of Israel, from Manasseh onwards (2 Kgs 21,1).

narratives of his own which are not found in Kings. The repetition of the formula is not always literal but undergoes variations which the author uses as a vehicle for his own interpretation of the reign in question.

A. Same wording in Dtr and Chr: Jehoram, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Josiah

This first group is a collection of all the cases where the stereotypical formula is reprised by the Chronicler without significant modifications either in the form or in the introductory function[4].

Jehoram
2 Kgs 8,18 = 2 Chr 21,6: «He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: [Jehoram] did what was evil in the sight of the Lord».

Ahaz
2 Kgs 16,2b-3a = 2 Chr 28,1b-2a: «He did not do what is right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his ancestor David had done, but he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel».

Hezekiah
2 Kgs 18,3 = 2 Chr 29,2: «He did what is right in the sight of the Lord just as his ancestor David had done».

Manasseh
2 Kgs 21,2 = 2 Chr 33,2: «He did what is evil in the sight of the Lord, following the abominable practices of the nations that the Lord drove out before the people of Israel».

Josiah
2 Kgs 22,2 = 2 Chr 34,2: «And he did what is right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the way of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right or to the left».

Common elements in this group of statements are the clear-cut nature of the actions performed by the sovereign and the presence of a

[4] Translations of biblical texts are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV); if different, it will be indicated.

term of comparison. The positive element of reference is always David; the negative ones are the sovereigns of the Northern Kingdom as long as it existed (for Jehoram, whose kinship with the Omride dynasty is made clear, and Ahaz), and subsequently the polytheistic peoples who lived in Canaan.

B. Reprise of the formula, but in a different position: Jehoshaphat

This group includes a single king: Jehoshaphat. The narrative about him in 2 Chr is found in 17,1-21,1, but, in his case, unique among them all, the stereotypical formula does not constitute the introduction; rather, the Chronicler reuses it as a final summary, at the end of ch. 20.

Jehoshaphat

1 Kgs 22,43-44: «[43]He walked in all the way of his father, Asa: he did not turn aside from it, doing what is right in the sight of the Lord. [44]Yet the high places were not taken away: and the people still sacrificed and offered incense on the high places».

2 Chr 20,32-33: «[32]He walked in the way of his father Asa and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the Lord. [33]Yet the high places were not removed; the people had not yet set their hearts upon the God of their ancestors».

The reprise of the formula and its position at the end of the reign create a contradiction within the Chronicler's narrative: in fact, whereas, for 2 Kgs, Jehoshaphat was only partly positive because he did not remove the high places, 2 Chr 17,6 and 19,3 had informed the reader about the elimination of the high places and sacred poles by this king. Rudolph explained this tension by the presence of different redactional stages with the final summary representing the most recent phase in which it borrowed from 2 Kgs in order to harmonise the two historiographical collections[5]. However, subsequent research has recognised the general unity of the Chronicler's work and highlighted also the particular function of the stereotypical formulas: when there are tensions,

[5] Cf. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 263.

they have not to be regarded as fortuitous but rather as intended by the author and inserted with the aim of transmitting a message. If we consider that the term of comparison for Jehoshaphat is his father, Asa, we can observe that the same contradiction is present for the latter too: in 2 Chr 14,2, Asa removes high places and sacred poles, but, in the repeat of the stereotypical formula in 15,17, it states (as in 1 Kgs 15,14) that the high places still existed although he himself remained faithful to Yhwh personally[6]. Tensions of this kind are extensive. They do not seem to be due to individual fortuitous cases but, rather, are almost a characteristic element of the Chronicler's style[7]. In this particular case, the contradiction could be indicating the ambiguity of their reigns for both Asa and Jehoshaphat: despite their personal commitment, the people continued to practise idolatrous cults[8]. In fact, according to the Chronicler, there was not necessarily a direct link between the religious actions of the monarch and those of the people who performed the role of being a real actor in the narrative with their own autonomy and, consequently, their own moral responsibility. Therefore, not only is the stereotypical formula not secondary; on the contrary, it expresses the author's authentic overall judgement on Jehoshaphat and, for this reason, is shifted to the end of the account of his reign.

C. Literal reprise with omissions: Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin

For two sovereigns, the notice in Kgs is abbreviated by the Chronicler.

Jehoiakim
2 Kgs 23,37: «He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, just as all his ancestors had done».

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[6] This is only one of the elements shared by the two narratives on Asa and Jehoshaphat: cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 129-130.

[7] Cf. Willi, *Chronik*, 61-62; R.W. Klein, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible), Fortress, Minneapolis (MN) 2012 294.

[8] Cf. G.N. Knoppers, *Reform and Regression: The Chronicler's Presentation of Jehoshaphat*, in *Biblica* 72 (1991) 518-159.

2 Chr 36,5b: «He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, his God».

Jehoiachin

2 Kgs 24,9: «He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, just as his father had done».

2 Chr 36,9b: «He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord».

In both cases, the Chronicler does not refer to the fathers: that could be due to theological motives so as not to create ambiguity with a potential reference to the just king, Josiah, father of Jehoiakim and grandfather of Jehoiachin; or else the explanation could be literary, that is, the summary and almost breath-taking character of the final chapter of the work in which the author wishes to convey the sensation of a rapid plummeting of events from the death of Josiah to the destruction of Jerusalem.

D. Reworking of the formula: Ahaziah, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Amon, Zedekiah

The literary activity of the Chronicler did not consist of a mere copying of the books of Kings or a simple selection and new arrangement of their elements. On the contrary, it was a creative piece of writing with a specific vision of the whole and with personal and original interpretations of the events narrated and of the texts which contained them. The difference between the two historical collections of the Bible is particularly noticeable in the way in which Chr reworks the judgements of the Dtr, adapting them to the aims of his own work.

Ahaziah

2 Kgs 8,27: «He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab, doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab».

2 Chr 22,3-4: «[3]He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counsellor in doing wickedly. [4]He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done, for after the death of his father they were his counsellors».

The Chronicler not only explains the wickedness of the sovereign with this imitation of the house of Ahab but also underlines the negative role of the courtiers: primarily his mother, Athaliah, future usurper and daughter of Ahab[9], and then the members of the Omride royal family who, by virtue of the dynastic alliance, had also entered the palace in Jerusalem. Ahaziah became completely dominated by their presence; probably also the premature end of his reign after only one year did not give him the possibility to emerge as his own personality.

Jehoash

2 Kgs 12,3-4: «[3]Jehoash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days, because the priest Jehoiada instructed him. [4]Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away: the people continued to sacrifice and make offerings on the high places».

2 Chr 24,2: «Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of the priest Jehoiada».

The Chronicler removes the reference to idolatrous behaviour and apparently presents this sovereign in a way that is completely positive; in fact, he replaces the negative judgement of Kings with a limiting temporal reference. Thus, the reign of Jehoash is divided into two phases, the first positive, and the second negative. The king's fidelity to Yhwh in the first phase is attributed to the beneficent influence of the priest, Jehoiada, but ends with the latter's death on account of the negative influence of the officials of Judah (24,17).

Amaziah

2 Kgs 14,3-4: «[3]And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not like his ancestor David: in all things he did as his father Joash had done. [4]But the high places were not removed: the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places».

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[9] 2 Kgs 8,18 and 2 Chr 21,6 refer to Athaliah, without calling her by her name, as "daughter of Ahab", while 2 Kgs 8,26 and 2 Chr 22,2, the first two passages in both collections in which her proper name appears, describe her as "daughter of Omri". The series of events and the relationships between the various representatives of the two royal houses make it more plausible that she was the daughter of Ahab. Thus, the reference to Omri is to be interpreted as an indication of generic descent from the founder of the northern dynasty.

2 Chr 25,2: «He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, yet not with a true heart».

As for Jehoash so too for his son, Amaziah, the Chronicler chooses not to cite the high places explicitly but to replace them with an expression which circumscribes his integrity and renders it partial: if, for Jehoash, the limitation was in the temporal sphere, for Amaziah, it was a question of incomplete moral commitment through the image of the "heart". Compared with 2 Kgs, the reference to David is also missing.

Azariah / Uzziah

2 Kgs 15,3-4: «[3]And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, just as his father Amaziah had done. [4]Nevertheless the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and made offerings on the high places».

2 Chr 26,4-5: «[4]He did what was right in the sight of the Lord, just as his father Amaziah had done. [5]He set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed [him] in the fear of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him prosper».

Amaziah's successor is called Azariah in 2 Kgs 14,21; 15,1.6-8.17.23.27 and in the genealogy of 1 Chr 3,12, and Uzziah[10] in 2 Kgs 15,13.30.32.34 and 2 Chr. In the description of his moral qualities, the Chronicler associates him with his father and applies an analogous literary treatment to that for Jehoash: he replaces the references to idolatry with a temporal limitation, linked to the presence of a counsellor particularly close to God, in this case, Zechariah. In fact, Uzziah's reign is also divided into two phases, the first positive and the second negative. The nature of Zechariah's influence is unclear: whereas Joehoiada is a priest, Uzziah's adviser is a person who is not identified and otherwise unknown. Moreover, the text of 2 Chr presents a textual problem which has to be resolved regarding the actual object of Zechariah's instruction. In place of בִּרְאֹת ("in the sight") various Hebrew manuscripts record a different text: בִּירְאֹת ("in the fear") perhaps an anomalous form of a

[10] Uzziah's name appears also in Is 1,1; 6,1; 7,1; Hos 1,1; Amos 1,1; Zech 14,5.

qal infinitive construct of ירא[11]. The versions, on the other hand, seem to understand this second consonantal text but vocalised differently: בְּיִרְאַת; thus the LXX: ἐν φόβῳ, and Peshitta: ܒܕܕܚܠܬ. Instead, in the Lucianic recension of the Greek, the semantic field of seeing returns: ἐν ὁράσει; so too in the Vulgate where, however, the phrase is partly reformulated: "in diebus Zachariae intellegentis et videntis Deum": the subject of the understanding and vision of God is Zechariah alone, they are two attributes which belong to him independently of his relation with Uzziah. In any case, Lucian and Jerome attest that, no later than the III cent. CE, there existed the reading of the word in question as a form of the root ראה and not from ירא. It is not simple to determine which of the two variants is preferable. In 2 Chr, the only two kings who receive visions of God are the two great founders of the dynasty: David (2 Chr 3,1, referring to 1 Chr 21,15-22,1, where, however, the vision is that of an angel) and Solomon (2 Chr 1,7; 7,12): it appears doubtful, therefore, that a minor monarch such as Uzziah could be exalted to such a level of relation with God, something that is not reserved even for the great kings Hezekiah and Josiah. Even for the prophets, the privilege of such a vision is rare: the only ones to be described as "seer" (רֹאֶה) are Samuel (1 Chr 9,22; 26,28; 29,29) and Hanani (2 Chr 16,7.10), to which we should add Micaiah who claims to have seen God (2 Chr 18,18). The concept of "fear of God" is more frequent, being referred to various kings (David: 1 Chr 13,12; Solomon: 1 Chr 22,13; 28,20), as also to the people as a whole (2 Chr 6,33; 19,9) as well as to all people in general (2 Chr 6,31.33). Furthermore, it is more suited to being taught, as is demonstrated by its presence in David's instructions to Solomon (1 Chr 22,13; 28,20) and Joshaphat's to the people (2 Chr 19,9) whereas the vision of God remains a gratuitous act in which the initiative comes from Yhwh and is not the result of humans employing available techniques to obtain it. For these reasons, it is preferable to emend to the text on

[11] So Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 367.

the basis of the LXX and the Peshitta[12]: Zechariah's activity as adviser/tutor is clarified as teaching Uzziah the fear of God.

Jotham

2 Kgs 15,34-35a: «[34]He did what was right in the sight of the Lord just as his father Uzziah had done. [35a]Nevertheless the high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and offered incense on the high places».

2 Chr 27,2: «He did what was right in the sight of the Lord just as his father Uzziah had done; only he did not invade the temple of the Lord. But the people still followed corrupt practices».

To understand the Chronicler's judgement on Jotham we must determine the meaning of the adverbial particle רַק within the verse: clearly, it has an exceptive function, but there are various possibilities as to the element in the previous clause to which it relates. Some scholars see here an exception to the king's integrity so that the subsequent phrase would be describing his negative behaviour which would render the Chronicler's positive judgement opaque: for some reason Jotham must have had to enter into Yhwh's temple but, not having done this, he would have committed a sin and so the judgement on him would be only partly positive[13]. However, that would be in sharp contrast with the immedi-

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[12] Almost all scholars prefer this: only by way of example, see J.M. Myers, *II Chronicles: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AYB 13), Doubleday, New York 1965, 147; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 878; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 367. 371. Dillard reaches the same conclusion but with an additional reason that we cannot accept: instruction in the vision of God would be more typical of medieval Jewish mysticism than of the biblical text (*2 Chronicles*, 205), thus letting us understand that the MT was modified in the Middle Ages under the influence of the mystics; the presence of an underlying root, ראה, in the Vulgate withdraws to this hypothesis. Instead, the MT is maintained by Balzaretti who interprets: "it explains the modes or meanings of divine visions" (*Cronache*, 348): therefore, it is not instruction on how to see God but on the understanding of the visions of God which the prophets had had up to that moment and which were the bearers of messages useful for the handling of the affairs of the kingdom.

[13] Thus H. Cazelles, *Le livre des Chroniques*, Cerf, Paris 1954, 202; Myers, *II Chronicles*, 156; and W. Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*. Vol. II*: 2 Chronicles 10-36. Guilt and Atonement* (JSOTSup 254), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 171-172. However, all three authors have trouble in identifying the nature of this sin. Cazelles hypothesises the persistence

ately preceding context which tells of Uzziah's entrance into the temple (26,16-21), an action so sacrilegious as to afflict him with the leprosy which would then prevent him from governing the country effectively. It is preferable, therefore, to refer the exception not to the integrity but to the behaviour of Uzziah: Jotham behaved with integrity and followed the example of his father except for the fact that his father entered the temple. If we follow this interpretation, it turns out that the Chronicler's judgement on Jotham is wholly positive. Therefore, the corruption of the people mentioned immediately afterward is not a consequence of a sin of the sovereign but, rather, it is placed in antithesis to his behaviour: as in other cases, the integrity of the king does not necessarily involve that of the people, and *vice versa*. A personal judgement of the Chronicler will explain the positive nature of this sovereign[14].

Amon

2 Kgs 21,20-22: «[20]He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. [21]He walked in all the way in which his father walked, served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them. [22]He abandoned the Lord, the God of his ancestors, and did not walk in the way of the Lord».

2 Chr 33,22-23: «[22]He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon sacrificed to all the images that his father Manasseh had made, and served them. [23]He did not humble himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself, but this Amon incurred more and more guilt».

Both the Dtr and the Chronicler express total condemnation of Amon on the basis of the comparison with the behaviour of his father, Manasseh. However, here the Chronicler has to introduce a qualification owing to his different assessment of Manasseh: whereas, in 2 Kgs,

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of tensions between the king and the clergy after the outrage on the temple committed by Uzziah. Myers refers to Cazelles, but acknowledges that it is only a conjecture. Johnstone sees a sin of omission: although God's representative on earth, Jotham would never have been present at the celebrations in honour of Yhwh, not even his own coronation, but this hypothesis is totally conjectural.

[14] Below, p. 98.

the latter is the wicked king *par excellence*, in 2 Chr, his reign is divided into a first negative and a second positive phase. Therefore, to maintain his totally negative judgement of Amon, the Chronicler has to state explicitly that he did not experience the repentance which had caused the change in his father's religious policy.

Zedekiah

2 Kgs 24,19: «He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, just as Jehoiakim had done».

2 Chr 36,12-13: «[12]He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord his God. He did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah who spoke from the mouth of the Lord. [13]He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. He stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the Lord, the God of Israel».

Like Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, Zedekiah lacks the comparison with the behaviour of his predecessors. However, 2 Chr adds the reference to his two sins: his refusal to listen to the prophet, Jeremiah, expression of the voice of God; and the breaking of the treaty with Nebuchadnezzar which had been sealed with an oath in the name of God. In this way, the Chronicler gathers up in a final summary the messages of the two prophets of this period: he explicitly mentions Jeremiah with whom the last king of Judah was in a direct relationship in Jerusalem; there is only an allusion to Ezekiel whom Zedekiah never disobeyed directly since the prophet had already been exiled with Jehoiachin but among whose prophecies there is preserved a condemnation of the breach of this oath, considered the direct cause of the destruction of the kingdom (Ezek 17,13-20).

E. Dismemberment of the formula and new placing of its elements: Asa

The freedom with which the Chronicler uses and adapts his Vorlage appears clear in the case of King Asa. Here, he takes up the formula of the Dtr almost word for word but divides it into two elements which he then places in two different positions in the narrative.

Asa

1 Kgs 15,11-15: «[11]Asa did what was right in the sight of the Lord, as his father David had done: [12]he put away the male temple prostitutes out of the land, and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made; [13]he also removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother, because she had made an abominable image for Asherah: Asa cut down her image and burned it at the Wadi Kidron. [14]But the high places were not taken away. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was true to the Lord all his days. [15]He brought into the house of the Lord the votive gifts of his father and his own votive gifts-silver, gold and utensils».

2 Chr 14,1: «Asa did what was good and right in the sight of the Lord his God».

2 Chr 15,16-18: «[16]King Asa even removed his mother Maacah from being queen mother because she had made an abominable image for Asherah: Asa cut down her image, crushed it, and burned it at the Wadi Kidron. [17]But the high places were not taken out of Israel. Nevertheless, the heart of Asa was true all his days. [18]He brought into the house of God the votive gifts of his father and his own votive gifts-silver, gold and utensils».

The first verse of the formula, 1 Kgs 15,11, is taken up by the Chronicler in his introduction to the reign of Asa, in 2 Chr 14,1, but with an important omission: David is not cited as a positive term of comparison. 1 Kgs 15,12 does not have a literal equivalent in 2 Chr, but there is a thematic correspondence with 2 Chr 14,2-4a, which uses other terms to summarise the religious reforms of this sovereign, later reprised at more length in 2 Chr 15,8-15. 1 Kgs 15,13-15 is again reused by the Chronicler with some lexical variations of little importance but is placed by him in a later position after he has recounted the king's military policy which includes a victory against the Ethiopians (2 Chr 14,4b-14), and after he has covered the religious reform more extensively (15,1-15). To understand the significance of this procedure, we must refer to the structure of the substantial section which the Chronicler reserves for the reign of Asa. If, in fact, for Dtr, Rehoboam's grandson is a secondary monarch, even if partly positive and worthy of being associated with David, the Chronicler attributes to him a much greater importance. The former

wraps up his 41 years of rule in 16 verses (1 Kgs 15,9-24) which give a summary description of only his religious policy (vv. 11-15) and the war with Baasha of Israel (vv. 16-22). The space that the Chronicler devotes to Asa is much more extensive: three whole chapters from 14 to 16, in a concentric structure[15]:

A. 13,23b-14,7: introduction, with summaries on religious (2-4a) and military (4b-7) activities
B. 14,8-15,8a: military activity to the south, against Zerah the Kushite: Asa obedient
α. 14,8-14: enemy invasion and victory of Judah
β. 15,1-7: prophetic intervention (Azariah)
γ. 15,8a: Asa's reaction to the prophetic intervention (positive)
C. 15,8b-18: religious activity: cultic reform, but partial
B'. 15,19-16,10: military activity to the north, against Baasha of Israel: Asa unfaithful
α. 15,19-16,6: enemy invasion and victory of Judah
β. 16,7-9: prophetic intervention (Hanani)
γ. 16,10: Asa's reaction to the prophetic intervention (negative)
A'. 16,11-14: conclusion of the reign: illness and distance from God; solemn burial

The Chronicler highlights a change in behaviour: Asa begins his reign, following the Law of Yhwh (14,2-4), defeats Zerah after calling on God (14,10) and undertakes a cultic reform in obedience to the inspired exhortation of the prophet, Azariah (15,8-16). However, a crack appears in his integrity: the reform is not carried out to the point of the complete extinguishing of the polytheistic cults (15,17); in the war with Baasha, the king uses the treasures of the temple for an alliance with Damascus (16,2-3); and he is denounced by the prophet Hanani (16,7-9), to whom he does not listen but, rather, throws him into prison (16,10a). The final results are the oppression of a part of the people (16,10b) and Asa's obstinacy in the illness which will bring him to death (16,12). However, the Chronicler's attitude is ambivalent since Asa's name will return in the

[15] Scholars are not unanimous in the subdivision of the three chapters; nor is there even agreement over 13,23b's belonging to the section on Asa. The structure presented here has been identified by yours truly; a proposal which is close to but not identical with it has been put forward by Balzaretti (*Cronache*, 276-277).

narrative as a positive point of reference[16]: his son, Jehoshaphat will be said to have walked in his ways (17,3-4; 20,32), whereas his grandson, Jotham, will be censured for straying from them (21,12). In any case the structural arrangement of events draws the reader's attention to the religious reform, the true central aspect of Asa's overall policy. The recycling of the second part of the formula shows that the Chronicler shares Dtr's partly positive judgement but sets it in a temporal sequence: it is precisely the survival of the high places (15,17) that is the first signal of an ambiguity that will mark the rest of this sovereign's life until his death. Consequently, the dismemberment of the stereotypical formula is a literary choice of the Chronicler to mark a nodal point in the narrative, fundamental to the end of communicating his message[17].

F. Expressions similar to the stereotypical formula: Rehoboam, Abijah

Both in the deuteronomist work and in the Chronicles, the stereotypical formula appears only with the third successor of Solomon, Asa. For Rehoboam and his son, who is called Abijam in 1 Kgs and Abijah in 2 Chr, a judgement is nonetheless present and is made with expressions which recall our formula, but only partly.

Rehoboam

1 Kgs 14,22: «Judah did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, they provoked him to jealousy with their sins that they committed more than all their fathers had done».

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[16] This ambivalence is also displayed in the description of the end of the reign and of the life of Asa (16,11-14), as we shall see below, p. 322-323.

[17] A contrary position is held by Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 241), followed by McKenzie (*Chronicler's Use,* 100-101): the insertion of 15,16-18 would stand in contradiction to the context and is, therefore, a secondary insertion. However, this observation does not take account of two factors: the ambivalence of the Chronicler's judgement on Asa, independently of the stereotypical formula, so that its deletion does not resolve the apparent contradiction; and the continuity with which the Chronicler takes up, modifies and adapts the judgements of the Dtr to express his own message. On the contrary, in the structure identified here, the formula assumes a key role in the Asa narrative, rendering recourse to a later redactor unnecessary to explain its presence.

2 Chr 12,14: «He [Rehoboam] did evil, for he did not set his heart to fear the Lord».

The two texts display a notable difference: in 1 Kgs, the subject is the people of Judah as a whole, not Rehoboam alone[18]. In 2 Chr, on the other hand, it is the transgression of the sovereign that is indicated primarily, an omen of negative consequences for the whole of Judah.

Abijam / Abijah

1 Kgs 15,3: «He committed all the sins his father did before him; his heart was not true to the Lord his God like the heart of his father David».

2 Chr 13,18b: «Because they relied on the Lord, the God of their ancestors».

The relationship between the two texts is exactly the reverse of the passages on Rehoboam: in 1 Kgs, the judgement is given in individual form, in 2 Chr universally, to the whole of Judah. Furthermore, the Chronicler neatly overturns the negative judgement of the Dtr but, in Abijah's case, does not express it directly but by means of the recounting of his positive actions, limiting his own direct intervention solely to this brief allusion in collective form at the conclusion of the war against Israel (2 Chr 13,3-18).

II. EXPLICIT AND DIRECT JUDGEMENTS PERSONAL TO THE CHRONICLER

In addition to the judgements expressed with the stereotypical formula borrowed from the deuteronomist work, the Chronicler adds his own explicit assessments of the king in other expressive ways. That happens particularly through the reinterpretation of events and situations as direct consequences of the conduct of the king in question in his relations with Yhwh.

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[18] The LXX has Ροβοαμ as subject but that is not found in any Hebrew manuscript or in the other versions so must be held to be an interpretation of the Greek translator.

Saul

1 Chr 10,13-14: «[13]So Saul died for his unfaithfulness; he was unfaithful to the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord; moreover, he had consulted a medium, seeking guidance, [14]and did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore, the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David, son of Jesse».

1 Chr does not recount the events of the reign of Saul, only the circumstances of his death. Therefore, the judgement is formulated on what the reader already knows and to which the author makes explicit reference, holding it to be the heritage of the milieu of his readers. However, the Chronicler does not list the wickedness of Saul; he first assesses his behaviour on a general level ("he did not keep the command of the Lord") and then indicates a single action that was an especially serious example: consulting a medium shortly before the battle in which he met his death[19].

Solomon

1 Chr 29,25: «The Lord highly exalted Solomon in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel».

2 Chr 1,1: «Solomon, son of David, established himself in his kingdom; the Lord his God was with him and made him exceedingly great».

The totally positive nature of Solomon's reign has been affirmed twice already at the time when he accedes to the throne and is expressed

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[19] In this context, it is desirable to prefer the intensive rather than the supplementary value for the particle גַּם; this is the choice made in the translation provided here, thus agreeing with T.D. Cudworth, *War in Chronicles: Temple Faithfulness and Israel's Place in the Land* (LHB/ OTS 627), Bloomsbury, London et al. 2016, 97. On the other hand, the identification of גַּם as a supplementary particle has led some scholars to claim that what follows is secondary, a mere example of refusal to listen to the word of Yhwh which has not been properly inserted into the context (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 95) or even a gloss by a later scribe (P.R. Ackroyd, *The Chronicler as Exegete*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 2 [1977] 8). This reflects the, mistaken, view of Mosis (*Untersuchungen*, 34) who thinks that the Chronicler never refers to episodes from the Deuteronomic History without recounting them extensively.

with the language of divine blessing. The Dtr also recognises the greatness of Solomon "excelling all the kings of the earth", but he does not attribute this glory explicitly to divine intervention (1 Kgs 10,23). The Chronicler no longer intervenes with explicit judgements: in fact, there is no mention of the religious and political degeneration which we find in 1 Kgs 11 and which causes Dtr to make a very severe direct judgement on the second phase of the reign (1 Kgs 11,4.9-10); by contrast, in Chr, the rule of David's son is only positive, equal to that of his father, and, in fact, with a still more splendid magnificence[20].

Rehoboam

2 Chr 11,17b: «They walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon».

2 Chr 12,1: «When the rule of Rehoboam was established and he [Rehoboam] grew strong, he abandoned the law of the Lord, he and all Israel with him».

The first of the two Rehoboam passages presents a textual problem: the verb in all the LXX manuscripts is in the singular, ἐπορεύθη, thus referring to the sovereign alone and not to the whole of Judah. It is not easy to establish which of the two grammatical numbers is original: in Chr, the syntagma הלך בְּדֶרֶךְ followed by a king's name is always in the singular and with the sovereign as subject. It is possible, therefore, that the LXX preserves the older reading and that the MT records a corruption owing to the presence of two verbs in the plural in 11,17a: וַיְחַזְּקוּ and וַיְאַמְּצוּ (LXX translates both with κατίσχυσαν)[21]. This corruption must

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[20] The expression "any king before him in Israel" is to be retained as an emphasis to reinforce the sense of magnificence: indeed, before Solomon, there were only two kings, Saul and David, the former of whom was of no interest in the eyes of the Chronicler.

[21] The complete text of v. 17a reads: "They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made Rehoboam son of Solomon secure". L.C. Allen, *The Greek Chronicles: The Relation of the Septuagint of I and II Chronicles to the Massoretic Text*, vol. II (VTSup 27), Brill, Leiden 1974, 98, maintains the priority of the LXX text over the MT for the grammatical number of הלך; M.J. Selman, *2 Chronicles: A Commentary* (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries 11), Inter-Varsity, Leicester-Downers Grove 1994, 370, on the contrary, prefers to retain the MT precisely because of the presence of the verbs in the

have taken place before Jerome since the Vulgate also has the plural "ambulaverunt". The two passages shed light on a development in the behaviour of Rehoboam. This was positive initially but then, after three years, negative until the final separation from Yhwh in 2 Chr 12,14, thus causing the condemnation expressed by the stereotypical formula.

Asa

2 Chr 16,12b: «Yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord but sought help from physicians».

The Chronicler's judgement is inserted within the narrative as a moral assessment of an action of Asa that is not contained in 1 Kgs. In Chr, Asa's reign is divided into a first positive phase and a second negative one with a certain ambivalence in this sovereign's behaviour. The passage of 16,12 is part of the conclusion of the section devoted to him and is intended to indicate the culminating point of his separation from Yhwh.

Jehoshaphat

2 Chr 17,3-6a: «[3]The Lord was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the earlier ways of his father (David), he did not seek the Baals, [4]but sought the God of his father and walked in his commandments, and not according to the ways of Israel. [5]Therefore the Lord established the kingdom in his hand: all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honour. [6a]His heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord».

In v. 3, some Hebrew manuscripts and some of the versions do not record the name of David, especially the principal witnesses to the LXX; Vetus Latina, which depends on the LXX, does not record it, but Jerome translates "David", a sign of the presence of the founder of the dynasty in the Hebrew text he consulted. Which text should be preferred? A minority of scholars hold that the mention of David is original. He is cited as a positive term of comparison also for Hezekiah (2 Chr 29,2) and Josiah (2 Chr 34,2): thus, Jehoshaphat would be being equated with the two just kings *par excellence*, a sign of his particular importance for the

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plural at the beginning of the verse, and also because of the general context of the phrase.

Chronicler[22]. However, some elements lead us to prefer the absence of the proper name with the result that אָבִיו becomes a reference to Asa: אָבִיו returns in the following v. 4 where the search for God is opposed to the imitation of Israel's idolatry, an action impossible for David in whose time the separation from the northern kingdom had not yet happened. Later in 2 Chr, Asa is presented as a positive example whom Jehoshaphat imitated (2 Chr 20,32, as in 1 Kgs 22,43) and from whom Jehoram distanced himself (2 Chr 21,12, without parallel in Kgs). Moreover, other passages already have the scribal tendency to add David as a "false clarification" where the text has simply אָבִיו, for example, in 2 Chr 15,18 with reference to the consecrated offerings which Asa brought into the temple[23]. However, particularly indicative is the use of הָרִאשֹׁנִים: already Rudolph saw there a reference to the division of Asa's reign into a first, positive, period, and a second, negative one, in which he was unfaithful to God, and translated: "in den anfänglichen Bahnen"[24]; he has been followed in that by the majority of commentators[25]. Those who retain the mention of David as original are forced to explain the numeral adjective in various, unconvincing, ways: as a gloss inspired by the books of Kings in which David's behaviour is initially imperfect[26]; as an underlining of the archetypal value of David's behaviour[27]; or as referring to the life of the same Jehoshaphat which would, therefore,

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[22] Thus Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. II, 78; A.E. Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (NIVAC 13-14), Zondervan, Grand Rapids (MI) 2003, 478; and R.H. Lowery, *The Reforming Kings: Cults and Society in First Temple Judah* (JSOTSup 120), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1991,101-102.

[23] In this case, the MT does not record the name of David which, instead, is added by some Greek manuscripts: cf. Allen, *Greek Chronicles*, vol. II, 144-145.

[24] Cf. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 250.

[25] Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 248-249, wishes to see there a reference to 16,11, the concluding summary of Asa's deeds, where the Chronicler employs the expression: דִּבְרֵי אָסָא הָרִאשֹׁונִים וְהָאַחֲרוֹנִים: in reality, however, this syntagma is used for various kings, also for those whose life is not divided into phases (like Solomon: 9,29), and so, in 16,11, it expresses a simple temporal extension without any value judgements.

[26] Thus Lowery, *Reforming Kings*, 102; his theory is not supported by any textual witness.

[27] So Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. II, 78.

be divided into two phases, the one pious and the other wicked[28].

The first verb of v. 6, וַיִּגְבַּהּ, has been variously interpreted. The root גבה, whose basic meaning is "to be high", appears in Chr a further five times: in two of these it retains its material significance and refers to buildings[29]; in the other three occurrences, the root is associated with a king and takes on the negative meaning of "to be arrogant": as it is in 2 Chr 26,16 with regard to Uzziah and in 32,25-26 to Hezekiah. However, the context around Jehoshaphat is clearly positive: this is no proud self-exaltation but an increase of strength, courage and zeal on the path of Yhwh's ways. If we exclude the passages with a physical connotation, morally neutral, therefore, the positive sense is not found elsewhere in the Bible. To lift up one's own heart before God is a sign of pride which provokes its own punishment[30]. 2 Chr 17,6 is the only case in the whole Bible where the lifting up of the heart is positive. This should not be taken as accidental, perhaps, but rather as a contrast which the Chronicler has deliberately created with the more common theological language in order to emphasise with greater intensity Jehoshaphat's firmness in his faithfulness to Yhwh. Jehoshaphat's integrity of heart will be revisited in 2 Chr 22,9 in the context of the burial of Ahaziah.

Joash

2 Chr 24,24

כִּי בִמְצַעַר אֲנָשִׁים בָּאוּ חֵיל אֲרָם וַיהוָה נָתַן בְּיָדָם חַיִל לָרֹב מְאֹד כִּי עָזְבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם וְאֶת־יוֹאָשׁ עָשׂוּ שְׁפָטִים

«Although the army of Aram had come with few men, the Lord delivered into their hand a very great army: because [the Judaeans] had abandoned the Lord, God of their ancestors, [the Aramaeans] executed judgement on Joash»[31].

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[28] Thus Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 479; however, the structure of the phrase renders this solution unacceptable.

[29] In 2 Chr 3,4 concerning the porch of the temple, and in 2 Chr 33,14 on the fortifications of Jerusalem constructed by Manasseh.

[30] Solely by way of example, we can cite: Ps 131,1; Prov 18,12; Ezek 28,2.5.17.

[31] This translation is not taken from NRSV.

This verse is formed out of four statements in the sequence:
1) subordinate conjunction כִּי + complement + *qatal* verb
2) coordinate conjunction ו + subject + *qatal* verb
3) subordinate conjunction כִּי + *qatal* verb
4) coordinate conjunction ו + complement + *qatal* verb

The syntactical correlations within this sequence can be established in various ways. Generally, the translations place the third statement as subordinate to the second: "Although the army of the Aramaeans had come with few men, the Lord delivered into their hand a very great army because they had abandoned the Lord, the God of their ancestors. And they executed judgement on Joash". However, the translation proposed here considers the existence of a syntactical parallelism between two pairs of statements in which the former is introduced by כִּי and the latter by ו. This interpretation[32] has the advantage of highlighting two aspects of the same event that is being recounted: the first pair creates a contrast between the two armies and underlines the paradoxical action of Yhwh who causes the weaker army to win; the second pair relates the two peoples, Judah and Aram, and highlights the reason for Yhwh's action, namely, his people's infidelity. The result is that, although the king too is wicked, he is blamed as representing the people as a whole. This reveals the divine justice which, in this case, acts by means of an enemy army.

Amaziah

2 Chr 25,27a: «From the time that Amaziah turned away from the Lord they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem».

In addition to the stereotypical formula taken up and modified from 2 Kgs (2 Chr 25,2), the Chronicler also adds a judgement of his own to give a religious interpretation to the conspiracy in which Amaziah met his death. The expression "From the time that Amaziah turned away from the Lord", is a deliberate addition of Chr to a text which is taken up word for word from 2 Kgs 14,19-20a. The Chronicler thus divides

[32] So too J.A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles* (NAC 9), Broadman & Holman, Nashville (TN) 1994, 313; and Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 532.

Amaziah's reign into a positive and a negative phase, and attributes the sovereign's ignominious end to his turning away from Yhwh.

Uzziah

2 Chr 26,16a: «But when [Uzziah had become] strong he grew proud, to his destruction, for he was false to the Lord his God».

The Chronicler's position on Uzziah is similar to the one he holds on Amaziah: he records, with modifications, the stereotyped formula of Dtr (2 Chr 26,4), but, because of the division of the reign into two phases, he then has to intervene in order to reckon the sovereign's behaviour as separation from Yhwh. This judgement serves to introduce the ensuing narrative of the presumptuous act of offering incense in the temple (2 Chr 26,16b-20) in which the declaration of the king's guilt will be expressed through the words of the priests[33]. The consequence of this sacrilege will be the appearance of leprosy.

Jotham

2 Chr 27,6: «So Jotham became strong because he ordered his ways before the Lord his God».

The judgement taken up from Dtr contained a comparison between Jotham and his father Uzziah in favour of the former (2 Chr 27,2). Having described Jotham's military successes against the Ammonites (2 Chr 27,5), the Chronicle again expresses his positive assessment by placing a direct relation between his integrity and his international power.

Hezekiah

2 Chr 32,25-26: «[25]But Hezekiah did not respond according to the benefit done to him [by Yhwh], for his heart was proud. Therefore, [the] wrath [of Yhwh] came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. [26]Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah».

Despite the general positivity with regard to Hezekiah, 2 Chr, in a single verse (32,25), claims his temporary infidelity which, however, is speedily cured (32,26). However, if we consider the precision with which the author

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[33] Below, p. 268-269.

describes and judges the sins of the sovereigns, the passage has rightly been described as "unusually enigmatic"[34]: in 32,24-33, the Chronicler reinterprets and rearranges some events that he takes up from 2 Kgs 20,1-21, with some additions according to the following scheme:

2 Kgs 20,1-21		2 Chr 32,24-33	
1-11	Illness, prayer and miraculous healing of Hezekiah	24	Illness, prayer and miraculous healing of Hezekiah
12-19	*Embassy of the king of Babylon*		
		25-26	**Pride and repentance**
		27-29	**Hezekiah's wealth**
		30	*Construction of the pool and the canal*
		31	*Embassy of the king of Babylon*
20aα	"The other deeds..." (וְיֶתֶר דִּבְרֵי)	32a	"The other deeds..." (וְיֶתֶר דִּבְרֵי)
20aβ	*Construction of the pool and the canal*		
20b	"...are they not written...?" (הֲלֹא־הֵם כְּתוּבִים)	32b	"...they are written..." (הִנָּם כְּתוּבִים)
21a	Death of Hezekiah	33a	Death of Hezekiah
		33bα	**Burial of Hezekiah**
21b	Succession: Manasseh king	33bβ	Succession: Manasseh king

The correspondences between 2 Kgs and 2 Chr are indicated in normal print; the italics mark the shifts in the narrative effected by the Chronicler; his own additions are highlighted in bold. The text with the temporary negative judgement is contained in one of these additions, but the different arrangement of the events makes it difficult to understand what episode is being referred to here. The sin of pride is specified as the failure to acknowledge a גְּמֻל from God, but there are two possible ways of locating this "benefit".

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[34] "Unusually enigmatic": J.G. McConville, *I & II Chronicles* (DSBS: Old Testament), Westminster, Philadelphia (PA) 1984, 247.

Starting off from the order in 2 Kgs, some scholars believe that 2 Chr 32,25-26 is alluding to the embassy of Merodach-Baladan, king of Babylon, which the Chronicler recounts in what follows, in v. 31: this last verse would, therefore, be a reinterpretation of the same fact inserted in a final summary comprising vv. 27-33. In fact, according to 2 Kgs 20,12-19, the visit of the Babylonian emissaries provokes Hezekiah into showing off his own wealth. This causes the intervention of Isaiah who announces from God the destruction of the goods of the palace and the enslavement of Hezekiah's descendants to the king of Babylon; the גְּמֻל would thus be the miraculous healing from illness recounted in v. 24[35].

However, if this is a clear modification of the *Vorlage*, it is legitimate to hold that the insertion of the description of Hezekiah's wealth and of the construction of the water system has precisely the aim of separating the episode of the illness from that of the Babylonian embassy. Therefore, other scholars refer vv. 25-26 to the illness as well so that it now receives its theological motivation as a divine punishment; in this case, the גְּמֻל would be the miraculous liberation from the army of the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, which would have provoked a culpable pride in Hezekiah and in the entire population of Jerusalem. This, in turn, would have attracted the wrath of God spoken of in v. 26[36].

This second interpretation appears the more convincing for at least three reasons: the intentional insertion of vv. 27-30, which makes it difficult to connect the judgement of vv. 25-26 with the story of the ambassadors; the fact that, in 2 Kgs 20,12-19, the divine threat is not actually withdrawn, as happens instead in 2 Chr 32,26; and the consideration that, in 2 Chr 32,31, the visit of the Babylonian emissaries receives its own theological interpretation: it is a trial to which Hezekiah is subjected by God to test his faithfulness, and the result is positive[37].

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[35] Thus, among others: Myers, *II Chronicles*, 192-193; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 386-388; and Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 385-386.

[36] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 258-259; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 992-994; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 467; and Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 390-391.

[37] Thus Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 995-996; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 469. However, Shinan and Zakovitch claim that, in summarising the episode, 2 Chr is alluding implicitly to what

Manasseh

2 Chr 33,12-13: «[12]While he was in distress, [Manasseh] entreated the favour of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his ancestors. [13]He prayed to him, and [God] received his entreaty, heard his prayer, and restored him again to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord indeed was God».

These verses contain one of the greater differences between the Deuteronomist work and the rewriting of the Chronicler: the return to Yhwh by one of the most wicked sovereigns of Judah. In 2 Kgs, he is presented as the exact opposite of his predecessor and father, Hezekiah: destroyer of his religious reform, he reaches such a degree of wickedness as to render the condemnation of Judah irreversible (21,10-15; 23,26; 24,3-4), so much so that not even the integrity of his grandson, Josiah, or his attempts at a return to monotheism were to succeed in cancelling the divine decree. In 2 Chr, on the contrary, Manasseh shares the destiny of other sovereigns whose reign receives a double assessment: the first part is negative (33,1-10), the second positive (33,14-17). The verses in question record the turning point, that is, his conversion during his imprisonment in the hands of the king of Assyria (33,10): once freed and back in Jerusalem, he was to re-establish the cult of Yhwh.

The explanation for this modification has been identified by some scholars in the doctrine of immediate retribution which constitutes the theological context of numerous narratives. According to these authors, Manasseh's conversion would be an invention of the Chronicler

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the reader already knows from 2 Kgs: since, for the Dtr, Hezekiah received a negative oracle from Isaiah, it must be understood that, for the Chronicler also, the king had not been faithful to God (A. Shinan-Y. Zakovitch, *Midrash on Scripture and Midrash within Scripture*, in *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 31 [1986] 268-269). Japhet, by contrast, precisely on the basis of 2 Kgs, maintains that the trial had a positive result: the final surrender to the will of God with which, in 2 Kgs 20,19, Hezekiah accepts the oracle of Isaiah would be the faithful disposition which is pleasing to God as a sign of submission to him (*I & II Chronicles*, 996). The fact that the Chronicler does not express a clear-cut judgement and omits the negative oracle of Isaiah, as well as the context which is wholly favourable to the king in the verses immediately preceding and immediately following tends to speak for a positive interpretation of 2 Chr 32,31.

to account for the exceptional duration of the 55 years of his reign and for his death in peace[38]. However, without denying the importance of immediate retribution in Chronicles, this explanation is not sufficient. The wicked king *par excellence*, Ahaz, dies in peace (2 Chr 28,27) at the age of 35 after a reign of 16 years (2 Chr 28,1), numbers not far from those of the just Josiah (dead at 39: 2 Chr 34,1) and much superior to those of other pious kings such as Abijah (a reign of only 3 years: 2 Chr 13,2). Yet, the Chronicler did not feel the need to overturn completely the narrative of the death of Ahaz transmitted by 2 Kgs, but only limited himself to placing his burial outside the royal necropolis in order to give a negative nuance to his death (2 Chr 28,27). In the case of Manasseh, however, we find ourselves before a total rewriting of the life of the one who, for 2 Kgs, is the very cause of the Exile. A literary intervention of such proportions cannot have been motivated simply by harmonisation with the doctrine of immediate retribution which is, therefore, not to be understood either as a mechanical application of the justice of Yhwh or the only and absolute criterion for the composition of the narrative.

To understand these different assessments of Manasseh, we must consider, instead, the differences in the literary level of the two works. The Dtr intends to explain the story of the people, and the Exile in particular, by highlighting the long series of infidelities and betrayals of the covenant and the Law which brought on the just divine punishment. Within the literary construction of Sam-Kgs, the reign of Manasseh is the peak of wickedness; its counterpart is Josiah, symbol of the pious king and restorer of the Law of Moses, whose reforming action, however, was not sufficient because the sin of Judah was too great to be able to obtain forgiveness. The theological reading of the final part of the history of the monarchy is expressed by the oracle of Huldah (2 Kgs 22,15-20): the divine sentence has by now been pronounced, and Josiah's integrity makes possible only a stay in its execution. Interested in furnishing an explanation for the drama of the Exile, Dtr presents its reader with a vision dominated by sin and by

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[38] Thus, for example, Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1002.

the consequent punitive justice of God which strikes unambiguously.

The Chronicler, on the other hand, means to present a different vision of the action of God in history. In his literary scheme, the conclusion of the narrative is not the Exile but the return from it. The wicked king *par excellence* is Ahaz, and his counterpart is Hezekiah, the great restorer of the temple and the cult. Manasseh begins his reign as a wicked king and ends it as a reformer; by contrast, Josiah, initiates a notable reform but, later, dies for not having recognised and followed the voice of God. In the post-Exilic period subsequent to the Dtr, the focus has shifted from the identification of the causes of sin to the need to pick up the path with Yhwh after acknowledging these failures. That is why Chronicles does not witness so much to the unavoidable nature of the punishment consequent on sin but finds repentance as one of its central themes[39]. The inverting of the figure of Manasseh is carried out with precisely this objective: even the wicked king *par excellence* of the previous historiographical work, who even refused to listen to the messages of Yhwh, was able to obtain forgiveness. His life thus becomes exemplary in demonstrating the divine mercy[40]. Not only that: in this way, Manasseh becomes the image of the Jewish people during and after the Exile. Like Manasseh, having ignored the prophets, the whole of Judah/Israel was to be led into exile in Babylon for a while, but there, repenting, it was to find again the possibility of a correct relationship with God[41]. In the literary drama, the exile of the individual king becomes an anticipation of the collective exile[42]. Like Manasseh,

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[39] Cf. E. Ben Zvi, *Reading Chronicles and Reshaping the Memory of Manasseh*, in P.S. Evans-T.F. Williams (eds.), *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2013,125-126.

[40] Cf. G.N. Knoppers, *Saint or Sinner? Manasseh in Chronicles*, in J. Corley-H. Van Grol (eds.), *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of P.C. Beentjes* (DCLS 7), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2011, 226.

[41] Cf. Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 192-194; and Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 389-390.

[42] Cf. K.A.D. Smelik, *Converting the Past: Studies in Ancient Israelite and Moabite Historiography* (OtSt 28), Brill, Leiden et al. 1992, 187-188; and B. Halpern, *Why Manasseh Is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition*, in *Vetus Testamentum*

the people were also to return to Jerusalem and have the possibility of readopting the cult of Yhwh with the re-establishment of the temple and the rebuilding of the city[43]. In the literary drama of the Chronicler, therefore, the story and the positive judgement on Manasseh become a symbol of the path of the Jewish people, of the need for its repentance and of the continual possibility of a future hope thanks to the merciful disposition manifested by Yhwh.

Josiah

2 Chr 35,22: «But Josiah would not turn away from him [Neco], but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God but joined battle in the plain of Megiddo».

The Chronicler describes the circumstances and manner of Josiah's death with more attention to detail than his *Vorlage*. The stratagem of disguise in battle (הִתְחַפֵּשׂ) had already been adopted by the wicked king of Israel, Ahab, in 2 Chr 18,29 (as in the *Vorlage*, 1 Kgs 22,30), where the same verb is also used twice: הִתְחַפֵּשׂ and וַיִּתְחַפֵּשׂ. The connection with the death of Ahab can also be detected thanks to other elements: both kings are killed by archers (2 Chr 18,33 and 2 Chr 35,22); both ask to be taken from the battlefield because they are wounded (idem); in both cases, carriage on a chariot is highlighted: Ahab stands on his all day and dies at evening (2 Chr 18,34); Josiah is taken from his carriage and put on another one to be carried on it to Jerusalem where he dies (2 Chr 35,24); for both, the cause of death is the refusal to listen to a prophetic

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48 (1998) 475-476. Also W.M. Schniedewind, *The Source Citations of Manasseh: King Manasseh in History and Homily*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 41 (1991) 450-461, agrees with this position but claims that the affair of Manasseh's repentance and prayer was not created from scratch by the Chronicler but was already present in the sources at his disposal other than the Dtr.

[43] A similarity has been proposed between the building activity of Manasseh (2 Chr 33,14) and the fortification of Jerusalem carried out by Nehemiah (Neh 2-6): *cf.* L.K. Handy, *Rehabilitating Manasseh: Remembering King Manasseh in the Persian and Hellenistic Periods*, in D.V. Edelman-E. Ben Zvi (eds.), *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian & Early Hellenistic Periods. Social Memory and Imagination*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, 225-226.

word (2 Chr 18,4-27 and 2 Chr 35,22)[44]. Thus, the link between the two deaths seems to have been constructed deliberately by the Chronicler, resulting in the description of the second in an ironic key. However, in 2 Chr 35,22, the LXX offers a text that is partly different: there is no mention of a disguise since, instead of הִתְחַפֵּשׂ, it has ἐκραταιώθη ("he became strong")[45]. Nevertheless, the presence of several elements which associate Josiah and Ahab lead us to believe הִתְחַפֵּשׂ original. We should not exclude the possibility that the theme was intentionally eliminated by the Greek translator, precisely to avoid the problem of an extravagant association between the pious sovereign and the classic wicked king. Not only Ahab: other rulers disguise themselves cunningly but fail in their wicked plan. Thus, Saul with the necromancer of Endor (1 Sam 30,8-12), and the wife of Jeroboam I with the prophet Ahijah, the Shilonite (1 Kgs 14,2-6); *vice versa*, the same Ahab receives an oracle of condemnation from one of the "sons of the prophets" who disguises himself so as not to be recognised (1 Kgs 20,38-41). Thus, the action of disguise has a negative connotation for sovereigns who always come off worst both when they themselves employ this stratagem and when they are deceived and become the victims of it. The disguise becomes an iconic element to indicate the failure to listen to the voice of the Lord

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[44] The correspondence between the deaths of Ahab and Josiah is well known and has been highlighted by various scholars: Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 411; Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 542-543; C. Mitchell, *The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles*, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68 (2006) 422-425; K.A. Ristau, *Reading and Rereading Josiah: The Chronicler's Representation of Josiah for the Postexilic Community*, in G.N. Knoppers-K.A. Ristau (eds.), *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2009, 234-235.

[45] The Vulgate is no help: "praeparavit contra eum bellum" is a paraphrase rather than a translation. Some linguistic solutions to the problem have been proposed, generally the reading הִתְחַזֵּק (already in E.L. Curtis-A.A. Madsen, *The Books of Chronicles*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1910, 518). However, this is not supported by any manuscript and does not explain the appearance of the present Hebrew verb. The parallel text of 1 Esd 1,26 reads here ἐπιχειρεῖ, which could agree with the base meaning of חפשׂ, "seek": cf. Z. Talshir, *I Esdras: A Text Critical Commentary* (SCS 50), Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta (GA) 2001, 49-50.

with the disastrous consequences which come from this: in the cases of Saul and the wife of Jeroboam, it is a deliberate attempt to deceive God from whose eyes, however, nothing is hidden; in the deaths of Ahab and Josiah, there is an attempt to force the course of events for personal advantage with an action that is not transparent; in the case of the anonymous prophet's oracle to Ahab, we have a stratagem to make him recognise his own wickedness and let it redound on him. All these cases show how the will of God and his word are fulfilled always and no matter what, and, if the king opposes this, his ruin is inevitable[46]. In order to avoid too close a relationship between Josiah and three kings who were manifestly wicked, subsequent readers have proposed interpreting הִתְחַפֵּשׂ differently: for the Targum[47], the king removes his everyday clothes to put on his military uniform; according to Talshir[48], however, we must refer to the base meaning of חפשׂ, "seek", thus associating the behaviour of Josiah with that of rulers less wicked than Ahab, such as Amaziah, who also went to war, contravening the word of God addressed to him through the enemy king, in this case, the Israelite, Joash (2 Chr 25,17-20 // 2 Kgs 14,8-11).

Moreover, if the death of the just Josiah had *per se* raised problems of a theological nature, the explanation and circumstances offered by the Chronicler must also have created some difficulty when we consider that 1 Esd 1,26 refrains from affirming that the words of a foreign king came from the mouth of God and attributes the final warning to the prophet, Jeremiah: οὐ προσέχων ῥήμασιν Ιερεμιου προφήτου εκ στόματοὺ κυρίου ("since he paid no attention to the words of Jeremiah from the mouth of God"). It seems that 1 Esd intends to simplify the theological questions, limiting the action of the prophetic spirit within the borders of the Israelite people, even if that contrasts with the preceding v. 25 in which

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[46] On the relationship beween kings and disguises, see R.J. Coggins, *On Kings and Disguises*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 50 (1991) 55-62, esp. 60-62.

[47] אשתני ואטקס בזיני קרבא: "he changed and put on his arms".

[48] Z. Talshir, *The Three Deaths of Josiah and the Strata of Biblical Historiography (2 Kings XXIII 29-30; 2 Chronicles XXXV 20-5; 1 Esdras I 23-31)*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 46 (1996) 219.

it is clearly Neco who addresses the final exhortation to Josiah. In fact, by doing this, 1 Esd renders the fault of the king of Judah still more serious since he did not accept the voice of God who was speaking to him through an authentic prophet[49].

III. CONCLUSIONS ON THE EXPLICIT AND DIRECT JUDGEMENTS

There follows a table summarising the explicit and direct judgements on the kings in the book of Chronicles with an indication of the assessment that they contain. The normal characters indicate the judgements expressed with the phraseology taken up from Sam-Re, the italics those particular to the Chronicler[50].

Sovereign	Samuel-Kgs		Chronicles	
	Text	Judgement	Text	Judgement
Saul	∅	Neg.	1 Chr 10,13-14	Neg.
David	∅	Pos.	∅	Pos.
Solomon	1 Kgs 10,23	Pos.	1 Chr 29,25 + 2 Chr 1,1	Pos.
	1 Kgs 11,4 + 9-10	Neg.		

[49] Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1057; Talshir, *Three Deaths*, 232-233; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 527.

[50] *Legenda* for the understanding of the table:
Pos.: completely positive;
Neg.: completely negative;
part.: partly positive or negative;
< >: the judgement is made over a single episode without threatening the general judgement;
( ): the judgement does not concern the individual king but the people as a whole;
∅: a direct judgement is not expressed.
In the case of a king with a double name, the first is the one appearing in Kgs, the second that in Chr; the name of Jeconiah is included between parentheses because it appears only in the genealogies of Chronicles (1 Chr 3,16-17), but not in the narrative about his reign (2 Chr 36,8-10).

Rehoboam	(1 Kgs 14,22)	Neg.	2 Chr 11,17b	Pos.
			2 Chr 12,1 + 12,14	Neg.
Abijam / Abijah	1 Kgs 15,3	Neg.	(2 Chr 13,18b)	Pos.
Asa	1 Kgs 15,11-15	Pos. part.	2 Chr 14,1	Pos.
			2 Chr 15,16-18	Pos. part.
			2 Chr 16,12b	Neg.
Jehoshaphat	1 Kgs 22,43-44	Pos. part.	2 Chr 17,3-6a	Pos.
			2 Chr 20,32-33	Pos. part.
Jehoram	2 Kgs 8,18	Neg.	2 Chr 21,6	Neg.
Ahaziah	2 Kgs 8,27	Neg.	2 Chr 22,3-4	Neg.
Athaliah	∅	∅	∅	∅
Joash	2 Kgs 12,3-4	Pos. part.	2 Chr 24,2	Pos.
			2 Chr 24,24	Neg.
Amaziah	2 Kgs 14,3-4	Pos. part.	2 Chr 25,2	Pos. part.
			2 Chr 25,27a	Neg.
Azariah / Uzziah	2 Kgs 15,3-4	Pos. part.	2 Chr 26,4-5	Pos.
			2 Chr 26,16a	Neg.
Jotham	2 Kgs 15,34-35a	Pos. part.	2 Chr 27,2	Pos.
Ahaz	2 Kgs 16,2b-3a	Neg.	2 Chr 28,1b-2a	Neg.
Hezekiah	2 Kgs 18,3	Pos.	2 Chr 29,2	Pos.
			2 Chr 32,25	<Neg.>
			2 Chr 32,26	Pos.
Manasseh	2 Kgs 21,2	Neg.	2 Chr 33,2	Neg.
			2 Chr 33,12-13	Pos.
Amon	2 Kgs 21,20-22	Neg.	2 Chr 33,22-23	Neg.
Josiah	2 Kgs 22,2	Pos.	2 Chr 34,2	Pos.
			2 Chr 35,22	<Neg.>
Jehoahaz	2 Kgs 23,32	Neg.	∅	∅
Jehoiakim	2 Kgs 23,37	Neg.	2 Chr 36,5b	Neg.
Jehoiachin (Jeconiah)	2 Kgs 24,9	Neg.	2 Chr 36,9b	Neg.
Zedekiah	2 Kgs 24,19	Neg.	2 Chr 36,12-13	Neg.

This survey of the explicit and direct judgements offers us the possibility of gathering some basic criteria which the Chronicler used to assess the individual kings. These criteria are useful for us in identifying elements of the author's vision of history and the role played in it by the sovereign.

A. Criterion of exemplarity

The behaviour of the king is often compared with that of other figures who act as positive or negative examples.

1. David

The positive reference *par excellence* is David to whom are compared Hezekiah (2 Chr 29,2), Josiah (2 Chr 34,2) and, for the first part of his reign, Rehoboam (2 Chr 11,17). In the judgement on Ahaz, David is cited to underline his total distance, making this king into a kind of anti-type (2 Chr 28,1). As for Solomon, the comparison with his father is only implicit (1 Chr 29,25: "any king before him") and has the aim of emphasising the greater splendour of Solomon's reign. The mention of David for Ahaz, Hezekiah and Josiah is shared with the Dtr, whereas, for Solomon and Rehoboam, it is original to the Chronicler.

It is to be noted, moreover, that the Chronicler omits the references to David in the judgements on Abijah, Asa and Amaziah present in 1-2 Kgs.

2. Immediate predecessor

For some kings, the term of comparison is the immediate predecessor whether in a positive or negative sense. A continuity in integrity is remarked for Jehoshaphat with Asa (2 Chr 20,32), Uzziah with Amaziah (2 Chr 26,4) and Jotham with Uzziah (2 Chr 27,2). By contrast, there is a continuity in wickedness for Amon with Manasseh (2 Chr 33,22). To these comparisons that were already present in 1-2 Kgs, the Chronicler adds the positive continuity between Solomon and the early years of Rehoboam (2 Chr 11,17), and a second positive reference to Asa in the deeds of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17,3-4).

The reference to the predecessors is omitted by the Chronicler for the last four kings: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. This could have a theological purpose, that is, of avoiding references which could have thrown shadows on the just Josiah, or else have a stylistic and literary reason, namely, the tension that the Chronicler wishes to transmit by summarising the events from the death of Josiah to the destruction of Jerusalem in the final chapter of the work.

3. Negative exemplarity

The wicked behaviour of Ahaz is compared to the idolatry of the kings of Israel (2 Chr 28,2). Manasseh's negative phase, on the other hand, is likened to the behaviour of the nations who lived in Canaan before the Israelites (2 Chr 33,2). Both for Ahaz and Manasseh, the expression is also found in 2 Kgs.

B. Criterion of influence

In the preceding criterion, the sovereign is set in relation to examples from the past; the criterion of influence sheds light on the power of the exemplarity and influence, actually or only attempted, of contemporary figures who intend to or actually exercise a particular power of persuasion over him. The king does not always yield to such influences.

1. Positive influences followed

Like the Dtr, the Chronicler also recognises the fundamental role of the priest, Jehoiada, in the political activity of Joash (2 Kgs 12,3 and 2 Chr 24,2). However, the Chronicle divides his reign into two phases, the first positive and the second negative, and attributes the transition from the one to the other explicitly to the death of Jehoiada after which Joash is subject to the negative influence of the 'officials' of Judah (2 Chr 24,17). This produces the image of an inconsistent Joash, subject to the will of others and incapable of a strength of his own and an independence of judgement.

Uzziah is described as having a similar regression: instructed by Zechariah, the king remained faithful until the latter's death (2 Chr 26,5). Subsequently, however, his unstable temperament led him to become arrogant and to abuse his authority in the sacred areas reserved to God (2 Chr 26,16). In Uzziah's case, however, the death of Zechariah is not cited explicitly as the turning point, nor is the decline attributed to the negative influence of foreign agencies. It is ascribed to the inner state of the sovereign. Furthermore, by contrast with the account of Joash, 2 Kgs lacks any mention of Zechariah and the sacrilege in the temple. These are proper to Chr.

It is interesting to note that, both for Joash and for Uzziah, simple compliance with a positive influence does not lead automatically to a positive assessment of the sovereign: on the contrary, the latter retains his personal inconsistency which is then revealed as soon as the positive influence is removed.

2. Negative influences followed

The Chronicler takes up from the Deuteronomist narrative the description of the dynastic entanglements between the families of David and Omri which were inaugurated by the matrimonial strategy of Jehoshaphat. According to both the historiographical collections, it was he who was the cause of the polytheistic religious policies of his successors, Jehoram (2 Kgs 8,18 and 2 Chr 21,6) and Ahaziah (2 Kgs 8,27 and 2 Chr 22,3-4). With regard to the latter, 2 Chr makes clear the decisive influence of his mother, Athaliah, who was later to continue this policy when she had usurped the throne, and of the counsellors as a body, who belonged to the Omride dynasty, thus inserting an idolatrous foreign element into the Davidic court. In Chr, therefore, more than Jehoram, Ahaziah turns out to be a weak king, influenced by the will of others.

By contrast with Kgs, moreover, the Chronicler adds a negative influence on Asa on the part of the doctors to whom he turns in his illness instead of trusting in Yhwh (2 Chr 16,12).

3. Positive influences not followed

If the influences followed, positive or negative, reveal the inconsistent character of the sovereign in question, a much greater value is assumed by the circumstances in which he resists external pressures: if the pressure is positive, the king's sin is deliberate and his judgement will be one of condemnation; if, on the other hand, it is negative, his faithfulness emerges more powerfully.

The first king who is stated to have deliberately refused to listen to the voice of God is Saul: since the Chronicler is not interested in recounting his deeds but refers only to his tragic death with a single phrase ("he did not keep the command of the Lord": 1 Chr 10,13), he summarises the theological judgement which the Dtr had explained in the long cycle devoted to the first king of Israel (1 Sam 8-31), a cycle to which Chr implicitly alludes as well known to his readers. In the same verse, 1 Chr places particular emphasis on his consulting a medium before the battle on Mount Gilboa, the summit of his refusal to listen to Yhwh.

Only the historiographical work of the Chronicler affirms explicitly the resistance of two other kings to the prophetic word. The first is Josiah who does not grasp the divine origin of the words of Pharaoh Neco and dies in battle as a consequence (2 Chr 35,22). In the context of the absolutely just behaviour of Josiah, this behaviour turns out to be an error of judgement that costs him his life and provides a theological explanation for this death but does not compromise the overall positive judgement of his activity.

More serious, though, is the end of Zedekiah (2 Chr 36,12-13): he does not believe the words of Jeremiah and betrays his loyalty to Nebuchadnezzar, which was sealed in the name of Yhwh. He thus becomes a rebel and perjurer with the effect of causing the definitive ruin of the kingdom of Judah. The summary picture of this last king which the Chronicler provides differs from those both of the Dtr and of the book of Jeremiah. In 2 Kgs 24,17-25,7, the rebellion against Babylon is not connected with the breaking of a sacred oath (an element which is found, however, in Ezek 17,13-20) but remains within the ambit of political calculation which is revealed to be erroneous. A weakened

Zedekiah takes to flight but is found and captured. He then has to undergo the punishments of watching the execution of his sons and of his own blinding. In the book of Jeremiah, the king appears even weaker, subjected to opposing internal pressures which render him fearful and dominated by the will of others. Despite this, he wishes to hear the opinion of the prophet and promises to protect him from his enemies, albeit in secret (Jer 21,1-7; 37,3-10.17-21; 38,1-28). By contrast, in the rapid picture of 2 Chr, Zedekiah is decisive, clearly opposed to Jeremiah and deliberately rebellious against the voice of God. The leaders of Judah are not divided into factions, as in Jeremiah, nor do they exercise influence over the sovereign; rather, they are all united and firm in their idolatry, along with the people, and they too reject the words of the prophets (2 Chr 36,14-16), acting as a crown to a wicked sovereign who, however retains his full negative responsibility intact.

4. Negative influences not followed

Two kings turn out to be particularly virtuous to the extent of avoiding dangerous influences which could have distanced them from the way of Yhwh. The first is Asa who, as the Dtr had already recounted (1 Kgs 15,13), ended up in depriving his own mother, Maacah, of the title of queen on account of her devotion to the goddess, Asherah (2 Chr 15,16).

The second king is Jehoshaphat. According to the Chronicler, he did not follow the Baals (2 Chr 17,3) and did not imitate Israel (2 Chr 17,4). This mention is not unimportant when one considers Jehoshaphat's closeness to the northern kingdom to the extent of uniting the two dynasties in marriage and sharing in common wars.

C. Criterion of inner dimension

In the terminology employed by the Chronicler to formulate his judgements, an important place is occupied by the substantive לֵב / לֵבָב: literally meaning "heart", the term serves to indicate the interior dimension of faithfulness to Yhwh. This, therefore, does not remain on

the level of merely exterior actions but is played out in the forum of the deepest motives. Already used by the Dtr, it is employed more extensively by the Chronicler, and particularly in his explicit judgements. Only one of the references to the king's heart is taken from the *Vorlage*: in connection with Asa (1 Kgs 15,14 and 2 Chr 15,17). In three cases, the Chronicler modifies the fixed formula deliberately in order to introduce the term: for Rehoboam (2 Chr 12,14), Amaziah (2 Chr 25,2) and Zedekiah (2 Chr 36,13). In one case, in the summary on Jehoshaphat, the formula is modified with the insertion of the heart of the people (2 Chr 20,33). For three sovereigns, the mention of the heart is completely *ex novo* and always in connection with the root גבה ("be raised up/exalted"): for Jehoshaphat in a positive sense at the beginning of the description of his reign (2 Chr 17,6); for Uzziah, it marks the passage from the positive phase of his rule to the negative (2 Chr 26,16); for Hezekiah, it indicates a temporary separation from Yhwh from which the king rapidly repents (2 Chr 32,25-26). Finally, we should note the omission of the term for Abijam/Abijah, which is used in 1 Kgs 15,3 to indicate the wickedness of the sovereign: since the Chronicler holds him to be positive, he chooses to eliminate the stereotypical formula altogether, narrating, instead, episodes that manifest his faithfulness to Yhwh.

D. Criterion of historical causality

In a relationship of cause and effect, the Chronicler explicitly links the integrity or wickedness of the sovereign and the events that happen during his reign: this is the theological principle of immediate retribution, on the basis of which the punishment of the sin is not deferred but sent by God on the king immediately after the sinful event. It takes shape in many ways: foreign invasions, illnesses, palace conspiracies, etc. Such judgements are not found in Sam-Kgs, or, at least, not in such an explicit way. They, therefore, provide an indication of the specific interpretation of history in Chronicles.

1. Faithfulness to Yhwh and prosperity

The king's integrity merits for him earthly glory on the part of Yhwh. That is said explicitly for Solomon (1 Chr 29,25), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17,3-5) and the first phase of Uzziah's reign (2 Chr 26,5). A similar expression, but one referring to the people of Judah as a whole, is inserted into the account of a military victory of Abijah (2 Chr 13,18).

2. Unfaithfulness to Yhwh and political failures

By contrast, the occurrence of internal political difficulties or a military defeat is held to be a direct consequence of the sovereign's infidelity to the voice of God. This was the cause of the final ruin of Saul (1 Chr 10,13-14), Joash (2 Chr 24,24) and Zedekiah (2 Chr 36,12-17). Amaziah's negative behaviour culminates in an internal revolt in which the king is killed (2 Chr 25,27). This plot is recounted by Dtr too (2 Kgs 14,19), but only the Chronicler associates it explicitly with the sovereign's change of behaviour which, initially, had been, at least partly, positive. A defeat does not necessarily express a definitive judgement: for Manasseh, it and his subsequent temporary deportation to Babylon were the occasion for his repentance and return to Yhwh (2 Chr 33,11-13). For Josiah, finally, his refusal to listen to the voice of God who was speaking through the mouth of Pharaoh Neco, was the cause of his defeat in battle and his own death, but it did not nullify the overwhelmingly positive judgement on his activity (2 Chr 35,22).

However, the judgement on some episodes in the life of Hezekiah is more nuanced and ambiguous: the Chronicler affirms the intervention of the divine wrath in response to the king's actions (2 Chr 32,25-26) and, a little later, the sending of a trial of his faith (2 Chr 32,31), but the context and the ambiguous expressions employed are patient of different interpretations.

E. Conclusions on the criteria

The four criteria we have identified in our analysis of the explicit and direct judgements provide a first track for understanding the concept of

leadership of the author of the book of Chronicles:

1. the true leader of Judah is the one who is ready to listen to the word of Yhwh: he is part of a tradition which has provided him with a code of religious behaviour to which he is bound to conform and which he does not have the power to modify;
2. his will is not absolute but must be inwardly obedient (in the "heart") to the divine will;
3. the mode of exercising leadership is not improvised or subject to the whim of the individual who holds power but must follow in the tracks of the positive leaders of the past;
4. in particular, the criterion of influence indicates the existence of other forms of power, possible alternative forms of leadership, which come into play in a dialectical relationship with the royal leadership.

We must now move on to other ways of expressing judgement in order to confirm and correct these criteria or add new ones. In particular, we shall now turn to the alternative forms of leadership and to the messages which the Chronicler provides through the figures who are their spokesmen from time to time.

Chapter 4

EXPLICIT BUT INDIRECT JUDGEMENTS THROUGH THE SPEECHES OF CHARACTERS IN THE LITERARY WORK

A second way through which the Chronicler provides his assessment of the individual kings consists in the introduction into the drama of characters, usually significant ones, already present in the Deuteronomist history or new, who interact with the sovereign either verbally, through dialogues and monologues or in letters. On account of their pragmatic function, direct speeches always occupy a place of particular importance within a narrative[1]. Structurally, they provide vitality to the action and give it a dramatic character, thus enabling greater involvement on the part of the reader. For precisely this reason, they also become the most appropriate and immediate bridge of communication between the author and his readership. They, therefore, represent the privileged part of the narrative where it is possible to track down the author's ideas. In them, he expresses his own vision of the world and the message that he intends to deliver. In the ancient world, in which there rarely existed the individual writer of modern and contemporary western society, literary works did not convey opinions that were strictly personal but rather the ideologies or the interests of the author and the group to which he belonged.

All this happens also in the book of Chronicles in which one can observe that, in the majority of cases, the speech of a character is created with the aim of expressing the theology of the author. The communication is strengthened thanks to the specific religious value accorded to

[1] With regard to the pragmatic function of the direct speeches in the narrative, with particular attention to the Bible, see the texts of Hardmeier, Hunziker-Rodewald and Bar-Efrat in the bibliography.

the speech: the character appears as mediator of the will or judgement of Yhwh, and, consequently, assumes the function of communicating the message to be transmitted to the recipients of the literary work. Already, on a first reading, one can observe their abundance which is so great as to be regarded as a specific feature of the author's style as corner stones of his narrative. The majority of these have no parallel in the Deuteronomist history. It is generally recognised that they are not fragments that have simply been inserted by the Chronicler; rather, they reflect his personality as author, either as compositions *ex novo* or else as reworkings of previous sources on which he has strongly intervened to render them consistent with his own theology[2]. A lesser collection is made up of speeches borrowed from Sam-Kgs. A comparison reveals that, as in the case of the direct judgements, here too, our author has undertaken significant interventions as a result of which we can recognise his own theology.

On account of their importance in the unfolding of the drama, the speeches have attracted the attention of modern scholars who have analysed them from different points of view[3]. Since the majority of the characters utter a speech which belongs to the sphere of divine communication, in most cases the subject has been tackled within the more general theme of the prophetism in Chronicles. However, the two questions are not exactly identical as became clear in the most recent studies.

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[2] The search for the possible existence of a source can be carried out only individually for each passage. Weinberg's hypothesis to make the speech go back to the "extra-canonical prophetic movement" (an expression that also provides the title to his work: *«Die Ausserkanonischen Prophezeiungen» in den Chronikbüchern*, in *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 26 [1978] 387-404) which was associated with the Levitical and priestly circles of the monarchical period has not met with agreement among scholars because it is wholly conjectural.

[3] The first pioneering attempt in the field of modern exegesis was made by S.R. Driver in 1895 in the two-part article, *The Speeches in the Chronicles*, in *The Expositor* 5 (1895) I: 241-256; II: 286-308, where he analysed some linguistic and stylistic aspects common to the Chronicler's own speeches.

The first important contribution was G. von Rad's article, "Die levitische Predigt in den Büchern der Chronik", of 1934. Noting that some charismatic figures belong to the priestly sphere, the famous scholar developed the concept of the "Levitical sermon", a literary genre which he claimed to identify in a certain number of speeches which the Chronicler attributes to prophets and sovereigns[4]. According to von Rad, the Levitical sermon originated in the liturgical context and was the typical form of Levitical and priestly preaching in the post-Exilic period. He envisaged a tripartite structure: starting from a theological principle stated through the quotation of an ancient source (*doctrina*), the preacher drew out the interpretation of the concrete situation (*applicatio*), concluding with the invitation to the audience to faith and the appropriate action (*exhortatio*). The discourses included in this category would be artificial compositions of the Chronicler who chose to resort to this literary genre in order to propose his own theological vision more convincingly by employing the argumentative scheme of the Levites of his time.

Following von Rad, two authors in particular have tackled the relationship between the prophetism of Chr and the Levitical movement. Studying the figures in this second group, D.L. Petersen maintained that the Levitical singers are identified as prophets: in this way, in fact, the Levitical movement superseded prophetism in order to protect the interests of the priestly class in power[5]. J.D. Newsome took up again the concept of the "Levitical sermon", making it coincide, in fact, with the prophetic sermon. In Chronicles, the Levites are prophets, and cultic service is a form of ritualised prophecy. The sovereigns, David

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[4] G. von Rad, *Die levitische Predigt in den Büchern der Chronik*, in A. Alt et alii (eds.), *Festschrift Otto Procksch: Zum sechzigsten Geburtstag am 9. August 1934 Überreicht*, Hinrichs, Helsinki 1934, 113-124. Von Rad includes in this category the speeches of Azariah (2 Chr 15,2-7), Hanani (2 Chr 16,7-9), Jahaziel (2 Chr 20,15-17), the anonymous man of God in 2 Chr 25,7-8, and of the kings, David (1 Chr 28,2-10), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 19,6-7; 20,20) and Hezekiah (2 Chr 32,7-8).

[5] D.L. Petersen, *Late Israelite Prophecy: Studies in Deutero-Prophetic Literature and in Chronicles* (SBLMS 23), Scholars Press, Missoula (MT) 1977, 55-87.

in particular, are prophets and act as intermediaries to let the people know the will of God[6].

Von Rad's proposal was criticised by other scholars. Beginning from the concrete case of the speech of Jahaziel in 2 Chr 20,14-17, A. Schmitt criticised the real applicability of the scheme elaborated by von Rad[7]. S.J. De Vries has drawn attention to the fact that the Levitical sermon of this theory would require a proclamation within a liturgical environment, something lacking in the passages cited. Moreover, the three sections of von Rad's theory are not encountered in all the passages put forward so that, actually, the concept of the "Levitical sermon" turns out to be weak[8]. R. Mason has shown that the criteria for the identification of a form called "Levitical sermon" are too insecure: on the one hand, the Chronicler's speeches do not present specific rhetorical features compared with other genres such as the prophetic oracle, and, on the other, passages that do answer to von Rad's parameters can be detected in other biblical books also. Furthermore, Mason believes that the direct speeches which the Chronicler ascribes to the kings merit a specific place on account of their juridical rather than exhortatory character[9]. P.C. Beentjes also claims that the attempt to establish a literary genre of the preaching of the post-Exilic Levites is too insecure since we do not have enough elements for an historical reconstruction and the modes of expression they actually used[10].

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[6] J.D. Newsome, *Toward a New Understanding of the Chronicler and his Purposes*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 94 (1975) 203-204. 210-212.

[7] A. Schmitt, *Das prophetische Sondergut in 2 Chr 20,14-17*, in L. Ruppert et alii (eds.), *Künder des Wortes: Beiträge zur Theologie der Propheten*, Echter Verlag, Würzburg 1982, 279.

[8] S.J. De Vries, *The Forms of Prophetic Address in Chronicles*, in *Hebrew Annual Review* 10 (1986) 16.

[9] R. Mason, *Preaching the Tradition: Homily and Hermeneutics after the Exile*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge et al. 1990, 59 (kings' speeches). 134-144 (weakness of von Rad's criteria). 257-262 (Levitical sermon outside Chr).

[10] P.C. Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation: Aspects of Innerbiblical Interpretation in 2 Chronicles 20*, in *Biblica* 74 (1993) 263-264.

Other scholars have moved in different directions. Firstly, A. C. Welch pointed out the prophetism in Chronicles, devoting an entire chapter to it in his book, *The Work of the Chronicler*, published in 1939, tackling, in particular, the relationship with the monarchy[11]. He reckoned that the prophets are described as a charismatic reality recognised at court where they had the task of communicating the word of Yhwh, thus guaranteeing his assistance. Along the same lines, T. Willi has conceived the relationship between king and prophet as a relationship that had something of an official character: on the one hand, the king personified the people, on the other, the prophet was the representative of the God of Israel. In particular, the prophet had the task of interpreting reality in the name of Yhwh in the furrow of tradition[12].

R. Micheel in 1983 and De Vries in 1986 studied the prophetic speeches from a more specifically literary point of view. The former distinguished between passages parallel to the Dtr and compositions proper to the Chronicler, noting that characters are introduced with different characteristics: whereas the prophets in the material shared with Sam-Kgs possess titles, those peculiar to Chr are without titles or even anonymous, with some exceptions[13]. The message of the prophets of the second group is one of condemnation, except in two cases[14]; that almost always places them at odds with the sovereign[15]. De Vries puts himself explicitly in continuity with Micheel, claiming to wish to complete her study with the analysis of the prophetic messages. Thus, he has divided all the speeches of the charismatic characters into four groups: "prophetic commission report"; e.g., Nathan's Oracle, 1 Chr 17,1-15; "prophetic

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[11] It is the second chapter of his work, entitled "The Chronicler and Prophecy", on pp. 42-54.

[12] Willi, *Chronik*, 215-244.

[13] Shemaiah (2 Chr 12,5) and Oded (2 Chr 28,9) are described as נָבִיא, Hanani רֹאֶה (2 Chr 16,7) and Jehu חֹזֶה (2 Chr 19,2).

[14] Azariah (2 Chr 15,1-7) and Jahaziel (2 Chr 20,15-17) bear messages of encouragement.

[15] In his work, *Die Seher- und Propheten-Überlieferung in der Chronik* (BBET 18), Peter Lang, Bern 1983, ch. 1 is devoted to the texts in parallel with Sam-Kgs (pp. 11-38) and ch. 2 to the personal compositions of the Chronicler (pp. 39-118).

battle story"; e.g., Micaiah's vision, 2 Chr 18,1-19,3; "report of an oracular inquiry"; e.g., Huldah's Oracle, 2 Chr 34,20-28; "report of a prophetic word". According to De Vries, the first three groups concern the passages in synopsis with Sam-Kgs, while all the speeches proper to Chr belong to the fourth. De Vries also identifies a difference in function: the speeches taken up from Dtr receive their significance from their context whereas those composed by the Chronicler confer significance on the narrative to which they belong. In particular, the latter respond to the need to provide a transcendent interpretation to the value-judgement on the integrity or wickedness of the sovereigns[16]. In 1990, R.K. Duke's monograph, *The Persuasive Appeal of the Chronicler*, subjected the entire literary work to a rhetorical analysis, underlining the function of the speeches as vehicle of the ethical message which the author intended to inculcate in his contemporaries: this rhetorical expedient enabled the Chronicler to remain personally hidden and remote while it lent authority to his own thought through the use of characters operating on a divine mandate[17].

While, in the wake of von Rad, scholars have lent attention only to the speeches of the charismatic figures, M.A. Throntveit took for the subject of his doctoral thesis, published in 1987 and entitled *When Kings Speak*, the direct speeches which the Chronicler attributes to the kings of Judah. The subject of his work does not concern the present study which does not tackle the speeches made by the sovereigns; it has to be mentioned, however, because it had the merit of plugging a gap in the exegesis by extending it to speeches not attributed to prophetic and Levitical figures.

In the nineteen nineties, two contributions mark a break and an advance in the study of the speeches in Chronicles which began to be considered as such, regardless of the theme of prophetism, without denying, however, that there are obvious relations with it. In his volume

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[16] De Vries, *Forms*: the classification of the speeches is on pp. 18-32, the conclusions on pp. 32-34.

[17] In particular, *ibid.*, 119-135.

Preaching the Tradition of 1990, R. Mason examined the speeches proper to the Chronicler which have no parallels in Sam-Kgs. In the first part of his work (pp. 5-144), Mason looks at all the direct speeches of the characters, arranging them according to the order in which they appear in the narrative with the aim of identifying common formal and thematic aspects and comparing them with the scheme of von Rad's Levitical sermon. In the second part (pp. 145-256), the information gathered is compared with other texts that can be dated to the Persian period: Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah 1-8 and Malachi. The author's analysis, carried out with expertise, is certainly (and legitimately) limited by the scope of his research, that is, to verify whether or not the category of the Levitical sermon has any foundation. For this reason, Mason excludes the parallel passages from Sam-Kgs in which there is no trace of the hypothetical literary genre. Furthermore, he is not interested in the interrelations between the characters but only in the structure and content of the text of the speech. The limits dictated by the objective of the study also emerge in the way the characters are classified: the author identifies four categories of interlocutors (royal, prophetic, priestly, others) with the aim of demonstrating the unfounded nature of von Rad's literary genre[18], but he seems not to have observed the nuances found in these categories which have been extracted in too summary a way; in reality, some characters belong to several categories, and he has not considered the specific importance of the speeches of the foreign kings which have been inserted in the generic group of "others". Thus, the author is moving in a markedly literary perspective: he is not interested in reconstructing aspects of the Chronicler's message but only in excluding the validity of a single model.

The second study which has marked a change of gear in the analysis of the speeches is the doctoral thesis of W.M. Schniedewind, published in 1995 under the title *The Word of God in Transition*. It still remains the most thorough study of the relationship between prophecy and speech in Chronicles. This scholar aims to identify the peculiar characteristics

[18] Mason, *Preaching*, 133-137.

of the prophetic figures present in the biblical book, beginning with the speeches with which they enter the stage[19]. It is worth mentioning the series of chapters in order to understand his method of work and the thorough nature of his research. The first chapter (pp. 31-79) surveys the prophetic titles used by the Chronicler and the formulae used to present divine inspiration. In the following two chapters, the author analyses the text: first, the Chronicler's own speeches (pp. 80-129), then, the ones shared with Sam-Kgs (pp. 130-162). Next, he pauses over two particular cases: the divine inspiration granted to members of the class of Levites, especially the singers (pp. 163-188), and the charismatic characteristics of the kings, especially David (pp. 189-208). After having presented the prophetic texts which the Chronicler claims to employ as sources (pp. 209-230), Schniedewind draws his final conclusions, letting the Chronicler's vision fall within the more general context of Second Temple Judaism (pp. 231-252). This study is of immense value for its great breadth and depth. In particular, Schniedewind is the first to consider also the passages in common with Sam-Kgs which were previously reduced to being copies of the original and without interest.

After Schniedewind, there were no studies specifically on the speeches except for the article of L.C. Jonker in 2008, "Who Constitutes Society? Yehud's Self-understanding in the Late Persian Era as Reflected in the Books of Chronicles"[20]. The title reveals Jonker's perspective: the declared objective is not purely linguistic or literary but socio-cultural. He examines all the direct speeches of whatever character appears on the scene. He identifies their individual interlocutors, context and contents to discover the elements of social identity which the Chronicler wishes to offer to the post-Exilic community at the end of the Persian period. It emerges that the intent of the biblical author is to contribute to the construction of society in a theocratic direction, centring the collective

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[19] Schniedewind, *Word*, 11-29.

[20] L.C. Jonker, *Who Constitutes Society? Yehud's Self-understanding in the Late Persian Era as Reflected in the Books of Chronicles*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (2008) 703-724

life on the temple cult, prescinding from the creation of an autonomous political entity of an ethnic character. Unfortunately, Jonker's analysis is restricted to 2 Chr 10-36, thus excluding the direct speeches of David and Solomon which are fundamental for reading the history of Judah after the division of the kingdom. Although providing interesting stimuli for the present study, above all for the socio-cultural perspective, Jonker's work constitutes only a partial starting point.

The present study approaches the direct speeches of the Chronicler in a way that is different and complementary. In his classic study on prophetism, *Grundformen profetischer Rede*, C. Westermann indicated three essential questions that have to be put with regard to a text: 1. "Who is speaking?"; 2. "To whom are they speaking?"; 3. "What is happening in this speech?"[21]. Schniedewind later added a fourth one: "How does the prophet speak?"[22]. If we observe the history of the research, we can summarise in broad strokes that the literary analysis of von Rad and those who followed him, whether to confirm his theory or to criticise it (including Mason), was trying to respond, above all, to the last question. Although touching on issues which concern all the questions, Schniedewind's research was aimed chiefly at the reconstruction of the characteristics of the speaker. Jonker investigated the identity of the recipients, both of the interlocutors within the narrative and of the readers contemporary with the Chronicler. The present chapter concentrates mainly on the third question in order to respond more carefully to the second: what thematic elements emerge from the speeches, with the object of identifying the message that the author wished to deliver to the readers (or hearers) of his literary work through the assessment, positive or negative, of the kings of Judah. We shall consider, therefore, only the characters who interact with the sovereign verbally, whether individually or within a group. In addition, the analysis will also include some interlocutors who, although not intervening directly with a king,

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[21] C. Westermann, *Grundformen prophetischer Rede* (BEvtThA 31), Kaiser, München 1960, 66.

[22] Schniedewind, *Word*, 31.

help to provide a value-judgement on him and his reign[23] or on the monarchy in general[24].

The following table assembles the list of characters to whom the Chronicler attributes a speech. The arrangement begins with the king with whom they are correlated. In the table and in the following analysis, they are distinguished on the basis of the principal category to which they belong[25]. Six categories have been identified:

1. Supernatural beings: God and heavenly beings subject to him
2. Charismatic figures, subdivided into categories on the basis of the way in which they are described or presented: terms from the roots ראה, חזה, נבא, the expression אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים, or formulas which express the presence of the spirit of Yhwh
3. Figures belonging to the priestly class (priests proper or Levites)
4. People: as a whole or else individual subjects who do not belong to the previous categories
5. Kings of Israel
6. Foreign kings.

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[23] Oded and the chiefs of Ephraim in the time of Ahaz (2 Chr 28,9-13).

[24] Cyrus of Persia at the end of the Exile (2 Chr 36,22-23).

[25] The parentheses in the category column indicate that the character is described with this root in different texts from those cited in the fourth column. The parentheses referring to the characters in action during the reign of Ahaz indicate that they do not enter into relation with him directly, but it is possible to obtain a judgement on the monarch from their speeches.

Sovereign	Character			Relationship with the sovereign
	Name	Category	Text	
Saul	∅			
David	all Israel	people	1 Chr 11,1-2	Pos.
	Samuel	(נבא / ראה)	1 Chr 11,3	Pos.
	Amasai	spirit	1 Chr 12,19	Pos.
	God	supernatural	1 Chr 14,10 1 Chr 14,14-15 1 Chr 21,26-27 1 Chr 22,8-10 1 Chr 28,3	Pos. Pos. Pos. Neg. Neg.
	all the people	people	1 Chr 16,36	Pos.
	Nathan	נבא	1 Chr 17,4-14	Pos.
	"satan"	supernatural	1 Chr 21,1	Pos.
	Joab	other subjects	1 Chr 21,3	Neg.
	Gad	חזה	1 Chr 21,9-12 + 18-19	Pos.
	all the assembly	people	1 Chr 29,20	Pos.
Solomon	God	supernatural	1 Chr 22,8-10 1 Chr 28,6-7 2 Chr 1,7-12 2 Chr 7,12-22	Pos. Pos. Pos. Pos.
	Hiram of Tyre	foreign kings	2 Chr 2,10-15	Pos.
	Queen of Sheba	foreign kings	2 Chr 9,1-12	Pos.
	all the kings of the earth	foreign kings	2 Chr 9,23-24	Pos.

Rehoboam	Jeroboam + all Israel	other subjects, kings of Israel people	2 Chr 10,3-4 2 Chr 10,16	∅ Neg.
	elders (of Judah)	people	2 Chr 10,7	Neg.
	young men (of Judah)	people	2 Chr 10,10-11	Pos.
	Ahijah the Shilonite	(נבא)	2 Chr 10,15	Neg.
	Shemaiah Semaia	אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים נבא	2 Chr 11,2-4 2 Chr 12,5-8	Pos. Pos.
	chiefs of Israel (= of Judah)	people	2 Chr 12,6	Pos.
Abijah	∅			
Asa	Azariah, son of Oded	נבא, spirit	2 Chr 15,1-7	Pos.
	Hanani	ראה	2 Chr 16,7-9	Neg.
Jehoshaphat	Micaiah, son of Imlah	נבא, spirit	2 Chr 18,7-27	(Pos.)
	Jehu, son of Hanani	חזה	2 Chr 19,2-3	(Neg.)
	Jahaziel, son of Zechariah	spirit, priestly	2 Chr 20,14-17	Pos.
	Eliezer, son of Dodavahu	נבא	2 Chr 20,37	(Neg.)
Jehoram	Elijah	נבא	2 Chr 21,12-15	Neg.
Ahaziah	∅			
Athaliah	Jehoiada	priestly	2 Chr 23,1-15	Neg.
Joash			2 Chr 23,16-24,16	Pos.
	Zechariah, son of Jehoiada	spirit, priestly	2 Chr 24,20-22	Neg.
Amaziah	anonymous	אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים	2 Chr 25,7-10	Pos.
	anonymous	נבא	2 Chr 25,15-16	Neg.
	Joash of Israel	Kings of Israel	2 Chr 25,17-20	Neg.
Uzziah	Azariah and 80 priests	priestly	2 Chr 26,17-18	Neg.
Jotham	∅			
Ahaz	(Oded)	נבא	2 Chr 28,9-11	∅
	(chiefs of Ephraim)	people	2 Chr 28,12-13	∅
Hezekiah	Levites	priestly	2 Chr 29,18-19	Pos.
	Azariah, of the house of Zadok	priestly	2 Chr 31,10	Pos.
	Isaiah, son of Amoz	נבא	2 Chr 32,20	Pos.

Manasseh	God through visionaries	supernatural חזה	2 Chr 33,4 + 7-8 + 10 2 Chr 33,18	Neg.
Amon	∅			
Josiah	Hilkiah	priestly	2 Chr 34,15	Pos.
	Shaphan	other subjects	2 Chr 34,16-18	Pos.
	Huldah	נבא	2 Chr 34,22-28	Pos.
	Neco of Egypt	foreign kings	2 Chr 35,21-22	Neg.
	Jeremiah	(נבא)	2 Chr 35,25	(Pos.)
Jehoahaz	∅			
Jehoiakim	∅			
Jehoiachin	∅			
Zedekiah	Jeremiah	נבא	2 Chr 36,12	Neg.
	Nebuchadnezzar	foreign kings	2 Chr 36,13	Neg.
Exile	Jeremiah	(נבא)	2 Chr 36,21	Neg.
Return	Jeremiah	(נבא)	2 Chr 36,22	Pos.
	Cyrus of Persia	foreign kings	2 Chr 36,22-23	Pos.

It is noticeable that almost every sovereign is in relation with one or more characters. There are exceptions: Abijah and Jotham, whose integrity is affirmed without the contribution of other characters; Ahaziah and Amon, who reigned very briefly (one year the former, two the latter); Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, on account of the peculiar way in which the Chronicler treats the final events in the kingdom of Judah.

I. SUPERNATURAL BEINGS

A first group of characters is made up of beings of supernatural origin who enter the human world to influence the course of events by their superior power.

A. God

Yhwh is described as interlocutor on some occasions but with only three sovereigns: David, Solomon and Manasseh.

1. God, David and Solomon

The fundamental communication which is basic to the very existence of the monarchy and the Davidic dynasty is pronounced by Yhwh in the oracle which Nathan receives by night after the king's proposal to build a temple for the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chr 17,4-14). The event is so important for the Chronicler's narrative as to constitute the foundation on which the transition of power from David to his son, Solomon, will take place. In fact, some parts of the oracle are taken up and inserted into two speeches which David addresses to his son to prepare him for acceding to the throne (1 Chr 22 and 28). Therefore, even if the message is revealed through a character of the literary work (and so, strictly speaking, 1 Chr 17,4-14 should be part of section II of this chapter), it is necessary to anticipate the treatment of these texts which manifest our author's theological vision about the function of the monarchy in sacred history and in Yhwh's plan.

a. The foundation: the oracle to David through Nathan (1 Chr 17,4-14)

After conducting the Ark to Jerusalem during a festal liturgy (1 Chr 15-16) and by now settled in his own palace, David summons the prophet, Nathan, to reveal to him his intention to build a palace for Yhwh as well (17,1). Nathan approves at first (17,2) but, the following night, he receives a revelation from God (17,3).

1 Chr 17,4-14: «[4]Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Not you will build me the house to live in. [5]For I have not lived in a house since the day I brought out Israel to this very day, but I have lived in a tent and a tabernacle. [6]Wherever I have moved about among all Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people, saying: Why have you not built me a house of cedar? [7]Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel; [8]and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies before you; and I will make for you a name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. [9]I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall wear them down no more, as they did formerly, [10]from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will subdue all your enemies. Moreover, I declare to you that the Lord will build you a house. [11]When your days are fulfilled to go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. [12]He shall build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. [13]I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you, [14]but I will make him remain in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever».

The oracle is subdivided into two parts, corresponding to the two speeches which Nathan is called on to address to the king and which are introduced by two similar sending formulas. In the former, which comprises vv. 4b-6 (v. 4a: "Go and tell my servant David"), Yhwh communicates his rejection of David as builder of the temple, referring to the pre-monarchical history. The second, which is found in vv. 7b-14 (v. 7a: "Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David"), is subdivided in turn into two distinct parts thanks to the employment of an announcement formula (v. 10c: "I declare to you"): Yhwh first recalls the assistance he has already shown to David and assures him of its continuation in the future for him and for Israel (vv. 7b-10b); in what follows, he formulates a specific promise regarding the king's immediate descendant who will build the temple and be the object of especial divine favour (vv. 10c-14).

The passage is taken from 2 Sam 7,5-16 almost literally. However, there are some differences[26] which are not easy to explain. It is not necessary to see the Chronicler at work in all of them: some can be attributed to a different *Vorlage* of Sam compared with the MT which has come down to us or else to corruptions in the textual transmission of 2 Sam 7 or of 1 Chr 17. Some have even argued for the priority of the latter which would have preserved the more ancient version of the oracle whereas 2 Sam 7 would have undergone successive reworkings[27]. The present study assumes the hypothesis that the *Vorlage* of 1 Chr 17 could not have coincided with the text of 2 Sam 7 which has come down to us in the MT but, at the same time, recognises that the Chronicler has left traces of his theology through the modification or omission of some portions of text. Therefore, we shall focus only on those differences of content which provide elements for identifying the Chronicler's ideology with regard to the monarchy which is closely correlated with the criteria of judgement which he uses for the individual kings[28].

Two differences are noted between 1 Chr 17,4 and 2 Sam 7,5:

1 Chr 17,4: לֹא אַתָּה תִּבְנֶה־לִּי הַבַּיִת לָשָׁבֶת: "Not you will build me the house to live in".

2 Sam 7,5: הַאַתָּה תִּבְנֶה־לִּי בַּיִת לְשִׁבְתִּי: "Are you the one to build me a house to live in?"

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[26] A description of the differences, along with a classification and an attempt at explanation is found in M. Avioz, *Nathan's Prophecy in II Sam 7 and I Chr 17: Text, Context, and Meaning*, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 116 (2004) 542-554.

[27] Thus H. Van den Bussche, *Le texte de la prophétie de Nathan sur la dynastie davidique (II Sam., VII - I Chron., XVII)*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 24 (1948) 393-394; and H. Gese, *Der Davidsbund und die Zionserwählung*, in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 61 (1964) 22-23.

[28] We shall not dwell here on the clear links between the oracle of Nathan and Psalms 89 and 132. With regard to the former, the priority of 2 Sam 7 is generally recognised while it is difficult to establish whether it is prior or subsequent to the Chronicler (Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 673-674); in any case, the differences between 2 Sam 7 and 1 Chr 17 cannot be ascribed to a possible influence of Ps 89. As for Ps 132, it is certainly prior to the Chronicler who quotes it in 2 Chr 6,41-42, albeit in a form that does not coincide with the MT; in this case too, however, it has not influenced the changes in 1 Chr 17.

The Chronicler replaces the rhetorical question in 2 Sam with an apodictic statement: although both put the pronoun אַתָּה in an emphatic position, 1 Chr places greater attention on the fact that David will not be the builder of the temple with a peremptory prohibition. In 2 Sam, Yhwh formulates a question of principle, underlining the proper status of humans who do not have the right or ability to take the initiative on such a question; instead, in Chr, there is no question of the principle of the existence of a temple *per se*[29]. The Chronicler affirms this also with a second change: בַּיִת receives the article. This is not a hypothetical house of Yhwh, but it is *the* house; the decision for its building has already been established by God. Only the moment of its realisation has been deferred. Above all, who will be its author is laid down[30].

1 Chr 17,10: וְהִכְנַעְתִּי אֶת־כָּל־אוֹיְבֶיךָ: "I will subdue all your enemies".

2 Sam 7,11: וַהֲנִיחֹתִי לְךָ מִכָּל־אֹיְבֶיךָ: "I will give you rest from all your enemies".

The Chronicle replaces the verb נוח ("give rest") with כנע ("subdue"). We can identify a deliberate modification here because, in the introduction to the oracle, he removes an entire phrase containing the verb נוח:

1 Chr 17,1: «Now when David settled in his house, David said to the prophet Nathan».

2 Sam 7,1-2a: «[1]Now when the king was settled in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, [2]the king said to the prophet Nathan».

The change in 17,1 establishes a closer link between David's plan and the transfer of the Ark into Jerusalem which was recounted in the previous chs.15-16: David's decision is not deferred over time but portrayed as immediately following the episode described just before. In 2 Sam

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[29] Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 329-330; and P.C. Beentjes, *Transformations of Space and Time: Nathan's Oracle and David's Prayer in 1 Chronicles 17*, in A. Houtman et alii (eds.), *Sanctity of Time and Space in Tradition and Modernity* (JCP 1), Brill, Leiden et al. 1998, 35.

[30] Cf. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 667. According to Beentjes, the insertion of the article also has a proleptic function, that of presenting the central theme of the following chapters already in the oracle, especially 22-27 (*Transformations*, 35). Some commentators, such as Klein (*1 Chronicles*, 371), do not agree in attributing a theological character to the two differences presented here, preferring a text-critical explanation.

too, the oracle is preceded by the transfer of the Ark (2 Sam 6), but the formulation of 7,1 introduces a temporal element which separates the two events. However, the narrative structure is not the only explanation for the Chronicler's modification: it cannot be fortuitous that both the references to the verb נוח have been removed in comparison with the *Vorlage*. This twofold deletion of נוח is part of the Chronicler's theological vision of history: the period of "rest" given by Yhwh will be realised only with the building of the temple by Solomon. Thus, every reference to such rest in connection with David is passed over (v. 1) or modified (v. 10).

1 Chr 17,12: וְכֹנַנְתִּי אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: "And I will establish his throne forever".

2 Sam 7,13: וְכֹנַנְתִּי אֶת־כִּסֵּא מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם: "And I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever".

Solomon's sovereignty is described slightly differently: 2 Sam's "the throne of his kingdom" becomes more simply "his throne". If Klein finds the explanation in a *Vorlage* different from the MT of 2 Sam[31], Knoppers sees a deliberate change by the Chronicler with the aim of creating a chiasmus, with a correspondence between v. 12 and v. 14, it too modified (כִּסְאוֹ instead of כִּסְאֲךָ of 2 Sam 7,16)[32]:

a) v. 12: I will establish his throne forever
  b) v. 13: I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me[33]
    c) I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you
  b') v. 14: but I will confirm him in my house and in my kingdom forever
a') and his throne shall be established forever

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[31] Cf. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 371.

[32] Cf. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 667.

[33] This expression is not to be understood as a kind of divine adoption but is to be ascribed to the economic sphere where, at the moment of the drawing up of a contract concerning a patrimonial asset (land or habitation), the lessor, declaring himself "father", guaranteed the asset in question, while the tenant, in the role of "son", recognised the former's right of intervention in the case of a breach (cf. M. Girolami, *2Sam 7,14: origine, sviluppo e prima ricezione cristiana*, in *Rivista Biblica* 66 [2018] 592).

The centre of this chiasmus, v. 13b, contains two important changes with respect to the parallel text of 2 Sam 7,14-15:

> *1 Chr 17,13b:* «I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from him who was before you».
>
> *2 Sam 7,14b-15:* «[14]When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. [15]But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you».

First of all, the Chronicler deletes an entire clause regarding the sin of David's successor: in fact, the character of Solomon is wiped clean of errors and stains to turn him into an ideal figure so that to mention them in the oracle would have been out of place[34]. In the Deuteronomist history, David and Solomon are two very different characters and partly counterposed: the first is the founder of the dynasty and the example of a perfect relationship with Yhwh, not as a sign of a perfection without stain but, rather, as having the ability to return to him with sincere repentance. His son and successor, on the other hand, although beginning his reign with unequalled endowments of wisdom and justice and with an integrity that culminates in the construction and dedication of the temple, yielded subsequently to idolatry and despotism without returning to Yhwh any more. For the Chronicler, by contrast, the two kings are both models of faithfulness to God and integrity even if with different qualities. Purifying the Solomon of the narrative from his faults means matching the two sovereigns closely, making their period into one of prosperity and divine benevolence, an era in which the integrity and the *pietas* of the sovereign work to the advantage of all the people[35]. The second difference between 1 Chr 17,13 and the parallel text, namely the absence of the mention of the name of Saul, is along the same lines: the omittion of the name of the first king of Israel, of whom

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[34] Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 135-136.

[35] Thus G.N. Knoppers, *Changing History: Nathan's Oracle and the Structure of the Davidic Monarchy in Chronicles*, in M. Bar-Asher et alii (eds.), *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis and Its Language*, The Bialik Institute, Jerusalem 2007, 106*, who highlights powerfully the unity between David and Solomon.

our author says nothing except for his death (1 Chr 10), has the effect of further emphasising the link between David and Solomon, true founders of the kingdom[36].

> *1 Chr 17,14:* «I will make him remain in my house and in my kingdom forever, and his throne shall be established forever».
>
> *2 Sam 7,16:* «Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever».

The conclusion of the oracle has undergone a notable reworking which it is not possible to explain by text-critical arguments. First of all, the promise is no longer about the house of David but about the house of Yhwh: the Chronicle exploits the plurality of meanings of the word בַּיִת to shift the attention from the Davidic family to the dwelling of God. The מַמְלָכָה is no longer the earthly kingdom of David but the supreme kingdom of Yhwh. This is why the first promise of stability is removed: נֶאְמַן no longer makes sense if referring to two divine realities. Therefore, it is replaced with הַעֲמַדְתִּיהוּ: Solomon moves within realities which surpass him and into which he is introduced by God himself. Thus, the object of the blessing is no longer the dynasty and the kingdom of Israel but, rather, the person of Solomon who enjoys a particular closeness to the divinity. The second part of the verse contains a substantial modification: the promise of stability is not for the כִּסֵּא ("throne") of David, on which his successors will sit forever, but for the כִּסֵּא of Solomon. Consequently, the expression עַד־עוֹלָם ("forever") repeated twice, changes its meaning: in 2 Sam 7, it provided the guarantee of the continuity of the Davidic dynasty in the future; in 1 Chr 17, it refers to the entirety of Solomon's life alone[37]. With these modifications in its conclusion, the Chronicler restricts the significance of the oracle which no longer concerns all of David's descendants but only his immediate successor, that

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[36] We should note the opinion of Klein who claims that this is a purely textual question (*1 Chronicles*, 372-373); in support, he cites the hypothesis of P.K. McCarter, *II Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* (AYB 9), Doubleday, New York 1984, 194-195, who thinks that the name of Saul in 2 Sam 7,15 is secondary.

[37] Cf. Pomykala, *Davidic Dynasty*, 94-97. Note that in 1 Chr 28,4 עַד־עוֹלָם is employed with reference to the life of King David alone.

is, Solomon[38]. There are three key terms in this verse: בַּיִת, מַמְלָכָה and כִּסֵּא: in 2 Sam, they referred to David whereas, in 1 Chr, the first two refer to Yhwh and the third to Solomon. The relation between these three terms leads us to understand the Chronicler's royal theology.

First of all, we need to understand the relationship between מַמְלָכָה and כִּסֵּא. The kingdom is Yhwh's and transcends the borders of Israel, according to what David affirms in his final prayer: "Yours is the kingdom (מַמְלָכָה), O Lord, you are exalted as head above all; riches and honour come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all" (1 Chr 29,11-12). Solomon is inserted firmly into the kingship of God who has chosen him so that he can sit on the כִּסֵּא of Yhwh, as David himself declares: "He has chosen my son Solomon to sit upon the throne of the kingdom (מַלְכוּת) of the Lord over Israel" (1 Chr 28,5); but, whereas Yhwh's kingdom is universal, Solomon's power is restricted to just that portion of Yhwh's kingdom which extends over Israel and which is symbolised visually by the throne on which the earthly king sits[39]. Thus, at the moment of his accession to power, "Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord, succeeding his father David as king; he prospered, and all Israel obeyed him" (1 Chr 29,23). In the face of his splendour, the Queen of Sheba was to exclaim: "Blessed be the Lord your God who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the Lord your God. Because your God loved Israel and would establish them forever, he has made you king over them, that you may execute justice and righteousness" (2 Chr 9,8). From these statements, we can gather that, as earthly sovereign,

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[38] Cf., among others: R.L. Braun, *Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973) 507; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 133; and Beentjes, *Transformations*, 43-44.

[39] Correctly, citing Dan 2,44 and 7,22.27, Aalen notes that the term מַלְכוּת has not only spatial or institutional significance but can also refer to the community of the members of the people of Israel (S. Aalen, *«Reign» and «House» in the Kingdom of God in the Gospels*, in *New Testament Studies* 8 [1961-62] 234-235).

Solomon is the representative of Yhwh and governs the kingdom on his behalf[40]. Are Solomon's successors thus excluded from the divine promises? After his death, in the context of the war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, the concept of Yhwh's kingship entrusted to an earthly representative is taken up and extended to all of David's descendants through the mouth of the king Abijah, who addressed a speech to Jeroboam and his army: "Do you not know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom (מַמְלָכָה) over Israel forever (לְעוֹלָם) to David and his sons by a covenant of salt?" (2 Chr 13,5); "And now you think that you can withstand the kingdom (מַמְלָכָה) of Yhwh, [which is] in the hands of the sons of David" (2 Chr 13,8). The extending of the divine promises to the dynasty is also affirmed in the formulation of the reproof of Jehoram's conduct (2 Chr 21,7: "Yet the Lord would not destroy the house of David because of the covenant he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and his descendants forever - כָּל־הַיָּמִים"[41]) and on the occasion of Joash's accession to the throne against the usurper, Athaliah (2 Chr 23,3: "Here is the king's son: let him reign, as Yhwh promised concerning the sons of David"). If these statements seem to guarantee an unconditional eternity to the dynasty, others seem to connect the validity of the promises to the observance

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[40] Cf. also, R. Kuntzmann, *Le Trône de Dieu dans l'Oeuvre du Chroniste*, in M. Philonenko (ed.), *Le Trône de Dieu* (WUNT 69), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 1993, 22-26; and M. Lynch, *Monotheism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles: Temple, Priesthood, and Kingship in Post-Exilic Perspective* (FAT II 64), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2014, 237-241.

[41] D.F. Murray, *Dynasty, People, and the Future: The Message of Chronicles*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 58 (1993) 73-74, draws attention to the fact that the Chronicler modified the *Vorlage* in order to mention the dynasty explicitly instead of making a generic reference to Judah as a whole: "Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah, for the sake of David, his servant, since he had promised to give a lamp to him and his descendants forever" (2 Kgs 8,19). According to Murray, that would mean that the Chronicles would have a particular interest in the dynasty, though more limited compared with Sam-Kgs. However, he does not observe that the Chronicler passes over the other two occurrences in which the term נִיר is associated with the divine promise about descendants, that is, 1 Kgs 11,36 and 15,4. On 2 Chr 21,7 and on the meaning of נִיר in this context we shall return, below, p. 359.

of God's will by the sovereign. This is what David says to Solomon after having received Nathan's oracle: "Only, may the Lord grant you discretion and understanding, so that when he gives you charge over Israel you may keep the law of the Lord your God. Then you will prosper if you are careful to observe the statutes and the ordinances that the Lord commanded Moses for Israel. Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid or dismayed." (1 Chr 22,12-13). In a second speech, David recalls Nathan's oracle and adapts it to the faithfulness of Solomon: "I will establish his kingdom (מַלְכוּת) forever if he continues resolute in keeping my commandments and my ordinances, as he is today" (1 Chr 28,7); a little later, he tells his son of Yhwh's abandonment of him if he ceases to seek him: "And you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve him with single mind and willing heart; for the Lord searches every mind, and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will abandon you forever (לָעַד)" (1 Chr 28,9). During the prayer for the dedication of the temple, Solomon himself recalls the oracle and adapts its validity to the faithfulness of David's descendants: "Therefore, O Lord, God of Israel, keep for your servant, my father David, that which you promised him, saying: There shall never fail you a successor before me to sit on the throne of Israel, if only your children keep to their way, to walk in my law as you have walked before me." (2 Chr 6,16 // 1 Kgs 8,25). It is not easy to hold together the perspective limited to Solomon in the Chronicler's version of Nathan's oracle, the statements on the permanence of the promises to David's descendants and the texts which, by contrast, limit their validity to faithfulness in the search for Yhwh. Scholars do not agree: some of them affirm that, for the Chronicler, the divine promise is not absolute but conditional on the just behaviour of the sovereigns[42]; this is rejected

[42] For example, Japhet, *Ideology*, 460-467, esp. 465-467. She reconsiders the significance of the statements of 2 Chr 13,5; 21,7 and 23,3 claiming that the contexts into which the passages are inserted are passages in which the piety of Abijah is contrasted with the apostasy of Jeroboam, and the innocence of Joash with the wickedness of the Omride dynasty from Jehoram to Athaliah. Consequently, they would be positive statements conditioned to the contingent positivity of the king whose integrity is being affirmed without undermining

by those who maintain that the Davidic monarchy, associated with the divine kingship, also acquires an eternal character[43]. Some authors have gone so far as to identify an eschatological[44] or messianic[45] perspective in the theological vision of the Chronicler. However, as we have shown above, Nathan's oracle in 1 Chr 17 reconsiders the view of the dynasty in its *Vorlage*, and, although affirming the irrevocable nature of the divine promises, the Chronicler at no point announces or wishes for an immediate or future restoration of the Davidides. In recounting the destruction of the kingdom, he does not betray any particular interest in the fate of the last kings (2 Chr 36,1-21), by contrast with the Dtr who closes his work with the liberation of Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon (2 Kgs 25,27-30). On the contrary, the Chronicler replaces this event with the reestablishment of the people and the temple at the hands of a foreign king, Cyrus (2 Chr 36,22-23). In my view, the best summary of this question has been formulated by Williamson: we cannot affirm that

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the general theological vision of the provisional nature of the dynasty. Along the lines of the insignificance of the Davidic dynasty is R. Mason (*The Messiah in the Postexilic Old Testament Literature*, in J. Day [ed.], *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* [JSOTSup 270], Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield: 1998, 361-363): the expressions on the eternity of the divine promises would be reused in the Chronicler as a foundation for the theocratic power of his time.

[43] Cf. Avioz, *Nathan's Prophecy*, 51.

[44] Thus, among others, Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 162-163. S. Japhet, *Exile and Restoration in the Book of Chronicles*, in B. Becking-M.C.A. Korpel (eds.), *The Crisis of Israelite Religion: Transformation of Religious Tradition in Exilic and Post-Exilic Times* (OtSt 42), Brill, Leiden 1999, 44, correctly distinguishes between eschatology proper and openness to the future, which is not necessarily eschatological, and claims that, in the Chronicles, there is no trace of eschatology but an undoubted tension towards the future.

[45] The first to attribute a messianic vision to the Chronicler was C.F. Keil, *Biblischer Kommentar* über *die nachexilischen Geschichtsbücher: Chronik, Esra, Nehemia und Esther* (BC 5), Dörffling und Franke, Leipzig 1870, 163-164; in the XX cent., this position was restated by von Rad (*Geschichtsbild*, 123-124), followed, among others, by A.-M. Brunet, *La théologie du Chroniste. Théocratie et messianisme*, in J. Coppens et alii (eds.), *Sacra Pagina. Miscellanea Biblica Congressus Internationalis Catholici de Re Biblica* (BETL 12-13), 2 voll., J. Duculot, Gembloux 1959, vol. I, 384-397; and Newsome, *Toward a New Understanding*, 213-214.

the Chronicler has an eschatological vision; his attention is not directed to the future but to the present of his time. He communicates to his readers the message that the kingdom of Israel remains firm because it is Yhwh's kingdom, even without a descendant of David on the throne[46]. We cannot even speak of a messianic concept; however, we can concede that the Chronicler maintained the hope that one day the Davidic dynasty could be restored through the eternal character of the promise of God[47]. In any case, the question of the conditional nature of the dynastic promise is not to be tackled as a question isolated from

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[46] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 26-28. According to Janzen, the Chronicler would reflect a pro-Davidic faction which looked for the restoration of the dynasty at the head of a client monarchy subject to the Persians, a legal arrangement actually realised in other areas of the empire. In this way, she intends to explain the simultaneous presence of expressions in Chr favourable to the dynasty and to the validity of the divine promise concerning it, and the presentation of the power of Cyrus as coming from Yhwh (Janzen, *Chronicles*, 171-180).

[47] Thus H.G.M. Williamson, *The Dynastic Oracle in the Books of Cronicles* [sic], in A. Rofé-Y. Zakovitch (eds.), *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume. Essays on the Bible and Ancient World*, 3 voll., E. Rubinstein's Publishing House, Jerusalem 1985, vol. III, 318; and Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia*, 125-127. In particular, Williamson (*Dynastic Oracle*, 305) distinguishes between "messianic" and "royalist" concepts, defining the former as the expectation of a future king who would inaugurate an ideal epoch, and the latter as the hope for a return to power of the Davidic dynasty in a concrete historical arena. By contrast, Murray (*Dynasty*, 89-92) rejects Williamson's view, asserting, on the basis of three texts (the second appearance of Yhwh to Solomon, 2 Chr 7,12-22; the religious reform of Hezekiah, 2 Chr 29,5-11; 30,6-12; and the final destruction of the kingdom, 2 Chr 36,11-21), that the Chronicler was completely uninterested in the dynasty and concentrated solely on the survival of the people. In my opinion, this position does not take enough account of the overall nature of the work. M.J. Boda, *Gazing through the Cloud of Incense: Davidic Dynasty and Temple Community in the Chronicler's Perspective*, in P.S. Evans-T.F. Williams (eds.), *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2013, presents a balanced view: the scholar carefully examines the different positions of previous scholars and arrives at an original synthesis; he maintains that the Chronicler's vision holds together present and future, Davidic dynasty and priestly community. Therefore, it is possible to trace in it both the author's interest in the present and his eschatological concern in which both the Davidic dynasty and the temple find themselves. Perhaps Boda presents an excessive balance and a certain lack of courage to take a more coherent position without for this reason renouncing the theological nuances which the Chronicles present.

Israel's religious context, a separate fact concerning David alone; rather, it should be inserted within the relations between dynasty, temple and faithfulness to the Mosaic covenant, as part of a national concern in which the dynasty itself is inserted and, in this way, also relativised[48].

The second relationship which has to be investigated to understand the Chronicler's royal ideology is between the terms מַמְלָכָה and בַּיִת. The kingdom and the house belong to Yhwh who assures David that Solomon will be there forever. However, as we have seen, the מַמְלָכָה is also in the hands of the Davidic dynasty. We must, therefore, understand the relation that the Chronicler establishes between the sovereigns and the house of Yhwh, that is, the temple. 1 Chr 17,14's modification of 2 Sam 7,16 shifts the attention from the dynasty to the temple: the focus is on the house of Yhwh which is established as the area in which he exercises his kingship. In fact, the dynasty is promised to David in close connection with the building of the temple, inverting the terms of Dtr's perspective: the gift of the dynasty is not the result of David's desire to build the temple but is ordered to its construction[49]. That binds David and Solomon closely together, united by the divine choice centred on the building of the sanctuary[50]. Undeniably, the sovereign is somehow

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[48] Cf. G.N. Knoppers, *David's Relation to Moses: The Contexts, Content and Conditions of the Davidic Promises*, in J. Day (ed.), *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup 270), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1998, 101-106. 115-118): the scholar highlights the ambivalence of the Chronicler on the survival or not of the Davidic promises which is also found in Pss 89 and 132, a sign of the fact that the subject was already being debated among the biblical authors and that it was not held to be absolute but, rather connected with the principle of the national interest of Israel: "these considerations suggest that the sharp contrast between unconditional and conditional versions of the Davidic covenant has been overdrawn" (p. 116).

[49] Cf. W. Riley, *King and Cultus in Chronicles: Worship and the Reinterpretation of History* (JSOTSup 160), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1993, 71.

[50] Thus Braun (*Solomonic Apologetic*, 514-516), who considers the reigns of David and Solomon a unit, taking as an example 2 Chr 35,3-4: "[Josiah] said to the Levites who taught all Israel and who were holy to the Lord, 'Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon, son of David, king of Israel, built; you need no longer carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the Lord your God and his people Israel. [4]Make preparations by your ancestral houses by your divisions, following the written directions of King David of Israel and the written directions

inserted within the sacral dimension on account of God's decision to choose Solomon as builder of the temple. However, despite this close connection, the king does not take on priestly roles; rather, he too has to respect the boundaries imposed on those who do not belong to the tribe of Levi. If he transgresses these, he will incur a ritual penalty (as was to happen with Uzziah: 2 Chr 26,16-20). However, since the oracle is centred on Solomon rather than on his descendants, it is legitimate to ask whether, according to the Chronicler, this sacral dimension is limited to him alone as builder of the temple or whether it is extended to all the Davidic kings. Beentjes holds a very restrictive position, placing Nathan's oracle in relation to Solomon alone and in close connection with the sanctuary. He cites 1 Chr 28,20 for the view that the promise of divine assistance for Solomon is not aimed at keeping the royal power in his hands but is motivated only by the construction of the temple[51]: "David said further to his son Solomon: «Be strong and of good courage, and act. Do not be afraid or dismayed, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the Lord is finished»". On the contrary, Japhet identifies the Chronicler's intention to present the monarchy as a theocracy in which the king exercises the royal power of God on account of his sacral dimension represented by the temple[52]. Kuntzmann reaches the same conclusion, beginning with the identification of the throne of the king of Judah with the throne of Yhwh: in this way, the temporal power would be inserted within a theocratic structure in which the monarchy finds its true *raison d'être* in the temple[53]. Beentjes's position is extremely limiting, and the passage that he adduces in support of his thesis can be interpreted in an alternative way: inserted in David's speech

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of his son Solomon'".

[51] Beentjes, *Transformations*, 40.

[52] Japhet, *Ideology*, 403: "[Chronicles] equates monarchy with theocracy – the Israelite monarchy is YHWH's kingship over Israel". Similarly, J.E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (BIS 33), Brill, Leiden 1998, 141-144.

[53] Kuntzmann, *Trône*, 26. Along the same lines, but with a less structured argument: Mason, *Messiah*, 359-363.

on the building of the temple, it expresses the assurance of Yhwh's assistance in the execution of such a massive project, and is not to be considered as a limitation of his assistance in general, which Nathan's oracle had already guaranteed "forever", to the duration of Solomon's life. Moreover, Beentjes does not seem to give enough consideration to the work of the Chronicler as a whole since his narrative is actually centred on the temple and on the performance of worship within it. On the other hand, Japhet's and Kuntzmann's description of "theocracy" also seems excessive: certainly, the monarchical power derives from the divine will, and the king is bound to preserving the functioning of the sanctuary and the regularity of its worship. However, such aspects are common in the royal ideologies of the Ancient Near East. In ancient societies, religion did not exist apart from the state institutions[54], but that does not necessarily make them theocracies. In my opinion, Japhet and Kuntzmann do not hold two questions sufficiently apart: the type of monarchical power that emerges in the narrative, and the social structure inhabited by the author and the readers of Chronicles. Even if the management of power in Jerusalem at the end of the Persian period and the beginning of the Hellenistic epoch centred on the temple and the priestly families, this situation cannot be *sic et simpliciter* syphoned off into the book of Chronicles only because it derives from that environment. Even if the narrative could have had the aim of strengthening the power of the temple class, it still enjoys its own autonomy which should be respected. It is true that Chronicles rereads every event concerning the king in a religious key; but such a reading occurs throughout the Hebrew Bible, including the Deuteronomist source which was already interested in presenting not an annalistic history but a vision of the past beginning with the relationship between Yhwh and the people. In fact, in Chronicles, the power of the sovereign does not derive from the authority of the priests or is subject to it; the divine will is also expressed through characters outside the area of the cult, even outside

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[54] Cf. T. Vuk, *Religione, nazione e stato nel Vicino Oriente Antico e nella Bibbia*, in *Liber Annuus* 40 (1990) 108-128.

the chosen people. The reference to the divinity is obviously present but it is common to every society of the ancient world. The special nature of Chronicles by comparison with the rest of the Hebrew Bible and the Dtr in particular does not reside in the description of a theocracy but in the specific concern for the temple and its worship, a concern that is required of the king because vital for the maintenance of a correct relationship between the divinity and the people. This concern, then, becomes a criterion of judgement to establish the fidelity of the individual monarch to Yhwh and, ultimately, to his own *raison d'être*. Therefore, the relationship between מַמְלָכָה and בַּיִת does not result in a fusion or in an overlap in a theocratic sense but, rather, it is a dialectical relationship in which the power which the sovereign exercises is continually called on to return to the sources of its own existence, in particular through the respect of the בַּיִת יְהוָה, in order to be able to continue to enjoy the promises made by Yhwh to David.

b. Preparations for the building of the temple (1 Chr 22,8-10; 28,2-7)

1 Chr 22,2-29,9 lists the preparations made by King David for the building of the temple on the site where the angel of the Lord had appeared on the threshing floor of Ornan (1 Chr 21,1-22,1). The beginning and the end of this section, which has no parallels in the Deuteronomist work, contain two speeches of David which have a similar subject; in both, the king refers to the oracle received through Nathan (1 Chr 17,4-14). Here, there are value judgements both on David himself and on his son, Solomon, who will have to be concerned, physically, with the building of the house of God.

David's first speech is in 1 Chr 22,7-16 and is addressed to his son, Solomon: in it, the father declares that God has chosen Solomon to build the temple.

> *1 Chr 22,8-10:* «[8]But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'You have shed much blood and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to my name, because you have shed so much blood in my sight on the earth. [9] See, a son shall be born to you; he shall be a man of rest. I

will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. [10]He shall build a house for my name. He shall be a son to me, and I will be a father to him, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever».

Schniedewind has carefully identified in these three verses two direct references[55] (here, A-B) and four expansions (here, a-d) of the text of Nathan's oracle:

A. Yhwh' s prohibition in 22,8 recalls 17,4

B. The promise of a son in 22,10 repeats 17,12-13 almost word for word;

a. 22,8 amplifies 17,5-6, adding the reason for Yhwh's prohibition which remained unexpressed in the oracle;

b. 22,9 amplifies 17,11 specifying which of David's sons is the divine choice for his successor;

c. the link between the name, שְׁלֹמֹה, and the substantive, שָׁלוֹם, is an innovation of the Chronicler with respect to the previous tradition which gave no hint of it;

d. the promise to subdue the enemies in 17,10 is placed in the time of Solomon in 22,9, recovering the root נוח which the Chronicler had omitted compared with his *Vorlage*, 2 Sam 7,11.

For the purpose of the present study, it is clear that v. 8 is expressing a judgement on David's past, whereas vv. 9-10 are describing the future characteristics of Solomon and his kingdom.

In a second speech, in 1 Chr 28,2-10, the old king repeats the same content but addresses himself no longer to his son alone but also to the chiefs of the people, and, in this case, the divine speech is split into two parts: v. 3 announces the judgement on David; then, vv. 6-7 take up some characteristics of the reign of Solomon that have already been expressed. Between the two pieces of speech, in vv. 4-5, David summarises the story of his divine election through a kind of series of concentric circles: firstly, Yhwh chose Judah within the tribes of Israel;

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[55] Schniedewind, *Word*, 156. He identifies a further direct reference in 1 Chr 27,7, in which David recalls his own, rejected, desire to build a temple for Yhwh which was recounted in 1 Chr 17,1-2.

among the descendants of Judah, he chose the clan of Jesse; within the family of Jesse, he chose David; and, among the numerous sons of David, he chose Solomon.

First piece of speech
1 Chr 28,3: «But God said to me: "You shall not build a house for my name, for you are a warrior and have shed blood"».

Second piece of speech
1 Chr 28,6-7: «[6](The Lord) said to me: "It is your son Solomon who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be a son to me, and I will be a father to him. [7]I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues resolute in keeping my commandments and my ordinances, as he is today"».

Here too, there are clear echoes of Nathan's oracle[56]. As in 1 Chr 22,8-10, it is recalled chiefly with the purpose of repeating the reason why David cannot be the builder of the temple and to reaffirm the choice of Solomon as successor as king and builder of the house of Yhwh. In this case, the speech is also accompanied by a writing composed by Yhwh himself, containing the model of the temple (28,19), which David hands over to Solomon with the precise instructions for the execution of the works (28,11-18).

In these two speeches, the sovereign himself declares that he received the divine communication. Even if it is clear that this is the same episode as ch. 17, where Nathan acted as intermediary, it is still notable that David was aware that, through the prophet, he had experienced a personal contact with Yhwh who delivered him his own instructions in this way. The idea of a direct communication between the two is not original to the Chronicler since it is already present in the last words of David in 2 Sam 23,1-7 (in particular, the term, נְאֻם, "oracle", in v. 1, and the declaration in v. 2: "The spirit of the Lord speaks through me, his word is upon my tongue"[57]),

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[56] Cf. *ibid*, 156-160.

[57] According to D.V. Edelman, *David in Israelite Social Memory*, in D.V. Edelman-E. Ben Zvi (eds.), *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian & Early Hellenistic Periods. Social Memory and Imagination*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, 141-157, David is here invested with a real prophetic office which places him on the same plane as Moses, Elijah

and it is at the basis of the Davidic attribution of various psalms[58].

Despite this special relationship, David is not chosen to be the sovereign who builds the temple; on the contrary, it is Solomon who is chosen. The terminology of 28,6 is weighty: the verb בחר ("choose") has considerable theological significance, all the more so if one considers that Chronicles is the only Old Testament book in which the object of the divine choice is a king who follows David[59]. For the Chronicler, therefore, David and Solomon share the privilege of divine election, but the former is rejected from the task of building the temple. Both in 22,8 and in 28,3, the reason is David's being a man of war and a shedder of blood. This echoes Solomon's letter to King Hiram of Tyre in which David's successor indicated the continual presence of war as the reason why his father was not able to get on with the building of the house of Yhwh (1 Kgs 5,17-19). However, if the Dtr traced back this impossibility to contingencies (lack of time and not enough peace), the Chronicler treats it as a question of principle: David not only did not have the concrete possibility but did not even have permission to build the temple[60].

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and Elisha although not attributing to him the term נָבִיא.

[58] The presentation of David as author of Psalms is woven together with his figure as founder of the temple and organiser of the cult in Chronicles. According to E. Ben Zvi, *Psalms, Chronicles and Matters of Social Memory in the Early Second Temple Period: Some Introductory Considerations*, in F. Hartenstein-T. Willi (eds.), *Psalmen und Chronik* (FAT II 107), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2019, 245-246, the Jerusalem community recognised itself in the actions of David to the point of identifying itself with him, continuing his cultic and celebratory action while his royal function had ceased. According to A. Berlin, *Psalms in the Book of Chronicles*, in M. Bar-Asher et alii (eds.), *Shai le-Sara Japhet: Studies in the Bible, Its Exegesis and Its Language*, The Bialik Institute, Jerusalem 2007, 35*-36*, the use of psalms in the book of Chronicles serves the presentation of David as organiser of a divine model of heavenly liturgy which would later be realised in the temple constructed by Solomon and would then be continued in the post-Exilic temple.

[59] The verb בחר will later refer to Solomon also in 1 Chr 28,10 and 29,1. The importance of these occurrences has been indicated by R.L. Braun, *Solomon, the Chosen Temple Builder: The Significance of 1 Chronicles 22, 28, and 29 for the Theology of Chronicles*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95 (1976) 588-590.

[60] We should note that, in 2 Chr 2,2-3, recording Solomon's letter to King Hiram of Tyre, the Chronicler modifies the text of Dtr, omitting the reason why David did not proceed with

To his warlike activity, the Chronicler adds the shedding of blood which is absent in 1 Kgs and probably comes from Num 35,33-34, according to which the presence of blood pollutes the country and is a grave affront to the presence of God in the midst of his people. The twofold reason (wars and blood) that renders David unsuitable for building the sacred place is not so linear as could appear at first sight: some scholars see here two expressions that are substantially synonymous while others distinguish them, placing the shedding of blood outside the military sphere. The interpretation of this passage is crucial for understanding the Chronicler's judgement on King David.

Scholars who combine the two reasons produce different arguments. Rudolph held that the problem was ethical in nature so that, on account of the many wars he engaged in, David found himself in a situation of moral culpability[61]. Williamson, followed by McKenzie, totally rejects this view which he reckons to be anachronistic and irrelevant, and, for the most part, inapplicable to a literary work in which many warlike events are ordered directly by God. According to these authors, instead, the Chronicler would be characterising David as in the condition of ritual impurity envisaged by the Mosaic legislation. Thus, even if David fought battles under divine orders (e.g., 1 Chr 14,10.14-15; 18,6.13), the very fact of the discharge of blood and its shedding on the earth rendered him unable to perform cultic acts, and so also the building of the temple[62]. Japhet points out the need for the temple builder to be a "man of rest" (this is her translation of אִישׁ מְנוּחָה of 1 Chr 22,9). David was the bearer of a "paradoxical and tragical flaw" since he had carried out wars in the name of Yhwh and on his orders, thus fulfilling his will, but, at the same time, the blood shed in these wars had incurred a condition of distance from the sacred which did not permit him to build the house of God. By

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the construction of the temple.

[61] Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 151.

[62] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 154; and S.L. McKenzie, *Why Didn't David Build the Temple? The History of a Biblical Tradition*, in D.J.A. Clines-P.R. Davies (eds.), *Worship and the Hebrew Bible. Essays in Honor of John T. Willis* (JSOTSup 284), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999, 220-221.

contrast with Williamson, Japhet notes an anti-militaristic tendency in the Chronicler who, although not stigmatising war in itself, identifies as an ideal time the period of peace and tranquillity (שָׁלוֹם וָשֶׁקֶט of 1 Chr 22,9; cf. 2 Chr 16,9) which Yhwh is going to guarantee to Solomon[63]. Murray initially comments that, in the Chronicles, the verb שׁפך with object דָּמִים/דָּם never applies to killings in war. However, he concedes that it is necessary to include this case too in the condition of impurity on the basis of an episode recounted in Num 31,19-24 in which soldiers who have entered into contact with corpses are bound to a ritual of purification. Furthermore, according to Num 35,33-34, by absorbing blood, the land itself becomes contaminated[64]. After a careful examination of the various possibilities of interpretation, Knoppers formulates the hypothesis (which he himself admits to be imperfect) that, in the face of the difficulty in providing a theological foundation for the fact that the pious and chosen king was not also the builder of the temple, the Chronicler would have created an *ad hoc* argument, valid for David alone: since the ideal king is a man of peace, it was impossible for David to find purification from the blood shed in war; the soldiers of the episode in Num 31,19-24 returned pure after seven days of isolation outside the camp of Israel, but that was not possible for David who had shed "much blood" (22,8: דָּם לָרֹב and דָּמִים רַבִּים) and so was stained with an impurity that could not be reconciled with the physiognomy of the ideal king, and so with the prerogative of building the sanctuary[65].

Other scholars, however, separate military activity and shedding of blood and offer various interpretations, especially of the latter. Micheel sees an intertextual reference to the Deuteronomist history, specifically to the killing of Uriah, the Hittite (2 Sam 11-12), an event directly linked to Nathan's oracle and the birth of Solomon[66]. Abadie adopts this

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[63] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 397-398.

[64] D.F. Murray, *Under YHWH's Veto: David as Shedder of Blood in Chronicles*, in *Biblica* 82 (2001) 472-476.

[65] Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10-29*, 772-775.

[66] Micheel, *Seher- und Propheten-Überlieferung*, 16.

position, extending the reference to blood to all the acts of violence committed during David's reign in general, even if not recounted by the Chronicler[67]. Mason sees an allusion to the curse pronounced by Shimei (אִישׁ הַדָּמִים: 2 Sam 16,7) in the context of David's flight from Jerusalem on account of the revolt of Absalom[68]. Dirksen maintains that it does not make sense to identify the precise equivalent of the shedding of blood: the Chronicler has sought to adapt 1 Kgs 5,17 to his own theological aims in order to give a frame of significance to the historic fact of the construction of the temple by Solomon[69]. Responding to Dirksen, the weakness of whose argument he underlines, Kelly seeks the shedding of blood in the narrative of the Chronicler and identifies it in the death of the innocent Israelites as punishment for the census of 1 Chr 21; the connection with the wars mentioned together with the blood would be provided by the (presumably) military objective[70] of the census itself. Moreover, Kelly points out that the expression "shedding blood" is not to be understood solely in a literal sense: in Ezek 22,4.9.12-13 it indicates the responsibility for the death of innocent people even without a killing that involves the physical effusion of blood, so that it can also be applied to a case of pestilence, as in 1 Chr 21[71]. Klein rejects the claims of Williamson and Japhet about David's ritual impurity: if the king had really been unable to perform acts of worship, he could not even have built an altar and performed sacrifices on Ornan's threshing floor (1 Chr

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[67] P. Abadie, *Pérennité dynastique ou éternité du temple? Deux lectures d'un même oracle (2 S 7 et 1 Ch 17)*, in C. Focant-W. André (eds.), *Analyse narrative et Bible. Deuxième colloque international du RRENAB, Louvain-la-Neuve, avril 2004* (BETL 191), Leuven University Press, Leuven 2005, 126-127.

[68] Mason, *Preaching*, 21.

[69] P.B. Dirksen, *Why was David Disqualified as Temple Builder? The Meaning of 1 Chronicles 22.8*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 70 (1996) 54.

[70] 2 Chr 21 does not indicate the reason why David intends to carry out the census; the hypothesis that it has a military objective derives from the account of 1 Chr 27. However, 2 Chr 2,16 links David's census with a subsequent one carried out by Solomon for economic reasons. Thus, the uncertainty remains.

[71] B.E. Kelly, *David's Disqualification in 1 Chronicles 22.8: A Response to Piet B. Dirksen*, in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 80 (1998) 58-60.

21,26-28). Klein, on the other hand, prefers to accept Kelly's arguments and comes to the conclusion to distinguish the two reasons of 1 Chr 22,8: David's engagement in war would be only the historical contingency which removed from him the concrete possibility of building the temple, similarly to what Solomon declares in 1 Kgs 5,17-19, not a question of principle which renders him guilty or impure; the shedding of blood, on the other hand, is to be referred to the death of the innocent Israelites on account of the plague following the census, polluting the soil, following Num 35,33-34[72]. Although distinguishing the two reasons, Amar furnishes both with a moral connotation: David undertook unnecessary wars, going beyond the limits of the will of Yhwh, and killed innocent people because of the sin of the census[73].

In my opinion and following Japhet's insight, the interpretation of the rebuff to David cannot be made without considering the parallel and antithetical positive description of Solomon as אִישׁ מְנוּחָה, which makes him suitable to construct the temple. Consequently, the Chronicler's judgement on David should be closely compared with his judgement on Solomon. In order to describe the fundamental characteristic of the latter, the Chronicler uses a term constructed on the root נוח. We have already seen that our author had removed the references to this root in the text and in the context of Nathan's oracle: הֵנִיחַ of 2 Sam 7,1 is omitted in the parallel passage of 1 Chr 17,1, while the root נוח of 2 Sam 7,11 (הֲנִיחֹתִי) is replaced in 1 Chr 17,10 with a *hiphil* form of כנע, that is, "subdue" (הַכְנַעְתִּי). The root נוח, associated with liberation from enemies is a familiar concept in the Deuteronomist history, particularly in the *hiphil* form of the verb and in the substantive derived from it, מְנוּחָה. In Deut 12,8-11, Moses announced to the Israelites in the desert the advent of an epoch in which they would enter into possession of the land and God would give them rest (הֵנִיחַ, 12,10) from their enemies, and then they could present their offerings to Yhwh in the "place of rest" (מְנוּחָה,

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[72] Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 435-436.

[73] I. Amar, *The Twofold Literary Structure of the Chronistic David narrative (1 Chr 11-29)*, in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 30 (2016) 274-276.

12,9) which he had chosen for this purpose. In the book of Joshua, this rest corresponds to the elimination and subjection of enemies thanks to the divine help in the conquest of the land (1,13.15; 21,44; 22,4; 23,1). Even after the conquest of Canaan, however, since some local peoples remained (cf. Jdg 2,3.14-15.20-23; 3,1-6), further divine interventions were made necessary in order for Israel to have rest. In the history of the monarchy, David obtains rest from his enemies, as is indicated in the account of Nathan's oracle: 2 Sam 7,1.11. Moreover, in 1 Kgs 8,56, a text that has no equivalent in Chronicles, during the rite of the dedication of the temple, Solomon blesses Yhwh for having granted the chosen people peace from their enemies: since he is at the beginning of his reign and since the building of the temple is the fulfilment of Nathan's prophecy, it is implied that this divine gift was already granted during his father's reign. The changes to Nathan's oracle and Solomon's prayer, and the description of Solomon as אִישׁ מְנוּחָה, manifest the Chronicler's intention to present not David but rather his son as the sovereign through whom the "rest" is achieved[74]. Functional to this purpose in the same verse, 1 Chr 22,9, is the underlining of the assonance between the name שְׁלֹמֹה and the term שָׁלוֹם ("peace"), the only passage in the Hebrew Bible where these two are found together.

But what is this rest? In fact, the Chronicler does not completely deny David liberation from his enemies; on the contrary, he affirms it precisely through the words of the king in the same ch. 22 as foundation for being able to proceed with the building of the temple:

> *1 Chr 22,18-19:* «[18]"Is not the Lord your God with you? Has he not given you peace on every side? For he has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the Lord and his people. [19]Now set your mind and heart to seek the Lord your God. Go and build the sanctuary of the Lord God so that the ark of the covenant

[74] On the basis of the distinction between David, "man of war", and Solomon, "man of peace", Schweitzer maintains the superiority of the latter over the former: David would be a Utopian figure, actor in a desired but not perfect world, whereas Solomon would be an ideal figure in whom are realised to the full the characteristics of the sovereign according to the will of Yhwh (*Reading Utopia*, 79-88, esp. 81-82).

of the Lord and the holy vessels of God may be brought into a house built for the name of the Lord"».

On the one hand, in 1 Chr 22,18, the Chronicler declares that the rest was already given by God at the time of David, thus fulfilling the ancient promises to Israel[75]; on the other hand, in 1 Chr 17 and 1 Chr 22,8-10, he delays its realisation to the reign of Solomon. That means that in his view there are several types of rest with different characteristics, and liberation from enemies is only one of the ways this can be fulfilled. As the work continues, in some passages peculiar to the Chronicler, God will also grant temporary pauses in fighting with enemies, to Asa (2 Chr 14,5-6; 15,15), to Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20,30) and to Hezekiah[76] (2 Chr 32,22); so this type of rest is not the fundamental characteristic which renders Solomon unique and elect.

Another passage containing the root נוח is 1 Chr 23,25. The context is cultic: David assembles the Levites, counts them, divides them into groups of service on the basis of their clan and family, and establishes their functions.

1 Chr 23,25-26: «[25]For David said: "The Lord, the God of Israel, has given rest to his people; and he resides in Jerusalem forever. [26]And so the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the things for its service"».

Here too, the rest is linked implicitly to liberation from enemies to which is added the transfer of the Exodic tent to Jerusalem, enabling Yhwh himself to have stability. Since, as a result of the building of the sanctuary, the tent that had accompanied the Israelites in the desert had found a permanent site, it was now possible for the Levites to find relief from the burden of transporting it. In fact, this is the realisation of

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[75] The syntagma at the end of v. 18, וְנִכְבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה ("the land is subdued before the Lord and his people"), is taken from Num 32,22. Cf. also the wish for peace as liberation from enemies expressed by Amasai in 1 Chr 12,19.

[76] With regard to this last citation, the MT presents a probable textual corruption: וַיְנַהֵלֵם which can be emended to וַיָּנַח לָהֶם on the basis of the LXX: καὶ κατέπαυσεν αὐτους (cf. 2 Chr 15,15).

Deut 12,8-11 which thus begins to be fulfilled already with David. As in 1 Chr 22,18, the rest given by the defeat of enemies is the starting point for the stability of Yhwh through the building of the temple. Therefore, a first part of the rest is already realised with David. The מְנוּחָה, characteristic of Solomon alone, includes liberation from enemies but does not coincide with it completely[77].

In 1 Chr 28,2, immediately before the reprise of the divine communication to David, the term מְנוּחָה appears, not in direct connection with Solomon nor with reference to liberation from enemies but, rather in association with the Ark:

> *1 Chr 28,2:* «Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had planned to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God; and I made preparations for building"».

In this passage, peculiar to the Chronicler, the term מְנוּחָה is associated with the physical place where the house of God is located. According to 1 Chr 6,31-32, the Ark had already found temporary rest in the tent erected by David in Jerusalem[78]; now, with Solomon, the location was to become definitive. The expression, בֵּית מְנוּחָה of 1 Chr 28,2, a unique formulation within the Bible[79], can be compared with Ps 132,8.14 where

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[77] To remedy the tension between the deferring of the rest to Solomon and the two statements of 1 Chr 22,18 and 23,25, Mosis maintains the hypothesis that the latter are secondary additions to the original text of Chronicles (*Untersuchungen*, 95-96, notes 43 and 45). However, although taken up subsequently by other scholars (e.g., I. Gabriel, *Friede* über *Israel: Eine Untersuchung zur Friedenstheologie in Chronik I 10-II 36* [ÖBS 10], Klosterneuburg: Österreicsches Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1990, 84-87), this position is conjectural and does not enable us to grasp the theological vision of the Chronicler which is only apparently contradictory.

[78] "These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the Lord, after the ark came to rest there (מִמָּנוֹחַ). They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the Lord in Jerusalem; and they performed their service in due order".

[79] Cf. A. Hurvitz, *Terms and Epithets Relating to the Jerusalem Temple Compound in the Book of Chronicles: The Linguistic Aspects*, in D.P. Wright et alii (eds.), *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in*

the transporting of the Ark to Mount Zion is portrayed as an arrival at "rest", not only of the Ark but of Yhwh himself. Furthermore, in the same psalm, at v. 7, the temple is described as "his footstool", as it is here. The connection between Ps 132 and the work of the Chronicler will be made explicit in 2 Chr 6,41-42, which is an almost literal quotation of Ps 132,8-10, with the difference that, instead of מְנוּחָה, the Chronicler employs לְנוּחֶךָ, the *qal* infinitive construct of the same root נוח[80]. Some scholars hold that the use of מְנוּחָה in 1 Chr 28,2 is without links with אִישׁ מְנוּחָה of 22,8: 1 Chr 22,8 would, therefore, be in debt to the historiographical reading of rest as liberation from enemies whereas 1 Chr 28,2 would have been influenced by the cultic sphere and by its image of the temple as place of Yhwh's rest. We would thus have two distinct theological *loci* without any connection between them[81]. On the

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Honor of Jacob Milgrom, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 1995, 174-177.

[80] H.G.M. Williamson, *The Use of Psalm 132 at 2 Chronicles 6:41-42*, in F. Hartenstein-T. Willi (eds.), *Psalmen und Chronik* (FAT II 107), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2019, 415-417, argues that the Chronicler deliberately replaced מְנוּחָה with נוח for ideological motives: since the former has a specific theological significance, the biblical author would have avoided attributing it to Yhwh in person, preferring a synonym without the same weight. In 1 Chr 28,2, on the other hand, he would have avoided the association by affirming that the מְנוּחָה concerns the Ark, not the person of Yhwh. However, Williamson's argument has wholly hypothetical foundations and fails to take account of two factors: at the time of the Chronicler, the texts that were later to form the Hebrew Bible were still fluid. So, faced with these kinds of differences, we can never exclude that the origin is a *Vorlage* different from the MT, in this case of Ps 132, and that requires prudence in using them for arguments based on content. Secondly, it appears more logical that clear changes for theological motives are made through the use of completely different terms formed from other roots. In this case, however, we find ourselves with two terms, the one a deverbal substantive from the *hiphil*, the other a *qal* infinitive of the same verb with the root נוח. Consequently, my view is that the Chronicler did not wish to make a deliberate change of a theological character, and that the explanation for this difference is to be found in the area of textual history (cf. P.R. Ackroyd, *I & II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah* (TBC), SCM Press, London 1973, 113).

[81] So, for example, Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 487, and Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 519-520. In fact, Japhet considers theologically important only the מְנוּחָה deriving from the victory over enemies and from the occupation of the Promised Land (*Ideology*, 391-393) and, in my opinion, does not have an adequate grasp of the importance of the correlation with the divine rest and the cult.

contrary, I argue that the use of the root נוח by the Chronicler expresses the intention to link their military and cultic meanings: the author expressly places them in a reciprocal relationship in order to combine them and arrive at a supplementary theological meaning, developing the direction of Deut 12,8-11, which already associated liberation from enemies, and construction of the sanctuary. Also, we cannot exclude a polemical intention in response to more or less contemporary positions that tended to deny the presence of Yhwh in the temple, as in so-called Trito-Isaiah[82].

If we analyse the use of the term מְנוּחָה in the Hebrew Bible, we can note that, already before the Chronicler, it was not necessarily correlated with liberation from enemies. In the book of Micah, it is connected with justice in such a way that the prophet affirms that the people have been deprived of the מְנוּחָה because of social conflicts and false prophets (Mic 2,6-11, in particular v. 10). In 2 Sam 14,17 also, a text absent in the Chronicler, since it belongs to the Absalom cycle, the מְנוּחָה is one result of the correct administration of justice by the king, in this case, David. In the prophecy of Is 11,10, held to be an addition later than the historical Isaiah, it is linked once again to David's descendants and concerns the future prosperity of the dynasty of Jesse. In Is 32,18, a text that is very probably post-Exilic, the מְנוּחָה is the object of a promise that is much wider than liberation from enemies, a promise that Yhwh pronounces over Israel for the future, and it is connected with justice as social order, as well as with aspects of cosmic peace (32,15-20). The true מְנוּחָה, in fact, is believed to be a gift of God: in Num 10,33, a text which is also related with the Ps 132 cited by the Chronicler[83], the Ark of the Covenant of Yhwh moves through the desert to seek a מְנוּחָה for the

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[82] Thus in Is 66,1, where the מְנוּחָה is denied in the form of a rhetorical question: "What is my מְנוּחָה ?".

[83] This correlation is provided by the use of מְנוּחָה in Num 10,33 and Ps 132,8.14, and of the battle cry קוּמָה ("arise/rise") in Num 10,35 and Ps 132,8 (cf. R. Müller, *David und die Lade, Zion und der Gesabte. Geschichte und Zukunft des Königtums nach Ps 132*, in F. Hartenstein-T. Willi (eds.), *Psalmen und Chronik* (FAT II 107), Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2019, 210-211).

people of Israel; in Ps 95,11, however, Yhwh denies rest to the people who are unfaithful and tempting God. Therefore, there is not only a מְנוּחָה of Yhwh or the Ark but also a מְנוּחָה of the people which does not depend on victory over enemies and which Yhwh himself seeks to be able to give to Israel at the appropriate moment. As we can see, the use of the root נוח oscillates between a local, concrete significance, as in Num 10,33, and an abstract meaning, indicating a situation or condition in which the people find itself, as in Mic 2,10 and Is 32,18. In this play on meanings, Ps 95,11 occupies an intermediate position, since the rest denied in the divine oracle can be interpreted both in a spatial sense, following Numbers, and in an abstract sense, as, later, in the Letter to the Hebrews[84]. The Chronicler finds himself the inheritor of this plurality of meanings and takes them up, bringing them together, recalling them and combining them in a masterly composition in order to locate the full realisation of the מְנוּחָה in the construction of the sanctuary under the reign of Solomon:

1. 1 Chr 22,9 shows that for the reign of Solomon too the liberation from enemies promised with Moses and already realised in the time of David is confirmed (1 Chr 22,18 and 23,25);
2. 1 Chr 22,18-19 and 23,25 link the liberation from enemies and the building of the house of Yhwh, declaring that the promise of Deut 12, 8-11 has been fulfilled;
3. 1 Chr 28,2 and the quotation of Ps 132,8 in 2 Chr 6,41 identify in the temple constructed by Solomon the place where Yhwh himself finds his own rest (בֵּית מְנוּחָה): after generations of wandering, the Ark stops definitively in the place chosen by God in the midst of his people;
4. on the basis of Num 10,33 and Ps 95,11, the consequence is that the moment of the true מְנוּחָה for the people of God has arrived: as 1 Chr 22,8 says, Solomon is revealed as the אִישׁ מְנוּחָה *par excellence*, under whose rule the ancient promises are realised for Israel in full.

Thus, the time of Solomon is understood by the Chronicler as the period of rest promised forever by Yhwh. Not David but his descendant,

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[84] The whole of the argument of Heb 3,7-4,16 hinges on this interpretation of "God's rest".

whom Yhwh has chosen, is the man of the fullness of rest and peace. After Solomon, rest will be given again through victory over enemies which, in its turn, will depend on the readiness of the king and the people to seek Yhwh, maintaining the performance of the temple worship and obeying his will[85]. I agree, therefore, with Klein about the distinction between the two reasons why the founder of the dynasty is not accepted as builder of the temple; he was not the man of מְנוּחָה for two separate reasons.

1. On the one hand, historical contingency had inevitably put David in the position of having to engage in wars. It is anachronistic to suppose a condemnation of war as such. Not only because it was commanded by Yhwh but also because war itself is connected both with the temple and with Solomon. Indeed, 1 Chr 18,8 claims a close connection between the spoils of war obtained in the victory against the Aramaeans and the construction of the temple and its furniture: if it were true that war rendered David impure and unsuitable, it would have also polluted this booty, rendering it unusable for sacred purposes. Moreover, 2 Chr 8,1-6 declares that Solomon himself will be the author of wars and the builder of fortifications for a military purpose after the dedication of the temple. War is, therefore, not opposed to the מְנוּחָה in principle; it was only an historical contingency that limited it to the reign of David.

2. The second reason for the rejection of David as builder does not have the nature of a contingency but concerns the moral behaviour of David who had committed acts of violence in his exercise of the royal power. By contrast with various scholars, I believe that it is unnecessary to seek a specific episode which identifies the "shedding of blood". In his work, the Chronicler often alludes to a plurality of events which he does not recount, assuming the reader is already fully aware of them so that; in this terse expression too, we can see the whole series of David's errors, miscalculations and sinful actions which had already been

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[85] For the value of the concept of rest in the story subsequent to Solomon, cf., in particular, B.E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (JSOTSup 211), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1996, 198.

recounted in the older historiographical work. By contrast, the figure of Solomon is wiped clean of every association with wars and blood; the account of his rising to the throne does not allude to the Dtr, but is deliberately and completely modified, omitting the royal anointing of Adonijah and the violent elimination of him and his followers, events that are replaced with a linear succession, communicated by David to the heads of the people as already decided unequivocally (1 Chr 28) and accepted by them without discussion while "all the sons of King David" also submit spontaneously (1 Chr 29,24).

It could be objected that this position is too vague and avoids explaining more adequately the deep reason why Yhwh denies David permission to build the temple. In fact, however, the Chronicler does not spell it out, and the scholar can only construct hypotheses starting from other elements furnished by the author. Here, in my opinion, there comes into play an aspect which is noted in the section of chaps. 22-29 on the preparation for the construction of the temple which, in 1 Chr, coincides with the preparation for Solomon's succession. The transition of the throne from David to his son is presented by the Chronicler in the same terms and with the same structure as those in the handing over of the baton from Moses to Joshua, as described in Deut 31 and taken up in Josh 1 in the form of a discourse addressed directly by Yhwh to the new leader of Israel[86]. That is part of a broader series of correspondences[87] between the figure of Moses and the David of Chronicles, among

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[86] Already noted by N. Lohfink, *Die deuteronomistische Darstellung des Übergangs der Führung Israels von Moses auf Josue: Ein Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Theologie des Amtes*, in *Scholastik* 37 (1962) 39, the link between the Moses-Joshua and David-Solomon successions was later studied further by McCarthy from the point of view of literary genre (D.J. McCarthy, *An Installation Genre?*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 90 [1971] 31-41), and by H.G.M. Williamson, *The Accession of Solomon in the Book of Chronicles*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976) 351-356, and Braun, *Solomon*, 568-588, for the lexical and phraseological contacts.

[87] S.J. De Vries, *Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107 (1988) 620-635, has carefully analysed the ways with which the juridical formulae which, in the Pentateuch, serve to ascribe the laws to the authority of Moses, are taken up and referred to David, especially in 1 Chr 23-28, equating the king with the great

which stands out, at the end of this section, the ban on completing the mission begun by the will of Yhwh: just as Moses receives the command to lead the people out of Egypt to the Promised Land but will not enter it, so David, concerned for the location of the Ark and blessed by God for this reason, will not be able to construct the temple in honour of Yhwh. In my view, the vagueness of the justification for this ban is also present in these correspondences. As for Moses, if Num 20,12 identifies his fault in a lack of faith in the second account of the miracle of the waters of Meriba, according to Deut 1,37-38 it occurred at the moment of

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legislator with regard the foundation of the temple cult. Auld (*Kings*, 128-146) has searched in the texts of Sam-Kgs and Chr all the explicit references to Moses and David to highlight the use the Chronicler makes of the figure of the liberator of the Exodus; even if the aim of his study was the reconstruction of a presumed original text which would have been at the base of the two historical works, nevertheless, it had the merit of indicating the role of the references to Moses for the formulation of the Chr's judgement on the kings subsequent to Solomon, in particular the joint mention of Moses and David for the positive assessment of Hezekiah (*Kings*, 138-139). Knoppers (*David's Relation*, 101-106. 115-118) has studied the relationship between Mosaic covenant and Davidic promises in Sam-Kgs, Chr and Pss 89 and 132. Mason (*Messiah*, 360) has identified some narratival correspondences: Yhwh's handing over of a model for the construction of the tent in the desert (Ex 25,9.40) and of the temple (1 Chr 28,19); and the collection of spontaneous offerings from among the people for the decoration of the tent (Ex 35,4-29) and the temple (1 Chr 29,5b-9). Dwelling particularly on the handing over of the model of the temple and on the cultic legislation of 1 Chr 23-28, Hutzli came to the conclusion that the Chronicler represents David as a new Moses who completes and, in some respects, replaces the ancient legislator (J. Hutzli, *David in the Role of a Second Moses: The Revelation of the Temple-Model [tabnît] in 1 Chronicles 28*, in J. Jeon-L.C. Jonker [eds.], *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible* [BZAW 528], De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston [MA] 2021, 332-336). Willi recognises the newness brought by David with respect to the Mosaic cult but prefers to conceive it, not in terms of a replacement but of one of his different concretisations within a changed historical context (T. Willi, *Grundgeschichte und Chronik: Kontinuität und Diskontinuität in Altisraels Geschichtsschreibung*, in J. Jeon-L.C. Jonker [eds.], *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible* [BZAW 528], De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston [MA] 2021, 245-249. 255-256). Moreover, if, as Lorenzin argues, the replacement of נוח with כנע in 1 Chr 17,10 is an example of the application of the hermeneutic technique of the *gezerah shawah* which links this verse with Deut 9,3, we would have another connection between the promise of the Mosaic period and the building of the Jerusalem temple (T. Lorenzin, *L'uso della regola ermeneutica gezerah shawah nel Cronista*, in *Rivista Biblica* 44 [1996] 66).

the rebellion of the people who were frightened after the exploration of Canaan by the spies. In both cases, however, this fault is not described with precision, and the punishment seems disproportionate to the importance of the action. This vagueness is found again in connection with David's fault: he is אִישׁ מִלְחָמוֹת, but the wars were willed by Yhwh; he shed blood, but the context of reference is not specified. In fact, like the pair Moses-Joshua, David and Solomon are in some way complementary: two reigns with opposing characteristics but both necessary for fulfilling the divine plan, the one by liberating Israel from her enemies and establishing the foundations for the constitution of the authentic cult of Yhwh, and the other realising this cult and the מְנוּחָה promised to Israel. Therefore, the dynamic which links the first two kings of the dynasty indissolubly becomes the same as that which had made Moses and Joshua inseparable: the former, the great legislator, the man of faith who spoke with God face to face, gave shape to the people with laws and norms and organised the entry into the land of Canaan which, however, he was able to see only from afar; the latter, the one who carried out with courage what Moses had arranged and brought to realisation the promises of Yhwh by conquering the country and renewing the covenant. Like Moses, David is chosen to establish the solid foundations of the relationship between God and Israel, no longer centred only on the Law but also on the cult, and so arranges for the construction of the sanctuary whose greatness he can only imagine, thanks to the model provided for him directly by Yhwh; like Joshua, Solomon is chosen to realise the divine plan, not by the bloody conquest of the land but with the building of the temple, inaugurating the period of God's rest in which his chosen people share also.

Already, in the oracle of Nathan, we noticed that the Chronicler links David and Solomon more closely than does the *Vorlage* of 2 Sam 7,5-16. Its reprise in 2 Chr 22 and 28 accentuates this link to the extent that we can say that there is no break in continuity between the first and the second sovereigns of the dynasty. The succession takes place peacefully without the violence and the difficulties which characterise 1 Kgs 1-2. David delivers a series of instructions to his son who implements

them. Moreover, Solomon is associated with the throne even before his father's death (1 Chr 29,22-28). For the Chronicler, the two reigns are inseparable, forming a unique golden age. Taken individually, each of the two does not realise the divine will in full. Taken together, however, they represent the model on which subsequent kings will be judged[88]. According to Knoppers, the Chronicler's reuse of the oracle aims at adapting the theological, religious and social themes of the *Vorlage* to the changed context of his time, presenting a different image of society as a model[89]. Jonker explains specifically the value of the concept of "rest" for the society of the V cent. BCE: in the context of the clash between the Persian Empire and the emerging Greek power, the theme of peace had taken on a particular importance in the royal ideologies which, during the reign of Artaxerxes (465/464-425/423 BCE) had elaborated the concept of the *pax Achaemenidica*. By recovering the theological concept of מְנוּחָה and depicting it as realised in the person of Solomon, the Chronicler was able to indicate to his readers that the realisation of true peace was to be sought within the Jewish world and not in the international context, and that its contours are defined by the relationship with Yhwh, author of that peace, and not by the Persian monarchs and their divinities[90].

In conclusion, the divine word communicated by Yhwh to David through Nathan and delivered by the latter to his son, Solomon, lays the foundation for delineating the characteristics of the leadership that the Chronicler intends to promote within the Jewish society without the monarchy for which he composes his work: a leadership that manifests its own faithfulness to Yhwh in the care of his house and in the organisation of the cult in such a way as to guarantee to Israel a correct relationship with God in perpetuity, and to be able to enjoy the benefits promised by him and summarised in the gift of מְנוּחָה.

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[88] So also: Braun, *Solomonic Apologetic*, 514-516; Japhet, *Ideology*, 478-489, esp. 488-489; Williamson, *Dynastic Oracle*, 316-318; and Knoppers, *Changing History*, 106*.

[89] Knoppers, *Changing History*, 103*.

[90] Jonker, *Chronicler's Portrayal*, 662-667.

2. God and David

In two episodes in the story of David, the God of Israel is portrayed as speaking directly, without intermediaries, with the founder of the dynasty:

1. David's victories over the Philistines (1 Chr 14,8-16);
2. the building of the altar on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite (1 Chr 21,26-22,1).

a. The victories of David over the Philistines (1 Chr 14,8-16)

The account of David's victories over the Philistines in 1 Chr 14,8-16 is shared with the second book of Samuel (2 Sam 5,17-25) which the Chronicler takes up almost word for word. Twice, David consults God about whether to attack the enemy (1 Chr 14,10a // 2 Sam 5,19a; 1 Chr 14,14a // 2 Sam 5,23a) and, in both cases, God replies in the affirmative (1 Chr 14,10b // 2 Sam 5,19b; 1 Chr 14,14b-15 // 2 Sam 5,23b-24); in the second case, Yhwh even gives precise instructions on how to conduct the battle.

First dialogue

1 Chr 14,10: «David inquired of God, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" The Lord said to him, "Go up, and I will give them into your hand"».

2 Sam 5,19: «David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" The Lord said to David, "Go up; for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand"».

Second dialogue

1 Chr 14,14-15: «When David again inquired of God, God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; go around and come on them opposite the balsam trees. When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then go out to battle; for God has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines"».

2 Sam 5,23-24: «When David inquired of the Lord, he said, "You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come upon them opposite the balsam trees. When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then be on the alert; for then the Lord has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines"».

Two differences can be observed between the Chronicler and his *Vorlage*, one textual, the other structural.

If we compare the two passages that have come down to us from the Masoretic tradition, we note the presence of אֱלֹהִים where יְהוָה appears in Sam-Kgs with the exception of 1 Chr 14,10 which mentions the divine name. Scholars are divided over the actual value of this substitution. Some, including Kittel and von Rad, believed it to be a mark of the process of "trascendentalisation" gradually undergone by the figure of Yhwh, from the historical divinity linked to the Hebrew people to the only God, creator of the universe and lord of all the peoples[91]. According to others, the Chronicler would be sharing the tendency, common to other authors of the period like Qoheleth or the composers of some of the Psalms[92], to avoid the tetragram, replacing it with more generic epithets or terms, perhaps to avoid a magical use of the divine name[93]. However, an in-depth study of the question by Japhet[94] has indicated that the Chronicler uses יְהוָה very often, with more than five hundred occurrences, and does not confer a particular theological value on אֱלֹהִים. Above all, however, we must consider the fact that, in many cases, LXX offers κύριος, as a translation of יְהוָה, where the MT records אֱלֹהִים, regularly rendered with θεός. Japhet explains this phenomenon, as Allen also hypothesises[95], with the existence of a *Vorlage* different from the MT which could have lain at the base of the Greek translation. It's also possible that the Chronicler had a text of Samuel-Kgs different from that received by the Masoretic tradition. Therefore, we can conclude with Williamson[96] that these kinds of variants are the result of the com-

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[91] R. Kittel, *Die Bücher der Chronik* (GHKAT 1:6,1), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1902, 63-64; von Rad, *Geschichtsbild*, 3-8.

[92] Cf. S.R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (ITL), T&T Clark, Edinburgh 19139, 372; E.E. Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, 2 voll., The Magnes Press, Jerusalem 19782 [Hebr. orig. 1971], 126-127.

[93] Cf. Urbach, *Sages*, 129-134.

[94] Cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 24-30.

[95] Cf. Allen, *Greek Chronicles*, vol. II, 148-159.

[96] Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 116.

plex textual tradition of the biblical writings and so not significant for us because they do not indicate the author's theology.

More important is the structural difference: the Chronicler anticipates the account of David's first attempt to transfer the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem so that the victories over the Philistines are placed between the first, failed, and the second, successful, attempt[97].

2 Sam 5-6		*1 Chr 11-16*	
5,1-5	David king of Israel in Hebron	11,1-3	David king of Israel in Hebron
5,6-10	Conquest of Jerusalem	11,4-9	Conquest of Jerusalem
(= 2 Sam 23,8-39)		11,10-47	List of David's chiefs
		12,1-41	*Lists of David's allies and representatives of the tribes*
		13,1-14	**The Ark at Kiriath-jearim**
5,11-12	Construction of the palace	14,1-2	Construction of the palace
5,13-16	David's wives and sons	14,3-7	David's wives and sons
5,17-25	David's victories over the Philistines	14,8-17	David's victories over the Philistines
6,1-11	**The Ark at Kiriath-jearim**		
		15,1-24	*Preparations for transporting the Ark*
6,12-19a	The Ark in Jerusalem	15,25-16,3	The Ark in Jerusalem
		16,4-42	*Liturgy welcoming the Ark*
6,19b	The people return home	16,43a	The people return home
6,20a	David blesses his own family	16,43b	David blesses his own family
6,20b-23	*Michal's curse*		

In the narrative scheme of the Dtr, David, already proclaimed king of Judah, is recognised as sovereign of the Israelite tribes as well. Then, the taking of Jerusalem is described; then, two appendices are joined: the account of the sending of wood by Hiram, king of Tyre, for the

[97] In the following table, normal characters indicate the correspondences between 2 Sam and 1 Chr; bold characters indicate the change in the narrative made by the Chronicler; italics signal the Chronicler's own additions.

construction of the palace, and the list of the wives and children which David had in Jerusalem. Linked to the preceding material is the double victory over the Philistines which is placed in relation to David's anointing as king of Israel. Finally, there is the opening of the narrative of the transfer of the Ark in two stages until its definitive arrival in the new capital.

In Chr, on the other hand, the sequence of events highlights the episode of the Ark: after David's anointing as king of Israel (the only anointing recounted in 1 Chr which passes over the separatist accession to the throne in Judah and the subsequent civil war), the conquest of Jerusalem takes place. Then, the author writes at length in three lists about David's supporters: the first list concerns his mighty men and is an anticipation of 2 Sam 23,8-39; the other two are material proper to the Chronicler and describe David's allies (1 Chr 12,1-23) and the representatives of the tribes of Israel who were present at the royal anointing (12,24-41). Next, after the king consults with the chiefs of the army and the people, material proper to the Chronicler (13,1-4), there is a first attempt to carry the Ark of the Covenant into the new capital that has just been conquered (13,5-14). Only then is the palace constructed and the family of David described (14,1-7). Next come the two victories over the Philistines (14,8-17) and, finally, during two chapters (15-16), there is an account of the transfer of the Ark to Jerusalem. This is preceded by intense preparations and concluded with a solemn liturgy which has as its climax a psalm written by David himself (made up of three Psalms of the Psalter: 105,1-15; almost all of 96; 106,1.47-48).

What is the reason for the placing of the victories over the Philistines in this context? Certainly, the anticipation of the first attempt to transport the Ark enables the author to highlight more sharply the pious character of the new king who, shortly after his accession to the throne and conquest of the new capital, immediately (not after years of ruling, as in 2 Sam), prepares to make it also the religious centre of the cult of Yhwh, honouring the Ark of Yhwh which had been neglected (cf. 13,3). In this way, the whole content of ch. 14 (gift of the king of Tyre, family, military victories) is reinterpreted as a result of the divine benevolence

towards David, as indicated by vv. 2 and 17. The concrete effect of this benevolence is immediate: the events take place within a span of three months (13,14) in which the rapid increase in David's power takes place with his consequent fame on the international stage[98].

Within the passage, the twofold consultation of God ("David inquired of God" in 14,10 and 14) expresses the king's integrity by contrast with the conduct of Saul ("he had consulted a medium" in 10,13) who was the cause of his own ruin against the same Philistine enemy. God responds immediately and enters personally into the struggle as we are led to believe by the "sound of marching" (14,15) which is to act as a signal for the start of the battle. For his part, David reacts with a sign of his total faithfulness to Yhwh: whereas in the parallel passage of 2 Sam 5,21, the images of the Philistine divinities are carried away, in 1 Chr 14,12, the king orders them to be burned. Thus, this double victory turns David's behaviour into the paradigm of the sovereign's correct conduct: in seeking God, he obtains victory over his enemies; in caring for his Ark and, in anticipation, for his temple, guarantees Yhwh's benevolent protection[99].

b. The construction of the altar on the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite (1 Chr 21,26-22,1)

The account of the census of the kingdom and the subsequent acquisition of the threshing floor of Ornan[100], the Jebusite, is borrowed from

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[98] An in-depth analysis of the whole of ch. 14 within the story of David is found in Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 55-79; here, we reproduce only the arguments that concern the present work.

[99] *Ibid.*, 62.

[100] In the MT, the name of the Jebusite who owns the threshing floor is אֶרְוְנָה in 2 Sam and אָרְנָן in 1 Chr 21 and 2 Chr 3,1. 4QSam[a] reads ארנא (in F.M. Cross, et alii, *Qumran Cave 4. XII: 1-2 Samuel* [DJD 17], Clarendon, Oxford 2005, 192). In the LXX, the name is Ορνα both in 2 Kgs and in 1 and 2 Par. In his *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus records the name Ορωννας. The difference between the two names is not held to be significant and, generally, the form in Chr and in Greek is thought to be secondary to אֶרְוְנָה, possibly of Hittite origin (cf. H.B.

the Dtr (2 Sam 24,1-25), but our author adds some details and makes some changes[101]. One of the elements peculiar to the Chronicler is the direct contact between Yhwh and David which is recorded at the end of the episode.

> *1 Chr 21,26-22,1:* «[26]David built there an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings and offerings of well-being. He called upon the Lord, and he answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. [27]Then the Lord commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. [28]At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he made his sacrifices there. [29]For the tabernacle of the Lord, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon; [30]but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord. [22,1]Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel"».

Common with 2 Sam is only 1 Chr 21,26a, which is parallel to 2 Sam 24,25a; 1 Chr 21, 26b-22,1 is a reworking and expansion of 2 Sam 24,25b:

> *2 Sam 24,25:* «David built there an offering to the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being. So, the Lord answered his supplication for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel».

In the general arrangement of the account, vv. 21,26b-22,1 are an important addition and are functional to the transmission of the interpretation of the entire episode: the threshing field of Ornan is the place where the temple was to be constructed, as will be stated still more explicitly in 2 Chr 3,1 so that the site of the temple is not the product of the whim of David or Solomon but derives from a choice made by God himself by means of a wonderful sign[102]. In what follows, another pas-

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Rosén, *Arawna – Nom hittite?*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 5 [1955] 318-320). The identification between Jebus and Jerusalem, which is explicitly claimed in 1 Chr 11,4, is far from certain from the historical point of view (Cfr. J.M. Miller, *Jebus and Jerusalem: A Case of Mistaken Identity*, in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 90 [1974] 126-127).

[101] Cf. also below, p. 197-203.

[102] With the information that the mountain on which Ornan's threshing floor is found is called Moriah, 2 Chr 3,1 implicitly links the temple cult with the binding of Isaac in Gen 22

sage peculiar to the Chronicler will tell of another descent of fire from heaven in relation to the dedication of the temple when the sacrifices offered by Solomon will be burned in a miracle (2 Chr 7,1), thus creating a link between the two moments. In order to express his theological message, the author is alluding here to numerous other biblical texts. The sign of fire aims to establish a direct link between the future temple to be built with the altar erected by Moses and Aaron in the desert which was the object of a similar miracle (Lev 9,24). Moreover, this link is also made clear by the mention of Gibeon[103] where the Tabernacle which had accompanied the Israelites in the desert was found (1 Chr 16,39). Furthermore, the description of this episode seems to echo the

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which is set in the "land of Moriah" (in Gen 22, the name Moriah is given to the area not to the mountain of the binding). This establishes a connection between the monarchical period and the doings of the patriarchs (cf. I. Kalimi, *The Land of Moriah, Mount Moriah, and the Site of Solomon's Temple in Biblical Historiography*, in *The Harvard Theological Review* 83 [1990] 349). A further link with the patriarchal period can be found in the circumstances of the purchase of the threshing floor from Ornan which is described in terms similar to the negotiation over the sepulchre of Machpelah between Abraham and Ephron in Gen 23 (cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 149-150; Lorenzin, *Uso della regola*, 70; and S. Vuaran, *Tre compravendite di terreni, Gen 23, 2Sam 24 e Rt 4, e la "peripezia" di Aristotele*, in *Liber Annuus* 72 [2022] 99-100).

[103] Verses 29-30 are here held to be an aside placed between parentheses in the narrative drama. Syntactically, it is possible to consider the two statements of 28 either as a complete sequence of protasis and apodosis or a series of two coordinate protases dependent on a subsequent apodosis. The choice is made on the basis of the sacrifices cited in v. 28b: if they are held to be the same sacrifices as those cited in v. 26, the choice falls on the possibility of two coordinate protases (Curtis-Madsen, *Chronicles*, 254; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 429); if, on the other hand, one wishes to see here a second series of sacrifices (Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 118-119; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 390) or else if one gives the verbs an inchoative significance (Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 162: "incominciò a offrire sacrifici", "he began to offer sacrifices"), v. 28b is considered an apodosis. I regard the first possibility as more convincing: the apodosis is וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִיד of 22,1, while 21,29-30 are an aside or a gloss with the aim of explaining the relationship between the threshing floor of Ornan and the sacred hill of Gibeon and the subsequent replacement of the latter with the temple mount. Note the position of Knoppers who also identifies in v. 28 two protases linked at v. 29 but believes the entire corpus of vv. 28-30 to be a secondary addition to justify the offering of sacrifices by David far from the Tabernacle built by Moses (G.N. Knoppers, *Images of David in Early Judaism: David as Repentant Sinner in Chronicles*, in *Biblica* 76 [1995] 463-464).

famous dispute between Elijah and the worshippers of Baal on Mount Carmel (1 Kgs 18,20-40), chronologically posterior and not reported by the Chronicler but certainly well known to him and his readers. David's final exclamation (1 Chr 22,1) recalls that of Jacob after his dream of the ladder (Gen 28,17), a dream that was also at the origin of the construction of a sanctuary at Bethel. The motif of the angel with the drawn sword[104], which arouses terror, is also present in Genesis after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden (Gen 3,24) and in the affair of Balaam's ass (Num 22,23.31).

The divine intervention takes place only after David has offered victims on the newly-constructed altar and called on Yhwh: with the fire, God shows he is pleased with the sacrifice. Only then does the plague come to an end. Thus, the "dialogue" between the king and God is a source of good for the people and a confirmation of the integrity of the sovereign despite his momentary yielding to his desire to carry out a census. Certainly, the king has sinned, but Yhwh is ready to pardon, a forgiveness that his people can continue to obtain in the future too thanks to the offering of sacrifices of which the holocaust offered by David is the first and most authoritative example[105]. This reveals a particular aspect of David's exemplarity: it consists not in his perfection

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[104] Not mentioned in the MT of 2 Sam, the drawn sword occurs in 4QSam[a] (cf. J.K. Driesbach, *4QSamuel[a] and the Text of Samuel* [VTSup 171], Brill, Leiden-Boston [MA] 2016, 325-327) which presents a text often different from the MT and in agreement with 1 Chr. The discovery of 4QSam[a] has demonstrated that some differences between the Chronicler and the MT of 2 Sam are due to a *Vorlage* different from the text of 2 Sam that has reached us from the tradition (cfr. Lemke, *Synoptic Problem*, 355-357; and E. Ulrich, *A Qualitative Assessment of the Textual Profile of 4QSam[a]*, in A. Hilhorst et alii [eds.], *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino Garcia Martinez* [JSJSup 122], Brill, Berlin-Leiden 2007, 160-161). In 2 Sam 24,16, the Qumran manuscript mentions the drawn sword in the direction of Jerusalem in the same terms as 1 Chr 21,16 (F.M. Cross-R.J. Saley, *Singular Readings in 4QSamuel[a] and the Question of Rewritten Scripture*, in *Dead Sea Discoveries* 20.1 [2013] 9). Peculiar to the Chronicler, however, is the mention in 21,27, in which the use of the term נֶרֶן ("scabbard"), of Persian origin, confirms the late date of the text (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 150).

[105] Interesting in this connection is the position of Lorenzin who collects there also the Psalms ascribed to David in the Psalter (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 168-169).

(as will be the case for Solomon, sanitised by the Chronicler from every sin and weakness), but in his ability to repent and obtain pardon from Yhwh[106]. He is aware of his own sin, but trusts in the mercy of God (v. 13); he recognises his own guilt, and intercedes for the good of the people (v. 17). Thus, his personal experience becomes a sign and guarantee for post-Exilic Israel: instructed by Chronicles, it knows that it can always return to Yhwh and obtain his pardon. A place is fixed for this experience of mercy: the communication between sovereign and divinity happens not in the place where the Tabernacle is, at Gibeon, but rather in a new place bound up with the person of David and not with that of Moses. Therefore, the figure of the founder of the dynasty turns out to be central for describing the relationship between Yhwh and the whole of Israel: if it is true that it is God who has chosen the place for the building of a temple, this choice is made because of David; if he is a weak and sinful man, so much so that he cannot be the builder of the house of the divinity man, nevertheless, the foundation of the temple is ascribed to him; he is its original protagonist. If the temple is the place of encounter between Yhwh and the people as a sign of the covenant, the people have in David the example of the possibility of repentance and subsequent pardon thanks to the divine mercy, and in the temple the place where it can be experienced.

3. God and Solomon

Within the narrative of the reign of Solomon, God speaks directly with the sovereign on two occasions:

1. he manifests himself during the night a first time at Gibeon (2 Chr 1,7-12);
2. he appears again at night after the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 7,12-22).

Both passages are taken from the Dtr, but our historian places them and confers significance on them within a modified general frame of events.

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[106] Cf. Knoppers, *Images*, esp. 458-470.

a. The apparition at Gibeon (2 Chr 1,7-12)

Shortly after his accession to the throne, Solomon receives a nocturnal apparition from Yhwh after having offered a thousand holocausts on the hill of Gibeon, site of the Tent of Meeting set up by Moses.

> *2 Chr 1,7-12:* «[7]That night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask what I should give you." [8]Solomon said to God, "You have shown great and steadfast love to my father David, and have made me succeed him as king. [9]O Lord God, let your promise to my father David now be fulfilled, for you have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. [10]Give me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people, for who can rule this great people of yours?" [11]God answered Solomon, "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked for possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked for long life, but have asked for wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may rule my people over whom I have made you king, [12]wisdom and knowledge are granted to you. I will also give you riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had who were before you, and none after you shall have the like"».

This episode is shared with Dtr (1 Kgs 3,5-15) but with important modifications through which the Chronicler emphasises different aspects from his *Vorlage*. First of all, the context has been changed: the offering of sacrifices at Gibeon is the first act carried out by Solomon after his accession to the throne. In the Deuteronomist history, the inauguration of the reign takes place in a bloody way after an internal struggle with the claimant, Adonijah, and his party which terminates with the killing of Adonijah himself (1 Kgs 2,24-25) and of Joab (1 Kgs 2,28-34) and with the removal of Abiathar from his priestly functions in Jerusalem (1 Kgs 2,26-27). Shimei's execution is also inserted here (1 Kgs 2,35-46a), thus ending all possibility of a claim to the crown on the part of the clan of Saul. Thus, the author can conclude: "So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (1 Kgs 2,46b). Only subsequently, somewhat later, after his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kgs 3,1), during a personal visit to Gibeon, the new king receives Yhwh's message in a dream (1 Kgs 3,4-15). Instead, the Chronicler describes a peaceful succession

to the throne, shared by all the kingdom (1 Chr 29,24). David dies (1 Chr 29,28a), Solomon begins to reign (1 Chr 29,28b) and summons the leading figures of the whole of Israel for a public and communal act of devotion at Gibeon (2 Chr 1,1-2) in order to consult Yhwh (2 Chr 1,5: דרשׁ). Here, at night, he receives the apparition of God (2 Chr 1,7-12). At the end, Solomon returns to Jerusalem (2 Chr 1,13a) and the Chronicler notes: "And he reigned over Israel" (2 Chr 1,13b). With these two modifications of his *Vorlage*, our author attributes a new significance to the vision at Gibeon: no longer is it an individual act but an official one together with the representatives of the population; and, at its conclusion, the verb מלך is repeated as in 1 Chr 29,28. In this way, the event at Gibeon, which, in 1 Kgs, was a private apparition in which the young king, attaining power in blood, sought help in ruling the country, now, instead, becomes an integral part of the enthronement of David's successor.

The text of the apparition proper (2 Chr 1,7-12) is shorter and some of its features are reworked. It is not always easy to account for the differences. For this reason, some scholars have hypothesised that the *Vorlage* is to be sought not in the Deuteronomist work but in a third source on which the two historians would have drawn independently[107]. This radical position is unnecessary and cannot be proved. Above all, it runs the risk of not grasping the Chronicler's own perspective. Instead, one can reasonably surmise that the text of 1 Kgs which he used diverged in some details from the MT as it has come down to us, but, at the same time, the author was able and wished to rework it with full freedom on the basis of his own theological requirements.

A difference of uncertain origin is the disappearance of the word חֲלוֹם ("dream") in 2 Chr 1,7.13 compared with 1 Kgs 3,5.15. Scholars have formulated three hypotheses: 1. narrative expedient: the direct

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[107] Cf. McKenzie, *Chronicler's Use,* 106; and A.G. Auld, *Solomon at Gibeon: History Glimpsed*, in S. Ahtuv-B.A. Levine (eds.), *Avraham Malamat Volume* (ErIsr 24), Israel Exploration Society, Jerusalem 1993, 1*-7*.

vision makes the apparition more immediate[108]; 2. stylistic question: the deletion is part of the number of abridgements which the Chronicler performs on this passage[109]; 3. theological motivation: in the Jewish world, in the meantime, a religious awareness had developed which entertained suspicions about dreams as a way of encountering Yhwh, a thread evidenced by texts such as Jer 23,25-32; Zech 10,2 and Sirach 34,1-8[110]. I believe the first hypothesis is the most convincing: Solomon enjoys an immediate vision of Yhwh without mediation, prophetic or material. Comparing this passage with the oracle mediated by Nathan in 1 Chr 17,4-14, Johnstone maintains that the Chronicler is expressing a value judgement affirming that in Solomon, and not in David, is manifested the fullness of the monarchical office[111]. This position can be accepted if the comparison is understood not as an opposition but as the ripening of seeds already laid during the reign of the founder of the dynasty: the two kings are to be understood as unity in continuity, not in reciprocal antithesis. Certainly, Solomon enjoyed a privilege that had not been granted even to David: he was the only sovereign who

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[108] Cf. Curtis-Madsen, *Chronicles*, 316-317; and Myers, *II Chronicles*, 6. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 12, notes that this hypothesis would associate Solomon with the experience of Moses as it is described in Num 12,6-8.

[109] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 12.

[110] Cf. A.-M. Brunet, *Le Chroniste et ses sources*, in *Revue Biblique* 61 (1954) 353; Ackroyd, *I & II Chronicles*, 101; Coggins, *Chronicles*, 148; F. Michaeli, *Les livres des Chroniques, d'Esdras et de Néhémie* (CAT 16), Delachaux & Niestlé, Neuchâtel 1967, 145; and Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 530.

[111] W. Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*. Vol. I: *1 Chronicles 1-2 Chronicles 9. Israel's Place among the Nations* (JSOTSup 253), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 301: "monarchy at its highest potential". On the same lines also, Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 23. According to Uhlenbruch, replacing the dream with a direct apparition, the Chronicler enhances the prestige of the figure of Solomon with the aim of presenting him as the fabulous king within the description of a utopian world (F. Uhlenbruch, *World-Building and Temple-Building: A Game of Utopian Pastiche in 2 Chronicles 1-9*, in S.J. Schweitzer-F. Uhlenbruch [eds.], *Worlds that Could Not Be: Utopia in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah* [LHB/OTS 620], T&T Clark, New York 2016, 72).

never needed a prophetic mediation to receive the word of Yhwh[112].

The dialogue between Solomon and Yhwh in 2 Chr 1,8-12 is shorter when compared with 1 Kgs 3,6-15. According to Japhet, this is how the Chronicler intends to confer on the character a more decisive and direct personality which requires a lesser use of rhetorical expressions when addressing God[113]; however, this reshaping affects not only Solomon's question (2 Chr 1,8-10 // 1 Kgs 3,6-9), but also the divine reaction (2 Chr 1,11-12 // 1 Kgs 3,10-15), thus turning out to be a characteristic of the passage as a whole. In addition, some elements of 1 Kgs are rearranged and sometimes also modified.

Standing out among the elements absent in Chr is the term עֶבֶד ("servant") which, in 1 Kgs, was applied once to David (3,6) and three times to Solomon (3,7-9). That could be due to the stylistic mood which is less inclined to rhetoric[114], but the possibility remains that here the *Vorlage* was partly different since עֶבֶד will be used twice for David in 2 Chr 6,15-17 and once in 2 Chr 6,42, and four times for Solomon in 6,19-21[115].

In his description of Yhwh's behaviour towards David, the Chronicler makes two changes. Whereas, in 1 Kgs 3,6, Solomon twice recognises the חֶסֶד גָּדוֹל ("great love") of which David was the object, in 2 Chr 1,8, we find only the first mention while the second, in 1,9, is replaced by a clause in which the verb is אמן: this root is dear to the Chronicler who inserted it also into Nathan's oracle (1 Chr 17,13-14). Thus, it can be argued that its presence in 2 Chr 1,9 is functional to the association between the two

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[112] Cf. J.W. Wright, *Beyond Transcendence and Immanence: The Characterization of the Presence and Activity of God in the Book of Chronicles*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of R.W. Klein* (JSOTSup 371), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 2003, 248-249. Also G.N. Knoppers, *Prophets, Priests, and Promises: Essays on the Deuteronomistic History, Chronicles, and Ezra-Nehemiah* (VTSup 186), Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2021, 182-183, points out the specific case of Solomon who is granted direct theophanies whereas the prophets are cited only as sources for the description of the events of his reign (2 Chr 9,29).

[113] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 531.

[114] Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. I, 301, sees there the desire to portray the relationship between Solomon and Yhwh as more direct and less obsequious.

[115] Cf. Auld, *Solomon*, 2*-3*.

passages. The second change concerns the motivation of the חֶסֶד גָּדוֹל, which, in 1 Kgs 3,6, is found in the behaviour of David. The Chronicler omits it, depicting the gift as originating wholly from the will of God and not dependent on human conduct.

Verse 9 sees the removal of the reference to Solomon's youth found in 1 Kgs 3,7, on which the Chronicler had already focused in 1 Chr 22,5 and 29,1 as a reason for the instructions imparted by David before his death.

In the same v. 9, the Chronicler eliminates the verb בחר ("to choose") from 1 Kgs 3,8: because of the theological weight of this root, the change takes on a particular tone. In the Deuteronomist work, 1 Kgs 3,8 is the only occurrence where the action expressed by בחר refers to Yhwh as subject and the people as object complement. Elsewhere, when the action is carried out by Yhwh, the object is David on three occasions (2 Sam 6,21; 1 Kgs 8,16; 11,34), Jerusalem on seven occasions (1 Kgs 8,44.46; 11,13.32.36; 14,21; 2 Kgs 23,27) and once Jerusalem and the temple together (2 Kgs 21,7)[116]. Of these, our author takes up one of the occurrences referring to David (2 Chr 6,6 // 1 Kgs 8,16), three referring to Jerusalem (2 Chr 6,34 // 1 Kgs 8,44; 2 Chr 6,38 // 1 Kgs 8,48; 2 Chr 12,13 // 1 Kgs 14,21) and the single reference to Jerusalem and the temple (2 Chr 33,7 // 2 Kgs 21,7). Moreover, he adds others: once, the object is David (1 Chr 28,4, peculiar to Chr), four times, Solomon (1 Chr 28,5-6.10; 29,1, peculiar to Chr), once, the tribe of Judah and the clan of Jesse (1 Chr 28,4, peculiar to Chr), once, Jerusalem (2 Chr 6,6, modification of 1 Kgs 8,16), twice, the temple (2 Chr 7,12.16, expansions of 1 Kgs 9,3), once, the Levites (1 Chr 15,2, peculiar to Chr), and once, priests and Levites together (2 Chr 29,11, peculiar to Chr).[117] This survey reveals the Chronicler's specific usage with regard to the root בחר: he extends the area of the divine election in two directions: on the one hand, he expands the preference for David to include the whole tribe of Judah and,

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[116] To this should be added an occurrence in the negative: Yhwh did not choose a particular city as the seat of his temple before Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8,16).

[117] Chr also has two negative occurrences, both in 2 Chr 6,5, which is an amplification of the parallel passage of 1 Kgs 8,16: Yhwh did not choose a particular city as the seat of his temple before Jerusalem and did not choose a leader for his people before David.

in particular, the family of Jesse, and then David's son, Solomon; on the other hand, the choice of the city of Jerusalem is centred chiefly on the temple lodged within it and becomes a preference also for the priests and Levites who carry out service there. In reporting the apparition at Gibeon, the Chronicler decides to omit the unique reference in Dtr to the election of the people in its entirety. This is surprising, and opens the way to two questions: does our author not regard the Hebrews/Jews a chosen people? Or, in his writing, is the root בחר without its theological weight? With regard to this last question, the answer must be negative: on the contrary, as we have already been able to consider[118], the use of בחר is precisely one of the main elements he employs to insert Solomon too within the divine election of David, thus associating the two reigns in a single, ideal, original epoch. As for the first question, we must bear in mind what von Rad had correctly identified: it is not possible to understand Chronicles without taking as a basic assumption the theological category of the election of the Hebrew/Jewish people which underlines subsequent particular elections[119]. In his tracks, in her in-depth study on the theology of the Chronicler, Japhet maintains that the election of the people is certainly present but expressed without recurring to the root בחר which is reserved only for particular preferences[120]. I believe that the observations of von Rad and Japhet are the most convincing explanation for this modification of the *Vorlage*[121].

In v. 9, the Chronicler modifies the terminology indicating the expansion of the people: if the Dtr describes this in numerical terms, affirming

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[118] Above, p. 148-149.

[119] Cfr. VON RAD, *Geschichtsbild*, 64.

[120] Cfr. JAPHET, *Ideology*, 92-96.

[121] A case apart is 1 Chr 16,13 where we find בְּחִירָיו, a deverbal adjective attributed to the "sons of Jacob" with suffixed pronoun referring to Yhwh. The verse is part of the song recorded in 16,8-36 and made up from three parts of three distinct psalms of the Psalter: vv. 8-22 correspond to Ps 105,1-15; vv. 23-33 to Ps 96,1b.2b-13b; vv. 34-36 to Ps 106,1bc.47-48b. 1 Chr 16,13 is parallel to Ps 105,6; however, the latter presents a textual problem, precisely over the term בְּחִירָיו. The question deserves a particular, thorough study, but its solution is not crucial for the purposes of the present work and so is not tackled here.

the impossibility of counting them, thus recalling the episode of the failed census of 2 Sam 24[122], the Chronicler employs the image of dust, dear to the patriarchal traditions. In fact, it appears twice in Genesis within the promises of Yhwh: in 13,16 to Abraham and in 28,14 to Jacob. Which of the two is the principal reference? According to Williamson, Jacob is preferable for three reasons: a) in the context of the promises to Abraham, the more characteristic images are those of the stars of heaven (Gen 15,5; 22,17) and of the sand of the sea shore (Gen 22,17); b) the promise to Jacob occurs in the context of the nocturnal dream at Bethel (Gen 28,12); c) it is the Chronicler's general tendency to refer to Jacob as particular forefather of the people of Israel[123]. Solomon is, therefore, linked with the patriarchs of the past: what they received as a promise has been fully realised in the time of the son of David; the blessings which God extended to Abraham and, above all, to Jacob have achieved their effect. We should not pass over the fact that Jacob's dream is also bound up with the foundation of a sanctuary at Bethel.

The Chronicler uses the *hiphil* form of מלך more frequently: two occurrences in the words of Solomon, in 2 Chr 1,8-9, compared with one in 1 Kgs 3,7. Moreover, he adds another one in Yhwh's response in 2 Chr 1,11. Our author emphasises the kingship of Yhwh: it is he who holds power over Israel, and it is he who has chosen Solomon as David's successor. Consistently with this theological vision, through the principle by which Solomon sits on the throne of Yhwh, the reference to the throne of David in 1 Kgs 3,6 is removed. According to McKenzie, the emphasis on the *hiphil* form of מלך in the context in which Solomon is seeking from Yhwh the confirmation of the promises to David, is the demonstration of the fact that the central object of Nathan's oracle is not the dynastic succession, which has already happened and so no longer in question, but, rather, the building of the temple[124].

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[122] Cf. Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. I, 302.

[123] H.G.M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge et al. 1977, 64, n. 1.

[124] McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 230.

The object of Solomon's prayer is expressed with different terms from the Dtr: if, in 1 Kgs 3,9, the young king asks for a "heart able to listen" (לֵב שֹׁמֵעַ), that is, docile to God and prudent in decisions, and, in 1 Kgs 3,12, Yhwh responds by granting him a "wise and intelligent heart" (לֵב חָכָם וְנָבוֹן), in 2 Chr 1,10, Solomon seeks "wisdom and knowledge" (חָכְמָה וּמַדָּע), gifts which, in 2 Chr 1,12, Yhwh bestows, exactly on the basis of the request, as attested by the presence of the article before each of the substantives. In 2 Chr, the לֵב is not part of the object of the question and the grant but is mentioned in 1,11 as consideration of the fact, recognised by God, of the good disposition of Solomon at the time of the request. In Chronicles, the stature of Solomon has grown: Yhwh accedes completely to his request and does not perform any action on his heart which is already well disposed to be able to receive the divine gift. It is, therefore, a surplus which has to be added to a positivity already possessed by David's young successor. There is no doubt that this is a rewriting on the part of the Chronicler as is inferred from the term מַדָּע ("thought") which belongs to late biblical Hebrew (cf. Qoh 10,20 and Dan 1,4.17) and so not present in his *Vorlage*[125]. According to Japhet[126], this modification is due to a different nuance associated with the root שׁפט which, in 1 Kgs 3,9, is linked to the administration of justice and, in 2 Chr 1,10, to government in general. In connection with the different significance of שׁפט, we must also note the image of the "leading out and in" of the people which is found in the request of 2 Chr 1,10 and reprised from 1 Kgs 3,7 where it accompanies the profession of inexperience: originally, the expression referred to the military context, indicating the army's departure from and return to the city on the occasion of a war (cf. 1 Sam 18,13.16 and 1 Chr 11,2); but, since Solomon is a man of peace, it indicates here the ability to rule the people in general.

The Chronicler also reworks and summarises Yhwh's response. First of all, he deletes the comment of 1 Kgs 3,10, thus making the divine

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[125] According to Williamson (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 196), נְכָסִים ("health") of vv. 11-12 is probably also a late term.

[126] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 531; cf. also Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 24.

reaction follow Solomon's request directly. According to 2 Chr 1,12, the superiority of the young king will not be linked to wisdom, as in 1 Kgs 3,12, but to the wealth, health and glory which had not been requested.

Notable is the complete omission of 1 Kgs 3,14, which contained the promise of a long life conditional on Solomon's just behaviour. Three possible reasons for this have been suggested: a) textual: the Chronicler had a shorter *Vorlage*[127]; b) deliberate removal: the Chronicler has kept quiet about the conditions of the promise so as not to place shadows on Solomon's conduct, along the lines of the modifications to Nathan's oracle to improve his presentation[128]; c) the Chronicler has harmonised the text with the continuation of the story of the reign: since Solomon's life was not particularly long and he is one of the ideal kings, a promise of long life that was not realised would have been in contradiction with his theological reading of events[129]. Of these three positions, the first is purely conjectural. As for the second, it clashes with David's exhortations to his son in which the connection between the realisation of the divine promises and Solomon's conduct is explicit (1 Chr 22,12-13; 28,9). Therefore, I adopt the third hypothesis as best agreeing with the totality of the book of Chronicles.

The Chronicler also changes the context subsequent to the text of the apparition at Gibeon. Omitting in 2 Chr 1,13 the reference to the awakening and dream of 1 Kgs 3,15, in harmony with the introduction to the episode, our author presents us with the young king while he returns to Jerusalem[130] and begins his reign. According to the Dtr, on the

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[127] Thus, the commentary to the books of Kings of Montgomery and Gehman who argue that 1 Kgs 3,14 is wholly or partly a redactional addition (J.A. Montgomery-H.S. Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh 1951, 108).

[128] Cf. Brunet, *Chroniste*, 353-354; and Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. I, 302; for the latter, the absence of conditions is a sign of the irresistible success of the one who is designated by God and filled with gifts.

[129] So, among others, Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 14.

[130] Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 206, suggests the possibility of a different interpretation for the verb וַיָּבֹא at the beginning of 2 Chr 1,13: if vocalised as *hiphil* instead of as *qal*, it would be indicating that Solomon performed a second series of sacrifices, as in 1 Kgs 3,15, but

other hand, he returns to the capital where he appears before the Ark of the Covenant, performs burnt offerings and offerings of well-being and then provides a banquet for his court (1 Kgs 3,15). According to the reconstruction of the pre-temple worship offered by the Chronicler, Jerusalem contained the Ark of the Covenant, brought by David, where the service was only musical (1 Chr 16,4.37), without offerings of sacrifices[131], while, at Gibeon, there was the Tent of Meeting (the Mosaic Tabernacle), where the worship was carried out both with sacrifices and music (1 Chr 16,39-42)[132]. The specification of the sites of worship, which the Chronicler inserts in 2 Chr 1,3-6[133], serves to resolve an ambiguity in 1 Kgs 3,4, where the expression הִיא הַבָּמָה הַגְּדוֹלָה ("that was the principal high place") could lead to Solomon's pilgrimage to Gibeon to be regarded as an idolatrous act. The Chronicler needed to affirm that, before the building of the temple, Gibeon too was an authorised place of worship and that Solomon's sacrifices were legitimate[134]. The focus is different compared with Dtr: if for the latter it was important to present the building of the temple as a transition from a multiplicity of places of worship to centralisation in one exclusive site, Chronicles describes the

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changing the place: not at Jerusalem before the Ark, but, again, at Gibeon, immediately after the apparition. This hypothesis is clearly interesting but it is not supported by ancient traditions: the LXX reads ἦλθεν and the Peshitta ܐܬܐ.

131 The sacrifices mentioned in 1 Chr 16,1-2 are to be considered occasional on account of the celebrations for the arrival of the Ark in Jerusalem (cf. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 357-358).

132 The Chronicler is faithful to the command of Lev 17,8-9 which established the Tent of Meeting as the only legitimate place for the offering of sacrifices.

133 Various opinions have been advanced about the nature and the sources of 2 Chr 1,3-6. The opinion of Welch, who held the entire passage, 1,1-13, a redactional addition (*Work*, 33-35), has not been followed by scholars who prefer to see an explanation for the peculiar nature of the passage within the authentic work of the Chronicler. According to Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 526-529. 532), our historiographer intended to unify in a coherent theological vision two traditions hitherto distinct: the centrality of the Tabernacle, typical of the Pentateuch, and the focus on the Ark which is more evident in the Former Prophets. There are no elements with which to establish the antiquity of these traditions and their possible link with historical reality (Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 130-132; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 22).

134 Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 22.

passage from two provisional places of worship to a permanent one[135]. According to Klein, the Chronicler intended to equate the pilgrimage to Gibeon with the introduction of the Ark into Jerusalem: Solomon was concerned with the Tent of Meeting just as David had been concerned with the Ark[136]. In this way, the episode of the apparition becomes a further element which places David and Solomon on the same level of authoritativeness and exemplarity.

In 1 Kgs, the dream at Gibeon is followed by the account of the sentence over the son contested by two prostitutes 1 Kgs 3,16-28) and the description of the administration of the kingdom (4,1-5,15). The gift granted by Yhwh is manifested in the sharp application of justice and the capacity for good government. In 2 Chr 1,14-17, however, there is a description of the means of transport (chariots and horses), precious metals (silver and gold) and cedar wood, as immediate fulfilment of the divine promises of wealth and glory. That constitutes the introduction to the procedures for the building of the temple (1,18-5,1). Thus, the Chronicler turns the apparition at Gibeon into an introduction to the building of the temple, and the gifts of wisdom and wealth granted to Solomon are aimed, not at the governing of the kingdom but, specifically at the work of construction[137]. According to Dillard[138], a further element functional to the presentation of this different idea of wisdom is given by the mention in 2 Chr 1,5 of the craftsman, Bezalel, physical builder of the Tabernacle, concerning whom the scholar identifies some correspondences with the figure of Solomon: both belong to the tribe of Judah (Ex 31,2), they are chosen by Yhwh to complete his plan and are charged with its execution on the basis of a model (Ex 25,9.40 and 1 Chr 28,19). Just as Bezalel was assisted by Oholiab (Ex 31,6), so Solomon is helped by Huram-Abì (2 Chr 2,12-13): thus, according to Dillard, the pair Bezalel-Oholiab finds its parallel in the pair Solomon-Huram-Abì.

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[135] Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 528; and McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 229.

[136] Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 23.

[137] Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 135; and McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 230-231.

[138] Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 4-5; cf. also Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 204-205.

To reinforce the allusion to Oholiab, the Chronicler makes some changes to the figure of Huram-Abì, who is called Hiram in 1 Kgs 7,13-46: he is sent by the king of Tyre, Huram, and is not sought independently by Solomon (1 Kgs 7,13); therefore, he is the object of an external choice, independent of the will of the king; he is the son of an inhabitant of Tyre and of an Israelite of the tribe of Dan, like Oholiab (Ex 31,6), and not of a woman of the tribe of Naphtali (1 Kgs 7,14); he appears on the stage before the building of the temple and not at its end, taking part in the whole work of construction and not just the manufacture of the furniture. Therefore, the Chronicler extends the range of abilities possessed by this craftsman: he is not only expert in working with bronze (1 Kgs 7,14); his competence extends to other metals also, to wood, stone and textiles (2 Chr 2,13), ending up coinciding with the skills of Bezalel and Oholiab (Ex 31,2-11). In a reworking of the description given by the Dtr[139], Huram-Abì is presented in 2 Chr 2,13 as אִישׁ־חָכָם יוֹדֵעַ בִּינָה (lit. "a wise man who knows understanding"), where the root חכם indicates the concrete wisdom which is expressed in physical abilities, a concept also present with the same root in the context of the construction of the Tabernacle and its furnishings (Ex 31,6; 35,10.25-26.31.35; 36,1-2.4.8).

To sum up: compared with the parallel text of 1 Kgs, the Chronicler develops the characteristics of Solomon with different emphases.

1. The young king enjoys a close relationship with Yhwh who has set him on throne as a deliberate choice so that Solomon is permitted to address him in direct language and obtains exactly what he requests with the bonus of further gifts that he has not asked for. The first act of the reign is the consultation with Yhwh and the offering of sacrifices in a public pilgrimage on the site of the Mosaic Tabernacle; in fact, this act is part of his actual enthronement. By virtue of Yhwh's choice of him, Solomon is invested with gifts from on high to proceed with the construction of a stable dwelling which is to replace the provisional site at Gibeon where the divine apparition takes place.

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[139] 1 Kgs 7,14: וַיִּמָּלֵא אֶת־הַחָכְמָה וְאֶת־הַתְּבוּנָה וְאֶת־הַדַּעַת: "He was full of skill, intelligence and knowledge".

2. As in other episodes of Chronicles, the figure of Solomon is wiped clean of any allusion to transgressions or unfaithfulness to Yhwh. The act of worship on a high place, ambiguous in 1 Kgs, is fully legitimised by the presence of the Tabernacle on it.
3. The link between Solomon and his father, David, is strengthened. The references to Nathan's oracle make Solomon the one thanks to whom the divine promises can be fulfilled, making both sovereigns part of a unique moment in Jewish history without any breach in continuity. Both are characterised by the same *pietas*: if David was concerned with the Ark, his son is now concerned with the Tabernacle. Indeed, in this way, Solomon takes a step forward in comparison with his father by repairing to Gibeon, a place feared by David because of the destroying angel (1 Chr 21,29-30). The father is also exceeded in wealth, health and glory: 2 Chr 1,12 explicitly affirms Solomon's greater magnificence in comparison with his predecessor. Finally, Solomon does not need prophetic mediation unlike David to whom Yhwh speaks through Nathan (1 Chr 17) and Gad (1 Chr 21).
4. Solomon is linked with the past story of Israel: with the patriarchs, through the allusions to Abraham and, above all, to Jacob's dream and the foundation of the sanctuary at Bethel; with Moses and the Exodus, through the Tabernacle situated at the place of Yhwh's apparition the construction of which is recalled in the narrative of the building of the temple.

Thus, it can be concluded that, compared with the parallel text of 1 Kgs, the Chronicler develops the theological dimension of the reign of Solomon in two directions. On the one hand, he increases the stature of the character to the point of equating him with David and, in some aspects, even raising him above his father. On the other hand, the new importance attributed to Solomon has a precise objective: the construction of the temple, true and only reason for the privileges and gifts with which he is invested by God. The wise Solomon thus becomes the model for the subsequent sovereigns, not so much in the administration of justice as in connection with the temple, its worship and the relationship with Yhwh which the temple maintains.

b. The apparition subsequent to the dedication of the temple (2 Chr 7,12-22)

The apparition at Gibeon is not the only moment in Solomon's life when he finds himself in direct contact with Yhwh. After the rites for the dedication of the temple have been completed, God manifests himself once again, during the night, in response to the long prayer offered up previously by the sovereign (2 Chr 6,14-42). As on the occasion of the first apparition, Yhwh intervenes after Solomon takes the initiative and consults him; however, this time, differently, there is no dialogue between the two characters, only a one-directional divine communication.

> *2 Chr 7,12-22:* «[12]Then the Lord appeared to Solomon in the night and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for myself as a house of sacrifice. [13]When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command the locust to devour the land, or send pestilence among my people, [14]if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. [15]Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. [16]For now I have chosen and consecrated this house so that my name may be there forever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. [17]As for you, if you walk before me, as your father David walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, [18]then I will establish your royal throne, as I made covenant with your father David saying, 'You shall never lack a successor to rule over Israel.' [19]"But if you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments that I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, [20]then I will pluck you up from the land that I have given you; and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. [21]And regarding this house, now exalted, everyone passing by will be astonished, and say, 'Why has the Lord done such a thing to this land and to this house?' [22]Then they will say, 'Because they abandoned the Lord the God of their ancestors who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they adopted other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore, he has brought all this calamity upon them'"».

The passage is partly taken from the Dtr (1 Kgs 9,3-9): v. 12a corresponds to 1 Kgs 9,3a; vv. 12b-15 are peculiar to the Chronicler; v. 16 corresponds to 1 Kgs 9,3b; and vv. 17-22 to 1 Kgs 9, 4-9. The texts of the parallel passages present some differences.

The context is similar to that of the *Vorlage*: in both cases, it is the divine manifestation at the end of Solomon's building activity. However, the chronology is different. Both place the beginning of the construction of the temple in the second month of the fourth year of the reign (1 Kgs 6,1 and 2 Chr 3,2). According to the Dtr, the work was carried out in two stages: in the first seven years, it concerned the temple (1 Kgs 6,38); then, for another thirteen years, the palace (1 Kgs 7,1), a total of twenty years (1 Kgs 9,10). At the end of the building of the temple (1 Kgs 7,51a; 8,1), its dedication was celebrated. 1 Kgs 9,1 states that the second apparition of Yhwh happened after the conclusion of both the temple and the palace, and so thirteen years after the dedication. The timing indicated by the Chronicler is partial and vaguer: the ceremony of the dedication is celebrated in the seventh month of a regnal year that is not clarified (2 Chr 5,3; 7,10); the palace is mentioned among the works built together with the temple (2 Chr 1,18; 2,11; 7,11), but there is no description of a chronological arrangement in stages[140]; only after the apparition is it stated that the total time taken amounted to twenty years (2 Chr 8,1). Thus, the narrative flows without chronological interruptions with the result that the dedication and apparition are connected more closely. The creation of this link is supported also by the expression בַּלָּיְלָה ("in the night") of 2 Chr 7,12 which leads us to understand that the manifestation took place in the night after the conclusion of the dedication feast, the twenty-third of the seventh month (7,11).

Verses 13-18 take up some themes expressed by Solomon in the public prayer offered up during the rite of dedication:

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[140] I agree with De Vries (S.J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles* [FOTL 11], Eerdmans, Grand Rapids [MI] 1989, 249) and Schweitzer (*Reading Utopia*, 86, n. 31), according to whom the vagueness with regard to the timings relegates the palace to second place and focuses attention on the temple as principal work of the twenty years of building activity.

– vv. 13-15 are linked to Solomon's request for the people in 6,21-40 (// 1 Kgs 8,30-50a.52);
– v. 16 (// 1 Kgs 9,3b) is in response to Solomon's objection in 6,18 (// 1 Kgs 8,27);
– vv. 17-18 (// 1 Kgs 9,4-5) concern the status of the king, as in 6,14-17 (// 1 Kgs 8,23-26).

Although both 1 Kgs 9,2 and 2 Chr 7,12 state that the speech is the divine response to the king's prayer, the Chronicler nevertheless establishes a stronger connection between the two moments both thanks to the chronological harmonisation and through the insertion of vv. 13-15, which express the acceptance of a petition which remains outstanding in 1 Kgs.

In thematic terms, Yhwh's speech is divided into three parts[141]:

a) vv. 12b-16: conditions under which the people can prosper;

b) vv. 17-18: conditional dynastic promise;

c) vv. 19-22: conditions under which the king and his people will be destroyed.

In v. 12, the Chronicler adds the expression בַּלָּיְלָה, as in 1,7, to leave as an allusion a connection with Gibeon which was explicit in 1 Kgs 9,2; in fact, that sanctuary had now been superseded and replaced, and it was no longer necessary to mention it. The mode in 1 Kgs is the same as Gibeon ("as he had appeared to him at Gibeon"), that is, by a dream; in 2 Chr, as in 1,7-12, the apparition is direct, without dreams and without prophetic intermediaries. According to Japhet, by adding בַּלָּיְלָה, our author intends to recall 1 Chr 17,1-15, indicating that, compared with David's experience, Solomon is taking a step forward: Nathan had received a vision by night which had cancelled the decision taken by the king by day whereas Solomon received at night confirmation of his request in his prayer by day[142].

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[141] Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 104; instead Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 609. 615-616, prefers a division in two parts: vv. 12b-16: Yhwh's positive response to Solomon's prayer; vv. 17-22: his exhortation to the king and people in which the Chronicler's theodicy is made explicit.

[142] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 614.

With the second part of v. 12, we come to the portion of the text peculiar to the Chronicler. The expression בֵּית זֶבַח ("house of sacrifice") is a unique formulation in the whole of Jewish literature, even the extra-biblical texts[143]. Whereas Solomon seeks for the prayer in the temple to be heard, Yhwh describes it primarily as a place of sacrifice. For the Chronicler, the primary role of the temple is the sacrificial offering; the house of prayer is essentially a house of sacrifice[144], as demonstrated also by the underlinings in 1 Chr 22,1 and 2 Chr 2,3. The actual rite of the inauguration of the temple finds its centre in the dedication of the altar (2 Chr 7,9).

As we have said, vv. 13-15 contain Yhwh's response to Solomon's request for the people expressed in the prayer for the dedication, as is inferred from two elements: the explicit reference to some[145] of the disasters listed in 6,26-39, even if with different vocabulary[146], and the full correspondence between the request of 6,40 (// 1 Kgs 8,52) and v. 15. We should note that the despatch of disasters is expressed with a passive in the prayer but here ascribed directly to God as their origin. In completing Yhwh's response to Solomon's prayer, the Chronicle is introducing themes dear to his own theology; in particular, v. 14 constitutes a kind of treasury of theological criteria with which to interpret subsequent history[147]:

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[143] Cf. Hurvitz, *Terms*, 178-179. Equal in meaning but different in formulation is the Aramaic expression in Ezra 6,3: אֲתַר דִּי־דָבְחִין דִּבְחִין (lit. "place where to sacrifice sacrifices").

[144] The association of the two activities is expressed also in Is 56,7 where the emphasis is placed more on prayer: "These I will bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer (בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי). Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer (בֵּית־תְּפִלָּה) for all peoples".

[145] According to Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 111), only those disasters that struck the Jews in the post-Exilic period are reprised here, namely, drought, plagues of grasshoppers and pestilence while defeat in war and exile are passed over; not even the stranger's prayer is reported.

[146] חָגָב ("grasshopper") instead of אַרְבֶּה ("locust") of 6,28.

[147] Precisely because of its centrality for the Chronicler's theology, Williamson holds vv. 13-15 one of his original compositions, rejecting the hypothesis that they derive from one of his own sources or from a different *Vorlage* from 1 Kgs; he links them with the judgement

1. the principle of immediate retribution, key element for the reading of the concatenation of the events;
2. the search for Yhwh, here expressed with בקשׁ, elsewhere also with דרשׁ;
3. humiliation (כנע) before God;
4. return (שׁוב) from wickedness to God;
5. the involvement of the people as a whole in the decision to follow or abandon Yhwh, and so in the determination of their own destiny[148].

Williamson and Murray have identified lexical and thematic references between 7,12-22 and 36,12-21, demonstrating that Yhwh's second apparition to Solomon has also the function of presenting some of the criteria in the light of which the behaviour of king and people will be judged at the end of the Chronicler's work[149].

In vv. 12 and 16, the Chronicler inserts a weighty verb, בחר: in this way, he centres on the temple the election which, according to the Dtr, belonged to Jerusalem in general (1 Kgs 8,44.48), and, furthermore, moves the focus from the dynasty to the temple as the true object of the divine preference. In v. 12, God's choice renders the temple בֵּית זֶבַח, centring it on the sacrificial cult. According to Klein, the change in v. 16 aims at

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on Saul in 1 Chr 10,13-14: in the light of the theology of immediate retribution, they serve to provide the antidote to the situation of distance from God embodied by the wicked conduct of Saul (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 225: «paradigmatic "exilic" situation», quotation marks of the author). For Dillard, vv. 12b-15 are programmatic for the presentation of the story of the two divided kingdoms (*2 Chronicles*, 58). According to Klein, the purpose of the addition is to emphasise the responsibility of the people as a whole and to diminish the emphasis on the conditional dynastic promise mentioned in the following vv. 17-18 (*2 Chronicles*, 110).

[148] The link between Yhwh and Israel is also accentuated by the theme of the "invocation of the name": according to 2 Chr 7,14, Yhwh's name is invoked over the people whereas, in the prayer of Solomon (2 Chr 6,33 // 1 Kgs 8,43), it is invoked over the temple.

[149] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 416-417, identifies the themes of humiliation (36,12), return to Yhwh (36,13) and renewal of the people (root רפא used in 7,14 and 36,16); Murray, *Dynasty*, 79-80, adds the consecration of the temple performed by Yhwh himself (7,16.20 and 36,14).

avoiding an ambiguity in the text of 1 Kgs 9,3[150] which it is possible to interpret by attributing the initiative for the construction to Solomon so that the dwelling of Yhwh's name would be approval *a posteriori*; in 2 Chr 7,16, the initiative clearly comes from Yhwh[151].

In v. 17, we note a minor underlining of David's integrity, a phenomenon that has already emerged in the changes made in 2 Chr 1,8 compared with 1 Kgs 3,6 in order to emphasise the gratuity of the divine preference.

In v. 18, the Chronicler replaces the verb דבר of 1 Kgs 9,5 with כרת; even without the substantive בְּרִית, the verb does not lose its technical meaning of "ratify a covenant" (in 2 Chr 5,10 // 1 Kgs 8,9, it is also used without בְּרִית). The modification seems intentional and has the effect of creating a play on words with יִכָּרֵת in the same verse. According to Williamson, who does not exclude completely that this simply reflects a different *Vorlage* of 1 Kgs, the Chronicler may have wished to reinforce the reference to Yhwh's covenant with David[152]. However, this position is weakened with the omission, compared with 1 Kgs 9,5, of the expression עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹלָם which reiterates the perpetual validity of the dynastic promise. McKenzie argues that this absence is to be ascribed to a different *Vorlage*, not to the Chronicler's theology, and, as further proof, he cites the use of the syntagma in 1 Chr 17,12.14[153]. This argument does not hold, however, since Nathan's oracle does not contain the same syntagma: 1 Chr 17,12 reads: וְכֹנַנְתִּי אֶת־כִּסְאוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם; 1 Chr 17,14: וְכִסְאוֹ יִהְיֶה נָכוֹן עַד־עוֹלָם. In both verses, the throne is associated with temporal permanence, but Israel is not mentioned. As we have already seen[154], עַד־עוֹלָם is to be understood with reference to the whole duration of Solomon's reign alone and not to the eternity of the Davidic dynasty.

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[150] 1 Kgs 9,3: הִקְדַּשְׁתִּי אֶת־הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בָּנִתָה לָשׂוּם־שְׁמִי שָׁם עַד־עוֹלָם: "I have consecrated this house that you have built, and put my name there forever".

[151] Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 112.

[152] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 226.

[153] McKenzie, *Chronicler's Use*, 97.

[154] Above, p. 136-137.

In the same v. 18, אִישׁ מֵעַל כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל ("a successor on the throne of Israel"), present in the MT of 1 Kgs 9,5, does not appear and is replaced with אִישׁ מוֹשֵׁל בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. However, the LXX version of 1 Kgs 9,5 agrees with the text of the Chronicles: ἀνὴρ ἡγούμενος ἐν Ισραηλ. It cannot be excluded that, at this point, the Chronicler's *Vorlage* was the Hebrew text which would later have been the basis of the Greek translation[155]. In this formulation, von Rad identified an echo of Mic 5,1[156], an echo that Japhet thinks was already in the *Vorlage* of 1 Kgs 9,5[157].

In vv. 19-22, the Chronicler follows 1 Kgs in mentioning the Exile and the destruction of the temple to admonish the people on the need for faithfulness to Yhwh. In 1 Kgs 9,6, the divine exhortation is addressed to אַתֶּם וּבְנֵיכֶם, but, in 2 Chr 7,19, we read only אַתֶּם. 1 Kgs 9,6-7 presents a textual tension with its shift from the second to the third person between vv. 6 and 7 which is retained by the parallel passage, 2 Chr 7,19-20. According to Williamson, in 1 Kgs, the second person related to the dynasty alone and the third to the people as a whole, so that Israel's disaster would have struck as a consequence of the negative conduct of the king. The Chronicler, on the other hand, understood the second person as also referring to the people as a whole and so omitted וּבְנֵיכֶם to make the text more intelligible[158]. However, other explanations are possible. According to Japhet, this deletion would indicate that the exhortation is addressed solely to Solomon's generation[159]. For Murray, the absence

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[155] Totally unfounded is the hypothesis of Van Keulen who thinks the Greek translator inserted the text of 2 Chr instead of translating the Hebrew text of 1 Kgs (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* [VTSup 104], Brill, Leiden-Boston [MA] 2005, 259-260).

[156] Von Rad, *Geschichtsbild*, 124. According to Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 113, n. 60), this is not necessarily a reference to the prophet, Micah, since the formula could have had a broader use. This position remains a conjecture without documentary support. Balzaretti points out that, in 2 Chr 9,26, the term מוֹשֵׁל refers to Solomon (*Cronache*, 241); the passage is a reprise of 1 Kgs 5,1.

[157] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 617.

[158] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 224. 226-227.

[159] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 616.

of the sons is to be ascribed to the theology of immediate retribution which had no room for the Deuteronomist idea of the falling of divine punishments on later generations[160].

The multiplicity of opinions among scholars turns around the central question raised by the content of Yhwh's second apparition: what is the value of the Davidic promise? What is the relationship between king and people in the light of the eternity of the divine word? Did the Chronicler still nourish expectations concerning the dynasty that had reigned over Judah? A group of scholars goes for an affirmative answer to this latter question. Myers identifies in Chronicles a messianic perspective which foresees the final restoration of the Davidic monarchy on the basis of the eternity of the divine promise[161]. Although denying a messianic conception, Williamson maintains, nevertheless, that the reprise of the Davidic promise expresses the hope for a reestablishment of the dynasty if the necessary conditions embodied in the example of Solomon are fulfilled[162]. According to Dillard, even if the throne of Israel is vacant at the time when the Chronicler is writing, the continuity of the Davidic succession is still to be held effective since the dynastic promise did not lose its validity with the loss of the throne[163].

Japhet is in the opposite camp, denying the eternity of the promise to David: her view is that the deletion of עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹלָם in v. 18 and וּבְנֵיכֶם in v. 19 reveals clearly that Yhwh's exhortation is addressed to Solomon's generation and not to subsequent ones, and so also, the Davidic promise which is recalled concerns Solomon alone and not the entire dynasty[164]. Klein sees no trace of any special interest in the dynasty and its reestablishment in the thought of the Chronicler[165]. According to Murray, the Chronicler operates a real "democratization" of the perspective of

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[160] Murray, *Dynasty*, 81-82, n. 30.

[161] Myers, *II Chronicles*, 44.

[162] H.G.M. Williamson, *Eschatology in Chronicles*, in *Tyndale Bulletin* 28 (1977) 152.

[163] Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 59.

[164] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 616-617.

[165] Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 113. 115.

Sam-Kgs, shifting all the attention from the dynasty to the people in general; the latter are recalled to their own responsibility and exhorted to act personally in seeking Yhwh and humbling themselves before him. They will then be the authentic recipients of the consequent prosperity or punishment[166].

As in the other texts considered, the answer can be sought in the interweaving of the elements present. As Japhet has correctly pointed out, the second apparition to Solomon summarises the three centres of Israel's existence: kingship, land and temple[167]. Each of these is in relation with the people and functional to the relationship between them and Yhwh:

1. centrality is undoubtedly assigned to the temple: the apparition is set in close correlation with the ceremony of dedication as immediate response to Solomon's prayer. Its construction has been determined by the initiative of Yhwh who has made it the object of his election (בחר) as a building for sacrificial worship (בֵּית זֶבַח). Its value is not absolute, however, but relative to the people whose conduct can determine its uselessness and, consequently, its ruin (vv. 19-22);
2. the land, where the people live, undergoes the consequences of the Israelites' conduct: it receives the disasters sent by Yhwh for their correction, is restored on account of their conversion or else deprived of inhabitants if the transgression is not followed by repentance;
3. the monarchy is certainly important. This is demonstrated by the role of Solomon as intercessor and example of integrity, his idealisation

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[166] Murray, *Dynasty*, 79-87. The author identifies an intratextual and an intertextual reference established by our passage: the echoes between 7,14 and 36,12-21 demonstrate that, at the end of his work, the Chronicler attributes the fault for the destruction of the kingdom to the people, within which is also included the responsibility of the kings, just as, in the apparition to Solomon, Yhwh addresses his exhortation chiefly to the people (pp. 75-80); moreover, although reprised from 1 Kgs with its Deuteronomist language, 2 Chr 7,17-22 presents echoes of Ps 132 to which, according to Murray, the Chronicler is alluding in order to refute the eternity of the dynasty affirmed in the psalm and affirm the centrality of the temple alone (pp. 84-87).

[167] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 616.

which places him even above his father, David, and the use of the verb כרת in connection with the dynastic promise. However, the references to Nathan's oracle and the first apparition place the figure of the second Davidite king in the channel constructed for him by the Chronicler: his power and his wisdom are functional to the temple which, in its turn, is functional to the maintenance of the relationship between Yhwh and his people. Consequently, the king is the recipient of the divine promises and threats, not on his own but together with and within the people. He is their first representative but not the only one responsible for the collective destiny.

Temple, land and monarchy converge towards a single element which is the object and the beneficiary of the divine discourse and so of the message of the Chronicler: the people of Israel. Once the construction of the temple has been completed, the physical place in which the relation between earth and heaven is nourished and endures, through his ideal king Yhwh announces to the Israelites the assurance of his own protection and lays down the conditions for its maintenance over time. The people are called on to assume personally the responsibility for the relation with God and the consequences of their own choices. The shaping of their own destiny is in the hands of the people, not in those of the king.

4. God and Manasseh? (2 Chr 33,10)

In the narrative of the wicked phase of the reign of Manasseh, the Chronicler changes his *Vorlage* with regard to the way in which Yhwh makes known his will to the sovereign.

> *2 Chr 33,10:* «Yhwh spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they gave no heed».
>
> *2 Kgs 21,10:* «The Lord said by his servants the prophets».

The reference to the prophets has been taken away with the result that Yhwh seems to intervene by speaking to the sovereign without intermediaries. However, the content of the divine message is not indicated since the Chronicler does not record the direct speech which

follows in 2 Kgs 21,11-15. This omission was necessary because of the different assessments of Manasseh: the prophetic oracle reported by the Dtr contained the total condemnation of the wickedest of the kings of Judah and the announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem. A little later, the Chronicler will recount the conversion of Manasseh in Babylon and so he cannot report this condemnation. He only tells of the calls to repentance, not listened to, addressed by Yhwh to Jerusalem.

But is this really a direct dialogue between God and Manasseh? If we isolate 33,10 from the context, an affirmative answer is possible. However, in the final summary of the reign, the Chronicler informs us that this communication took place through charismatic intermediaries:

> *2 Chr 33,18:* «Now the rest of the actions of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the Lord, God of Israel, these are in the annals of the kings of Israel».

The whole question, therefore, will be tackled in what follows[168]. However, we should note that the expression of 33,10 is significant and that we should not rule out that the ambiguity over a possible direct dialogue with Yhwh is deliberate in order to highlight the importance that the author gives to the events surrounding Manasseh[169].

B. Other supernatural figures

The world of Chronicles is not populated by supernatural figures who interact with human beings. Heavenly spirits are generally absent and come on stage on only three occasions:

– in the account of the acquisition of Ornan's threshing floor, David is incited to carry out a census of the population by a figure described as שָׂטָן (1 Chr 21,1); subsequently, the destroying angel stops on the threshing floor of Ornan (1 Chr 21,12-30);

– the divine deliberation over the death of Ahab, king of Israel, takes place during an assembly of the heavenly court (2 Chr 18,18-22);

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[168] Below, p. 223-224.

[169] Cf. Ben Zvi, *Reading Chronicles*, 131-132.

–in the time of Hezekiah, the Assyrians undergo a prodigious defeat at the hands of an angel sent by Yhwh (2 Chr 32,21)[170].

These three episodes are taken up from Sam-Kgs (respectively, 2 Sam 24; 1 Kgs 22,19-23; 2 Kgs 19,35), but, in the first of these, the Dtr puts on stage, not the שָׂטָן but Yhwh himself (2 Sam 24,1). In none of the three episodes does the Chronicler describe the supernatural being in dialogue with a human character. The only direct contact, whose mode is not made clear, is that between David and the שָׂטָן who incites him to take the census. In the Chronicler's theology, supernatural beings do not enjoy particular positions of importance: Yhwh intervenes, either directly, in the few cases already analysed, or else through human intermediaries.

1. שָׂטָן (1 Chr 21,1)

The account of the census of Israel and the acquisition of Ornan, the Jebusite's, threshing floor comes from 2 Sam 24,1-25 which the Chronicler supplements and modifies. A decisively important change happens in the first verse: the one who incites David to number the population is not Yhwh but a figure described as שָׂטָן.

> *1 Chr 21,1:* «שָׂטָן stood up against Israel, and incited David to count the people of Israel»[171].
> *2 Sam 24,1:* «Again, the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel and he (Yhwh) incited David against them, saying: "Go, count the people of Israel and Judah"».

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[170] A possible allusion to a heavenly court which, as in 2 Chr 18,18-22, collaborates with Yhwh in taking decisions can be detected also in 2 Chr 25,16: יָעַץ אֱלֹהִים לְהַשְׁחִיתֶךָ ("God has determined to destroy you"), addressed to King Amaziah by an anonymous prophet. The *qal* form of the verb יעץ means "deliberate", without necessarily implying the presence of counsellors, something that is generally implied by its *niphal* form. In this case, however, the expression is correlated with Amaziah's action in consulting his courtiers about waging war against Israel in the following v. 17 (וַיִּוָּעַץ, *niphal* of יעץ); therefore, it is not excluded that v. 16 also understands that God's decision is arrived at through consultation with his own court. Cf. below, p. 241-242.

[171] This translation is not taken from NRSV.

The translation of the term שָׂטָן requires particular care. Etymologically, this Hebrew term is at the root of the proper name, "Satan", commonly used in European languages as a synonym of "the Devil" to indicate the principle of evil which is opposed to God and wages war against him to extend his own power over the cosmos and over human beings. However, the personification of the power of evil is not a feature of the Chronicler's narrative so that the understanding of this term requires caution.

In the Hebrew Bible, the root שטן is used almost always to indicate human figures who act as accusers (Ps 38,21; 71,13; 109,4.6.20.29), as political or military opponents (1 Sam 29,4; 1 Kgs 5,18; 11,14.23.25) or as avengers (2 Sam 19,23). The שָׂטָן as a figure belonging to the supernatural world is present in only three texts: in Num 22,22.32, the substantive appears twice, without article and accompanied by the preposition לְ, as an attribute of the angel of Yhwh who intercepts Balaam on his way to King Balak of Moab; in Job 1-2, where the term is cited fourteen times, preceded by the article; and in Zech 3,1-2, three times, always with the article, it indicates the accuser *par excellence*, the one who, in the heavenly court, takes on the role of presenting to God the failures in the behaviour of individuals and suggests to him initiatives for putting them to the test, specifically in the contests of the righteous Job and the post-Exilic high priest, Joshua, respectively. Some lexical elements contribute to associating 1 Chr 21,1 with these three texts: just as in Num, so too in 1 Chr 21, we find both the term שָׂטָן and an angel of Yhwh (מַלְאַךְ יְהוָה) who intercepts the protagonists in a threatening pose with a drawn sword (וְחַרְבּוֹ שְׁלוּפָה בְיָדוֹ: Num 22,23.31 and 1 Chr 21,16); also, in 1 Chr 21,1, the verb סות in the *hiphil* form is associated with שָׂטָן as in Job 2,3; in the Chronicler's text and in Zech 3,1 the adversative direction of the שָׂטָן is indicated with the root עמד followed by the preposition עַל (1 Chr 21,1: וַיַּעֲמֹד שָׂטָן עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל; Zech 3,1: וְהַשָּׂטָן עֹמֵד עַל־יְמִינוֹ). However, some differences can also be observed: in the Balaam incident, the angel of Yhwh descends into the camp on behalf of the people, presenting himself as שָׂטָן to hinder the journey of Balaam who had been called by Balak to curse Israel whereas, in the census of Israel, the שָׂטָן incites David to do what is wrong against the people; compared with Job and Zech, in 1

Chr 21,1, the general picture is different since the שָׂטָן does not present himself before God in a juridical (Zech) or deliberative (Job) context; in fact, the divinity is not even mentioned is not mentioned and is not present on the scene while this figure is there. The very action of the שָׂטָן, although indicated with the *hiphil* of סוּת, as in Job 2,3, is not equivalent in the two passages: in Job, he operates by exercising his influence on God; in 1 Chr he directs his action of seduction on a human being. In our text, moreover, by contrast with Job and Zech, the term is without the article. In conclusion, our passage possesses peculiarities which bring the שָׂטָן into a completely singular position.

How can we identify the features of this figure more closely? According to the majority of commentators, the absence of the article in 1 Chr would render the שָׂטָן a proper name: over time, the ancient substantive would have become specialised so as to become the actual name of the figure personifying the principle of evil[172]. This interpretation is prevalent and more widespread. However, it bears within itself a serious problem: it can easily be suspected of anachronism, a projection on to this figure of features belonging to the subsequent late-Hebrew and Christian angelology. Day correctly points out that, in the extra-biblical Jewish literature, the term שטן is never used as a proper name[173],

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[172] See the careful analysis by R.E. Stokes, *The Satan: How God's Executioner Became the Enemy*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids (MI) 2019.

[173] P.L. Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible* (HSM 43), Scholars Press, Atlanta (GA) 1988, 128, identifies only two exceptions: *Jubilees* 23,29 and *Assumption of Moses* 10,1. The mention of these two works is puzzling. In fact, the former has come down to us in its entirety only in Ge'ez and partly in Hebrew in some fragments of various length coming from caves 1, 2, 3, 4 and 11 of Qumran, but the passage 23,29 figures in none of these and so we have it only in Ge'ez. With regard to the *Assumption* (or *Testament*) of Moses, this work is attested in a single, incomplete Latin manuscript preserved in the Ambrosian Library in Milan. Since the two passages have reached us only in translation, they cannot be used to support arguments about the lexicon and grammar of the Hebrew. Beentjes, P.C. *Satan, God, and the Angel(s) in 1 Chronicles 21*, in F.V. Reiterer et alii (eds.), *Angels: The Concept of Celestial Beings – Origins, Development and Reception* (DCLY 2007), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2007, 140) cites Day and records the two works without noticing their uselessness for this purpose.

and that, in its attestations at Qumran, it is employed with the meaning of "adversary"[174]. The deuterocanonical and extra-biblical literature prefers other proper names for the principle of evil or for negative supernatural beings: Asmodeus (Tobit 3,8.17), Shemyaza, Azazel (both in *1 Enoch* 6-11), Mastema (*Jubilees* 17,16; 48,2), Belial (*War Scroll*[175]). By contrast, Sirach 21,27 attests the transliteration of the Hebrew term with the common meaning of "adversary": ἐν τῷ καταρᾶσθαι ἀσεβῆ τὸν σατανᾶν αὐτὸς καταρᾶται τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχήν "When the wicked man accuses the adversary, he accuses himself"[176]. The Greek translator of 1 Chr 21,1 renders שָׂטָן with διάβολος, without the article,[177] a term that is to

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[174] Day (*Adversary*, 129) mentions three texts in particular: 1QH 4,6, 1QH 45,3 and 1QSb I,8. The first two are fragments of the *Hymn Scroll* (the most recent reconstruction of 1QH is in H. Stegemann et alii, *1QHodayot*[a]. *With Incorporation of 1QHodayot*[b] *and 4QHodayot*[a-f] [DJD 40], Clarendon, Oxford 2009; the text of 4,6 is on p. 270; the text of 45,3 is on p. 283): 4,6: תגער בכול שטן משחית "You threaten every corruptor adversary"; 45,3: כול שטן ומשחית "Every adversary and corruptor". The third text, 1QSb or 1Q28b (in D. Barthélemy-J.T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 1* [DJD 1], Clarendon, Oxford 1955, 118-130; the text of I,8 is on p. 120), contains a collection of blessings to be recited on some unspecified occasions; the term שטן is found in fragment 2 and, in the reconstruction of the prayer, it has been identified as part of line 8 of column I; but here, שטן appears isolated and completely detached from the context, so much so that, despite the mention Day makes of it, in reality, it is not possible to make out if it is a proper name, a common substantive or even a verbal form. To the three texts mentioned by Day, it is possible to add a fourth, 4Q213a 1,17 (in G. Brooke et alii, *Qumran Cave 4. XVII: Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* [DJD 23], Clarendon, Oxford 1996, 25-36; the text of 1,17 is on p. 120), part of the *Aramaic Testament of Levi*, which attests the use of the similar Aramaic term שטן as a common substantive: אל תשלט בי כול שטן "No adversary has power over me".

[175] See also 2 Cor 6,15, where the name Βελιάρ appears, to be considered a simple variant of Belial (cf. A. Pitta, *La Seconda Lettera ai Corinzi*, Borla, Roma 2006, 298); the New Testament, including the Letters of Paul, already knows the use of σατανᾶς as a specialised term for the devil.

[176] *Contra* Day (*Adversary*, 128) who considers that, in Greek, proper names can receive the article and so holds τὸν σατανᾶν the proper name of the principle of evil.

[177] Some witnesses of the Lucianic recension present the transliteration σαταν (in A.E. Brooke et alii, *The Old Testament in Greek*. Vol. III: *The Later Historical Books*, Part II: *I and II Chronicles*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1932, 451); according to Angelini, these reflect a probable Christian influence (*Imaginaire*, p. 286). Jerome translates "satan".

be understood as an indeterminate substantive with the etymological sense of "slanderer", belonging here to the supernatural world[178]. In the face of this multiplicity of attestations of שָׂטָן as a common substantive, increasing credit is being given to the hypothesis in which the absence of the article would indicate, not the proper name of a strongly characterised evil agent but, on the contrary, an unspecified heavenly accuser, immune from later dualistic connotations[179]. On the basis of 1 Kgs 5,18; 11,14.23.25, some exegetes have even argued that what we have here is a human adversary, not a supernatural being[180].

At the end of this examination of the available data, we can establish some firm points. It seems reasonable to exclude that שָׂטָן is the proper name for the principle of evil: if we observe the gradual emergence of the figure of God's enemy in Jewish literature, we can notice that it developed within the general evolution of the concept of heavenly figures. Of such a development, however, there is no trace in Chronicles; on the contrary, as we have noted, the book presents an angelology that is scarcely developed. In a vision of the world that is so little inhabited by angels, it would be passing strange that precisely the Chronicler

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[178] See the recent and thorough research by Angelini on the demoniac imaginary in the LXX: she has shown that the term διάβολος identifies the principle of evil only in the Book of Wisdom 2,24 whereas in the rest of the occurrences it retains the meaning of an indeterminate slanderer and accuser subject to the power of God (A. Angelini, *L'imaginaire du démoniaque dans la Septante: Une analyse comparée de la notion de «démon»* dans la *Septante et dans la Bible hébraïque* [JSJSup 197], Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2021, 281-287).

[179] Thus Day, *Adversary*, 127-145, esp. 142-144; P.S. Evans, *Divine Intermediaries in 1 Chronicles 21: An Overlooked Aspect of the Chronicler's Theology*, in *Biblica* 85 (2004) 553-555; R.E. Stokes, *The Devil Made David Do It... or 'Did' He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the 'Satan' in 1 Chronicles 21:1*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128 (2009) 97-98; Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 144-145; and Jonker, *Defining All-Israel*, 122-127. From the grammatical point of view, the absence of the article leaves open the possibility of a proper name or an indeterminate substantive.

[180] For example, Japhet, *Ideology*, 145-149; J.H. Sailhamer, *1 Chronicles 21:1 – A Study in Inner-Biblical Interpretation*, in *Trinity Journal* 10 (1989) 42; Knoppers, *Images*, 455; and Beentjes, *Satan*, 139-140.

would be the only author in the Hebrew Bible to highlight the spirit of evil in such a way as to personify him with his own name, without ever even naming him in the rest of the narrative.

Equally difficult is the hypothesis that the שָׂטָן is a human adversary: if he is a foreign foe, what war are we talking about? What would be its results? What would be the connection between a declaration of war and incitement to carry out a census? The *hiphil* of סוּת does not indicate a generic provocation but active and vigorous incitement to perform an action. Moreover, would the Chronicler leave so indeterminate and vague a war which was at the origin of the choice of place for the temple? The hypothesis of a human שָׂטָן has too weak foundations; it needs a justification that is excessively tortuous.

There does not seem to be a link with Job 1-2 and Zech 3,1-2: what differentiates 1 Chr 21,1 from the two texts is more than what they share. In particular, once the hypothesis of a proper name has been excluded, the absence of an article before שָׂטָן leaves as the only possibility that what we have here is an indeterminate common substantive and so a figure distant from the specific role of accuser which the שָׂטָן performs before Yhwh in Job and Zech.

The most reasonable hypothesis is that the Chronicler is introducing an indeterminate שָׂטָן who is placed as an obstacle for David and Israel to overcome. Supporting this hypothesis are the links which the chapter has with the episode of Balaam's ass (Num 22,22-35), with precise lexical references which are inserted in a web of multiple correspondences that extend even into parts of the narrative which do not concern the present study directly[181]. Thus, the Chronicler confers his own physiognomy on the שָׂטָן, in continuity with the texts prior to him and at the same time with his own originality. He is not the enemy of God, opposing his plan of salvation; rather, through him, Yhwh's project with regard to the

[181] For a presentation of the numerous lexical correspondences between 1 Chr 21 and Num, see C. Balzaretti, *L'angelo del censimento (1Cr 21,15-16)*, in *Rivista Biblica* 54 (2006), esp. 34-35. On the general relationship between Chr and Num, see L.C. Jonker, *Numbers and Chronicles: False Friends or Close Relatives?*, in *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel* 8 (2019) 332-377.

choice of a site for the future temple is realised: therefore, he is not the personification of the principle of evil but a creature who is limited and subject to the unique and universal sovereignty of God to the extent of being an instrument of his will. Thus, the modification made to 2 Sam does not aim to contradict the *Vorlage* but, rather, to clarify how the action of God on David is carried out: the wrath of God spoken of in 2 Sam 24,1 is manifested, as in Num 22,22-35, through the sending of an emissary who incites David to carry out the census. This is within a general tendency to replace the interventions of God with angelic mediations[182]. However, some questions which were already present in 2 Sam remain unresolved: neither of the two historical works relieves Yhwh of the responsibility of being at the origin of an evil action[183]; furthermore, the object of the wrath in 2 Sam 24,1 and of the hostile position of the שָׂטָן in 1 Chr 21,1 is Israel, not David, but neither of the texts explains the origin and reason for this divine stance.

II. CHARISMATIC FIGURES

The Chronicler's world is very rich, inhabited by a multitude of figures connected with the prophetic sphere who interact with the king of Judah. The charismatic figure appears mostly suddenly bearing a message through which the sovereign is informed of the will of Yhwh or of his interpretation of events. At times, the direct speech is followed by the king's reply, and this inaugurates a brief dialogue; at other times, it takes the form of a judgement on the situation and remains without response while events follow their course. The sovereign's reaction sheds light on his moral quality: if he is just, he behaves according to the word announced; in the opposite case, he ignores the prophetic appeal or

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[182] See in this same passage the insertion of a dialogue between an angel and the prophet Gad in 1 Chr 21,18, a dialogue absent in 2 Sam 24.

[183] So too in 2 Chr 18,18-22, as already in the *Vorlage*, 1 Kgs 22,19-23, God is at the origin of a lie through a heavenly spirit.

even rejects it, even with negative results for the messenger. In cases of conflict, the charismatic figure acts as defender of God's theodicy which is reaffirmed in the face of the injustice of the king who ought to be his institutional intermediary among the people.

The plethora of prophetic figures immediately captures the reader's attention, especially when compared with the Deuteronomist work. Why this abundance of prophets? Why did the Chronicler entrust his own message to this category so extensively? Scholars have offered different answers, from different angles. To what has already been stated in the introduction to the chapter on direct speeches[184] we add here some particular points starting from the history of research which has established some firm points to which the present work also refers.

In the wake of the precomprehension of the Chronicler's work as secondary to the Deuteronomist history, the first studies were devoted to the comparison between the two collections. In 1983, Y. Amit summarised previous research and outlined its gains in this connection[185]:

– the greater abundance of prophetic figures renders this category fundamental for understanding the Chronicler's message: the prophets accompany the entire story of the Davidic dynasty and take on the role of sparring partner of the sovereign, expressing the will of God within the narrative drama;
– there is no longer a problem with false prophecy except in the account about Micaiah which is borrowed from the *Vorlage* (2 Chr 18 // 1 Kgs 22,1-38): the charismatic figure enters into contact with the king to communicate the divine word without any doubt;
– the prophet is no longer described as a professional figure: groups of prophets are not mentioned and the individuals are not portrayed as a specialised social category since the spirit of Yhwh can descend on anybody;
– the content of the message concerns events in the short term; long-term oracles are not announced;
– the prophetic prerogative of working miracles is completely passed over;
– the last three characteristics cited render the prophetic characters as stereotyped figures without individual characterisation. Instead, their

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[184] Above, from p. 117.

[185] Amit, *Role*, 90-92.

dominant role, equal for all, is that of heralds of God before the king;
– the very content of their speeches allows a glimpse of the lack of need for a prophet: they call for the fulfilment of the precepts of the Law; once this has been fulfilled, prophecy will no longer be necessary;
– the prophetic texts are adopted as sources for the reconstruction of events. According to Amit, the extensive use of such sources, together with the copious presence of charismatic figures, reveals the Chronicler's intention to confer prophetic authority on his own work also[186].

Amit's position with regard to the role of the prophets in Chronicles is important. She links their function with the more general theme of kingship which, according to the Chronicler, as we have seen[187], belongs to Yhwh: the prophet's function consists in the action of spurring the sovereign to align the earthly kingdom of the Davidic dynasty with the perspective of the kingdom of Yhwh, avoiding an imbalance between the two realities. For the recipients of the literary work, therefore, listening to the prophets becomes the condition for which the Jewish people can remain within the kingdom of Yhwh, avoiding the destruction that had already fallen on the dynasty for its disobedience[188].

In her study already cited, R. Micheel analyses the function which the Chronicler attributes to the charismatic figures, especially those not in his *Vorlage*. According to her, these additions have the function of commenting on and integrating the interpretations of events already narrated by the Dtr so as to render them significant for the message to be transmitted. The words of the charismatic figures are addressed primarily to the sovereign: the events interpreted in the speech are connected to the king's relation with Yhwh, with the theological principle of retribution as the fundamental criterion. The basic message can be summarised in a general assumption: faith in God involves a blessing and its abandonment a curse[189].

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186 *Ibid.*, 96-97.

187 Above, p. 34-35.

188 Amit, *Role*, 97-101.

189 Micheel, *Seher- und Propheten-Überlieferung*, 67-70.

In his article of 1988, "The Classical Prophets in the Chronistic History", before entering into the detail of the relationship between the Chronicler and the texts of the so-called "writing prophets", C.T. Begg highlights four general tendencies of the Chronicler[190]. First of all, the prophetic dimension is greatly emphasised compared with the Deuteronomist work with the insertion of characters unknown to the latter. Secondly, the speeches proper to the Chronicler contain allusions to texts which were later to become the prophetic books of the canon. Thirdly, the figures added by the Chronicler are more like the classical prophets than the prophets of Sam-Kgs, both in their *modus operandi* (their words are addressed to the whole people and not just to the sovereign) and in their contents (call to repentance and the return to Yhwh). Finally, if the prophets of Sam-Kgs were stationed chiefly in the north, the Chronicler's prophets act in Judah, filling a void in our information.

According to H.V. Van Rooy, this void concerns not only the past but also the present of the recipients of the literary work. The word of Yhwh no longer reached the Chronicler's contemporaries directly because, in the meantime, the prophetic institution had disappeared. Thus, the biblical author puts on stage numerous charismatic figures to compensate for the absence of a contemporary prophetism. A peculiar characteristic of this process is the link which Chr establishes between the prophetism attributed to the monarchical period and Levitism with the aim of supporting the theocratic institutions which had been formed in the post-Exilic period[191].

Essential for the theme, once again, is the already-cited volume of W.M. Schniedewind, *The Word of God in Transition*. This scholar's thorough analysis sheds light on the variety of the charismatic figures in Chronicles. The fundamental contribution in this regard lies in

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[190] C.T. Begg, *The Classical Prophets in the Chronistic History*, in *Biblische Zeitschrift* 32 (1988) 100-101.

[191] H.V. Van Rooy, *Prophet and Society in the Persian Period According to Chronicles*, in T.C. Eskenazi-K.H. Richards (eds.), *Second Temple Studies: 2. Temple and Community in the Persian Period* (JSOTSup 175), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1994, 178-179.

the distinction between prophets and inspired messengers[192] which Schniedewind establishes starting from the overall theological judgement on the history of the kingdom of Judah which the Chronicler expresses at the conclusion of his work as an explanation for the tragedy of the Exile.

> *2 Chr 36,15-16:* «[15]The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; [16]but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord against his people became so great that there was no remedy».

According to Schniedewind, the Chronicler includes in the category of "prophets" the figures who bear the classical titles נָבִיא, רֹאֶה, חֹזֶה, and אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים; the "messengers", however, are characters whom the Chronicler introduces with formulas which express the descent of the spirit of Yhwh, which moves them to speak. Schniedewind identifies a difference in social membership: the first group comprises characters who exercise the role of prophets in a stable form; the second group, on the other hand, is formed by all those who do not enjoy the social status of prophet and intervene in the name of Yhwh only occasionally under his impulse. Schniedewind also notes a different function in the narrative drama. In particular, with regard to the speeches:

- the prophets address the kings, and the content of their speech consists of an interpretation of events in the name of the divinity;

- the inspired messengers, on the other hand, address the people and carry out an inspired reinterpretation of texts which were held to be authoritative in the time of the Chronicler[193].

On the basis of this distinction, Schniedewind makes a clear separation between Levites and prophets: when a Levite intervenes to communicate a divine message, he receives the spirit and is to be considered an

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[192] Mason had already distinguished the two terms but differently from Schniedewind: נָבִיא would refer to prophets *in sensu stricto*, and מַלְאָךְ to charismatic figures as a whole, prophets included (*Preaching*, 121-122. 137).

[193] Schniedewind, *Word*, 84. 122-129.

inspired messenger. The only Levites connected with prophetism would be Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, ancestors of the families of singers in service in the temple, and only in relation to their liturgical office[194].

Schniedewind's study has certainly the merit of being a careful and thorough analysis of the prophetic titles and the formulas with which the divine words are introduced. However, it presents some weaknesses and inconsistencies due essentially to the rigidity with which the scheme he has identified is applied to the text. This does not permit the emergence of a more nuanced view in which the types intersect with one another. For example, Schniedewind includes Azariah, son of Oded, among the inspired messengers because he is not described with one of the classical titles and his intervention is introduced with a formula of the descent of the spirit (2 Chr 15,1), but he does not notice the term נְבוּאָה with which the Chronicler describes his oracle (2 Chr 15,8)[195]; by contrast, he includes Eliezer among the prophets because, although he lacks a prophetic title, his direct speech is introduced with the verb נבא (2 Chr 20,37)[196]. Schniedewind lists the priest Zechariah among the category of inspired messengers but, in fact, he appears in the narrative after a series of prophets (2 Chr 24,19-20) rather as continuing them than in opposition to or distinction from them[197]. Moreover, in Jehoshaphat's

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[194] *Ibid.*, 186-188.

[195] *Ibid.*, 112-115.

[196] *Ibid.*, 97-98; this position is reprised and clarified in Id., *Prophets and Prophecy in the Books of Chronicles*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (JSOTSup 238), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 214. For Knoppers, on the contrary, the figure of Eliezer shows that the Chronicler equates the people sent by God *ad hoc* for a single mission to the stable prophets (G.N. Knoppers, *Democratizing Revelation? Prophets, Seers and Visionaries in Chronicles*, in J. Day [ed.], *Prophecy and Prophets in Ancient Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar* [LHB/OTS 531], T&T Clark, London 2010, 397-398).

[197] Japhet has a different interpretation according to which it is possible to recognise two categories of prophets in Chr: the messengers of conversion and the inspired interpreters of events; she believes that the prophets of 2 Chr 24,19 represent the first category while Zechariah embodies the second (*Ideology*, 177-179). My view is that the identification of the two categories is artificial since the two themes of conversion and interpretation of

war against Moab and Ammon, the Chronicler places on the same level the inspired messenger, Jahaziel, and the prophets the pious king asks the people to believe (2 Chr 20,14-20), whereas Schniedewind tries – in vain – every means to demonstrate the contrary[198]. In conclusion, Schniedewind's study has marked a fundamental step in the study of prophetism in the Chronicles, but his schematization needs to be accepted with a certain elasticity which respects the evidence emerging from the text.

Adopting a historical approach, E.S. Gerstenberger has sought to explain the Chronicler's prophetic conception, starting out from the socio-cultural environment of the province of Yehud in the late Persian period. Formulating an interesting hypothesis, he interprets the final summary of 2 Chr 36,15-16 in the light of this historical context: in his opinion, the terms מַלְאָךְ and נָבִיא are, in fact, synonyms without particular shades of meaning. It is possible that the Chronicler intended to contrast the prophets as messengers of God with the Persian imperial organisation in which the sovereign's messengers had the task of communicating the laws issuing from the royal authority and bringing them to execution[199]. L.C. Jonker takes up and completes this concept, linking it more explicitly to the kingship of Yhwh: the prophets are the messengers of a monarchy alternative to the Persian one, that is, the kingship of the God of Israel, and they communicate his will and instructions. In this way, their speeches do not just have the aim of giving a theological interpretation to the events narrated but also of contributing to the clarification of the collective identity of the Jewish people[200].

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history are woven together in the speeches of the charismatic figures.

[198] Schniedewind, *Word*, 182-184.

[199] E.S. Gerstenberger, *Prophetie in den Chronikbüchern: Jahwes Wort in zweierlei Gesalt?*, in F. Hartenstein et alii (eds.), *Schriftprophetie: Festschrift für Jörg Jeremias zum 65. Geburtstag*, Neukirchener Verlag, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2004, 357; also Becking, *Zedekiah*, 226.

[200] L.C. Jonker, *Refocusing the Battle Accounts of the Kings: Identity Formation in the Books of Chronicles*, in S. Lubs et alii (eds.), *Behutsames Lesen: alttestamentliche Exegese im interdisziplinären Methodendiskurs. Christof Hardmeier zum 65. Geburtstag* (ABG 28), Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Leipzig 2007, 261-262.

E. Ben Zvi tackles the theme of prophetism in Chronicles according to the perspective of social memory, seeking to grasp the representation of prophecy which the author intends to formulate and present to his readers. Going beyond Schniedewind's rigid distinction, he recognises a considerable variety within the presentation of prophetism in Chronicles. The view offered by the biblical author is not to be considered an innovation introduced by default for ideological ends but, rather, reflects the perception of its time in which changed historical circumstances had set the conditions for a rereading of the past different from the older, Deuteronomist work. Ben Zvi identifies four "prophetic images" that existed in the Chronicler's society and can be detected in the text: prophecy in the strict sense; the laws and regulations which assume an authoritative character inasmuch as they are attributed to Moses and David; the historical works which the author claims to be using as sources; and the composition of chants and music for the temple liturgy[201]. S.J. Schweitzer also places the concept of prophetism that emerges from Chronicles within the socio-cultural context of his time. Focusing in particular on the third and fourth of Ben Zvi's prophetic images, Schweitzer goes back to the author's social categories of reference: the use of prophetic sources (real or presumed) places him within the scribal class while his recognition of the prophetic character of the liturgy reveals his connection with Levitism[202].

An important contribution to the subject has been provided by G. N. Knoppers. He ascribes the presence and activity of the charismatic figures of Chr to Moses' declaration about prophets in Deut 18,15-22. Knoppers interprets this passage (correctly in my opinion) in a distributive and not an individual sense: Moses' promise is not made concrete in a single prophet of the future but in the continual sending of prophets

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[201] E. Ben Zvi, *Chronicles and Its Reshaping of Memories of Monarchic Period Prophets: Some Observations*, in M.J. Boda-M. Wray Beal (eds.), *Prophets, Prophecy, and Ancient Israelite Historiography*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2013, 182-184.

[202] S.J. Schweitzer, *Exile, Empire, and Prophecy: Reframing Utopian Concerns in Chronicles*, in S.J. Schweitzer-F. Uhlenbruch (eds.), *Worlds that could not be: Utopia in Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah* (LHB/OTS 620), T&T Clark, New York 2016, 97-101.

who, each in his own time, guarantees the function of helper, comfort and guide of Israel which was precisely that of the great lawmaker of the Exodus. The Chronicler arranges his characters on stage according to the word pronounced by Yhwh through Moses[203]. As in Deut 18,15-22, the charismatic figures speak in the name of Yhwh and their veracity is demonstrated by the exact fulfilment of what they have announced. As promised by Moses, they are sent to the people, not to the king[204]. Furthermore, the nature of their mission is verbal: they do not perform miracles, and the biblical author does not show any interest in them as individuals. The focus of attention is only on the word which they communicate in the name of God[205]. Following Schniedewind, Knoppers also operates a distinction between different types. However, he does not apply this too rigidly, recognising that it does not resolve on its own the question of the identity of the prophet. For the purposes of communicating the message, there is no substantial difference between permanent prophets and temporary ones. The sending of *ad hoc* messengers has the sole additional scope of demonstrating the continual care of Yhwh who is ready to grant the temporary gift of prophecy to any kind of person for the good of the people if the situation requires it. Moreover, in the choice of this person, God acts with the greatest freedom to the extent of expressing his will even through foreign rulers like Neco (2 Chr 35,21-22) and Cyrus (2 Chr 36,22-23)[206]. The text does not reveal a greater emphasis on the institutionalised prophet as against the temporary one, as is demonstrated by the absence of calling or commissioning accounts and the silence over the schools or groups of prophets which populated the world of Sam-Kgs[207]. The function of the prophets, whether permanent or *ad tempus*, is fundamental for the development of the narrative drama and the communication of the

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[203] Knoppers, *Prophets*, 162-169.

[204] *Ibid.*, 196-197.

[205] Knoppers, *Democratizing Revelation*, 400.

[206] *Ibid.*, 398.

[207] *Ibid.*, 400.

theological message: standing beside the king, social leader of Israel, they represent Yhwh before the people and its chiefs; at the same time, however, they enjoy independence from the monarch. They are not members of his court, and they often act occasionally and then disappear from the scene. In this way, they too rise to the status of national leader under the religious aspect[208]. The wide and free choice of messengers even among common people, otherwise unknown, brings Knoppers to coin the expression "democratised prophecy", that is, unconnected with institutional circles, poured out on Levites, soldiers and any other men chosen freely by Yhwh; the Chronicler himself can be held to have had the awareness and claim to be a sharer of this same gift in the composition of his literary work[209].

Finally, in his article "Concepts of Prophetic Leadership in Chronicles", K. Pyschny develops the concept of prophetic leadership identified by Knoppers in order to explain its form. The Chronicler places the prophet in juxtaposition with the king: the two figures are put on an equal level, both receiving their authority directly from Yhwh. However, the charismatic figure is not only a counsellor of the sovereign; he also addresses the people to exhort them and recall them to the observance of the Law. Like Knoppers, Pyschny too recognises in the Chronicler's vision a sign of the "democratisation" of the concept of prophecy which took place in the post-Exilic period and he identifies two of its elements[210]: on the one hand, the prophetic action is untied from institutional figures to be linked directly to the will of Yhwh who grants this gift with total freedom through the pouring out of the spirit; on the other hand, the prophetic leadership is not conceptualised in relation to its relationship with the sovereign but rather with the people as a whole or with a group of its representatives. From the point of view of content, the prophetic leadership is made up basically of two aspects[211]: the proclamation

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[208] Knoppers, *Prophets*, 172.

[209] Knoppers, *Democratizing Revelation*, 405.

[210] Pyschny, *Concepts*, 311.

[211] *Ibid.*, esp. 300-304. 310-312.

of the word of Yhwh revealed in the Torah and its interpretation according to the actualising current of the classical prophets. In fact, the prophetic word ends up in possessing qualitatively the same authority and normativity as the law of Moses, and the sovereign owes his attention and obedience. To summarise in the words of King Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20,20: "Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe in his prophets and you will succeed"), for the Chronicler, faith in Yhwh and faith in his prophets are two interconnected elements, indeed, two aspects of the same reality. In this way, the prophetic activity is closely bound up with the interpretation of Scripture and so with the social make-up of the scribes to which the Chronicler belonged.

Here we shall describe the charismatic figures who, within the narrative, pronounce speeches useful for reconstructing the author's judgement on the sovereigns[212]. The figures are subdivided on the basis of their titles in the literary work. The first three subsections are devoted to three classical titles: רֹאֶה, חֹזֶה, and אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים. The fourth subsection lists the figures correlated with the root נבא: by contrast with Schniedewind, I am not limiting myself only to the prophetic title נָבִיא, so as to include Azariah and Eliezer also. The fifth subsection includes some of the figures whom Schniedewind describes as "inspired messengers", that is, charismatic figures without a specific prophetic title, who are moved by the spirit of Yhwh to proclaim an oracle *ad hoc*. By contrast with the classifications of previous scholars, we exclude here some messengers who will be described in subsequent sections: in view of the perspective of the present study, focused on the leadership of the sovereign, it is preferable to privilege the criterion of the social class of membership, holding it significant for the Chronicler's judgement provided through

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[212] For this reason, we have not considered the prophetic works cited by the Chronicler as sources of his information since they are not useful for our purpose. On the relationship between king and prophetic sources, we note only the opinion of Amit: when the king is just, the prophet is only a historical source; when the king is wicked, the prophets are called on to re-establish justice (Amit, *Role*, 99); in reality, the question is more complex since, as we shall see, charismatic figures intervene also in relation to sovereigns that are judged positively.

these figures[213]. Lastly, a sixth and final section will be devoted to the summary conclusion of 2 Chr 36,15-16.

A. רֹאֶה

As substantivized *qal* participle of the verb ראה, the term רֹאֶה, has the literal meaning of "he/the one who sees". When applied to charismatic figures, it loses its purely physical meaning of "seeing" to assume a religious one belonging to the sphere of divination. The description of seer is applied to one who is able to perceive reality that is much deeper than seeing and so can interpret it with authority, at times also anticipating future events. In Chronicles, רֹאֶה appears on five occasions: three times, it is applied to Samuel (1 Chr 9,22; 26,28; 29,29) and twice to Hanani (2 Chr 16,7.10). In the rest of the Hebrew Bible, it occurs in only another seven places: in 1 Sam it is attributed to Samuel three times (9,11.18-19), while twice in 9,9, in a comment of the author, it is equated to נָבִיא. In Is 28,7, רֹאֶה is utilised in a polemical context against priests and prophets, and, in Is 30,10, it is placed in parallel with the synonym, חֹזֶה.

The Chronicler's application of the term רֹאֶה to Samuel and Hanani has an archaic flavour. The Dtr describes Samuel as נָבִיא in a single occurrence (1 Sam 3,20). In the passage recounting the first meeting between Saul and Samuel (1 Sam 9,1-21), the latter is described several times as רֹאֶה, but a comment of the author notes: "Formerly in Israel when a man went to enquire of God, he said: «Come, let us go to the seer!», for he who is now called נָבִיא was formerly called רֹאֶה" (9,9). According to various scholars, the verse is not a later gloss but is to be attributed to the Dtr himself, either with the aim of clarifying the source he was using[214], or else to weld together two narratives that were originally distinct[215].

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[213] Therefore, the inspired messengers, Jahaziel and Zechariah will be treated in section III "Priests and Levites", and Neco and Cyrus in section VI "Foreign sovereigns".

[214] Cf. H.J. Stoebe, *Das erste Buch Samuelis* (KAT 8/1), Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh 1973, 195. 202-203.

[215] Cf. T.L. Fenton, *Deuteronomistic Advocacy of the Nabî: 1 Samuel IX 9 and Questions of Israelite Prophecy*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 47 (1997) 24-28.

In any case, it was contained in the text consulted by the Chronicler. The nature of the precise distinction between רֹאֶה and נָבִיא is much discussed, and various proposals have been advanced: the difference could be qualitative, specifying two figures with different functions[216]; or else it could be of a temporal nature as 1 Sam 9,9 suggests, that is, an exchange of terms indicating the same reality; a different geographical origin has also been proposed[217]; finally, there could be a theological explanation, with נָבִיא having a richer significance for the Dtr[218]. However, the scant number of occurrences and its explicit equation with נָבִיא do not allow us to take a secure position on the social origin of the term: in fact, in the texts that have come down to us, it possesses all the characteristics of a prophetic title proper, and it is employed by the Chronicler as synonymous with נָבִיא.

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[216] According to H.W. Hertzberg, *Die Samuelbücher* (Das Alte Testament Deutsch 10), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 1956, 63, the seer was a man with a particular capacity for penetrating reality who drew from that his own means of living, while the prophet was one who was taken totally by God and belonged to him. On the basis of 1 Sam 9, Petersen has claimed to identify a difference between seer and prophet: whereas the latter could belong to itinerant groups, the seer, Samuel, appears as a recognised professional figure resident in an inhabited centre connected with a sanctuary to which it was necessary to repair for a consultation (D.L. Petersen, *The Roles of Israel's Prophets* [JSOTSup 17], JSOT Press, Sheffield 1981, 38-39). However, as Schniedewind correctly notes (*Word*, 45), the text of 1 Sam 9 presents interpretative problems, and the occurrence of the term is so limited as to render such positions rather weak.

[217] Thus W. Caspari, *Die Samuelbücher mit Sacherklärungen versehen* (KAT 7), A. Deichertsche Werner Scholl, Leipzig 1926, 95-96; followed by Y. Levin, *The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah. 2 Chronicles 10-36: A New Translation and Commentary*, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, London-New York 2017, 79.

[218] Fenton (*Deuteronomistic Advocacy*, 37-38) recalls the centrality of the text of Deut 18,15-22 for Deuteronomist theology; moreover, he affirms that it is possible that the seer was perceived as a solitary figure whereas the Hebrew Bible knows only of prophets who live in groups, some of them in conflict with the authentic prophet of Yhwh (*ibid.*, 38).

1. Samuel

Chronicles mentions the figure of Samuel for the first time within the genealogy of the tribe of Levi (1 Chr 5,27-6,66)[219], presenting him as son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham[220], and father of Joel and Abijah:

> *1 Chr 6,10-13:* «[10]Sons of Elkanah: Amasai and Ahimoth, [11]Elkanah his son, Zophai his son, Nahath his son, [12]Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son, [Samuel his son]. [13]And the sons of Samuel were Joel the firstborn and Abijah the second».

The names of Samuel's sons, Joel and Abijah, correspond to 1 Sam 8,2; however, the series of ancestors in 1 Sam 1,1 is partly different: here, Elkanah is indicated as son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, the Ephraimite. In the list of ancestors of the temple singer Heman, son of Joel, son of Samuel, the genealogy is partly different (1 Chr 6,18-20): Samuel is here presented as son of Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, son of Elkanah[221]. The clearest and most significant difference between Dtr and Chr is the numbering of Samuel, not in the tribe of Ephraim but in the priestly tribe of Levi.

A single verbal intervention of Samuel is recorded in an indirect speech, in connection with King David who was anointed king of Israel

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[219] The Greek, Syriac and Latin versions, followed by many modern translations, place the beginning of chapter 6 at v. 5,27 of the MT, causing a discrepancy of 15 units in the ensuing numeration; for this reason, many publications have a double numeration. Here, we follow the numeration of the MT.

[220] In the MT and the LXX, there is no link of sonship between Samuel and Elkanah, which is posted in square brackets in the translation, and the names of Samuel's sons are inserted without apparent connection with the preceding material. Only the Lucianic recension of the LXX contains the information Σαμουηλ υἱὸς αὐτου (= 1 Chr 6,27 LXX). The commentators complete the MT from Lucian, holding this to be a case of omission through *homoioteleuton*. It is not clear whether the Lucianic reading is due to a different Hebrew original or the result of a textual emendation in the face of a clear lacuna (cf. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 172).

[221] Japhet explains the difference between the two series of names by holding Heman's genealogy to be late. It would have been modified with the insertion of the name of Samuel in order to give greater importance to the group of singers who were traced back to him (*I & II Chronicles*, 157).

in Hebron in fulfilment of a "word of the Lord by Samuel" (1 Chr 11,3). The Chronicler records a single anointing of David by the elders of the whole of Israel at Hebron, preferring to pass over the events of the war with the family of Saul narrated by the Deuteronomist. In this account the kingship of the son of Jesse was inaugurated in two stages: first, the elders of the tribe of Judah alone anointed him king at Hebron (2 Sam 2,4); then, after two years, following the death of Ishbaal, the elders of Israel also came to him at Hebron for a further anointing (2 Sam 5,1-3). 1 Chr 11,1-3 corresponds to this second account: the Chronicler deletes the chronological elements about David's age and the years of his reign (2 Sam 5,4-5) and adds the reference to Samuel which is absent in the Dtr. The דְּבַר יְהוָה to which the text alludes is not contained in Chr: as happens on other occasions, the author recalls what is already well known to the reader of Sam-Kgs without making it explicit. In this case, he is very probably referring both to the similar action of anointing recounted in 1 Sam 16,1-13 and to the prophetic word *post mortem* during the consultation with the witch of Endor in 1 Sam 28,17. This last episode is recalled by the Chronicler a little earlier, in 1 Chr 10,13-14, at the end of the reign of Saul, in which the prophet is not named directly but only the sin of having consulted a medium instead of Yhwh[222].

In the rest of Chronicles, Samuel is mentioned in other four passages without any equivalent in Sam-Kgs: in three of these, he is described as רֹאֶה and, in the fourth, נָבִיא. In 1 Chr 9,22, faithfulness to David and to Samuel, "the seer", is held to be a criterion of admission for the Levites who had to take up the responsibility of "gatekeepers of the threshold" of the Tent of Meeting in the time of David, and so were to become the temple porters under Solomon. 1 Chr 26,28 mentions the objects, product of the booty of war, consecrated to Yhwh by Samuel, "the seer", by Saul, by Abner and by Joab; Samuel's connection with military events is attested only by 1 Sam 7,2-14 where, however, there

[222] Only the LXX adds at the end of 1 Chr 10,13: καὶ ἀπεκρίνατο αὐτῷ Σαμουηλ ὁ προφήτης ("and Samuel, the prophet, replied to him"), making clear the identity of the spirit called up by the king through the necromancer.

is no hint of consecrations of the booty of war. 1 Chr 29,29 attributes to Samuel, "the seer", the authorship of one of the sources consulted by the Chronicler for information on the reign of David. Finally, in 2 Chr 35,18, the period of Samuel, "the prophet", is claimed to be the last in which a solemn Passover was celebrated before the time of Josiah. The mention of Samuel is absent in the parallel passage of 2 Kgs 23,22-23, and the account of such a celebration is not contained in any text known to us.

A glance at the body of citations in which Samuel appears reveals two aspects. On the one hand, the figure who gives his name to the two books of the Deuteronomist history is much less important for the Chronicler. Undoubtedly, the reason for this is Samuel's role in the activities of Saul and in the complicated succession from Saul to David, events which the Chronicler chooses not to recount. On the other hand, we see the wish to trace Samuel back into the priestly world: from an Ephraimite, he becomes a Levite, is connected on several occasions with the temple worship (song, furnishings and liturgical offices), and becomes the model and term of comparison for the great Passover which the pious king, Josiah, causes to be celebrated.

2. Hanani (2 Chr 16,7-9)

In the second phase of the reign of Asa, characterised by the king's separation from Yhwh, the seer Hanani appears in connection with a military victory which the king had obtained against Israel, thanks to an alliance with Ben-Hadad, king of Aram. The Chronicler puts a direct speech in the mouth of Hanani. The passage has no parallel in the Dtr.

> *2 Chr 16,7-9:* «[7]At that time the seer Hanani came to King Asa of Judah, and said to him, "Because you relied on the king of Aram, and did not rely on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped you. [8]Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with exceedingly many chariots and cavalry? Yet because you relied on the Lord, he gave them into your hand. [9]For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the entire earth, to strengthen those whose heart is true to him. You have done foolishly in this; for from now on you will have wars"».

In this account, Hanani has the task of denouncing the sin of Asa: the key element of the discourse is the verb שׁען ("rely"), an action which the king adopts towards the king of Aram and not towards Yhwh, the reverse of his previous position on the occasion of the invasion of the Cushites (נִשְׁעַנּוּ in 2 Chr 14,10). On the basis of the theology of immediate retribution, since Asa's relying on the Lord has been reversed, the prophet's condemnation is, in its turn, the reversing of the king's situation. If, in 14,5, the characteristic of the reign was the absence of wars, conceded by Yhwh, now Hanani announces precisely the arrival of new wars. The sovereign's reaction is violent, so much so that he throws the seer into prison (2 Chr 16,10a). He is the first one sent by God to undergo persecution. The Chronicler inserts here the information that Asa oppressed some of the people (2 Chr 16,10b)[223], thus alluding to a link between the king's separation from God and the outbreak of conflicts between him and his people.

One factor should be observed: according to the author, the military victory in itself is not enough to give the king a positive judgement. It is necessary that this victory be the product of the relationship with Yhwh and not of human alliances. Otherwise, the alliance itself could be the harbinger of future negative developments. This seems to be the sense of the final phrase of v. 7: since there was no hostility between Aram and Judah, the mention of the flight of the army of Aram seems to be out of place. Already, there was an attempt in antiquity to simplify the text by reading "Israel" here instead of "Aram", as in the Greek recension of Lucian, a solution which contradicts what comes earlier since Israel is not fighting against Judah but only with Aram (16,4-5). Thus, the text can be explained as an announcement of the evil that will come to Judah from this alliance: Aram remains an enemy. With his wicked alliance, Asa has enabled a hostile army to descend on the country, to come dangerously close to the people of Yhwh and to get away undisturbed, giving access to negative consequences in the long term. On the contrary, Yhwh

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[223] Perhaps the part of the people who supported Hanani's position? Thus Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 126.

could have given Asa the possibility of making war and defeating both Israel and their allies, the Aramaeans[224].

B. חֹזֶה

Like רֹאֶה, the term חֹזֶה is a substantivized *qal* participle from a root pertinent to the semantic field of sight[225]. The use the Chronicler makes of it is broader than with רֹאֶה: ten times (one of which taken from the *Vorlage*) and for a greater number of figures. Furthermore, he describes as חֲזוֹת some sources he has consulted for collecting historical information. Comparison with the rest of the Hebrew Bible is interesting: חֹזֶה occurs only six times: 2 Sam 24,11 (repeated in 1 Chr 21,9); 2 Kgs 17,13; Is 29,10; 30,10; Amos 7,12; Mic 3,7; in all these cases, the term is mentioned together with רֹאֶה (Is 30,10) or נָבִיא (all the remaining cases), with which it is taken to be synonymous[226].

1. Gad

Gad, one of the men at David's court already known in the Deuteronomist history, appears also in Chronicles in a single episode: the census of the people and the acquisition of the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite: 1 Chr 21 (// 2 Sam 24). In his dialogue with the king we don't find elements of judgement useful for the present study: Gad is a simple intermediary between Yhwh and David who follows the divine instructions, repenting of his conduct and raising an altar. However, since the Chronicle is following the pre-existing text, it is interesting to note that Gad no longer has the title of נָבִיא:

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[224] Cf. Curtis-Madsen, *Chronicles*, 389; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 735-736; and G.N. Knoppers, *«Yhwh is Not with Israel»: Alliances as a Topos in Chronicles*, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 58 (1996) 607.

[225] To indicate the distinction between the two roots, the present work translates רֹאֶה with "seer" and חֹזֶה with "visionary".

[226] The attempts of some authors to distinguish the historical origins and social roles of נָבִיא and חֹזֶה (e.g. Petersen, *Roles*, 51-75, and Knoppers, *Prophets*, 175) collapse with the scarcity of attestations and remain in the realm of hypotheses.

2 Sam 24,11: «When David arose in the morning, the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad, David's visionary, saying».

1 Chr 21,9: «The Lord spoke to Gad, David's visionary, saying».

In the Deuteronomist history, Gad is called נָבִיא here and when he appears on the scene in 1 Sam 22,5 in the context of David's flight from Saul, a narrative cycle which the Chronicler does not report. The Chronicler shows a certain degree of care in assigning the title of visionary to Gad and that of prophet to Nathan: as sources of the Chronicler for the reign of David, 1 Chr 29,29 indicates "the records of the seer (הָרֹאֶה) Samuel, and in the records of the prophet (נָבִיא) Nathan, and in the records of the visionary (הַחֹזֶה) Gad", a mention absent in Sam-Kgs. This distinction also appears in 2 Chr 29,25 which deserves to be recorded in full:

2 Chr 29,25: «[Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's visionary and of the prophet Nathan, for the commandment was from the Lord through his prophets».

This text also implicitly attributes to Gad the title of נָבִיא which the Chronicler had denied him in 1 Chr 21,9. However, the chief novelty is that Gad is here associated with the sphere of the cult, an element never present in the Deuteronomist history. Neither Sam-Kgs nor Chr has any information on Gad's tribe, and nothing enables us to deduce that he could have been a Levite; his name does not necessarily render him a descendant of the homonymous patriarch; David's visionary does not even appear in the chronologies which open 1 Chr. On a closer look, 2 Chr 29,25 is not the only passage in which the Chronicler links Gad with the temple. That had happened indirectly also in the acquisition of Ornan's threshing floor since, according to 2 Chr 3,1, this was located on the mountain on which Solomon was to build the sanctuary to Yhwh. In 1 Chr 21,18-19, Gad shows David the place where he is to raise the altar, following a revelation from an angel of Yhwh, an altar which is an anticipation of the temple in the narrative: it is through Gad that the choice is made of the site for the building of the temple.

We can conclude that the figure of Gad, originally bound to David personally and (by contrast with Nathan) foreign to the dynamics of the

court, is brought back by the Chronicler within the temple institution, as a charismatic element which justifies the constitution of the temple institution and structures its activities.

2. Jehu, son of Hanani (2 Chr 19,2-3)

Just as Asa received a warning from the רֹאֶה Hanani, so Asa, Jehoshaphat's son, receives a judgement from Hanani's son, the חֹזֶה Jehu.

> *2 Chr 19,2-3:* «[2]Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, wrath [has gone out] against you from the LORD. [3]Nevertheless, some good is found in you, for you destroyed the sacred poles out of the land, and have set your heart to seek God"».

Jehu belongs to the northern kingdom: in 1 Kgs 16,1-7, where he is described as נָבִיא, he is bearer of an oracle of condemnation against Baasha, king of Israel, contemporary of Asa[227]. The Chronicler presents him as still active in the time of Asa's son, Jehoshaphat.

Jehu's intervention takes place at the end of the military campaign of Ahab, king of Israel, against the Aramaeans to whom Jehoshaphat, ally and relation of Ahab, had lent his support (2 Chr 18). As a fulfilment of the oracle the oracle of Micaiah, son of Imlah, who had condemned the king of Israel, Ahab is killed in battle while Jehoshaphat returns to Jerusalem safe and sound (2 Chr 19,1). In the Deuteronomist history, Ahab is the wicked king *par excellence*, dominated by his wife, Jezebel, and enemy of the prophet, Elijah. In Chronicles, he is one of the few kings of Israel to receive attention because of his relationship with the king of Judah. By contrast, in Chronicles, Jehoshaphat is one of the justest kings whereas, according to 1 Kgs 22,43-44, he was only partly positive: "doing what was right in the sight of the Lord; yet the high places were not taken away". The link between Ahab and Jehoshaphat was too close for the Chronicler to be able to ignore: how then justify such an

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[227] An analysis of this passage and of the origin of the traditions about Jehu are found in H. Seebass, *Tradition und Interpretation bei Jehu ben Chanani und Ahia von Silo*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975) 175-190, but it falls outside the scope of the present study.

alliance? The answer lies in the insertion of an episode not found in the Dtr: the negative judgement from Jehu, a charismatic figure coming, not by chance, from the northern kingdom. Just as Asa began his reign faithfully and later distanced himself from God on account of an ill-chosen alliance with Aram, causing the intervention of Hanani, so Hanani's son presents himself before Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, to admonish him over his alliance with Israel. However, in the face of the deliberate closeness between the two events, precisely from their comparison, two elements emerge that place Jehoshaphat in a better light than his father. First of all, Jehu recognises the correctness of the general religious policy of the king of Judah and also his specific behaviour during the war alongside Ahab when, by contrast with the ruler of Israel, he insisted on consulting Yhwh (דרשׁ of 18,4.6, reprised in 19,3). Secondly, unlike Asa, Jehoshaphat does not turn against the divine messenger: actually, his reaction goes unnoticed. However, 2 Chr 19,4a observes that "Jehoshaphat stayed at Jerusalem". He no longer made for the northern kingdom to help a wicked king; and immediately afterwards, in 19,4b: "he went out again among the people, from Beer-sheba to the hill country of Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord, the God of their ancestors". By contrast with the mission of his father, therefore, that of Jehu managed to obtain its intended result: the king stopped, changed his behaviour, and, after having been allied to the wicked king of Israel, also brought back part of the people of the north to faith in Yhwh. A final hint reveals the author's intention to reread the reign of Jehoshaphat in the light of this episode: in 2 Chr 20,34, the דִּבְרֵי יֵהוּא בֶן־חֲנָנִי are indicated as the Chronicler's source for this period.

3. Other visionaries חֹזִים

A group of anonymous visionaries is mentioned in the final summary of the reign of Manasseh.

> *2 Chr 33,18:* «Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the visionaries who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, these are in the Annals of the Kings of Israel».

No direct speech is reported. A summary of the events already recounted, the reference is to 33,10 where the Chronicler affirmed: "The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people". In Manasseh's case, the interlocutor is not an individual charismatic figure but a multiplicity of such figures, thus giving these messages a particular weight and emphasis: that is part of the particular way in which the author treats this king, no longer presenting him as the symbol of the greatest wickedness, as he appears in the books of Kings, but rather as a model of repentance and divine forgiveness[228].

The name of חָזוֹת is given to some works that the Chronicler indicates as sources for various reigns: that goes for Iddo, for the time of Solomon (2 Chr 9,29); Iddo[229], for the reigns of Rehoboam (2 Chr 12,15) and Abijah (2 Chr 13,22), described in this second case as נָבִיא; Isaiah, son of Amoz, he too נָבִיא, for Hezekiah (2 Chr 32,32).

Finally, three figures are described as חֹזִים who, though not interacting with the sovereign, deserve a mention for their simultaneous relation with him and with the temple: Heman, "visionary of the king" (David; 1 Chr 25,5); Asaph, who lived in the time of David and was author of hymns which Hezekiah and the chiefs of Judah ordered the Levites to sing (2 Chr 29,30); and Jeduthun, another "visionary of the king", author of regulations for the singers that were issued in the time of David and revived by Josiah (2 Chr 35,15). The names of Heman and Jeduthun are recorded only in Chronicles; Asaph and the group of singers which takes its name from him are mentioned also in Ezra and in the titles of some psalms[230]. As singers and composers of sacred hymns, they

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[228] Cf. Ben Zvi, *Reading Chronicles*, 131-132, and above, p. 101-104.

[229] Jeddo (יְעְדוֹ) and Iddo (עִדּוֹ) are very probably two variants of the same name and identify the same figure. The NRSV uses Iddo on both occasions he/they is/are mentioned.

[230] In Ezra and Nehemiah, the singers, "sons of Asaph", are found in Ezra 2,41; 3,10; Neh 7,44; 11,17.22; 12,35. In Neh 12,46, Asaph is associated with David in a comment in which the author claims that the composition of the Psalms of praise and the organisation of the groups of singers goes back to their time. Moreover, in the Psalter, Asaph is presented as author of Ps 50 and of the series 73-83. A figure named Heman is mentioned in 1 Kgs 5,11, where he is associated with the brothers Ethan the Ezrahite, Calcol and Darda,

work at the time of the founder of the dynasty and contribute to fixing the temple liturgy. Thus, the Chronicler often associates them[231] and regards them as visionaries on account of the particular inspiration with which they composed their works to the extent of prophesying while they performed the music (the *niphal* of נבא is used for Asaph in 1 Cr 25,2 and for Jeduthun in 1 Chr 25,3). This divine assistance was also extended to their family members: in 1 Chr 25,1, the Chronicler states that their sons "prophesied[232] with lyres, harps and cymbals". The spirit of Yhwh was to descend on Jahziel, a descendant of Asaph, in order to communicate with Jehoshaphat and the people during collective prayer in the temple (2 Chr 20,14-17). Moreover, according to the genealogy of 1 Chr 6,18-19, Heman's grandfather would have been

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sons of Mahol: their eminent wisdom is taken as a term of comparison to emphasise the greatness of Solomon. In 1 Chr 2,6, the names Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Darda are mentioned together and placed among the descendants of Judah as sons of Zerah, who lived before the events of the Exodus. In 1 Chr 6,28, on the other hand, Heman, the singer (הֵימָן הַמְשֹׁרֵר), is included among the Levites and described as son of Joel, while, in 1 Chr 15,17.19, a cantor called Ethan is presented as a Levite and son of Kushaiah. Therefore, the Chronicler does not mean to identify the two cantors with the homonymous figures of 1 Kgs 5,11. However, this identification seems to be made in the titles of the Psalms: Ps 88 is attributed to Heman, the Ezrahite, and the following Ps 89 to Ethan the Ezrahite; this last Psalm is also linked to David through the reprise of Nathan's oracle.

231 The three names are mentioned in 1 Chr 25,1-6; 2 Chr 5,12; 29,13-14; 35,15; only Heman and Asaph, with Ethan, in 1 Chr 15,17.19; only Heman and Jeduthun in 1 Chr 16,41. Ethan and Jeduthun never appear together: according to Lorenzin (*1-2 Cronache*, 192), they would be two alternative names for the same figure; according to H. Gese (*Zur Geschichte der Kultsänger am zweiten Tempel*, in O. Betz et alii [eds.], *Abraham unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch* über *die Bibel. Festschrift für Otto Michel zum 60. Geburtstag* [AGSU 5], Brill, Leiden-Köln 1963, 227-230) and Knoppers (*I Chronicles 10-29*, 657-659), they would be two distinct groups of singers followed in the liturgical service alongside the groups of Asaph and Heman, and the reason why the Chronicler inserted them both should be sought in the plurality of his sources, going back to different periods. Gese gives temporal priority to Jeduthun; for Knoppers, by contrast, Ethan's group is the most ancient and, at a certain point, was supplanted by that of Jeduthun.

232 According to the *ketib*: הַנִּבְּיאִים; according to the *qere*: הַנִּבְּאִים. In Schniedewind's opinion (*Word*, 181. 187), the root נבא was present in the source used by the Chronicler for this passage, thus hypothesising its pre-Exilic origin.

Samuel, another example of the association of prophetic activity and cultic environment. In its vision of the relationship between Yhwh and Israel, prophecy finds a permanent location in temple service, here, in particular, in the office of the singers.

C. אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים

An expression which often occurs in the Hebrew Bible is אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים. The Chronicler uses it on seven occasions: twice to describe Moses (1 Chr 23,14 and 2 Chr 30,16) and once with regard to David (2 Chr 8,14). The expression is also applied to two figures who interact with sovereigns: Shemaiah (2 Chr 11,2, a unique occurrence taken from the *Vorlage*: 1 Kgs 12,22) and an anonymous interlocutor of King Amaziah (2 Chr 25,7 and twice in 2 Chr 25,9). By contrast with the two categories already seen, אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים is employed extensively in the Hebrew Bible: outside Chronicles, it is encountered 65 times, once in Deuteronomy (Deut 33,1, applied to Moses) and 59 in the Deuteronomist history; in 32 cases, it is found in the Elijah and Elisha cycles, applied to the prophet himself or to an anonymous figure[233]. Scholars have questioned the value and significance of this expression with various results: some have denied a correlation with the prophetic world, holding it to be an honorific title which only occasionally overlaps with the description of נָבִיא[234]; others have believed that they can recognise there a particular, peripheral, type of prophet, close to the poorest social classes who comes into action in moments of particular difficulty and oppression in defence of the people[235], but this hypothesis is forced and finds correspondence in many occurrences of the expression. In fact, the Dtr himself offers us a clue: in 1 Sam 9,8-10, he equates the titles אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים, רֹאֶה and נָבִיא,

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[233] Cf. Schniedewind, *Word*, 46 n. 44.

[234] Thus R. Hallevy, *Man of God*, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 17 (1958) 237; and J.A. Holstein, *The Case of 'iš ha'elohim Reconsidered: Philological Analysis versus Historical Reconstruction*, in *Hebrew Union College Annual* 48 (1977) 80-81.

[235] Cf. Petersen, *Role*, 43-50.

attributing them both to the same figure, namely, Samuel; and, in 1 Kgs 13, the man of God and the prophet, both anonymous, who interact in the time of Jeroboam, are put on the same level in v. 18: "I also am a נָבִיא as you are". Therefore, even if the title of אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים is undoubtedly broader, including Moses and David who are not prophets in the strict sense, when it is applied to charismatic figures it is interchangeable with the other terms we have already considered. The Chronicler is no exception with regard to this kind of usage.

1. Shemaiah (2 Chr 11,2-4; 12,5-8)

The book of Chronicles attributes the description of אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים to a certain שְׁמַעְיָהוּ who appears in the story of Rehoboam (2 Chr 11,2). The account is taken from the Dtr, where the figure receives the name of שְׁמַעְיָה and is also called אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים (1 Kgs 12,22-24). In all probability, he is to be identified with שְׁמַעְיָה הַנָּבִיא who, on a subsequent occasion, recounted solely in Chronicles, interacts with the same sovereign (2 Chr 12,5-8) and is portrayed as author of one of the Chronicle's sources for this reign (2 Chr 12,15)[236].

In the former of the two passages, on Yhwh's orders, Shemaiah prevents a fratricidal war between Judah and Israel immediately after Jeroboam's political schism.

> *2 Chr 11,2-4:* «[2]But the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah the man of God: [3]Say to King Rehoboam of Judah, son of Solomon, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin: [4]"Thus says the Lord: You shall not go up or fight against your kindred. Let everyone return home, for this thing is from me." So, they heeded the word of the Lord and turned back from the expedition against Jeroboam».

Here, the Dtr text has been partly reworked: the Chronicler deletes the too specific information about the army on the march, and, above all, describes the tribes of Judah and Benjamin as "Israel", a usage that the books of Kings reserve to the northern kingdom: according

[236] The existence of two variants of the same theophoric name in which the divine element appears in a longer or shorter form is quite common in the Hebrew Bible which often alternates them for the same person.

to the Chronicler's theology, the kingdom of Judah too could legitimately be called Israel[237]. The prophet opposes Rehoboam's decision to raise a war against the north in order to reconquer it. This is not a judgement against a wicked king: a little later, the Chronicler will state that Rehoboam behaved justly in the first three years of his reign (2 Chr 11,17). Rather, it is an exhortation which Shemaiah addresses in the name of Yhwh to give the right advice to a just king and prevent him from committing an action contrary to the divine plan.

In the second passage, peculiar to the Chronicler, Shemaiah, here described as נָבִיא, is heard again by Rehoboam and the chiefs of Judah who are afraid at the arrival of Shishak, the king of Egypt.

> *2 Chr 12,5-8:* «[5]Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and to the officers of Judah, who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the Lord: You abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak." [6]Then the officers of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The Lord is in the right". [7]When the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying: "They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. [8]Nevertheless they shall be his servants, so that they may know the difference between serving me and serving the kingdoms of other lands"».

Rehoboam and his court had been afraid of Shishak and did not trust in Yhwh completely. But then came the two consecutive interventions of Shemaiah: initially, he points out the weakness of their faith and issues a judgement of condemnation which foresees their destruction. Since the reaction to this oracle is positive, Yhwh again reveals himself to the prophet, toning down their condemnation. The result is that Shishak enters Jerusalem. He limits himself to looting the treasures of the

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[237] In the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, the ethnic national identity concerns only the members of Judah and Benjamin who were repatriated after the Exile, and the term "Israel" is applied only to these two tribes (cf. Vuk, T. *Bibbia tra orientalistica e storiografia: una introduzione* [SBFA 91], Edizioni Terra Santa, Milano 2021, 326-332). Chronicles presents a wider concept of Israel, as we shall see in the section "Israel in the confrontation between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (2 Chr 10-13)", on p. 272-277.

temple and the palace, and Rehoboam is forced to replace the objects of gold with replicas in bronze. In 2 Chr 12,12, the Chronicler restates that Rehoboam's humiliation enabled Judah to experience a period of prosperity.

The Chronicler depicts the submission to Shishak with the term עֲבֹדָה. This is a use unique in Chr where it refers only to the cultic and never to the socio-political sphere.

Striking in this second passage is the involvement of the chiefs as addressees of the oracle along with the sovereign: it is a feature of the political vision of the Chronicler for whom the king shares his power together with his circle, not as a solitary ruler. Consequently, some figures address their words to the court as well: sharing in the responsibility for decisions, it contributes to faithfulness to Yhwh or distance from him.

2. Anonymous in the time of Amaziah (2 Chr 25,7-10a)

Chronicles portray King Amaziah as partly positive: in his early period, he is faithful to Yhwh; later, however, he introduces into Jerusalem the cult of the Edomite divinities (2 Chr 25,14) and, consequently, undergoes a severe military defeat at the hands of Israel (25,21-24). In the initial, positive phase, Amaziah's interlocutor is an anonymous אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים who warns against the initiative of hiring mercenaries from the northern kingdom which is judged to be wicked and by now abandoned by God. The passage does not appear in the account of Amaziah's period in 2 Kgs 14,1-20.

> *2 Chr 25,7-10a:* «[7]But a man of God came to him and said, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the Lord is not with Israel - all these Ephraimites. [8]Rather, go by yourself and act; be strong in battle, or God will fling you down before the enemy; for God has power to help or to overthrow." [9]Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what shall we do about the hundred talents that I have given to the army of Israel?" The man of God answered, "The Lord is able to give you much more than this". [10]Then Amaziah discharged the army that had come to him from Ephraim, letting them go home again».

God rewards Amaziah's act of faith, granting him victory against the Edomites (2 Chr 25,11-12). In parallel, the Chronicler also underlines the

cruelty of the northern Israelites: angry at having been dismissed before the battle (25,10b), they attack the cities of Judah on the borders, sacking them and killing their inhabitants (25,13). Thus, he also prepares for the subsequent account of the battle between Judah and Israel in which, however, Amaziah will not be equally faithful to Yhwh[238].

D. נבא

The term with which the Hebrew Bible describes the prophetic figures *par excellence* is נָבִיא. In the Chronicles also, it is the most common title, used on 33 occasions (10 in common with Sam-Kgs) and attributed to various figures who interact with the sovereigns. Passing over Samuel, Gad and Shemaiah, whom we have already examined, in this section we shall be looking at Nathan, Micaiah, son of Imlah, Elijah, an anonymous figure from the time of Amaziah, Oded, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Huldah whom the Chronicler takes from the *Vorlage* is described as נְבִיאָה. Another figure, Eliezer, is not described directly as נָבִיא, but his action in the narrative is expressed with the verb נבא. Finally, Ahijah, the Shilonite and Azariah, son of Oded, are not described directly as נָבִיא, but as authors of a נְבוּאָה, a term which indicates, firstly, a written text presented by the Chronicler as one of his sources for the reign of Solomon, and, secondly, an oral speech communicating the will of God.

1. Nathan

Already known in the Deuteronomist history, Nathan also appears in Chronicles in relation to King David in a single episode which the Chronicler takes from his *Vorlage*: the promise of a stable dynasty in Judah (1 Chr 17,1-15 // 2 Sam 7,1-17). Nathan's role in the dialogue is simply that of intermediary: firstly, as perfunctory interpreter of Yhwh's will (1 Chr 17,3), then, following a nocturnal revelation, he communicates to the sovereign the authentic divine arrangements (17,15). The relationship between the prophet and the king is positive, but Nathan

[238] Below, p. 240-242.

makes no judgements. He is merely the spokesman for Yhwh's oracle.

Nathan's name appears on other occasions in the course of the narrative. In 1 Chr 29,29 and in 2 Chr 9,29, he is presented as author of one of the sources to which the Chronicler refers for the reigns of David and Solomon. This mention is absent in Sam-Kgs.

More interesting is the link between Nathan and the temple cult which the Chronicler establishes with reference to the reform of Hezekiah in the text mentioned previously in connection with Gad:

> *2 Chr 29,25:* «[Hezekiah] stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer and of the prophet Nathan, for the commandment was from the Lord through his prophets».

Like Gad, Nathan is never placed in direct relationship with the cult in the Deuteronomist history: although he announces to David the birth of a son who is to build the temple to Yhwh and later has a decisive role in Solomon's succession, nothing is said about his direct involvement in the foundation of the holy place and of its worship. As in the case of Gad, we do not even know the tribe to which Nathan belonged[239]. Among Solomon's high dignitaries, 1 Kgs 4,5 mentions "Azariah, son of Nathan" and "Zabud, son of Nathan, priest and friend of the king". The presence in the same list of Zadok, a son of Zadok, and Benaiah leads to the conclusion that this is the *entourage* who had helped Solomon ascend the throne, and that, therefore, the Nathan in question is the prophet of that name. The Chronicler's genealogies include, in the lists of Judah, a Nathan, son of Attai and father of Zabad (1 Chr 2,36), perhaps the same Zabud as 1 Kgs 4,5. What value is to be given to the term "priest" attributed to Nathan's son in 1 Kgs 4,5? In the list of David's dignitaries in 2 Sam 8,18, it says: "David's sons were priests"; in another list of dignitaries, in 2 Sam 20,26, we read: "Ira, the Jairite, was also David's priest". All these cases concern figures who were not members

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[239] According to G.H. Jones, *The Nathan Narratives* (JSOTSup 80), JSOT Press, Sheffield 1990, 53-57. 138-141, the reason why Nathan is not included in any tribe would be his Jebusite origin.

of the tribe of Levi. It is very probable, therefore, that at the courts of David and Solomon, the term כֹּהֵן was a simple title[240] or a real function assigned independently of membership of the tribe of Levi[241], possibly only temporarily[242]. In his lists of dignitaries, the Chronicler prefers to eliminate all ambiguity, removing all references to possible non-Levitical priests: he does not take up 2 Sam 20,26 and 1 Kgs 4,5, and he modifies 2 Sam 8,18: "David's sons were the chief officials in the service of the king", that is, with הָרִאשֹׁנִים לְיַד הַמֶּלֶךְ in place of כֹּהֲנִים (1 Chr 18,17)[243]. On the other hand, however, the explicit association of Nathan, the prophet, with the organisation of the temple service is an innovation of the Chronicler: although without inserting him in the tribe of Levi, as happened, instead, for the seer Samuel, the author brings the prophet of the Davidic and Solomonic courts closer to the cult through his mention in the context of Hezekiah's reform.

2. Ahijah the Shilonite

2 Chr 10,15 mentions Ahijah the Shilonite, a key figure in the narrative of the division of the two kingdoms according to the Deuteronomist history, but less important for the Chronicler who is not interested in the fate of the north. He is not described as נָבִיא, but, in the final summary of Solomon's reign (2 Chr 9,29, the only other passage where Ahijah is

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240 Cf. Montgomery-Gehman, *Kings*, 115.

241 Cf. McCarter, *II Samuel*, 254-257; and D.B. Rooke, *Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy*, in J. Day (ed.), *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (JSOTSup 270), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1998, 190.

242 Cf. Hertzberg, *Samuelbücher*, 241; and A.A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11), Word Books, Dallas 1989, 137-138.

243 From the grammatical point of view, it is also possible to translate: "The elder sons of David were in the service of the king". Probably because of the theological problems to which the Hebrew text could give rise, the LXX coined the neologism αὐλάρχαι (lit. "heads of the court", *hapax* in the whole of Greek literature) for 2 Sam 8,18 (= 2 Kgs 8,18 LXX), but kept ἱερεύς in 20,26 (= 2 Kgs 20,26 LXX); in 1 Kgs 4,5 (= 3 Kgs 4,5 LXX), the term כֹּהֵן is not translated. The Greek version of 1 Chr 18,17 reads πρῶτοι διάδοχοι, lit. "first successors", perhaps with the meaning of "viceroys".

named) his name had already appeared as the author of a נְבוּאָה which the Chronicler claims to have used as a source for this period. In 2 Chr 10,15, Ahijah does not interact directly with King Rehoboam but with his adversary, Jeroboam, the author of the separation between Israel and Judah. No direct speech of Ahijah is recorded; it is simply stated that the division of the kingdom took place on the basis of his "word which [Yhwh] had spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat". Chronicles does not report the text of this "word": the author is referring to what is already well known to the reader, that is, the texts of the Dtr.

3. Azariah, son of Oded (2 Chr 15,1-8)

The time of King Asa is the setting for Azariah who appears on the scene as bearer of a divine message which urges the sovereign to purify the cult. The passage is not found in the Dtr.

> *2 Chr 15,1-8:* «[1]The spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded. [2]He went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The Lord is with you, while you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will abandon you. [3]For a long time Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law; [4]but when in their distress they turned to the Lord, the God of Israel, and sought him, he was found by them. [5]In those times it was not safe for anyone to go or come, for great disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. [6]They were broken in pieces, nation against nation and city against city, for God troubled them with every sort of distress [7]But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded." [8]When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the Lord that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the Lord».

Azariah's intervention is described as נְבוּאָה in v. 8. The verse contains a clear textual corruption: the term נְבוּאָה is in the absolute state when one would expect a construct. Moreover, the prophecy is attributed to

Oded, Azariah's father, who is described as "prophet"[244]. Because of this, the syntagma עֹדֵד הַנָּבִיא is generally held to be a later gloss[245]. In any case, there is no doubt about the divine origin of the speech because of the descent of the spirit of God (v. 1). Azariah expresses the fundamental theological lines of the Chronicler: separation from Yhwh involves disorder and insecurity whereas closeness to him ensures victory and prosperity. The king and all the people are called on to seek him and obtain a reward for their fidelity. For this reason, Asa demolishes everything in his kingdom dedicated to the worship of foreign deities. The speech is constructed by taking up themes and vocabulary from the prophetic books with allusions to texts that the addressees of the work certainly knew: the Chronicler performs a work of interpreting history in the light of Scripture in order to send a message useful to the readers of his own time. Verse 2 and 4 recall Jer 29,13-14a ("When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart"); v. 3 alludes to Hos 3,4 ("For the Israelites shall remain many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without *ephod* or *teraphim*"); v. 4 recalls Hos 5,15 ("I will return again to my place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face. In their distress they will beg my favour"); verses 5-6 echo Zech 8,10 ("For before those days there were no wages for people or for animals, nor was there any safety from the foe for those who went out or came in, and I set them all against one another"); v. 7 refers to Jer 31,16 ("Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, says the Lord: they shall come back from the land of the enemy"). The Chronicler's teaching depends on his reading of past history: there was a time when the religious institutions

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[244] Not to be confused with the homonymous prophet who was to be active in the northern kingdom only later, in the time of Ahaz (2 Chr 28,9-11).

[245] Cf. K. Hognesius, *The Text of 2 Chronicles 1-16: A Critical Edition with Textual Commentary* (ConBOT 51), Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm 2003, 162-163; according to L.H. Brockington, *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament: The Readings Adopted by the Translators of the New English Bible*, Oxford University Press-Cambridge University Press, London-Cambridge 1973, 87, who bases himself on the Arabic version, וְהַנְּבוּאָה would also be a gloss.

were failing, and that had thrown the country into a situation of anarchy and insecurity. The cause of this disaster was the lack of knowledge of God and his teaching: closeness to Yhwh procures peace and stability, distance from him, failure and desolation. In the narrative context, the reference is to the pre-monarchical period prior to the establishment of the cultic system based on the temple. In the interpretation of history that the Chronicler wishes to transmit to his readers, he alludes to the social problems of his time[246], using Zech 8,10 to recall the first post-Exilic phase without priesthood and without temple in order to exhort his contemporaries to listen to and practise the teaching of the prophets in order to regain stability and security. King Asa's reaction, with the consequent religious reform, becomes the model of behaviour for the leaders who wish to bring back prosperity to the Jewish people.

4. Micaiah, son of Imlah (2 Chr 18)

Chapter 18 of 2 Chronicles is a long reprise of the Deuteronomist passage on the death of Ahab during a battle at Ramoth-gilead, 1 Kgs 22,1-38. However, the function of the account in the two narratives is very different[247]. In 1 Kgs, it is part of the Elijah cycle as fulfilment of the divine condemnation of the house of Omri. The protagonist, therefore, is Ahab whose final fate is an expression of the justice of God in response to his wickedness; Jehoshaphat is a wholly secondary figure. In Chronicles, by contrast, the interest is in the latter: despite Ahab's obstinacy, the king of Judah insists on consulting Yhwh. Therefore, he is not involved in the defeat in which only the king of Israel is killed. Furthermore, the Dtr passage is responding to the need to contrast true and false prophecy, a theme which holds no interest for Chr so that, in 2 Chr 18, the false prophets act as simple bit players through which Jehoshaphat's insistence becomes even more marked.

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[246] Cf. also Boda, *Gazing*, 237.

[247] An in-depth study of the relationship between the two works and the different function of the characters in the two parallel accounts is found in J.A. Berman, *Narrative Analogy in the Hebrew Bible: Battle Stories and Their Equivalent Non-Battle Narratives* (VTSup 103), Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2004, 181-198.

The figure of Micaiah, son of Imlah, prophet of Yhwh in opposition to Ahab and his false prophets assumes a different role. In 1 Kgs, he is the opponent who confirms to Ahab the divine condemnation already anticipated by Elijah. In Chronicles, he becomes the spokesman for Yhwh, summoned by the just king, Jehoshaphat, to reveal the will of God. In Chr, furthermore, Micaiah's word is fulfilled not only for Ahab but also for Jehoshaphat: the former dies in battle whereas the king of Judah returns to Jerusalem בְּשָׁלוֹם (2 Chr 19,1), an expression that the Chronicler adds to the *Vorlage* to demonstrate that Jehoshaphat sees the fulfilment of the phrase of the oracle: אִישׁ־לְבֵיתוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם (2 Chr 18,16). In this way, this king of Judah's fidelity to Yhwh stands out still more sharply in the face of the wicked king *par excellence*.

However, the association between the two sovereigns is not easy for the Chronicler to resolve; for this reason, he inserts a subsequent oracle of negative judgement through the mouth of Jehu (19,2-3).

5. Eliezer (2 Chr 20,37)

In addition to Micaiah and Jehu, a further figure communicates with Jehoshaphat with reference to his relations with the king of Israel: this is Eliezer, son of Dodavahu. He is not called נָבִיא; however, his intervention on the scene is described with the *hithpael* form of the verb נבא, the only occurrence in a text peculiar to the Chronicler[248]. After Ahab's death (2 Chr 18,34), despite Jehu's condemnation of the alliance with him (2 Chr 19,2), Jehoshaphat confirms it with his son and successor, Ahaziah (2 Chr 20,35), with whom he secures an economic agreement for the construction of commercial ships at Ezion-geber, in the Gulf of Eilat (2 Chr 20,36). Then Eliezer intervenes to condemn the agreement.

> *2 Chr 20,37:* «Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have joined with Ahaziah, the Lord will destroy what you have made". And the ships were wrecked and were not able to go to Tarshish».

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[248] The *hithpael* of נבא occurs only three other times, in 2 Chr 18,7.9.17, a text dependent on 1 Kgs 22,8.10.18, in the dispute between the true prophet, Micaiah, and the false prophets in the presence of Jehoshaphat and Ahab.

This is a notable reinterpretation of this episode which is decisively different in the Deuteronomist history.

> *1 Kgs 22,48-49:* «[48]Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold, but they did not go, for the ships were wrecked at Ezion-geber. [49]Then Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships," but Jehoshaphat was not willing».

The Dtr does not name Eliezer and does not even need to: in 1 Kgs, Jehoshaphat rejects Ahaziah's proposal, and, moreover, the shipwreck precedes the offer of the economic agreement. The Chronicler inverts the order of events and supplies a theological interpretation that is absent in his *Vorlage*. Jehoshaphat is thus presented as a king marked by a certain weakness and instability: on the one hand, his personal piety presses him to seek Yhwh and promote the reform of the cult; on the other hand, the pursuit of power and international prestige leads him to conclude alliances with wicked sovereigns instead of leaning on God completely. In this description, there is not absent a dose of irony[249] aimed at warning the reader against ambivalent conduct in the possession of leadership.

6. Elijah (2 Chr 21,12-15)

The Chronicler does not record the cycle about Elijah, a prophet active in the northern kingdom, who occupies a considerable amount of space in the books of Kings (1 Kgs 17 to 2 Kgs 2). However, he introduces him on to the scene through a letter sent to King Jehoram, an episode not present in the Dtr.

> *2 Chr 21,12-15:* «[12]A letter came to him from the prophet Elijah, saying: "Thus says the Lord, the God of your father David: Because you have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat or in the ways of King Asa of Judah, [13]but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have led Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem into unfaithfulness, as the house of Ahab led Israel into unfaithfulness, and because you also have killed your brothers, members of your father's house, who were better than yourself, [14]see, the Lord will bring a great plague on your

[249] Cf. Cudworth, *War*, 138-139.

people, your children, your wives, and all your possessions, [15]and you yourself will have a severe sickness with a disease of your bowels, until your bowels come out, day after day, because of the disease"».

Elijah was the enemy of Omri's dynasty into which Jehoram had married as the husband of the future usurper, Athaliah. In this way, the sins of Jehoram are closely connected with the wickedness of Ahab which was denounced in 1 Kgs by the great prophet. The narrative device of prophetic intervention by letter is unique in Chronicles but corresponds functionally to the speeches with which other figures intervene in royal affairs. There are various hypotheses on the significance of this feature. It could be due to the exclusive nature of Elijah's ministry within the borders of the northern kingdom so that a personal intervention in Judah would have been improbable[250]. However, if we are to stick with the chronology of the Dtr, Elijah would have been taken up into heaven before Jehoram's accession to the throne, during the reign of his father, Jehoshaphat. The letter has, therefore, been interpreted as a prophecy written before the prophet's death or else hailing from the supernatural world[251]. Finally, the sudden and unexpected arrival of the letter has been linked with the disappearance of Elijah recounted in 2 Kgs 2,1-18: just as the prophet was taken away to an unknown place, so a letter appears on the scene in a mysterious and miraculous way without its real origin being known[252].

It is my opinion that, since the Chronicler knows the Deuteronomist history and presupposes knowledge of it among his readers, he deliberately wished to surround Elijah's intervention with a halo of holiness and mystery, and that, to this end, he employed two linguistic expedients. First of all, he does not say that Elijah sent a letter but only that a writing 'arrived' (וַיָּבֹא) from him, leaving open the origin and mode of this

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[250] Cf. B.J. Diebner, *Überlegungen zum «Brief des Elia» (2Chr 21,12-15)*, in *Henoch* 9 (1987) 204-205.

[251] Rudolph discusses both possibilities in *Chronikbücher*, 267.

[252] Cf. R.E. Knuteson, *Elijah's Little-Known Letter in 2 Chronicles 21:12-15*, in *Bibliotheca Sacra* 162 (2005) 29-32.

'arrival'[253]. Furthermore, he employs the term מִכְתָּב instead of the more common סֵפֶר which also appears in the Elijah and Elisha cycles (1 Kgs 21,8-11; 2 Kgs 10,1-7). Rare in the Hebrew Bible, מִכְתָּב is used with reference to inscriptions carved on stone or metal, not to writings on papyrus: in Ex 32,16 (twice) and in Deut 10,4, it is correlated with the tablets of the Law; in Ex 39,30, it indicates the inscription "holy to Yhwh" recorded on the golden band round the high priest's turban; in 2 Chr 35,4, it refers to the instructions written by Solomon for the service in the temple; in 2 Chr 36,22 and Ezra 1,1, it describes the Edict of Cyrus[254] which, in its turn, represents the fulfilment of the prophetic word of Jeremiah[255]. The use of a term so rare and so specific cannot be accidental or a simple stylistic variant: Elijah's intervention is being placed on the same level as the written and stable word of God, and, furthermore, this happens when the prophet has already gone up into heaven[256].

Elijah's letter indicates three sins of Jehoram (v. 13): having behaved like the king of Israel, according to the typical expression "walk in the way of"; having led the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem into idolatry, described using the language of prostitution; and having killed his own brothers to secure himself the throne. According to the doctrine of immediate retribution, Jehoram will have to atone for these sins in his own lifetime, and be subject to the law of retaliation with regard to his own family: just as he killed his brothers, so he will have to witness the plunder of his goods, his sons and his wives, something which the Chronicler states happened shortly afterwards at the hands of the Philistines and Arabs (2 Chr 21,17).

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[253] Cf. Micheel, *Seher- und Propheten-Überlieferung*, 56.

[254] According to Begg, through the term מִכְתָּב, the Chronicler intends to link Elijah's letter with the Edict of Cyrus: Jehoram's wickedness would constitute a link in the series evil actions which explain the final disaster of the Exile (C.T. Begg, *Constructing a Monster: The Chronicler's Sondergut in 2 Chronicles 21*, in *Australian Biblical Review* 37 [1989] 49).

[255] A further attestation of the term in the MT is found in Is 38,9, but this is to be regarded as a textual corruption of an original מִכְתָּם (cf. Levin, *Chronicles*, 174).

[256] It should not be forgotten that, in post-Exilic Judaism, the figure of Elijah receives increasing attention over time, as demonstrated by the texts of Mal 3,22-24 and Sirach 48,1-11.

7. Anonymous in the time of Amaziah (2 Chr 25,15-16)

After an anonymous man of God[257], a prophet is sent to King Amaziah by Yhwh. The presence of two figures without names who are connected with Amaziah, both information peculiar to Chr[258], does not seem to be significant with regard to content[259] or to the judgement on this monarch but, rather, is to be explained by the relationship between the Chronicler and his sources. According to Williamson, it would be the sign that these are two figures introduced freely by the author[260]; by contrast, Dillard and Japhet think that this reveals the Chronicler's reluctance to add details that were not present in his sources[261]. Williamson's position runs up against a basic weakness: it is difficult to try to establish with certainty what parts peculiar to the Chronicler can be attributed to him and what to his sources. It is more prudent, therefore, to maintain the hypotheses of Dillard and Japhet.

> *2 Chr 25,15-16:* «[15]The Lord was angry with Amaziah and sent to him a prophet, who said to him, "Why have you resorted to a people's gods who could not deliver their own people from your hand?" [16]But as he was speaking the king said to him, "Have we made you a royal counsellor? Stop! Why should you be put to death?" So, the prophet stopped, but said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not listened to my advice"».

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[257] Above, p. 229-230.

[258] In fact, they are the only two anonymous figures who act in an individual way: visionaries, prophets and messengers are also mentioned elsewhere, but always as a group (2 Chr 33,18; 36,15-16). Nameless charismatic individuals are much more frequent in the Dtr.

[259] Hill's opinion, that the anonymity of the messenger would lend greater emphasis to the content of the message (*1 & 2 Chronicles*, 545), seems unfounded if one considers the work as a whole in which these two oracles do not enjoy especial pre-eminence compared to those uttered by the other charismatic figures.

[260] Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 328.

[261] Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 197, and Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 862. A middle position is proposed by Klein. Beginning from the language used in the two speeches and from their coherence with the context, he argues that the intervention of the man of God belongs to the Chronicler's source and that of the prophet a literary expedient elaborated by him *ex novo* (*2 Chronicles*, 354).

In his accusation, the prophet makes use of a verb dear to the Chronicler: דרשׁ ("seek, turn to"; it occurs as a technical expression in the divinatory sphere with the meaning of "ask, consult [with the divinity]"). Instead of seeking Yhwh, Amaziah has sought the divinities of the Edomite people whom he himself had defeated. This, apparently absurd, behaviour can be explained within the polytheistic vision of the Near East. Many neo-Assyrian royal inscriptions attributed victory to the foreign gods who had abandoned their own people to support the Assyrians[262]. A clash in war was considered to be also a cosmic clash between divinities. In order to make visible the defeat of the conquered people, the images of their divinities were carried into the victor's territory, and these gods were adopted into the local pantheon[263]. If this ritual action was also performed by Amaziah, it is easy to understand the condemnation of the prophet (that is, of the Chronicler) in defence of the rigid monotheism based on the worship of Yhwh alone[264].

Moreover, the dialogue contains another root significant for its theological import, יעץ ("seek advice"; this verb is not used in divinatory contexts), which is repeated three times in v. 16: in the substantive יוֹעֵץ ("counsellor"), in the *qal* form יָעַץ ("has taken counsel, has determined") with the subject אֱלֹהִים, and in the substantive עֵצָה ("advice"); the following v. 17 begins with the same verb in the *niphal* form.

> *2 Chr 25,17:* «Then King Amaziah of Judah took counsel and sent to King Joash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face!"».

What follows (25,18-24) contains the narrative of the defeat of Judah at the hands of the northern kingdom as fulfilment of the word of the anonymous prophet. The Chronicler employs the root יעץ with a clear

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[262] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 201, and Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 343-344.

[263] Cf. M. Cogan, *Imperialism and Religion: Assyria, Judah and Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries B.C.E.* (SBLMS 19), Scholars Press, Missoula (MT) 1974, 9-21. 116-117.

[264] Ben Zvi thinks differently, that Amaziah's action is without sense and is recounted by the Chronicler appropriately to describe the sovereign's idolatrous madness (E. Ben Zvi, *History, Literature and Theology in the Book of Chronicles*, Equinox, London-Oakville [CT] 2006, 64-65).

ironic effect: Amaziah did not wish to have Yhwh's messenger as his counsellor so Yhwh himself has taken counsel to condemn him. The king preferred his own courtiers to the prophet. This brought him to the war in which God's punitive decision was realised. Paradoxically and inadvertently, the advice of the courtiers has brought on the realisation of the counsel of Yhwh which was revealed by the one who had been rejected as counsellor. Refusing divine assistance, Amaziah relied on human counsellors causing *ipso facto* his own ruin from which he had been warned – in vain – to escape. The author shows, ironically, how the divine condemnation is carried out on the sovereign with the same means with which he deluded himself that he would escape it.

8. Oded (2 Chr 28,9-11)

Active in the time of King Ahaz was a prophet called Oded who is otherwise unknown. He addressed the army of the northern kingdom which was returning to Samaria from Jerusalem after defeating Judah. The whole story is peculiar to Chronicles.

> *2 Chr 28,9-11:* «[9]But a prophet of the Lord was there [in Samaria], whose name was Oded; he went out to meet the army that came to Samaria, and said to them, "Because the Lord, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand, but you have killed them in a rage that has reached up to heaven. [10]Now you intend to subjugate the people of Judah and Jerusalem, male and female, as your slaves. But what have you except sins against the Lord your God? [11]Now hear me, and send back the captives whom you have taken from your kindred, for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you"».

The prophet, an inhabitant of Samaria who is addressing other Israelites of the north, intervenes in defence of the kingdom of Judah, restating a classical theme of prophecy: Yhwh employs the armies of the chosen people's enemies to punish them for their sins. However, these enemies are not tools without a will. In their turn, they can be punished for having taken advantage of the situation and having committed more

atrocities than those foreseen and permitted them by Yhwh[265]. However, the novelty of the Chronicler consists in the application of this theme, not to pagan nations but to the relationship between Judah and Israel whom the author describes as "brothers". Although there has been a division, and despite the fact that the author is not concerned with the fate of the north, its belonging to Yhwh has not diminished. He is the "God of your fathers" (v. 9), and so the spiritual relationship between the two peoples remains. The episode is on the same lines as 2 Chr 11,1-4 where Rehoboam is warned by Shemaiah not to wage war against his northern brothers. In particular, 2 Chr 28,9-11 has the Mosaic legislation in the background: Lev 25,39-43.46 forbids making another Hebrew a slave and treating a Hebrew debtor harshly.

In Chronicles, there are three charismatic figures operating in the north: mentioned as well as Oded are Micaiah, son of Imlah (2 Chr 18,7-27) and Elijah (2 Chr 21,12-15). The survival of prophetic activity is indicative of the Chronicler's conception that, although schismatic and deficient with regard to the cult, the northern tribes are considered sharers in the same fundamental identity of Israelites along with Judah[266]. Of these three figures, Micaiah and Elijah are shared with the Dtr, although the episode regarding the second has no parallel in 1-2 Kgs. Oded, on the other hand, is a figure completely exclusive to the Chronicler. By inserting this figure, therefore, he is underlining that the north has not been abandoned by Yhwh. Rather, in it, there is still the possibility of receiving his word through charismatic figures who operate just as in the south. Notable is the clear dissociation between prophecy and kingship: there is no appearance of the king of the north, Pekah, or the king of Judah, Ahaz, whose wickedness is described in the context of ch. 28. Instead, the interlocutor of the charismatic figure is the people, especially the chiefs of the army some of whom listen and carry out

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[265] Thus, for example, Isaiah announces the punishment of Assyria (Is 10,15), Obadiah the devastation of Edom (the whole book is devoted to this purpose), and Zechariah, the punishment for all the enemy peoples (Zech 1,15).

[266] Cf. Knoppers, *Prophets*, 187-188.

the divine command (28,12-15). Yhwh continues to help the people of Judah, freeing their members taken as hostages, independently of the royal institution which is not involved in this operation in the least. The theological vision of the Chronicler is a response to the situation of its readers[267], without an autonomous kingdom, which the author considers unnecessary for the chosen people: the monarchy is important but not essential in order to maintain the covenant link between God and Israel/Judah. Even the lack of the temple is not an insurmountable obstacle. Ahaz was not interested in it (28,2-4) and later he was to rob it (28,21) and even close it (28,24), and yet, for the Israelites, both of north and south, it still remains possible to seek Yhwh and embrace his will. The dialogue between Yhwh and his people is not broken despite the schisms and unfaithfulness caused by their highest representatives.

9. Isaiah (2 Chr 32,20)

The great prophet, Isaiah, is named in Chronicles in relation to King Hezekiah but enjoys a secondary role compared with that assigned to him by the Dtr. In 2 Kgs, Isaiah appears in three episodes: the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem (19,1-34), the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah (20,1-11) and the Babylonian embassy (20,12-19). On these three occasions, his contribution is large, rich in dialogue with the other characters and also with the inclusion of oracles. The Chronicler is usually careful to record the dialogues between prophets and sovereigns but, precisely with Isaiah, he is unwontedly sparing: he records the three episodes of 2 Kgs, but Isaiah appears only in connection with the Assyrian siege, and very briefly, without any direct speech:

> *2 Chr 32,20:* «Then King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed because of this and cried to heaven».

The verse is a summary which combines two different moments: the prophet's prayer of intercession for Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19,4) and the supplication of the king himself (2 Kgs 19,14-19). In the other two episodes,

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[267] Cf. E. Ben Zvi, *A Gateway to the Chronicler's Teaching: The Account of the Reign of Ahaz in 2 Chr 28,1-27*, in *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 7 (1993), 239-247.

which the Chronicler records very briefly, Isaiah has no role: Hezekiah obtains healing from his sickness by praying to Yhwh personally (2 Chr 32,24), while the sovereign's behaviour with the Babylonian embassy is held to be positive so that the Isaian oracle of condemnation contained in the Dtr (2 Chr 32,31) is omitted. By contrast, the Chronicler gives much space to the restoration of the worship of Yhwh after the idolatry of Ahaz (chaps. 29-31), but Isaiah has no role in this reform.

Moreover, the Chronicler mentions Isaiah among his sources for the reign of Uzziah (2 Chr 26,22) and Hezekiah (2 Chr 32,32). In the first case, he seems to be alluding to a text that has not come down to us: it's not the book of Isaiah, that mentions Uzziah only in the titles (Is 1,1; 6,1; 7,1). In the second mention, the source is called חָזוֹן, the same term used to describe the collection of Isaiah's prophecies in its *incipit* (Is 1,1), so that it is possible that the Chronicler is referring to the prophetic book which already existed in some form during his time[268].

Chronicles' silence over Isaiah can be explained from the starting point of the exemplary integrity of Hezekiah[269]: since the king already embraces Yhwh's will and puts it into practice, it is not necessary to send him charismatic figures to communicate it to him and exhort him. Moreover, in 2 Chr 32,20, Isaiah's function as intercessor is also toned down since the prayer for liberation is raised concurrently by the prophet and the king who are thus placed on the same level.

10. Huldah (2 Chr 34,22-28)

In the time of Josiah and in close connection with the rediscovery of the book of the Law, we encounter the figure of Huldah, the only female prophet mentioned in Chronicles[270].

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[268] Certain of this identification is, for example, P.C. Beentjes, *Tradition and Transformation in the Book of Chronicles* (SSN 52), Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2008, 92-93; instead, Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 469, n. 53, assumes that it could be possible; for the contrary opinion, Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260, and Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 392.

[269] Cf. Amit, *Role*, 91-92.

[270] The Chronicler does not seem to attach any particular importance to the fact that Huldah is a woman. Outside Chronicles and 2 Kgs 22,14-20, a further four women bear the

2 Chr 34,22-28: «[22]So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to the prophet Huldah, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe (who lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter) and spoke to her to that effect. [23]She declared to them, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, [24]Thus says the Lord: I will indeed bring disaster upon this place and upon its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book that was read before the king of Judah. [25]Because they have forsaken me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the works of their hands, my wrath will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched. [26]But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall you say to him: Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, [27]because your heart was penitent and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me, and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the Lord. [28]I will gather you to your ancestors and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." They took the message back to the king».

Apart from minimal variations, this text takes up 2 Kgs 22,14-20 word for word. The figure of Huldah, a character from the priestly sphere, is retained in the Chronicler's narrative as the mediator of a divine oracle inspired by the request of Josiah who had sent some emissaries to her after the discovery of the book of the Law in the temple. There are actually two divine oracles; the first concerns Jerusalem and its inhabitants (vv. 24-25), the second only King Josiah (vv. 26-28).

There is a notable difference between 2 Kgs and 2 Chr with regard to the relationship between the oracle and the religious reform inaugurated by this king: in fact, the unfolding of events follows a different order[271].

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title נְבִיאָה in the Hebrew Bible: Miriam, Moses' sister (Ex 15,20); the judge, Deborah (Jdg 4,4); a certain Noadiah, enemy of Nehemiah, the governor (Neh 6,14); and Isaiah's wife (Is 8,3: it is debated whether she receives this title as a prophet's wife or because she prophesied herself).

[271] In the following table, the Chronicler's alterations are indicated in italics. Some verses of Sam-Kgs which do not have a parallel in Chr are in square brackets.

2 Kgs 22,3-23,27		*2 Chr 34,3-35,19*	
		34,3-5	*Elimination of places and sacred images in Judah*
		34,6-7	*Elimination of places and sacred images in the territories of the former northern kingdom*
22,3-10	Restoration of the temple and discovery of the book of the Law	34,8-21	Restoration of the temple and discovery of the book of the Law
22,11-20	Consultation of Huldah	34,22-28	Consultation of Huldah
23,1-3	Public reading of the Law and renewal of the covenant	34,29-33	Public reading of the Law and renewal of the covenant
23,4-14	*Elimination of places and sacred images in Judah*		
23,15-20	*Elimination of places and sacred images in the territories of the former northern kingdom*		
23,21-23	Celebration of Passover	35,1-19	Celebration of Passover
[23,24-27	Assessment of the Dtr: comparison between Josiah and Manasseh]		

In 2 Kgs, the discovery of the scroll and Huldah's oracle are the cue for Josiah's religious reform. According to the Chronicler, however, these happen after the king had carried out a first series of reforms. Thus, Huldah's oracle is a confirmation of the work already done by the king and a preparation for what happens next. In particular, attention is focused on the celebration of the Passover with a more extensive narrative than in 2 Kgs while, by contrast, the passage about the elimination of the places and sacred images is a summary. Furthermore, the Deuteronomist comparison between the integrity of Josiah and the wickedness of Manasseh is completely eliminated because of the positivity of the latter in Chr.

Since the Chronicler does not follow his source slavishly, it is legitimate to ask why the Huldah episode was retained. One reason is surely the presence, already in the Dtr, of themes and vocabulary dear to Chr, such as abandonment or forsaking of God (v. 25), humbling before him (v. 27) and the involvement of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the sin which was to lead to the Exile (vv. 24, 27, 28)[272].

Moreover, the Chronicler intends to show that the fulfilment of God's promises, whether positive or negative, is not automatic but conditioned by the human response. This overcomes an aporia in the Dtr's theodicy which remained unsolved and which made it difficult to understand the action of God. In 2 Kgs, in fact, Josiah is promised a death in peace; he then ends his life inexplicably in a violent way against Neco (2 Kgs 23,29-30); 2 Chr takes up this announcement but later interprets the king's death as disobedience to the word of God pronounced through the mouth of Neco (2 Chr 35,20-25). Not even the most faithful king is exempt from the possibility of a fall: Josiah enjoyed God's protection, guaranteed by an oracle; however, he did not listen to his word until the end, thus causing the positive divine promise linked with the oracle to fail[273]. As for the negative part of Huldah's message, its perspective is not limited to the person of Josiah but becomes, in the Chronicler, the prophetic foundation for the exile to Babylonia in which the threats will find their fulfilment[274]. In this case too, the vision of the Dtr is modified, that

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[272] Cf. Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 405-406.

[273] Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 505-507. We should mention the radically contrary opinion of Mitchell in her article, *The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles*: she argues that the Chronicler portrays Josiah as a negative king whose sin would have been the celebration of an incorrect Passover which represents a decline from the Passover of Hezekiah, and that is why he is punished with the death of wicked kings like Saul and Ahab. Huldah's oracle would have been fulfilled in all its parts in an ironical way: she announced his death בְּשָׁלוֹם ("in peace"), and he died in Jerusalem, a name that contains within itself the root שׁלם (at least according to popular etymology). Although interesting and clever, Mitchell's position is not accepted in this work which, on the contrary, recognise the general positivity of the Chronicler's judgement on Josiah and the Passover he celebrated.

[274] Cf. E. Ben Zvi, *Observations on Josiah's Account in Chronicles and Implications for Reconstructing the Worldview of the Chronicler*, in Y. Amit et alii (eds.), *Essays on Ancient*

had ascribed the entire fault for the end of the kingdom to wickedness of Manasseh, so great that not even the religious reform could avert his condemnation. The Chronicler replaced this with a more consistent theology based on listening to the voice of God which neither Josiah, at the end of his life, nor the last sovereigns (particularly Zedekiah: 2 Chr 36,12) were able to do.

11. Jeremiah (2 Chr 35-36)

The prophet Jeremiah is mentioned four time in Chronicles: the first time, he is indicated as author of a lament on the death of Josiah (2 Chr 35,25); secondly, he is linked directly with Zedekiah (36,12); then, with reference to the period of the Exile whose duration of seventy years is interpreted by the Chronicler as the fulfilment of one of the prophet's oracles (36,21); and, finally, in connection with the Edict of Cyrus (36,22).

> *2 Chr 35,25:* «Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah, and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a custom in Israel; they are recorded in the Laments».

The Chronicler does not present us with a direct comparison between Jeremiah and Josiah but only the contribution of the prophet after the sovereign's death through the composition of a funeral song. This is not a strictly prophetic text but a lament, whose text is not recorded. It is assumed to be already known to the readers, being a song still in use "to this day". Some scholars see here an allusion to the book of Lamentations[275], hypothesising the existence of an early collection larger than the present one. However, this hypothesis is wholly conjectural and not supported by any textual or archaeological proof. It is preferable, therefore, to think of a different collection that has not come down to

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Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2006, 96-100.

[275] Thus Myers, *II Chronicles*, 216, and Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1043-1044.

us. The mention of Jeremiah by the Chronicler[276] could have served various purposes: to fill a gap in the Deuteronomist history, which does not name Jeremiah whereas, from the book of the prophet, there emerges his central role in the destiny of the kingdom of Judah from as early as the time of Josiah[277]; to recall to the reader's memory a link with the liturgy, a favourite subject for our author[278]; to raise the funeral song not only of King Josiah but of the entire dynasty at the conclusion of its royal function[279]. I believe that the question should be tackled together with a particular characteristic of the story of Josiah, and that is the absence of any mention of his burial, an element that the Chronicler utilises as a vehicle for his own message. Therefore the question will be discussed again in the section on the burials of the kings of Judah[280].

> *2 Chr 36,12:* «[Zedekiah] did what was evil in the sight of the Lord his God. He did not humble himself before the prophet Jeremiah who spoke from the mouth of the Lord».

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[276] However, H.G.M. Williamson, *The Death of Josiah and the Continuing Development of the Deuteronomic History*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 32 (1982) 246-247, hypothesises that the Chronicle's *Vorlage* was a version of 2 Kgs extended by circles that looked to Jeremiah for inspiration and which, therefore, already contained the mention of the prophet.

[277] Combining the information of 2 Kgs 22,1 and 2 Chr 34,1, which assign thirty-one years of rule to Josiah, and of Jer 1,2, according to which the prophet began his ministry in the thirteenth year of his reign, one arrives at the conclusion that Jeremiah's preaching was carried out under Josiah for a good eighteen years.

[278] Both hypotheses are formulated by M. Leuchter, *Remembering Jeremiah in the Persian Period*, in D.V. Edelman-E. Ben Zvi (eds.), *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian & Early Hellenistic Periods. Social Memory and Imagination*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, 409).

[279] Thus, J. Blenkinsopp, *Remembering Josiah*, in D.V. Edelman-E. Ben Zvi (eds.), *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian & Early Hellenistic Periods. Social Memory and Imagination*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2013, 245-246, interprets the intertextual links which the Chronicler establishes with the description of the deaths of Saul (he too wounded in battle by archers and father of three sons who had been destined to reign) and of Ahab (cf. above, p. 104-106).

[280] Below, p. 340-342.

The relationship between Jeremiah and Zedekiah has already been examined[281]. In this chapter, since no direct speeches of the prophet are recorded, the passage is marginal, deserving merely a mention.

More interesting, however, are the third and fourth mentions which are interconnected:

> *2 Chr 36,20-21:* «[20]The king] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia, [21]to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfil seventy years».
>
> *2 Chr 36,22:* «In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in fulfilment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom and also declared in a written edict».

These two mentions help the portrayal of events as fulfilment of the will of Yhwh which had been expressed in anticipation by Jeremiah. Verse 21 is peculiar to the Chronicler whereas v. 22 is taken from the *Vorlage* which, in this case, is not the Dtr, but Ezra 1,1. In particular, 2 Chr 36,21 provides the key to a theological reading. The oracle as such is not found in the biblical text which bears the name of the prophet but is a composition of the Chronicler who combines some of his own expressions with elements of the Mosaic legislation. The number of seventy years derives from Jer 25,11-12 and 29,10[282]; on the other hand, the re-

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[281] Above, p. 113.

[282] The position which sees 2 Chr 36,21 as referring also to Dan 9's prophecy of seventy weeks was advanced by M.G. Kline, *The Covenant of the Seventieth Week*, in J.H. Skilton et alii (eds.), *The Law and the Prophets: Old Testament Studies in Honor of Oswald T. Allis*, Presbyterian and Reformed, Nutley (NJ) 1974, 461-462, and it was restated by some scholars who take inspiration from the canonical approach, such as J.H. Sailhamer, *Biblical Theology and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible*, in S.J. Hafemann (ed.), *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect*, InterVarsity-Apollos, Downers Grove-Leicester 2002, 35-37; and S.G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Biblical Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (NSBT 15), InterVarsity Press-Apollos, Downers Grove-Nottingham 2003, 225. But it raises problems of relative chronology between the books of Chronicles and Daniel, and does

lationship between the sin of the people, dispersal among the nations and sabbath rest of the land[283] is one of the theological themes of Lev 26, in particular of vv. 34-35 and 43.

However, this verse raises a problem of translation and another of interpretation. First of all, there is doubt about the temporal axis expressed by the *qatal* verbal forms, רָצְתָה and שָׁבְתָה. Certainly, the former, introduced by עַד, expresses priority in relation to the second; however, does the latter express a prophecy in the future or an action in the past? The first case would be a quotation which records an oracle in the form of direct speech, introduced by the formula דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּפִי יִרְמְיָהוּ; in the second case, it would be a theological comment of the Chronicler located on the temporal axis of the past. The ancient versions[284] and the majority of modern commentators choose the second option[285]. The translation of the *qatal* verbs as two pasts is preferable for two reasons:

a. the *qatal* not preceded by *waw* is generally used for the temporal axis of the past, and it is not necessary to detect an exception which

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not distinguish adequately between the work of the Chronicler and the theological vision on the basis of which the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was subsequently developed.

[283] The Chronicler had already described the land as needing its own restoration in Yhwh's second apparition to Solomon: אֶרְפָּא אֶת־אַרְצָם ("I will heal their land", 2 Chr 7,14), a *hapax* in the whole of the Hebrew Bible. In the course of the narrative, 2 Chr 30,20 mentions the healing of the people which took place as a result of Hezekiah's reform, but, at the moment of the destruction of Jerusalem, it was declared to be impossible now (36,16). In the same context, Jeremiah announces the future healing of Judah (Jer 33,6). In the Chronicler's vision, following Leviticus, God has also established a healing of the land, which is related to the people and undergoes the consequences of the transgressions committed, but, at the same time, needs an independent purification so that Yhwh intervenes in a specific way to bring it back to its original condition of integrity. According to Jonker, this sabbatical period acts as a caesura between two periods of Israel's history, enabling the beginning of a phase of complete renewal at the time of the return permitted by the Persian Empire (L.C. Jonker, *The Exile as Sabbath Rest: The Chronicler's Interpretation of the Exile*, in *Old Testament Essays* 20 [2007] 714-715).

[284] LXX: προσδέξασθαι (aorist infinitive) and ἐσαββάτισεν (aorist indicative); Vulgate: "(donec) celebraret" and "egit sabbatum".

[285] So, for example, Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 295; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1061; Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 390; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 531.

would raise syntactical problems; that is supported by the ancient translators who reveal how the text was interpreted at the time when they operated;

b. in Chr, the syntagma "בְּפִי + divine intermediary" never introduces an oracle in the form of direct speech (cf. 2 Chr 18,21-22);

c. the comparison with Lev 26,34, clearly alluded to in 2 Chr 36,21, reveals that the two *qatal* forms are used by the Chronicler to replace two *yiqtol* forms:

Lev 26,34

אָז תִּרְצֶה הָאָרֶץ אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתֶיהָ כֹּל יְמֵי הֶשַּׁמָּה וְאַתֶּם בְּאֶרֶץ אֹיְבֵיכֶם אָז תִּשְׁבַּת הָאָרֶץ וְהִרְצָת אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתֶיהָ

«Then the land shall enjoy its sabbath years as long as it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its sabbath years».

2 Chr 36,21 takes up the segment הָאָרֶץ אֶת־שַׁבְּתוֹתֶיהָ כָּל־יְמֵי הֶשַּׁמָּה replacing תִּרְצֶה with רָצְתָה, then also inserts the root שׁבת, and, in both cases, changes the temporal aspect of both verbs deliberately: if the Chronicler had wanted to understand a quotation attributed to Jeremiah, a *yiqtol* form would have been much more suitable to his aim. Instead, he does not wish to attribute a foreign element to the prophet's preaching: the mention of Jeremiah concerns only the duration of seventy years while he alludes to the Mosaic text in an almost literal way to show that the promise contained in the Law was also fulfilled in the past with the Babylonian Exile. Law and prophecy are fused and contained in a single divine promise that found its fulfilment during the Exile.

Here we come to the difficulty of interpreting this verse which regards the number 70, since, between the destruction of the temple in 586 and the Edict of Cyrus in 539, only 47 years elapsed. Various proposals have been advanced to account for this discrepancy[286]. Assuming the date of the Edict as the term for the period, it goes back to about 609 BCE: at this time, that is, 605, is the time of the accession to the throne of Nebuchadnezzar II, the first year of whose reign saw the writing of

[286] For a summary of the scholarly positions, see Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 301.

Jeremiah's oracle over the seventy years of desolation of the land of Judah contained in Jer 25,1-14. The slavery would have begun already, therefore, with the battle of Carchemish in 605 in which the Babylonians defeated an Assyro-Egyptian coalition and imposed their hegemony over the Ancient Near East. Instead, starting at the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, the 70-year deadline comes to the dedication of the second temple, around 515[287]; but that can certainly not be the intention of the Chronicler who clearly makes the Edict of Cyrus coincide with the end of the seventy years[288]. It is possible, though, to understand the number 70 in a symbolic sense without needing to see in it a precise historical indication but, rather, a link with the septenary structure of the sabbath in the Mosaic legislation[289]. In any case, it is a theological declaration: foreseen by the Law and the prophets, the Exile is only a limited phase in the passage of time. It is submitted to the control of God who establishes its end at the fixed time.

If the seventy sabbatical years not enjoyed by the land are counted, we obtain the number of 490: going backwards, depending on whether one starts from the battle of Carchemish or from the destruction of the temple, a date between 1095 and 1076 BCE would be indicated. According to the biblical chronology, this is the period of the passage from the rule of the Judges to the monarchy. Can we see here also an implicit criticism of the monarchical institution in itself?[290] It is not easy to maintain this. The total duration of the reigns of the kings of Judah is 474 years, and includes sovereigns who were certainly just and pleasing to God, like David, Solomon and Hezekiah. Furthermore, there are no elements which directly link this calculation to a possible criticism of the

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[287] Thus Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 418.

[288] According to M. Leuchter, *The Polemics of Exile in Jeremiah 26-45*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge-New York 2008, 188, the Chronicler would be intending to correct the perspective of the prophetic book of Haggai who identified the moment of the rebirth of the people after the Exile with the construction of the temple and not with the coming of Cyrus.

[289] So Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1076; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 545; and, above all, McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 371.

[290] Thus Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 418.

monarchy. Rather, it is better to understand the number as symbolical, within the theological reading of the Chronicler[291]: the period of the Exile was necessary to purify the land after an indefinite period of infidelity; after the Exile, the history of the Jewish people can make a fresh start.

Will David's dynasty have a place and a role in this new beginning? The link with Jer 29 assumes a negative response[292]: Jeremiah's letter to the exiles contained in this chapter involves the people as a whole without any reference to sovereigns. It is addressed generically to the chiefs of the people in exile without mentioning the exiled king, Jeconiah (v. 1). Jeremiah exhorts them to seek the good estate of the kingdom of Babylon without rebelling (v. 7); the promise of restoration after seventy years (v. 10a) will involve the whole of the transformed people without any specific mention of the dynasty (vv. 10b-14); for Zedekiah, identified not by his name but as "the king who sits on the throne of David" (v. 16a) is reserved the punishment together with the inhabitants of Jerusalem for their lack of faith in Yhwh, without any prospect of rehabilitation (vv. 16b-19). The Chronicler makes haste in this interpretation of the story, narrating the end of the Davidic dynasty with rapidity. He is not interested in the fate of Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. Outlining his horizon of hope, he presents it centred on the people, the land and the temple, passing over the contingent existence of an autonomous kingdom for Israel and the family who govern it.

E. Inspired messengers

Some interlocutors of the kings of Judah are characterised by the presence of the spirit of Yhwh which descends on them and spurs them to intervene in the events. None of them is described with a prophetic

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[291] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 302.

[292] Cf. Murray, *Dynasty*, 75-79. Schweitzer (*Reading Utopia*, 127-128) identifies in the Exile an historic fracture of such significance as to involve a new beginning with characteristics necessarily different from the past which cannot be replicated. In this new beginning, ascribed to divine intervention through a foreign king, Cyrus of Persia, the Davidic dynasty plays no role.

title despite being bearers of a supernatural communication which, in one case (Azariah's speech in 2 Chr 15,8), is named נְבוּאָה. To mark the distinction between this particular category of charismatic figures and prophets properly so called, Schniedewind has coined the expression "inspired messengers": these are not permanent prophets for whom are reserved the titles examined above but, rather, people who receive a divine inspiration occasionally and temporarily[293]. The only passage where the presence of the spirit and the permanent prophetic institution are associated is the dispute between Micaiah and the false prophets in 2 Chr 18, a text of a Deuteronomist matrix taken up from 1 Kgs 22,1-38.

In the passages peculiar to the Chronicler, it is possible to identify two "possession formulas" in which the descent of the divine spirit is indicated with two different verbs: לבשׁ and היה.

לבשׁ: the spirit literally "clothes" the literary figure. In the whole of the Hebrew Bible, the formula רוּחַ יְהוָה/אֱלֹהִים לָבְשָׁה אֶת is found only in Jdg 6,34, in 1 Chr 12,19 and in 2 Chr 24,20: in Jdg, the רוּחַ יְהוָה clothes/takes possession of Gideon for a military task whereas, in the two occurrences in Chr, the רוּחַ (אֱלֹהִים)[294] spurs the figure (first Amasai, then Zechariah) to speak in the name of God.

היה: the spirit is found to be present above the person who is speaking: Azariah in 2 Chr 15,1, and Jahaziel in 2 Chr 20,14. For both, the Chronicler employs a specific syntactic construction: conjunction ו + name in *casus pendens* + הָיְתָה עָלָיו רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים/יְהוָה. This formula with an anacoluthon is not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible: first, the Chronicler introduces a new character; then, he declares that the spirit was on him; finally, the character speaks in the name of God. The association of רוּחַ with the verb היה is found in another six occurrences: in Num 24,2 for Balaam; in Jdg 3,10 for Othniel; in Jdg 11,29 for Jephthah; in 1 Sam 19,9.23 for Saul and in 1 Sam 19,20 for the messengers of Saul.

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[293] Cf. Schniedewind, *Word*, 70-74.

[294] In 1 Chr 12,19, the term רוּחַ is not followed by any specification but nor is it preceded by the article: according to P. Joüon (*Notes philologiques sur le texte hébreu de 1 et 2 Chroniques*, in *Biblica* 13 [1932] 87), it is necessary to add the indication of the divinity as a conjecture.

Among all the passages outside Chronicles that contain possession formulas, only in Balaam's case does the spirit drive the one receiving it to utter an oracle. In all the other cases, the context is military. Thus, the possession formula is not original to the world of prophetism. The most convincing hypothesis is that the transition from the military narrative to Chronicler's use of it is constituted by Ezekiel, who defines his divine inspiration in terms of a possession in which the spirit intervenes on the prophet, opening his mind to the contemplation of supernatural visions (cf. Ezek 3,14; 11,5); the rereading of prophecy as possession performed by Ezekiel would later have been taken up in post-Exilic religiosity until reaching the modes of narrative expression which we find in Chr[295].

1. Amasai (1 Chr 12,19)

In the context of David's story, the spirit descends on one of the chief commanders of his future army to formulate an announcement of peace to the king.

> *1 Chr 12,19:* «Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, chief of the thirty, and he said, "We are yours, O David; and with you, O son of Jesse! Peace, peace to you, and peace to your helpers! For your God helps you." Then David received them, and made them officers of his troops».

The whole of ch. 12 is without parallel in the Deuteronomist work and has the function of retrieving, in a kind of flashback, some elements of the struggle between David and Saul with the aim of legitimising the son of Jesse's accession to the throne. Verses 1-23 are located in the period of the stay in the city of Ziklag, a city that the king of Gath, Achish, had given to David and his men (1 Sam 27,6-7) where the future sovereign was to receive the news of the death of Saul (2 Sam 1,1-16). According to 1 Chr 12, while Saul was still alive, David already received there the support of some groups of soldiers of the tribes of Benjamin (called, significantly, "brothers of Saul": vv. 2b-8), of Gad (vv. 9-16) and of Manasseh (vv. 20-22), whose names are listed by the author. Verses

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[295] Cf. Schniedewind, *Word*, 72-73.

24-41 present the list of the forces faithful to David from all the tribes of Israel who arrived at Hebron to anoint David as king. Verses 17-19 tell of the arrival of some supporters from Benjamin and Judah. In this context, the spirit descends on Amasai to make a public ratification of God's choice of David and of the divine help for those who support him. This figure is otherwise unknown[296]: although described as "chief of the Thirty", he does not appear in the lists of this special group recorded in 2 Sam 23,24-39 and 1 Chr 11,26-47. In any case, it is remarkable the choice of placing as the spirit's intermediary a figure who is neither prophetic nor priestly: the freedom with which God communicates with the king is total. On occasions, the spirit can descend even without links with stable charismatic activities or institutional roles.

2. Other figures on whom the spirit descends

The Chronicler also uses the expression about the descent of the spirit to introduce the action of some prophets who have already been discussed: for Azaria, son of Oded, in relation to King Asa (2 Chr 15,1), and in the account of the debate between the prophet Micaiah, son of Imlah, and the false prophets led by Zedekiah (2 Chr 18).

The spirit also descends on two figures belonging to the priestly sphere: Jahaziel, of the family of Asaph, in dialogue with King Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20,14-17), and Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, in the time of King Joash (2 Chr 24,20-22). We shall discuss each of these in the following section which is given over to priestly figures[297].

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[296] Unless his name is considered a textual corruption for אֲבִישַׁי, the brother of Joab and chief of the Thirty, mentioned in 2 Sam 23,18-19 and 1 Chr 11,20-21; but it would be a very ancient corruption, unsupported by any version, and so would remain a conjecture.

[297] Jahaziel on p. 263-265; Zechariah on p. 267-268.

F. The final summary: the rejection of the prophets and messengers of Yhwh (2 Chr 36,15-16)

In the context of the destruction of the temple, the Chronicler makes a generic mention of the messengers sent by God to call the people to conversion[298].

> *2 Chr 36,15-16:* «[15]The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent persistently to them by his messengers, because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling place; [16]but they kept mocking the messengers of God, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord against his people became so great that there was no remedy».

Before his description of the national disaster, the Chronicler sums up the theological reason for this event: the people of Judah have always been unfaithful and have not wished to listen to Yhwh who has spoken to them continually down the centuries through his messengers. It is preferable to think that the author is referring here to all the prophetic figures in the history of Judah from the very beginning rather than to just the prophets from the time of Zedekiah, that is, Jeremiah and Ezekiel[299]: the expression הַשְׁכֵּם וְשָׁלוֹחַ in v. 15 and the participles in v. 16 describe continual behaviour over a span of time larger than the reign of a single sovereign. Jeremiah is certainly emblematic in this respect[300], to the extent of being named three times in the whole of ch. 36; there is also an allusion to him in v. 15 in the formula הַשְׁכֵּם וְשָׁלֹחַ, which appears

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[298] Cf. also the introduction to the charismatic figures, p. 203-214.

[299] The former position is maintained, for example, by Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 300-301; Mason, *Preaching*, 121-122; Becking, *More than a Pawn*, 260; and P.C. Beentjes, *Constructs of Prophets and Prophecy in the Book of Chronicles*, in L.L. Grabbe-M. Nissinen (eds.), *Constructs of Prophecy in the Former and Latter Prophets and Other Texts* (ANEM 4), Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta (GA) 2011, 23-24. The second position, among others, is shared by Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1069-1071; and Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 414. However, the latter is unacceptable because only Jeremiah is connected with Zedekiah in Chronicles while vv. 15-16 mention several messengers of God. Moreover, the verbal forms that refer to the people in v. 16 describe repeated behaviour which presupposes a more extended period of time which is paralleled by the prolonged patience of Yhwh.

[300] Cf. Leuchter, *Remembering Jeremiah*, 410-411.

only six other times in the Hebrew Bible, all of them in the book that bears his name[301].

Only here does the Chronicler apply the term מַלְאָךְ to the intermediaries between God and the people: elsewhere, it designates angelic creatures (1 Chr 21,15-30; 2 Chr 32,21) or emissaries with diplomatic duties (1 Chr 14,1; 19,2.16; 2 Chr 18,12; 35,21). The terms "prophet" and "messenger" are placed in parallel and actually treated as synonyms; the association is due to the verbal nature of prophecy that had gradually led to the perception of the prophets as heralds of the word of God which had come to prevail over their divinatory and thaumaturgical roles (cf. Is 44,26; Hag 1,13; Mal). The information coming from these two verses is very important for understanding the author's theology. The resulting image of God possesses the features of care for and closeness to the people, who are continually helped despite their negative response. Those sent are invested with the same authority as Yhwh, and the reaction to their words coincides with the people's attitude of faith or hostility to Yhwh himself[302]. Furthermore, the Chronicler declares that the blow of rejection and consequent exile does not fall on the king alone or his court but involves the entire people. The judgement, therefore, is widened: since the transgression is shared, with the messengers of the word being continually rejected by all, God has no other choice than to exile the whole of Judah far from its land.

III. PRIESTS AND LEVITES

The literary world of Chronicles offers a rather rich presence of figures coming from the cultic sphere. The Chronicler's attention is centred on the temple and on faithfulness to it. Thus, he highlights those who

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[301] Jer 7,25; 25,4; 26,5; 29,19; 35,15; 44,4.

[302] Cf. Mason, *Preaching*, 122: "Taken together they [= the prophets] have shown how leadership is a divine gift to the community. God has never left his people without a witness. Through them his words have come again and again".

perform the various offices in it which guarantee its proper functioning. A conspicuous proportion of the genealogies is devoted to the tribe of Levi (81 verses: 1 Chr 5,27-6,66), second only to the section on Judah. As the literary work unfolds, two groups of cultic officials are featured continually: the priests and the Levites. According to the arrangements issued by Moses and then refined by David, the priests, descendants of Aaron, are charged with the carrying out of the sacrifices and offerings and the care of the Holy of Holies (1 Chr 6,33-34), while the Levites, members of the other families of the tribe, are entrusted with the ancillary jobs, basically as singers and stewards of the structure of the temple and of its goods (1 Chr 23; 25-26). The Levites are portrayed in relation to the Ark and very close to the priests, assisting them in the cultic ceremonies (2 Chr 5,4-5.7.11-12; 29,16). This distinction reflects the historical post-Exilic situation rather than the monarchical period which is the subject of the narrative, but it actually precedes the Chronicler, as is demonstrated, with some differences, in the Law of Moses (e.g., Num 3,1-10).

Compared with the previous literature, our author introduces a notable novelty with regard to the status of the Levites who are accorded greater respect and are brought close to the dignity of the descendants of Aaron. This is particularly evident considering the use of קדשׁ, a root proper to the sphere of holiness and consecration. If, as in the Pentateuch, the priests are consecrated for the exercise of their cultic duties (1 Chr 23,13; 2 Chr 5,11), 2 Chr 23,6 implies a consecration of the Levites also. In 2 Chr 29,5.11, Hezekiah calls on the Levites to sanctify themselves as those chosen (בחר) by Yhwh for the service of the temple. The same exhortation is repeated by Josiah (2 Chr 35,6). On the occasion of Hezekiah's Passover, the Levites take on the office of immolating the holocausts because of the scarcity of priests and because the Levites have been sanctified with a greater zeal (2 Chr 29,34; cf. 30,3.15-17a.22). In fact, with this action, the Levites enjoy power to sanctify the impure (2 Chr 30,17b). At the end of the Passover celebrations, Hezekiah issues some regulations so that the Levites and priests can remain in the state of holiness (2 Chr 31,17-18). Later, Josiah ascribes also to the Levites the office of immolating the Passover because of the great crowd of

people in Jerusalem (2 Chr 35,3-6.9-14). The Pentateuch and the book of Ezekiel never associate the Levites with the sphere of holiness and consecration: this is, therefore, an innovation of the Chronicler[303]. It has been observed that the portrayal of the Levites becomes increasingly favourable as the narrative progresses, reaching its climax in the reign of Hezekiah in which their status is promoted from a position of hierarchical subordination to the priests to a coordinate and complementary relation with them[304]. In the context of the Passover celebration, they even receive greater reverence than the priests themselves (2 Chr 29,34; 30,22). From Hezekiah onward, the only prerogative that actually remains to Aaron's descendants is the presentation of the offerings within the sanctuary, especially the expiatory sacrifices (2 Chr 29,21-24). According to Jonker, the evolution of the presentation is to be explained starting from the Holiness Code of Leviticus. This sees the emergence of the theological idea of the gradual diffusion of holiness beginning with the sanctuary and the cult. Thus, in Chronicles, holiness belongs, first to the sons of Aaron, then to the whole of the tribe of Levi, and, finally, to the entire people of Israel[305].

This introductory summary has highlighted the importance of the priestly and Levitical class in the theological thought of the Chronicler. We shall now discuss the figures coming from this environment who

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[303] See the detailed analysis in G.N. Knoppers, *Hierodules, Priests, or Janitors? The Levites in Chronicles and the History of the Israelite Priesthood*, in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 118 (1999) 49-72, which also contains a general presentation of the studies on Levitism in Chronicles.

[304] Cf. Jonker, *Reflections on Leadership*, 215-217.

[305] Cf. *ibid.*, 219. A different opinion, which we do not accept, is offered by Labahn who argues that Chr contains a clear opposition between priests and Levites in favour of the latter. That would indicate the Chronicler's membership of the Levitical social group which, at the time of the Second Temple, would have constituted an alternative leadership both to the Persian and Hellenistic rulers and to the priestly class of the temple (A. Labahn, *Antitheocratic Tendencies in Chronicles*, in B. Becking-R. Albertz [eds.], *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era. Papers Read at the First Meeting of the European Association for Biblical Studies; Utrecht, 6-9 August 2000* [STR 5], Van Gorcum, Leiden 2003, esp. 130-135).

interact with the monarchs. Some of these (Jehoiada and Hilkiah) are also known to the Deuteronomist work; others (Jahaziel, Zechariah and Azariah) are mentioned only by the Chronicler.

A. Jahaziel, Levite (2 Chr 20,14-17)

The pious king, Jehoshaphat, is forced to defend himself from an invasion of Moabites and Ammonites in the region of En-gedi, on the Dead Sea (2 Chr 20,1-2). The sovereign proclaims a fast and announces a sacred assembly in the temple at Jerusalem to call on God's protection (20,3-4). He himself makes a fervent public prayer in which he remembers the gift of the land to Abraham and its conquest in the return from Egypt, culminating in the construction of the sanctuary, the place in which the name of Yhwh is present (20,5-13). At this point, God responds by sending the spirit on the Levite, Jahaziel, son of Zechariah.

> *2 Chr 20,14-17:* «[14]Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the middle of the assembly. [15]He said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the Lord to you: Do not fear or be dismayed at this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's. [16]Tomorrow go down against them; they will come up by the ascent of Ziz; you will find them at the end of the valley, before the wilderness of Jeruel. [17]This battle is not for you to fight; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, and the LORD will be with you"».

Jahaziel's words are received favourably by the king and all those present (20,18) while the Levites praise God for having intervened with his authoritative word (20,19). Thus, the military expedition turns out to be a success. It happens without a military confrontation but through a liturgical ceremony which puts the enemy camp into great confusion (20,20-25). Jahaziel is not identified explicitly as a prophet. However, after his intervention, Jehoshaphat exhorts the people to "believe in his [Yhwh's] prophets" (20,20) in order to obtain victory, thus, undoubtedly, including Jahaziel himself, the last of these figures sent to reveal the

word of God[306]. Moreover, the Chronicler records for Jahaziel an unusually long genealogy which goes right back to Asaph, the prophet-singer contemporary with David. The prophetic utterance is an oracle of salvation but also represents the execution of the order of Deut 20,1-4, which prescribes that, before a battle, the priest is to exhort the people to have courage and not to fear with the certainty of the favourable presence of Yhwh. The whole episode recalls the miraculous wars of more ancient history contained in the book of Judges, for example, Gideon against the Midianites (cf. Judg 7,9). However, two references are almost literal: to David and to Moses[307]. The central concept for the interpretation of the whole episode is taken from the account of the slaying of Goliath:

2 Chr 20,15: לֹא לָכֶם הַמִּלְחָמָה כִּי לֵאלֹהִים: "The battle is not yours but God's";

2 Chr 20,17: לֹא לָכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם: "The battle is not for you to fight";

1 Sam 17,47: לַיהוָה הַמִּלְחָמָה: "The battle is the Lord's".

If we also consider the exceptional nature of Jahaziel's genealogy, which goes back to the time of David, we can grasp the Chronicler's intention to associate the time and deeds of Jehoshaphat with those of the founder of the dynasty. With Mason, we can also add the geographical element: at En-gedi, the site of the battle, David had experienced God's help while he was fleeing from Saul[308].

The second reference is even more literal and is related to the Exodus from Egypt:

2 Chr 20,17: לֹא לָכֶם לְהִלָּחֵם בָּזֹאת הִתְיַצְּבוּ עִמְדוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה [...] אַל־תִּירְאוּ

"The battle is not for you to fight. Take your position and stand still, and see the victory of the Lord […] do not fear";

Ex 14,13-14: אַל־תִּירָאוּ הִתְיַצְּבוּ וּרְאוּ אֶת־יְשׁוּעַת יְהוָה [...] יְהוָה יִלָּחֵם לָכֶם

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306 The LXX has the singular ἐν προφήτῃ αὐτοῦ, referring to Jahaziel alone. *Contra* Schniedewind, who claims to identify in Jehoshaphat's words an allusion to Is 7,9; therefore, in his opinion, the warning would concern the earlier prophets of whom, at the time of the Chronicler there were presumably preserved some collections of oracles, not those sent by Yhwh who appear in the narrative (*Word*, 182-184).

307 Cf. Beentjes, *Tradition*, 73-74.

308 Mason, *Preaching*, 65.

"Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance of the Lord […] The Lord will fight for you".

The deliverance which the people experience in this battle is equated with the deliverance after the departure from Egypt. Like Moses, Jehoshaphat cries to Yhwh for help and is heard (Ex 14,15 and 2 Chr 20,5-12). In both cases, Israel receives miraculous aid without fighting. They are called on only to have faith and not to fear so that, the next day, they can see the corpses of the enemy soldiers (Ex 14,30 and 2 Chr 20,24). After the miraculous victory, a song of praise is intoned (Ex 15,1-21 and 2 Chr 20,26-28). Also, the theme of the terror which descends on the foreign nation when they become aware of the miracle (2 Chr 20,29) is often recalled in connection with the departure from Egypt (Ex 15,14-16; Num 14,13-14).

Thus, the model of faith embodied in Jehoshaphat's leadership is offered by the Chronicler to his contemporaries to summon them to an irreproachable faith in Yhwh: if they keep the same disposition of soul as the pious king, the people and its chiefs will be able to continue to experience the help guaranteed by God and manifested in the foundational moments of the people (Exodus) and of the monarchy (David).

B. Jehoiada, (high) priest (2 Chr 23-24)

One of the most prominent priestly figures in Chronicles is the priest, Jehoiada, a key figure in the events which restored the throne to the Davidic dynasty after the usurpation of the queen mother, Athaliah. Jehoiada's name appears for the first time in 2 Chr 22,11 where he is depicted as a priest who had married into the dynasty: his wife, Jehoshabeath, in fact, was the daughter of King Jehoram and sister of King Ahaziah, and she is portrayed as the saviour of little Joash from the extermination of the royal family perpetrated by Athaliah, by hiding him in her apartments close to the temple. The parallel account of 2 Kgs 11,2, where the woman's name is Jehosheba[309],

[309] יְהוֹשֶׁבַע; Chronicles reads יְהוֹשַׁבְעַת.

does not contain the information about her marriage with Jehoiada.

As for the status of this figure, he is constantly described as כֹּהֵן ("priest")[310]. In 24,6, he is indicated as רָאשׁ ("the chief"), and, in 24,11, the two terms are combined in the expression כֹּהֵן רָאשׁ, which, in other passages in Chr, indicates the high priest[311]. For this reason and also considering that 2 Kgs 12,11, parallel to 2 Chr 24,11, describes Jehoiada as הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל[312], it is generally assumed that he was the high priest. Nevertheless, margins of doubt remain[313]. In any case, there is no uncertainty about his membership of the priestly class.

2 Chr 23 is given over to the narrative of the deposition of Athaliah (vv. 1-15) and the early reforms of Jehoiada, acting as regent for King Joash who was only seven years old at his accession (vv. 16-21). Jehoiada's speeches are taken from the Deuteronomist: vv. 4-7 provide the instructions for the coup (// 2 Kgs 11,5-8) and v. 14 describes the manner of Athaliah's execution (// 2 Kgs 11,15). The only important element proper to the Chronicler is the presentation of Joash to the nobles of Jerusalem.

> *2 Chr 23,3b:* «Here is the king's son! Let him reign as the Lord promised concerning the sons of David».

Jehoiada, the priest, proclaims the need for the restoration of the Davidic dynasty. This is motivated not by purely political questions but by religious ones, namely, the fulfilment of Yhwh's promise.

2 Chr 24 recounts the events of the reign of Joash. The first part (vv. 1-16) deals with the initial phase of the reign which is positive under the

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310 2 Chr 22,11; 23,8-9.14 (twice); 24,2.20.25.

311 In 2 Chr 19,11, it is attributed to Amariah during the reign of Jehoshaphat; in 26,20, to Azariah, in the time of Uzziah; and in 31,10, to another Azariah in the time of Hezekiah.

312 The Chronicler also uses this expression with reference to Hilkiah during the reign of Josiah (2 Chr 34,9).

313 Note that the expression כֹּהֵן רָאשׁ in 2 Chr 24,11 (as also הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל in 2 Kgs 12,11) is attributed to Jehoiada only indirectly, without relation to his name, within the procedures for collecting offerings for the temple: "The king's secretary and the officer of the chief priest came and emptied the chest". On the question of the high priesthood in Chr, see S.J. Schweitzer, *The High Priest in Chronicles: An Anomaly in a Detailed Description of the Temple Cult*, in *Biblica* 84 (2003) 388-402 (esp. 397-399 on Jehoiada).

influence of Jehoiada. No speeches of the priest are recorded. After his death, however, the sovereign, abandons his faithfulness to Yhwh under pressure from the nobles of Judah. This brings him into conflict with Jehoiada's son, Zechariah (vv. 17-27).

C. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, priest (2 Chr 24,20-22)

In the second phase of his reign, Joash abandons the religious policy of his mentor, the priest, Jehoiada, to follow the line of the military chiefs of Judah who were favourable to a mingling with the cults of the traditional Canaanite deities (2 Chr 24,17-18). Consequently, God sends prophets, who are anonymous and issue a call to conversion, but they remain unheard (24,19). Then the spirit of Yhwh takes possession of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who may represent the focal point for the supporters of a more rigorously monotheistic line.

> *2 Chr 24,20-22:* «[20]Then the spirit of God took possession of[1] Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, "Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has also forsaken you." [21]But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the Lord. [22]King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah's father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, "May the Lord see and avenge!"».

The figure of Zechariah is unknown to the Deuteronomist work. For the Chronicler, however, he is functional to his theological vision: the king and the chiefs of the people have abandoned Yhwh; consequently, he is abandoning Judah. Zechariah's prayer, on point of death, explains the subsequent Aramaean invasion which is also recounted in 2 Kgs but without theological connections (2 Kgs 12,18-22): the Aramaeans kill all the commanders, authors of the king's polytheistic deviation and obtain great booty (2 Chr 24,23). Thus, "they executed judgement on Joash" (v. 24b). This victory with a smaller army than the Judaean forces is a sign of the divine source of the enemy victory (v. 24a). After this, Joash grows ill, and his ministers conspire against him

and kill him. The Chronicler explicitly links these events to the death of Zechariah (v. 25).

D. Azariah, high priest, and another eighty priests (2 Chr 26,17-18)

Only the Chronicler recounts an episode which has King Uzziah as its leading figure and which is functional to the explanation of the origin of the leprosy which strikes this sovereign: a cultic abuse, namely, the claim to offer incense to Yhwh in the temple in the place of the priests (2 Chr 26,16). The priest, Azariah, enters the temple behind the king together with eighty holy priests and begins to speak.

> *2 Chr 26,17-18:* «[17]But the priest Azariah went in after him, with eighty priests of the Lord who were men of valour; [18]they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "It is not for you, Uzziah, to make offering to the Lord, but for the priests the descendants of Aaron, who are consecrated to make offering. Go out of the sanctuary; for you have done wrong, and it will bring you no honor from the Lord God"».

Only subsequently, in 2 Chr 26,20, Azariah is described as כֹּהֵן הָרֹאשׁ ("high priest"). The king's transgression is twofold: he offers incense illicitly and enters the sanctuary. The offering of incense is regulated by the Law of Moses, alluded to in 1 Chr 6,34; 23,13 and 2 Chr 29,11. According to Ex 30,7-8, it is the prerogative of Aaron and, so, of his successors, while Num 17,5 forbid it categorically to those who are not priests through the exemplary punishments on the family of Korah. In Num 18,3-7, the entrance into the sanctuary area is reserved to the priests alone on pain of death for the profane who have violated this prescription. Uzziah is not put to death but undergoes condemnation from God himself who instantly strikes him with leprosy[314]. The judge-

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[314] Maskow has analysed the text in the light of the theory of "conversational implicatures", identifying a series of intertextual references, especially to the Pentateuch (L. Maskow, *Conversational Implicatures in the Book of Chronicles*, in J. Jeon-L.C. Jonker [eds.], *Chronicles and the Priestly Literature of the Hebrew Bible* [BZAW 528], De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2021, 264-280).

ment of infidelity issues directly from the mouth of the priests[315], not by virtue of a prophetic word but as an immediate sentence for the objective transgression of a cultic law given by Moses. The relationship between fault and punishment is expressed by the repetition of לֹא־לְךָ in v. 18: וְלֹא־לְךָ לְכָבוֹד מֵיְהוָה אֱלֹהִים – לֹא־לְךָ עֻזִּיָּהוּ לְהַקְטִיר לַיהוָה. The king's action is described with the root מעל: employed elsewhere by our author[316], it indicates a sin against the Deity, a refusal to recognise what belongs to him with the consequence of particularly destructive repercussions not only on the one carrying out the transgression but on the community as a whole[317]. It has been shown, correctly, that among all the occurrences, the present one is the only one to be inserted in a direct speech, a sign of the greater importance of the sin committed by Uzziah[318].

A result of Uzziah's abuse is the appearance of leprosy (2 Chr 26,19). This information is taken from 2 Kgs 15,5 and is extended to be clear about its theological cause: for the Dtr, the illness appears in an implicit connection with the general ineffectiveness of Uzziah who had let the worship on the high places continue (2 Kgs 15,4); the Chronicler attributes it to a specific act in which the king did not show the due respect for the temple and its worship.

E. Priests and Levites in the time of Hezekiah (2 Chr 29-31)

During the reign of Hezekiah, the members of the priestly class come upon the scene several times in the role of executors of the religious

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315 According to some authors, we should understand that the direct speech attributed to the priests was uttered by Azariah alone in the name of the whole group: so Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 886; and De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 357.

316 With reference to individual kings, it refers to Ahaz (2 Chr 28,19.22; 29,19) and Manasseh (2 Chr 33,19) as well as to Ahaz; with reference to the people, it is used for the periods of Rehoboam (2 Chr 12,2) and Zedekiah (2 Chr 36,14).

317 Cf. Milgrom's study on the relationship between מעל and אָשָׁם, the sacrifice or reparation for sin: J. Milgrom, *Cult and Conscience: The Asham and the Priestly Doctrine of Repentance* (SJLA 18), Brill, Leiden 1976, esp. 16-21. 35); cf. also Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. I, 13.

318 Thus Beentjes, *Tradition*, 84.

reform intended by the sovereign. The narrative does not contain dialogues in the form of direct speech. At the beginning of his reign, Hezekiah calls together priests and Levites and announces to them his programme for the restoration of the worship of Yhwh (2 Chr 29,4-11). At the end of the purification of the temple, they repair to him to report the execution of what he has ordered (2 Chr 29,18-19). In a second stage, the כֹּהֵן הָרֹאשׁ ("high priest") Azariah is questioned by the king and speaks about the collection of first fruits for the priests (2 Chr 31,10). In no case, however, are there expressions of judgement towards the sovereign, positive or negative. Yet, the very fact of a sharing of intentions and actions between the king and the priests constitutes a positive element which highlights Hezekiah's devotion and his faithfulness to Yhwh and to the cultic regulations issued by him.

F. Hilkiah, high priest, and other priests and Levites in the time of Josiah (2 Chr 34-35)

Josiah's reign saw the repetition of the same phenomenon identified a little earlier in connection with Hezekiah: faced with a ruler reforming the cult, the priests are simple and harmonious executors of his orders (2 Chr 35,1-19). The only individual speech comes from Hilkiah, described in 2 Chr 34,9 as הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל ("high priest"), who informs the scribe, Shaphan, of the discovery of the book of the Law of Moses (2 Chr 34,15). The same Shaphan later reads some passages from it before Josiah (v. 18). Hilkiah is then included in the delegation the king sends to consult the prophetess, Huldah (vv. 20-22). The whole passage about the finding of the Law has its source in 2 Kgs 22,8-14. The harmony between the sovereign and the priestly class represents in itself an element with which the Chronicler judges Josiah positively: his portrayal, in fact, is centred on the Passover he celebrated in which the agreement of intentions between sovereign, priests, Levites and people stands out[319].

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[319] With regard to the centrality of the Passover in the account of Josiah, see, in particular L.C. Jonker, *Reflections of King Josiah in Chronicles: Late Stages of the Josiah*

IV. THE PEOPLE

In some passages of Chronicles collective interlocutors interact with the sovereign: the people as a whole or in its parts.

A. The people as a whole

A first group of texts concerns the people considered as a whole. We can distinguish three situations: Israel in the time of King David, Israel in the time of the division between the kingdoms of north and south, and the speeches of the people within liturgical settings.

1. Israel in the time of David (1 Chr 11,1-2)

The Chronicler takes up from the Deuteronomist only one anointing of David as king. He passes over Samuel's prophetic action (1 Sam 16,1-13) as well as the consecration performed by the tribe of Judah alone after the death of Saul (2 Sam 2,4), preferring to report only David's election as king by the tribes of Israel (cf. 2 Sam 5,1-3). He is also completely silent about the war against Ishbaal, Saul's son.

> *1 Chr 11,1-2:* «[1]Then all Israel gathered together to David at Hebron and said, "See, we are your bone and flesh. [2]For some time now, even while Saul was king, it was you who commanded the army of Israel. The Lord your God said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over my people Israel"».

In the following v. 3, only the elders of Israel appear before David and perform the rite of anointing. Since the Chronicler does not distinguish between more than one anointing, in the dynamic of his narrative, doubt arises about the significance of the denomination "Israel": does it refer only to the tribes of the north or does it indicate the Hebrew people as a whole? The second hypothesis is more probable since 2 Sam 5,1 reads כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל ("all the tribes of Israel"): the Chronicler's modification leads us to think that, from his perspective, this single anointing

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Reception in 2 Chr. 34f. (TSLK 2), Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh 2003, esp. 34-60.

is performed by the tribe of Judah too, understood within the as yet undivided totality of the Hebrew people. The kingdom passes naturally from Saul to David (1 Chr 10,14), without breaches and without disputes within the chosen people, thus fulfilling the word that Yhwh had pronounced through Samuel (1 Chr 11,3b, absent from 2 Sam).

2. Israel in the confrontation between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (2 Chr 10-13)

The term "Israel" assumes a different nuances from the moment of the division of the kingdom between the north and the south. In 2 Chr 10, it indicates the northern tribes who appear before Rehoboam together with Jeroboam by contrast with the tribe of Judah. In 2 Chr 12,1-6, the chiefs of Judah, together with King Rehoboam, hear the oracle of condemnation pronounced by Shemaiah and repent of their behaviour, so managing to avoid a disastrous defeat at the hand of the Egyptian king, Shishak. Here, surprisingly, we find the use of the name "Israel" to mean the tribe of Judah alone. This identification will return further times in the course of the narrative: in 19,8 and 21,2 in connection with Jehoshaphat; in 21,4 during the reign of Jehoram; in 23,2, 24,5 and 24,16 in the time of Joash; in 28,19.23.27 with Ahaz. In 21,2, 28,19 and 28,27, the rulers of Judah are described as "kings of Israel". In 12,1, 24,5 and 28,23, Judah is even described as "all Israel". In these occurrences, although referring to Judah alone, the Chronicler does not intend to use the name in a supersessionary sense, as if the one true Israel had remained only in the south. In the Chronicler's theological vision, the term, dense with significance because bearer of the divine promises to David and to his people, can also be used legitimately to indicate the northern region alone. The northern kingdom continues to be a brother but somehow deprived of the divine help and left to the mercy of the consequences of its own infidelity. However, by contrast with 1-2 Kgs, the Chronicler regards the schism as a temporary situation which is, in fact, overcome with the celebrations of the Passovers of Hezekiah (2 Chr 30) and Josiah (2 Chr 35) which were to see the participation of the northern tribes as well.

This is the origin of the application of the term Israel to both states[320].

The relationship between Rehoboam and the northern tribes of Israel is also the stage for the Chronicler's judgement on this ruler. The account of the schism in 2 Chr 10, taken without important variations from 1 Kgs 12,1-19, does not express a clear position in this regard: like the *Vorlage*, it recounts the harshness of the king's reply to Jeroboam and the other representatives of the north (2 Chr 10,13-14), but, at the same time, the affair is portrayed in the light of a word pronounced by Yhwh through Ahijah the Shilonite (2 Chr 10,15), as Shemiaiah will later confirm (2 Chr 11,4). However, if the Dtr interprets the schism as a consequence of the oppressive policies of Solomon, the Chronicler, for whom the latter is an ideal king whose gradual degeneration is omitted, has to

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[320] Von Rad (*Geschichtsbild*, 31), followed by G.A. Danell (Danell, *Studies in the Name Israel in the Old Testament*, Appelbergs Boktryckeri, Uppsala 1946, 275), maintained an "exclusivist" position: for the Chronicler, the northern kingdom would have immediately degenerated, and Judah would have replaced it as the "true Israel". On the contrary, Japhet's study on the theology of the Chronicler (*Ideology*, 267-278, esp. 273-274) and Williamson's subsequent analysis of the use of the term "Israel" in Chronicles (*Israel*, 97-110) have indicated a more "inclusivist" position: since it fulfils a prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, the schism is part of Yhwh's plans; the northern tribes remain part of the people of Israel although separate politically. According to Jonker (*Defining All-Israel*, 165-166) and Amar (*The Characterization of Rehoboam and Jeroboam as a Reflection of the Chronicler's View of the Schism*, in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 17.9 [2017] 25-29), the schism is basically a cultic question: it consists not so much in the rejection of the Davidic dynasty but in the construction of a sanctuary parallel to the Jerusalem temple (cf. 2 Chr 13,8-12). Thus, the schism is not decisive but depends on the readiness of the north to return to the only legitimate cultic service. According to Amar, that is why the narrative of Josiah's Passover possesses a utopian dimension as a representation of the ideal people of Israel reunited, something the author hopes for in his own time. According to Knoppers (*Changing History*, 120*-122*), the Chronicler's position is to be placed within the late-Persian political context in which the identity question is raised in the confrontation between the Israelites of the province of Yehud and those scattered in the surrounding territories (Samaria, Idumaea and Transjordania). In describing Israel, whether the northern kingdom or Judah, the biblical author recalls the centrality of Jerusalem and the temple cult, on the one hand, and, on the other, maintains the idea that the membership of the chosen people belongs to all Israelites, wherever they live, against the restrictive tendencies of some of the Jews of Yehud.

modify the perspective. In fact, the political schism does not constitute a theological problem for our author: it corresponds to the will of Yhwh. No sovereign, not even the pious Hezekiah and Josiah, will attempt to restore a single kingdom of the Israelites[321], nor receive from God the command to revive the unity that had been lost. On the contrary, some charismatic figures intervene to prevent a war they regard as fratricide (Shemaiah in 2 Chr 11,3-4, and Oded in 2 Chr 28,9-11). What really separates Israel from Judah is the religious schism. The Chronicler does not include the narrative of the construction of the sanctuaries of Bethel and Dan in 1 Kgs 12,26-33, but gives them a summary mention, focusing on the destiny of the priests and Levites of the north who had taken refuge in Judah after Jeroboam had excluded them from serving the golden calves which he had built (2 Chr 11,13-16). The religious schism poses a theological problem for the Chronicler: can it too be ascribed to the will of Yhwh? That must be excluded in view of the promises addressed to Moses and David regarding the unique nature of the temple in Jerusalem. Could it be the result of Rehoboam's excessively harsh behaviour? The Deuteronomist narrative leaves the question open: if the initiative in constructing the competitor sanctuaries could clearly be ascribed to Jeroboam, nevertheless Rehoboam is also portrayed a devoted to idolatrous cults (1 Kgs 14,22-24), within a picture that is

[321] Ben Zvi points out, correctly, that the unity of the Israelite tribes described on the occasion of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah is of a cultic and not a political character: the participation in the Passover celebrations (2 Chr 30 and 35) and the actions of restoring the monotheistic cult (2 Chr 31,1 and 34,6-7) do not necessarily presuppose a territorial annexation of the north which is never claimed by the narrator. Hezekiah and Josiah are always styled "king of Judah", never "king of Israel"; their counsellors are the officials of Judah; when they die, the mourning is carried out by the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem alone (2 Chr 32,33 and 35,24). According to Ben Zvi, the Chronicler's purpose is to provide his readers with a theological explanation for the existence of the Samaritans, ethnically Jews but not belonging to the province of Yehud. As happened in the period of the two kingdoms, so also at the time of the biblical author, Samaritans had to be considered legitimate Israelites through the will of God on condition that they maintained the cultic link with the Jerusalem temple (E. Ben Zvi, *The Secession of the Northern Kingdom in Chronicles: Accepted 'Facts' and New Meanings*, in M.P. Graham et alii [eds.], *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of R.W. Klein* [JSOTSup 371], Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 2003, 83-86).

totally negative. The Chronicler removes all doubt: the first three years of the reign, while Jeroboam was constructing the golden calves and instituting a parallel priestly class, were marked by Rehoboam's fidelity to Yhwh (2 Chr 11,17). As for the event of the political schism, that was the occasion and starting point for the religious one as well, our author tackles the question of Rehoboam's responsibility in a subsequent passage, within a speech which his son and successor, Abijah, makes during a war between Judah and Israel (2 Chr 13,4-12); in it, Abijah comments retrospectively on the process of the schism.

> *2 Chr 13,6-7:* «[6]Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord; [7]and certain worthless scoundrels gathered around him and defied Rehoboam son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and irresolute and could not withstand them».

Abijah describes his father as נַעַר ("young") and רַךְ ("irresolute"); these are the same terms David uses to describe his son, Solomon, in 1 Chr 22,5 and 29,1. However, an important difference stands out: Solomon was really young whereas Rehoboam came to the throne at the age of forty-one (2 Chr 12,13); so, it is preferable to give the term נַעַר here the meaning "immature". In the case of Solomon, the adjectives are uttered by the father because of his age; instead, Abijah attributes them to the father Rehoboam as a qualitative judgement on his character. Abijah does not exonerate Rehoboam completely but depicts him as a victim of people stronger and more resolute than he. Consequently, he lets the greater responsibility for the schism fall on Jeroboam and the chiefs of the north who benefit from it[322].

We cannot avoid noting that this solution which is created to exonerate the Davidic dynasty from the sins of the northern kingdom creates a tension with what has been claimed previously: in completely ignoring all reference to the prophecy of Ahijah and the oracle of Shemaiah, Abijah's polemical discourse ends up by presenting the political schism as a human abuse, contrary to the will of Yhwh to place David and his

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[322] According to Knoppers, the depiction of Rehoboam's weakness is not an expression of a negative judgement by the Chronicler but reflects a "sympathetic reading of Rehoboam's role" (*Rehoboam*, 439).

descendants as rulers over the whole of Israel (2 Chr 13,5). To heal this contradiction, recourse has been made to the theological principle of "dual causality" according to which the fulfilment of the will of Yhwh can coexist with full human responsibility without denying it. The event would, therefore, be simultaneously preordained by God and caused by the wickedness of Jeroboam and the other officials[323]. Other commentators have simply noted the existence of a tension, accepting it and avoiding accounting for it further[324]. I prefer to consider the mention of the political schism in close relation with the overall context of the passage, focusing on two elements in particular. First of all, the continuation of Abijah's speech is centred fundamentally on the religious schism, which is the subject of the following vv. 8-12: vv. 6-7 are to be considered an introduction which emphasises the sins of Jeroboam and the northern Israelites with a polemical tone which is well suited to the confrontation which has exploded between the two sovereigns. Secondly, the first prophecy of Shemaiah had already given voice to the author as describing the political schism as explicitly originating from the will of God (2 Chr 11,4), in opposition to Rehoboam's desire to reconquer the north (2 Chr 11,1). Abijah's argument reflects the position of Rehoboam, denied by Shemaiah, and so does not express the Chronicler's interpretation of the events despite the fact that Abijah was a just king. In fact, at the end of the battle, even if the result is a victory for Judah, there is no complete conquest of the north but only of some cities (2 Chr 13, 19). Therefore, I believe that vv. 6-7 are not reporting the theological vision of the Chronicler[325], but are only a polemical argument placed in

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[323] Developed especially by I.L. Seeligmann, *Menschliches Heldentum und göttliche Hilfe: Die doppelte Kausalität im alttestamentlichen Geschichtsdenken*, in *Theologische Zeitschrift* 19 (1963) 385-411, and Y. Amit, *The Dual Causality Principle and Its Effects on Biblical Literature*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 37 (1987) 385-400, the concept has been applied to this passage by Amar, *Characterization*, 22-23.

[324] So, e.g., Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 691-692; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 200-201.

[325] A. Frisch, *Jeroboam and the Division of the Kingdom: Mapping Contrasting Biblical Accounts*, in *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 27 (2000) 28, reaches the same conclusion from a different starting point, namely, the comparison between the texts of

the mouth of Abijah with the purpose of augmenting the accusations about the wicked behaviour of Jeroboam in the religious department.

In conclusion, if the Chronicler holds the political schism to be part of God's plan, Rehoboam has no responsibility for it that puts him in a negative light. Jeroboam, on the contrary, who initially carried out the divine will with the political separation, later imposed a religious schism as well with the help of wicked officials. This was followed by the northern tribes who thus placed themselves outside the will and favour of Yhwh.

3. The people in the liturgical context

On one occasion, the people intervene with a collective direct speech within a liturgical celebration: in 1 Chr 16,36, they respond אָמֵן to a prayer composed and uttered by King David before the Ark of the Covenant. In other contexts, also, the people participate actively in the liturgy begun by the sovereign. In 1 Chr 29,20, the assembly gathered together again by David blesses Yhwh at the command of the king on the occasion when he solemnly proclaims Solomon as his successor, with the specific charge of proceeding to the construction of the temple. When the building is finished, Solomon presides over the solemn rite of dedication with all the Israelites (2 Chr 5,6; 6,3; 7,8-10). In 2 Chr 20,18-19.21-22, the people participate in the penitential liturgy proclaimed by Jehoshaphat in anticipation of a battle which is then won miraculously through the processional chant of the Levites. 2 Chr 30,15-27 tells of the great celebration of the Passover ordered by Hezekiah in which members of the Hebrew people coming from both Judah and the northern territories (cf. 30,11.18) take an active part in the success of the feast and, in general, in the execution of the religious reform. In the time of Josiah, a similar situation was repeated on the occasion of the renewal of the covenant between Yhwh and the people after the discovery of

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1 Kgs and 2 Chr referring to Jeroboam. Generally, however, the commentators assume Abijah's speech to be an expression of the Chronicler's theological view of the northern kingdom, thus rendering the contradiction that emerges irreconcilable (e.g., Japhet, *Ideology*, 404-405).

the book of the Law (2 Chr 34,29-32) and during the celebration of the Passover (35,16-18).

The liturgical unity between the king and the people appears in the Chronicler's account only for those kings he regards as positive: David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. The cultic context is one of the spheres in which the integrity of the sovereign in his dealings with Yhwh is manifested in the clearest way.

B. Groups within the people

Not only the people as a whole but parts of it also intervene as actors within the narrative. In the following section, we report only those passages in which these collective entities speak as a single voice.

1. Elders and youngsters of Judah at the court of Rehoboam (2 Chr 10)

If the transition of the kingdom from Saul to David had been natural for Israel as a whole, Rehoboam's accession to power was traumatic and dramatic. It saw the emergence of a revolt of part of the northern tribes, led by Jeroboam, during an assembly at Shechem. In 2 Chr 10,6-7 (// 1 Kgs 12,6-7), Solomon's older counsellors suggest to Rehoboam a prudent path of dialogue and conciliation with the representatives of the north so as to keep the kingdom united. However, the sovereign prefers to follow the opinion of the young courtiers, his companions from boyhood who propose a harsh response (2 Chr 10,8-11 // 1 Kgs 12,8-11). The account comes without relevant changes from the *Vorlage* in which emerges the theme, dear to the traditional sapiential current, of the connection between age and wisdom: the latter is a prerogative of the elderly so that, in favouring his peers against the opinion of the wise, Rehoboam deprives himself of the wisdom necessary for the direction of the monarchy, thus causing the division of the kingdom[326]. However, the taking

[326] Cf. M. Cogan, *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 10), Doubleday, New York 2001, 350-351; and A. Rofé, *Elders or Youngsters? Critical Remarks on 1 Kings 12*, in R.G. Kratz-H. Spieckermann (eds.), *One God, One Cult, One Nation:*

of the passage into Chronicles provokes some substantial changes as to the significance attributed to the episode of the Shechem assembly in the narrative plot. In the Deuteronomist account, the rebellion of the north has its roots already during the reign of Solomon and was caused by his poor government. By contrast, the Solomon of Chr is an upstanding character, and Jeroboam's rebellion begins after his death, actually turning out to have no motivation from a political point of view. Both 1 Kgs and 2 Chr ascribe the secession to the divine will expressed through the prophet, Ahijah, the Shilonite (1 Kgs 12,15 // 2 Chr 10,15) and then confirmed by the oracle of Shemaiah (1 Kgs 12,24 // 2 Chr 11,4). Ahijah's prophecy is reported in full by 1 Kgs 11,29-39, while the Chronicler only alludes to it since its text would tarnish the idealised vision of Solomon he provides. Despite this, it is precisely the Chronicler who gives greater emphasis to the divine origin of this event: the less human motivation is involved, the political schism is explained only as part of Yhwh's plan. Rehoboam is stripped of all responsibility and negative judgement; on the contrary, the Chronicler will claim explicitly that the first years of his reign were marked by integrity in the wake of David and Solomon (2 Chr 11,17). Consequently, the comparison between the young and old men of Rehoboam's court is without the negative connotations that emerge in 1 Kgs, being resolved, in fact, into the simple account of the events leading to the division of the kingdom as realising the will of God.

2. Chiefs of the Ephraimites (2 Chr 28,12-13)

As already seen previously[327], the commanders of the northern army enter into dialogue with the prophet, Oded. During the war between Judah and Israel in the time of Ahaz, they had taken with them hostages to make them slaves.

Archaeological and Biblical Perspectives (BZAW 405), De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2010, 86; both scholars hold that the aim of the account of the assembly at Shechem in 1 Kgs is didactic.

[327] Section "Oded (2Cr 28,9-11)", p. 242-244.

> *2 Chr 28,12-13:* «[12]Moreover, certain chiefs of the Ephraimites, Azariah son of Johanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai, stood up against those who were coming from the war, [13]and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives in here, for you propose to bring on us guilt against the Lord in addition to our present sins and guilt. For our guilt is already great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel"».

The chiefs of the Ephraimites recognise the tribal link between the two peoples and listen to the charismatic word of Oded (28,9-11) in order to cancel Yhwh's anger. Whereas the unfaithful king *par excellence* is sitting on the throne of David, the Chronicler highlights the fidelity to Yhwh in the northern kingdom: in the time of Ahaz, even the northern tribes were better than he[328]. Furthermore, the author reassures his readers about Yhwh's faithfulness to Judah: even when the king was wicked, the divine assistance did not fail the chosen people[329].

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[328] Cf. Smelik, *Representation*, 176-177; and I. Kalimi, *The Retelling of Chronicles in Jewish Tradition and Literature: A Historical Journey*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2009, 65. According to Amar, the Chronicler expresses the negativity of Ahaz even on the literary level, constructing ch. 28 in a deliberately fragmentary and confused way, furnishing the reader with the sensation of chaos rampant in the epoch of the wicked king (I. Amar, *Chaotic Writing as a Literary Element in the Story of Ahaz in 2 Chronicles 28*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 66 [2016] 349-364, esp. 354-364). Comparing this passage with the portrayal of the reign of Abijah (2 Chr 13), Jonker highlights the reversal of the situation described at the beginning of the division between north and south: if, earlier, Judah, people of those who had remained faithful to Yhwh, were opposed to Israel, author of the sacrilegious religious schism, in the time of Ahaz, the northern tribes manifest their fidelity to God through listening to the word of a prophet (*Reflections on Leadership*, 210-212).

[329] Cf. I. Kalimi, *The Capture of Jerusalem in the Chronistic History*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 52 (2002) 73. This temporary rehabilitation of the Israelites of the north cannot be stressed enough: in the eyes of the Chronicler, they remain schismatics nonetheless and examples of infidelity. Only a few years later, when Hezekiah seeks to involve them in his project of religious reform, almost all of them refuse with scorn (2 Chr 30,10-11), including the tribe of Ephraim which is depicted here in positive terms by contrast with Ahaz (cf. Williamson, *Israel*, 130-131).

C. Individual subjects

In this section, we discuss two figures who intervene in the narrative and do not belong to the previous categories from the prophetic or priestly sphere: Joab, chief of David's army, and Shaphan, scribe in the time of Josiah.

1. Joab, chief of the army

Several times, the Chronicler introduces the figure of Joab, the chief of David's army. An innovation from the *Vorlage* is the note on the kinship between the king and his general: according to the genealogy of 1 Chr 2,16, Zeruiah, Joab's mother, was David's sister. Job's character is sketched with less sombre and ambiguous features than in the books of Samuel where he is described with a character that is decisive and, at times, unscrupulous with the tendency to go beyond the monarch's orders in the direction of greater cruelty. That emerges, in particular, in connection with the killings of Abner (2 Sam 3,23-30), Absalom (2 Sam 18,10-15) and Amasa (2 Sam 20,8-13) which later earned him the words of condemnation of David (1 Kgs 2,5-6) and Solomon (1 Kgs 2,31-33) and the fall from grace at the time of the latter's accession to the throne. For the Chronicler, on the other hand, Joab is characterised by a greater loyalty to the sovereign as executor of his orders in the various military campaigns which he is charged with leading (1 Chr 19,8-15 // 2 Sam 10,7-14; 1 Chr 20,1 // 2 Sam 11,1; 12,26). By contrast with 2 Sam, in Chr, Joab does not perform the task of commander of the army right at the beginning of David's reign, but wins the post in the field being the first to enter Jerusalem (1 Chr 11,6). Immediately afterwards, he is concerned with its rebuilding, particularly the system of defence (11,8). This fact invests Joab with a special function in the narrative: it is he who brings to a conclusion the first act of King David, an event of national unity ("all Israel" in 11,4, whereas, in 2 Sam 5,6, the conquest was achieved only by the men of David) which enables the Israelite people to take possession of the place where the palace and the temple were later due to arise. Thus, Joab is the first person who performs that ascent to

Jerusalem which will later be made by the Ark (1 Chr 15) and to which the Jewish people will be invited at the end of the Babylonian Exile (cf. 2 Chr 36,23)[330]. A further element of Job's importance for the Chronicler is the mention of the objects hailing from the booty of war which he had consecrated and deposited with the Levites in 1 Chr 26,28.

The only passage where Job speaks in order to dialogue with the king is the account of the census in which he attempts to dissuade David from carrying out such an outrage (1 Chr 21,3). No particular elements of judgement on David emerge from this brief intervention.

2. Shaphan, scribe

One of the key figures in Josiah's reform recounted by the Dtr in 2 Kgs 22 is the scribe, Shaphan. In 2 Chr, the discovery of the scroll of the Law (34,14-21) is less important: it is only one of the stages of the reform which takes place after the king had already stamped a monotheistic turn on his government (34,3-7). Consequently, Shaphan's importance is also partly reshaped. He appears on the scene for the first time in 34,8 among the lay functionaries charged with the restoration of the temple. Here, he is described as "son of Azalia"; then, in vv. 15.18.20, he is characterised as "the scribe" (הַסּוֹפֵר); finally, he is a member of the delegation sent by Josiah to the prophetess, Huldah (2 Chr 34,20). Nothing is said with regard to his ancestry; his name does not even appear in the genealogies at the beginning of the book. As for his office, the term סֹפֵר here does not indicate the simple secretary but the head of the royal chancellery.

Shaphan appears verbally in the narrative, in particular in vv. 16-18: in dialogue with the king, he first delivers the report regarding the execution of the works of restoration of the temple which had been entrusted to him and also adds the information about the discovery of the Law by Hilkiah which he reads to Josiah. The text is taken from the Dtr (2 Kgs

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[330] Cf. Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 302; on the basis of Ezra 2,6 (// Neh 7,11) and Ezra 8,9, he gives an historical explanation of the positive nature of Joab in Chr in the importance that his descendants would have acquired in post-Exilic Jerusalem.

22,9-10), but with some variants, one of which enjoys particular importance. According to 2 Kgs 22,10, Shaphan took the book and "read it (וַיִּקְרָאֵהוּ) before the king"; in 2 Chr 34,18, Shaphan "read from it (וַיִּקְרָא־בוֹ) before the king". For some scholars, these are two variant equivalents from a grammatical point of view[331]. However, the Chronicler is not accustomed to making purely stylistic modifications to his *Vorlage*. Therefore, we can understand that this change had an ideological motive[332]. In the Deuteronomist account, the book that is found is Deuteronomy; instead, in the Chronicler's view, it is the entire Pentateuch which cannot be read on a single occasion. Thus, Shaphan reads out only parts "from it"[333]. The dialogue between Shaphan and Josiah confirms the integrity of the king: he listens to the word of the book found in the temple and carries it out. His courtiers share his integrity, carrying out the orders of the sovereign for re-establishing the cult of Yhwh and promoting the reform undertaken.

V. SOVEREIGNS OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

The Chronicler's narrative rarely includes direct confrontations between the king of Judah and his northern counterpart. If we except the rebellion of Jeroboam against Rehoboam and the relationship of covenant and kinship between Jehoshaphat and Ahab, only one king of Israel comes into contact with the kings of the south: Joash in relation to Amaziah.

A. Joash of Israel (2 Chr 25,17-20)

Strong in his success against the Edomites but falling into idolatry precisely towards the deities of the defeated people, Amaziah seeks to

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331 Thus Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 281; and Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 405, who cites Jer 36,6.

332 Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 503, n. 76, lists a series of passages where the preposition בְּ in similar contexts involves a shade of meaning different from the direct object complement.

333 Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 402; and Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1030.

wage war against Israel and sends messengers in this sense to its king, Joash, of the dynasty of Jehu.

> *2 Chr 25,17-20:* «[17]Then King Amaziah of Judah took counsel and sent to King Joash son of Jehoahaz son of Jehu of Israel, saying, "Come, let us look one another in the face." [18]King Joash of Israel sent word to King Amaziah of Judah, "A thornbush on Lebanon sent to a cedar on Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son for a wife'; but a wild animal of Lebanon passed by and trampled down the thornbush. [19]You say, 'See, I have defeated Edom,' and your heart has lifted you up in boastfulness. Now stay at home; why should you provoke trouble so that you fall, you and Judah with you?" [20]But Amaziah would not listen -- it was God's doing, in order to hand them over, because they had sought the gods of Edom».

The account is taken word for word from 2 Kgs 14,8-11a. The Chronicler makes two adjustments to the content: at the beginning of v. 17, he adds "took counsel" (וַיִּוָּעַץ), extending the responsibility for the king's sin to the court as well, in opposition to the advice of the anonymous prophet which is not followed (in v. 16 also, the root יעץ is found, repeated three times); and, in v. 20b, he provides a theological interpretation for the disobedience of Amaziah. Joash's speech is not portrayed explicitly as a prophetic action or a divine word. God is not acting in the message addressed to the king of Judah but, rather, in his refusal to listen to it. However, these words express the reason for the condemnation of Amaziah, namely, the pride in his heart against which Joash warns him (v. 19): Amaziah has attributed the victory over Edom to himself and not to Yhwh, displaying his distance from his initial integrity (cf. 25,2). This speech also has an ironic effect: a little earlier, rejecting the enrolment of mercenaries from the northern kingdom for the war against Edom, an anonymous man of God had affirmed that "The Lord is not with Israel – all these Ephraimites" (25,7). Now it is precisely the king of Israel who explains the reason for Amaziah's condemnation. Pride has led the king of Judah away from a correct relationship with God. He has preferred to take the advice of the men of his court rather than of men of God. He has turned to the gods of Edom and been followed in this by his courtiers also (v. 20). For this, disaster will be inevitable (25,23). It will destroy

not only the king but also his counsellors who shared his wicked decision. They will be taken as hostages[334] and brought to Samaria (25,24). The extension of the personal responsibility of the king to segments or to the whole of the population is a characteristic of the theological vision of the Chronicler who distances himself from the Deuteronomist idea that the sovereign takes on himself the entire weight of decisions and the consequent blessing or punishment by God.

VI. FOREIGN SOVEREIGNS

Compared with the Deuteronomist history and the pre-Exilic prophetic books, the Chronicler shows little interest in affairs beyond the borders of Judah with which he is concerned only when he holds them to be important for the theological message which he wishes to transmit to his readers. Already, the earlier texts were not intended to be a description of the history in itself but as a theological reading of the facts of the past. Now, the Chronicler continues further in this direction. Since Jerusalem and the temple are the centre of history and the cosmos, the foreign people are of interest as executors, albeit unaware, of the divine judgement on the kingdom and on its sovereign whether for good or evil. The non-Jewish figures who interact on the scene always have something valuable to contribute to the narrative. Their actions are read in relation to the religious situation of the kingdom of Judah, and the words they address to its sovereign confirm his goodness or wickedness. Paradoxically, rulers who do not know the true God become pure instruments in his hands. They are transformed into more

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[334] Even if the text does not say so explicitly, we must assume that the hostages in question were influential persons in Judah, nobles or even members of the royal family: so that the abductor could have contractual force, the hostage had to be an important person in the eyes of his captor. Moreover, if the prisoners whom Joash captures are substitutes for Amaziah, who is set free instead, they certainly belong to the highest classes of society. Cf. M. Cogan-H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AYB 11), Doubleday, New York 1988, 157; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 363.

effective executors of his will, and their words are almost direct channels through which Yhwh dialogues with his people and with his highest representative.

A. Huram of Tyre (2 Chr 2,10-15)

The first foreign sovereign who makes a verbal contribution to the narrative is the king of Tyre who was a contemporary of David and Solomon. He is called Huram in Chronicles and is equivalent to the King Hiram[335] of the Deuteronomist history and of 1 Chr 14,1. The beginning of Solomon's reign sees direct contact between the two kings, not in the form of an oral dialogue but through an exchange of letters. The king of the Jewish people sends a letter to seek labourers for the building of the temple (2 Chr 2,2-9)[336], and his counterpart of Tyre replies, also with a letter.

> *2 Chr 2,10-15:* «[10]Then King Huram of Tyre answered in a letter that he sent to Solomon, "Because the Lord loves his people, he has made you king over them." [11]Huram also said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, endowed with discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the Lord, and a royal palace for himself. [12]I have dispatched Huram-abi, a skilled artisan, endowed with understanding, [13]the son of one of the Danite women, his father a Tyrian. He is trained to work in gold, silver, bronze, iron, stone, and wood, and in purple, blue, and crimson fabrics and fine linen, and to do all sorts of engraving and execute any design that may be assigned him, with your artisans, the artisans of my lord, your father David. [14]Now, as for the wheat, barley, oil, and wine, of which my lord has spoken, let him send them to his servants. [15]We will cut whatever timber you need from Lebanon, and bring it to you as rafts by sea to Joppa; you will take it up to Jerusalem"».

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[335] According to Allen, the original form of the name was אחירם, from which derives the form חִירָם preserved in 1 Kgs and in 1 Chr 14,1; חוּרָם of 2 Chr would be due to a scribal error owing to the similarity between י and ו (Allen, *Greek Chronicles*, vol. II, 120).

[336] The editions of the Greek, Syriac and Latin versions, followed by NRSV and many other modern translations, place the beginning of ch. 2 at v. 1,18 of the MT, causing a displacement of one unit in the following numeration. That is why many publications employ a double numeration. Here, we follow the numeration of the MT.

The passage is a free adaptation of 1 Kgs 5,21-24: the Chronicler combines with it the information of 1 Kgs 7,13-14 about the foreman, Hiram, namesake of the Phoenician king, and of Ex 31-39 on the construction of the Mosaic tabernacle by the Judahite, Bezalel and the Danite, Oholiab[337].

Compared with 1 Kgs 5,21-24, there emerges a disparity of dignity between Solomon and the king of Tyre, expressed by some additions and modifications by the Chronicler. Huram describes as אֲדֹנִי both David (v. 13) and Solomon (v. 14), going so far as also to address the latter in the third person (v. 14); the despatch of foodstuffs to Tyre appears to be a generous gesture on the part of the king of Judah (v. 14), who fixes their quantity in advance (2,9). Huram responds by carrying out the cutting and transportation of the wood requested (v. 15). In the *Vorlage*, by contrast, Solomon sought the wood from Hiram but submitted to his discretion the fixing of the salary and supplies for the labourers (1 Kgs 5,20.23). In Chronicles, the king of Tyre is depicted as subject to David's successor, as he had been subject to his father previously; in the Deuteronomist history, there is no indication of a relationship of vassalage; on the contrary, the terms employed in 1 Kgs 5,26 and 9,13 go in the direction of an alliance of peers.

Although belonging to a polytheistic people, Huram mentions Yhwh and blesses him for the love that he shows towards the people of Israel by giving them such a wise successor to David. The declaration of v. 10 has no parallel in 1 Kgs 5; rather it comes from the exclamation of the queen of Sheba in 1 Kgs 10,9 which the Chronicler too records in 2 Chr 9,8. The blessing of v. 11 is a reworking of 1 Kgs 5,21 to which two additions are brought: the epithets of Yhwh as "God of Israel" and "[the one] who made heaven and earth"; and the descriptions of Solomon as endowed with discretion and understanding and builder of the temple and the palace. The two divine epithets are well attested in the Hebrew Bible but are never combined together[338]. Furthermore,

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[337] Above, p. 183-184.

[338] Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 544.

the concept of God as Creator is affirmed explicitly in Chronicles only here and in the quotation of Ps 96,5 in 1 Chr 16,26, and it is significant that it is expressed by a foreign king[339]. In addition, this affirmation is preceded by Solomon's declaration of the superiority of Yhwh over all the gods (2 Chr 2,4), a declaration, therefore, that Huram seems to accept and endorse. For their part, the two descriptions of Solomon added by the Chronicler, have the aim of manifesting that Yhwh has heard the prayer uttered by David (שֵׂכֶל וּבִינָה also in 1 Chr 22,12) and of indicating that the wisdom of the young king is expressed, not so much in his ability to rule, as appeared in 1 Kgs, but, basically, in his activity as builder of the temple. Therefore, in the development of the narrative drama, this foreign king has the function of enabling the concrete realisation of the sanctuary by providing the raw material, but, first of all, he sows the reader, in a way that is almost paradoxical, the religious reading that is to be applied to the story: Solomon has ascended the throne through the will of God, creator of the universe, who looks on his people Israel with particular love, giving them just and wise leaders. This he has done by placing David on the throne and hearing his prayer by giving discretion and understanding to his son Solomon also who is now following in his footsteps and bringing to a conclusion his plan to glorify Yhwh by the construction of the sanctuary in his honour. Not the sovereign in himself but the temple is the Chronicler's final focus and the purpose to which the royal activity is directed. This operation has a paradoxical flavour: even a foreign king who does not belong to the chosen people, is able to recognise Yhwh's action in history. To get round the difficulties which that can involve, Huram is portrayed as Solomon's vassal and is attributed a personal profession of faith in Yhwh as the only Creator God.

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[339] Cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 37, who compares Huram's blessing to Melchizedek's one on Abraham in Gen 14,19.

B. The queen of Sheba and "all the kings of the earth" (2 Chr 9,5-8; 9,24)

As well as Huram, another foreign sovereign came into direct contact with Solomon: the queen of Sheba whose visit is recounted in 2 Chr 9,1-12 on the basis of the Deuteronomist text of 1 Kgs 10,1-13. By contrast with Huram, who sent a letter, the verbal contribution of the anonymous sovereign took place in person.

> *2 Chr 9,5-8:* «[5][The queen of Sheba] said to the king, "The report was true that I heard in my own land of your accomplishments and of your wisdom, [6]but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes saw it. Not even half of the greatness of your wisdom had been told to me; you far surpass the report that I had heard. [7]Happy are your people! Happy are these your servants, who continually attend you and hear your wisdom! [8]Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on his throne as king for the Lord your God. Because your God loved Israel and would establish them forever, he has made you king over them, that you may execute justice and righteousness"».

This passage substantially reproduces the *Vorlage*, with the exception of v. 8 where the Chronicler introduces two significant changes[1]. First of all, the relationship between Yhwh and Solomon is emphasised more strongly: the latter has been constituted king "for Yhwh, your God", and the actual royal throne is described as "his throne". The theological concept of David's throne as the "throne of Yhwh" is typical of Chronicles where it recurs a further two times: 1 Chr 28,5 and 1 Chr 29,23. In its turn, the formula "throne of David", typical of the Dtr, never occurs. The kingdom of Israel belongs to God alone whereas the Davidic dynasty rules only by divine mandate.

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[1] 1 Kgs 10,9: בָּרוּךְ אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ בְּךָ לְהִתִּתְךָ עַל־כִּסֵּא יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבַת יְהוָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעֹלָם וַיְשִׂימְךָ לְמֶלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָהיְהִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ: "Blessed be the Lord, your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel. Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he has made you king to execute justice and righteousness".

The second modification, in v. 8, is the underlining of the stability of Israel with the introduction[2] of לְהַעֲמִידוֹ. As in Huram's letter, here too, Solomon's reign becomes a sign of Yhwh's love for Israel which is assured eternal stability. Since the Davidic kingdom no longer existed at the time of the Chronicler, this deliberate addition is meant to reassure the readers of the permanence of this love which will last for ever independently of the throne with which it was associated for a period in the past.

Like the queen of Sheba, other sovereigns also come to Solomon to listen to his wisdom; in fact, following 1 Kgs 10,24[3], the Chronicler claims that "all the kings of the earth" (2 Chr 9,23) sought him out, bearing gifts and tribute (9,24). No direct speeches are reported; however, the mere mention of them confirms that Solomon is superior to every other sovereign. All acknowledge him a debt of reverence, and that is a sign of the divine favour and integrity which distinguish him. We should recall that, when he modified the account of Yhwh's first apparition (2 Chr 1,7-12), the Chronicler embodied Solomon's wisdom not in the administration of justice but, basically, in the building of the temple. This is the wisdom that the queen of Sheba wonders at and to which the sovereigns of the world render their homage. Therefore, even if not explicit, the theme of the cult recurs in this passage too.

The figures of Huram and of the queen of Sheba have a similar function in the narrative. The one is placed at the beginning of Solomon's reign, the other at its end. Both recognise the link between love for Israel and Solomon's government in similar terms; in fact, 2 Chr 2,10 is modified precisely to render it even more similar to the words of the queen. Both bless Yhwh for the wisdom of Solomon. The queen of

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[2] Noting the presence of στῆσαι in the Greek version of 1 Kgs 10,9, Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 139) argues that it could not be an addition of the Chronicler but a variant already present in the Hebrew text of 1 Kgs available to him.

[3] The MT of 1 Kgs 10,24 reads כָּל־הָאָרֶץ, without the mention of the kings, but that is generally held to be a problem of the textual transmission of 1 Kgs which originally must have had such a mention as witnessed by the LXX: πάντες βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς. Cf. M. Nobile, *1-2 Re* (I libri biblici. Primo Testamento 9), Milano, Paoline 2010, 128; and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 132.

Sheba does not express a form of personal faith in Yhwh as in Huram's letter, nor is she depicted as a vassal of the king of Israel from a political point of view. Certainly, however, she recognises both the action of Yhwh in history and the superiority of Solomon's wisdom. In this, like the king of Tyre, she becomes a guide for the reader in interpreting the affairs of the Jewish people.

C. Neco of Egypt (2 Chr 35,21-22)

Throughout the history of the kings of Judah, no sovereign, with the exception of the Assyrian Sennacherib[4], contributes direct speech until the final events, where we find Neco, king of Egypt; Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; and Cyrus, king of Persia. The first of these interacts with Josiah who came to wage war against him.

> *2 Chr 35,21-22:* «[21]But [Neco] sent envoys to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I am not coming against you today, but against the house with which I am at war; and God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, so that he will not destroy you. [22]But Josiah would not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of Neco from the mouth of God, but joined battle in the plain of Megiddo».

Previously[5], we examined the theological questions to which the passage on Josiah's death seeks to respond but which, in its turn, it helps to raise. In this section, we limit ourselves to indicating the prophetic value of Neco's speech which is stated explicitly by the Chronicler. The direct speech and the judgement of its value are not found in the *Vorlage* which gives a summary account of the bare events from Neco's departure from Egypt at the succession of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23,29-30). Such an

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[4] Sennacherib's speech during the siege of Jerusalem (2 Chr 32,10-15) is not examined in the present work because it responds to a different function in the narrative: Sennacherib is the enemy of the pious king, Hezekiah, and his speech does not express the thought of the author but emphasises the greatness of the Assyrian threat in order to praise the faith and integrity of the king of Judah further.

[5] Above, p. 104-107.

explicit affirmation about the origin of Neco's words from the mouth of God is remarkable to the extent that some scholars have hypothesised that it is a secondary intervention[6], or else that the reference in v. 21 is not to the God of Israel but to the Egyptian deity that the pharaoh was carrying with him into battle[7]. However, it is clear that the author's comment in v. 22 is about Yhwh. The hypothesis that a mixture between an Egyptian deity and the God of Israel, as if this could speak through an idol, raises more theological problems than those it would like to resolve, and would be clean contrary to the position of the Chronicler already expressed in the condemnation of Sennacherib's speech against Hezekiah (2 Chr 34,18-19). The simplest solution is to assume the *de facto* datum that a foreign king can receive, momentarily, the gift of prophecy and speak in the name of Yhwh. Huram had already professed a kind of profession of faith in the God of Israel, Creator of heaven and earth. It is not shocking if the Chronicler now attributes an authentic warning from Yhwh to the mouth of another, non-Jewish sovereign. In fact, the expression used for Neco forms a kind of inclusion with the similar one associated with Jeremiah who, in his turn, will speak to Zedekiah מִפִּי יְהוָה ("from the mouth of God": 36,11): Josiah's sin represents the beginning of the end of the monarchy of Judah[8].

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[6] Thus Williamson in *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 409, and in *Death*, 245. C.T. Begg, *The Death of Josiah in Chronicles: Another View*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 37 (1987) 5-6, challenges the conclusions of Williamson who, in his turn, replies to him in a further article: *Reliving the Death of Josiah: A Reply to C.T. Begg*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 37 (1987) 9-15, esp. 12-13.

[7] Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1056-1057: she maintains that there was no way Josiah could have accepted Neco's warning because, in doing this, he would have recognised the value of the Egyptian deity; thus, the creation of a clear short circuit: Josiah did not survive, he was found forced to die. According to Japhet, that does not threaten the theological conception of the Chronicler whose aim would have been to ascribe the death of the king at all costs to a transgression committed by him, even if apparently absurd. Japhet's position, which attempts to attribute every element of Chr to the principle of immediate retribution, turns out to be forced.

[8] Cf. Cudworth, *War*, 163.

D. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (2 Chr 36,13a)

Even if not direct speech, the Chronicler refers to a verbal action performed by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, in his dealings with the last king of Judah, Zedekiah.

> *2 Chr 36,13a:* «He also [Zedekiah] rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God».

On the significance of the breaking of a political oath, ratified by a divine oath, we refer to what we have already said previously[9]. Here, we only observe that the Chronicler takes from his *Vorlage* only the first part of the verse which does not mention this oath: "Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon" (2 Kgs 24,20). The Chronicler is certainly influenced by the prophetic reflection, especially Ezekiel's[10], who had condemned the breaking of the oath and the covenant which Zedekiah had concluded with Nebuchadnezzar to whom he owed his own accession to the throne (Ezek 17,13-20). The assessment of Zedekiah's political behaviour leaves the exclusively diplomatic or military sphere to assume the religious aspect so that the Babylonian king becomes the unconscious instrument of the will of God: the oath of alliance which is ratified in the name of Yhwh is the criterion on the basis of which Zedekiah could have also maintained a correct relationship with God. The betrayal of this also becomes wickedness which attracts the divine wrath on him, and on all his people who have transgressed the divine words along with him (2 Chr 36,14-17).

E. Cyrus of Persia (2 Chr 36,22-23)

The final act of the book of Chronicles is the edict of Cyrus, king of Persia, which was issued to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem and build the temple.

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[9] Above, p. 87.

[10] Cf. Kalimi, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 180.

> *2 Chr 36,22-23:* «[22]In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in fulfilment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom and also declared in a written edict: [23]"Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may the Lord his God be with him! Let him go up"».

The attributes that Cyrus bestows on Yhwh in his edict are akin to the terminology employed by Huram of Tyre: the Persian king recognises that he is the God of heaven who has power over earthly realities and human history. At the same time, he is also the God of a particular people on whose behalf he confers on the new conqueror the task of constructing for him a temple in Jerusalem. The Jewish people are not identified with a specific name; nor is anything said about the fact that this is not a construction *ex novo* but a reconstruction owing to the violent destruction caused by the previous conquerors. The direct speech is not addressed to a member of the ancient royal dynasty of Judah but generically to all those who are aware of belonging to this anonymous people. At the same time, Cyrus claims to have received the task of building the temple directly from Yhwh himself. Thus, this royal speech differs in many ways from those of the sovereigns we have analysed a little earlier: if they came on the scene to express the Chronicler's assessment of the sovereign, Cyrus' decree is not connected with any human agent other than the same Persian king and, generically, the members of the people of Yhwh.

The *Vorlage* of this text is not 2 Kgs, which does not conclude with the edict of Cyrus but rather with the liberation of Zedekiah's predecessor, Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 25,27-30), in whose fate the Chronicler is not interested. Instead, 2 Chr 36,22-23 is very similar to Ezra 1,1-4.

> *Ezra 1,1-4:* «[1]In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia so that he sent a herald throughout all his kingdom, and also in a written edict declared: [2]"Thus says King Cyrus of Persia: The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me

all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. 3Any of those among you who are of his people -- may their God be with them! -- are now permitted to go up to Jerusalem in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel -- he is the God who is in Jerusalem; 4and let all survivors, in whatever place they reside, be assisted by the people of their place with silver and gold, with goods and with animals, besides freewill offerings for the house of God in Jerusalem"».

There are two differences between the text of the edict in 2 Chr and that in Ezra[11]: the Chronicler does not record the complete decree as it appears in Ezra, but interrupts it at וְיַעַל ("go up") of Ezra 1,3; moreover, the text taken up differs from Ezra on account of a term at the end of v. 23: יְהוָה in 2 Chr instead of יְהִי of Ezra 1,3.

The interruption of the quotation of the edict of Cyrus has aroused discordant opinions among scholars. Some refer to the cultic significance of the root עלה, "make the sacrifices go up, sacrifice": the Chronicle would, therefore, be pointing the story towards a future centred on the temple and on the worship carried out in it[12]. According to another hypothesis, the Chronicler would have eliminated the part of the edict which binds Yhwh closely to Jerusalem since this would have challenged his idea of Yhwh as universal God and not a local deity[13]. Others have wished to see the emphasis of וְיָעַל, placed at the close of the book, an exhortation to start out for Jerusalem addressed not only to the contemporaries of the Persian king but, above all, to the readers of Chronicles, and, in particular, to those who have preferred to remain

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[11] There are two further differences in the introduction to the edict: in 2 Chr 36,22, the divine word goes out בְּפִי of Jeremiah, and his name is indicated in the long form יִרְמְיָהוּ; in Ezra 1,1, the word comes מִפִּי and the name appears in the short form יִרְמְיָה.

[12] Thus Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 652. 657-658; Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 416-417; and Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 422-423; according to the last-mentioned, the Chronicler could have intentionally exploited the ambiguity between *qal* and *hiphil*, characteristic of this form of the verb עלה, to indicate simultaneously the meanings of "go up" and "offer".

[13] Cf. Kalimi, *Ancient Israelite*, 152-153.

in the diaspora despite the edict of Cyrus[14]. Since עלה is a verb that is also associated with the departure from Egypt, some scholars have understood the finale of Chronicles as the promise of a new Exodus, yet to be realised in the historical context of the author in which the temple had already been built and was functioning but the Torah was not yet properly observed[15]. Following Balzaretti[16], my view is that the Chronicler could have deliberately exploited the ambiguity between *qal* and *hiphil*, characteristic of this form of the verb עלה, to indicate simultaneously the spatial meaning of "go up" and the cultic one of "offer". It is clear that the author intends to look to the future with a pressing call to hope which the readers are urged to grasp.

The difference between יְהוָה of 2 Chr 36,23 and יְהִי of Ezra 1,3 has been variously interpreted by scholars: it has been considered an error in textual transmission[17], but it seems strange that the scribes who were so careful about the name of God would have made an error precisely like this. A theological motive in the direction of universalism has been suggested: thus, the God of Israel is being made to coincide with the generic God of heaven mentioned previously[18]. Lorenzin's interpretation is appealing[19]: the Chronicler was intending to create a link with the oracles

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[14] This hypothesis is also maintained by Kalimi (*ibid.*, 152-153) and Balzaretti (*Cronache*, 423) since it is not exclusive with respect to the preceding ones; cf. Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 547; and Guy, *United*, 185. According to Kalimi, this would also have been the reason why, after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE, the Chronicles were placed as the last book of the Hebrew canon.

[15] Cf. A.M. Gilhooley, *The Edict of Cyrus and Notions of Restoration in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles* (HBM 89), Sheffield Phoenix Press, Sheffield 2020, 88-91.

[16] Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 423.

[17] So, e.g., De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 9.

[18] Cf. M. Kartveit, *2 Chronicles 36.20-23 as Literary and Theological «Interface»*, in M.P. Graham (ed.), *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 263), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999, 399; and Gilhooley, *Edict*, 26; the latter observes that the divine name appears in Ezra 1,3b, that is, in the part of the edict not reprised in 2 Chr: the modification of יְהִי with יְהוָה could have had the aim of also inserting the divine name within the portion recorded by the Chronicler.

[19] Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 425. 436-437.

of Balaam, particularly Num 23,21, which contains the same syntagma יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו עִמּוֹ ("the Lord his God be with him"). Lorenzin's position, supported by his own studies on the midrashic techniques in Chronicles[20], has the additional merit of accounting for the modification of the temporal axis of the statement: in 2 Chr, Ezra's wish for the future becomes a declaration about the present. In this way, it is possible to identify the author's intention to depict the return from the Exile as a new beginning for the people of Israel. As in the time of the Exodus, so now in the face of the possibility of a catastrophe (the curse requested to Balaam as a prophet, the possibility that the conquering King Cyrus was a new oppressor), there takes place instead an unexpected benefit for Israel as a gift of God. In both cases, a pagan, moved by the divine impulse, is entrusted with the task of recognising and proclaiming Yhwh's presence in the midst of his people. Furthermore, the same syntagma, אֱלֹהָיו עִמּוֹ יְהוָה, refers to the well-known covenant formula which recurs often in the Old Testament and which is a cardinal concept of chapters 30-33 of the book of Jeremiah, a prophet named several times in 2 Chr 36.

Far from being a secondary appendix without value[21], the Chronicles finale instead directs the mind of the readers towards the openness to hope, teaching them to read history with the benevolent eyes of Yhwh. It should not escape the attention that, compared with the Dtr, the author of Chronicles chooses to express this hope not through the liberation of the Davidic king, Jehoiachin, but, rather with a divine intervention which takes concrete form thanks to a pagan king. In fact, though not belonging to the chosen people[22], Cyrus is invested with the principal

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[20] See his studies: *2 Cr 2,12-13: un derash del Cronista?*, in *Bibbia e Oriente* 32 (1990) 156-161; *L'uso di un procedimento esegetico analogo all'al tiqré in 1 e 2 Cronache*, in *Rivista Biblica* 40 (1992) 67-76; and *L'uso della regola ermeneutica gezerah shawah nel Cronista*.

[21] As argued by, among others, Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 419; and Murray, *Dynasty*, 76, n. 15.

[22] Although sharing Oeming's opinion on the importance of 2 Chr 36,22-23 for the communication of the Chronicler's message and on the centrality of Cyrus for understanding his conception of kingship, my opinion, nevertheless, is that he is extreme in thinking that the author is depicting the Persian king with the characteristics of a Jew, a model for

mission entrusted at the beginning of the book to the Israelite monarchy. Like David, he receives from God in person the task of preparing a temple[23] and gives orders for it to be built, thus becoming the guarantee of the link between Yhwh, his people and the place chosen by him in Jerusalem. If the story of the path of the Jewish people with its God was able to resume after the Exile, it was not thanks to the continuity of dynastic blood in the person of Jehoiachin but to the ideal continuity of the Davidic monarchy with the figure of a foreign king who brings the will of Yhwh to fulfilment. The finale of 2 Kgs portrayed Jehoiachin as the legitimate king in opposition to Zedekiah; instead, as Second Isaiah had already identified[24], the Chronicler considers Cyrus the legitimate sovereign chosen and loved by the same Yhwh who, as Lord of the universe, has full power over all the peoples of the earth[25]. In this way, the royal ideology of the Chronicler frees the action of God in the world from the physical and historical Davidic dynasty in order to funnel it towards what is its true content. The purpose of the monarchy is not

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the Jews at the beginning of the Hellenistic period in which he places the composition of the work (M. Oeming, *Cyrus, the Great Jew? A Critical Comparison of Cyrus-Images in Judah, Babylon, and Greece*, in I. Kalimi (ed.), *Writing and Rewriting History in Ancient Israel and Near Eastern Cultures*, Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden 2020, 195-199. 205-207). My view is that Yhwh's action performed through a pagan is one of the strongest aspects of the Chronicler's theology, also probably polemical against the particularistic currents and those hostile to foreigners in Jewish society of the time.

[23] According to Dempster, in the edict, the term בַּיִת maintains the double meaning of "house (of Yhwh)" and "family (of David)", so that the Chronicler would be interpreting Cyrus' text as also the reestablishment of the dynasty with the temple in an eschatological future (*Dominion*, 227). That does not take account of the semantic slip the Chronicler produces in Nathan's oracle precisely in connection with the term בַּיִת (cf. above, p. 136).

[24] For example, Is 44,24-28; 45,1-7; 48,14-15.

[25] I.D. Wilson, *Yahweh's Anointed: Cyrus, Deuteronomy's Law of the King, and Yehudite Identity*, in J.M. Silverman-C. Waerzeggers (eds.), *Political Memory in and after the Persian Empire* (ANEM 13), Society of Biblical Literature Press, Atlanta (GA) 2015, esp. 346-351, reaches similar conclusions not by a comparison with 2 Kgs but from Deut 17,14-20, which prohibited a non-Israelite from royal enthronement. Second Isaiah's oracles on Cyrus are the first witnesses to the upheaval in theological perspective which was to emerge some centuries later in the finale of Chronicles as well.

to establish an autonomous political entity for the Jews but to protect the temple and guarantee its worship in which the presence of Yhwh in the midst of his people is perpetuated and ensured. That is all the more important if one considers the period and the addressees of the literary work, that is, the Israelites subjected to the empire founded by Cyrus. The Chronicler's message leads the readers to a favourable view of the Persian authority thanks to which the temple was re-established, and, consequently, to a benevolent attitude towards foreigners[26].

VII. CONCLUSIONS ON THE EXPLICIT BUT INDIRECT JUDGEMENTS

At the conclusion of this discussion about the figures who enter into relation with the king and so express the message of the Chronicler, it is possible to identify the criteria that emerge from it through which the rulers are praised or condemned for their behaviour. These criteria are found and combined in the individual texts with different outcomes, reinforcing each other. Taken together, they contribute to the picture of political leadership which the author wishes to promote among his contemporaries.

A. Criterion of care for the cult

Nathan's oracle (1 Chr 17,4-14) places the construction of the temple as the foundation for the divine choice of David and of the monarchy itself. This criterion is the basis for David's subsequent orders which

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[26] E. Ben Zvi, *When the Foreign Monarch Speaks*, in M.P. Graham (ed.), *The Chronicler as Author: Studies in Text and Texture* (JSOTSup 263), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1999, 226-228, points out the ethnicity of the two foreign kings through which Yhwh communicates and carries out his will: Neco and Cyrus are at the head of the two nations of importance to the Jews in the Achaemenid period, that is, Egypt and Persia. Therefore, the Chronicler's political message is characterised by a perspective of openness and universalism, something remarkable when contrasted with the opposition position of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the same Persian period.

recall the oracle explicitly (1 Chr 22,8-10; 28,2-7) and which concern the functioning of the future sanctuary in detail. The connection between temple and monarchy reaches its climax in the events directly linked to the construction: the choice of the site, indicated by God to David (1 Chr 21,26-22,1), and the two apparitions to Solomon which crown the beginning and the conclusion of the works (2 Chr 1,7-12; 7,12-22). The cult is also the starting point for understanding the interactions of the two monarchs with the figures in the other questions of government recounted: the wars won by David on account of his care for the Ark (1 Chr 14,8-16); the exchange of letters between Huram and Solomon (2 Chr 2,10-15), and the universal admiration aroused by the wisdom of the latter (2 Chr 9). The integrity of David and Solomon in the cultic sphere is the origin of their success, their wealth and the international glory they enjoy. The events which stretch from the announcement of the construction of the temple to its effective achievement constitute a unique foundational period in which the criterion of care for the cult is defined theologically and finds its full application.

The story of the kingdom of Judah is viewed continually under the lens of this basic criterion. Asa (2 Chr 15,1-8) and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 19,2-3) are approved as guardians and purifiers of the cultic system. By contrast, Jehoram (2 Chr 21,12-15) and Uzziah (2 Chr 26,17-18) are condemned for their transgressions. The latter, in particular, commits a specifically ritual infraction by invading the sphere reserved for the priests.

The path indicated by the sovereign involves repercussions in the life of all the people. The harmony described during the liturgical celebrations of the reigns of David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah represents the utopian scenario of the social unity imagined by the Chronicler in which king, priests, Levite and people unite in praise of Yhwh, just as had been prescribed on the basis of the regulations transmitted in his name. On the contrary, the northern tribes of Jeroboam's time represent the opposite model: those who decide on a religious schism and so exclude themselves from a correct relationship with Yhwh, deprive themselves of his presence and consequently forfeit his help.

B. Criterion of search for Yhwh

Closely linked to the preceding is the criterion of the search for Yhwh: if care for the cult expresses the behaviour of the ruler who is practically concerned with maintaining or, at times, re-establishing the correct functioning of the temple, the search for God includes a broader gamut of actions which manifest the king's disposition to repose his own hope on Yhwh alone and to remain obedient to him. Therefore, it is more a question of interiority expressed with the typical biblical terminology connected with the "heart" (לֵב or לֵבָב) which is to be ready and turned to God (כון: 2 Chr 19,3 on Jehoshaphat). The Chronicler indicates the search for God with some particular roots: he prefers the use of דרשׁ ("seek": in speeches, it is found in 2 Chr 15,2, addressed to Asa, and in 2 Chr 19,3, to Jehoshaphat), but he also uses בקשׁ ("seek": in 2 Chr 7,14 to Solomon, and in 2 Chr 15,4, to Asa), שׁאל ("consult": in 1 Chr 14,10.14 in connection with David) and ("rely": in 2 Chr 16,7-8 for Asa). The opposite behaviour is generally described as עזב ("abandon": it is the judgement addressed to Rehoboam in 2 Chr 12,5). Azariah's speech to Asa contains the summary formulation of this criterion: "The Lord is with you, while you are with him. If you seek (דרשׁ) him, he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will abandon you" (2 Chr 15,2b).

According to the Chronicler, the search for Yhwh expresses itself in two specific spheres of government: religious policy with the assumption of other divinities within the monotheistic cultic system; and international relations, with the search for foreign alliances contrary to the will of Yhwh.

1. The veneration of foreign deities

Idolatry, a theme constantly present in the Dtr, holds less importance for Chronicles. There is some reference to the high places and the poles venerated by some kings of Judah and Israel but with slight emphasis. That is a sign of the change of historical context which had taken place in the meantime with respect to the composition of the texts which

later came together in Sam-Kgs[27]. In fact, the theme of idolatry assumes its importance as an outer sign of the separation of the sovereign's heart from Yhwh. Furthermore, it causes negative consequences with respect to the correct functioning of the temple cult which is altered by the presence of other divinities or even suppressed in the case of the wicked king, Ahaz (2 Chr 28,24). Joash is accused of having abandoned Yhwh to prostrate himself before other gods (2 Chr 24,20); the verb דרשׁ is applied to Amaziah, the object being the gods of Edom (2 Chr 25,15).

2. The alliances with other kingdoms

If a king seeks for Judah's stability by contracting alliances with the surrounding kingdoms, then, according to the Chronicler, he displays an insufficient degree of faith in the power of Yhwh, the national God who has promised his assistance and protection. The criticism in this area does not involve only foreign peoples but also the Israelites of the northern kingdom. That is why there is condemnation of Asa for his alliance with Aram (2 Chr 16,7-9) and Jehoshaphat for his political and dynastic link with Israel, specifically with Ahab (2 Chr 19,2-3) and with Ahaziah (2 Chr 20,37). By contrast, Amaziah is judged positively for having followed the order of an anonymous man of God who admonished him over his intention to enrol mercenaries from Israel against Edom (2 Chr 25,7-9).

Alliance with a foreign power is possible only if concluded in the name of Yhwh. In Chronicles, two, very different, situations fall under this heading[28]. The agreement between Solomon and Huram for the acquisition of material for the temple (2 Chr 2,10-15) is stipulated within a stable relationship between the kingdoms of Israel and Tyre which is made to go back to the time of David; the alliance is depicted positively with the foreign sovereign emerging as dependent. He is even attributed with an, albeit vague, profession of faith in the God of Israel. In the

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[27] On the theme of idolatry in Dtr and Chr, see Japhet, *Ideology*, 203-221; appropriately, she describes idolatry as "the narrative's unifying theme" in the books of the Kings.

[28] The relationship between Solomon and the queen of Sheba is not included here because it is not to be considered a stable alliance but, rather, as a kind of "State visit" which was followed by a series of trade agreements.

concluding phase of the story of Judah, Zedekiah is judged severely for his rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chr 36,13): even if it entails a lack of equality, the submission to Babylon had been ratified by an oath in the name of Yhwh, and so the divine presence had been invoked on it. The breach of his oath by Zedekiah is presented not only as an act of political myopia but, above all, as sacrilegious.

C. Criterion of listening to warnings

The figure who expresses the voice of the narrator not only intervenes to approve or censure acts already undertaken but, at times, he moves in anticipation, addressing a warning which the king is called upon to believe and follow. The acceptance or not of this warning constitutes an element in the judgement of the sovereign's integrity. Thus, Rehoboam listens to the warning not to undertake a war against the newly independent north (2 Chr 11,2-4); Asa purifies the cult after the warning to seek (דרשׁ) Yhwh (2 Chr 15,1-8); Jehoshaphat shows complete obedience to the exhortation addressed to him through Jahaziel; and he himself encourages the people in the war against the Moabites and Ammonites (2 Chr 20,14-20); Amaziah listens to the advice of the man of God and dismisses the Israelite mercenaries whom he had previously engaged for a war against Edom (2 Chr 25,7-10). By contrast, on a second occasion, the same Amaziah does not take the warning of the northern king, Joash, to withdraw from his plan to wage war against Israel, and he is defeated (2 Chr 25,18-20); Josiah does not listen to the warning of the king of Egypt, Neco, because he does not perceive its divine origin and dies in battle (2 Chr 35,21-24). The criterion finds its summary formulation in the words of Jehoshaphat: "Believe in the Lord your God and you will be established; believe in his prophets and you will succeed" (2 Chr 20,20).

D. Criterion of conversion

As we noted several times, the physiognomy of the sovereigns in Chr is not static but can include evolutions from fidelity to wickedness or,

vice versa, from distance from Yhwh to return to him. In itself, sin does not denote the wickedness of the one committing it; instead, it is made concrete in the absence of repentance. Not even David was exempt from errors and, in the episode of the census, he is portrayed as a penitent sinner (1 Chr 21,16-17). The possibility of conversion and consequent return is expressed by Yhwh himself in the second apparition to Solomon: "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves (כנע), pray, seek (בקשׁ) my face, and turn (שוב) from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (2 Chr 7,14). Together with בקשׁ, one of the generic verbs for the search for Yhwh, we notice the two roots that the Chronicler uses more frequently to indicate the act of submission and return to Yhwh after transgression: כנע and שוב. Generally, conversion takes place thanks to a figure who appears, summons the king and urges him to repentance. Rehoboam and the chiefs of Judah are punished with the invasion of Shishak, king of Egypt but, after being admonished by Shemaiah, they humble themselves (כנע) and the sacking of the country is only partial (2 Chr 12,2-8). The integrity of Josiah, who humbles himself (כנע) before Yhwh, improves the perspective of the punishment of Judah, as Huldah affirms (2 Chr 34,22-28). Zedekiah does not have the same attitude to the words of Jeremiah and, precisely because of his lack of humbling himself, he will draw punishment on to the whole country (2 Chr 36,12). During the reign of the wicked Ahaz, the Ephraimite chiefs become the model of repentance after listening to the prophet, Oded (2 Chr 28,12-13).

E. Criterion of collective solidarity

A characteristic of Chronicles is the sharing of the people or a part of it in the moral quality of the sovereign. Once again, the foundation of this criterion is to be found in the story of David and Solomon: while the group of David's future court is being formed, Amasai proclaims peace for all those who unite themselves to the future king who is being helped by God (1 Chr 12,19 TM); and Solomon, in Yhwh's second apparition, receives from him the promise of assistance and protection

for the people, to whom are ordained the gifts of kingship, land and temple (2 Chr 7,12-22). The unity of wills between king and people finds its maximum fulfilment in the liturgical context: the unanimous praises and prayers which are raised on the occasion of David's rites for the Ark, on the dedication of the temple and in the Passover celebrations of Hezekiah and Josiah represent the image of social cohesion that the Chronicler wishes to set out for his readers. Furthermore, the people are close together around their supreme representative on other occasions such as David's anointing (1 Chr 11,1-2) and Josiah's reform (2 Chr 34). The solidarity between king and people is also shown when a שָׂטָן incites David to the census with not the sovereign alone but the whole of Israel in his sights (1 Chr 21,1).

Additionally, the king shares the responsibility for his decisions with his court which, as a result, shares in his integrity or his wickedness. Rehoboam receives the call to submission to God pronounced by Shemaiah together with the chiefs of Judah (2 Chr 12,5-8); Azariah addresses his words to Asa and the chiefs of Judah and Benjamin (2 Chr 15,2); Zechariah condemns both Joash and his officials (2 Chr 24,20); Amaziah's courtiers with whom he took counsel fall into disgrace along with their sovereign (2 Chr 25,17-20). Certainly, the king has a specific responsibility for the power to direct events which is in his hands (e.g., Elijah accuses Jehoram for having spread idolatry: 2 Chr 21,12-15). Finally, the summary at the end of the work attributes the transgressions not only to the succession of sovereigns but to the whole of Israel which, down the centuries, has rejected the prophets and messengers sent by Yhwh (2Cr 36,15-16), and so undergoes *en masse* the punishment of exile.

Not only is the king considered within the body of the people but even the people themselves enjoy a pre-eminence in the theology of the Chronicler. In the time of Ahaz, whose wickedness reaches the point of commanding the closure of the temple, Yhwh does not abandon the people but, through the prophet, Oded, arouses the compassion of the Ephraimites, confirming his assistance to Judah (2 Chr 28,9-13). The king is fundamental for the relationship between God and Israel, but he is not an absolute and indispensable element. Moreover, the return from

the Exile takes place independently of the Davidic dynasty for which no perspective of restoration is foreseen. A foreign king, Cyrus enables the Jews to return to their land and rebuild the temple on his authority which comes from the universal God (2 Chr 36,22-23). Thus, the criterion of collective solidarity not only involves the people in responsibility together with their sovereign but invites them to be engaged directly because the examples of the past, positive and negative, are taken into consideration in the present of the people, who are without political autonomy but who are not thereby deprived of the help of their God.

F. Particular cases

An overall glance at the succession of the kings of Judah highlights the special nature of three sovereigns who take on particular importance within the direct speeches: David, Solomon and Cyrus. Their figures do not represent a criterion proper but provide elements that complete Chronicler's general ideological picture, which is his starting point for expressing his judgements through the characters of the literary work.

1. David

David is depicted as the real founder of the monarchy. The account of the kingdom of Saul is dealt with in a few verses (1 Chr 10), whereupon the Chronicler narrates the oracle of blessing pronounced by Amasai (1 Chr 12,19) and then portrays David in close connection with the Ark (1 Chr 14; 16) and with the building of the temple. Nathan's oracle focuses on the house of Yhwh which has to be built, subordinating to it the gift of kingship (1 Chr 17,4-14); David himself issues regulations for the temple on the basis of Nathan's prophecy, conscious of his own function as recipient of a divine mandate which requires faithful transmission to his successor who, in the same oracle, is established by Yhwh as the concrete agent of what has been announced (1 Chr 22,8-10; 28,2-7). In fact, David is recognised as having a role comparable to the legislative activity of Moses: the founder of the dynasty issues binding regulations for the functioning of the temple which his successors are bound to

respect (1 Chr 22-29); the choice of the site for the temple is made by Yhwh with the mediation of David as a replacement for the previous provisional sanctuary at Gibeon which was linked to the memory of the Exodus (1 Chr 21,1-22,1); the layout of the temple is described in divine writing comparable to the model of the Ark presented to Moses in his time (1 Chr 28,19); and the handover between the king and his son is modelled on the succession from Moses to Joshua.

2. Solomon

If David is the new Moses, Solomon consequently takes on the characteristics of a new Joshua: it is his job to fulfil what was promised to David, enabling the beginning of a new era for the Israelite people in which the divine presence will be guaranteed permanently thanks to the building of the temple which is now constitutive in the relationship between Yhwh and Israel. The sanctuary is the concrete realization of the fulfilment of the ancient promises recapitulating the story of the patriarchs (Abraham and Isaac in 2 Chr 3,1; Jacob in 2 Chr 1,7-12), of the Exodus (2 Chr 1,7-12; 2,10-15) and of the early stage of the occupation of the land (1 Chr 17,6), until Nathan's oracle. The view of Solomon's period as inauguration of the culminating stage in the history of Israel involves a reshaping of the figure of the king himself compared with the Dtr: flawless, wise, admired by sovereigns who come into contact with him, enjoying a privileged relationship with Yhwh who appears to him directly, only sovereign who does not need the mediation of a prophet. He is the man chosen (בחר) by God as אִישׁ מְנוּחָה ("man of rest": 1 Chr 22,9), charged with building the בֵּית מְנוּחָה ("house of rest": 1 Chr 28,2). The מְנוּחָה is the summit and the summary of the gifts bestowed by God throughout the previous story; and the same name שְׁלֹמֹה is placed in relation to the term שָׁלוֹם ("peace": 1 Chr 22,9). The blessing of peace which Amasai had invoked on David and his supporters (1 Chr 12,19) is realised only with his son, Solomon. By virtue of his divine election, Solomon becomes the model to be followed for continuing to enjoy the presence and help of God. However, the conditions for maintaining the right relationship with Yhwh do not concern just his successors;

they must be fulfilled by the people as a whole who, in their collective responsibility, are called to maintain or reject the divine benevolence and, consequently, will enjoy his gifts of prosperity and peace or else will draw down on themselves his punishment (2 Chr 7,12-22).

3. Cyrus

If David and Solomon represent the foundation on which the whole of the subsequent narrative rests, the edict of Cyrus constitutes its conclusion. In fact, 2 Chr 36,22-23 is an open finale, the opening of a perspective on the future while a new story is beginning for the Jewish people. This passage, therefore, forms a bridge between the narrative and its readers: what has already been recounted finds its continuation in which the Chronicler's contemporaries are living. He is inviting them to reread their own situation in the light of the contents of his work. Therefore, Cyrus (paradoxically since he is a pagan) shares some aspects which were particular to David and Solomon: like them, he received his royal power from Yhwh; like David, he receives from Yhwh the mandate to build a house in Jerusalem; like, Solomon, he rules in a world that has been pacified. All the peoples of the earth look to him, and he orders what is necessary for the rebuilding of the temple. He is not a new Moses, however: he does not choose the site destined for the sanctuary, nor does he issue regulations about its functioning and on those responsible for its worship. It is implicit that the rebuilt temple will be sited where the previous one was and will be governed by the Davidic regulations. He is not even a new Joshua: nothing is said of his wisdom or his integrity, and he is not depicted as a model of behaviour, a model that remains embodied by Solomon. Thus, Cyrus, chosen as the one who makes possible the restoration of the temple and its worship, shares with the two great founders of the dynasty the characteristics of universal peace and legitimacy necessary for the rebuilding, but he does not possess any authority over specific aspects of the cult or the state of being a religious and moral example.

So then, the fundamental gifts which the Jewish people enjoy according to 2 Chr 7,12-22 are renewed: the land is restored to all the Israelites;

the temple is set for rebuilding; and a legitimate kingship governs the country. Compared with the pre-Exilic period, the first and last elements change their features: the land is no longer the seat of an autonomous political entity but is subject to a non-Israelite power which enables the Jews to resettle there; the monarchy is no longer connected with the Davidic dynasty but in the hands of a sovereign who is foreign and distant but who has been established by the same Yhwh who had chosen David and his descendants. The Persian king is legitimate but he is not concerned with cultic questions; nor is he the guarantor of the correct relationship between Yhwh and Israel. The Chronicler places these last two aspects, the cult and the relationship with the divinity, in the hands of the people themselves who are directly called on to commit themselves in faith to God, specifically in the care of the temple.

G. Conclusions on the criteria

The five criteria identified are placed along the lines of the results of the analysis of explicit and direct judgements, to which they add further important elements.

1. The leadership within the people of Judah must be concerned primarily with the temple and its worship: as constitutive factor of the relationship between Yhwh and Israel, its correct functioning is vital for obtaining prosperity and for the very survival of the people in the land.
2. However, commitment to God must not be limited to the external sphere but (as has already emerged from the criterion of interiority in direct judgements) must involve the heart and be expressed in consequent political choices: the promotion of the cult of Yhwh alone and self-sufficiency in the face of international relations that are possibly compromising.
3. In a still more explicit way than the direct judgements, the presence of figures who intend to direct the behaviour of the sovereign indicates the fundamental need to listen to the word of Yhwh whatever its source, continual discernment of the divine will, rejecting contrary

influences; this is possible only if the heart has been prepared for faithfulness to God. The power of the leader is not absolute; rather, he himself must be subject to the law and to the authoritative interpretation of the prophets provided by the priests and Levites in particular, but not only by them.

4. Since the leader is not an absolute and incontrovertible ruler, political error is possible so that a humble disposition and the recognition of one's own mistakes are required.
5. The legitimate monarch lives in Persia: the leader who guides the people in the province of Yehud is not the successor of the Davidic dynasty, whose true heir, with regard to the promises bound to temple and land, is the people as a whole, of whom the local leader is only a representative. On the one hand, this represents an antidote to possible abuses of power; on the other hand, it gives responsibility to Israel as a whole who cannot delegate to their chiefs the commitment of faithfulness to Yhwh which is due from all.
6. If, in the explicit and direct judgements, the criterion of exemplarity indicated David above all as the term of comparison, from the analysis of the speeches of the characters there emerges another model who is alongside and even supersedes David, namely, Solomon.

Chapter 5

IMPLICIT JUDGEMENTS THROUGH CULTURAL MOTIFS

Explicit verbal utterance is not the only type of language through which content is transmitted. Human communication takes place within a culture that also includes non-verbal elements which are expressed in actions and situations which refer to meaning and values shared by the members of the group.[1] Thus, for example, there are non-verbal body language, rites, natural and experiential situations to which particular significance is attributed (life, death, procreation) with their correlative actions. Although they can also be made explicit through a verbal code, these elements possess their own power of communication which depends on the interpretative frame of reality that is furnished by the culture to which they belong. In fact, it can happen that communication through *motifs* of a cultural character may possess an importance and a greater effectiveness than the simple spoken word because it involves aspects that are primordial and so fundamental for the personal or collective identity.

In a written text, communication takes place through the code of verbal language. However, since this is produced by a sender and destined for a receiver, both of whom are culturally determined, cultural *motifs* inevitably come into play, even subconsciously, as an expression of the symbolic picture and shared set of values. So too in the Bible, beyond

[1] Cfr. E. Leach, *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected. An Introduction to the Use of Structuralist Analysis in Social Anthropology* (Themes in the Social Sciences), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1976, 10: "*All* the various non-verbal dimensions of culture […] are organized in patterned sets so as to incorporate coded information in a manner analogous to the sounds and words and sentences of a natural language" (author's italics).

what is stated explicitly, there exists a system of elements which carry the communication of a message in an implicit way, becoming understood by the recipient.

If, however, sender and receiver do not share the cultural frame of reference, the communication of these implicit *motifs* can remain hidden or even misinterpreted. This risk can occur when a modern reader approaches the Bible. Furthermore, while explicit verbal communication takes place through univocal signs which express content within a linear sequence, non-verbal communication is obtained through several elements which, when combined, carry out their function as bearer of content[2]. For this reason, the contribution of studies in cultural anthropology and ethnography turns out to be very important.

Some of these cultural *motifs* are also present in the work of the Chronicler and contribute to the formulation of his judgements on the sovereigns. Because of our chronological and cultural distance, their identification and understanding require caution, through an investigation conducted case by case thanks to cultural anthropology and with particular reference to the differences and similarities which emerge from comparison with the Dtr work.

We can trace *motifs* belonging to various spheres:

– fundamental situations of biological life: birth, procreation, illness, death
– usages and customs, especially rites
– socio-political: relationship between the sovereign and the people, war, prosperity, conspiracies and violent death.

In this chapter, we shall present three cases which I hold to be particularly significant[3]. Ample space will be given to the site and (when present) the mode of the burying of the kings of Judah: treating simultaneously of a biological event and a rite of passage, the occurrence

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[2] Leach compares the functioning of non-verbal communication with the harmonic management of an orchestra (*Culture*, 43-45. 95-96).

[3] Some cultural *motifs* are passed over here in that they are explicitly interpreted by the author in a theological sense as a consequence of the integrity or wickedness of the sovereign, e.g., war or sickness. The texts that make this correlation have already been presented in the chapter on direct explicit judgements.

of the king's death and the ensuing funeral customs possess a notable symbolical weight in every culture which the Chronicler skilfully utilises to convey his own final judgement on the dead person who is the subject of the narrative. The second example is connected with the sphere of biology: the procreation of children and the significance attributed to their absence or premature departure. Finally, we shall consider a cultural element from the socio-political area: the relationship between the spatial extent of the king's dominion and the geography of his interventions in the religious sphere with particular attention paid to the value attributed to the border between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. The first example concerns all the sovereigns; the other two can be observed for only some of them.

I. THE BURIALS OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH

Among the elements which can be considered in the light of the anthropological code "honour-shame/infamy", we must focus on an, apparently marginal, aspect of the biography of the kings of Judah which acquires a specific importance for the Chronicler to the extent of becoming a vehicle for his own message: the place and the mode of burying the sovereign. In the majority of cases, Chronicles agrees with Sam-Kgs in indicating the site of the tomb of the individual kings. However, there are interesting differences.

It is possible to hypothesise the existence of different or additional sources compared with Dtr. On the other hand, it should be noted that the Chronicler often seems to make appropriate modifications, add or remove details in such a way as to communicate his message by emphasising the positive or negative judgement on the dead king.

Consequently, the place and mode of the sovereign's burial can throw a light of honour or a shadow of infamy over him. In fact, from an anthropological point of view, the treatment of the body of the dead king

is linked to his symbolical function as representative of the entire social body of the kingdom[4].

Additionally, however, the texts of the Bible itself reveal the existence of a strong link for everyone, not just the monarch, between individual death, burial and honour. One's own personal honour does not end with death: the individual desires to prolong it through the good memory of himself and, very concretely, through a worthy arrangement for his own physical remains and the place destined to receive them which thus assumes a symbolic significance. Already when alive, he seeks to establish the destiny of his own corpse, giving orders to others or preparing a tomb for himself. This is what Jacob (Gen 47,29-30) and Joseph (Gen 50,25) do, but it was a common procedure, at least for the more elevated social classes (Is 22,16-18; Jer 20,6): it will then be the task of the family members to see to the execution of these wishes (Gen 49,29-32; Jos 24,32; Sirach 38,16). When a person does not himself establish his future destiny, it will be the family's task to see to it as a fundamental element both of funerary piety and internal solidarity of the clan (Gen 23; Gen 35,8.20; Tobit). However, if the dead person was the king or a member of the court, it falls to the one in power to fulfil the task of a worthy burial (thus David for King Saul: 2 Sam 2,4-6 and 21,12-14; for the claimant to the throne, Ishbaal: 2 Sam 4,12; and for the general, Abner: 2 Sam 3,31-34; thus, Simon Maccabeus for the family members who had led the revolt before him: 1 Maccabees 13,25-30). The place of burial is not something indifferent and tends to perpetuate the links within groups in the world of the living: the place *par excellence* is the "tomb of one's fathers", image of the perpetual nature of the unity of clan and family (Gen 49,29-32; Gen 50,25; 1 Kgs 13,22; Neh 2,3-5; in Ruth 1,17, it becomes the sign of Ruth's permanent affiliation to the family of

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[4] Cf. the interesting study C. Lafages, *Royalty and Ritual in the Middle Ages: Coronation and Funerary Rites in France*, in J.G. Peristiany-J. Pitt-Rivers (eds.), *Honor and Grace in Anthropology* (Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology, Series Number 76), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992, 19-49. Although concerning medieval France, it clearly illuminates the dynamic which is created in the relationship between the people and the sovereign on the death of the latter.

Naomi). For the women who have remained widows, the proper place is the husband's tomb (Judith 16,23). However, when the dead person belongs to specific social categories that transcend the narrow sphere of the family, the destination of his corpse changes in relation to his status: that goes for kings (Is 14,18-20), for prophets (1 Kgs 13,31) and for those who are particularly distinguished at court (the only case in Chr is the priest Jehoiada in 2 Chr 24,16). Thus, to bury someone anonymously assumes the sense of a negative social judgement on him, at least on the part of authority (thus the prophet Uriah whom Jehoiakim order to be killed and thrown into a common ditch: Jer 26,23).

In its mysterious nature and as a limit experience of human life, death has always been bound up with the sacral sphere. In Israelite society, this sacred character comes to be connected with the theological principle of divine retribution for human actions. Consequently, the mode and honourable nature of a burial come to be interpreted as a sign of divine favour towards the person – or the reverse (Sirach 44,14). Thus, the Bible presents divine oracles in which a sepulchre is promised as an expression of divine blessing (1 Kgs 14,13; 2 Kgs 22,20 // 2 Chr 34,28), and others in which, in a parallel way, the definitive cursing of a person is made concrete in the absence of a tomb after death, conferring great infamy in the eyes of others (Jer 14,16.18; Jer 16,4-7; Jer 25,33; Jer 36,30; Ezek 29,5; Ps 79,3)[5]. Equally disgraceful and a sign of divine disfavour is the inability to make use of a tomb that has been chosen or prepared when someone is alive (1 Kgs 13,22; Jer 22,18-19), especially if that is due to exile far from one's own land (Is 22,16-18; Jer 20,6; Hos 9,6). There is no worse fate after death than the profanation of one's own mortal remains (Is 14,19). This is what Josiah reserves for the dead prophets of the Canaanite divinities (2 Kgs 23,16-18 // 2 Chr 34,4) and is one of the most serious threats that Jeremiah addresses to the kings of Judah and all

[5] Considered in the light of the honour-infamy category, the sign of the revitalisation of the bodies in the vision of Ezek 37,1-14 can be understood as a restitution of dignity lost by God, opening up scenarios of interpretation on the anthropological meaning of the resurrection also in Dan 12,2-3, 2 Maccabees 7, and, later, in the New Testament.

the chiefs and inhabitants of Jerusalem (Jer 8,1-3). The highest degree of sacrality in funeral honours is the preparation of a tomb by God himself: for Moses, this is the sign of the greatest favour (Deut 34,6); on the contrary, if God prepares the tomb for one of his enemies, it is the sign of the greatest annihilation (thus, for the Assyrian king in Nah 1,14, and for Gog and his army in Ezek 39,11-20). However, when the principle of divine retribution comes into crisis, within its reflections on the meaning of life, the sapiential thread[6] also asks about the meaning of death, and, therefore, of its visible sign, namely, the tomb and funerary honours in general (Job 21,32-33; Qoh 6,2-3; Qoh 8,10). In the New Testament, with paradoxical irony, Jesus regards the construction of sepulchres for the prophets killed by the fathers no longer as a tribute of honour but, on the contrary, a culmination and almost confirmation of and participation in their homicide (Lk 11,47-51)[7].

This rapid survey of scriptural passages provides the cultural framework within which we can set the statements of Sam-Kgs and Chronicles on the tombs of the twenty-three sovereigns of Judah. On the basis of this framework, we can gain indications or formulate hypotheses about the Chronicler's modifications. The importance that the Chronicler attributes to the description of the funeral rites to provide his assessment of the king is not a new element but a characteristic already known to scholars[8]. It has already been noted that the relationship between

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[6] Because of its uncertain and much-debated interpretation, I am passing over the paradoxical fate of the prophetic figure of the Servant of Yhwh who undergoes a disgraceful fate, buried with the wicked and "with the rich", but, in reality, worthy of great honour in the eyes of God (Is 52,13-53,12, especially 53,9). The relationship between honour and infamy in this text could be an interesting field of research with the tools of the social sciences.

[7] However, the parallel passage of Mt 23,29-31 proposes a different interpretation of the word of Jesus: the scribes and Pharisees complete the work of the fathers not with funeral honours for the prophets and the just, but through the killing of the prophet of their own time, namely, Jesus himself (cf. Acts 7,52-53).

[8] To give only a few examples, already in 1955, Rudolph claimed it (*Chronikbücher*, xx), and, after him, the theme was taken up more by, among others, B. Halpern, *Sacred History and Ideology: Chronicles' Thematic Structure – Indications of an Earlier Source*, in R.E.

the monarch's behaviour, the mode of burial and the judgement of the Chronicler is part of the theological scheme of immediate retribution: sin has a *post mortem* repercussion in the way in which the king is buried and honoured[9]. That does not imply an other-worldly retribution, of which the Chronicler gives no hint: the type and circumstances of the burial express the author's this-worldly judgement on the king[10]. The present section will concentrate on this judgement, not from the theological point of view but from the anthropological one, considering the connections with honour or infamy which this judgement involves for the king as leader in the eyes of the social group which sees him inserted in its own collective memory.

Friedman (ed.), *The Creation of Sacred Literature: Composition and Redaction of the Biblical Text* (UCPNES 22), University of California Press, Berkeley 1981, 49; Glatt-Gilad, *Regnal Formulae*, 203-205; and Jonker, *What Do*, 352-355. However, none of them, except Jonker in part, analyses and compares the individual texts. Amar, I. *Form and Content in the Story of Asa in 2 Chr 13:23b-16:14: A Diachronic-Synchronic Reading*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 69 (2019) 337-360, esp. 348-349, hypothesises that the Chronicler had a specific source dealing with the rites of royal burial. We should note the contrary opinion of Schweitzer (*Reading Utopia*, 119-125) who denies any correlation between the funeral rites and the judgements on the monarchs, and maintains that the sites of burial are a "utopian space", where social differences are annulled within the presumed alternative reality imagined by the Chronicler. In my opinion, this position is anachronistic and forced, and is due to the author's desire to inscribe every element of the text within his rereading which is based on the literary category of utopia.

[9] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 76-81. 193.

[10] Cf. B.E. Kelly, *«Retribution» Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Theologian: Essays in Honor of R.W. Klein* (JSOTSup 371), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 2003, 209. L.C. Jonker, *Manasseh in Paradise? The Influence of ANE Palace Garden Imagery in LXX 2 Chronicles 33:20*, in E. Ben Zvi-C. Levin (eds.), *Thinking of Water in the Early Second Temple Period* (BZAW 461), De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston (MA) 2014, 344-345, does not exclude the possibility that some funereal descriptions, like those of Manasseh (2 Chr 33,20), may have also assumed an other-worldly value during the translation of the LXX which, for Chronicles, he places in the II cent. BCE, when eschatological tension was important in numerous sectors of Jewish society.

The following pages offer a table which shows in parallel the judgement and the place of burial of each king in both historical collections of the Bible[11].

The judgement is indicated with sigla and signs in the following way:

Pos.: completely positive;
Neg.: completely negative;
part.: partly positive or negative;
/: evolution in the judgement within the account;
< >: the judgement is given on a single episode without threatening the general judgement.

The indication of the burial is given in the following way:
italics: the transmission of the text is not uniform and there are variants;
( ): the element is not mentioned but can be reconstructed from the context;
Ø: the element is not mentioned and cannot be grasped from the context. The indication of the burial is provided as follows:

[11] For a comparison between the texts of Sam-Kgs and Chr on the tombs of the kings, cf. J. Simons, *Jerusalem in the Old Testament: Researches and Theories* (SFSMD 1), Brill, Leiden 1952, 194-225, especially the table on pp. 201-204 and the subsequent annotations on the biblical texts as far as p. 208; however, he focuses on geographical and archaeological research and does not tackle in detail the literary questions raised in what follows.

Sovereign	Samuel - Kings			Chronicles		
	Text	*Judgement*	*Burial place*	*Text*	*Judgement*	*Burial place*
Saul	1 Sam 31,10-13 + 2 Sam 21,12-14	Neg.	Jabesh-gilead / Zela	1 Chr 10,11-12	Neg.	Jabesh-gilead
David	1 Kgs 2,10	Pos.	City of David	Ø	Pos.	Ø
Solomon	1 Kgs 11,43	Pos. / Neg.	City of David	2 Chr 9,31	Pos.	City of David
Rehoboam	1 Kgs 14,31	Neg.	City of David	2 Chr 12,16	Pos. / Neg.	City of David
Abijam / Abijah	1 Kgs 15,8	Neg.	City of David	2 Chr 13,23	Pos.	City of David
Asa	1 Kgs 15,24	Pos. part.	City of David	2 Chr 16,14	Pos. / Pos. part. / Neg.	City of David
Jehoshaphat	1 Kgs 22,51	Pos. part.	City of David	2 Chr 21,1	Pos. / Pos. parz.	City of David
Jehoram	2 Kgs 8,24	Neg.	City of David	2 Chr 21,20	Neg.	City of David, "not in the tombs of the kings"
Ahaziah	2 Kgs 9,28	Neg.	City of David	2 Chr 22,9	Neg.	Samaria ?
Athaliah	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø	Ø
Joash	2 Kgs 12,22	Pos. part.	City of David	2 Chr 24,25	Pos. / Neg.	City of David, "not … in the tombs of the kings"
Amaziah	2 Kgs 14,20	Pos. part.	City of David	2 Chr 25,28	Pos. parz. / Neg.	*City of Judah*
Azariah / Uzziah	2 Kgs 15,7	Pos. part.	City of David	2 Chr 26,23	Pos. / Neg.	"in the burial field that belonged to the kings"
Jotham	2 Kgs 15,38	Pos. part.	City of David	2 Chr 27,9	Pos.	City of David
Ahaz	2 Kgs 16,20	Neg.	City of David	2 Chr 28,27	Neg.	"*in the city, in Jerusalem*; … not … into the tombs of the kings of Israel"
Hezekiah	2 Kgs 20,21	Pos.	Ø / *City of David*	2 Chr 32,33	Pos. / <Neg.> / Pos.	"on the ascent to the tombs of the descendants of David"
Manasseh	2 Kgs 21,18	Neg.	"in the garden of his house, in the garden of Uzza"	2 Chr 33,20	Neg. / Pos.	"in *(the garden of)* his house"
Amon	2 Kgs 21,26	Neg.	Garden of Uzza	2 Chr 33,24	Neg.	Ø
Josiah	2 Kgs 23,30	Pos.	"in his own tomb" *City of David*	2 Chr 35,24	Pos. / <Neg.>	"in the tombs of his ancestors"
Jehoahaz	Ø	Neg.	(Egypt)	Ø	Ø	(Egypt)
Jehoiakim	*(2 Kgs 24,6)*	Neg.	*(Garden of Uzza)*	*(2 Chr 36,8)*	Neg.	(Babylon ? / *Ganoza*)
Jehoiachin (Jeconiah)	Ø	Neg.	(Babylon)	Ø	Neg.	(Babylon)
Zedekiah	Ø	Neg.	(Babylon)	Ø	Neg.	(Babylon)

Comparison between the information provided by the Dtr and the Chronicler leads to the identification of coincidences and differences that can be arranged into eight groups:

1. for 5 of the 23 kings of Judah, the place of burial is the same without further details: the City of David for Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijam/Abijah, Jehoshaphat and Jotham;
2. in 3 cases, the place is the same, but the Chronicler provides more detail on the location of the tomb and on the modes of burial: Asa, Jehoram and Joash;
3. in 2 cases, on the contrary, the place is the same, but the Chronicler is less precise than the Dtr: Saul and Manasseh;
4. in 4 cases, the two texts very probably describe the same place but with different wording: Amaziah, Azariah/Uzziah, Ahaz and Josiah;
5. for the usurper, Athaliah, no information is provided;
6. in 1 case, the Chronicler adds information that is completely lacking: Hezekiah (but there is a textual problem for 2 Kgs);
7. in 3 cases, on the contrary, the Chronicler removes all the information on the place of burial: David, Ahaziah and Amon;
8. for the last 4 kings of Judah (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah), both the historical works do not record the site of the tomb; for Jehoiakim, however, the information on his place of death does not agree, and there are also textual variants about his burial.

This information has to be taken up and considered individually for each group.

A. Same place in Dtr and Chr with stereotypical expression: Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Jehoshaphat, Jotham

For five kings, the account of the burial is recorded by both Dtr and the Chronicler with a stereotypical expression which is repeated in a similar way in all the occurrences.

Solomon

1 Kgs 11,43a: «Solomon slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father, David».

2 Chr 9,31a: «Solomon slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of his father David».

In the case of Solomon, the difference consists in the form of the verb קבר: *niphal* in 1 Kgs, *qal* in 2 Chr.

Rehoboam

1 Kgs 14,31a: «Rehoboam slept with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David».
2 Chr 12,16a: «Rehoboam slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David».

For Rehoboam too, the formulation is similar: what is missing is the repetition of the ancestors to whom his tomb is near.

Abijah / Abijam

1 Kgs 15,8a: «Abijam slept with his ancestors and they buried him in the city of David».
2 Chr 13,23a: «So Abijah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David».

The same formula is used for David's third successor: the only difference is the use of the variant Abijah in 2 Chr instead of the Abijam of 1 Kgs.

Joshaphat

1 Kgs 22,51a: «Jehoshaphat slept with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the city of his father David».
2 Chr 21,1a: «Jehoshaphat slept with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David».

A similar expression is employed for Jehoshaphat. However, the Chronicler does not present the term אָב ("father", "ancestor") in connection with the city of David by contrast with 1 Kgs where, in the very middle of the verse, the substantive is repeated a good three times.

Jotham

2 Kgs 15,38a: «Jotham slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David, his ancestor».
2 Chr 27,9a: «Jotham slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city of David».

Finally, with regard to Jotham, 2 Chr employs a simplified expression in which אָב is used only once against the three times of 2 Kgs, and the *qal* of קבר is used by contrast with the *niphal* of 2 Kgs.

In conclusion, the Dtr and the Chronicler agree substantially over the place of the tomb of the five kings examined here, that is, the city of David, and they describe the event of the death and burial with the same typical expressions which describe death with the image of sleep in the company of the fathers/ancestors who are sometimes mentioned also in the indication of the place of burial. The father/ancestor *par excellence* is David from whom the city itself takes its name.

B. Same place in Dtr and Chr, with greater details in Chr: Asa, Jehoram, Joash

The city of David is also indicated as the place of burial of a further three sovereigns: Asa, Jehoram and Joash. However, whereas the books of Kgs contain formulaic expressions similar to those considered in the previous section, Chronicles adds clarification on the mode (Asa) or the siting (Jehoram and Joash) of the burial.

Asa

1 Kgs 15,24a: «Then Asa slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of his father David».
2 Chr 16,14: «They buried [Asa] in the tomb that he had hewn out for himself in the city of David. They laid him on a bier that had been filled with various kinds of spices prepared by the perfumer's art; and they made a very great fire in his honour».

The texts of the Dtr and the Chronicler are completely different. The Chronicles passage presents some textual problems that do not impair the meaning[12] which describes a particular honour attributed to Asa which

[12] The versions translate בְּקִבְרֹתָיו in the singular: thus LXX: ἐν τῷ μνήματι; and Vulgate: "in sepulchro suo". According to A. Kropat, *Die Syntax des Autors der Chronik: Verglichen mit der seiner Quellen* (BZAW 16), Alfred Töpelmann, Giessen 1909, 10, the plural is accounted for by the fact that the individual tomb was composed of several rooms. Moreover, the logic of the text and the versions presuppose the construct state זְנֵי instead of זְנִים. The

is not given explicitly to any other king. We know from 2 Chr 21,19 and Jer 34,5 that the practice of burning perfumes in the funeral rite was usual for sovereigns, but it is only recounted explicitly for Asa, underlining his particular majesty. As already noted previously[13], 1 Kgs and 2 Chr handle the deeds of this king differently, and this is also true about the description of his burial rite. The Chronicler portrays an evolution in his behaviour: after a positive beginning (14,1-15,16), the second stage of the reign is negative, characterised by the remains of idolatry (15,17), refusal to listen to the voice of God (16,7-10) and lack of repentance even in the face of the sickness that is to bring him to his death (16,12). Despite that, Asa is depicted in the on-going narrative as a positive model which his son, Jehoshaphat, followed (17,3-4; 20,32) but from which his grandson, Jotham, departed (21,12). Since Asa seems to die far from Yhwh, the honour reserved for the moment of his funeral becomes the only element which the Chronicler provides to highlight his positivity. It, therefore, assumes a central function as vehicle of the message which the author wishes to transmit to his readers about this king[14]. In any case, the judgement on this king is not neat and tidy just as it was not for his behaviour as sovereign. The same striking juxtaposition between the negativity of the sickness and the positivity of the funeral honours is a sign of this ambivalence.

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only difference of importance is the translation of מָלְאוּ, third person singular masculine of the *piel* conjugation, which, in the LXX, corresponds to the third person plural ἔπλησαν, and, in the Vulgate, to the adjective "plenum".

[13] Above, p. 88.

[14] In the similar interpretations of Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 739-741, and Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. II, 74-75, the final balance of Asa's reign would be entirely negative. Consequently, they attribute a similarly negative value also to the special majesty of the funeral honour of the perfumes which they depict as an extravagant exaggeration prepared by the king himself while he was still alive; Japhet, in particular, bases herself on the fact that the verb מלא is used with the *piel* conjugation, so with the meaning of "complete" and with the king as subject. However, albeit interesting and with textual support at least in the MT, this position does not take account of the versions and, above all, of the subsequent mentions of Asa which indicate him as a model to be followed, and the allusive comparison which the Chronicler establishes between the glorious burial of Asa and the unbecoming one of Jehoram, as we shall see here in what follows.

Jehoram

As for Asa, so too for King Jehoram, the Dtr records the usual stereotypical expression.

> *2 Kgs 8,24a:* «So Joram slept with his ancestors, and was buried with them in the city of David».

The corresponding text of 2 Chr 21,18-20 supplies greater details on the sickness which will bring the king to his death, not mentioned in 2 Kgs, and on his death and burial.

> *2 Chr 21,18-20:* «[18]After all this the Lord struck [Jehoram] in his bowels with an incurable disease. [19]In course of time, at the end of two years, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great agony. His people made no fire in his honor, like the fires made for his ancestors. [20]He was thirty-two years old when he began to reign; he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. He behaved in an undesirable way. They buried him in the city of David, but not in the tombs of the kings».

Despite some difficulties in translation[15], the Chronicler clearly intends to cover the death and burial of Jehoram with dishonour: after the loss

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[15] Three passages are patient of different interpretations. The nature of the sickness is not clearly defined: see the subsequent treatment on the cultural *motif* of the loss of descendants, p. 353-374. With regard to the duration of the sickness (v. 19), some versions translate יוֹם with the meaning of "year", as in Num 9,22; 1 Sam 27,7 and 29,3: so the Vulgate ("duorum annorum expletus est circulus"), but not the LXX (ὡς ἦλθεν ὁ καιρὸς τῶν ἡμερῶν ἡμερας δύο). However, while in the passages cited the presence of other elements (such as the indication of the months) or the context render the meaning of "year" unequivocal, there is nothing in 2 Chr 21,19 to compel this solution; rather, it seems that the author expressly shows that the events follow closely after the written oracle sent by the prophet Elijah in 21,12-15 (thus Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 437; McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 305-306; Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 319-320). A second problem concerns the syntagma וַיֵּלֶךְ בְּלֹא חֶמְדָּה (v. 20), literally: "he went/travelled without desire": the LXX translates: καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἐν οὐκ ἐπαινῷ: "and he went away without praise"; Vulgate: "ambulavitque non recte"; Peshitta: ܘܐܙܠ ܕܠܐ ܪܓܬܐ (lit. "he went away without being desirable", that is, "without leaving regrets"). Japhet speculates that the expression indicates the absence of the traditional funeral lament or else that the root חמד here signifies "fire" or "heat", as in some later rabbinic texts, and would, therefore, be a repetition of the absence of the pyre of perfumes already expressed in the previous verse (*I & II Chronicles*, 817). The translation proposed here, similar to the interpretation of the Vulgate, is based on the comparison with the judgements given to other kings in which the verb הלך followed by the preposition בְּ assumes the meaning of

of his descendants (21,17), God sends an illness which disfigures and lacerates his body, allowing no relief. At his death, he is deprived of the fire of perfumes, in clear contrast with Asa, a ruler who is depicted as a model in Elijah's letter (21,12). Finally, his body is not placed in the necropolis of the kings of Judah. Jehoram is the first sovereign accorded a completely negative judgement by the Chronicler: even the details of the lack of honour in the context of his death and burial aim at taking a distance from his behaviour, described as "not desirable". In a particular way, this dishonour can be considered the consequence of Jehoram's killing of his brothers at the beginning of his reign (21,4)[16]. The funeral rites are closely associated with the family sphere: the unusual way in which his burial takes place and the site of his tomb far from his predecessors also signifies a taking of distance on the part of the Davidic royal family towards whom he had previously committed an act of extreme gravity. This breach of the links of family solidarity earns Jehoram the strongly negative judgement of the Chronicler.

Joash

2 Kgs 12,21-22a: «[20]His [Joash's] servants arose, devised a conspiracy, and killed Joash in Beth-Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla. [21]It was Jozacar son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer, his servants, who struck him down, so that he died. He was buried with his ancestors in the city of David».

Since his death did not arise naturally but as the result of a palace conspiracy, the syntagma "he slept with his ancestors" is not used but, rather, "he died". The parallel passage of 2 Chr 24,25 records the information about the conspiracy but expresses it in a different form and adds a note about the burial.

"behave, follow a model of behaviour" (e.g.. 2 Chr 20,32; 21,6.12; 28,2; cf. Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 321); furthermore, v. 20 has the function of a final summary of the reign so that it is easier to expect an overall assessment of the sovereign's behaviour rather than a repetition of the behaviour of the people at the time of his death.

[16] Cf. Y. Zimran, «*The Covenant Made with David»: The King and the Kingdom in 2 Chronicles 21*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 64 (2014) 314-316.

> *2 Chr 24,25:* «When they had withdrawn, leaving him severely wounded, his servants conspired against him because of the blood of the son of the priest Jehoiada, and they killed him on his bed. So he died; and they buried him in the city of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings».

The two accounts diverge about the site of the conspiracy: according to 2 Kgs, it took place at Beth-Millo, 2 Chr puts it in the royal palace in Jerusalem; for both, the site of the burial is the city of David. Like Jehoram, Joash too is a negative sovereign. Initially, he followed the directions of the priest, Jehoiada, author of the dethroning of the usurper, Athaliah (24,2). Later, after the priest's death, he distanced himself from the way of God (24,14b.17-18) to the extent of killing the son of the same Jehoiada (24,21-22) who is referred to also in 24,25 as a cause of the conspiracy[17]. As for Jotham, here too, a military expedition is followed by sickness: if, for Jotham, it is a mortal sickness, in the case of Joash, it is the favourable opportunity to organise a conspiracy and assassinate him in a moment of weakness. In any case, their death is disgraceful for them both. For Joash, his burial is also dishonourable: his tomb is not in the royal necropolis. If, for Jotham, the comparison was with Asa and in relation to the honour of the perfumes burned in the funeral rite, here it is easy to see a contrast with Joash's mentor, the priest Jehoiada. Although not a member of the royal family, he had served the kingdom so well that he was buried alongside the monarchs (24,16)[18]. Once again, through the cultural code of the funeral honour, the Chronicler is sending a clear message to his readers on the behaviour to be adopted or avoided. Additionally, the direct contrast between Jehoiada and Joash

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[17] The MT is emended here according to the principal versions which, instead of the plural בְּנֵי read υἱοῦ (LXX), "filii" (genitive singular in the Vulgate) and ܕܒܢܘܗܝ (preposition followed by singular substantive with suffixed pronoun): 2 Chr speaks of one of Jehoiada's sons killed by Joash, that is, Zechariah.

[18] According to Klein, the contrast between the burials of Jehoiada and Joash is inserted within a complex of ironic comparisons between the figures of the priest and the sovereign (R.W. Klein, *The Ironic Death of Joash in Chronicles*, in R.A. Argall et alii (eds.), *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, Trinity Press International, Harrisburg 2000, 116-127, esp. 126-127).

highlights who is the true leader and what characteristics a leader must have in his relation with God.

C. Same place in Dtr and Chr, with less details in Chr: Saul, Manasseh

With respect to Saul and Manasseh, the opposite phenomenon occurs to that in the previous case: the Chronicler provides less information than the Dtr.

Saul

Saul's deeds do not receive much space in Chronicles: the end of his reign acts as an introduction to the establishment of the Davidic dynasty which is thenceforward the centre of attention. We shall look at the first of the two Deuteronomistic accounts of his death, that is, 1 Sam 31,1-13, which concludes with the tribute of funeral honours paid to the first Israelite king and his sons by the people of Jabesh-gilead.

> *1 Sam 31,8-13:* «[8]The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. [9]They cut off his head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to the houses of their idols and to the people. [10]They put his armor in the temple of Astarte;[1] and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan. [11]But when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul [12]all the valiant men set out, traveled all night long, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan. They came to Jabesh and burned them there. [13]Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days».

The Dtr recounts the Gileadites' act of piety which prevents Saul and his sons from the infamy of being hung on the wall of Beth-Shan. However, this also prepares the way for depicting David's accession to the throne as legitimate since he is not stained with the blood of his predecessor. Later, David was to perform the mourning ritual for Saul and his sons (2 Sam 1,17-27) and approve the gesture of the Gileadites (2 Sam 2,4b-6). In this way, he could present himself as full of integrity, a man of honour and so a legitimate successor (2 Sam 2,7).

Later, the Dtr recounts a second burial in the context of the definitive extermination of Saul's descendants: the wrath of God is kindled through a famine because of an unspecified sin committed by Saul in relation to the Gibeonites (2 Sam 21,1); therefore, David and the Gibeonites complete the elimination of the members of the house of Saul who are still alive and leave them unburied (21,2-9). The piety of Rizpah, one of the wives of the dead king, towards her dead sons spurs David to relocate the bones of Saul and Jonathan (nothing is said about Saul's other sons), bringing them from Jabesh-gilead to Zela in Benjamin into the tomb of Kish, Saul's father (21,10-14). The aim of this translation is unclear: perhaps David intends to put his own responsibilities for the extermination at a distance, presenting it not as one of his initiatives against Saul and his family but as a consequence of the divine will[19]. We can also hypothesise that the underlying idea is that to die and be buried outside one's homeland is dishonourable[20].

The Chronicler has a different perspective[21]. For him, Saul's death is only the preliminary event for the enthroning of David: 1 Chr does not record the presence of David in Philistia while Saul dies but places him on the scene at Hebron already where the elders of Israel, and not just those of Judah (11,1-3), arrive for the royal anointing. The enmity between the first two Israelite kings is known (12,1), but there is no mention of any clash with Saul's descendants over David's accession to the throne which happens "according to the word of the Lord" (12,24) and in a peaceful manner, shared by all (12,39), including part of the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul belonged (12,30). It is no longer even necessary to name Saul, unless in a secondary way with reference to the Ark of God which he neglected (13,3), to his daughter, Michal (15,29) and to the objects in the temple which he had dedicated (26,28). Consequently, the

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[19] Cf. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, 250-251.

[20] Cf. C.Y.S. Ho, *Conjectures and Refutations: is 1 Samuel XXXI 1-13 really the Source of 1 Chronicles X 1-12?*, in *Vetus Testamentum* 45 (1995) 95.

[21] Cf. S. Vuaran, *La geografia della salvezza nel libro delle Cronache*, in *Liber Annuus* 74 (2024) 534-536.

second burial of Saul's bones is not mentioned. Even with regard to the first burial, there are some important omissions and differences, as can be observed by comparing 1 Sam 31,12-13 with its parallel 1 Chr 10,12.

> *1 Chr 10,8-12:* «[8]The next day when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. [9]They stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the good news to their idols and to the people. [10]They put his armor in the temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon. [11]But when all Jabesh-gilead heard everything that the Philistines had done to Saul, [12]all the valiant warriors got up and took away the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons, and brought them to Jabesh. Then they buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh, and fasted seven days».

First of all, the Chronicler modifies the fate of the corpses. In 1 Sam 31,9-10, the Philistines behead Saul and bring the bodies of him and his sons to Beth-Shean where they hang them on the walls of the city while Saul's weapons are placed in the temple of Astarte. According to 1 Chr 10,9-10, on the other hand, only Saul's head was brought to Beth-Shean. There it was hung̱ not on the walls but in the temple of Dagon. The weapons were deposited in the sanctuary of an unspecified deity. Thus, the recovery of the bodies by the Gileadites took place in a different way: in 1 Sam 31,12, they repair to Beth-Shean by night to snatch the bodies of Saul and his sons secretly; in Chr, a clandestine journey is unnecessary so the Gileadites do not go to Beth-Shean but to the battlefield where they are still lying unburied.

The mention of the depositing of Saul's head in the temple of Dagon contains a twofold change with respect to 1 Sam 31,10, implicitly connecting this episode to two facts which the Chronicler does not recount but the reader knows from the Dtr. In 1 Sam, the person who has his head cut off is the Philistine hero, Goliath, who has been beaten by David despite the disparity of strength (1 Sam 17,51). The first encounter between David and Saul happens while the young victor is still holding the enemy's head (1 Sam 17,57), which will then be brought to Jerusalem as part of the spoils of war (1 Sam 17,54). In 1 Chr, Saul undergoes the

same fate as Goliath[22]. Furthermore, we should note the replacement of the name of Astarte with that of Dagon: that recalls the episode of the capture of the Ark in the time of Samuel when the Philistines brought it into the temple of this god whose image remained miraculously deprived of its head and hands before it (1 Sam 5,1-8)[23]. In the continuation of the narrative, David himself will declare that, during the time of Saul, the Ark had fallen into oblivion (1 Chr 13,3). In this way, the Chronicle numbers Saul among the kings who did not take care of the temple, of which the Ark was the anticipation. With the two implicit references to Goliath and the Ark, our author gives us to understand that Saul has gravely sinned against God and that, therefore, he has undergone the same fate as his enemies[24]. Saul's head remains in the temple of Dagon, the same temple which the Ark had miraculously left. The head of the first head (pun intended) is not buried with the rest of his body and remains outside the kingdom in a pagan sanctuary as a sign that his descendants will no longer have any leading role in Israel[25]. With this symbolical element, the Chronicler is affirming that the kingdom has now passed to David; it is no longer necessary to devote time to the other events which marked the change of dynasty.

Another important difference concerns the funeral rite: before the burial, according to the Dtr, there was a burning of the bodies (1 Sam 31,12). The Chronicler omits this completely, probably to avoid subjecting a king of Israel to a practice which was prescribed only as a punishment for certain categories of criminals (for some sexual behaviour: Gen 38,24; Lev 20,14; 21,9; for the violation of the vow of extermination in war: Josh 7,15.25) and which prophetic preaching had condemned (Amos 2,1). In the text of 1 Sam, it is not to be seen as a sign of dishonour because the context intends to point out the generosity of the

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[22] For the comparison between Saul and Goliath, see Ackroyd, *Chronicler as Exegete*, 6.

[23] Cf. Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 24-26.

[24] Cf. Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 109-110.

[25] Cf. J. Jarick, *1 Chronicles* (Readings: A New Biblical Commentary), Sheffield Academic Press, London-New York 2002, 84.

Gileadites: with the cremation, they prevent the Philistines from retrieving the bodies and humiliating the defeated king and his sons again[26]; in addition, it can be understood as a rite of purification to make up for the profanation of the bodies committed by the pagans[27]. It is also possible that the practice of cremation reflects the non-semitic origin of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead[28]. In any case, the Chronicler has other aims than the Dtr and prefers to eliminate all ambiguity, omitting the reference to this funerary practice.

Also notable is a detail which is apparently without value but which could hide a message useful for this study. According to 1 Sam 31,13, the bones are buried under a tamarisk (אֶשֶׁל); according to 1 Chr 10,12, under an oak (אֵלָה). The tamarisk had already appeared in the story of Saul: in 1 Sam 22,6, it was the tree under which the king was seated when he decided on the killing of the priests of Nob who had protected David when he was fleeing. The oak had already appeared in connection with the royal anointing of Saul by Samuel (1 Sam 10,3). In the rest of the Hebrew Bible, this tree is bound up with important episodes in the story of the Israelite people, such as the apparitions of Yhwh by the oak of Mamre in the Abraham cycle (Gen 18,1); the renewal of the covenant

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[26] Cf. D.T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids (MI)-Cambridge 2007, 655. However, the mutually opposed positions of Ho and Dirksen are not acceptable. Ho (*Conjectures*, 95) believes that 1 Sam means to depict the Gileadites in a negative light, but that does not take account of the praise reserved for them by David in 2 Sam 2,4b-6. On the contrary, Dirksen (*1 Chronicles*, 166) argues that the Gileadites are presented as positive in 1 Sam and negative in Chr where they would not be performing an act of piety but following up the action of the Philistines, they too behaving as enemies; however, this is an arbitrary interpretation not supported by anything in the text. Isolated and unsupported is the position of McCarter who, because of its absence in 1 Chr, holds the information of 1 Sam 31,12 to be secondary and late (P.K. McCarter, *I Samuel: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes and Commentary* [AYB 8], Doubleday, New York 1980, 442).

[27] Cf. Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 197.

[28] Cf. D.V. Edelman, "Jabesh-Gilead", in D.N. Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 voll., Doubleday, New York 1992, vol. III, 594. However, in Jdg 21,8-14, the inhabitants of Jabesh are portrayed as Israelites and related to the tribe of Benjamin, something that would explain their attention with regard to Saul and his sons.

at Shechem after the conquest of the Promised Land (Josh 24,26); the royal anointing of Abimelech (Jdg 9,6); and, moreover, connected with another burial, that of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse (Gen 35,8). The replacement of the tamarisk with the oak cannot be without significance: the oak is a nobler tree bound up with central turning points in the history of Israel and, consequently, more worthy of being the place of burial of the first king[29].

For the Chronicler, therefore, Saul was wicked to the extent of undergoing the same death as Goliath and the fate of the Ark which he had neglected, thus being deprived of the kingdom and the dynastic succession. However, even if the decapitated bodies of Saul and his sons remain outside their native land, nevertheless, their burial was worthy of honour and they received a royal burial performed by pious men all the same.

Manasseh

2 Kgs 21,18a: «Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his house, the garden of Uzzah».
2 Chr 33,20a: «So, Manasseh slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in his house».

The typical formula returns for Manasseh in both the historical works but with a difference: in the Hebrew text of Chronicles[30] neither here nor elsewhere do we find the גַּן עֻזָּא where, ("garden of Uzzah")

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[29] Cf. Ho, *Conjectures*, 95-96.

[30] In the LXX, the information on the place of burial in 2 Chr 33,20 is integrated with the mention of the garden: καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν ἐν παραδείσῳ οἴκου αὐτοῦ. The Vulgate is close to the MT: "in domo sua". The text of the Peshitta is different again: ܒܒܝܬܗ ܒܓܢܬ ܒܝܬܗ: first, it mentions the house, then the garden, then follows a third term which can mean "treasure", but could also derive from גַּן עֻזָּא, through influence of the parallel 2 Kgs 21,18. With regard to the LXX, mention should be made of Jonker's study on the relationship between the garden of Uzza, the royal tombs of the Ptolemaic period and the Persian gardens: since 2 Kgs 21,18 contains the term κῆπος and not παράδεισος, of Persian origin, Jonker wants to see there the desire on the part of the Greek translators of Chronicles to associate the long reign of Manasseh with the greatness of the Persian emperors, in whose political culture the creation of gardens was an indicator of the sovereign's power and prosperity (*Manasseh*, 355-357).

according to 2 Kgs 21,18.26, Manasseh and Amon were buried[31].

The reference of the name עֻזָּא is unclear: it could be the name of a figure otherwise unknown whose property had passed to the sovereign, thus forming part of the palace[32]. It is thought to be an allusion to the homonymous person who died for touching the Ark during its translation from Kiriath-Jearim to Jerusalem in the time of King David (2 Sam 6,6-8 // 1 Chr 13,9-11); in this case it would be a compound inserted by the Dtr to restate the wickedness of Manasseh[33]. A further proposal is that Uzzah is a contracted form of עֻזִּיָּהוּ (Uzziah), an alternative name for King Azariah who, according to 2 Chr 26,23 was not buried with the other kings because of his leprosy[34]. Finally, for another hypothesis there is a link here with the name of an astral divinity venerated by the Arabs with the name of Al-Uzza and by the Nabataeans as Uzzà whose cult could have been introduced under the influence of the king's wife who was Arabian in origin[35].

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[31] According to a variant of 2 Kgs 24,6 and according to 2 Chr 36,8 LXX, Jehoiakim too was buried there.

[32] Cf. 1 Kgs 21 and 2 Kgs 9,21.26 regarding the field belonging to Naboth or 2 Chr 3,1 concerning the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. The proper noun עֻזָּא was widespread and well attested in the Bible: e.g., 1 Chr 6,14; 8,7; Ezra 2,49.

[33] Cf. Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. II, 228-229.

[34] Cf. S. Yeivin, *The Sepulchers of the Kings of the House of David*, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 7 (1948) 33-35.

[35] Cf. J. Gray, *The Desert God 'ATTR in the Literature and Religion of Canaan*, in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 8 (1949) 72-83. This hypothesis was later taken up and expanded by J.W. McKay, *Religion in Judah under the Assyrians: 732-609 BC* (SBT II 26), SCM Press, London 1973, 20-27, and B. Becking, *The Enigmatic Garden of Uzza. A Religio-Historical Footnote to 2 Kings 21:18,26*, in I. Kottsieper et alii (eds.), *Berührungspunkte: Studien zur Sozial- und Religionsgeschichte Israels und seiner Umwelt. Festschrift für Rainer Albertz zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (AOAT 350), Ugarit-Verlag, Münster 2008, 383-391. The name of Manasseh's wife, Meshullemeth (מְשֻׁלֶּמֶת), daughter of Haruz (חָרוּץ) of Jotbah (יָטְבָה), is known from 2 Kgs 21,19: Jotbah corresponds to the locality of Jotbathah (יָטְבָתָה) mentioned in the Pentateuch as one of the stages in the Israelites' journey in the desert (Num 33,33-34; Deut 10,7), today Taba, in Egypt, near the Gulf of Aqaba; moreover, according to McKay, Meshullemeth and Haruz are Arab names.

It is also debated why Manasseh and Amon were buried in this garden and not in the royal necropolis in the city of David. On the basis of a comparison with neo-Assyrian architecture, it has been suggested that Manasseh, who was inclined to take up foreign models, introduced the Mesopotamian practice of having one buried in one's own house or in its outbuildings[36], and so, because of his polytheistic tendencies, decided to be buried in the sacred courtyard which he had built close to his palace in honour of the divinity dearest to him[37]. It should be noted, however, that both 2 Kgs and 2 Chr agree in affirming that, at least from the time of Hezekiah[38], no king was buried in the royal tombs of the city of David any longer[39]. They were, therefore, not used to receive the body of Hezekiah, Manasseh's father, or those of the kings who came after Amon. Rather than a personal desire of Manasseh not to make use of the traditional cemetery area, it seems more plausible that, at a certain time, the royal necropolis of the city of David fell into disuse. Since the indication of the place of Hezekiah's burial is completely lacking in 2 Kgs 20,21, it has been hypothesised that the decision to abandon the first necropolis is to be attributed to him, perhaps as part of his religious reform. Since the royal palace was near the temple, the priests of Yhwh might have obtained that the sovereigns' bodies no longer be placed in ground so near to a sacred area with the risk of its being

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[36] Cf. J. Zorn, *The Burials of the Judean Kings: Sociohistorical Considerations and Suggestions*, in A.N. Meir-P. de Miroschedji (eds.), *I Will Speak the Riddle of Ancient Times. Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*, 2 voll., Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake (IN) 2006, vol. II, 814-815; however, there is no archaeological proof in support of the existence of this practice in Palestine.

[37] Cf. F. Stavrakopoulou, *Exploring the Garden of Uzza: Death, Burial and Ideologies of Kingship*, in *Biblica* 87 (2006) 17-21; and Becking, *Enigmatic Garden*, 388-389.

[38] According to 2 Kgs, the last sovereign to be buried in the city of David is Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 16,20), whereas, for the Chronicler, it is Jehoram, father of Ahaz (2 Chr 27,9).

[39] However, there are textual variants of 2 Kgs 20,21 and 23,30 according to which Hezekiah and Josiah were placed in the City of David. The question will be tackled below on p. 343-345 and on p. 341, n. 56.

contaminated[40]. However, this hypothesis contrasts with Ezek 43,7-9: in condemning the presence of the kings' tombs close to the temple, it is referring to a practice which was evidently still in use for the last kings of Judah[41]; on the contrary, it is easier to argue that the new necropolis was closer to the temple than the previous one, thus justifying the prophet's complaint[42]. Other scholars, therefore, hold that the shifting of the royal burials was to meet a merely practical need: either because the available recesses had been used up[43] or because, in the meantime, the city had expanded and it had become necessary to site the cemetery area in a place further away from the houses[44]; the "garden of Uzza" would, therefore, be the new funerary site chosen to replace the previous one, and its mention by the Dtr would simply be the recording of the memory of an historical fact without involving a negative value judgement on Manasseh and Amon. On the contrary, whoever maintains the hypothesis that the גַּן עֻזָּא is a place of polytheistic worship willed by Manasseh rejects the idea of a contingent need on the basis of the study of ancient funerary practices: these prescribe that, once a body has decomposed, the bones have to be removed so as to be able to reutilise the same recess for another member of the same family, and so it was not necessary to provide a new necropolis[45]. Consequently, according to this position, the mention in the text would be reflecting a negative judgement on

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[40] Cf. N. Na'aman, *Death Formulae and the Burial Place of the Kings of the House of David*, in *Biblica* 84 (2004) 252-254.

[41] Cf. Zorn, *Burials*, 816; Na'aman registers the passage of Ezekiel but argues that the prophet is referring not to his own time but to that preceding the reign of Hezekiah (*Death Formulae*, 251-252).

[42] Cf. Simons, *Jerusalem*, 207.

[43] Cf. A. Kloner, *The «Third Wall» in Jerusalem and the «Cave of the Kings» (Josephus War V 147)*, in *Levant* 18 (1986) 129; and Nobile, *1-2 Re*, 449.

[44] Cf. B. Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord*, Doubleday, Garden City 1975, 187; however, one can counter this position with the objection just cited starting from the text of Ezekiel: the second necropolis was, very probably, closer to the temple and so to the residential area than the previous one.

[45] Cf. Stavrakopoulou, *Exploring the Garden*, 7; and Becking, *Enigmatic Garden*, 389.

the part of the Dtr, with the emphasis on the polytheistic behaviour of the two sovereigns, whereas its absence in Chronicles would be an indication of the favour which Manasseh, in particular, enjoys in the eyes of this author[46].

I believe that it is necessary to keep two questions distinct: the origin of the גַּן עֻזָּא in 2 Kgs and the choice of the Chronicler not to mention it in his book. In the work of rewriting, what is really decisive for the intervention on a text is the perception of the text by the one reworking it, a perception which cannot coincide with the knowledge and intentions of the author of the original text. In this case the identity of the גַּן עֻזָּא in 2 Kgs is not necessarily connected with its removal from the Chronicler's rewriting.

As for the nature of the "garden of Uzza", the simplest explanation is that it is a new royal necropolis, the previous one having ceased to function because it was full. It is not necessary to explain the move with the introduction of polytheistic cults: if it were a case of a sacred pagan courtyard linked to Manasseh and his son, Amon, we would expect that the pious Josiah would have taken up again the cemetery in the city of David; that did not happen, and it is a sign that the first royal necropolis was no longer in use. The objection raised with regard to the funerary practice of freeing up a recess to permit the burial of a new body does not take account of the exceptional nature of the figure of the king: the bodies of illustrious people were not removed but destined to remain in the same recess as an everlasting memorial.

As for the absence of Uzza's garden in Chronicles, it has been claimed that it can be due simply to the oblivion into which it had fallen in the meantime[47]. However, this does not appear to be a *modus operandi* of our author; on the contrary, he loves to collect proper names that are otherwise unknown (enough to think of the genealogies of 1 Chr 1-9). My view is that it is much more useful to refer to the changed historical context in which the Chronicler is writing: from the V cent. BCE,

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[46] Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 395; and Stavrakopoulou, *Exploring the Garden*, 17-19.

[47] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 269.

there were increasingly frequent contacts with the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Peninsula who worshipped Al-Uzza as one of their principal astral divinities: the name of the goddess appears in some Aramaic inscriptions coming from Idumaea[48]. Therefore, she is a foreign deity known to the readers of the literary work, with the risk of connecting her with the "garden of Uzza", whatever the original significance of this name. Even if, in origin, the garden of Uzza was simply the replacement of the royal necropolis, in the time of the Chronicler, the expression could be perceived as related to a polytheistic cult. By omitting the reference to the garden, the Chronicler deliberately wished to eliminate every possible shadow of apostasy from a king who is depicted as repentant and converted at the end of his life. Therefore, in opposition to those who maintain that the omission is a negative judgement of the Chronicler on Manasseh[49], it is actually a cancellation of a possible element dishonouring him.

D. Same place in Dtr and Chr but with different wording: Amaziah, Uzziah, Ahaz, Josiah

For four kings, the account of the burial is reported by the Dtr and the Chronicler with different formulations which are not mutually exclusive but could refer to the same place described in a different way.

Amaziah

2 Kgs 14,20: «They brought him [Amaziah] on horses; he was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors in the city of David».

2 Chr 25,28: «They brought him [Amaziah] back on horses; he was buried with his ancestors in the city of Judah»[50].

The difference is simply a variant or the product of a textual error. Like Joash, Amaziah also dies in a conspiracy so that the usual stereotypical phrase referring to a natural death is missing. By contrast with Joash,

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[48] Cf. Becking, *Enigmatic Garden*, 386-388.

[49] For example, McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 356-357.

[50] This translation is not taken from NRSV.

however, he dies outside Jerusalem, at Lachish (2 Kgs 14,19 // 2 Chr 25,28) so that 2 Kgs 14,20 clarifies the place with the complement "in Jerusalem", which is absent in 2 Chr. However, the syntagma "with his ancestors" enables us to understand that, according to the Chronicler also, the burial took place in Jerusalem, the place where his dynastic predecessors were buried. However, some puzzlement has been aroused by the expression of 2 Chr "city of Judah" instead of the more common "city of David": all the versions read "David"; moreover, the syntagma עִיר יְהוּדָה ("city of Judah") never appears in the Hebrew Bible; only the plural form exists as a collective indication of all the towns belonging to this tribe. The name "city of Judah" is attributed to Jerusalem in the *Chronicles of the Neo-Babylonian Kings* which recounts its conquest at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar[51]. However, I think that it is a sort of synecdoche which could have been created only by someone living far from the region and not by an inhabitant of the region itself. So, then, it can be concluded that the reading of the MT is the product of error[52] or else (with more difficulty) it is a *hapax* equivalent to "city of David". It is not necessary to see there a negative judgement because of the lack of an explicit reference to the royal tombs[53]: the formula without reference to the necropolis also occurs for pious sovereigns such as Abijah (2 Chr 13,23) and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 21,1).

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[51] B.M. 21964 Rev. 12: *al ia-a-hu-du*, in D.G. Wiseman, *Chronicles of Chaldaean Kings (626-556 B.C.) in the British Museum*, The Trustees of the British Museum, London 1956, 72-73.

[52] Cf. Allen, *Greek Chronicles*, vol. II, 98-99, and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 364: the former explains it with the occurrence a few lines above of בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה (25,13); the latter, on the other hand, attributes it to the presence of יְהוּדָה in the following verse (26,1).

[53] Thus, instead, Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 346. Others, such as Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 872) and McKenzie (*1-2 Chronicles*, 325-326), propose translating "in a city of Judah", identifying an element of condemnation on the part of the Chronicler in the generic localization of the burial. However, the presence of the typical complement "with his ancestors" leads to the conclusion that it is the royal cemetery of Jerusalem and that "Judah" should be emended to "David".

Azariah / Uzziah

Amaziah's successor, called Azariah in 2 Kgs and Uzziah in 2 Chr, was sick with leprosy at various times. 2 Kgs provides only the bare information of the sickness, which it holds to be of divine origin (2 Kgs 15,5) whereas 2 Chr recounts the precise episode in which the leprosy appears as a punishment from God on account of his pride which leads him to commit a transgression of a cultic character (2 Chr 26,16-20). This was particularly grave as he had initially been a pious king (2 Chr 26,4-5). According to both the historical works, he retires to a structure separate from the royal palace on account of his sickness while his son, the future King Jotham, takes on the regency (2 Kgs 15,5 // 2 Chr 26,21). Just as 2 Chr describes the onset of the illness in more detail, so he adds details on the site of the tomb: it was placed in the area of the royal necropolis but not alongside the other kings but, rather, in a nearby field to avoid the danger of contagion.

2 Kgs 15,7a: «Azariah slept with his ancestors; they buried him with his ancestors in the city of David».
2 Chr 26,23a: «Uzziah slept with his ancestors; they buried him near his ancestors in the burial field that belonged to the kings, for they said, "He is leprous"».

The addition about the tomb, connected directly with the leprosy, shares also in the symbolic and theological significance of the latter: just as the leprosy was a punishment for Uzziah's impiety after his initial integrity, so his burial separate from the other sovereigns remains after his death as a sign of his distance from God. Just as, in life, he underwent the infamy of an impure disease and marginalisation from his people, so too, now he is dead, his dishonourable segregation remains.

Ahaz

2 Kgs 16,20: «Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and was buried with his ancestors in the city of David».
2 Chr 28,27a: «Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel».

Ahaz is one of the more negative kings in the history of Judah both for the Dtr and for the Chronicler. Chronicles does not mention the city of David explicitly as the site of the tomb of Ahaz but locates it, vaguely, within the city of Jerusalem[54]. Just as for the other two wicked kings, Jehoram and Joash, so too for Ahaz it is noted that his burial was not in the royal necropolis. We have observed that between Jehoram and Joash there seems to exist a parallel: for both, the events of the end of the reign were arranged in the sequence, military expedition – illness – disgraceful death – a non-royal burial; and for both, there is an allusion to a comparison with a pious figure (Asa for Jehoram, Jehoiada for Joash). Ahaz escapes from this pattern and seems to be placed in a worse light owing to two devices: thanks to the use of the syntagma בָּעִיר בִּירוּשָׁלַ͏ִם ("in the city, in Jerusalem"), the name of the wicked king is not juxtaposed with that of the ideal king, David; vice versa, citing "Israel" in the expression "the tombs of the kings of Israel" (for Jotham and Joash, only "the tombs of the kings" is said) renders even stronger the contrast between Ahaz and the other sovereigns of the chosen people[55], from whom Ahaz was distanced in life and from whom he is kept apart after his death.

Josiah

Opposite to that of Ahaz is the assessment reserved for Josiah who is considered by both the historical works as the only completely (or almost) positive king together with Hezekiah. The context of his death is tragic: probably on account of a mistaken political tactic, Josiah went out against the king of Egypt, Neco, who was going to Carchemish to confront Assyria whose empire was in decline, but the king of Judah was killed at Megiddo. 2 Kgs 23,29-30 does not describe the context of this killing and does not give theological prominence to this event. 2 Chr 35,20-22 states that it happened during a battle and explains

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[54] The text of the LXX, ἐν πόλει Δαυιδ, is not found in any other version; it must be taken to be a harmonisation with the parallel passage of 2 Kgs.

[55] In 28,19 also, Ahaz is described as "king of Israel". On the use of the name Israel in Chr, see above, p. 271-277.

the defeat of the just king as a consequence of disobeying God who spoke through the pharaoh to dissuade him from his military campaign. This is the Chronicler's only negative judgement on Josiah. The two historical works also diverge on his place of death: whereas, for 2 Kgs, the king is killed at Megiddo and brought, already dead, to Jerusalem (historically more plausible), in 2 Chr 35,23-24a, he is only wounded in battle and gives the order to be carried to Jerusalem where he dies. This modification is also theological in intent: the just king has to die in the capital where he launched a reform of the cult and celebrated the Passover; in 2 Chr, furthermore, he is the last king to die and be buried in Jerusalem since his successors all die in exile, including Jehoiakim who, according to 2 Kgs 24,6, dies in his home country. Therefore, the two accounts of Josiah's burial are very different.

> *2 Kgs 23,30a:* «His [Josiah's] servants carried him dead in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb».
>
> *2 Chr 35,24-25:* «[24]So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in his second chariot and brought him to Jerusalem. There he died, and was buried in the tombs of his ancestors. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. [25]Jeremiah also uttered a lament for Josiah, and all the singing men and singing women have spoken of Josiah in their laments to this day. They made these a custom in Israel; they are recorded in the Laments».

The Dtr account is very meagre[56]. By contrast, the Chronicler greatly expands the description of the funeral honours with the note about the collective lament over Josiah and the intervention of the prophet, Jeremiah. However, with regard to the site of the tomb, all that is

[56] Perhaps precisely because of the lack of information in the Hebrew text, the LXX adds ἐν πόλει Δαυιδ, not found in the other versions and so to be considered an attempt at improving the text. That it is an addition of the Greek translator is also corroborated by the fact that, as we have seen, the disappearance of the reference to the city of David from Manasseh on could indicate an abandonment of the former royal necropolis in favour of a second one, identified as "garden of Uzza".

mentioned is that it is the place of the "tombs of his ancestors"[57] (note absent in 2 Kgs) without further detail. The Chronicler remains inconclusive about the site of the tomb of one of the greatest kings of Judah: is it the city of David where his "ancestors" rested? Is it the garden of Uzza where the two "ancestors" who were his immediate predecessors were placed[58]? Or could it be a sign that the tomb was not known like the others, perhaps because he was actually buried at Megiddo so that the burial in Jerusalem would have only theological value? There is no proof.

In the case of Josiah, however, the Chronicler pays the final honour not by way of the place but through the rite of lamentation, composed even by the great Jeremiah, the champion of orthodoxy in the last phase of the monarchy, and with a glory that transcends the centuries down to the age of the writer. This wholly exceptional honour not only rehabilitates Josiah from his final disobedience but places him on the contemporary scene of the readers of Chronicles as a positive leader to be followed. The fact that the lament has continued to be repeated at a distance of centuries should not be undervalued: it indicates that Josiah's death had transcended the purely emotional sphere of the commemoration of a sovereign who had just died and become an event to be celebrated in subsequent times because held to be important from the social point of view, to be held fixed in the collective memory of the Jewish people[59].

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[57] 2 Chr 35,24 LXX does not mention the tomb but only the ancestors: καὶ ἐτάφη μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ.

[58] Hypothesis of Simons, *Jerusalem*, 204.

[59] Blenkinsopp (*Remembering Josiah*, 252-255) argues that the lament over Hadad-rimmon at Megiddo cited in Zech 12,11 is to be placed in relation to Jeremiah's lament over Josiah: in this way, through intertextual links and each according to his own literary genre, both the Chronicler and Deutero-Zechariah would be intoning the funeral lament for the entire Davidic dynasty. They do not see any possibility of its return to power, to the advantage of the temple institution.

E. Absence of information on the place both in Dtr and Chr: Athaliah

The Dtr and the Chronicler agree in their account of the end of the reign of Athaliah: both report that she is made to leave the temple so as not to shed her blood in the sacred precinct (2 Kgs 11,15 // 2 Chr 23,14), and, when she gets beyond the Horse Gate which leads to the palace, she is put to death (2 Kgs 11,16 // 2 Chr 23,15). Nothing is said of her burial: what is emphasised, rather, is the fact of her killing which is later recalled in both accounts as the reason for a feast which sprang up spontaneously among the "people of the land" (2 Kgs 11,20 // 2 Chr 23,21). This is the greatest dishonour which identifies her as a usurper, an alien to what normally happens for the kings of Judah: there is no rite, no place of burial, only a public feast for her death.

F. Absence of information in Dtr present in Chr: Hezekiah

The Dtr says nothing about the place of burial of one of the great kings of Judah, Hezekiah but only provide the notice of his death; the Chronicler, on the other hand, contains the information but with a singular formulation which is not found elsewhere.

> *2 Kgs 20,21a:* «Hezekiah slept with his ancestors».
> *2 Chr 32,33abα:* «Hezekiah slept with his ancestors, and they buried him on the ascent to the tombs of the descendants of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death».

The silence of 2 Kgs is astonishing, especially considering the importance of this king; it is not by chance that the passage has been completed with different outcomes, perhaps precisely because of the need to fill up a space perceived as an anomaly[60].

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[60] Thus the critical apparatus of the BHS informs us that, in 2 Kgs 20,21, one manuscript adds בְּעִיר דָּוִד as the place of death but says nothing about the funeral rite. The LXX adds not only the indication of the place but also the action of burial: καὶ ἐταφη ἐν πόλει Δαυιδ; this clause is lacking, however, in Codex Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and in minuscule 344; by contrast, Lucian's recension expands the addition, providing also the complement of company: καὶ ἐταφη μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτουᾳ ἐν πόλει Δαυιδ. Vulgate and Peshitta agree

For his part, the Chronicler's text presents some interpretative difficulties. In this context, the term מַעֲלֶה, translated by NSRV as "ascent", could have several meanings. The most direct is geographical-topographical, that is, a path which goes up along a slope[61]. Or it could indicate that Hezekiah's tomb was in a part of the necropolis higher than that of the tombs of the other sons of David[62], or in an area more visible[63] or more prestigious, for reasons that are unknown to us[64]. The term can also indicate the higher level of a raised structure, like a tomb with two floors[65]. Or else it can signify that the structure of the monument was more elaborate or its material of better quality[66]. The root עלה can also be used in a figurative sense. In this case, it would be stating that Hezekiah's tomb was more honoured than the other tombs of the sons of Israel[67]. Also uncertain is the identity of the בְּנֵי־דָוִיד (NSRV: "descendants of David", but literally "sons of David") who are not necessarily the kings who succeeded David in which case one would expect the more common expression: "he was buried with his ancestors"; perhaps the reference is to the members of the royal family in general, for whom there could have been an appropriate area in the royal necropolis. Neh 3,16 contains the expression, strangely in the plural, קִבְרֵי דָוִיד ("graves of David") which could be matched with the statement of 2 Chr but which

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with the MT. The lack of homogeneity in these additions speak in favour of hypotheses of attempts at improving the text to align it with the information on the other kings.

61 Cf. Simons, *Jerusalem*, 207-208.

62 Cf. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 314; P.R. Ackroyd, *The Death of Hezekiah - A Pointer to the Future?*, in H. Cazelles (ed.), *De la Tôrah au Messie*, Desclée, Paris 1981, 223; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260; and Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 392.

63 Cf. Selman, *2 Chronicles*, 517.

64 Cf. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 388; and Hill, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 597.

65 This is one of the suggestions of Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260, and Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, 366.

66 Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 260.

67 Cf. Ehrlich, A.B. *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel*. Vol. VII: *Hohes Lied, Ruth, Klagelieder, Koheleth, Esther, Daniel, Esra, Nehemia, Könige, Chronik, Nachträge und Gesamtregister*, Hinrichs, Leipzig 1914, 381; Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 315; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 997; and McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 351.

appears in the singular in some versions[68]. Independently of the identification of these figures, however, we cannot exclude that the entire syntagma מַעֲלֵה קִבְרֵי בְנֵי־דָוִיד ("ascent of the tombs of the sons of David") which does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, is a fixed geographical expression indicating an uphill path which led to or was within the royal necropolis. In any case, we can affirm that the Chronicler avoided the need to leave an embarrassing void of information about the tomb of the great Hezekiah.

For the same purpose, he also added the reference to the funeral honours paid to Hezekiah by "all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem", a unique clarification among all the monarchs of Judah. For example, with regard to Josiah, the Chronicler will declare that they wept for him (35,24), not that they honoured him[69]. Furthermore, the mention of the sons of David links this king to the first sovereign of the dynasty whom Hezekiah has in some ways represented by his political action and his care for God and the temple. The comparison with Dtr's silence makes still clearer the symbolical importance that the author of Chr attributes to the burials of the kings as confirmation of the judgement on the sovereign in terms of honour and infamy.

G. Presence of information in Dtr which is absent in Chr: David, Ahaziah, Amon

For King Hezekiah, the Chronicler adds information that is completely lacking in his *Vorlage*. For three kings, instead, he does the opposite, totally omitting the account of their burial: this is the case with David, Ahaziah and Amon.

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[68] LXX: τάφου Δαυιδ; Vulgate: "sepulchra David".

[69] According to Baines, this difference is functional to the replacement of Josiah with Hezekiah as a model of integrity in the transition from the Deuteronomist history to the work of the Chronicler (S.E. Baines, *The Cohesiveness of 2 Chronicles 33:1-36:23 as a Literary Unit Concluding the Book of Chronicles*, in P.S. Evans-T.F. Williams [eds.], *Chronicling the Chronicler: The Book of Chronicles and Early Second Temple Historiography*, Eisenbrauns, Winona Lake [IN] 2013, 146-147).

David

Particularly surprising is the lack of any mention of David's burial: Chronicles records only the notice of his death.

> *1 Kgs 2,10:* «Then David slept with his ancestors, and was buried in the city of David».
> *1 Chr 29,28a:* «[David] died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour».

There is no doubt that the figure of David is surrounded with honour since the references to his old age, his fullness of days, his wealth and his honour recall figures such as Abraham (Gen 15,15; 25,8), Isaac (Gen 35,29), Gideon (Jdg 8,32) and Job (Job 42,17).

However, in David's case, this exaltation does not come through the cultural code of funeral honour[70].

Ahaziah

One of the kings who is placed at the opposite extreme from David is Ahaziah. By contrast with the Dtr, the author of Chronicles does not mention the site of his burial.

> *2 Kgs 9,27-28:* «[27]When King Ahaziah of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. Jehu pursued him, saying, "Shoot him also!" And they shot him in the chariot at the ascent to Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there. [28]His officers carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his ancestors in the city of David».
> *2 Chr 22,9abα:* «[9][Jehu] searched for Ahaziah, who was captured while hiding in Samaria and was brought to Jehu, and put to death. They buried him, for they said, "He is the grandson of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart"».

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[70] David is not the only great biblical figure who is without a tomb: enough to recall Enoch (Gen 5,21-14) and Elijah (2 Kgs 2,1-12), and we could add Moses (Deut 34,5-6), buried by God himself in a tomb wrapped in mystery. An object of research, which goes beyond the limits of this work, could consist in the study of links among these four figures to see if, by not mentioning David's burial, the Chronicler intends to express a message which in some ways connects the first truly great king of Israel with the destiny of the other three figures.

The two historical works present the facts with some divergences[71]. According to 2 Kgs 9,21-28, the kings of Judah and Israel, Ahaziah and Jehoram, were together at the moment of the killing of the latter by Jehu which takes place on the ground of Naboth of Jezreel; Jehoram dies there and is left in a field unburied (9,26) while Ahaziah flees to the north. He reaches Yibleam where he is wounded; he continues further north until Megiddo where he dies. His officials carry him from there to Jerusalem where they bury him. In 2 Chr 22,7-9, instead, Ahaziah finds himself at Jezreel together with Jehoram. From there, they go out against Jehu towards an unspecified place. The killing of Jehoram is not recounted specifically but the account speaks of the extermination of all of Ahab's descendants in general, and also of the officials and members of the royal family of Judah. Ahaziah hides in Samaria, but is discovered, killed and, finally, buried. The divergence with regard to the place of the southern king's killing can be resolved by considering "Samaria" not as the name of the northern capital but of the surrounding geographical area, including Megiddo which, according to Josh 17,11 and 1 Chr 7,29, is counted among the cities of the tribe of Manasseh. However, this would be a *unicum* in Chronicles which always employs "Samaria" to indicate the city and not the region[72].

However, the location of the burial appears to be more difficult. The text specifies neither the place nor the executors of the burial but only supplies their motives: although he was wicked, Ahaziah was a descendant of the pious king, Jehoshaphat. There is no other possibility than to obtain from the context the missing elements. With regard to the executors of the burial, in 2 Kgs 9,28, they are the servants of Ahaziah; instead, in 2 Chr the king is portrayed as hiding alone since the chiefs of

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[71] Both passages contain textual problems but these do not concern the site of the events. 2 Kgs 9,27 lacks the main verb which is supplied on the basis of the Greek (καὶ ἐπαταξεν αὐτὸν) and Syriac (ܘܡܚܘܗ) versions. In 2 Chr 22,9, according to the LXX, Ahaziah was not hiding in Samaria but recovering (ἰατρευόμενον) although 2 Chr does not tell of the wounding of the king of Judah. Moreover, in all the versions, it is Jehu in person who kills Ahaziah because of a vocalisation of the consonantal text different from that of the MT (וַיְמִתֻהוּ).

[72] The other occurrences are: 2 Chr 18,2.9; 25,13.24; 28,8-9.15.

Judah and the members of his family have already been eliminated previously (22,8). In 2 Chr 22,9, there is no change of subject between the scene of the king's killing and that of his burial: as a result, it is implicit that, after having killed Ahaziah, the same rebels and comrades of Jehu bury him. The motive attributed to them, that is, respect for the king of Judah, Jehoshaphat, is not an obstacle to this reconstruction: for the Dtr, the revolt and reign of Jehu have, at least initially, the connotations of a religious purification in favour of the cult of Yhwh (2 Kgs 9,1-13.22; 10,10.18-31), and also, according to the Chronicler, his conspiracy is a carrying out of the divine will (2 Chr 22,7). Consequently, there is nothing to prevent Jehoshaphat from being able to be considered by them a model to be followed. If the rebels themselves bury Ahaziah, then the place of his tomb is not Jerusalem, as in 2 Kgs 9,28, but the same as that of his death, namely Samaria, whether understood as city or as region: the wicked king who imitated the religious policy of the north (2 Chr 22,2-4) is not worthy to rest with his ancestors in Jerusalem but finds his burial in an unspecified place in the kingdom from which he learned to distance himself from Yhwh[73].

Amon

The third king whose place of burial is omitted by the Chronicler is Amon, the successor of Manasseh. Amon is killed because of a palace conspiracy, but the "people of the land" intervene, in their turn eliminate the conspirators and proclaim his very young son, Josiah, king, thus avoiding the dethroning of the Davidic dynasty. The passages of the two historical works that recount the events can be placed in parallel almost word for word.

> *2 Kgs 21,23-24:* «[23]The servants of Amon conspired against him, and killed the king in his house. [24]But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made his son Josiah king in place of him».
> *2 Chr 33,24-25:* «[24]His servants conspired against him and killed him in his house. [25]But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired

[73] Cf. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 175.

against King Amon; and the people of the land made his son Josiah king to succeed him».

At this point, the Chronicler passes immediately to the account of Josiah's deeds whereas the Dtr inserts the typical stereotypical expression about the "other deeds" of the king, and the notice of his burial.

2 Kgs 21,25-22,1a: «[21,25]Now the rest of the acts of Amon that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah? [26]He was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza; then his son Josiah succeeded him. [22,1]Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem».
2 Chr 34,1: «Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign; he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem».

Also, when it begins the account of Josiah, 2 Chr contains almost the same words as the parallel passage of 2 Kgs 22,1. Why, then, does it omit 2 Kgs 21,25-26? The formulaic expression on the "other deeds" is usually reprised by the Chronicle and there does not seem to be a particular reason for an omission for Amon, a wicked king but certainly a minor one who reigned for only two years and without being involved in any important event. An explanation can be found on the merely textual level: 2 Kgs 21,24 and its parallel 2 Chr 33,25 end in the same way as 2 Kgs 21,26: יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ בְנוֹ תַּחְתָּיו ("his son Josiah in his place"); we can, therefore, advance the hypothesis of an accidental elimination of 2 Kgs 21,25-26 through *homoioteleuton*[74]. However, textual witness is lacking, and it is necessary to place it in a rather ancient stage because no version contains the piece that would have been expunged. Since, for Manasseh also, the Chronicler removes the reference to the garden of Uzza where he too would have been buried (2 Kgs 21,18 vs. 2 Chr 33,20), we also cannot exclude here a voluntary omission of the reference to the burial of Amon. This king is depicted as still more wicked than his father, Manasseh (2 Chr 33,22-23); in addition to undergoing an ignominious

[74] Hypothesis advanced already in 1901 by I. Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Chronik* (KHC 20), Mohr Siebeck, Leipzig-Tübingen 1901, 129, then taken up again in the nineteen fifties by Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 316, and, more recently, by Johnstone, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, vol. II, 230; McKenzie, *1-2 Chronicles*, 357, and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 473. 487.

death, he also undergoes the infamy of not receiving the mention of funeral honours. In this way, in 2 Chr, the action of the "people of the land", who, in 2 Kgs, also provide a worthy tomb for the slain king, is aimed solely at the maintenance in power of the legitimate Davidic dynasty, and so the reader's attention is directed solely on Josiah whose integrity the Chronicler is about to relate[75].

H. Peculiarities of the last four kings of Judah: Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah

In the two historical works, the last four kings of Judah share a similar treatment: events are hurtling forward, the monarchy is lurching into its decline and the two authors are more interested in describing the fates of the people than those of their chiefs. Furthermore, after the false move of Josiah, who dies for a tactical error, the kingdom is henceforward at the mercy of foreign powers: first Egypt and then Babylon arrogate to themselves the right to establish who is to reign in Jerusalem, deporting undesirable (to them) sovereigns and placing other members of the royal family on the throne. With regard to the subject of the present chapter, the consequence is the fact that of at least three of the four last kings, who were deported and died in exile, nothing is said about their burial.

Jehoahaz

For the immediate successor of Josiah, Jehoahaz, both the works agree on his deporting to Egypt by Neco after just three months of his reign. The *Vorlage* also contains the notice of his death without temporal indications, whereas the Chronicler leaves it implicit[76].

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[75] Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 1014) also thinks the omission voluntary but with a different motivation from that offered here: the Chronicler would have been moved by such disgust for Amon as to reduce as far as possible the presentation of his reign and to underline with more force his lack of personality.

[76] However, the LXX reads 2 Chr 35,19-36,5 in a conflated form which takes up the parallel passages of 2 Kgs and harmonises the two historical compositions. In particular, at the end of 2 Chr 36,4, information is added taken from 2 Kgs 23,34b-35, including the death of Jehoahaz in Egypt. No Hebrew manuscript nor the other ancient versions contain this expansion.

Neither of the two mentions his burial.

2 Kgs 23,34b: «[Pharaoh Neco] took Jehoahaz away; [Jehoahaz] went into Egypt and died there».
2 Chr 36,4b: «[Pharaoh Neco] took Jehoahaz, his [Jehoiakim's] brother, and carried him into Egypt».

The omission could be intentional: a death outside Israel, in an unclean land, is not worthy of attention[77]. In fact, however, everything concerning any sovereign outside the borders of the kingdom does not receive interest in the eyes of the Chronicler[78]: no actions outside Canaan are reported by our author except defensive military campaigns and some episodes that are particularly important for the structure of the narrative[79]. It should be noted that Jehoahaz is the only king of Judah about whom the author expresses no judgement either positive or negative (by contrast with the Dtr who reserved a negative judgement for him).

Jehoiachin

With regard to the end of the reign of Josiah's third successor, Jehoiachin, the two historical works describe the same events but the Chronicler is more summary. Neither of the two recounts his death: just as for Jehoahaz, Chr mentions only his deportation (2 Chr 36,10), while Dtr chooses to close his work by showing him still alive, pardoned by Evil-Merodach after thirty-seven years in prison (2 Kgs 25,27-30), an episode not reported in Chr.

Zedekiah

Neither of the two historical collections mentions the death of Zedekiah[80]: the final mention of him in 2 Kgs concerns the killing of his

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[77] Cf. Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 413.

[78] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 1064: "From the moment a king crosses the borders of the land of Israel, he leaves the orbit of the Chronicler's interest".

[79] For example, the imprisonment of Manasseh in Babylon which was the origin of his conversion: 2 Chr 33,11-13.

[80] The information about Zedekiah's death in prison in Babylon comes to us from Jer 52,11 (Jer 52 is parallel to 2 Kgs 24,18-25,30, but Dtr does not contain the information of Jer 52,11) and, in the form of an oracle, from Ezek 12,13.

sons in front of him and his blinding after which he is taken to Babylon (25,7); 2 Chr relates only the beginning of his reign, albeit in a summary way (36,10b-11) and his sin against God (36,12-13), leaving implicit the fact that he was later to be deported with the majority of the people (36,17.20).

Jehoiakim

Different from the other three is the fate reserved for Josiah's second successor, Jehoiakim. According to 2 Kgs, Nebuchadnezzar, after wresting hegemony in the region from Egypt, sent a first expedition to reduce Jehoiakim to obedience. After three years, however, Judah rebelled and, consequently, Babylon and her allies intervened once again (24,1-2). Jehoiakim died a natural death in Jerusalem, but nothing is said about his burial[81].

2 Kgs 24,6a: «So Jehoiakim slept with his ancestors».

Observing this absence, the Lucianic recension of the LXX adds: καὶ ἐτάφη ἐν κήπω Οζα μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ ("and he was buried

[81] If Jeremiah's oracles reflect what would have happened historically and are not just a simple threat to Jehoiakim to urge him to conversion, we obtain from them the information that the king's corpse remained unburied for a certain period of time (Jer 36,30) and then buried with funeral honours outside the walls of Jerusalem (Jer 22,18-19). According to Lipschits (*«Jehoiakim Slept with his Fathers…» (II Kings 24:6). Did He?*, in *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 4.1 [2003] 11), these oracles of Jeremiah go back to the prophet himself, were pronounced while the sovereign was still alive and were then never fulfilled; the Dtr, with which the book of Jeremiah has close links, would have preferred to omit every piece of information about Jehoiakim's burial so as to avoid having to tackle the difficulty of explaining why the prophet's word was not fulfilled. Some scholars, like F.B. Huey (*Jeremiah, Lamentations* [NAC 16], Broadman & Holman, Nashville [TN] 1993, 207), try to hold together the various biblical texts and hypothesise that the prophecy was actually fulfilled but after the burial: when the Babylonians conquered the city, they would have exhumed Jehoiakim's corpse and inflicted on it the humiliation described by Jeremiah. However, the hypothesis of the unfulfilled prophecy is more convincing, bearing in mind also the fact that at least another part of the same oracle certainly did not happen: in threatening the absence of burial for Jehoiakim's body, Jeremiah had also announced that none of his descendants would ever ascend the throne (Jer 36,30), but actually, on his death, his son, Jehoiachin, was to become king.

in the garden of Uzza with his ancestors"), similar to what was said in 2 Kgs 21,18 for Manasseh and in 21,26 for Amon.

The Chronicler, on the other hand, seem to claim that Jehoiakim was deported to Babylon:

> *2 Chr 36,6:* «Against him [Jehoiakim] King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came up, and bound him with fetters to take him to Babylon»[82].

The MT is ambiguous: it could indicate either a deportation that happened or the simple intention of Nebuchadnezzar to take Jehoiakim to Babylon[83]. Describing Manasseh's deportation, the Chronicler is more complete: וַיַּאַסְרֻהוּ בַּנְחֻשְׁתַּיִם וַיּוֹלִיכֻהוּ בָּבֶלָה (2 Chr 33,11). In any case, the Hebrew language envisages the possibility of using the preposition לְ followed by the infinitive construct with a consecutive as well as a final or intentional meaning[84], leaving open the possibility of a real deportation. The LXX translates the Hebrew infinitive with an aorist: Jehoiakim is undoubtedly taken as prisoner to the Mesopotamian capital.

> *2 Chr 36,6 LXX:* «But Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, went up against him [Jehoiakim] and bound him with chains of bronze and took him to Babylon».

The MT says nothing about his death; it only reports the succession of his son Jehoiachin but it is not clear if this happens along with Jehoiakim's deportation to Babylon or at the moment of his death.

> *2 Chr 36,8 MT:* «Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and the abominations that he did, and what was found against him, are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah; and his son Jehoiachin succeeded him».

Instead, the LXX, between the stereotypical expression on his "other deeds" and the notice of the succession, introduces the information on his death and burial.

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[82] This translation is not taken from NRSV.

[83] McConville (*I & II Chronicles*, 266-267) speculates that the chaining of Jehoiakim was only a symbolic act to remind him of his status as vassal with the aim of intimidating him.

[84] Cf. P. Joüon-T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (Subsidia Biblica 27), Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Roma 1991, § 124*l*.

2 Chr 36,8 LXX: «And the rest of the deeds of Jehoiakim and everything that he did, behold, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? And Jehoiakim slept with his ancestors and Jehoiachin, his son, became king in his stead».

The differences between MT and LXX are important. First of all, the formulary expression of the first part of the verse does not mention the abominations but only deeds and actions in general. Moreover, the book cited as the source available to the author is not the book of the kings of Israel and Judah but the book of the annals of Judah. The most important novelty, however, is the central part of the verse which informs us that Jehoiakim returned from Babylon, died a natural death and was buried in Ganoza with his ancestors. At first sight, the term "Ganoza" seems mysterious: it does not appear anywhere else in the LXX but is connected with the royal necropolis, since Jehoiakim's "ancestors" are there. Furthermore, the manuscripts reveal a high number of variants[85]. The most plausible explanation of this unknown place name is that it is a transliteration of גַּן עֻזָּא, clearly no longer understood by the Greek translators of the different manuscripts as a construct chain to indicate the "garden of Uzza". Establishing the origin of the Greek version of the text is difficult. According to Wiseman[86], the addition of ἐν κήπῳ Οζα in the Lucianic recension of 2 Kgs 24,6 would derive from the Greek translation of 2 Chr 36,8, but this hypothesis is problematic because it does not account for the passage from Ganoza to κῆπος Οζα, and does not explain how the presence of the garden of Uzza could be original in the Chronicles which never name him. According to Allen[87], the garden

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[85] The variant ganoza is the most attested, but we also find γανωζα, γονοζα, γανοζαη, γααζα, γαζαα, γανοζαν and γανοζανι: cf. Brooke et alii, *Old Testament*, 555; and R. Hanhart, *Paralipomenon liber II* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum 7, 2), Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2014, 424.

[86] In D.G. Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings* (TOTC 9), Inter-Varsity, Leicester-Downers Grove 1993, 308.

[87] In L.C. Allen, *The Greek Chronicles: The Relation of the Septuagint of I and II Chronicles to the Massoretic Text*, vol. I (VTSup 25), Brill, Leiden 1974, 216: in n. 5, the author examines and discusses the various hypotheses on the relationships between the different texts, reaching the conclusion reported here. Previously (p. 63), Allen had claimed that the

of Uzza was present in both Hebrew texts which were available to the translator of 2 Kgs and the translator of 2 Chr, and they translated differently independently of each other; later Hebrew manuscripts no longer recorded the phrase because of an omission of an entire line through *homoioteleuton* both in the Hebrew text of 2 Kgs and in that of 2 Chr. However, there is still no explanation for this unique mention of the garden precisely in this passage of Chronicles which contradicts the context which understands the king as deported to Babylon. We have already seen in the passage about Jehoahaz that, in the last part of the work, the LXX contains an expansion to harmonise with 2 Kgs. Moreover, the comparison between the narrative about Jehoiakim and those on the kings after Josiah leads to the conclusion that the Chronicler wanted to present the deeds of the last four sovereigns of Judah in parallel[88], associating them with a very brief account which highlights their dependence on foreign sovereigns and each one ending his reign with an

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transliteration of גַּן עֻזָּא into Γανοζα would be a proof of a good personal knowledge of Jerusalem on the part of the Greek translator, so expert as to know how to recognise the name of a suburb of the city. However, my view is that precisely this translation is an indication of the opposite since Ganoza is not a suburb, and the translator does not recognise the name of one of the necropolises of the kings of Judah.

[88] The fate of Jehoiakim is one of the clearest example of the problem of the historicity of the information contained in Chronicles: whereas some scholars, like Yeivin (*Sepulchres*, 34), tend to integrate the information lacking in Sam-Kgs with that of Chr, others, such as C.R. Seitz (*Theology in Conflict: Reactions to the Exile in the Book of Jeremiah* [BZAW 176], De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1989, 112-113), prefer to consider the modifications contributed by the Chronicler as theological interpretations with the objective of communicating a message rather than providing historically accurate data. The interest of the present work is precisely on the communicative intention of a theological and social message rather than on the historical reconstruction of events. We can thus also transfer on to the anthropological and social plane the assessment that Ackroyd gave about the theological aspect of the thought of the Chronicler: "His significance as a theologian is not dependent on the historical reliability of his sources; even if it were demonstrated that at every point his account was historically speaking inferior – as used often to be affirmed – we should still have to ask what kind of theological judgment he makes and how far we may assess this judgment as valid": in P.R. Ackroyd, *History and Theology in the Writings of the Chronicler*, in *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38 (1967) 507.

exile[89]. Therefore, the addition of the LXX is to be considered foreign to the work of the Chronicler. Thus, the pious Josiah is, significantly, the last king of Judah to have died and been buried in Jerusalem.

I. Conclusions on the kings' burials

On summing up the data collected, we can observe the importance the Chronicler generally gives to the burial of the sovereigns; but it also emerges that the value of each of them possesses a gradation that varies from case to case. Undoubtedly, for some kings, even important ones, the burial does not take on particular importance: this is the case for David and figures included in groups A and E. For some sovereigns, their funeral honours confirm the explicit judgements, sometimes in connection with the doctrine of immediate retribution: this happens for Saul, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Uzziah, Ahaz, Manasseh and Amon. Finally, for one group of kings, the burial is especially significant.

1. For Asa, the funeral rites represent the decisive element through which the Chronicler rehabilitates the sovereign who, in this way, can be portrayed as a model of integrity despite the infidelity of the second phase of his reign.
2. Hezekiah is raised to the highest honour through a tomb endowed with singular magnificence: the splendour and the visibility of his burial become a sign of this king's integrity which is indicated as an example of leadership being a perfect embodiment of the ideal models of David and Solomon.
3. In a similar way to Asa, Josiah receives a *post mortem* rehabilitation through the specific nature of the funeral honours granted to him, especially through the intervention of the prophet, Jeremiah and the insertion of the lament he composed in a series of hymns which have been preserved for generations until the time of the Chronicler.

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[89] Cf. Mosis, *Untersuchungen*, 205-208; and C.T. Begg, *The Fate of Judah's Four Last Kings in the Book of Chronicles*, in *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 18 (1987) 82-83.

4. The final destiny of the last four kings responds to the aim of presenting the rapid and inglorious end of Davidic power in breathless tones. Through his silence on their deaths and burials, the Chronicler indicates Josiah as the last sovereign to the buried in Jerusalem. The lament over his death, the last lament uttered in Jerusalem, becomes the song of mourning for the whole dynasty now at its descent, a lament which lasts "to this day" (2 Chr 35,25).

In conclusion, in their function as a "memorial", the location of the tomb and the funeral honours in general not only express the divine retribution on the dead sovereign but also, through the category of honour/infamy linked to them, contribute to describing the quality of the memory which the collective memory of Israel has to maintain of him, and so also to sketch the outlines of the ideal leadership that the Chronicler intends to delineate.

II. ABSENCE OR LOSS OF DESCENDANTS

The cultural *motifs* bound up with the generation of children are part of the more general anthropological dimension of life and its preservation, a universal dimension linked to the very nature of human beings. However, although it is universal and primordial, the ways through which this vital dimension takes shape in history are modelled and presented in a particular way by each culture which develops ideological and valorial elements within a general vision of the world that is specific and original. In particular, the procreation of children possesses a social importance which necessarily intersects with cultural aspects on several levels: the criteria for the acceptance of life, the collective identity and its preservation (for example, through rites of passage which ratify belonging to the collective identity), the transmission of material and immaterial goods to the new generations etc[90].

[90] A general review of the social aspects connected with the transmission of life is contained in the work of the sociologist E. Zerubavel, *Ancestors and Relatives: Genealogy,*

Within this fabric, both natural and cultural, we also find the specific theme of the interruption of the transmission of life through the absence of descendants or their loss after this transmission has taken place. The lack of children, on the one hand, and grief for their premature death, on the other, are not just personal dramas but are invested with social connotations which confer interpretations and significance on these natural realities. In addition, when this concerns the royal family, there is also a surplus of significance owing to the public role and the significance of the figure of the sovereign for the collective identity.

In the Israelite mentality attested by the Bible, the transmission of life is a sign of Yhwh's blessing. Sterility is social infamy and is connected with a curse or, at least, with an absence of care from God. The death of a son is interpreted as a divine punishment. Emblematic in this regard are two stories (only two examples drawn from other narrative texts) contained in the books of Samuel. The comparison between Peninnah and Hannah, the two wives of Elkanah, father of the prophet Samuel, is constructed precisely on the theme of honour and infamy linked to the abundance or absence of children to which value judgements of a religious character are associated (1 Sam 1,1-20). After his adultery committed with Bathsheba, David has to accept the death of the son conceived with her as reparation before being able to obtain the pardon of Yhwh (2 Sam 12,13-23).

Chr reveal the stamp of the Jewish culture of the period of their composition and reflect it in their presentation and interpretation of the events of the identity past of Israel. The importance the Chronicler attaches to the element of the transmission of life and the continuation of blood lines is clearly expressed in the early stages of his literary work: the first nine chapters are made up of a collection of genealogies which are meant to delineate the identity of the people of Israel, first, within the universal map of the nations (1 Chr 1) and then in its structure among the constitutive twelve tribes originating from the third patriarch,

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Identity, and Community, Oxford University Press, New York 2012.

Jacob/Israel (1 Chr 2-9)[91]. The historical continuity of the Jewish people is assured through the uninterrupted generation of children from the beginnings to the time of the author. Any interruption in this generation involves a suspension of the divine blessing and the cessation of participation in Yhwh's plan for Israel.

Added to these general considerations, valid for all the members of the Jewish people, is a specific element concerning the Davidic dynasty and expressed by the Chronicler with a comment of the author himself within the account of Jehoram, one of the sovereigns included in the theme of loss of descendants:

> *2 Chr 21,7:* «Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David because of the covenant that he had made with David, and since he had promised to give a lamp to him and to his descendants forever».

The permanence of descendants is directly connected with Yhwh's promise to David and is, therefore, a sign and guarantee of God's help for the people of Israel. When the possibility of descendants is threatened, a theological message is being delivered to the reader of Chronicles.

A. Saul

The only event in the life of the first king, Saul, recounted by the Chronicler is his defeat and death on Mount Gilboa together with his three sons.

> *1 Chr 10,2:* «The Philistines overtook Saul and his sons; and the Philistines killed Jonathan and Abinadab and Malchishua, sons of Saul».
> *1 Chr 10,6:* «Thus Saul died; he and his three sons and all his house died together».

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[91] The interpretative model of "generations" is also used elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible to define the identity of Israel, in particular in the genealogies of Genesis with regard to the national identity in relation to the other peoples (cf. Vuk, *Bibbia*, 191-194, and the bibliography in n. 263) and in the stories of the patriarchs to account for the dichotomous relationship between the unity of Israel and its structuring into twelve tribes (cf. Vuk, *Bibbia*, 297-303).

In the genealogies, Saul's family is listed twice: in 1 Chr 8,33-40, in the tally of the tribe of Benjamin, then, in 9,39-44, as an introduction to the account of the battle of Gilboa. Verses 8,33-38 and 9,39-44 are substantially parallel; 8,39-40 adds the names of further descendants. Both lists mention four sons of Saul in the same order: Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab and Eshbaal (8,33 // 9,39). Subsequently, both consider only the descendants of Jonathan through Meribbaal (8,34 // 9,40). However, neither Eshbaal nor Meribbaal are mentioned in the continuation of the narrative by contrast with the books of Samuel where the former was head of the ephemeral kingdom of Israel between the death of Saul and David's taking power (2 Sam 2-4), while the latter was protected by David in the name of his friendship with Jonathan (2 Sam 4,4; 9,1-13; 19,25-31; 21,7). The Chronicler is not even interested in the fate of the other descendants of the first king who, according to 2 Sam 21,1-14, were killed in expiation for Saul's violation of the covenant between Israelites and Gibeonites which went back to the time of Joshua (Josh 9,3-27). In the narrative of the entrance of the Ark into Jerusalem, he mentions the presence of Michal, Saul's daughter, and her scorn at David's dancing (1 Chr 15,29), but does not record the king's reaction and the information about her sterility (2 Sam 6,21-23); he never even mentions that she was David's wife.

Therefore, the Chronicler limits his interest in Saul's family to the battle of Gilboa alone. Not only does he provide the names of the sons who died with him (1 Chr 10,2): he declares that all his family shared in the final catastrophe (10,6). The bodies of the king and his sons were found, stripped and left unburied (10,8). Later, they received funeral honours from the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead who were allies of Israel (10,12). With these actions, Saul's dynasty is considered terminated because of the infidelity of its head towards Yhwh (10,13-14).

B. David and Solomon

If Saul's dynasty ends disastrously on Gilboa, without any further appearance, because of his infidelity to God, by contrast, Chronicles

portrays the Davidic royal family free from any kind of shadow or stain. Consequently, some of the narrative sequences in Sam-Kgs which would have compromised its ideal image were omitted or deliberately changed. In the Deuteronomist work, David has to face the loss of some of his descendants because of sins and rebellions: the first son conceived with Bathsheba dies as a consequence of the adultery committed (2 Sam 12,15-23); the first born, Amnon, is killed by Absalom because of his incest with the latter's sister, Tamar (2 Sam 13,28-29); during the civil war which followed his rebellion, Absalom himself was mortally wounded by Joab and his soldiers in contravention of the orders of the king (2 Sam 18,9-17); on the death of David, Solomon eliminates the party favouring Adonijah and orders the killing of his brother (1 Kgs 2,23-25). Moreover, Michal, David's first wife produces no children (2 Sam 6,23). None of these events has a place in Chronicles. Our author completely omits the sin with Bathsheba and the Absalom cycle; he mentions Michal's scorn of David but does not describe her as his wife, thus obtaining the effect of not relating the two dynasties through marriage (1 Chr 15,29); above all, in direct contradiction to the Dtr, he radically modifies the succession from David to Solomon, noting that, at the moment of the latter's coming to the throne, "also all the sons of King David pledged their allegiance to Solomon" (29,24): he is the undisputed successor, accepted by the king's "many sons" (cf. 28,5) by virtue of the choice made by Yhwh himself. Chronicles had previously listed the numerous progenies of David in the genealogies (3,1-9); a second list is found after the transfer of the capital to Jerusalem, restricted to the sons born there (14,3-7). The omission of the loss of some descendants and the radical modification of the description of the succession are two elements in strong support of the ideal portrayal of the first two sovereigns of the dynasty. Family harmony is a fundamental element augmenting the perception of the positivity of both kings who act in full obedience to the divine will.

C. Jehoram

Jehoram rises to power after the death of Jehoshaphat, one of the kings more greatly esteemed by the Chronicler. Despite his descent from such a just father, Jehoram is the first sovereign of Judah to receive a completely negative judgement. His wickedness is revealed right from the first lines with the account of the extermination of his brothers and of some chiefs of Judah[92] which he carried out in order to secure greater power for himself.

> *2 Chr 21,2-4:* «[2]He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these were the sons of King Jehoshaphat of Judah. [3]Their father gave them many gifts, of silver, gold, and valuable possessions, together with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was the firstborn. [4]When Jehoram had ascended the throne of his father and was established, he put all his brothers to the sword, and also some of the officials of Israel».

There is no parallel to this passage in the depiction of the reign of Jehoram in 2 Kgs 8,16-24. The king's action violates the basic value of familial solidarity[93]. Moreover, it is without justification: while Jehoshaphat was still alive, he had designated Jehoram as his successor and had assigned his other sons local posts for organising the kingdom (cf. 2 Chr 17,7-9.12; 19,4-7) and guaranteeing a peaceful succession, following the example of Rehoboam (2 Chr 11,21-23). Jehoram was chosen as firstborn, not for particular merits or for the possession of qualities suitable for ruling. The subsequent letter of Elijah, condemning Jehoram, was to claim that his brothers were better than he (21,13). Thus, the reign of Jehoram opened with a dynastic crisis and with a notable reduction in

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[92] Verse 4 mentions the "officials of Israel". Since v. 2 describes Jehoshaphat as "king of Israel", we must understand that here the name is equivalent to "Judah".

[93] Cf. J.N. Bremmer, *Brothers and Fratricide in the Ancient Mediterranean: Israel, Greece and Rome*, in G.P. Luttikhuizen (ed.), *Eve's Children: The Biblical Stories Retold and Interpreted in Jewish and Christian Traditions* (TIB 5), Brill, Leiden-Boston (MA) 2003, 78.

the number of members of the royal family[94]. However, the danger for the dynasty reaches its peak a little while later, in fulfilment of Elijah's oracle (21,14), when a foreign invasion involves the capture and killing of the sons of Jehoram.

> *2 Chr 21,16-17:* «[16]The Lord aroused against Jehoram the anger of the Philistines and of the Arabs who are near the Ethiopians. [17]They came up against Judah, invaded it, and carried away all the possessions they found that belonged to the king's house, along with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest son». *2 Chr 22,1:* «The inhabitants of Jerusalem made his youngest son Ahaziah king as his successor; for the troops who came with the Arabs to the camp had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram reigned as king of Judah».

This information also is not in the *Vorlage* where, instead, the brothers of Ahaziah were killed later during the revolt of Jehu (2 Kgs 10,12-14; in the parallel passage of 2 Chr 22,8, object of the extermination are the sons of Ahaziah's brothers). The two enemy people, Philistines and Arabs, are depicted as vassals of Judah in the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17,11), in a clear contrast between the two kings. All Jehoram's sons and wives are captured (21,17) and killed (22,1). The only survivor is Ahaziah, also called by his other name, Jehoahaz[95] (which is used also in 2 Chr 25,23); even if not mentioned in the text, his mother Athaliah also survives together with her son and becomes the protagonist of subsequent events. A little later, Jehoram, who inaugurated his reign by killing his brothers, has to witness the extermination of his own family.

In addition, Elijah's letter had announced a further punishment: an incurable sickness which would lead him to death (21,15) and which arrived on time!

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[94] Japhet reckons it improbable that Jehoshaphat had only seven sons: according to her, the names recorded by the Chronicler indicate the first born of each of the other six wives of Jehoshaphat as well as Jehoram's mother whose name was Athaliah according to 2 Chr 22,2 (*I & II Chronicles*, 807-808).

[95] The names אֲחַזְיָהוּ and יְהוֹאָחָז are composed of the same elements, namely, the root אחז ("hold back, grasp") and the divine name יה, combined in two different sequences.

2 Chr 21,18-19: «[18]After all this the Lord struck him in his bowels with an incurable disease.[19]In course of time, at the end of two years, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great agony. His people made no fire in his honor, like the fires made for his ancestors».

The sickness concerns his מעים, a plural term only which occurs 32 times in the Hebrew Bible, always accompanied by the suffixed pronoun referring to their possessor. From the general significance of "lower abdomen"[96], it most often indicates the internal parts of the human body, both physically and metaphorically in connection with the expression of feelings[97] or the decision-making faculty[98]. When it indicates the viscera, the term is clarified to indicate a specific anatomical part: in six cases, the digestive system[99], and in another nine, the sexual organs, both male[100] and female[101]. In 2 Chr 21, the term occurs four times in three verses, twice in Elijah's letter (v. 15), one, on the appearance of the disease (v. 18) and one, on its mortal outcome (v. 19). In 2 Chr 21, the ancient versions translate מֵעָיו with terms that possess the same breadth of significance: the LXX, ἡ κοιλία αὐτοῦ, the Peshitta ,ܡܥܝܗ, while the Vulgate uses four different substantives: "uterus", "vitalia" (v. 15), "alvus" (v. 18) and "viscera" (v. 19). Modern translators generally hold that the disease refers to the digestive system and can be identified with a tumour or very violent

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[96] 2 Sam 20,10 (passage about the revolt of Sheba, not in Chr); Ct 5,14.

[97] Job 30,27; Ps 22,25; Ct 5,4; Is 16,11; 63,15; Jer 4,19 (2 twice); 31,20; Lam 1,20; 2,11.

[98] Ps 40,9.

[99] Num 5,22; Job 20,14; Ezek 3,3; 7,19; Jonah 2,1-2.

[100] Five occurrences: Gen 15,4; 2 Sam 7,12 (term not present in the parallel passage of 1 Chr 17,11); 16,11 (the Absalom cycle, not in Chr); 2 Chr 32,21; Is 48,19. Also, in Ct 5,14, there is a possible allusion to the male sexual organ.

[101] Four occurrences: Gen 25,23; Ruth 1,11; Ps 71,6; Is 49,1. In Ct 5,4, there is a probable allusion to the female sexual organ. Moreover, in Num 5,22, the reference to the digestive system is inserted within a context of the ordeal in order to reveal the existence of a sexual transgression: the woman suspected of adultery is challenged to drink water which, in the case of guilt, once ingested into the viscera (בְּמֵעַיִךְ) will cause a swelling of the belly (בֶּטֶן) and sterility; thus, the ordeal associates symbolically the digestive and sexual apparatus.

diarrhoea[102]. Y. Zimran has proposed attributing to מעים the meaning of reproductive system[103]; in this case, the illness described would be a lethal form of orchitis or a testicular tumour. This interpretation chimes with the occurrence of מעים in 2 Chr 32,21 where it is used with reference to the sons born to Sennacherib[104]. Moreover, it is inserted more suitably into the context: the disease is not a generic punishment but fits in with the sins of Jehoram. He violated seriously the blood links of his family: as a result, firstly, he undergoes the extermination of his own sons, with the exception of one, as a guarantee of the divine promise on the continuation of the dynasty (cf. 21,7); then, he himself is struck in his own generative faculties. Finally, he will receive a dishonourable burial which underlines his expulsion from the royal family[105]. If one also considers the brevity of his reign, eight years (21,20), the specific nature of the Chronicler's depiction of Jehoram emerges: he is a king who has threatened the very life of the dynasty at its roots and is, therefore, punished in his physical life and in his ability to procreate[106].

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[102] "Bowels": Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 163; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 816; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 309-310; Jonker, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 235-236. "Intestini": Lorenzin, *1-2 Cronache*, 318; Balzaretti, *Cronache*, 319.

[103] Zimran, *Covenant*, 315-320; she is followed by I. Amar, *Three Evil Kings and One Promise: Another Look at the Doctrine of Retribution and the Question of the Eternal Reign of the Davidic Dynasty in the Book of Chronicles*, in *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 132 (2020) 563; and Levin, *Chronicles*, 176).

[104] The term does not appear in the parallel text of 2 Kgs 19,37.

[105] Above, p. 324-325.

[106] On other aspects of the importance of the figure of Jehoram for the collective identity of the Israelites in the Persian period, see Jonker, *Textual Identities*, esp. 206-15. The scholars who identify the מעים with the digestive system, without grasping the direct link between the disease and Jehoram's sin, interpret it in different ways: according to Japhet (*I & II Chronicles*, 816-817) it is a generic application of the doctrine of immediate retribution; according to Begg (*Constructing*, 42-43), the Chronicler adds to the *Vorlage* the account of the disease by analogy with the situation of the homonymous Jehoram of Israel who was killed by Jehu while he was recovering from the wounds sustained in a battle against the Aramaeans (2 Kgs 8,29; 9,14-15; cf. 2 Chr 22,5-6); for Strange, it is really the analogy between the two Jehorams that constitutes one of the elements on which he bases his hypothesis that they were historically the same person (J. Strange, *Joram, King of Israel*

D. Ahaziah

Jehoram's son, Ahaziah, escaped the kidnapping and killing of the royal family by the Arabs and Philistines, experienced, in his turn, the loss of descendants. By contrast with his father, however, he was not present at the slaughter of his sons because it was committed after his death. After a reign of only two years, in fact, Ahaziah was killed in the northern kingdom during the rebellion hatched by Jehu which the Omride dynasty was exterminated (2 Chr 22,9). Exploiting the vacuum of power thus created, Ahaziah's mother and the wife of Jehoram, Athaliah, last descendant of the house of Omri, made herself ruler. Like her husband, Athaliah inaugurated her reign with the collective killing of possible rivals; if Jehoram had committed this action towards his brothers, the usurping queen turned against her grandchildren, the sons of her own son, Ahaziah.

> *2 Chr 22,10-11:* «[10] Now when Athaliah, Ahaziah's mother, saw that her son was dead, she set about to destroy all the royal family of the house of Judah. [11] But Jehoshabeath, the king's daughter, took Joash son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's children who were about to be killed; she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Thus Jehoshabeath, daughter of King Jehoram and wife of the priest Jehoiada -- because she was a sister of Ahaziah -- hid him from Athaliah, so that she did not kill him».

The figure of Ahaziah can be compared with his two predecessors who were related by marriage to the dynasty of Omri: his grandfather, Jehoshaphat, and his father[107]. The beginning of Ahaziah's reign is portrayed in opposite terms to the initial phases of his father: Jehoram was the first born (21,3), Ahaziah, the last born (22,1); Jehoram was named successor by his father, Ahaziah by the inhabitants of Jerusalem;

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and Judah, in *Vetus Testamentum* 25 [1975] 198). However, these interpretations are not exclusive and can also coexist with the identification of the מעים with the reproductive system which has the advantage of pointing out an additional significance by making the account more meaningful.

[107] Cf. Amar, *Three Evil Kings*, 563-564.

Jehoram was chosen from among various possible claimants, Ahazias becomes king necessarily as the only surviving son. If Jehoram's reign was already short, only eight years (21,20), his son lasted as king for only a single year (22,2). Both follow in the footsteps of the house of Ahab: Jehoram is subdued to the influence of his wife (21,6), Ahaziah to that of the counsellors coming from the royal family of Israel (22,4). The Chronicler sketches an introductory picture which allows us to foretell a possible calamity for Ahaziah similar to what happened to his father.

The closeness to the house of Omri entails some analogies with Jehoshaphat also. Both kings go north to help the king of Israel in his war against the Aramaeans at Ramoth-gilead: Jehoshaphat with Ahab (18,3), Ahaziah with Jehoram (22,5). Both undergo a defeat from which the king of Israel comes out worse: Ahab dies in battle (18,34), Jehoram is gravely wounded, and, while convalescing, is killed by Jehu (22,6-7). The death of the two northern kings happens because of their wickedness and is depicted as the divine will: Ahab had received an oracle from Micaiah (18,16), Jehoram is supplanted by Jehu whom Yhwh had consecrated king in judgement on the Omride dynasty (22,7). The fate of the two kings of Judah, on the other hand, is different on account of the different moral implications: Jehoshaphat, a just man, returns to Jerusalem in peace (19,1.3) whereas the wicked Ahaziah is killed in Jehu's revolt despite an attempt at flight (22,9). In death, Ahaziah is once again matched with his father, Jehoram: it happens along with the extermination of the royal family (the "sons of the brothers of Ahaziah") and of the chiefs of Judah (22,8), just as his father had slaughtered his own brothers and some of the chiefs of Israel (21,4). Jehoshaphat is buried in the city of David (21,1), Jehoram in the city of David but not in the royal necropolis (21,20), Ahaziah somewhere unknown, probably in Samaria, and only as a mark of respect for Jehoshaphat, his grandfather (22,9). If, on his death, Jehoshaphat left seven sons (21,3), all fit to reign (21,13), and if, on the death of Jehoram, the citizens of Jerusalem place on the throne the last son, Ahaziah (22,1), when the latter is killed, the Chronicler observes: "the house of Ahaziah had no one able to rule the kingdom" (22,9).

The wickedness of Ahaziah caused a further crisis in the dynasty after that already experienced with Jehoram. Yhwh had decided to eliminate the dynasty of Ahab (22,7) but intended to remain faithful to his promise to David (21,7). Just as Ahaziah had escaped the extermination of his brothers, so too, among his sons, Joash was saved. Although he is not described as the last born, he was certainly very young and was hidden until he could rule properly[108]. Therefore, on the one hand, the Chronicler adopts the cultural *motif* of the loss of descendants to underline the gravity of the sins of Jehoram and Ahaziah; on the other hand, in both cases, he preserves the Davidic family by the literary stratagem of the rescue of the little son.

E. Ahaz

The theme of the loss of descendants assumes a new aspect with the reign of Ahaz. If Saul, Jehoram and Ahaziah lost their sons because of wars or internecine struggles, Ahaz is himself the author of the death of his offspring.

> *2 Chr 28,3:* «And he made offerings in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and made his sons pass through fire, according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out before the people of Israel».

According to 2 Kgs 16,3, Ahaz was guilty of the sacrifice of a son, probably his firstborn; the Chronicler, for whom Ahaz is the king who reaches the peak of wickedness, turns the substantive בֵּן into the plural[109]. Beyond its general significance of idolatrous infidelity, this action also takes on the value of an act contrary to the dynasty which it places in danger[110]. In addition to the sacrificial immolations, a further loss of

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[108] The rescue of Joash is taken from 2 Kgs 11,2-3; however, by modifying the narrative context, the Chronicler creates a clear parallelism with Ahaziah which is not found in the Dtr.

[109] According to Dillard (*2 Chronicles*, 218) and Klein (*2 Chronicles*, 390), the presence of the plural is not ascribable to the Chronicler but is to be explained by a *Vorlage* partly different from the MT of 2 Kgs.

[110] Cf. Amar, *Three Evil Kings*, 566-567.

descendants occurs during the so-called Syro-Ephraimite War:

> *2 Chr 28,7:* «And Zichri, a mighty warrior of Ephraim, killed the king's son Maaseiah, Azrikam the commander of the palace, and Elkanah the next in authority to the king».

The military defeat is ascribed explicitly to the will of Yhwh (28,5-6) to whom, therefore, we must attribute all the individual events which make up the overall picture. The expression בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ (literally "king's son"), with which Maaseiah is identified, could also be the title of an official, not necessarily a biological son[111]; however, the narrative context in which Maaseiah is mentioned first and then followed by the commander of the palace and the vice-king makes it more likely that בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ does not indicate a simple official but precisely a son of the king or even his firstborn.

For Ahaz too, as in the previous cases, the loss of descendants denotes a moment of crisis for the dynasty and is connected directly with the wickedness of the sovereign. The greater the wickedness, the greater the danger for the survival of the family. Ahaz reaches the new level of the deliberate killing of offspring. That had already happened with Athaliah, but with two important differences: the extermination of the sons of Ahaziah did not take place in a sacral context and, above all, Athaliah herself was not a Davidide. Now, however, the most wicked of the sovereigns reaches the peak of harm caused to the continuation of life and, in the particular case of the royal family, the preservation of the Davidic leadership.

F. Manasseh

In the first phase of his reign, Manasseh is given a very negative assessment. In the list of his wicked acts, taken from 2 Kgs 21,6, we find information about the sacrificial offering of his sons.

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[111] Cf. A. Lemaire, *Note sur le titre bn hmlk dans l'ancien Israël*, in *Semitica* 29 (1979) 59-65; however, on p. 62, in examining 2 Chr 28,7, the same scholar holds it plausible that the expression here indicates a biological son, and precisely the designated heir.

2 Chr 33,6: «He made his son pass through fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom, practiced soothsaying and augury and sorcery, and dealt with mediums and with wizards. He did much evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking him to anger».

The terminology is very similar to 28,3, and the act possesses the same religious and anthropological significance[112]: like Ahaz, Manasseh too has made an attack on the integrity of his descendants, threatening their very existence. What differentiates the two sovereigns is the act of conversion and submission to Yhwh which Manasseh performs during his personal exile in Babylon. In fact, in the first phase of his reign, Manasseh is no different from Ahaz. However, his conversion is portrayed as a sign of hope for the people of Persian Yehud who are being called on by the Chronicler to rediscover their own identity. If, like Manasseh, the Israelites' past has also known the destruction caused by their own sins, the example of that king's return demonstrates Yhwh's capacity to go beyond the transgression and reconstruct a new future. If the Israelites too have made an attack on their own life with idolatry, Yhwh is able to give them future and descendants.

G. Final kings of Judah

Despite the faithfulness and reforms of some kings, like Hezekiah and Josiah, the power of the Davidic dynasty was waning. Summarising the events recorded in 2 Kgs 23,31-25,21, the Chronicler describes their rapid development from the unexpected death of Josiah to the final catastrophe of Judah. In 14 verses, he concentrates almost 23 years of history in which four kings succeed one another, three of them sons of Josiah. Jehoahaz reigns for only three months and is deposed by Neco who replaces him with his brother Jehoiakim (2 Chr 36,1-4): for the first time, the succession does not follow the vertical line from father to son, but the horizontal one from brother to brother; interruptions in the

[112] Also valid with regard to the singular בֵּן in 2 Kgs 21,6 and the plural in 2 Chr 33,6 are the same considerations expressed a little earlier.

patrilineal succession had happened only in the change of dynasty from Saul to David and in the interregnum of the usurper, Athaliah. Nothing is said about the possible sons of Jehoahaz, information that is lacking in 2 Kgs 23,31-33 also. Jehoiakim's death was the occasion of the last succession in the vertical line in favour of his son, Jehoiachin (2 Chr 36,5-8): when the latter was deported to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar imposed his uncle, Zedekiah, on the throne[113] (2 Chr 36,9-10). The Chronicler does

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[113] 2 Chr 36,10 describes Zedekiah as אָחִיו, with a suffixed pronoun referring to Jehoiachin; in the parallel passage of 2 Kgs 24,17, however, דֹּדוֹ is read. Japhet translates the term אָח literally so that, according to the Chronicler, Zedekiah would be a son of Jehoiakim, not of Josiah (*I & II Chronicles*, 1068); since Jehoiakim died at the age of 36 (2 Chr 36,5) and, after the three months of Jehoiachin's reign, Zedekiah ascended the throne at 21 (2 Chr 36,11), Jehoiakim would have produced Zedekiah at the age of 15. Such a temporal scenario is not impossible, since, at the birth of his second son, Jehoiakim, Josiah was 14 (combining the information in 1 Chr 3,15, 2 Chr 34,1 and 36,5). Williamson hypothesises a confusion between Zedekiah, son of Josiah, and a homonymous figure mentioned in the genealogies in 1 Chr 3,15-16 (*1 and 2 Chronicles*, 414); however, this position appears weak since the Chronicler certainly knew the information in 2 Kgs 24,17. Furthermore, 1 Chr 3,16 poses a problem of translation: the Zedekiah named here can be held to be a son of Jehoiakim (thus Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 56-57; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 98; and Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 320) or else a son of Jehoiachin born before the Exile and to be distinguished from Jehoiachin's sons born in Babylon and mentioned in 1 Chr 3,17 (so Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 118); in the latter case, this Zedekiah cannot be identified with the king. But even if we considered him a son of Jehoiakim, since Zedekiah is mentioned after his brother, he must be held to be the second born, thus contradicting the datum of 2 Chr 36,9.11 according to which the last king of Judah is older than Jehoiachin: in this case too, therefore, the Zedekiah of 1 Chr 3,16 cannot be the king. It is preferable to hold that the term אָח in 2 Chr 36,10 indicates a more general degree of kinship which also includes the relation between uncle and nephew (cf. Gen 13,8 with regard to Abraham and Lot). Or else we can hypothesise an error in the textual transmission of the Hebrew text through *homoioteleuton* from אחי אביו to אחיו: the LXX reads here ἀδελφὸν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, and, in 2 Kgs 24,17, υἱὸν αὐτοῦ; therefore, it is not a case of harmonisation between the two translations; rather, according to the Greek version, it is the Dtr, not Chr, that describes Zedekiah as son of Jehoiachin. In 2 Kgs, the Lucianic recension also reads ἀδελφὸν τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ; the Peshitta reads ܐܚܘܗܝ as in 2 Kgs 24,17; the Vulgate, instead, reads "fratrem eius" (in 2 Kgs 24,17: "patruum eius"), a sign that the omission through *homoioteleuton* must have already happened in the IV cent., at least in the text consulted by Jerome. For all these reasons, I assume that also for the Chronicler, as for the Dtr, Zedekiah was the son of Josiah and is to be identified with the person mentioned in the genealogy of David in 1

not report any information about Zedekiah's descendants: the last king holds no interest for him (2 Chr 36,11-14); he chooses to include not even the account of the killing of Zedekiah's sons before he was blinded (2 Kgs 25,7). As for Jehoiachin, his descendants are listed within the genealogies, in 1 Chr 3,16-24, very probably getting as far as the time of the Chronicler. Thus, Chronicles bears witness to the continuation of the Davidic dynasty even after the conquest of the kingdom of Judah, not through the last king, Zedekiah, but following the line of Jehoiachin. Even if there is no interest in the personal fate of the latter, unlike the Deuteronomist work which concludes with a sign of hope in the restoration of the Davidic power (2 Kgs 25,27-30), nevertheless, Chronicles also considers the penultimate king of Judah the one through whom the royal descent continues to exist in the post-Exilic period[114].

The Davidic dynasty loses royal power but it does not cease to exist. Its fate, therefore, is depicted differently from the end of the house of Saul. If a thematic analogy can be drawn between Saul's refusal to listen to the word of Yhwh (1 Chr 10,13-14) and Zedekiah's obstinacy before Jeremiah and Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chr 36,12-13), it remains limited to the comparison between the figures of the two individual sovereigns. As for their families, Saul's death is accompanied by that of his sons (1 Chr 10,2.6) whereas, by contrast, the extermination of Zedekiah's family, which is recounted by the Dtr, is deliberately omitted in Chr. In the genealogies, descent from Saul is preserved thanks to Jonathan's son, Meribbaal, but the names listed reach to the fourteenth generation in the longer version (1 Chr 8,33-40) and the twelfth in the shorter (1 Chr 9,39-44); David's genealogy continues for thirty generations, embracing a temporal span that is almost double (1 Chr 3); the end of the list of Saul's descendants corresponds to the period of Ahaz and Hezekiah, the time of the destruction of the northern kingdom. Through the cessation of Saul's descendants and the continuation of the Davidic line, the Chronicler is affirming the

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Chr 3,15, and not with his homonym in 1 Chr 3,16.

[114] Cf. Williamson, *Eschatology*, 154; Klein, *1 Chronicles*, 123; and Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 333-336.

permanence of the continuity of the family of the son of Jesse. However, the loss of the kingship is made clear. It passes not to a usurper, as in the case of Athaliah, but to a legitimate sovereign, he too chosen, like David, by Yhwh himself. Has the covenant between God and David guaranteed in 2 Chr 21,7 failed, perhaps? It has certainly lost its strength. However, the dynasty still exists in the time of the Chronicler, like an underground stream which continues to flow even in the Persian period, ready to break through to the surface again when conditions permit. The life of David's descendants also involves the vitality of the eternal covenant of Yhwh who has temporarily entrusted power to Cyrus and his successors but leaves open the possibility of a future reestablishment of the Davidic monarchy. However, the Chronicler does not advocate this explicitly nor is it a central element of his theological agenda.

H. Conclusions on descendants

At the end of our analysis of the narratives about the absence or loss of descendants, we can obtain four elements useful for the definition of the judgement which the Chronicler means to express on the sovereigns concerned.

1. Saul dies together with his sons: the contemporaneous death of the whole family is equivalent to the end of the dynasty. The cause is the infidelity of Saul who has not wanted to listen to the voice of God. The succession involves the passage of the throne to a different dynasty, chosen by Yhwh. The contrast with David is clear: the events are reread by the Chronicler in such a way as to pass over the loss of descendants. At his death, the Davidic family is intact and is unanimous in placing Solomon on the throne.
2. The reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah are placed in parallel with mutual references which indicate their total negativity: they represent the danger of an evil that takes life away, a wickedness which puts the relationship with Yhwh at risk, and, consequently, the very existence of king and people.

3. A further parallel is drawn between the behaviour of Ahaz and that of the early Manasseh: they reach the greatest level of wickedness to the point of killing their sons and themselves threatening the survival of their descendants. However, the contrary outcome of the two stories shows the possibility of a repentance which Yhwh is ready to give if there is a return to him, as with Manasseh, despite the extreme gravity of his transgressions.
4. There is no parallelism between the end of the two dynasties, Saulide and Davidide, but only a similarity between the sins of the individuals, Zedekiah and Saul. Saul's genealogy, through the survivor, Meribbaal, no longer merits a mention after a few generations by contrast with that of David which lasts until the period of the Chronicler: if the narrative from the Exile onward gives no space to the Davidic family and the kingship is assigned to Cyrus, the Davidic genealogy shows that it continues survive and with it also the promises of Yhwh, although at the moment their power is latent.

In conclusion, the cultural *motif* of the absence or loss of descendants is revealed as a significant element which contributes to completing the explicit judgements on the individual sovereigns. In fact, in the case of the survival of the dynasty after the end of the kingdom, it furnishes a very valuable contribution for delineating more clearly the theme of the validity of Yhwh's promise connected with the royal throne of David, a theme that the Chronicler does not tackle head on, but which must be understood through the multiform languages that he uses.

III. POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS GEOGRAPHY: THE "BLURRED BORDER" BETWEEN JUDAH AND ISRAEL

The territorial element is a constitutive aspect in the formation of collective identity. Although, in the case of physical distance, a people can perceive identity links on the base of other factors such as common blood or cultural affinities, the space in which a social group has its concrete existence implies, necessarily, the creation of a form of identity.

Such a process, verifiable universally and at all periods, was still more accentuated in the sedentary societies of the ancient world in which the mobility of individuals and the possibilities of communication over a long distance were less, and this facilitated the formation of common frameworks of value among people who shared the same space. In this way, geography becomes part of the collective identity of a population which recognises itself not only through common beliefs and practices but also through the territory in which it lives, territory identified with names and marked out by borders beyond which "the others" stay. At times, but not necessarily, this social territory can be supplemented by an autonomous or semi-autonomous political reality, which reinforces the perception of collective identity and also often places it in competition with other ones[115].

In the biblical world, the geographical question assumes a theological importance that is wholly special. The origin of the Israelite people is made to go back to the figure of Abraham who was called to move from his own geographical and cultural space to go to a land promised by God himself to his future descendants (Gen 12,1.7). This land, Canaan, is the hinge of the whole of the subsequent story: it is the scene of the events of the patriarchal stories; it is the destination of the events of the Exodus; it is the object of the conquests of Joshua and the allocation to the tribes until the setting up of the monarchy. After the Exile, it is the place to which to return to restart the history of the people. In the case

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[115] On the relationship between geography, culture and identity, both in theory and in the specific case of the biblical world, see J.L. Berquist, *Critical Spatiality and the Construction of the Ancient World*, in D.G. Gunn-P.M. McNutt (eds.), *'Imagining' Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (JSOTSup 359), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 2002, 14-29; J.L. Berquist-C.V. Camp (eds.), *Constructions of Space I: Theory, Geography, and Narrative* (LHB/OTS 481), T&T Clark, New York-London 2007; M. Sleeman, *Critical Spatial Theory 2.0*, in C.M. Maier-G.M. Prinsloo (eds.), *Constructions of Space V: Place, Space and Identity in the Ancient Mediterranean World* (LHB/OTS 576), T&T Clark, London-New York 2013, 49-66; and C. Meredith, *Taking Issue with Thirdspace: Reading Soja, Lefebvre and the Bible*, in J. Økland et alii (eds.), *Constructions of Space III: Biblical Spatiality and the Sacred* (LHB/OTS 540), T&T Clark, London-New York 2016, 75-103.

of the Israelites, therefore, geography possesses a particularly elevated identity value, invested with religious connotations that make the relationship with divinity fundamental for the people.

The narration of events necessarily involves also the description of the space in which they take place. Chronicles, a theological work which is concerned with the history of the kingdom of Judah, also describes this land in its geographical extent, signalling its expansions and contractions, recounting expansionary wars and territorial losses, noting the fortifications with which the territory is protected and made secure. However, even when these elements seem to be purely descriptive, we are always faced with a story that is being reread in a theological key: the events are not recounted simply for the historical information they supply but, above all, for the message which the author intends to transmit with them.

In this section, we shall focus on a specific geographical aspect, the border, which, on account of its value as a separating element between one's own collective identity and the reality outside, assumes the status of a cultural *motif* proper. In particular, we shall be concerned with a wholly peculiar border: that between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Its peculiarity lies in its nature as a political but not an identity border: it defines the northern limit of Judah but it does not separate two different peoples. Rather, it is an internal division of a single social group which perceives itself as sharing the same collective identity. The Chronicler conceives the existence of a single Israel which embraces both kingdoms, and so shows a relative permeability between them which is not encountered in their relations with the other peoples. Taking up a description of Jonker, we describe the frontier between Judah and Israel as a "blurred border"[116], the crossing of which is attended with particular

[116] This expression adapts the similar expression "blurred lines" employed by Jonker with reference to the reign of Jehoram (2 Chr 21,1-22,1) in *Textual Identities*, 211-212, and *Reflections on Leadership*, 212-213; here, I am extending its use to other passages not considered by Jonker. See also C. Balzaretti, *Confini «porosi» nei libri storici dell'AT con un'appendice sui matrimoni misti in Esdra-Neemia*, in *Richerche Storico Bibliche* 31.1 (2019), 115-162. I have already partly expressed the arguments in this chapter in my article

meanings that the author intends to transmit. Since there are two kingdoms but one people, political geography and religious geography do not coincide, and this discrepancy plays a role in the story.

A. Movement between Judah and Israel in the first phase of the divided monarchy

At the time of the political schism between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, the southern kingdom, often described by the name of Judah, comprised not only the tribe of the Davidic dynasty but also Benjamin. On several occasions, 2 Chr 11,1-12 mentions the two tribes together, lists fortresses belonging to both territories, and concludes: "So he [= Rehoboam] held Judah and Benjamin" (2 Chr 11,12b). Shemaiah's oracle, contained here (2 Chr 11,1-4), is parallel to 1 Kgs 12,21-24 where Benjamin is also cited in contradiction to what immediately precedes (1 Kgs 12,20b: "There was no one who followed the house of David, except the tribe of Judah alone") and to the prophecy of Ahijah who assigned a single tribe to the Davidic dynasty (1 Kgs 11,32). By contrast with the Dtr, the Chronicler never places Benjamin within Israel but always names it along with Judah as an integral part of the southern kingdom[117]. Abijah, against whom Jeroboam waged war, conquered for the south some fortresses of the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, including Bethel (2 Chr 13,19); this information is not imparted in 1 Kgs 15,1-7 which only signals the continual state of war between the two kingdoms. Asa further extends Judah's dominion over Ephraim (2 Chr 16,6 // 1 Kgs 15,22); for the governing of these recently conquered cities, Jehoshaphat named suitable officials (2 Chr 17,2). After Asa, no further expansion towards the north is mentioned. Therefore, the border between Judah and Israel pressed north in the first stages of the divided monarchy, from a territory

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La geografia della salvezza nel libro delle Cronache, 539-548.

[117] Judah and Benjamin are also mentioned in association with the reigns of Asa (2 Chr 15,2.8-9), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17,14-18) and Amaziah (2 Chr 25,5). Cf. Giffone, B.D. *"Sit at my Right Hand": The Chronicler's Portrait of the Tribe of Benjamin in the Social Context of Yehud* (LHB/OTS 628), T&T Clark, London 2018, esp. 195-197.

limited initially to the tribes of Judah and Benjamin solely to an annexation of some parts of Ephraim. This shifting of the frontier reflects the conflictual nature of the relationships between the two kingdoms with the first three kings (Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa) which was to last until Jehoshaphat united the two ruling families by marriage.

In this conflictual phase, the border between the two kingdoms marked a clear political separation; however, this was bridged several times for cultic reasons. A first such bridging took place in the time of Rehoboam.

> *2 Chr 11,13-17:* «[13]The priests and the Levites who were in all Israel presented themselves to him from all their territories. [14]The Levites had left their common lands and their holdings and had come to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had prevented them from serving as priests of the Lord, [15]and had appointed his own priests for the high places, and for the goat-demons, and for the calves that he had made. [16]Those who had set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel came after them from all the tribes of Israel to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the Lord, the God of their ancestors. [17]They strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and for three years they made Rehoboam son of Solomon secure, for they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon».

The facts recounted here, peculiar to the Chronicler, will be reprised by King Abijah when he addresses the Israelites before attacking them in battle and criticises their removal from office of the descendants of Levi and the institution of an illegitimate priesthood (2 Chr 13,9). This presentation of the facts is intended to take away an ambiguity which could emerge from the *Vorlage* about the Levites resident in Israel at the time of the religious schism. According to 1 Kgs 12,31-32, Jeroboam instituted illegitimate priests, but nothing is said of the fate of the Levites: were they, perhaps, suitable for Jeroboam's idolatry? The Chronicler replies negatively: all the Levites moved south because Jeroboam had not only established new priests but had removed the legitimate ones. Moreover, after them, members of the remaining tribes transferred south in order to maintain their faith in Yhwh intact. Therefore, right from the beginning of the divided monarchy, the kingdom of Judah consisted not only of the homonymous tribe but of the whole of Judah,

Benjamin and Levi plus faithful Yahwists from all the other families of the descendants of Jacob: the Israel that had remained faithful was still composed of twelve tribes, as in the time of David and Solomon, even if nine of them were not completely part of it. In this way, Rehoboam's power was reinforced since around him were gathered a people devoted to Yhwh who with their own fidelity drew down the benevolence of the divinity and so rendered the kingdom strong and stable. The border between Judah and Israel is clear since it is both political and religious but it is crossed thanks to the attraction which the just King arouses in the Israelites faithful to Yhwh.

A second migration of Israelites towards the south is found in the time of Asa. It too is recounted only by Chronicles.

> *2 Chr 15,8-9:* «[8]When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns that he had taken in the hill country of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the Lord that was in front of the vestibule of the house of the Lord. [9]He gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who were residing as aliens with them, for great numbers had deserted to him from Israel when they saw that the Lord his God was with him».

First of all, the Chronicler outlines the object and the geography of Asa's reform which consisted of the purification of the idolatrous elements from the temple and from the local cultic sites throughout the kingdom: the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the part of the tribe of Ephraim which his father, Abijah, and then he himself had conquered. Furthermore, as affirmed also for Rehoboam, the faithfulness to Yhwh that characterises the first phase of Asa's reign attracts members of other tribes to move and settle in Judah so as to be able to practice the worship of Yhwh freely. The north is still an idolatrous territory[118]: already, 2

[118] In the geography of Chr, the tribe of Simeon which, in Josh 19,1-9, receives as its share a part of the Negev, south of Judah, is considered part of the kingdom of Israel. According to some authors, the Chronicler places Simeon in the north: R.H. Kennett (Kennett, *Old Testament Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1928, 27. 30) hypothesises the existence of an original territory of Simeon in central Palestine; A. de Pury (*Genèse XXXIV*

Chr 11,14 had extended to Jeroboam's sons also the implementation of the religious schism which was to last under his successors as well to the detriment of those faithful to Yhwh. In any case, in the time of Asa, as in that of Rehoboam, the border between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel was both political and religious and was crossed only by those who, in the name of Yhwh desired to be united to the faithful Israel that was being led by the just king.

B. The Omride dynasty in Israel and its influence in Judah

The state of conflict between Judah and Israel lasted until Jehoshaphat thought it more useful to have an alliance sealed by marriage between the scions of the two dynasties: 2 Chr 18,1 supplies simply the notice of the relationship established between the houses of Jehoshaphat and Ahab; then, in 2 Chr 21,6, it states that Jehoram was married to Ahab's daughter who is called Athaliah in 22,2. The promoter of the matrimonial alliance, Jehoshaphat, goes north to help Ahab (2 Chr 18,2-19,1) and, for this, receives a negative oracle through the seer, Jehu (2 Chr 19,2-3). Subsequently, he is involved in a commercial maritime project with King Ahaziah, an endeavour condemned by the prophet, Eliezer (2 Chr 20,35-37). However, Jehoshaphat is still held to be positive: 2

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et l'histoire, in *Revue Biblique* 76 [1969] 21) prefers to think of the presence of Simeonite elements in the north, as attested also by some traditions preserved in Genesis (34; 49,5-7) where the eponymous ancestor is mentioned together with Levi in relation to events taking place at Shechem. However, it is preferable to hold that the Chronicler shares the traditional, southern location of Simeon and that he identifies as "kingdom of Israel" all the Hebrew people who do not belong to Judah and Benjamin (so M. Noth, *Das System der Zwölf Stamme Israels* [BWANT 53], Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 1930, 77, n. 2): the places mentioned in the genealogy of the tribe are found in the Negev (1 Chr 4,24-43), and the expression "from Simeon to Naphtali" of 2 Chr 34,6 refers to the two extremes, southern and northern, of the dominion of Josiah. Note also that, in two passages of the book of Amos (5,5; 8,14), the area of Beer-sheba is associated with the northern kingdom: according to J. Gray (*I & II Kings: A Commentary*, SCM Press, London 19773, 735), when 2 Chr 34,6 mentions idolatrous places eliminated by Josiah in the territory of Simeon, it is referring to the sanctuary deprecated by Amos (cf. also Williamson, *Israel*, 104, n. 2).

Chr 19,4 records a reforming campaign which reaches as far as the part of Ephraim controlled by Judah, similar to what was achieved by Asa. However, by contrast, this campaign arouses no attraction of Israelites towards the south. The perception of the border between Judah and Israel has changed: it is no longer a rigid political and religious frontier to be crossed only by those faithful to Yhwh who travel to Jerusalem. Now, it has been transformed into a fluid border which is crossed from south to north to assist a wicked dynasty which, *vice versa*, sends south members of the royal family who are destined to have an influence on the political decisions and, above all, on the religious policies of the Davidide sovereigns.

Jehoshaphat's successors, Jehoram and Ahaziah are judged negatively because they adopt the religious policy of the Omride dynasty (the "house of Ahab": 2 Chr 21,6; 22,3). Jonker identifies as an element of assimilation between the two kingdoms the description of "king of Israel" attributed to Jehoshaphat in 2 Chr 21,2 and the mention of the "chiefs of Israel" killed along with Jehoram's brothers in 2 Chr 21,4[119]. Like his grandfather, Jehoshaphat, Ahaziah crosses the border northwards to help King Jehoram; he dies and is buried in Samaria along with his nephews and some chiefs of Judah. The border between the two kingdoms is becoming extremely porous, open to negative influences which threaten the authentic worship of Yhwh.

The intermixing between the Omride dynasty and the southern kingdom finds its peak with the usurper, Athaliah. Paradoxically, however, it was precisely during her reign that the border was closed once again because a new sovereign, Jehu, the enemy and exterminator of the house of Ahab, had seized power in the north. Actually, the Omride dynasty fell from power in Israel and gained it in Judah. The frontier returned sharply closed and the relationship between the two kingdoms became hostile once more.

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[119] Jonker, *Textual Identities*, 208-213.

C. Hostility between the two kingdoms until the fall of the north

From the reign of Athaliah until the disappearance of the kingdom of Israel, the only two kings whose relations with the north are mentioned are Amaziah and Ahaz.

In view of the war with Edom, Amaziah enrols mercenaries from the tribe of Ephraim (2 Chr 25,6). Since they are not enrolled alongside Judah and Benjamin and are not part of the calculation of the census carried out by the king (25,5), we have to conclude that they hailed from the part of Ephraim that was under the authority of Israel, as is inferred also from the speech of the anonymous man of God condemning the operation (25,6). We could also suppose that, in the meantime, Judah had lost control of the Ephraimite areas conquered by Abijah and Asa, but the description of the territory that the mercenaries devastate in revenge after the dismissal of their troop, "between Samaria and Beth-horon" (25,13), corresponds to the part of the inheritance which was assigned to Ephraim in Josh 16,3-5 and 21,22 and which, therefore, according to the Chronicler, was still included in the kingdom of Judah. The man of God declares that "The Lord is not with Israel – all these Ephraimites" (25,7): the Judah-Israel border is clear both politically and religiously. Judah is the kingdom of those who are faithful to Yhwh whereas the north is decadent. While the faithful king, Amaziah, wins the war against Edom (25,11-12), the soldiers of wicked Ephraim sack the cities of faithful Ephraim and kill their inhabitants (25,13): the fratricide underlines their wickedness and the contrast with Judah and its sovereign.

Amaziah's integrity does not last, however, and, at the end of the same war against Edom, it is changed into idolatry and *hybris* (25,14-16). An attempt to declare war on Israel ends with a heavy defeat which takes place before the king of Judah can cross the border with the north: in fact, the site of the decisive battle is Beth-shemesh, a city of the tribe of Judah (25,21). By contrast, Joash, the king of Israel, crosses the frontier and greatly weakens the kingdom of Judah (25,21-24). The Chronicler interprets this defeat as fulfilment of the will of God (25,20). Although abandoned by Yhwh, the northern kingdom becomes an instrument in

his hands, revealing the wickedness of Amaziah in a paradoxical and ironic way. The encroachment of Israel into Judah becomes an element with which the Chronicler stresses the negative judgement on this sovereign.

Like Amaziah, because of his own wickedness, Ahaz suffers the invasion of Israel, ruled by King Pekah who sacks the cities, slaughters the inhabitants and takes a great number of prisoners (2 Chr 28,5-8). Again, the border is crossed from the north in order to carry out the punitive will of God with regard to the wicked sovereign of Judah. However, to the advantage of the innocent population, a prophet, Oded, intervenes to exhort the soldiers to free the prisoners of war in order to avoid the wrath of Yhwh (28,9-11). Some chiefs of Ephraim listen to the prophet and convince the army to release the hostages, bringing them to Jericho which was under the control of Judah (28,13-15).

In conclusion, this period is to be distinguished in two stages.

a. Amaziah's first stage is similar to the first phases of the divided monarchy: Judah is the faithful kingdom; Israel has cut itself off from the favour of Yhwh. The border between the two kingdoms is political and religious. However, if, with Rehoboam and Asa, the faithful Israelites went down south to profess their Yahwist religions, Amaziah calls mercenaries into Judah who later show themselves to be harmful to the population.

b. Amaziah's second stage and the kingdom of Ahaz reveal a different situation: Judah is a wicked kingdom and Israel is the instrument in Yhwh's hands to punish it. Neither Joash nor Pekah are judged positively in themselves but assume the function of executors of God's will. When, later, the punishment reaches its climax, the chiefs of Ephraim make an act of obedience to the divine voice, which Ahaz, on the contrary, continues to reject. In the face of Judah's wickedness, the border between the two kingdoms is opened to enable the manifestation of the justice of Yhwh.

D. After the fall of the north: the religious reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah

After the affair of the prisoners freed by the army of Israel, the northern kingdom is no longer named in Chronicles; there is never a hint of the fall of Samaria. The border between the two States disappears *de facto*, without explicitly stating that one of the two kingdoms no longer exists. However, there is still a need to establish a religious geography, necessary for explaining the success of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah.

Hezekiah ascends the throne and immediately he proceeds to a renewal of the worship of Yhwh which had been hindered by his predecessor Ahaz. Immediately, on the very first day of his reign, the temple, which his father had mothballed, is newly open for worship (2 Chr 29,3.17). In the following month, corresponding to the second month of the year, the new king, summons the whole of Israel and Judah to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover, a month later than prescribed in the Law of Moses on account of the procedures for the purification of the temple (30,1-3). The king also sends messengers to the territories of Ephraim and Manasseh with the letters of summons (30,1). Later, it is explained that the letter was destined to "all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan" (30,5). So, the couriers left for "all Israel and Judah" (30,6), "from city to city in the country of Ephraim and Manasseh and as far as Zebulun" (30,10). The response to the king's summons is not universally positive: the Chronicler mentions the presence in Jerusalem of members of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, Zebulun, Asher and Issachar (30,11.18). When the Passover has ended, the Israelites return to their own territory and spontaneously destroy the places of idol worship in the territories of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim and Manasseh (31,1).

The chronology of the reform and of the Passover celebration poses a problem of agreement with the temporal information of the *Vorlage*. According to 2 Kgs 18,1, Hezekiah's accession was in the third year of Hosea, the last king of Israel; according to 2 Kgs 18,9-11, Samaria was besieged in the seventh year of the reign of Hosea and the fourth of Hezekiah, and then conquered in the ninth year of Hosea and sixth of

Hezekiah; after the conquest, Shalmaneser deported the population into Assyria. According to the Chronicler, the purification of the temple was begun on the first day of Hezekiah's reign and lasted sixteen days (2 Chr 29,1.17); the Passover was celebrated on the fourteenth of the second month (30,15). However, the letter of summons sent by Hezekiah presupposes that the north is under Assyrian rule (30,6) and that the deportation has already happened (30,9). This discrepancy can be resolved only by admitting that the Chronicler has deliberately placed Hezekiah's religious activity in the first months of his reign to indicate his integrity even more clearly[120]. According to the Chronicler, therefore, at the time of the reform, the kingdom of Israel was no longer existing. But what was the status of the territory? The involvement of the northern tribes in the Passover celebration has led to the belief that, according to Chronicles, Hezekiah had extended his own kingdom towards the north to the point of restoring the political borders of the time of David and Solomon[121]. However, some elements push for a different solution:

– There is no account of a war of conquest; on the contrary, the final mention of Israel during the reign of Ahaz described a situation unfavourable to Judah;

– Hezekiah never visits the northern territories: the anti-idolatrous change is not carried out by him or under his orders but by pious Israelites spontaneously as a consequence of their rediscovered faithfulness to Yhwh (2 Chr 31,1) whereas the cultic reform proper seems limited only to Judah (31,6);

– Hezekiah is never described as king of Israel: decisions are taken by him only with representatives of the tribes of Judah and Levi; Sennacherib invades Judah alone (32,1); at his death, Hezekiah is honoured by "all of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem" without any mention of Israel (32,22);

– the proclaimers of the Passover are scorned and humiliated (2 Chr 30,10), behaviour difficult to envisage if Hezekiah were their sovereign.

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[120] Following Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 934-935.

[121] Cf. Japhet, *Ideology*, 355-356; Williamson, *Israel*, 223-225; and Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 228.

These factors render it preferable to hold that Hezekiah's rule was limited to the southern kingdom. The summoning of the northern tribes to the Passover is not the result of the extension of political power but is made possible on account of the permeable nature of the border between Judah and Israel. Already in the reigns of Rehoboam and Asa, many Israelites had gone south for religious reasons, attracted by the integrity of the sovereign. Now, the king who, after David and Solomon, is the model of justice and *pietas*, consciously uses a reforming initiative to exercise his personal religious influence on the north which is without local leaders in order to restore ancient Israel, not under the political aspect but as the religious membership of the one people of Yhwh[122]. This distinction between political geography and religious geography enables us to have a better understanding of the data emerging from the text and to identify different levels in the identity concept of the Chronicler.

Josiah's reform is described with different emphases. By contrast with Hezekiah, the son of Amon visits the north in person to impose his Yahwist reform by force (2 Chr 34,6-7.33). He too organises a Passover celebration in Jerusalem, and the Israelites participate along with the tribes of Judah and Levi (35,17-18). However, there no mention of a summons similar to Hezekiah's letter: the Israelites come spontaneously. Moreover, there is no trace of any refusal as happened to the son of Ahaz since Israel followed Yhwh until Josiah's death (34,33). The political geography appears different from the time of Hezekiah: such a personal and active intervention of the king of Judah in a foreign territory is unthinkable[123]. Certainly, in Josiah's case too, there is no narrative of conquest, but the context is different: whereas, immediately prior to Hezekiah, Judah had

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[122] Cf. Knoppers, G.N. *History and Historiography: The Royal Reforms*, in M.P. Graham et alii (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (JSOTSup 238), Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield 1997, 191: "For Chr good government is not only reactive, but also proactive".

[123] By contrast, Balzaretti thinks it possible that Josiah carried out his reforming activity even beyond the borders of the kingdom since the former Israel represented a peripheral territory of the Assyrian Empire which was now in decline and could no longer manage to guarantee control over it (*Cronache*, 401).

been defeated by Israel, now the latter had long since disappeared from the international scene, and its annexation to the southern kingdom was not sudden and unexpected even if its course is not described. Another difficulty could arise from the account of the funeral honours for Josiah which were granted only by "all Judah and Jerusalem" (35,24); however, the immediately following mention of Israel with regard to the preservation and performance of the lament written by Jeremiah (35,25) has the aim of highlighting the unity of the whole people in grief for the death of the king[124]. The Chronicler shows that, almost at the end of his story, the political geography of the kingdom of Judah has been re-established in its original dimensions; as for its religious geography, it comprises the whole of Israel which is faithful once more thanks to Josiah, so that the celebration of the feasts of Yhwh are resumed with an intensity unknown "since the days of Samuel" (35,18).

E. Conclusions on the religious geography

The frontier between Judah and Israel is described as a "blurred border" because of the overlapping of two conceptions of the people of Yhwh: the religious Israel, comprising all the twelve tribes of Israel who confirm their belonging to God with their faithfulness; and the historical manifestations of the two kingdoms that arose after the death of Solomon, and which changed their dimensions and characteristics on the basis of the politics of their sovereigns. Therefore, the frontier between the two kingdoms also takes on a theological value: it opens or closes according to the integrity or wickedness of the sovereigns, and its crossing is the indicator of religious consequences. We can identify five situations.

1. In the first phases of the divided monarchy, although the border was politically clear, it was opened to permit the passage of those Israelites who intended to settle in Judah so as to celebrate the legitimate

[124] The mention of Israel is interpreted in this way by Ristau, *Reading*, 236, and Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 528.

cult of Yhwh: this contributed to establishing the positive nature of the sovereign (first Rehoboam, then Asa) whose integrity exercised a power of attraction.

2. Because of the influence of Omri's dynasty on the south, the border became increasingly unstable, causing the penetration of wickedness into Judah: Jehoshaphat is painted in ambiguous colours which manifest both his faithfulness to Yhwh and his link with Ahab and his descendants which was judged to be excessive; decidedly negative are Jehoram and Ahaziah to the extent that the latter ends his days tragically, outside his kingdom.
3. The period from Athaliah to Ahaz is characterised by hostility between the two kingdoms, as at the beginning of their separation but with the difference that, in the meantime, wickedness has penetrated into the south: there are no longer any just sovereigns who exercise a form of attraction; rather, on the contrary, Israel crosses the border as an instrument in Yhwh's hands for the punishment of Judah.
4. The situation is reversed with Hezekiah: wickedness is extirpated from Judah, and, on his initiative, the king seeks to restore the religious geography of the period of David and Solomon through a reform which also involves the northern tribes, although they are outside his political control: the crossing of the border by the king's messengers and, in the opposite direction, by Yhwh's faithful who go to Jerusalem contribute to portraying the integrity of Hezekiah.
5. With Josiah, there is a renewal of the unity between political and religious geography: the whole of the old dominion of David and Solomon is in his power, and a new reform imposes the worship of Yhwh also on the tribes of the north which up till then were still idolatrous.

The geographic element comes in support of the explicit judgements to compete the Chronicler's vision of the sovereign. With respect to the explicit judgements, moreover, we can add an element which has not yet emerged: the greater extent and thoroughness of Josiah's reform compared to that of Hezekiah. If Hezekiah is portrayed as a model of fidelity superior to the former, who died for not having listened to Yhwh who spoke to him through Neco, nevertheless, Josiah's religious policy

reached objectives that Hezekiah did not attain. Rather than contrast the two reforms (as scholars of the Chronicles have often done), it is possible to grasp from the Chronicler's indications the signs of a gradual process: the just Hezekiah sets in motion a series of arrangements which begin a religious renewal of the country which, later, Josiah, although less just than he, will be able to bring to conclusion. Through the geographical element too, the actions of the two kings appear in a continuity that is arranged in a crescendo, and an overall glance enables us to set them in a complementary relation.

IV. CONCLUSIONS ON THE IMPLICIT JUDGEMENTS

The present chapter has enabled us to make a thorough study of the communicative strategy of the Chronicler: fully part of the society of his time, he makes use of its cultural codes to carry his own message with them. As far as his judgement of the sovereigns is concerned, the object of this study, he makes skilful use of cultural *motifs* connected with the code of honour/infamy to highlight their integrity or wickedness and the consequences entailed by their moral quality. The three *motifs* we have analysed contribute to painting the general picture:

a) the burial contributes to the Chronicler's final judgement on the king: the honour or infamy accorded in the narrative indicate to the reader what memory of the figure to keep and what degree of exemplarity he represents;
b) the situation of the loss of descendants or the description of their absence sends a serious warning on the quality of the king in question: it concerns sovereigns who are particularly wicked who put at risk the very promises of Yhwh which can lose their validity in the case of repeated and unrepented wickedness;
c) the geography expresses the consequences of the sovereign's actions: the extent of the effects of his decisions in the religious arena is correlated with his inner disposition, in particular, the intensity of his integrity and faithfulness to Yhwh.

From the analysis, we can obtain a more general consideration: the cultural *motifs* act in support of the explicit language of the text to clarify it and complete its message, but they must not be made absolute. In the particular case of this study, the implicit judgements on the kings must be obtained according to two criteria:

1. in connection with the explicit judgements;
2. by considering the frequency and effective use of the cultural *motif* by the Chronicler throughout his literary work.

Considering an individual passage in isolation can be the cause of misunderstandings: being less direct, this way of transmitting the message should be read in correlation with the context. The Chronicler constructs his text with comparisons, allusions and references between the events which must be investigated with care in order to be able to identify a cultural *motif* and to understand its function adequately.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this study, we can place the results obtained from the analysis of the Chronicler's judgements on the kings of Judah within a general framework obtained from the starting point of the theory of social identity and its successive developments (cf. first chapter). In this way, it will be possible to grasp the function of the assessments of the sovereigns for the purposes of the communication of the message of the author, a message which is not only theoretical but addressed to concrete recipients, the Jews of the province of Yehud in the late Persian period, with the pragmatic aim of influencing their social dynamics. This general framework will be provided in particular by considering: I. what is the prototype outlined for the social group of reference; II. what norm of behavior is required in order to be members of this group; III. what are the identity elements that the leader is called to promote. IV. In conclusion, we shall offer a summary of the characteristics of the leadership at which the Chronicler is aiming.

I. A PROTOTYPE WITH TWO FACES: DAVID AND SOLOMON

According to the social approach adopted in the present work, in every social group, the figure of the "prototype" is central as the ideal point of reference who fully sums up in himself all the characteristics of the group and constitutes the normative standard on the basis of which the individual members, and particularly the concrete leaders, are judged.

When the leaders described in the books of Chronicles are examined, it is clear that the author employs different standards in presenting and judging David and Solomon, on the one hand, and the subsequent kings of Judah, on the other[1]. The dynasty's first two sovereigns are characterized by an aura of perfection which does not admit significant negative aspects. For their successors, however, mistakes, infidelity and wickedness are brought to light explicitly in such a way as to provide a theological explanation for them. David and Solomon constitute a measure of comparison: conformity to or divergence from their conduct becomes the criterion for assessing the leaders of Judah who followed them.

The prototype, therefore, is not a single ideal figure but a combination of the characteristics of two figures: David and Solomon. The former is portrayed as a new Moses: just as the latter had laid down regulations and laws for civil life and had received from Yhwh the model for the construction of the Ark, so the founder of the dynasty receives the model of the temple to be built and hands over to Solomon and the people the cultic regulations to be carried out. The second king, on the other hand, assumes the features of a new Joshua who, through a divine mandate, is invested as leader by his predecessor when still alive, and, after the latter's death, carries out his instructions to the full, performing faithfully the orders of the divinity. Among the two, Solomon assumes a preeminence: whereas some of David's faults are recounted (even if these are not so serious and flagrant as in Sam-Kgs) and it is claimed that he is not up to the building of the temple, his son is depicted as flawless, his wisdom is revealed in his building works centered on the temple, and he enjoys a direct relationship with Yhwh, the only king who does not need intermediaries to receive instructions from him.

Why the need for two figures to constitute a single prototype?

We can identify two reasons:

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[1] The presentational difference between the first two Davidic kings and their successors was already observed by Japhet on the purely literary level (*I & II Chronicles*, 660-661).

1) Safeguarding the unique nature of the sovereignty of Yhwh. Kingship is in the hands of Yhwh alone who exercises it over the whole of the universe; he is, therefore, also the supreme head of the Jewish people for whose benefit he has ordered that David and his successors are his representatives on earth. Beyond human leadership, there exists also a divine leadership which, however, is situated on a different level from the earthly one: it is the origin of the latter, but, since it is not on the visible and concrete level, it cannot constitute a prototype to imitate. It is necessary, therefore, to have an earthly prototype for the people. But no human being on his own can be a full realization of the divine leadership. Hence the need for several concrete figures who, *together*, constitute the norm of behavior to be observed so as to exercise a leadership of divine origin on earth. Neither David nor Solomon can individually possess the characteristics of a human leadership which is of divine origin: the Israelite leaders must pay attention to both figures in order to obtain the different aspects of the prototype.

2) Shaping the leadership as conservation and not innovation. David laid the foundations and issued laws and regulations for the cult which Solomon, later, brought into practice fully. However, only Solomon is perfect so that it is he who is set up as principal model. The leader of the Israelite people is called to align himself more with the behavior of Solomon than with that of David: there is nothing new to introduce; everything has already been given. The leader manifests his own wisdom in ruling and his own personal virtue in faithfully carrying out and transmitting to his successors norms that have already been given and are immutable.

II. THE NORM OF BASIC BEHAVIOR: THE CORRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH YHWH

The prototype we have identified, constituted by David and Solomon, is connected with the supernatural leadership belonging indisputably to Yhwh. From this emerges the norm of basic behavior on the basis

of which every sovereign from Rehoboam on is judged, namely, his relationship with Yhwh. This is not exhausted only in the external performance of norms for the good of society but also involves the king in an interior relationship of a personal kind. Solomon, the main model, enjoyed a direct relationship with the deity: without intermediaries, the apparitions at Gibeon have the function not of presenting as ideal the absence of prophetic mediation but rather of making the central theme the relationship between the leader and God.

The pious disposition of the king is manifested in three fundamental kinds of behaviour:

1) Listening to Yhwh, who speaks through multiple figures but, in a wholly special way, through prophets, priests and Levites. That means, first of all, respecting the tradition without changing it, giving credit to the one who acts as authoritative interpreter of the ancient words spoken by Yhwh. Placing himself within the prophetic dimension through the numerous charismatic figures and the reference to sources of prophetic authors, the Chronicler himself with his writing claims the right to be listened to by the leaders of his time.

2) Seeking Yhwh with the "heart", that is, with a concern for sincerity. Seeking him means desiring to listen to his intermediaries but also assuming a more general attitude of trust in him and being prepared, when necessary, for conversion. Hence the concern of the Chronicler, greater than that of the Dtr, for the portrayal of figures of a more nuanced humanity, less heroic, at times changing over time so that there is a greater shading in judgements than in Sam-Kgs. The Chronicler's view of human nature is realistic, foresees the possibility of changes and examines the interior movements which are behind choice and action. This balanced judgement is seen, for example, in the cases of Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah: despite having stumbled in some situations and, in certain cases, having also received divine punishments, they still remain positive examples. Outside the prototype, exemplarity is not linked with idealization. The ambiguity of which the Chronicler has been accused or which has led to the hypothesis of a plurality of redactional levels can, instead, be explained by the complexity of the

human being who needs a continual education of the heart, an education to which the leader too must always have recourse[2].

3) Recognizing the voice of Yhwh. From care for the heart derives the ability to discern those messages that are of divine origin even when this is a complex operation. Many subjects try to exercise their influence on the sovereign: he has, therefore, to recognize which are positive and which negative. Besides, the case of the pious king, Josiah, is emblematic. Despite his integrity, he dies for not having grasped in the word of Neco a divine provenance that was objectively difficult to identify. It is a warning to the Chronicler's own contemporary leaders in two ways: on the one hand, it calls on them to be careful in the choice of their own counsellors, to be taken from the ranks of those who follow Yhwh; on the other hand, it suggests a more open and careful watch on the international situation, in particular, in their relationship with the leaders of the surrounding peoples since Yhwh, the universal sovereign, can make use of historical events to call his own people to integrity or conversion.

When the leader embodies these religious attitudes, he strengthens the bond between Israel and its God, and so assures the prosperity of the people. Moreover, this can give rise to another consequence: the ability to attract to Jerusalem also the sons of Israel who live outside the borders of Yehud as happens in the narrative for the first rulers of the divided kingdom, Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa, and for the two great reformers, Hezekiah and Josiah. In this way, the function of leadership transcends the political boundary to obtain a religious dimension as well with the aim of guaranteeing a kind of "spiritual unity" among all the members of the chosen people, centered on the temple.

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[2] Japhet calls this attitude of the Chronicler towards his characters a "realistic appreciation of human nature" (*I & II Chronicles*, 741). Endres describes the Chronicler as a preacher who advocates a spirituality that is not private but specific to the one who exercises leadership in the people: J.C. Endres, *The Spiritual Vision of Chronicles: Wholehearted, Joy-filled Worship of God*, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 69 (2007) 18-19.

III. THE LEADER AS PROMOTOR OF THE ISRAELITE IDENTITY

The leader of a social group possesses a central role in the definition, the concrete representation and preservation of the collective identity. The Chronicler has no historiographical aim, that is, of presenting past history as such, but, rather, a theological purpose, to provide an interpretation of history to the recipients of his literary work. Therefore, we are not to search in these books for indicators of the identity of the Israelite people in the period of the monarchy, but those of the later Persian period in which they were composed. We must, therefore, return to the study of T. Willi on the process of redefinition of the Jewish identity which happened in this historical phase[3]. As we have already said, in the province of Yehud, there emerged the need for a new identity definition in the double direction of the reappropriation of the previous historical and theological traditions and integration in the Achaemenid Empire, considering the Israelite people within the map of the peoples who were known at that time. The reflection of the Israelite élite remodeled three central aspects in particular:

A. the relationship with Yhwh for the maintenance of which the value of the Jerusalem temple as the only place of worship is affirmed with ever greater force;
B. the precise nature of the chosen people, redefining the term "Israel" in the face of the problems posed from the Samaritans, on the one hand, and, on the other, by the numerous descendants of the Israelite tribes living outside Palestine;
C. kingship, with the theological legitimization of the Achaemenid authority.

We can relate these three aspects to the three centers of existence of the Israelite people that were functional to their relationship with Yhwh and which were identified in the passage about Yhwh's second appearance to Solomon at Gibeon (2 Chr 7,12-22): the temple, the land and the kingship respectively[4].

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[3] Above, p. 58.

[4] Above, p. 194-195.

A. Substantial centrality of the Jerusalem temple

The temple is invested with central importance for the identity of Israel outlined in Chronicles. Its construction went back to the initiative of Yhwh himself who chose it (בחר: 2 Chr 7,12.16) as the place of his own closeness to Israel. Around the temple is constituted the unity of the people who recognize themselves in it as a cultic community not only related by ties of blood but, above all, unified in the name of a common relationship with Yhwh. The very existence of Israel is linked to the temple; it can be lost and destroyed if this link fails. The functioning of its worship and of his staff is the object of the action of the prototype figures: David in his legislative activity and Solomon with his wise plan for the building. In the judgement on their successors, the attitude of each towards the temple is decisive. The leader must take care of the sanctuary, for that signifies taking care of the relationship between the people and Yhwh, and, in this way, enables it to remain united and guarantees its very existence. Ultimately, caring for the temple means exercising proper leadership for the benefit of the people.

This care is made concrete in the implementation of the conditions necessary for its functioning according to the regulations issued by David which describe every aspect of the cult with precision. Part of this area is the reference to the danger of idolatry which, though less emphasized than in Sam-Kgs, is present nevertheless because of the multi-religious context in which the Chronicler's readers found themselves living. In addition, care for the temple is also realized through respect for the prerogatives of the tribe of Levi, both enabling and guaranteeing the performance of their tasks and avoiding trespassing in their field, an act which would be described as abuse, as in the case of Uzziah (2 Chr 26,16-21).

Among the sovereigns, Ahaz represents the negative peak insofar as he was the only one to go to the extreme of closing the temple (2 Chr 28,24). By contrast, there emerge positive examples like Hezekiah and Josiah, authors of two, complementary cultic reforms which permitted the return, for a short time, of a situation close to the prosperity of the two prototype kings.

The Chronicler's vision does not seem to allow for confusion between civil and religious: the areas of competence remain distinct. The readers of the literary work are required to concern themselves with the conditions for the functioning of the temple but not to act directly in it; the leader must not legislate for it, since the regulations in force are the immutable ones of David, nor perform cultic acts reserved to the priests and Levites alone. Contrary to what has been claimed by various authors whom we have already examined, it cannot be argued that the Chronicler is promoting the affirmation of a theocratic power; rather, he asks that the administrative leadership take care of the good of the sanctuary since that coincides with the good of the country, but he does not assign a directly religious-cultic authority to the civil power nor, on the other hand, does he claim civil authority for the priestly class.

B. Redefinition of the term "Israel" and of its relationship with the land

The Chronicler is also interested in providing a definition of the term "Israel" in a period when rivalry with the province of Samaria and the presence of sizeable groups of Jews outside Palestine required a clarification of the limits of the application of eponymous patriarch's name. In Chronicles, Israel is presented as a unified people with Jerusalem as its capital. Through the genealogies, our author defines a concept of identity which is based on a common origin, in the name of a distant consanguinity. The land in which this people lives is set in relation to the behavior of its inhabitants so that they undergo the punishments sent by Yhwh when they are wicked and receive renewal when they atone for their sin. Actually, however, there is no theology of the land: only Jerusalem receives great attention on account of the temple which is there. Therefore, the limits of the use of the term Israel are also defined in relation to the temple which is the foundational element of the collective identity. For this reason, the relation with the north is dialectic: it is still held to be Israel, but, at the same time, it is perceived as "other" because of the break in communion with the temple, and, therefore, with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin who had remained faithful (albeit in varying degrees).

This identity concept of Israel is reflected in the message which the Chronicler sends concerning the leadership. The legitimization of David and of the dynasty which originates with him also appears as the legitimization of the leadership which, at the time of the composition of the literary work, is ruling the province of Yehud which, like the old kingdom, has its capital in Jerusalem. At the same time, however, against the particularistic tendencies of other Jewish currents, the Chronicler declares that Israel is more than Yehud and finds its unity not so much under the standard of a single civil entity but, rather, in the recognition of the unique nature of the place of worship. Hence the need to remodel the figures of David and Solomon compared with the Deuteronomist work: the latter described a very divided people, undergoing internecine struggles, in which some tribes rebelled against the first two sovereigns, and so its message could have threatened the leadership in power[5]; by contrast, the Chronicler portrays a peaceful kingdom under the two prototype kings who guaranteed the unity of Israel no longer in the organization of the civil government (as in Sam-Kgs) but, rather, in the building and in the organization of the identity sign of the temple. The prototype kings founded and organized the temple, not the State; and Israel recognized itself around the sanctuary, not in the kingdom. Therefore, on the basis of the characteristics of the prototype, the leadership of Yehud also exercises its particular duty towards the whole of the people of Israel, not by seeking to obtain a single political entity once again but ensuring the existence of the temple which is the foundation of Jewish identity and guarantee of its very existence. The link with the land has become fragile; the leadership also manifests itself through the exercise of a religious agenda which goes beyond the political borders (as happened with the attractive ability of Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa, and with the actions outside Judah performed by Hezekiah and Josiah) in order to preserve the spiritual unity of all the tribes of Israel.

We can also observe another interesting phenomenon in Chr: the author proposes antidotes to avoid a repeat of the collective misfortune

[5] Cf. also Knoppers, *Changing History*, 119*-123*.

which occurred with the destruction of the temple and the Exile, a possibility that can be realized again if Israel relaxes her own relation with the national divinity. How can one prevent and avoid the case of a leader of Yehud who, because of his own unfaithfulness to Yhwh, drags the people down to ruin, as had happened in the old kingdom? Moreover, if the leadership of Yehud does not possess any concrete power outside the borders of the province but only a moral authority, how can one guarantee the faithfulness of that part of Israel which lives in Samaria or even in Egypt, Mesopotamia or other areas of the empire? To answer these two questions, the Chronicler has no other solution than to recall the people themselves to their own responsibilities, involving them together with the leader both in the calls for fidelity and in the assessment, positive or negative, and the consequent rewards or punishments. In the narrative, the people take part in listening to the prophets, are called on to search for Yhwh together with the king and undergo the disastrous consequences in case of refusal. The responsibility for the relation with God is not concerning the leadership alone: the people, not the king, have the keys to their own future in their hands. This aspect too marks a difference from the Dtr for whom the act of trust in the words of Yhwh belonged to the king alone. In Chr, by contrast, the status of the people is different, and that modifies the status of the king as well[6]. In fact, according to the Chronicler, the people too possess their own ability to recognize a king as positive or negative, as demonstrated by the type of burial and funeral honors they confer on him. The king cannot change Israel's identity at will but must keep himself consistent with it. Therefore, as leader, the king of Judah represents and manifests the group "Israel", but does not exhaust it. Consequently, the Israel contemporary with the Chronicler is called to its own responsibility to listen to and search for Yhwh, and, if it recognizes its own leader as unfaithful, it is authorized to ignore his attempts to alter the identity of the group and, in case of necessity, even to depose him.

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[6] Cf. also Japhet, *Ideology*, 424-425.

C. Unique nature of Yhwh's sovereignty and plurality of earthly rulers

Israel's identity in relation to its own leader carries with itself the question concerning the significance of the kingship described by the Chronicler with reference to his contemporary situation. The sovereigns are the protagonists of the book, and this is certainly a sign of the great importance attributed to them. However, Nathan's oracle and the two apparitions of God at Gibeon place the prototype kings in a subordinate relationship with respect to the temple which, in its turn, is functional to the relation between Yhwh and Israel. The Davidic kingship makes sense only in relation to the temple and to Israel for the sake of which Yhwh, the only true holder of the מַמְלָכָה ("royal power"), has chosen the dynasty. For the existence of a legitimate dynasty, therefore, it is not necessary that it is in the hands of a descendant of David. The foundational elements are the supreme sovereignty of Yhwh, on the one hand, and, on the other, the people of Israel, the two poles of a relation in which the temple, not the dynasty, represents the link.

However, Yhwh's sovereignty is expressed not only in the temple. The relativization of the Davidic dynasty is the clearest sign of a redefinition of kingship which the Chronicler carries out in order to be able to interpret his own period. The theological apex is constituted by the legitimization of the Achaemenid power. This process passes through the elevation of the figure of Cyrus to founder of a universal empire willed by "the Lord, the God of heaven" (2 Chr 36,23: יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם).

The esteem for Cyrus has been prepared for in Chr by certain factors. First of all, the positive presentation of the foreign rulers who support Yhwh and Israel is clear. The author causes us to understand that they are preferable to a Davidic king who leads his people to destruction. Secondly, the word of a foreign king can come from the mouth of Yhwh, like Neco's warning to Josiah not to resist his passage through Palestine (2 Chr 35,21-22). Finally, an oath of loyalty expressed in the name of Yhwh, like that given by King Zedekiah to the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, head of a supranational empire, must be observed like a religious covenant (2 Chr 36,13).

The finale, which opens with the Edict of Cyrus, brings the content of the text into the contemporary situation of the readers of Chronicles who are still subject to Persian rule. The royal power of the Achaemenids comes from Yhwh just as had happened for the Davidic dynasty in former times. Cyrus receives from God the commission to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem, thus being placed in continuity with David and Solomon. However, he has no authority over the cult which has to be regulated by the instructions issued by David, and it will be built in the form realised by Solomon on the basis of a divine model. Therefore, Cyrus inherits only a part of the Davidic kingship: he is a legitimate sovereign but limited to what Yhwh has commanded, namely, the external conditions favorable to the reestablishment of the religious life of the Israelite people. As a pagan, he has no authority on internal questions, which are based on the temple cult, nor does he embody an example to be imitated. The people who, already with David and Solomon had been associated with the king in responsibility for faithfulness to Yhwh, become the subject which, from now on, has the task of maintaining the relationship with God and the functioning of the cult.

Thus, the characteristics of the Davidic kingship are divided between two subjects, both legitimated by Yhwh: the Persian emperor with regard to the effective dominion over the land and the people; and Israel for the aspects of the religious life. There is no announcement of the return to power of the Davidic dynasty but neither is it declared to be at an inexorable end since, in the genealogy of Judah, it is presented as still in being (1 Chr 3,17-24): therefore, on the one hand, there is no promotion of the existence of an autonomous kingdom but neither is its possibility excluded for the future[7]. However, the leaders whom the Chronicler addresses are not possible future Davidides but, rather, the local officials who are effectively in power. Holding the administrative

[7] In his study, *Chronicles and the Politics of Davidic Restoration: A Quiet Revolution*, Janzen espouses the interesting hypothesis that the Chronicler intended to promote the establishment of a vassal kingdom of the Persian Empire led by the heirs of the Davidic dynasty mentioned in the genealogy, a political form which was realised in practice in some regions that were subject to Achaemenid power.

authority, they must observe Yhwh's orders with respect: on the one hand, they are called to recognise as legitimate the Achaemenid authority which is the source of their present favorable condition; on the other hand, they have to take care of the temple in the name of the people. However, the temple is superior to the empire whose authority is functional to the reestablishment of the sanctuary for the good of the people of Yhwh. Hence, starting from previous texts of the tradition, the reprise of the concept of מְנוּחָה ("rest") with all its pregnancy as the apex of the gifts granted by Yhwh to the people: Solomon is identified as אִישׁ מְנוּחָה ("man of rest": 1 Chr 22,9) and the temple is described as בֵּית מְנוּחָה ("house of rest": 1 Chr 28,2). Moreover, the מְנוּחָה is connected with the theme of שָׁלוֹם ("peace"), object of Amasai's blessing on David and his followers (1 Chr 12,19) and, in an etymological relation, with the very name of Solomon (1 Chr 22,9). Therefore, the fundamental condition for having the מְנוּחָה and the true שָׁלוֹם is the relationship with Yhwh, since they are divine gifts and not a consequence of the *pax Achaemenidica*. Thus, the Jewish leadership must respect the Persian emperor but within the limits set by Yhwh himself, the only universal sovereign and only guarantor of peace.

IV. THE LEADERSHIP OF YEHUD, ADDRESSEES OF THE JUDGEMENTS ON THE KINGS OF JUDAH

In the introductory chapter to the book of Chronicles, we reviewed the position of L. C. Jonker regarding the leadership addressed by the literary work[8]: Jonker maintains that we have to differentiate four spheres of leadership with reference to four levels of historico-socio existence which make up the concrete reality in which the inhabitants of Yehud were immersed in the late Persian period, namely, the imperial, provincial, tribal and cultic levels. Looking at the literary work as a whole, we are able to trace individual elements of an ideological or pragmatic

[8] Above, p. 64-65.

character which are addressing one or another of these leaderships, as indicated by the examples adduced by Jonker.

At the conclusion of the present research, we can question how the four spheres are involved in the indications that come from judgments about the kings.

1. The elements identified entail that the reader is within a social group of reference, sharing the characteristics of the prototype and the norms of behavior correlated with the Jewish identity. Therefore, the judgements do not concern the imperial leadership directly: neither the distant Achaemenid court nor its representatives of non-Jewish ethnicity residing in Yehud. However, the emperor is indirectly involved insofar as elements emerge on the relationship which the local leadership must have with the central authority: this receives theological legitimization from the Chronicler but, at the same time, is set in relation to the good of Israel, centered on the temple. Consequently, the Persian sovereign can expect a substantial amount of sincere loyalty, but, at the same time, is faced with a people who hold an absolute value in their relationship with their God, with the claim that Yhwh is superior to the divinities of Persia.

2. The identity questions bound up with the term "Israel" involve the relationship which the leadership of Yehud had to have with the surrounding provinces. It is not called to territorial conquests or the enlargement of the borders of its own administration. The responsibility for the Jews living outside Yehud is of a spiritual nature and is exercised only indirectly through their care of the temple in Jerusalem. In concerning itself with the sanctuary, the leadership guarantees the divine favor, and so prosperity and peace for the members of the whole of Israel, wherever they find themselves. However, care for the temple also involves the defense of its unique nature: here, we can recognize the historical background to the composition of Chronicles where attempts at constructing parallel sanctuaries are overlooked. In this situation, the leadership of Yehud must oppose the proliferation of cultic sites for Yhwh and, rather, arouse a contrary, centripetal movement towards the one house chosen by God himself.

3. Although it emerges in other aspects of the literary work, the relationship between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin is not particularly involved in the three typologies of judgement analyzed. More developed is the comparison between Saul, the Benjaminite, and David, the Judahite, and between their respective dynasties. Saul is rejected for his refusal to seek Yhwh, entrusting himself to mediations foreign to his will. With him, his descendants too are rejected and die alongside him in battle against the Philistines. In their stead, Yhwh raises up a new king and a new dynasty. In this way, the Chronicler affirms the supremacy of Judah over Benjamin and, consequently, establishes within Yehud a supremacy of the Judahite leadership over that of the sister tribe.

4. From the text there emerges a clear distinction between the civil leadership and the Levitical tribe which operates in the temple, and only the former is involved in the judgements on the kings of Judah. However, the cultic leadership takes on a central role in the definition of the criteria of assessment so that what becomes decisive is the respect that the sovereigns show towards the cult in general and its officials in particular. Priests and Levites enjoy the exclusive right to perform the worship in the temple; they are the guardians of the liturgical regulations which are to be maintained complete, according to the mandate of David; they are also interpreters of the word of God which has already been delivered to Israel. Consequently, the Chronicler entrusts the cultic leadership with the task of defending the temple and the right/duty to intervene for its good and for the preservation of the relationship between Yhwh and the people, even at the cost of life (as for Zechariah, son of Jehoiada: 2 Chr 24,21-22). In any case, as the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah show, the temple leadership is not a replacement for the administrative one but is called to collaborate with it in reciprocal respect for roles that remain distinct.

Within his theological understanding of reality and history, the Chronicler possesses and presents a socio-political agenda for the government of the province of Yehud: placing himself within the perspective of the priestly-Levitical group to which he himself very probably belongs, through criticism of the behaviour of the ancient kings with

respect to the cult, he gives directions for the administrative leadership of his time. Placing himself in the line of the prophets, our author also raises himself up as defender of the relationship between Yhwh and his people, interprets the word of the past, actualizes the divine promises relating to the temple, and, in this way, points out a way for the prosperity of the people of Israel. The relationship with God is vital: the errors of the past are to be avoided so that there is no repetition of a tragedy like the Exile. At the same time, however, the present cannot be *sic et simpliciter* the reproduction of an ideal distant epoch, even that of the prototypes, David and Solomon: the new historical situation requires a rethinking and an actualization of the theological categories, abandoning what is not realistically achievable and centering every element of faith on the concrete nature of the building of the sanctuary, true point of reference for the Jewish identity, source of legitimacy for the kingship (first Davidic and then Persian) and criterion for a profound commitment to Yhwh both by the leaders and by the people as a whole. Thus, the Chronicles are found to be a fundamental theological turning point in the history of the people of Israel: they contributed to overcome the principled opposition between people and nations; they called for reconciliation between the tribes of Israel; and they directed attention towards the interior state of the believing Jew who places his hope in Yhwh alone, sovereign of the universe, true guarantor of prosperity and peace.

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