

Succession to the Throne

A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of 2 Kings 11

Patrick Jayaraj Antony



Succession to the Throne

A Synchronic and Diachronic Analysis of 2 Kings 11

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	9
1 Introduction.....	11
1.1 History of Research	12
1.1.1 Double Source Theory	12
1.1.2 Single Source Theory	14
1.1.3 Narratological Studies	15
1.2 Methodology.....	16
1.3 Structure of the Study	19
2 Translation and Rationale	21
3 An Outline of the Narratological Approach	29
3.1 Narratological Approaches and Models	30
3.1.1 Text Oriented Models.....	30
3.1.2 Reader oriented Models	30
3.1.3 Reception-aesthetic Model.....	31
3.2 Levels of Communication.....	32
3.3 Constellation in Narrative Texts	33
3.3.1 The Narrative Voice	34
3.3.1.1 Categories of the Description of the Narrative Voice.....	36
3.3.1.1.1 Presence of the Narrative Voice in the Narration	36
3.3.1.1.2 Presence of Narrative Voice on the Level of the Characters	36
3.3.1.1.3 The Degree of Involvement in the Narrated Event	37
3.3.1.1.4 The Degree of their Explicitness.....	37
3.3.1.1.4.1 The Degree of their Reliability	39
3.3.1.1.4.1.1 Various Approaches Pertinent to Unreliability.....	39
3.3.1.1.4.1.2 Indicators of Unreliability.....	41
3.3.1.1.4.1.3 Causes for Unreliability	42
3.3.1.1.4.2 The Degree of Gender Application.....	42
3.3.1.2 Functions of the Narrative Voice	43
3.3.1.2.1 Narrative Technical Function.....	43
3.3.1.2.2 Analytical Function.....	44
3.3.1.2.3 Synthetical Function.....	45
3.3.1.2.4 Mediation Related Function.....	45

3.3.2	Focalization.....	45
3.3.2.1	Types of Focalization	47
3.3.2.2	Focalized Object	50
3.3.3	Following Unit.....	50
3.3.4	Character.....	51
3.3.4.1	Characterization.....	52
3.3.4.2	Perspectives of Character	53
3.3.5	Author	55
3.3.5.1	Undoubted Authority of the Author	55
3.3.5.2	Doubtful Authority of the Author.....	55
3.3.5.3	The Death and Revival of the Author.....	56
3.3.5.4	Real and Implied Author	60
3.3.5.5	Author as a Context of Interpretation	63
3.3.5.6	Functions of the Author	64
3.3.5.6.1	Function of Choice	64
3.3.5.6.2	Function of Form/Composition	65
3.3.5.6.3	Function of the Selection of Contexts	65
3.3.5.6.4	Function of Meaning and Intention	65
3.3.5.6.5	Function of Recognition	67
3.3.5.6.6	Function of Innovation	67
3.3.5.6.7	Function of Fixing Space and Time.....	67
3.3.5.7	Author-figuration.....	68
3.3.6	Reader	69
3.3.6.1	Intended Reader and Implied Reader	70
3.3.6.2	Fictive Reader.....	72
3.4	Biblical Narratology.....	73
3.4.1	Issues in Biblical Narrative Criticism.....	74
3.4.2	Repetitions	75
3.4.3	Characters and Characterization	76
3.4.4	Fictionality and the Bible.....	77
3.4.5	Historicity of the Bible	78
3.4.6	Authorship and Origin of Texts.....	79
3.4.7	Religious Aspects	80
4	A Synchronic Analysis of 2 Kings 11	83
4.1	Salient Features of Narratology in 2 Kings 11	83

4.1.1	Narrativity in 2 Kings 11	83
4.1.2	Wholeness	84
4.1.3	Location of the Occurrence	85
4.1.4	Perspective Structures	85
4.1.4.1	Levels of Communication	85
4.1.4.2	Categories of Narrative Voice.....	86
4.1.4.3	Functions of Narrative Voice	87
4.1.4.4	Focalization	88
4.1.4.5	Characters and Characterization	88
4.1.4.5.1	The Characterization of Jehoiada.....	89
4.1.4.5.2	The Characterization of Athaliah	90
4.1.4.5.3	The Characterization of Jehosheba	91
4.1.4.5.4	The Characterization of the Wet-nurse	91
4.1.4.5.5	The Characterization Centurions of the Carer and the Runners	92
4.1.4.5.6	The Characterization of Mattan	92
4.1.4.5.7	The Characterization of the People	93
4.1.4.5.8	Protagonist and Antagonists.....	93
4.1.4.5.9	Perspectives of the Narrative Voice and of the Characters.....	94
4.1.4.6	Real Author and Real Reader.....	95
4.1.4.7	Implied Author and Implied Reader	95
4.1.4.8	Reliability.....	96
4.2	A Synchronic Reading in Detail	96
4.2.1	Delimitation of the Pericope	96
4.2.2	Characterization of Athaliah and Ahaziah in v. 1	98
4.2.3	Focalization in v. 1	99
4.2.4	Intention and Causality.....	100
4.2.5	Massacre of the Children.....	100
4.2.6	Characterization of Jehosheba, Joram, Ahaziah and Joash in v. 2.....	103
4.2.7	The Wet-nurse in v. 2.....	104
4.2.8	Characterization of Jehosheba in v.2.....	105
4.2.9	Information concerning Joash in v. 2	105
4.2.10	Bedchamber in the temple.....	107
4.2.11	Athaliah – a Ruler of Judah.....	108
4.2.11.1	Lack of Regnal Formula.....	108
4.2.11.2	Lack of the Title “Queen Mother”	110

4.2.12	Absence of Introduction to Jehoiada	114
4.2.13	Focalization in v. 4.....	115
4.2.14	Carers and Runners – כָּרִי and הִרְצִים.....	115
4.2.15	Covenant and Oath.....	116
4.2.16	Conspiracy against Athaliah	117
4.2.17	Coup on Sabbath.....	118
4.2.18	Characterization of the Centurions in v. 9	120
4.2.19	Spear and Shields.....	121
4.2.20	Significance of House in v. 11	122
4.2.21	Coronation of Joash	122
4.2.22	The Crown – כִּיָּוֶן	123
4.2.23	The Testimony – עֵדוּת	123
4.2.24	Anointing – מְלִשָּׁה	125
4.2.25	Acclamation.....	127
4.2.26	Focalization in v. 13.....	129
4.2.27	Focalization in v. 14.....	129
4.2.28	The People of the Land עַם הָאָרֶץ	131
4.2.28.1	Meaning of the term עַם הָאָרֶץ	131
4.2.28.1.1	In Relation to Functioning.....	131
4.2.28.1.2	In Relation to Habitation	132
4.2.28.1.3	In Relation to Affiliation	133
4.2.28.2	עַם הָאָרֶץ in the Pentateuch	134
4.2.28.3	עַם הָאָרֶץ in the Context of Succession to the Throne in Kings	135
4.2.28.4	עַם הָאָרֶץ in the Context of 2 Kings 11	137
4.2.28.4.1	The Political Elements.....	137
4.2.28.4.2	The Religious Elements.....	138
4.2.28.4.3	People of the Land versus City Dwellers	138
4.2.29	Meaning of עָמוּד in the Context of 2 Kings 11.....	139
4.2.30	Reactions of Athaliah.....	140
4.2.31	The Death of Athaliah.....	142
4.2.32	Judgment on Athaliah	143
4.2.33	בְּרִית – Covenant	144
4.2.33.1	Between Yahweh, the King and the People.....	146
4.2.33.2	Between the King and the People.....	148

4.2.34	Characterization in v. 18	150
4.2.35	Baal Worship under Athaliah's Patronage	150
4.2.36	Enthronement	151
4.3	Conclusion	152
4.4	Themes Concerning Historicity	154
4.4.1	Extra-biblical Attestations	154
4.4.2	Identity of Athaliah	154
5	A Diachronic Analysis of 2 Kings 11	157
5.1	Sitz im Leben	157
5.2	The Discrepancies in the Final Text	157
5.3	Layers in the Text	159
5.3.1	Coherence of the Basic Text	163
5.3.2	The Redactions	165
5.3.2.1	Deuteronomistic Redaction	165
5.3.2.2	Priestly Redaction	168
5.4	Conclusion	170
6	An Intertextual Analysis of 2 Kings 11	173
6.1	Exodus 1:1–2:10	173
6.1.1	Traditions of Ancient Birth-Narratives	174
6.1.2	Characters and Themes in Ex 1:1–2:10.....	178
6.1.2.1	Pharaoh.....	178
6.1.2.2	Depiction of the Pharaoh.....	179
6.1.2.3	Midwives.....	181
6.1.2.3.1	Ethnic Belongingness.....	182
6.1.2.3.2	Religious and Moral Aspects of the Midwives.....	183
6.1.2.4	Pharaoh's Daughter – Preserver of Life.....	184
6.1.2.5	Increase in Population	185
6.1.2.6	Forced Labour	186
6.1.2.7	Aborted Plan of Male Infanticide.....	188
6.1.2.8	Command to Genocide.....	188
6.1.3	Comparisons and Motivations.....	189
6.1.3.1	Pharaoh and Athaliah	189
6.1.3.2	Pharaoh's Daughter and Jehosheba.....	190
6.1.3.3	Moses and Joash.....	191
6.1.3.4	The Midwives and the Wet-nurse	191

6.1.3.5	Life versus Death	192
6.1.4	Inspirations from Ex 1:1–2:10	192
6.1.4.1	The Motif of the Birth of a Saviour	192
6.1.4.2	Two Promises in Crises	193
6.1.5	Conclusion	195
6.2	A Comparison between 2 Sam 7; 1 Kings 1 and 2 Kings 11	195
6.2.1	Coronation Ceremony	196
6.2.2	Elimination of Contenders to the Throne	196
6.2.3	The Roles of the Prophet and the Priest	197
6.2.4	Promise of God to David	198
6.3	Athaliah Narrative and Jehu Narrative	199
6.4	The Chronicler's Account of the Athaliah-Narrative (2 Chronicles 22:10–23:21)..	202
6.4.1	Dissimilarities in both the Accounts	203
6.4.1.1	Athaliah Antagonized	212
6.4.1.2	Jehosheba Identified	212
6.4.1.3	Jehoiada, the Central Figure	213
6.4.1.4	Extended Role of the People	213
6.4.1.5	Significance of the Covenant	214
6.4.1.6	Judgement on Deeds	216
6.4.1.7	Baal Worship	217
6.4.1.8	The Place of Cult and Religious Aspects	218
6.4.1.9	Other Changes	221
6.4.2	Inspirations from 2 Chr 23	222
6.4.2.1	The Share of the Priests and the Levites	222
6.4.2.2	Cult of YHWH versus Cult of Baal	222
6.4.2.3	Involvement of the People	223
6.4.3	Conclusion	223
6.5	The Book of Esther	224
6.5.1	Characterization	226
6.5.1.1	Esther – Epitome of Emotional Valour	226
6.5.1.2	Mordecai and the Conflict between Personal or Ethnical Interests	230
6.5.1.3	Haman and his Exaggerated Vengeance	232
6.5.1.4	Ahasuerus – Impressionable and Susceptible	233
6.5.2	Binding Elements of Esther and 2 Kings 11	234
6.5.2.1	Athaliah and Haman	237

6.5.2.2	Bloodthirsty Reactions	237
6.5.2.3	Events of Transition	238
6.5.2.4	Reversal of Fortunes	239
6.5.2.5	Consequences of Death	239
6.5.2.6	Jehoiada and Mordecai and Esther.....	241
6.5.2.7	Jehosheba and Esther	242
6.5.2.8	Esther and Joash.....	242
6.5.2.9	Conflict among People as a Major Theme	243
6.5.3	Inspirations from the Book of Esther	244
6.5.3.1	Self-Perpetuity and Self-Defence.....	244
6.5.3.2	Religious Aspect	246
6.5.4	Conclusion.....	246
7	Historical Considerations.....	249
7.1	Time of Athaliah.....	249
7.2	Dtr Redaction and its Connections to the North.....	249
7.3	Time of Composition.....	251
7.3.1	Time of the Basic Text	252
7.3.2	Time of Dtr Redaction.....	252
7.3.3	Time of the Priestly Redaction.....	253
7.3.4	The Time of the Chronicler's Account	254
7.3.5	Conclusion.....	255
8	Summary and Implications	257
9	Bibliography	265
10	Abbreviations.....	303
11	Presentation of Layers in 2 Kings 11	307
12	Translation of 2 Kings 11	311

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Antony Patrick Jayaraj

1 Introduction

The events narrated in the books of Kings contribute with different concepts, which create an understanding of the history of Israel. Some of these events relate themselves to David, the key figure in the construction of this history and to the promise unto him for a long dynasty. 2 Kings 11 presents itself as such an example. At the surface level, the biblical text reports that Athaliah occupied the throne of Judah by murdering the royal offspring on the demise of her son Ahaziah from the Davidic dynasty and that she was overthrown through a coup led by Jehoiada. The narrative concludes with the eventual enthronement of Joash, a son of Ahaziah. Thus, the pericope begins with a cruel act of merciless infanticide and ends with jubilation and quietness. Between these two emotions of grief and gladness, there are events describing secrecy, planning, execution, covenant between YHWH, the king and the people, restoration of tradition and cultic reforms.

The inconsistency within the text of 2 Kings 11 suggests that the biblical image of Athaliah and the information about Jehoiada and Joash are not just a report of well established facts but show evidence of purposeful design. It propels the readers to look for the thrust of this narrative. Is it concerning the reign of Athaliah? Or is it a succession narrative which highlights the enthronement of Joash? Or does the text want to underline the triumph of Yahwism over Baalism? The first part of the narrative tells the readers how Athaliah occupied the throne. In fact, she occupies the entire narrative as it revolves around her till the last verse. On the other hand, the whole narrative is heading towards the coronation of Joash with which the episode ends. There is no single answer to the above mentioned question, as the purpose of the text is intriguing.

The text does not directly speak anything negative about the reign of Athaliah, although she is shown as a murderer. As per the final version, it took six years to dethrone her. And no explicit reason is cited for her dethronement. But the religious elements interwoven within the text seem to suggest that there was a conflict between the cult of YHWH and that of Baal. Could that be a ground for the upheaval in Judah in the 9th century or is this element due to later reflections? At the same time, there are also indications of political conflicts between Athaliah and Jehoiada, for the enthronement of Joash puts the city in silence. It leads to the question, whether the text is an attempt to establish the legitimacy of Joash. The view is strengthened by the reference to David's spear and shields.

There are several priestly elements interlaced with the court history. The text also adorns Jehoiada with a commanding power over the military. What was the role of the priests at the time of the events and 8:26 at the time, when the narration came into existence? This question would in turn interrogate the reliability of the reported events in its entirety, which should have taken place in the 9th C.

It is generally believed that the books of Kings have gone through the hands of the Deuteronomists. The text in our focus, too, exhibits dtr traits. It is, therefore, important to study the deuteronomistic elements found in 2 Kings 11. It leads us to the question, what is the contribution of the Deuteronomists in the formation of this text. The goal of the study is to explore the above mentioned elements in the text critically and arrive at conclusions which would unfold the text for further study. It also aims at reconstructing the textual history of 2 Kings 11. In this process, the narrative structure of the final text and its intertextual relationship to other texts in the Hebrew Bible play equally important roles in the questions concerning the formation of the text. It is built upon the findings and proposals of the biblical research of the past, carried on by several scholars.

1.1 History of Research

The history of research revolves around the sources of the text, history of formation of the text and the themes which flow from the text. It also studies the reception of the text in the context of the book of Kings. The models of literary criticism on 2 Kings 11 have produced contrasting results, varying from a single source theory to double source theory and to several redactions including insertion of some words alone at different points of time.

1.1.1 Double Source Theory

The double source theory of Stade claims that this pericope is an amalgamation of two different sources. Stade notes the disturbing order of events in the text: the royal anointing (v. 12) – the murder of Athaliah (vv. 13–16) – covenant making (v. 17) – destruction of the temple of Baal (v. 18) – appointing guards in the temple (v. 18b) – and enthronement of Joash (v. 19). According to the final version, the destruction of Baal’s temple seems to have taken place between the royal anointing and the enthronement. Moreover, appointing guards in the temple after the death of Athaliah, too, raises questions. He concludes that v. 18b could directly follow v. 12 and the report of the murder of Athaliah and the

destruction of Baal's temple could be from another source.¹ This theory has been followed by several scholars after Stade. The two sources are: (i) the block consisting of vv. 1–12, 18b–20 is a secular narrative, which is politically oriented. It is a carefully designed account of the plot from the part of Jehoiada. (ii) the block consisting of vv. 13–18a inserts a religious motivation in the revolt.² This theory gains support from two internal reasons: (i) The death of Athaliah is reported twice with differing locations. In v. 16 it is reported that she was killed on the way to the palace, whereas v. 20 reports that it took place within the palace itself.³ (ii) In v. 13 the appearance of the people is abrupt. The people were neither involved in making the plan nor had any role to play in the coup against Athaliah, but they appear all of a sudden as participants of the ceremony. Noth suggested that the Deuteronomist who used “the Books of the Chronicles” for his writing about the Judaeen kings also used it for necessary information contained in 2 Kings 11, like the usurpation of Athaliah, her fall and the installation of Joash.⁴ The observation that the death of Athaliah is reported twice is not without contention, as it could be argued that her death is not reported a second time, but only referred to.

Invariably most of the scholars after Noth expounded his theory posit a Deuteronomistic shaping of 2 Kings 11–12. Gray opines that the compilation of both priestly and popular sources was brought together by the Deuteronomistic redaction, and both the sources, however, are complimentary and not exclusive to each

¹ Cf. Bernhard Stade. ZAW 5 (1885) 279–88. The view of Stade is commonly accepted except for the difference on historicity of the sources. Cf. Charles Fox Burney 1903: 308. Cf. John Gray 1964: 511.

² Cf. Nolan B. Harmon 1954: 246.

³ Rudolph considers it erroneous to hold that the places of death mentioned in v. 16 and v. 20 are different. He translates v. 16 as follows: after she came to the palace through the horse gate, she was murdered. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 476. V. 20 is not a repetition of v. 16, but only mentioned in order to contrast the jubilation of the people. Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 131.

⁴ “The Books of the Chronicles,” both of Judah and of Israel, are derived from the official annals of the Judaeen and Israelite kings. These Books of the Chronicles are unofficial histories adapted from the official materials. Cf. Martin Noth 1981: 63–67. The theory of Noth gave impetus to further biblical studies in similar vein. But today we understand the formation and redaction of the text differently, which will be dealt under the redaction criticism.

other. They are combined probably at the time of the Josianic reformation which was both a constitutional and religious reformation.⁵

1.1.2 Single Source Theory

In spite of the observation of double sources, 2 Kings 11 is often treated as a single source. Skinner finds a lack of religious motifs in the so-called priestly section. It is rather a paradox that in the “official” account, the key characters are the people. And in the “popular” account, it is the military officials and priests, who play a prominent role.⁶ B.O. Long argues that vv. 13–16, part of the so-called second source, could hardly stand alone and should depend on vv. 4–12 for intelligibility, and proposes a single source.⁷

The biblical researches of recent times postulate a single source and one or more redactions which followed it. Cogen and Tadmor believe in the single source theory and add that it underwent dtr redaction.⁸ Barré proposes that the basic unity of a reconstructed original text of 2 Kings 9–11 has gone through a dtr and post-dtr redaction, which resulted in expansion of the original narrative in several places and consequently in overlapping narrative.⁹ Mullen is of the opinion that the author of the biblical text probably relied on several sources for his history writing, such as written or oral, official or popular.¹⁰ Levin sees 4 layers of redaction in 2 Kings 11. They are: one basic text of Judah which is pre-exilic (vv. 1–2, 3b, 4a–b.d.f, 5a.b.d, 6a, 8a–b, 11a.c, 12b, 13a, 14a.c, 16, 17a.c, 19c–20a), an early chronicler edition (vv. 10, 15b, 18b), an extensive priestly edition (vv. 3a, 4c.e, 5c, 7, 8c, 9, 11b, 12a, 13b, 15a, 19a–b, 20b), and a covenant theology

⁵ Cf. John Gray 1964: 511–13. The priestly source does include the involvement of the people and likewise the popular source does include the role of the priests in the coup. The latter source makes the popular support visible which is implicit in the former.

⁶ Cf. John Skinner 1904: 337.

⁷ Cf. Burke O. Long 1991: 147.

⁸ Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 126. Rudolph sees it slightly different, as he considers 2 Kings 11:1 pointing out that the whole chapter had been a part of a larger portion whose materials are scattered in the previous two chapters, especially the reports on the death of Ahaziah. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 475–76. Garbini finds it difficult to accept that stories about coups and conspiracies would come from the archives of royal court. He opines that such materials could be an outcome of the fiction of Dtr, who attempted to give a sense of unity to the events of the kings. Cf. G. Garbini. *Henoch* 3 (1981) 26–46. Cited in: Mark A. O’Brien 1989: 183.

⁹ Barré asserts that the strong negative attitude towards Ahab in 2 Kings 9–10 are dtr additions, and that 2 Kings 11 forms a continuity of the preceding chapters. Cf. Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 29.

¹⁰ Cf. Theodore Mullen Jr. 1993: 24.

edition (14b, 17b, 18a) which belongs to late dtr times.¹¹ The thesis of Levin is partly convincing and partly isn't. For instance, the differentiation between the priestly edition and that of the early chronicler is very thin. At the same time there is a definite unity within what Levin calls covenant theology edition.

The text exhibits interests of the Southern kingdom and its internal affairs, such as, fall of one ruler and the coronation of another. There is no mention of foreign hands in the affairs which might eventually link it to external sources. 2 Kings 8:26 which categorically links Athaliah to the Omride dynasty belongs to the dtr work. In the older layers of the text, Athaliah is nowhere linked to the Omrides. Robker rightly notes that Athaliah's ascent to the throne in 2 Kings 11 presupposes the death of her son Ahaziah in 2 Kings 9:28–29. And 2 Kings 9–11 does not identify Athaliah as coming from the Omride dynasty.¹² Moreover, 2 Kings 11 does not focus on the destruction of the Omride dynasty, but on the murder of Athaliah and the coronation of Joash of Judah. Thus 2 Kings 11 contains concerns of the Southern kingdom alone.

The research on 2 King 11 leaves some questions still open, such as the delimitation of the basic text, the impact of several traditions in the text in its present form, the similarity of the Jehu narration and 2 Kings 11 and the relation between our text and the northern sources. This necessitates further study on this subject.

1.1.3 Narratological Studies

On the levels of narratology, the study on the narrative voice was developed by formalist critics, like the Russian formalists, students of stylistic and structuralists. Henry James coined the concept of a reflector. Booth developed the concept of a reliable and unreliable narrator. Genette worked on focalization and narrative levels. Bal developed the concept of focalizer and levels of focalization.¹³ An application of the narratological method also in the sphere of biblical research begins to appear in recent times. Alter analysed the narrative elements in the biblical writings. Bar-Efrat made a detailed narrative analysis of the story of the rape of Tamar. Schmitz's work on 1 Kings 13 and 22 and the analysis of Dutcher-

¹¹ Cf. Christoph Levin 1982: 18. Benzinger considers that v. 10 might have been adopted from 2 Chr 23:9. According to the Chronicler, the Levites took the place of the temple guards and so they needed to be supplied with weapons. And so supplying the Levites with weapons fits into the narration of 2 Chronicles. Cf. Immanuel Benzinger 1899: 157.

¹² Cf. Jonathan Robker 2012: 69.

¹³ Cf. Susana Onega and José Angel Gracia Landa 1996: 28–29. See the particular works of the authors in the bibliography.

Walls on 2 Kings 11–12 are further examples of the narratological approach. Our text in study, 2 Kings 11 displays an artistry and flair in its narrative style. Dutcher-Walls uses literary and rhetoric methods in tandem with ideological and sociological methods in her interpretation of 2 Kings 11–12. She also explores the deuteronomistic worldview expressed in the text. I intend to add another dimension to the study on 2 Kings 11 by way of a diachronic analysis and an intertextual study. An analysis of hermeneutics, history and intention of the author under the light of narratology would bring interesting results which might enhance our understanding on the text, alongside the diachronic analysis of the pericope.

1.2 Methodology

Recent times have witnessed a broader application of methodologies in biblical studies. The present study on 2 Kings 11 stands in the tradition of a diachronically reflected synchronic exegesis. The synchronic study reads the text as it is presented in the final form. The diachronic analysis, on the contrary, studies the formation of the text, its historical and cultural background and the components of the final text. As Berges advocates, a diachronically reflected synchronic approach¹⁴, in which both the methods complement each other, would make the biblical research richer. This methodological discussion in the last decade has enriched the biblical studies. And so, the study at hand, aims at deriving a fair understanding of 2 King 11, making use of some of the current methods of biblical research, both on the levels of synchronic and diachronic analyses.

From the level of the narratological approach, I aim to present a synthesis of various models and approaches and to offer explanations on essential concepts related to narratology. This presentation is imperative, in order to apply the method on our text more effectively. The study at hand then applies the narratological concepts on 2 Kings 11 and views this biblical text both from a narratological perspective and from a semantic perspective. The narratological application is not confined within any single method, but rather is a comprehensive approach whereby several narratological tools are used in reading the text in a narratological perspective. The narrative elements combined with those of the semantic enriches the synchronic analysis exposing the nuances of narrative ele-

¹⁴ Cf. Ulrich Berges. *BiKi* 62 (2007) 250–51.

ments in the text in focus. The study also includes the discussion of some interpretative problems in the text.

The diachronic analysis of 2 Kings 11 also contains a new hypothesis concerning sources and redactions of the text, and tries to unfold answers to some of the complications revolving around the text. And it proposes as to how this pericope could have come into existence and arrives at new dimensions in the understanding of the text. It also seeks to study the role of the text in the larger context of the book of Kings, for 2 Kings 11 offers a highly significant theme to the entire book of Kings, as it deals with the theme of continuity of the Davidic dynasty. The word study also reveals several layers in relations to some known circles like deuteronomistic and priestly traditions. These concerns are to be treated in the history of the formation of the book and the text. It necessitates an analysis of formation history and readdresses the challenges which it poses. Thereby, a proposal is made with regard to the time of the above mentioned layers.

Our diachronic analysis shows that 2 Kings 11 is to be understood in relation to some other biblical texts. It necessitates an intertextual analysis. Intertextuality in general reads one text against another intertext and seeks clarity on the text in study. The concept of intertextuality was introduced by J. Kristeva in the context of linguistic, literary and cultural theory of Bachtin. Kristeva argued that every text consists of citations and is an absorption and transformation of another text.¹⁵

In the application of the intertextual method in biblical theology, diverse methodologies have emerged. It, in fact, mirrors the diversity of attempts to address a variety of questions.¹⁶ The approach introduced by Steins, viz., “kanonisch-intertextuelle Lektüre” – “a canonical intertextual reading” is fascinating in this regard. This concept stresses the inexhaustible richness of meanings in the biblical texts and the role of the reader in discovering these meanings.¹⁷ Steins bases his theory on Bachtin’s concept that words are dialogical and on Kristeva’s concept that texts stand in relation to one another and he integrates them with the

¹⁵ Cf. Julia Kristeva 1972: 345–75. See also Georg Steins 1999: 48–49.

¹⁶ Boda and Floyd caution not to jump into conclusions of dependence of texts, when one identifies common vocabulary or phraseology. It is sometimes possible both the identified texts have had a common origin or the language might be the result of common everyday usage and they could be only indirectly related. Cf. M. Boda and M. Floyd 2003: 5.

¹⁷ Georg Steins 1999: 2–3. As a canonical approach, it pays attention to the three dimensions of canon, namely, the context, the specific structure and the medium of reception. Ibid. 26.

literary features of biblical canons in order to formulate semantic constructions. It means, when we place a text in the canonical context, one voice from the text stands in close relation to other voices from the text and enables the possibility of dialogue which should be actualized through the reader. Steins agrees that not every text stands in text-to-text relation to other texts, but only a text which evokes other text or texts can enrich itself. These texts contribute to the construction of meanings.¹⁸

Stead's method of "thematic allusions" seeks attention in this context. It holds that the same theme could be expressed in more than one text, using different vocabulary. In successive reading of the Bible, one has to note the echoes of the text in study and look for thematic allusions. The texts which share common themes won't be remarkable, if the theme is very common in the Hebrew Bible. Then the particular passage is read against the background of the identified intertext in order to explore additional depth of meaning.¹⁹ Since there exists a great difficulty in determining the time of composition of early biblical texts, more concentration will be given to the thematic analysis. Echo and allusions are two important aspects in an intertextual analysis and they are closely interconnected. An echo is a subconscious evocation of an earlier text without any rhetorical end in mind, whereas, allusion means conscious reference by one text to another.²⁰

Scheetz developed "the Concept of Canonical Intertextuality" which integrates concepts of Kristevian influenced intertextuality with canon criticism. It insists on the dialogue inherent in the canonical texts. "This dialogue reflects point of continuity, where there are similar terms, phrases, and values, and points of discontinuity where these terms, phrases, and values have shifted in meaning."²¹ It means, even if a term or phrase could be used in different ways in different contexts, they do not reflect static textual units, but stand in dialogue with each other. Thus the approach of Scheetz can be seen as an extended version of the theory of Steins.

Steins' "kanonisch-intertextuelle Lektüre" is helpful for this study on 2 Kings 11, as the biblical canon stands at the centre of this approach as a dialogically and intertextually structured literary work. This intertextual study consists in two

¹⁸ Ibid. 70–83.

¹⁹ Michael R. Stead 2009: 37–39.

²⁰ Todd Hibbard 2006: 14.

²¹ Jordan M. Scheetz 2011: 33.

steps. The first step is to look for the presence of other texts in 2 Kings 11, based on the similarities and congruencies. It also includes the search for reference signals within the text and study of the relationship between the texts. The second step consists in unfolding new meanings in the light of the new text and drawing inspirations from it.

The act of murdering the children brings the texts concerning the births of Moses and Joash together. The same act of murdering relates itself to the promise of a long lasting Davidic kingdom (2 Sam 7). The coronation of Joash reminds the reader of the accession of Solomon (1 Kings 1:28–40). The removal of Athaliah from the throne and the consequent destruction of the Baal cult stands in close relation to the removal of the Omride dynasty in the Northern kingdom and the subsequent eradication of Baal cult (2 Kings 9–10). The covenant mentioned in 2 Kings 11:17 is to be read in relation to the covenant cut by Josiah (2 King 23:3). Besides these instances of relatedness, 2 Kings 11 has its parallel in 2 Chronicles. The themes of dethronement and revolt bring 2 Kings 11 closer to the book of Esther. The connectivity of 2 Kings 11 with these texts and their interdependence are to be analysed concisely. Besides these texts, shorter comparative analysis is done with a few other texts in the course of the study in appropriate contexts.

1.3 Structure of the Study

As the title would suggest it, the study makes use of both synchronic and diachronic analysis. After the presentation of my own translation of 2 Kings 11, the synchronic analysis of the text in 2 Kings 11 is elaborately dealt with. It consists of a description of the significant concepts of narratology and a narratological approach to our text. It is followed by the study of the diachronic aspects of the text. Thereafter the intertextual analysis studies the relationship between the text at hand with relevant biblical texts.

In the appendix, my translation of the text with classified layers is attached. For biblical citations other than the text in study, the English version of NRSV is followed. Hebrew references are made according to the Masoretic Text.

2 Translation and Rationale

- וַעֲתִלְיָהּ אִם אֶחְזִיָּהּ רָאָתָה כִּי מָתָהּ בְּנָהּ וַתָּקָם וַתֹּאבֵד אֶת כָּל־זָרַע הַמְּמַלְכָּה: 1. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah saw²² that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring²³.
- וַתִּקַּח יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַ בַּת־הַמֶּלֶךְ־יֹרָם אֶחָת אֶחְזִיָּהּ אֶת־יֹאָשׁ בֶּן־אֶחְזִיָּהּ וַתִּגְנֹב אֹתוֹ מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמּוֹמְתִים אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־מִינְקָתוֹ בַּחֲדָר הַמְּטוֹת וַיִּסְתְּרוּ אֹתוֹ מִפְּנֵי עֲתִלְיָהּ וְלֹא הוּמָת: 2. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, the sister of Ahaziah took Joash, the son of Ahaziah²⁴ and stole him away from the sons of the king, who were put to death²⁵, him and his wet-nurse²⁶ in the bedchamber²⁷ and they hid²⁸ him from Athaliah²⁹ and he was not killed.

²² Manuscripts differ in the form of this verb in ketib (וַרְאָתָהּ) and qere (רָאָתָהּ).

²³ זָרַע הַמְּמַלְכָּה is from the form ממלכה, meaning king or kingdom or royal rule. The regular expression is הַמְּלֹכָה (2 Kings 25:25; Jer 41:1; Ez 17:13). Since the form found in this text is intelligible, it need not be emended. Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 125. Davies, too, understands ממלכה when active in its underlying verbal idea, as a more institutionalised term like dynasty or royal house (1 Sam 13:13–14; 2 Sam 3:10; 1 Kings 2:46; 11:11). Cf. John A. Davies 2004: 78.

²⁴ The shorter form of the name Ahaziah is used here unlike the previous two occurrences. In the place of “the son of Ahaziah”, LXX has “the son of her brother”.

²⁵ הַמּוֹמְתִים is the hoph'al form and found in various Manuscripts, which is generally accepted. The same word is used in the book of Chronicles, too (2 Chr 22:11). 2 Kings 17:26 applies the same form. Montgomery believes that the Polal form may be to imply the intensity of the massacre. Cf. James A. Montgomery 1951: 424.

²⁶ מִינְקָתוֹ is the hiph'il participle feminine of יָנַק, meaning ‘to nurse or to breast-feed.’ It is translated as ‘wet nurse’. It is the only place in DtrH, where this word appears. Cf. Mercedes L. Bachmann 2013: 255.

²⁷ Schulte suggests, it should have been “out of the bedchamber” which is erroneously written as in the bedchamber. Cf. Hannelis Schulte. Semeia 66 (1994) 136.

²⁸ The verb here is in 3rd person plural and the subject could be impersonal: “They hid him from Athaliah.” On the contrary, it is in 3rd person feminine singular in 2 Chr 22:11 and LXX. The previous two verbs (took, stole) are indicating her action are in singular. Würthwein suggests that it is a gloss in the wrong place and opines that the plural pronoun would indicate other helpers and not the wet-nurse. Cf. Ernst Würthwein 1984: 346. Gray and Dutcher-Walls are of the opinion that it could be an impersonal or indefinite plural and hence, there is no need for emendation. Cf. John Gray 1964: 569; Patricia Dutcher-Walls 1996: 30–31. Nelson is of the view that it may be proleptic for the forthcoming wider conspiratorial circle, which would also include the people. Cf. Richard D. Nelson 1987: 207. But the text does not suggest the involvement of others at this place and Jehosheba does not appear later. Therefore, the plural “they” would refer to Jehosheba and the wet-nurse.

²⁹ The longer form of the name “Athaliahu” is used here unlike the previous occurrence.

וַיְהִי אִתָּהּ בַּיִת יְהוָה מִתְחַבֵּא שָׁשׁ
שָׁנִים וְעַתְלָהּ מַלְכַת עַל־הָאָרֶץ: פ
3. And he was with her in the house of YHWH
hiding himself for six years, while Athaliah
ruled³⁰ over the land.

וּבַשְּׁנָה הַשְּׂבִיעִית שָׁלַח יְהוֹיָדָע
וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאוֹת לַכָּרִי
וְלָרָצִים וַיָּבֵא אֹתָם אֵלָיו בַּיִת יְהוָה
וַיַּכְרֵת לָהֶם בְּרִית וַיִּשָּׁבַע אֹתָם
בְּבַיִת יְהוָה וַיִּרְא אֹתָם אֶת־בֶּן־
הַמֶּלֶךְ: 4. And in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and
took the centurions³¹ of the carer³² and the run-
ners³³ and made them come to him to the house
of YHWH and he cut a covenant for them and
made them swear in the house of YHWH³⁴ and
let them see the son of the king.

וַיִּצְוֶם לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן
הַשְּׁלִישִׁית מִכֶּם בְּאֵי הַשָּׁבָת וְשֹׁמְרֵי
מִשְׁמֶרֶת בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ: 5. And he commanded them: This is what you
should do. One third of you, who come on duty
on Sabbath, shall undertake the watch³⁵ in the
house of the king.

³⁰ Athaliah מַלְכַת the land: This is not the ordinary Hebrew word for “queen” (מלכה) but the feminine participle of the verb מלך, “to rule, to be king”. It could be also translated as: Athaliah was the “ruling woman” of Judah. Cf. Jerome T. Walsh. CBQ 72 (2010) 249. I prefer to translate in the verb form.

³¹ Some Manuscripts have the Qere form המאות.

³² The term כָּרִי is differently translated and so it is often preferred to transliterate as carites or carians or carer. Ewald prefers to term it Carians. The British Revised Version of English Bible and the Jewish Version call it Carites. Cf. Heinrich Ewald 1867: 4, 135. The Authorised Version renders a military title, naming it captain. Vulgate compounds it. The transcriptions of the name “carian” do not solve this issue. The Greek form is kares and karikoi. The Babylonian form is karsā. In Elamite and Old Persian, it is kurkā. The striking point is the commonality of the three consonants. However, it does not suggest any other relation with the Hebrew כָּרִי. Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 126. I prefer to use the term “carer” in view of upholding their identity as a particular type of guards.

³³ רָצִים are understood to be members of the king’s royal security guards. The Greek texts recognised it as nominal pronoun. The last two words of the sentence in the MT are transliterated in the mainstream Greek text without making a translation. The word לָרָצִים could be also a derivation from רוצ meaning ‘to haste, to run.’ This has led translators to doublets of the word. In Greek, the three terms referring to the chiefs of the king, the shield-bearers and the spear-bearers are understood as collective denominations. Cf. Natalio Fernandez Marcos 2003: 593–94. All the same, I translate it as “runners” in order to preserve the original meaning of the word.

³⁴ LXX omits “the house of the Lord” as redundant.

³⁵ The original meaning of מִשְׁמֶרֶת is “guarding” in the physical sense. It could mean also “keeping watch” (Mal 3:14). Cf. Moshe Weinfeld 1972: 335.

- וְהִשְׁלִישִׁית בְּשַׁעַר סוּר וְהִשְׁלִישִׁית
בְּשַׁעַר אַחֵר הַרְצִיִּים וְשָׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת־
מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַבַּיִת מִסָּח:
6. One third at the entrance of the gate of Sur³⁶
and one third at the gate behind the runners and
so you keep watch over the house alternatively³⁷.
- וְשָׁתֵי הַיְדוּת בְּכֶם כֹּל יֵצְאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת
וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת בַּיִת־יְהוָה אֶל־
הַמֶּלֶךְ:
7. And the two divisions of you, all who leave
on Sabbath, and they should undertake³⁸ the
watch of the house of YHWH for the king³⁹.
- וְהִקְפַּתֶּם עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב אִישׁ
וְכִלְיו בְּיָדוֹ וְהִבָּא אֶל־הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת
יּוֹמָת וְהָיוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּצֵאתוֹ
וּבָבֹאוֹ:
8. And you shall assemble around the king, ev-
eryone and with his weapons in his hand. If any-
one comes inside the ranks⁴⁰, let him be killed.
Be with the king, when he goes out and when he
comes in.
- וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שָׂרֵי הַמְּאוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה
יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו
בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת עִם יֵצְאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וַיָּבֹאוּ
אֶל־יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן:
9. The centurions did as all that Jehoiada the
priest commanded and they took, each (of them)
his men who come (on duty) on Sabbath, and

³⁶ The name Sur is mentioned as Jesod (the foundation) in the Book of Chronicles (2 Chr 23:5), in which סוּר is replaced by יְסוּד. The location of this gate is not known. V. 16 mentions the Horse entrance. Some would emend the Sur gate in v. 6, as redactional gloss like the Horse gate. Cf. John Gray 1964: 515. Cogen and Tadmor locate it as the gate in the southern wall, which separates the Temple and the compounds of the palace. Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 127.

³⁷ The word מִסָּח is not very intelligible. LXX but omits this word. Gesenius treats this word as a borrowed Acadian word which would mean “alternatively”. Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 702. It could be a scribal annotation. Gray translates it as “to replace” positing a Hebrew cognate on the Arabic *naṣaḥa*. Cf. John Gray 1964: 515.

³⁸ The LXX omits the copula and reads as “those standing guards”. But the copula is warranted as וְשָׁמְרוּ is in third person plural, indicating the allegation of work to the groups. V.5 also has the participle וְשָׁמְרֵי.

³⁹ Here אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ causes some difficulty in meaning. Hobbs translates it as “at the disposal of the king”. Cf. T.R. Hobbs 1985: 134. I prefer to translate אֶל as “for”, offering the meaning, “for the sake of the king”.

⁴⁰ The word הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת is of Akkadian origin. The military term *sidirtu* means rank of soldiers. Cf. James A. Montgomery 1951: 425. The Akkadian cognate *sidirtu* (Reihe in German; array or row in English) is used to refer to setting troops in the battle array. Cf. Wolfram von Soden 1965: 1039. While admitting that this word means ranks, Yeivin contests that it does not refer to rows of soldiers. He attributes an architectural sense with an allusion to a third entrance to the inner court of the temple. This entrance might have had two rows of pilasters along the inner walls of the gate way. Cf. S. Yeivin. VT 14 (1964) 335. However, the ranks of soldiers appear to be fitting to the context, as Athaliah could be forcibly led between the ranks without offering any chance of escape.

who leave on Sabbath. They came to Jehoiada, the priest.

וַיִּתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן לְשָׂרֵי הַמַּאוֹת אֶת־
הַחֲנִית וְאֶת־הַשְּׁלֵטִים אֲשֶׁר לְמֶלֶךְ
דָּוִד אֲשֶׁר בְּבַיִת יְהוָה: 10. The priest gave to the centurions the spear and the shields⁴¹ which belonged to David and were in the house of the YHWH.

וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ הַרְצִים אִישׁ וְכָלִיו בְּיָדוֹ
מִכַּתֵּף הַיְמָנִית עַד־כַּתֵּף הַשְּׂמָאלִית
לְמַזְבֵּחַ וְלִבְיַת עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ
סָבִיב: 11. The runners stood, everyone and with his weapons in his hand, from the right side(wall) of the house onto left side(wall) of the house, at the altar and at the house around the king⁴².

וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת־
הַנִּגָּז וְאֶת־הַעֲדוֹת וַיִּנְמְלוּ אֹתוֹ: 12. He brought the king's son and gave the crown onto him, and the testimony⁴³. They⁴⁴

⁴¹ There is uncertainty regarding the translation of הַשְּׁלֵטִים which LXX translates as “shields”. In Jer 51:11, it is translated as quiver, which finds support in Yadin’s work on the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is a synonym for a javelin in Songs 4:4. Cf. Yigael Yadin 1962: 133–34. See also M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 128. It is all the same preferable to understand it as “shields” which stands in connection 2 Sam 8:7. It speaks of שְׁלֵטֵי הַזָּהָב (the shields of gold) belonging to the servant of Hadadezer, which David brought to Jerusalem as booty.

⁴² The phrase ‘around the king’ is suggested to be omitted by some authors, as the prince must have been already brought over there. Cf. Rudolf Kittel 1900: 249. Burney puts it as, ‘round about the altar and the house.’ Cf. C.F. Burney 1903: 311. Šanda explains that it refers to a circle turning towards the altar and temple and stand around the future king. Cf. A. Šanda 1912: 130. Rudolph understands it as: ‘for the protection of the king’ (i.e. when he comes over there). Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 475. See also James A. Montgomery 1951: 420. In fact הַמִּלֵּךְ סָבִיב concurs with v. 8 and is oriented towards the safety of the prince. Moreover the mention of the word “king” at this point is also crucial from the view of literary criticism.

⁴³ The word עֲדוֹת is variously understood. Some translate it as ‘diadem.’ Diadem has the etymological sense of consecration. All Ancient Versions, Authorised Version and British Revised Version of the Bible translate it as ‘testimony.’ Cf. James A. Montgomery 1951: 420. In 2 Sam 1:10 there is the pairing of diadem and bracelet. In the past, it was also interpreted as placing the Torah, so that the king may read it, which stands in relation to Deut 17:18ff. Cf. James A. Montgomery 1951: 425. Yeivin surmises it as ornamented head cover made of precious material, above which נִגָּז, the royal diadem was placed. He cites the Assyrian and Egyptian examples of kings wearing a head band. Cf. S. Yeivin. IEJ 24 (1974) 19–20. But the meaning testimony is more compelling based on the context of the covenant at the coronation which will be dealt with in detail later.

⁴⁴ Some Greek Manuscripts like Codex Vaticanus use singular subject, attributing it to Jehoiada.

- וַיִּמְשַׁחְהוּ וַיִּכְרֹכְהוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ יְהוָה
הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס made him king, anointed him and clapped their
hands saying: Long live, the king.
- וַתִּשְׁמַע עַתְלִיָּה אֶת-קוֹל הַרָצִין
הָעָם וַתָּבֹא אֶל-הָעָם בֵּית יְהוָה: 13. When Athaliah heard the noise of the run-
ners⁴⁵ the people⁴⁶, she came to the people in the
house of YHWH.
- וַתֵּרָא וַהֲגִיָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ עֹמֵד עַל-הָעֵמּוּד
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְהַשָּׂרִים וְהַחֲצֹצְרוֹת אֶל-
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל-עַם הָאָרֶץ שָׂמַח וַתִּקְרַע
בְּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וַתִּקְרַע עַתְלִיָּה אֶת-
בְּגָדֶיהָ וַתִּקְרָא קוֹשָׁר קוֹשָׁר: ס 14. And she saw: behold! The king was standing
on the podium⁴⁷ according to the custom⁴⁸ and
the commanders⁴⁹ and the trumpeters by the
king, and all the people of the land blew the
trumpets and Athaliah tore her upper garment
and cried: Treason, Treason!
- וַיִּצְוֵהוּ יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲוֹת
פְּקָדֵי הַסִּיל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם הוֹצִיאוּ
אֹתָהּ אֶל-מִבֵּית לְשַׁדְרָת וְהִבָּא 15. Jehoiada, the priest commanded the centuri-
ons, the captains of the army and told them,
“send her out in front of the house, through the

⁴⁵ The word הַרָצִין is in Aramaic plural form here, contrary to the previous occurrences.

⁴⁶ There is no conjunction between the nouns “the runners” and “the people”. LXX does not have it either, though BHS suggests adding וְ (and) to it. A Manuscript strikes out הָעָם which looks reasonable in relation to preceding verses. All the Manuscripts have “the runners”. 2 Chr 23:12 does not speak of the runners, but only of the people who are running about, probably in an attempt to establish the presence of the people, who all of a sudden appear in the episode and to whom Athaliah came.

⁴⁷ עֵמּוּד means “pillar”. Etymologically it could be also a formation from עָמַד which opens up the possibility to understand it as a pedestal or podium. It is translated as “podium” in Jewish Version and in British Revised Version of the Bible. If it is translated as “pillar”, it could stand in relation to Jachin and Boaz. These were the known pillars, by which the king stood, whenever he visited the temple. Cf. D. Wilhelm Nowack 1900: 250. North interprets it as “platform” (1 Kings 8:22; 2 Chr 6:18). Cf. C.R. North. ZAW 50 (1932) 19–20. Coggins prefers to translate it rather as “dais” than pillar. Cf. Richard J. Coggins 1976: 236. I prefer to translate it as “podium”, as it finds similar expression in the passage of Josiah making covenant with the Lord (2 Kings 23:3).

⁴⁸ כַּמִּשְׁפָּט is translated as custom or as ritual (cf. Ezekiel’s ritual for royal worship in Ez 46:2). Chronicles does not mention “according to the customs”, in its parallel in 2 Chr 23:13.

⁴⁹ There is confusion with the word הַשָּׂרִים which is translated as commanders. LXX and Vulgata use the word “singer” whereby שָׂ is replaced with שׁ. It derives support from the reference to music, played at the enthronement of Solomon (1 Kings 1:40). 2 Chr 23:13 finds a double entente in the word. Greek texts and Vulgate also took the word for singing. But I would prefer to go by the MT and understand as commanders referring to the centurions of the carer who are entrusted with the duty of standing around the king (v. 8). It goes well with the command of Jehoiada and fits into the context.

אֶחָרֶיהָ הִמַּת בְּחֶרֶב כִּי אָמַר הַכֹּהֵן
אֶל־תּוֹמַת בַּיִת יְהוָה:
ranks⁵⁰, and let anyone who follows her, be slain
by the sword”; indeed the priest said, “she shall
not be killed within the house of YHWH.”

וַיִּשְׁמוּ לָהּ יָדַיִם וַתָּבֹא דְרָר־מְבוֹא
הַסּוּסִים בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתּוֹמַת שָׁם: ס
16. They laid hands⁵¹ on her and she came the
way of horse-entrance to the house of the king
and there she was killed.

וַיִּכְרַת יְהוֹיָדָע אֶת־הַבְּרִית בֵּין יְהוָה
וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם לִהְיוֹת לְעָם
לִיהוָה וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם:
17. Jehoiada cut the covenant between YHWH
and the king and the people that they should be
people of YHWH; and between the king and the
people⁵².

וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ בַּיִת־הַבַּעַל
וַיִּתְּצוּהוּ אֶת־מִזְבְּחֹתָיו וְאֶת־צִלְמָיו
שָׁבְרוּ הַיִּטָּב וְאֵת מַתָּן כֹּהֵן הַבַּעַל
הָרָגוּ לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת וַיִּשֶׂם הַכֹּהֵן
פְּקֻדוֹת עַל־בַּיִת יְהוָה:
18. And the entire⁵³ people of the land came to
the house of Baal and they destroyed it, its altars
and its images they broke thoroughly and killed
Mattan, the priest of Baal in front of the altars
and the priest appointed guards over the house
of YHWH.

⁵⁰ Authorized Version translates this phrase as “have her forth without the ranks”. British Revised Version of English, Jewish Version and German Version have it as, “have her forth between the ranks.” It is related to the command from the priest to safeguard her until she is officially executed outside the temple premises. From the context, the latter translation looks more suitable. Cf. James A. Montgomery 1951: 421–22.

⁵¹ The plural form is differently used here: יָדַיִם instead of the usual יָדוֹת. But this form is also found in some other places in the Bible, like Gen 34:21, Josh 8:20, Judg 18:10, 2 Sam 17:2. Targum and Syriac Versions translate יָד as “space” (Josh 8:20, Gen 34:21, Ps 104:25). LXX and Vulgate have it literal, meaning that she was taken forcibly from the temple. It was accepted to be the right translation by the Renaissance scholars. Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 130. It is to be understood as: they took her in their control, meaning that she lost every control over herself.

⁵² The last part of the verse, “and between the king and the people” is absent in Codex Vaticanus and textus Graecus ex recensione Origenis and also in 2 Chr 23:16. Rudolph treats both the king and the people as the second partner of the first covenant with God, and translates as follows: Jehoiada but made the covenant between YHWH and the king, that he should be a king to the people of YHWH. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 474. In all likelihood, it is a single covenant, which is dealt with elaborately in the later part of our paper.

⁵³ Bruno suggests to remove כָּל. Cf. Arvid Bruno 1955: 297. But such a change, which in fact has no ground, would reduce the emphasis on entire people.

וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמָּאוֹת וְאֶת־הַפָּרִי
 וְאֶת־הַרְצִיִּים וְאֶת כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ
 וַיְרִידוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִבֵּית יְהוָה
 וַיָּבֹאוּ דֶרֶךְ־שַׁעַר הַרְצִיִּים בְּיַת
 הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים:
 19. And he took the centurions of the carer and
 the runners and the entire people of the land and
 they let the king descend from the house of
 YHWH, and they entered through the runners-
 gate into the house of the king. And he⁵⁴ sat on
 the throne of the kings.

וַיִּשְׂמַח כָּל־עַם־הָאָרֶץ וְהָעִיר
 שָׁקֵטָה וְאֶת־עַמְלִיָּהוּ הַמִּיתוּ בַּחֶרֶב
 בְּיַת מֶלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס
 20. The entire people of the land rejoiced and the
 city was peaceful, and Athaliahu⁵⁵ they had
 killed by sword in the house of king⁵⁶.

Gloss

הָעָם in v. 13 is a gloss. The final text has the sentence as: “When Athaliah heard the noise of the runners the people, she came to the people in the house of YHWH.” There is no conjunction between the nouns “the runners” and “the people”. Reading with a genitive case does not solve the problem, as it would still mean: the noise of the runners of the people. In the same verse “the people” appear for the first time without any prior introduction. In 2 Chr 23:12 הַרְצִיִּין is made into הַרְצִיִּים an adjective to the people. It indicates a corruption of the text in order to introduce the people to whom Athaliah comes. The modification of הַרְצִיִּין and the addition of הָעָם by the Chronicler give the meaning that Athaliah heard the noise of the people and she came to the people. On the contrary the MT preserves the original הַרְצִיִּין. Through a comparison with 2 Chr 23, the הָעָם is probably added to it later. And therefore, הָעָם is to be understood as a gloss.

⁵⁴ Textus Graecus ex recensione Luciani reads it in plural: they set him ... This reading is supported by 2 Chr 23:20.

⁵⁵ The longer form of the name is used here as in v. 2.

⁵⁶ Several Manuscripts add the definite article to the “king”.

3 An Outline of the Narratological Approach

A narrative can be understood only in relation to concatenation of events, for it is often done by means of telling or showing of represented events. It represents sequence, space and time. Both the verbal articulation and the nonverbal showing might equally have a narrative orientation. In order to be called a narrative, an expression, be it verbal or nonverbal, should be a sequence, which is a movement that flows inexorably from the start to the end.⁵⁷ Kloepfer and Monaghan define narratology as “the representation of a real or fictitious world in events or in actions which are realized through human agents in the course of a stretch of time and in a specific space”⁵⁸.

Narratology could be also conceived as the study of the composite elements contained in a narrative and their relationship with each other.⁵⁹ In literary analysis, well defined categories and methods are applied to the text, in order to get a comprehensive account of the content. Narratology employs descriptive models and categories of analysis, which provide us with tools for a systematic and precise account of these elements and structures. It studies the linguistic and structural characteristics of the text and their relationship with their potential meaning.⁶⁰ In dealing with a text, one is confronted with the hermeneutical problem that no text can be understood as it had been originally meant. Hence, tracing the primary sources of the text would not be of big help in this regard. It means to say that no reader would be able to grasp the real intention of the author.⁶¹ Therefore, narratology does not seek to look for the original source of the text and the original intention of the author.

⁵⁷ Cf. Paul Cogley 2014: 7–9. The aspect of music is also to be included to them.

⁵⁸ Rolf Kloepfer and F. Monaghan. *Poetics Today* 1 (1980) 116.

⁵⁹ There is no single definition for narratology. It could be called “a humanities discipline dedicated to the study of the logic, principles, and practices of narrative representation”. Narratology has developed into various theories, concepts and analytic procedures, even though in the initial stages this study was dominated by structuralist approaches. Today the scope of narratology is not limited to literary narrative. Narrative syntax is not enough, but is essential to make a narrative. Cf. Jan Christoph Meister 2009: 329, 339.

⁶⁰ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 15. It is essential to know the narrative syntax in making a narrative, even though it is not enough. An author needs to be transgressive and not merely be naïve with the techniques alone. To be a good narrator, therefore, one needs to know the syntax of narrative and be a genius too. Cf. Christine Brooke-Rose. *Poetics Today* 11 (1990) 291.

⁶¹ Cf. Hans M. Barstad 2008: 4.

In the process of narrative analysis, clarity on the distinction between various forms of narratives, like history, stories and fiction are imperative. The other forms, like film and pictures, are not dealt herewith, as it is not warranted for the purpose of the topic.

3.1 Narratological Approaches and Models

3.1.1 Text Oriented Models

Diachronic methods like the historical critical method of interpretation aim to reconstruct the evolution of the text. Whereas, synchronic methods like the narratological method try to interpret the text as it is today. These two methods were considered as unrelated to each other or even as opposite poles. We need to blend both the methods, so that they can be applied as complimentary approaches. Both the approaches have their strength and weaknesses, but at the same time one can fill in where the other is lacking.⁶²

Narratology of fiction is rooted in two synchronous structural aspects, namely story and discourse.⁶³ The story oriented approach is concerned with what is narrated, whereas the discourse oriented approach is concerned with how the level of narrative is transmitted. The analysis of the former relates itself to the presentation of action, characters, plot and spatial frame. The latter focuses on the structure of the narrative transmission, rather than on the content of the narrative. The text oriented analysis focusses on the structure of the text. The structure of the narrative transmission is described as ‘point of view’.⁶⁴

3.1.2 Reader oriented Models

The traditional model of literary communication starts from the view point of the author. It is seen as a process in which a message is being sent from the Sender (author) to the Receiver (reader). It is a process consisting of three elements, viz.,

⁶² Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 7–8.

⁶³ The story/discourse dichotomy is very minimal at work in historical methods. The text oriented method of fiction excludes in principle the aspect of historicity, which is one of the major concerns for a historical theory. On this ground, the bi-level model of narratology has been neglected to marginal use by the historical theorists. Cf. Dorrit Cohn. *Poetics Today* 11 (1990) 778.

⁶⁴ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 18. The point of view is often referred to as the narrative situation, whose examination is one of the important elements in the analysis of a narrative text. It describes how the characters, events and plot elements are mediated in narrative texts. A detailed study of this aspect will be taken up later.

Author – Message – Receiver. The reader oriented model places emphasis on the role of the reader. It upholds that any literary model of communication should be thought of from the side of the situation of the Receiver. The modified model would claim that the reader can raise questions about the author only in and through the text that is available to him. It means, the author does not communicate with the reader in the first layer, but the reader is confronted with the text, in and through which he comes to know about the author. Thus, this model begins with the Receiver. This new model reduces the communication layers to three basic levels, viz., it has a flexible handling of the text; it includes the text-external instances (authority); and it goes from the view of the Receiver.⁶⁵

3.1.3 Reception-aesthetic Model

Like the other reader oriented models, this model, too, concentrates on the reader. It is applicable also in the areas of biblical exegeses. The historical critical method also focussed on the author of the biblical texts and the process the text has gone through as oral tradition and then as written documents. The Reception-aesthetic model stresses upon this process from a reader's perspective. In order to understand a text, the reader should work on it and should have the ability to construct the meaning. Only with them he/she can build a firm foundation for the text oriented analysis. Therefore, in the analysis of the narration of the text, the reader is the focus beside the text.⁶⁶

Having had a glimpse of the above methods, one needs to bear in mind that no method can be termed superior over the others. Every method carries along with it certain positives and some flaws at the same time. For example, the reception-aesthetic model does not offer the possibility to differentiate the meaning of the text from other meanings. Therefore, it is very important to integrate the production-aesthetic elements in the reception-aesthetic method. It would make the receiving situation of the readers integrated with the historic dimension of the text narration. And one has to avoid generalisation while reading a text, but has to read with the grain. The question, who reads, is the starting point of every reading process. One should be careful not to mix one's own perspective and understanding with the objective ones. One's reading is temporary, but the reading of the text is never ending and never understood fully.⁶⁷ An integration of text oriented

⁶⁵ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 13.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 16–18.

⁶⁷ Ibid. 18–19.

and reader oriented models, therefore, would be productive in our analysis of text narration. It would offer both the reader and the text their due places and not place one over the other.

3.2 Levels of Communication

The starting point of communication is the available written text. Every text travels across many generations. Apart from the understanding of the speaker and the first receiver, the text is always applied at different times along with the changing language situations. In this way, the text functions as a messenger between the original author and the reader at various times. This narrative text has a multiple layer of communication process which is called levels of communication. Coste and Pier call the narrative level as “an analytic notion whose purpose is to describe the relations among the plurality of narrating instances within a narrative, and more specifically the vertical relations between narrative instances”⁶⁸.

Based on the relationship between the speaker and receiver, Barbara Schmitz classifies the communication layers as K I, K II, K III and K IV levels.⁶⁹

K I – Text-External Level: In this level, the reader and the author are treated as empirical persons. The author writes a text, which has the influence of his/her world; and the reader, who likewise has the influence of his/her own world, tries to understand it, makes it his/her own and forms a new text world.

K II – Text-Internal Level: The Narrative Voice⁷⁰ has a fictional text world which is directed towards the addressee. It also lets the characters appear and lets them communicate with one another. What we hear from the Narrative Voice takes place in the second level.

K III Level: This level refers to the various voices which the reader hears within the text. These are the products of the Narrative Voice. This could be also the voices of the characters.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Didier Coste and John Pier 2009: 295.

⁶⁹ K stands for communication (Kommunikation in German).

⁷⁰ Narrative Voice is the function or narrative agent through which the author narrates the story. A detailed study about the description of the Narrative Voice will be taken up later.

⁷¹ Nünings calls the addressee in the level of conversation between the characters as the fictional addressee, because even though he is an essential component of the story line, he cannot be compared with the characters of the story. He is to be distinguished from the

K IV Level: The characters, narrated by the Narrative Voice (K II) in the story play an active role in the creation of the fictional world. A character can also in turn narrate a story or report an incident (K III) within the story, in which many other characters might appear and even communicate with each other. These new characters form K IV level. Therefore, in K III the characters which narrate something or deliver a speech become Narrative Voice themselves. But in order to avoid confusion, we do not call them Narrative Voice, but Speaking Characters. They are also called Character-bound Narrators, because their perspective is limited to the particular role they play as characters. It is quite different in the case of the Narrative Voice (K II) which can be present all through the story. The Speaking Characters, though limited in perspective, can react by themselves within their domain and are responsible for their speeches. For this reason, one can say that the speeches of the Speaking Characters determine their characters and are not identical with the character of the Narrative Voice.⁷²

3.3 Constellation in Narrative Texts

Every narrative text consists of several perspective structures. These perspectives help one to identify the diverse and converging layers in the happenings in the narrated world. In order to perceive the divergent perspectives in a literary text, one needs to differentiate between what is narrated and how it is narrated. The latter has two levels: (a) Narration, which refers to the mechanism employed and (b) Focalization, which concerns with how the perception is thematised. The differentiation includes the question, how the Narrative Voice can be described in the literary text. The categories of the description of the Narrative Voice should be explained first, in order to analyse the perspective structures established by the Narrative Voice. The question about the constitution of the perspectives through characters is also raised. These characters are connected to their own perspectives of what is respectively narrated. It should be differentiated both by presentation of what is narrated by the Narrative Voice and by the presentation of what is focussed upon.⁷³ Thus, one can find multiple perspectives in a narrative text. Primarily, three different concepts could be identified: (a) Narrative Voice which brings out the basic and important perspective of a narrative text.

empirical reader who stands outside the text. Cf. Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning 1997: 325.

⁷² Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 12. For the differentiation between speaking or narrating characters and narrators, see: Ansgar Nünning and Vera Nünning 1997: 326–27.

⁷³ Ibid. 19–21.

(b) Focalisation, by which the text-strategies are brought to focus. (c) Characters which appear in the fiction of the text.⁷⁴ Besides them, the concepts of author and reader play significant roles.

3.3.1 The Narrative Voice

Every narrative has a content plane (story) and an expression plane (discourse). The latter is a set of narrative statements presented to the audience either directly or through mediation of a narrator.⁷⁵ Direct expression is shown to the audience, whereas the mediated expression is told to the audience through the narrator. This narrator is quite distinct from the author. Hence, one should not treat the author and the narrative agent identically. Unlike the past, the difference between the author and the narrator is clearly marked in recent times.⁷⁶ An author is a real person, who creates a text, book or narrative. A narrator is an agent created by the author, constructed on the basis of the internal clues of the text. This narrator transmits the story to the narratee.⁷⁷ “A narrator is a linguistically indicated, textually projected and readerly constructed function, slot or category whose occu-

⁷⁴ Ibid. 6.

⁷⁵ Cf. Seymour Chatman 1996: 161.

⁷⁶ In the analysis of texts, often the analysers were content with the thought that it was all about auctorial narration. Stanzel introduced a new perspective of Narrative Situation. Speaking on mediation, Stanzel opines that modes, person and perspective can determine the understanding of the reader. It relies on the perception of the Reflektorfigur (reflector) or the identity of the narrators and the characters or the auctorial external perspectives. Thus, he makes a threefold differentiation of narrator. The personal narrative situation is narrated through the medium of a reflector-character (Reflektorfigur) which was part of the narrated incident. The fictive narrator withdraws himself in the narration, so that the narrated world is not easily recognised. The readers get an impression that they get a direct view of the incident from the perception of the character, who is not a personalised narrator, but the one who provides the viewing frames. Thus, the reflector-character offers an internal perspective. The Narrator is to be distinctly recognised in first person and third person narratives. If a happening is narrated by a narrating I (erzählendes Ich) or by an experiencing I (erlebendes Ich) as a character, then the narrator is an I-Narrator (Ich-Erzähler). The I-Narrator is either a protagonist or a character in the narration. It can report about the happenings, whereby it was present. For the rest, it has to rely on what it has learnt from others. The auctorial Narrator or He-Narrator (auktorialer Erzähler oder Er-Erzähler) stays outside the world of characters, and in this type of narration, external perspective is a crucial element. The auctorial Narrator can be recognised from his comments and moral judgements about the incidents. This type of narrator is all knowing and all present. Cf. Franz K. Stanzel 2008: 24. See also Vera Nünning and Ansgar Nünning 2015: 114–17. Lanser expressed clearly the lack of a well-developed critical practice, helpful for analysing narrative presence in depth. Cf. Susan Sniader Lanser 1981: 233.

⁷⁷ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 29.

pant need not be thought of in any terms but those of a communicative role.”⁷⁸ The narrative agent is to be differentiated from the author who is a real person. The narrative agent is not to be treated as a person. The narrative agent is not a person like the author. If it is considered as a person, it would lead to personification and gender application. Therefore, it is preferable to rather use the term Narrative Voice than Narrator, whereby the degree of objectivity and neutrality will be higher.

The Narrative Voice is the key for interpretation. Kayser describes the Narrative Voice as the one different from both the known and unknown author. It is a role, invented by the author. It doesn't mean that the author hides himself under the mask of this invented form. The Narrative Voice is the spirit, all knowing and all present as the creator of that particular world.⁷⁹ “Narrative Voice ... is not a fixed construct, projecting an isolated authorial point of view. Rather that voice is endowed with a life apart from the author, interacting with the environment it inhabits and giving its own coloration to the world it grasps.”⁸⁰ The Narrative Voice need not be singular. It is also possible that there are multiple Narrative Voices at different places of a text or even simultaneously. Multiple perspectives could be identified basically in three forms: if a happening is narrated by two or more narrative instances; if the happening is presented through the view of two or more reflective figures; and if several versions of the same happening are presented in different combinations of elements at different places in the text.⁸¹ It is important to identify the Narrative Voices and whose type they are, so that the reader understands their respective perspectives.

⁷⁸ Uri Margolin 2009: 350. This role of the narrator could be expressed in different terms like discursive function, voice, source of narrative transmission, producer of current discourse, teller, reporter, narrating agent or narrating instance.

⁷⁹ Kayser is the main protagonist of the work *Immanent Method* in Germany. He began to identify the narrator in all the created works. Cf. Wolfgang Kayser 2000: 127, 134.

⁸⁰ Michael J. O’Neal. *Style* 17 (1983) 271. This description of Narrative Voice is from the perspective of Edith Wharton as understood by O’Neal.

⁸¹ Cf. Vera Nünning and Ansgar Nünning 2000: 42–46. The authors further give sub-forms like extradiegetic multiperspectives (through narrative instances), intradiegetic multiperspectives (through narrative characters), biperspectives, polyperspectives, etc. Though the presence of multiple Narrating Voices is recognised and accepted in the modern literature, it is not so in the biblical exegesis. The question, pointed out by the historical critical method, whether one can conceptualise multiple perspective structures in areas where tensions, breaks, additions, redactions, interpolations, etc., is yet to be answered.

3.3.1.1 Categories of the Description of the Narrative Voice

Six different categories pertaining to the description of the Narrative Voice could be identified based on its positioning.

3.3.1.1.1 Presence of the Narrative Voice in the Narration

In the level of Narration, two types of Narrative Voice could be identified:

Extradiegetic Narrative Voice appears in the level of narrating agent, which constitutes the narration. It is located on the level of narration outside the story and constitutes the narrative process along with the addressee.

Intradiegetic Narrative Voice would refer to the characters that are part of the narrated story and would be located on the level of the story. It implies that one of the characters becomes the Narrative Voice and so the Narrative Voice itself would be treated like other characters. This differentiation can be made, not only in K II level but in all levels of communication.⁸²

3.3.1.1.2 Presence of Narrative Voice on the Level of the Characters

In the level of the characters we need to ask, whether the Narrative Voice is identical with the character in the narration, so to say, whether the Narrative Voice is present or absent in the narration.

Heterodiegetic Narrative Voice is understood to be a Narrative Voice, which itself is not a character but is absolutely necessary in order to constitute the narration, all knowing and all present. Because this type of Narrative Voice does not take part in the story, it can have omniscience, i.e., the insight into the minds of all characters, can be present everywhere in the narration, even though it may be invisible, and it can have an overview of the past, present and future happenings.⁸³ But the Narrative Voice can narrate only what it wants and avoids what it

⁸² Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 93. It could be argued that the term Narrative Voice is not adequate enough to refer to a character that narrates. Narrators and characters operate at different levels and have different functions. In order to maintain this distinction, Neumann und Nünning propose the term 'narrating characters' to the characters which narrate. The term 'narrator' is to be reserved for the agent which functions at the level of narrative communication. Ibid. 30–31.

⁸³ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 25. Rimmon-Kenan admits that omniscience is perhaps an exaggerated term, often in the context of the modern extradiegetic narrators. Yet, there are characteristics like familiarity, innermost thoughts and feelings of the characters, knowledge of the past, present and even future, and presence in places even if the characters are alone there, etc. ... Cf. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 95. See also Ansgar

does not want. It cannot exploit its knowledge of characters and happenings. Therefore, we can only speculate about what is not narrated. It is also possible that something is not narrated due to the ignorance of the Narrative Voice or that it consciously avoids revealing the inner thoughts and intensions of a particular character.

Homodiegetic Narration is called so, when a Narrative Voice meets itself in the narration, and takes part in the fictional event of the narration. Here, the narrator is involved in the story and appears as a character.⁸⁴ In this case, the Narrative Voice has restrictions concerning the boundaries of each character. The Narrative Voice would be able to reveal its own view about other characters, but unable to reveal the real thoughts and intentions of the characters. When it is absent in an event, the sources of its information remain open. Narration of a past event depends on the different sources of information, in which case the homodiegetic Narrative Voice comes closer to the heterodiegetic Narrative Voice. All these four models, i.e., extradiegetic, intradiegetic, heterodiegetic and homodiegetic Narrative Voices can be variously combined with one another.⁸⁵

3.3.1.1.3 The Degree of Involvement in the Narrated Event

The degree of participation of the Narrative Voice in the narrated world is to be defined. It could be of varying degrees between two extremes; from a total involvement as in an autodiegetic narration to a non-involvement in a narration of events.⁸⁶

3.3.1.1.4 The Degree of their Explicitness

With regard to the revelation of the Narrative Voice in the narrated text, there could be varying degrees, too. It could stand outside the fabula or could be a witness and a character in the story. It could be also a gradual progress between

Nünning and Vera Nünning 1997: 327. The attack on the idea of a heterodiegetic narrator has increased in the recent years. There have been serious discussions between the pan-narrator theory (every fictional narration has a narrator), the narratorless-narration (there are fictional narrations without a narrator) and the optional-narrator (we can talk about a narrator, only when there are explicit features in the text pertinent to the narrator). Cf. Frank Zipfel 2015: 45–46.

⁸⁴ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 93. The homodiegetic narrator corresponds to the term ‘first-person’ narrator of Stanzel. The authors feel that the latter term would be more confusing, especially because the authorial narrators, too, refer to themselves in first person.

⁸⁵ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 26.

⁸⁶ Ibid. 27.

being imperceptible to becoming perceptible. Sometimes this transition is so subtle that the reader does not notice it.⁸⁷ Some textual conditions would help the reader identify the Narrative Voice. Primarily, the text should be capable of being naturalized as expressing one or more reporting utterances from narrative agent(s). It must be possible to demarcate these utterances and it should be possible to assign a distinct voice to each of them. It should be able to establish the hierarchical relation between different utterances and their respective originators. It should be possible to determine the primary Narrative Voice, the single and highest originator of originators.⁸⁸ Two theoretical frameworks would help one to infer the primary Narrative Voice, namely linguistic pragmatics which would reveal the time, place, context of the narrative, capacities, beliefs and communicative intentions of the originator; and the cognitive psychological theory of attributions which would infer the disposition and attitude of the agent from the behaviour mentioned in the text.⁸⁹

From the above mentioned signals, the inferred Narrative Voice could be either in zero level impersonal anonymous Narrative Voice or a dramatic, personal and overt voice. A perceivable personal Narrative Voice could appear as an individual speaker and fictional character. In such a case, it will be obviously comprehensible through its words, comments, analysis and evaluation. It would allow the readers to imagine the Narrative Voice with certain characteristics. A non-perceivable Narrative Voice can display a high degree of reliability or it can also display a strong personal evaluation under the mask of neutrality.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Cf. Mieke Bal 1997: 29.

⁸⁸ Cf. Uri Margolin 2009: 353–54. The primary or global Narrative Voice is the one (impersonal) from whom the core narrative (as the macro speech act) emanates and in whom all other utterances are imbedded or stand in reference.

⁸⁹ The first person and second person narrative would indicate a type of narrator different from third person narrative. In the same way, the application of tense would give us sufficient indications about time of event narrated. Certain terms and rhetorical strategies would be helpful to determine the intention. The personal style of the narration, personal references and characterization and emotions are also to be taken into account. Cf. Uri Margolin 2009: 355–57.

⁹⁰ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 28. Perceivable and non-perceivable Narrative Voices could be also called overt and covert narrators respectively. The reader is encouraged to attribute personal characters to the overt narrator, who appears as an individualised speaker and concrete person in the narrative. A covert narrator would take an anonymous form in the narration. Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 94.

3.3.1.1.4.1 The Degree of their Reliability

Reliability and trust are integral aspects of communication, albeit the existence of unreliable authors and narrators is an undeniable fact. The term “unreliable narrator” is first introduced in literary analysis by Wayne C. Booth. He makes a distinction between the reliable narrator and the unreliable narrator in the following words: “I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author’s norms), unreliable when he does not.”⁹¹ Primarily, he calls narrators unreliable, if they present themselves as if they are speaking always for the norms of the book, and in fact do not do it. The definition of Booth caused a lot of debate over this concept. But in general, the reader’s role in identifying the presence of unreliable narrator is immense.⁹² A reliable narrator would render the story and commentary in a way that the reader has no reason to suspect what is narrated. If an author’s narration of events leads the reader to mistrust, the narrator is called unreliable. In this sense, an unreliable narrator is to be understood in connection with the projection of the reader, i.e., if the reader finds contradiction within the text or between the fictional world and the real world conceived by the reader.

3.3.1.1.4.1.1 Various Approaches Pertinent to Unreliability

3.3.1.1.4.1.1.1 Contention of the Rhetoric Approach

In the realm of rhetoric approach, unreliability is said to be the non-concomitance between the values and norms of the narrator and the implied author. It refers to the norms of the implied author that might vary from that of the narrator. However, this approach is criticised for taking for granted the knowledge about the

⁹¹ Wayne C. Booth 1970: 158–59. He adds that most of the reliable authors who indulge in incidental irony could be called unreliable in the sense of being potentially deceptive. Cf. Wayne C. Booth 1996: 148. When the author here speaks of author’s norms, he refers to that of the implied author. Today it is considered that other narrators, too, could be unreliable. The interpretations, comments and evaluations of overt narrators could be susceptible to the readers. Here unreliability is not based on their unworthiness but on their interpretation. Cf. Vera Nünning 2015: 12. Stanzel points out that Booth differentiates unreliability from reliability only pertaining to the narrator (I or He-Narrator), and not reflector-narrator. The I-Narrator tends to take a one sided stand and therefore, they are more or less unreliable. The auctorial narrator, though not beyond suspicion, can claim reliability unless there are obvious signs of unreliability. Stanzel further claims that the discussion of reliability with regard to reflector-narrator is irrelevant. Cf. Franz K. Stanzel 2008: 200–203.

⁹² Cf. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 100. The narrator’s knowledge, personal involvement and value system could be factors determining reliability. Based on these elements, it is questionable, whether the ancient texts could be treated this way.

status and norms of the implied author from the part of the reader. The question that arises here is, whether there is a definite yardstick for normal moral standards in our society. It is also noted by some narratologists that the concept of the implied author does not provide the reader with the certainty on unreliability. The notion ‘implied author’ is elusive and not easy to arrive at.⁹³

3.3.1.1.4.1.1.2 Contention of the Structuralist and the Cognitive Approach

In the realm of structuralist and cognitive approach,⁹⁴ unreliability is to be weighed in the sphere of interaction between the reader and the text. It means that unreliability depends on normative presuppositions and moral convictions of the reader and the critic. The notion of moral standards would vary from reader to reader. It implies that what is reliable to a reader could be unreliable to another reader.⁹⁵ In this context, one needs to take also into consideration the cultural and historical context of the text, the time of its writing and review, because norms and values are culturally and historically variable. It implies that the unreliability is not merely based on the textual features, but also on the interpretative stra-

⁹³ Cf. Ansgar F. Nünning 2008: 91. Narratologists like Gerald Prince and Kathleen Wall belong to the group, which holds the implied author as the yardstick to measure unreliability. Gerald Prince defines a reliable narrator as “a narrator behaving in accordance with the implied author’s norm.” Gerald Prince 1987: 80–81. Rimmon-Kenan belongs to the counter group. “If the implied author does share the narrator’s value, then the latter is reliable in this respect, no matter how objectionable his views may seem to some readers.” Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 101. Kathleen Wall further points out that the distance between norms and values of the implied author and those of the narrator can vary drastically. She raises the question about the unreliability of the authors who admit their unreliability or of the authors who provide us the means of correcting their unreliability. There could be also instances of unconscious slips. Human subjectivity is not entirely coherent. Therefore, the psychological motives of the author for unreliability are to be taken into account. Cf. Kathleen Wall. *JNT* 24 (1994) 21–22. Yacobi argues that the judgment on reliability is always an interpretative and hypothetical move. One cannot simply call a homodiegetic narrator as unreliable and a heterodiegetic narrator as unreliable. There are no fixed package deals in narrative. Cf. Tamar Yacobi. *Narrative* 9 (2001) 223–24.

⁹⁴ Zerweck terms cognitive narratology as “based on the premises of a frame theory originally derived from research on artificial intelligence for instance ... In the context of frame theory, the reading process can be conceptualized as the construction and projection of a system of hypotheses and schemata-or frames- with the help of which the potential meaning of textual signals is worked out by the reader”. Bruno Zerweck. *Style* 35 (2001) 153.

⁹⁵ Cf. Ansgar F. Nünning 2008: 95–97. “Whether a narrator is called unreliable or not does not depend on the distance between the norms and values of the narrator and those of the implied author but between the distance that separates the narrator’s view of the world from the reader’s or critic’s world-model and standards of normalcy.” Ansgar F. Nünning 1999: 61.

ategies utilized by the reader. Besides the knowledge and norms of the reader which influence his or her reconstruction of the text, discrepancies discovered by the reader between the text and his or her own moral convictions would lead to term a narrator unreliable. The selection of interpretative strategies is influenced by culturally determined frameworks within a historical context.⁹⁶ Ansgar F. Nünning would sum up as follows: “In the end, it is both the structure and norms established by the respective work itself and designed by an authorial agency, and the reader’s knowledge, psychological disposition, and system of norms and values that provide the ultimate guidelines for deciding whether a narrator is judged to be reliable or not.”⁹⁷ It calls for a comprehensive approach from the part of the reader before considering the reliability or unreliability of the text.

3.3.1.1.4.1.2 Indicators of Unreliability

There are some clues that might help one identify an unreliable narrator. Explicit contradictions by the Narrative Voice, discrepancies within the texts, difference in the self-characterization of the Narrative Voice and its characterization by other characters, discrepancies in details during repetition of reports about the same incident, references to memory lapses, insistence on one’s own credibility, etc., would determine the degree of reliability from the side of the text. The receiver’s overall knowledge about the world, his value and norm systems, and the specific individual situation would determine the reliability from the side of the reader. The degree of unreliability is observed to be more in homodiegetic Narrative Voice, in which the entire perspective is very closely connected to the sole perception of the Narrative Voice.⁹⁸ Concerning paratextual elements, the signals could be conflicts between story and discourse, internal discrepancies within the narrator’s discourse, discrepancies between the narrator’s presentation of events and his/her commentary on these events, multiperspectival accounts of the story that cannot be synthesized, and the narrator’s explicit or implicit disclosure of his/her own unreliability.⁹⁹ Besides these, not revealing truth, where it should

⁹⁶ Zerweck and Vera Nünning are the proponents of this point. Cf. Bruno Zerweck. *Style* 35 (2001) 151, 155. See also Vera Nünning. *Style* 38 (2004) 237–38.

⁹⁷ Ansgar F. Nünning 2008: 105.

⁹⁸ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 32. See also Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 98–99. Unreliability could be a result of misrepresenting the events or facts or of deficient understanding and dubious judgements from the part of the author. Ryan is of the opinion that most instances of unreliability in individuated narrations are due to the inability of the narrator to convince the reader of the validity of his/her declaration. Therefore, it is more of rhetorical failure than outward lying or being mistaken. Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan. *Style* 45 (2011) 33.

⁹⁹ Cf. Bruno Zerweck. *Style* 35 (2001) 154. See also Ansgar F. Nünning 2008: 97.

have been shared, would be an indicator of unreliability. Thus, silence could be a marker, too.

3.3.1.1.4.1.3 Causes for Unreliability

There could be several reasons for an author to be unreliable. From the viewpoint of the author, it could be, in order to convince others of the truth or ideology the author holds, to establish a common identity, to amuse the readers, to become accepted in the society, or simply at will, without any reason. Therefore, it is important to take note of the intentions of the author, who wilfully misinterprets the events. It can also happen that the author did not intend to misinterpret, but due to one's own incompetence to present the truth, misinterpretation occurs.¹⁰⁰ Basically, the cause of unreliability could be branded as intentional, unintentional and ignorant.

3.3.1.1.4.2 The Degree of Gender Application

The degree of personalisation of the Narrative Voice leads to the area of gender application. It could be either a male voice or a female voice and not a neutral one. The recent past has witnessed feminist narratology focussing on women writers and female narrators. Lanser argues, "sexual categories are as important to narrative meaning as person, level, order, and reliability, and indeed that they interact with these other elements in crucial ways"¹⁰¹. Feminist narratology would help one distinguish the gender distinction within the text, especially in homodiegetic narration, by observing the ways narrative voices are gendered. It is to be noted that the gender of the narrator need not be the gender of the author. However, one needs to ground the generalizations in some degree of historical and cultural specificity. It is also noted that the paradoxical statements of the narrative voice and the heterodiegetic nature cannot be attributed to gender differentiation.¹⁰² But then, there raises the question, if it is unmarked, how does the reader gender the narrative voice. This question becomes relevant, since sex is one of the immediate attributions which a reader would posit, in order to infer the values and personalities of a character, which is applicable to the Narrative Voice, too.¹⁰³ Thus, positing a gender to the Narrative Voice can make serious impacts in the interpretation of the text.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Vera Nünning 2015: 13.

¹⁰¹ Susan Sniader Lanser 1999: 169.

¹⁰² Cf. Alison Case 2008: 312.

¹⁰³ Cf. Susan Sniader Lanser 1999: 172. Even if the gender is not explicit for characters and for the narrator, it could be constructed through gender codes available in the text. Even

3.3.1.2 Functions of the Narrative Voice

There are four functions of the Narrative Voice, which can be found in a text, either individually or in varying combination with others. They are: (i) narrative technical function, (ii) analytical function, (iii) synthetical function and (iv) mediation related function.

3.3.1.2.1 Narrative Technical Function

The primary function of the Narrative Voice is to constitute the fictional world, by which it transmits value neutral information. In this process, it constitutes the time and space structure of the narrated world, provides it with the characters, and narrates the plot. The time structure is constructed under the categories of sequence, duration and frequency. It denotes the difference between the story as narration-sequence and the chronological sequence in the fabula.¹⁰⁴ Duration or rhythm refers to the relation between the time of the fabula and the time of the story.¹⁰⁵ Both these types of times cannot be accurately determined. The duration of the fabula and of the story need not match each other. Frequency is the number of times a particular event is narrated in the story, even though the event might have occurred only once in the fabula. It is highly important that the reader observes the differences in narration, if an event is repeated more than once.¹⁰⁶ Frequency could be for several grounds, like a tactic to emphasise the importance of the event, to remind the reader about the past incident which would be relevant to the current event of narration, or even to mislead the reader.

The Narrative Voice has to construct the space of the fictional world, which includes scene, location, landscape, etc. Mostly the fictional world is portrayed with a certain geography and name, which the reader can relate with the world of his experience or which he can imagine. Even if one can identify it with a real world, it would remain fictional. The description of place might lead to a break within the plot. Places have also semantic function, reflecting spatial opposition,

in the case of a heterodiegetic narrator, the reader designates a gender and will have to address in third person.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 34–36.

¹⁰⁵ The period of time involved in writing or the time taken up for writing the narrative will bear little importance on the effect on the reader. The time duration of telling the narrative or reading is dubious. But it is possible to estimate the time of presentation of the events or episodes. However, attention paid to each event would vary. For example, a short episode might have lasted a longer time in the fabula. This longevity of presentation can be related to the time of the fabula. Cf. Mieke Bal 1997: 101–102.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 36–37.

contrasts and boundaries. Mostly, the location of the plot is explained either in the beginning or in the course of the play. Correspondingly, the characters are located with it.¹⁰⁷

The Narrative Voice also furnishes details about the personnel in the narrated world. In this process, the characters are introduced and characterised either explicitly or implicitly. Some characters are allowed to speak, some only appear during narration, while some others are only mentioned. Some might even appear with anonymous names. Besides this, the Narrative Voice explains the various happenings in the text-world.¹⁰⁸

3.3.1.2 Analytical Function

Basically, the establishment of the narrated world is done by action or gesture. It can be further enhanced by the commentary of the Narrative Voice. All the statements which do not directly push the plot forward are considered to be commentaries. Comments stand in direct relationship to the world of the characters and analyse them in the happenings. Comments could be explanative or evaluative. Explanatory comments illustrate the events of the narrated world, especially regarding the characters. It can be of information concerning cause or consequence. For example, the Narrative Voice can give information regarding the limitations of a particular character, which in turn is capable of evoking sympathy from the part of the audience. The Narrative Voice can also correct the wrong information given by a particular character. Evaluative comments refer to the statements of the Narrative Voice, which evaluates the characters. In this case, it distances itself from the fictional world. Through evaluative comments, the Narrative Voice reveals its value of norms, its position and subjectivity. The audience have to be careful not to make the value system of the Narrative Voice their own.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 37–39. In drama, time, place, character and non-verbal activities are the concrete and basic categories, unlike in narrative texts where the above categories are brought to form only linguistically and in abstract terms. What is experienced in drama creates an inner communication system, i.e., the audience make a fictional picture, corresponding to what they see. Cf. Manfred Pfister 1994: 327.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. 39.

¹⁰⁹ Genette calls this function ‘narrator’s ideological function’ which can take a didactic form of an authorized commentary on the action. Cf. Gérard Genette 1980: 256. Bal calls the evaluative comments as non-narrative comments, because they do not narrate any event. They often refer to something more general, more public and of more cultural bearing. Any statement that refers to something of general knowledge outside the fabula could be also called argumentative. Often, they serve as ideological statements. It does not mean that the explanatory comments are not ideological statements. Cf. Mieke Bal

3.3.1.2.3 Synthetical Function

The Narrative Voice is capable of abstracting matters from what is narrated and generalising it. While doing it, it would have only a mediated relation with the narrated world. Generalization will be very much visible by the language, which is not bound by space and time, and mostly expressed in present tense and first person plural. Generalization increases the claim of universality or general validity. It strengthens the communication channels between the Narrative Voice and the fictional addressee. The Narrative Voice might attempt to include its own value system as part of generalization. At the same time, its value system would give us indications about its aim and position.¹¹⁰

3.3.1.2.4 Mediation Related Function

The Narrative Voice would establish a relationship with the process of narration, too. In order to refer to the self, it would use “I” and to the fictional addressee “you”. There is an expressive function, in which the Narrative Voice makes statements about itself, so that it is paid attention to. Revealing its value system, it can establish its credibility. There is an appellative function, in which the comments are addressed to the fictional addressee, either directly or indirectly. Linguistically, it would be of salutatory form and imperative speech. There is a phatic function, which guarantees the communication between the Narrative Voice and the addressee. Its characteristics are rhetoric questions. It is also a metanarrative under which all other functions are subsumed.¹¹¹

3.3.2 Focalization

Every narrative has at least one narrator and more than one character. The narrator can express something from his viewpoint or from that of a character. Focalization is a term introduced in Narratology by Genette. This term was to replace the old term ‘point of view.’¹¹² Focalization refers to the choice and the way the

1997: 31–34. Malmgren categorises comments in fiction under three groups: personal comments which make reference to the speaker’s own belief, opinion, judgement or attitude about the characters, events and setting; ideological comments which are connected to the reading cultural community which shares a value system; metalingual comments which stand in reference to the narrative act in which the speaker presents the rationale for the fiction and exposes the enabling codes of fiction. Cf. Carl D. Malmgren. *Poetics Today* 7 (1983) 473–74.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 41–42.

¹¹¹ Ibid. 42.

¹¹² Cf. Burkhard Niederhoff 2009: 384–85. Point of View is a difficult term, because it is also related to mind, and the boundaries of the mind are not easily determined. One cannot

fictional world is portrayed. Focalization is related to the question: who sees or through whose visual the incident is perceived in the narration.¹¹³ It refers to the non-verbal perception of the fictional world. It is based on the belief that everything is viewed always in a particular perspective. It is not merely about looking at something or someone from a certain position, but getting things in focus when looking through a device or mind or person. This perception could be either from outside the text or from a fictional world.¹¹⁴

Bal defines focalization as “the relations between the elements presented and the vision through which they are presented”¹¹⁵. It is the relation between the vision and what is seen. It is a three way tie up between Subject-Object-Relation. She

fully know the internal consciousness of a character. Point of view very much depends on the mind-set of the person who views, which is not easy to comprehend. Cf. Wayne C. Booth 1970: 160–61. Point of view is not a concrete entity or a technical angle of vision through which the story is perceived, but rather a relationship. It is not a single relationship between two static elements, but multi-levelled relationship between narrating subjects with characters, events, addressees etc. Therefore, it is difficult to grasp and codify. Cf. Susan Sniader Lanser 1981: 13–14.

¹¹³ Cf. Vera Nünning and Ansgar Nünning 2015: 121. The earlier terminology ‘point of view’ was treated as it contained several features, like narratorial visibility, stance, knowledge, involvement, rhetoric, and presence or absence of reflector characters. By introducing the term Focalization, Genette tried to make a clear cut distinction between the character whose point of view is presented and the narrator, in other words, a distinction between who sees and who speaks. Cf. Gérard Genette 1980: 186. See also Manfred Jahn. *Style* 30 (1996) 243. The verb ‘to see’ is not limited to the sense of seeing alone, but includes the other senses of perception, like thinking, feeling, remembering, etc. It includes all cognitive, mental and emotional processes. Cf. Ansgar Nünning 1989: 55. In the opinion of Niederhoff, Genette thinks of focalization in terms of knowledge and information. It is a selection of narrative information. One can notice it by the preposition that is employed along with the word focalization by Genette. “Genette consistently writes “focalization *sur*” in French: while a story is told *from* a particular point of view, a narrative focusses on something. This preposition indicates the selection of, or restriction to, amounts or kind of information that are accessible under the norms of a particular focalization.” This information aspect would help to prove that focalization is not a mere reformulation of point of view, but something more than that. Cf. Burkhard Niederhoff 2009a: 116.

¹¹⁴ Hillis J. Miller 2008: 125.

¹¹⁵ Mieke Bal 1996: 153–54. The author does not prefer to use several other terms in vogue like point of view, narrative perspective and narrative viewpoint, because she believes that they are insufficient to explain the distinction between the vision through which the elements are presented and the voice that is verbalising the vision. Focalization stands in relation to perception. Perception is strongly dependent on several factors like previous knowledge and psychological attitude. Therefore, it is pointless to strive for objectivity. The term perspective comes closer to what is meant by focalization, but it retains the ambiguity between the narrator and the vision. The term focalization is a technical word used in photography and film, which is capable of denoting a manipulating effect.

differentiates between what sees (focalizer) and what is seen (focalized). And so, besides the Narrative Voice and the character, there is also a focalizing subject. The Narrative Voice, the character and the focalizing subject have their own respective objects in the narrated world, the plot and the focalized object.¹¹⁶ Neumann and Nünning describe it in the following words: “Focalization therefore encompasses all perspective, cognitive and emotional elements within the consciousness of the narrator or the characters. It includes processes such as thinking, feeling and remembering, in addition to sensory perception. To put it more abstractly, one can say that focalization describes the various means of regulating, selecting, interpreting and channelling narrative information, particularly of ‘seeing’ events from somebody’s (usually a character’s) point of view – no matter how fallible this point of view might be.”¹¹⁷ The view presented through the eye of a focalizing subject doesn’t need to be totally genuine. It presents only what it sees or senses. The character that offers the viewing angle that is decisive for the narrative perspective determines focalization.

The distinction between the narrator and the focalizer is important to be mentioned here. The Narrative Voice does the function of narration. The narrator does the function of giving a linguistic account of a fictional world. He recounts the events of the story-world, gives information about the characters and decides the sequence of presentation of events. The focalizer is the psychological centre of orientation. It is through his/her perception and consciousness the fictional events are filtered before they are presented to the reader.¹¹⁸ Hence, the Narrative Voice could be said as speech or overt means through which the author communicates events or existence to the audience, whereas the latter would refer to the perspective either of the author or the reader. Narrative events stand in relation to point of view.¹¹⁹

3.3.2.1 Types of Focalization

Genette presents three types of focalisation. (i) Unfocalized Narration or zero-focalization is where the Narrative Voice does not seem to have the privilege of ‘point of view’, but knows and speaks more than what the character knows by

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 155–56.

¹¹⁷ Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 31.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 93.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Seymour Chatman 1996: 165–66. Chatman distinguishes between three types of point of view: perceptual point of view, conceived from what one sees; conceptual point of view, conceived from what one thinks and from one’s world view; and interest point of view, conceived from one’s concerns and interest vantage.

entering into their thoughts. Here the subject is the Narrative Voice. (ii) External Focalized Narration is where the Narrative Voice speaks less than what the character knows. Here the focus is on the character. It doesn't just see, but is seen. (iii) Internal Focalized Narration is where the Narrative Voice knows nothing more than what the character knows. The focalizing subject is the character of the fictional world. The focalised object is the character stemming from the fictional world.¹²⁰

When focalization takes place outside the narrated world (heterodiegetic focalization), it is called external focalization. Here, an anonymous agent outside the narration, i.e., the narrator himself/herself would be functioning as focalizer. It takes place in K II level. Here, the narrating subject and the Narrative Voice are identical. Internal focalization takes place in K III level. Here, the Narrative Voice would be different from the focalizing instance, and focalization would be taking place in concrete connection with the character. Since the focalization is done by the character, it becomes the character-focalizer. Character-bound-focalization can shift from one character to another. The reader would be shown, how the same fact is differently viewed by different characters. Both the types of focalization are not exclusive to each other.¹²¹ Internal focalization can be called the

¹²⁰ Under internal focalization, there are three subcategories: fixed focalization, i.e., the focalizing instance remains constant; variable focalization, i.e., the focalized character could shift from one to another; and multiple focalization, i.e., a single event could be differently focalized by various characters. The various types of focalization are not always clearly distinguished. Cf. Gérard Genette 2010: 121–22. See also Gérard Genette, *Poetics Today* 11 (1990) 763. Nünning clarifies that the zero focalization is something extravagant and redundant, based on the reason that every text has one or the other focalizing instance besides the narrative instance, as the authorial narrative instance will have different forms of focalization. Cf. Ansgar Nünning. *LWU* 23 (1990) 257. Chatman distinguishes between three types of point of view: perceptual point of view, when the person has a literal perception; conceptual point of view, when it is concerning one's attitudes and way of thinking; interest point of view, when it is related to one's interest point of view. Cf. Seymour Chatman 1989: 151–52.

¹²¹ Cf. Mieke Bal 1996: 156. See also Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 95. Prince would classify them into unrestricted point of view, in which the narrator could describe and explain everything of the characters; internal point of view, in which everything is presented only in terms of knowledge and only what one or other characters know would be narrated; and internal point of view, in which the narrator presents everything from outside and does not describe inner feelings and thoughts of the characters. Cf. Gerald Prince 1982: 51–52. In internal focalization, the character serves as focalizer. The internal focalizer does not need to speak in order to express his/her point of view. It is enough that the cognitive, emotional and evaluative attitudes are expressed and not reported. When it is reported, it comes from the author. Whereas, when it is expressed, it comes from the perspective of the character. Cf. Tobias Klauk et al. *Style* 46 (2012) 229. Since external

secondary focalization. In this case, the object is focalized twice, first by the Narrative Voice and then by the character. This will be visible in monologue, expression of thoughts and soliloquy.¹²² It is to be noted that the focalizing character is more prominent than the other characters, because the reader understands all the events through this particular character. The reader might be inclined to accept the vision presented by this character.¹²³

Focalization is done through direct or indirect speeches and repetition of things in them. Memory could be another form of focalization. Memory helps the reader to connect different times and places within the narration. The reader needs to be careful with it, because memory is not always reliable. There could be shift of focalization from one type to another.¹²⁴

Embedded focalization refers to the situation, when the narrator sees a character seeing something, which means, one focalization is inserted into another focalization. It does not refer to the instance wherein the narrator merely writes that the character sees something, but rather that the narrator is able not only to see what the character sees, but also is able to survey the whole story of the world.¹²⁵ The relation between embedding and embedded elements is hierarchical and it is

focalization occurs only in the heterodiegetic narration and when the narrator could be the sole focalizer, Nieragden renames it as heterodiegetic narratorial focalization. When a character becomes the focalizer, he would call it heterodiegetic figural focalization. Internal focalization can take place both in homodiegetic and heterodiegetic narrations. If the narrating character is the focalizer, then he calls it homodiegetic narratorial focalization. If the function of focalization is delegated to a character other than the narrator, then he calls it homodiegetic figural focalization. Cf. Goran Nieragden. *Poetics Today* 23 (2002) 691.

¹²² Cf. Manfred Jahn. *Style* 30 (1996) 248–49.

¹²³ Since a particular part of the story is narrated from the view point of the character, the way the character perceives, feels, interprets and evaluates at that particular point of time could have telling influence on the reader. And thus, a character-bound focalizer brings about bias and limitation. Cf. Burkhard Niederhoff 2009a: 116. See also Mieke Bal 1997: 146.

¹²⁴ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008:48–49.

¹²⁵ Cf. Manfred Jahn. *Style* 30 (1996) 260–61. This notion is first developed by Bal, which however did not attract many narratologists to take up as a serious element worth considering. Bal mentions three criteria which would define embedding. (i) insertion, where the transition between two units is perceptible, (ii) subordination, whereby these units are ordered hierarchically, and (iii) homogeneity, which demands that the embedded units should be members of the same class. Cf. Mieke Bal. *Poetics Today* 2 (1981a) 43–44.

not reversible. It implies that what is seen does not see what the other one sees. It is a phenomenon that contributes to the meaning of a narrative text.¹²⁶

3.3.2.2 Focalized Object

Focalization can be perceived in so far as the focalizing subject focalizes something outside itself. The way an object is presented in the play, would give us information about the focalized object and the focalizing instance. The following questions are important: what is focalized and how is it presented? What is not focalized? How is the object focalized, and how is the view of the reader diverted? Who focalizes and by which method, and is it connected to a character?¹²⁷ Like the focalizing subject, the focalized object can be variable, too. If an object is externally focalized, it is called imperceptible focalized object. If the focalized object is perceptible to another character, too, it is called perceptible object. It is also possible that the focalized object is perceivable only to the focalizing subject. Inner thoughts, internal monologues and feelings would be known only to the character and to the reader when verbalised.¹²⁸

3.3.3 Following Unit

The concept of following-unit would further enrich the concept of focalization. Altman sees the point of view or focalization as insufficient in narrative analysis. Instead, he proposes the analysis of “following-unit”. He points out that every narrative text displays a specific “following-unit”. And every text or narration is a succession of “following-units”. “Every narrative text may usefully be understood as a series of individual following-units, joint by modulations and arranged in a particular manner.”¹²⁹ A text follows a particular character or a group of characters at different points of narration. Some texts continue following a single character from the beginning to the end, while some others vary it, following several characters. Therefore, a text or narration is a following-unit or the totality of various following-units. The length of time of following would be also varying from narration to narration. In some texts, every following-unit is clearly delimit-

¹²⁶ Mieke Bal. *Poetics Today* 2 (1981b) 204.

¹²⁷ Barbara Schmitz 2008:49.

¹²⁸ Mieke Bal 1996: 159–60. Ansgar Nünning uses a different terminology. By perceptible objects, he refers to the focalized objects, which are accessible to the senses of the characters. By non-perceptible objects, he refers to psychological aspects, cognitive and emotional elements which are not perceivable and whose content is known only to the consciousness of the characters. Ansgar Nünning 1989: 58–60.

¹²⁹ Rick Altman 2008: 26.

ited by the process of narration itself. In some others, it is discrete. Shift from one following-unit to another is done very logically in some narrations. In such narrations, a clear link would be provided between the two characters of successive following-units, whereas in some other texts, this modulation is abrupt.¹³⁰

Following-unit and focalization are not one and the same. The former helps the reader to understand the latter in a narrative. Focalization is the process of obtaining information through the view of the Narrative Voice or of one or more characters as second filters. It takes place in shorter periods and particular events and texts. Following-units are the sequence of focussing on some character or something at different points of time. It can even last the entire narration. Thus the focussing is successive and longer in the Following-units.

3.3.4 Character

Character is a participant in the action of narrative fiction. Character is not a person, but a fictive figure. The communication level of the fictional story consists in the dialogues between the characters. The dialogues of the characters are often mediated by the Narrative Voice. Characters are the speakers and the addressees in a narrative fiction as well. Characters can also at times function as the narrator.¹³¹ Every character, be it primary or secondary, is an agent of sequence of actions which belong to it. Therefore every character could be called the hero of its own sequence.¹³² Actions could be physical action, verbal action, and also thoughts, feelings, perceptions and sensations which are not articulated. Abilities, needs, motivation and intention are factors that influence the development of the action of the character, among which, intention plays a vital role.¹³³ Margolin defines a character in a narrative as “a human or human-like individual, existing in some possible world, and capable of fulfilling the argument position in the propositional form DO – that is, a Narrative Agent, to whom inner states, mental pro-

¹³⁰ Ibid. 21–24. Altman contents that the approach based on Point of View is not comprehensive, as there are portions of narration, where we do not find any focalization of character.

¹³¹ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 30. The dialogues between the characters in a narrative fiction serve the purpose of transmitting the information. It is to be noted that these dialogues could be mediated by the narrator, as opposed to the drama, where the characters mostly deliver the dialogues.

¹³² Cf. Roland Barthes 1996: 55.

¹³³ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 41.

perties (traits, features) or complexes of such properties (personality models) can be ascribed on the basis of textual data”¹³⁴.

The 20th century has witnessed the development of various theories of scholarship pertaining to the analysis of character. The sundry approaches by disciplines could be summed up in four dominant paradigms. (i) Hermeneutic Approaches treat characters as representations of human beings. Specific historical and cultural background of the characters and their creators are taken into consideration. (ii) Psychoanalytic Approaches focus on the psyche of the characters as well as the recipients. They take into account the inner life of characters. (iii) Structuralist and Semiotic Approaches focus on the construction of the characters and the role of the text, while maintaining the difference between characters and human beings. (iv) Cognitive Theories are based on the cognitive and affective operations of information processing. They regard characters as text-based constructs of the human mind, for which one needs to understand the text and the human psyche as well.¹³⁵ A dialogue between these and other theories would pave way for the revelation of multiple viewpoints regarding characters, which would in turn facilitate better understanding of the characters and the texts.

3.3.4.1 Characterization

The characters are presented in the narrative in a particular way with certain traits. “The term characterization could be used to refer to the ascription of a property to a character, but also for the overall process and result of attributing traits to a given character.”¹³⁶ Cohn defines it as follows: “Characterization is a writer’s method of developing an individual by describing physical appearance or actions, by revealing the person’s speech or thoughts, or by indicating other character’s reactions to him or her.”¹³⁷ In this process, all that is said of the character, all that the character speaks, all that is said in its presence, its entire behaviour, experiences and what happens in its presence are to be taken account of. While observing the traits of a character, one must also note, how constant these

¹³⁴ Uri Margolin. *Poetics Today* 7 (1986) 205.

¹³⁵ Cf. Jens Eders et al. 2010: 5.

¹³⁶ Fotis Jannidis 2009: 15. While stating that the ascription of mental traits to a narrating agent could be called characterization, Margolin differentiates it from ‘character-building’ which could be inferred only from an accumulation of a number of traits from successive actions and behaviour patterns of the narrating agent. Several acts of characterization make parts of character-building. Cf. Uri Margolin. *Poetics Today* 7 (1986) 205.

¹³⁷ Robert L. Cohn 2010: 89.

attributes are.¹³⁸ Though characterization is primarily shaped by the narrator, the reader has his/her task in recognizing it. Frequent mention and revelation of traits would have a strong bearing in the observation of the reader than single and casual mention.

Traits could be attributed to characters directly, in which the text explicitly states the attributes of a particular character or indirectly through indications. Direct attributes refer to attribution of traits to characters which is done already in the beginning of the narrative; or they are subsequently added, which might conform what was narrated or might go the other way. It is also possible that the traits are only to be inferred from actions of the character in the narration. The language used by the character and its behaviour pattern would help to infer indirect characterisation.¹³⁹

There could be character indicators which help the reader to recognise the characteristics of a particular character. Several features pertaining to the characters, such as, their names and the meaning of those names, other ways of referring to the characters if any, and attributes to the characters might give significant information towards the understanding of the text. In this process, it is important to observe what the character speaks of the self and others and what other characters speak of this particular character. Various acts of the narrating agent serve as signifiers of its psychological traits. It is also equally important to know the way they are characterized, i.e., properties attributed to the characters in the story-world.¹⁴⁰

3.3.4.2 Perspectives of Character

The way a plot is narrated also depends on what the narration and the characters do. Perspectives are formed in the level of the characters, besides the Narrative Voice and Focalization. Every character which appears in the fictional world of

¹³⁸ Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2004: 208.

¹³⁹ Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2009: 15. Indirect attribute of characterization could be in two ways: (i) what the reader learns from the text, maybe through indirect mentions of the character (ii) through inference of which but one cannot be fully certain. Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2004: 210. Rimmon-Kenan adds that the authority of the voice makes a huge difference in convincing the audience of the directly attributed characteristic. If it is enunciated by the most authoritative voice in the narrative, it would be counted more seriously than by a character of subtle nature. Under indirect presentation of characteristics, for example through actions, she maintains that rather habitual actions reveal one's static characteristics than a one-time action which is inadequate. Cf. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 59–61.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Uri Margolin. *Poetics Today* 7 (1986) 206–208.

narration brings its own perspective through the filtered perception through focalization, and it takes place in the third level. A character's perspective is the total of its world view, truth formation, its value and norms. The values and norms of the character are often explicit in the text. They could be easily inferred by the reader.¹⁴¹ Character's perspective and storyline (plot) have reciprocal relationship. On the one hand, the storyline is always guided by the character perspective and is intentionally spread by the character. On the other hand, the information level, need and capacity of a character change by every plot.¹⁴²

A character's perspective is determined by three factors, namely its level of information, its psychological disposition and its norm of value. The level of information, i.e., what the character knows and what it does not know, its capacities and attributes can be established from the text. The psychological disposition is the characteristics revealed about the character. It can be of two types: internal – based on aspects that are purely from the character itself, like its speeches, behaviour, etc; and external – what is expressed through others like the Narrative Voice and other characters.¹⁴³

There could be a discrepancy between the perspectives of different characters. The difference between the perspectives of various characters would help us to understand their standpoint, perception, closeness to reality, knowledge, psychological disposition and value system. The narrator has the privilege of analysing the plans and desires of a character, of commenting on them and giving pointers to the future happenings. Its nature depends on the appropriation of the Narrative Voice. Therefore, it is important to identify the perspective of the Narrative Voice, too. It can be determined from the textual references and information, which indicate the Narrative Voice.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 57. The authors would not prefer to use the term 'ideological perspective', as it would lead to confusion with several connotations.

¹⁴² Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 54.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 51–52. Pfister makes the need of two distinctions clear: between the level of information from the part of the character and of the audience, and between perspectives of the characters and the perspective of reception intended by the author. Every single perspective of individual characters is to be considered autonomously in relation to the perspective of the author. He also makes a distinction between the perspective of a higher ranked character and that of a lower ranked character. Cf. Manfred Pfister 1994: 90–103.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ansgar Nünning 1989: 80–81.

3.3.5 Author

An author could be described as an individual who produces texts in the real world outside the text (story), who is different from the Narrative Voice and the characters created by him in the fictional world. Therefore, an author falls in the outside of the text communication level, just like the receiver.¹⁴⁵ The concept of author is imperative for the historical understanding of the text. In this sense, understanding the narrator also becomes vital. It is the author, who provides the link between the text and its historical context. The concept of the author becomes important also in studying the relation between several texts produced by the same author.¹⁴⁶

3.3.5.1 Undoubted Authority of the Author

Every text is stamped with a certain degree of the authority of its author. The authority of the author in an autobiography is less questioned, because such a text is born out of a close relationship with the author. There would be obvious information about the person, leading to the meaning of the text. It is easy to draw conclusions from the text, regarding the person of the author and his life. But today a naive autobiography is a rarity, and so the authority is doubtful even in homodiegetic texts. One can employ the hermeneutical approach to conceptualise the life and work of the author. In this process, it is very much needed to differentiate between the intention of the author and the various meanings given by the readers.¹⁴⁷

3.3.5.2 Doubtful Authority of the Author

In works other than autobiographies, the authority of the author could be doubted. In such texts, the Narrative Voice would play the lead role rather than the author. The knowledge about the author may not help one assimilate his/her text. Kayser contends that it would be ideal not to have the name of the author. It does not mean to keep the real author of the text outside interpretation. He admits that the acquisition of the information depends a lot on the author. When the reader has deeper knowledge about the author and his work, it might offer

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 62.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 29–30.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 62–63.

him a different perspective, but adds that the author's power is limited when it comes to the relevance of the text.¹⁴⁸

Interpretation based on the intention of the author is challenged by Wimsatt and Beardsley, who state that it would lead to intentional fallacy. The interpretation and valuation of a literary text oriented towards the author's intention is not possible, when the intention of the author is no more available to us. Even if it is available, such an interpretation is not desirable. They believe that every text carries its own meaning independent of the author, and that it is possible that the text fails to bring out the intention of the author. The only reference point should be the text. Once a text is published, it does not belong to the creator (author) anymore, but to the public. In order to understand the intention of the text, a reader doesn't need the author or the background of creating that text, but the reader needs only the internal evidences, grammar and lexicon.¹⁴⁹

Against the wider acceptance of this theory, Danneberg and Müller revealed the result of their study on the author's intention and stated that the intentional meaning is neither inadequate nor unacceptable. They point out that the Intentional Fallacy theory should be approached carefully.¹⁵⁰ It means to say that the text is to be read and studied as such without being influenced by the author. A healthy distance from the real author is very much imperative. However, the concept of implied author would help the reader to establish a relationship between the reader and the author discovered within the text.

3.3.5.3 The Death and Revival of the Author

The article "La Mort de l'auteur" (the Death of the Author) by Barthes in 1968 brought about a different outlook into the concept of the author. He is of the opinion that in a good work, the author disappears, after having set uneven words and given them initiative to communicate. The impact of Barthes was so great

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Wolfgang Kayser 1968: 35–36.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley: 2000. 85–87. Lyrics are a master work, in which a complex of meanings can be derived. Something could be relevant and some others irrelevant. And the meaning of a poem can be of something personal to the poet. It is also possible that the poet works on his poem later with a different motive. Therefore, it is not possible to know the intention of the poet.

¹⁵⁰ Danneberg holds that a theory cannot be condemned as a fallacy. One can only recommend a reader not to treat a text in a particular way. Cf. Lutz Danneberg 1999: 80. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 68.

that the texts were then read as if the author disappeared in all respects.¹⁵¹ The absence of the author is not only a historical fact, but has changed the modern texts, too. The modern writers appear along with the texts and detach themselves from the author. It presupposes that the text is not made up of multiple words which give just one theological meaning, but rather that there are multiple ways of writing which conjoin and oppose each other. In the context of biblical theology, Barthes replaces “author-God” with scribe, and terms the intertextual author as the repeter of strange speeches, while Kristeva considers the author himself as this linkage. Both of them admit that the author has the function of disappearing and they place the passive author against the active text. The work of the author is only to mix the various texts and let them confront each other. As the successor of the author, the scribe cannot contain passion, sentiments, feelings or impressions. He can only translate the words of the texts into other words, without changing the content of the text. The absence of the author leads one to decipher the text. The term “scribe” also offers a new reading process, in which the reader stands at the centre. The reader becomes the place of conjunction of all the quotes. This warrants changes in the reader and also the author becomes the reader. An author can attribute meanings to his text only as a reader, and not as a privileged interpreter.¹⁵²

In his work “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?” (who is an Author?) Foucault writes that the concept of modern scribes does not make the author superfluous, but rather his own writing, while making the author still active. Foucault does not insist that the Author does not exist, but suggests to leave the author behind, because the term “author” is already outdated as a category for interpretation of the

¹⁵¹ Cf. Roland Barthes. “La Mort de l’auteur.” (1968) 187. Cited in: Barbara Schmitz 2008: 72–73. Ronald Barthes took inspiration from the article of Julia Kristeva “Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman” (1967), in which Kristeva replaces the author by universal intertextuality. From a linguistic point of view, an author is someone who writes, different from the real person. The language knows the subject, but not the person. Cf. Roland Barthes 2000: 188–89. Barthes explains that the author is like the past of a book, existed, nourished the ideas in the book, reflected and lived for his book. He precedes his work like a father his son, whereas, the modern writer has no existence before his book. He is in no way the subject of the book. There is only the time of expression. And the text is always written here and now.

¹⁵² Cf. Roland Barthes 2000:190. Cf. Julia Kristeva 1978: 107. Cited in: Fotis Jannidis et al. 1999: 14. Japp is of the opinion that Barthes had in mind the Author-God theory, when he spoke of the death of the author. Therefore, it was to be the death of the fiction of an absolute god and that he had referred to the powerlessness of the author against the power of language and of the scribe. Cf. Uwe Japp 1988: 233.

text.¹⁵³ Three important aspects about the author can be extracted from Foucault. (a) Every author has elements peculiar to him. The name of the author is not just an element of discourse, but an element that organises the discourse, provides an introduction to it; a construct that demarcates the text and offers control and discipline, with whose help the text can be classified as a work. (b) Leaving the concept of author behind does not mean leaving the function of the author behind. The author is tied to a certain legal and state system, due to which he has to safeguard and sanction some of its characteristics. Neither in all the discourse of a culture nor in a single discourse the author must be present. The characteristic of an author is not to be labelled by one attribute to a discourse, but by the totality of the author's construct. (c) The claim to authorship is not automatically attributed. It is done in accordance with the approach in and treatment of the text, continuity and conclusions of the discourse, etc.¹⁵⁴

For Foucault, the author is only a construction of the reader's projection. He says that the readers construct the author based on their circumstances with the text, their knowledge and the indications in the text. It also happens in accordance with their intentions. Hence, a text is a place, from where the readers recognise and draw text-statements and guess the author. But it is undeniable that the authors would be also aware of the rules of communication and ways of constructing the authors from the text. Hence, a text is also a place, where the author places materials for the view of his readers, so that he can be decoded by the readers.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Foucault distinguishes the name of the author from the name of an individual, even though the same name could be used for both. A personal name refers to a real individual and the name of the author is related to his work. A literary work was understood and valued depending on the author, his background and time. But nowadays, literary works are grouped, based on their genre. Cf. Michel Foucault 2000: 208–13.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Michel Foucault 2000: 211–14. However, it is to be noted that the theories of both Barthes and Foucault met with a lot of criticism. The counter argument was that in their theories the intention of the author is not accessible, because the author-communication and the author-text cannot be easily identified. Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 77. Jannidis and others explain that the change in concepts has to be understood against the background of the historical and political situation of the time, influenced by the Movement of 1968. Already in France, any critique was not limited by strict disciplined rules of science. A vision of a culture without the place of the author was important. The implementation of critic against the author did not thus come through the change of concepts, but through the change in the understanding of the society and science at that time. Cf. Fotis Jannidis et al. 1999: 15–16. The theory of Foucault was neither probable nor absolutely desirable. Cf. Fotis Jannidis 1999: 354.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. 214. In the description of process, propounded by Foucault, the space for reader's activities is limited and defined in the text itself. Moreover, the elements which are to be

Though the theories of communication speak of the construction of the author by the reader, they do not mean that it is a psychological projection of the reader as Foucault suggests. Although in the process of the construction of the author, the view of the reader shaped by his background is important, the author can decide which material to be placed closer to the reader. There are several important traces left behind by the author. It indicates that there would be differences between what was significant at the time of the author and at the time of the reader. This difference necessitates a historical research on the situation of reception as far as possible. Therefore Foucault's view that the author is a construct could be accepted, while his view that the author is a construct of projection by the reader cannot be accepted as it overlooks the world knowledge of the communicator.¹⁵⁶

For the above said reason, Foucault's theory of Discourse without the author is not so attractive today. Nonetheless, the concept of author and the anthropological nature of the function of the author are very stable even today. Furthermore, the circle of editors and the situation at the origin of the text as secondary context play a major role in determining the meaning of the text. Jannidis would say that neither it can be concluded that a culture of discourse without the author is possible in the future, nor is it desirable. It would mean, even if the term 'author' is done away with, it would be replaced by terms like 'work', 'writing', and 'discourse'.¹⁵⁷

Even in a reader oriented interpretation of the text, the role of the author is imperative. It is the author who places the text in a particular space and time. Only with the knowledge about the author's background, one will be able to grasp the meaning of the text fully. Therefore, the expression of the empirical author is also useful in limiting the multiple applications. For this reason, the term 'author' is neither to be blindly applied nor to be completely ignored.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, the

constructed by the reader need to be explicit in the text. Fotis Jannidis, Wimsatt and Beardsley can be cited as representatives of code based communication model, which maintains that for the communication of a text, the concept of the author is irrelevant. Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2004: 21.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2004: 21–24. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 82–83.

¹⁵⁷ Jannidis further believes that the author-function is possible, but not necessary. Cf. Fotis Jannidis 1999: 357. Van Peer contents that the position of Foucault is to be rejected as a pure speculation. The speculation that the author disappears in his communicated instance cannot be proved. Cf. Willie van Peer 1999: 114.

¹⁵⁸ How far the concepts of the author can be employed is to be cleared in the analysis of interpretation. In the same way, which text-references could be used as indications to the intention of the author is to be defined. Cf. Fotis Jannidis et al. 1999: 25.

text is subject to innumerable readings and misreadings. One cannot go on reading a text, as though the implied author and the text are one and the same. Each time a reader reads a particular text, he or she creates an implied author, which is not identical to the person of the author. It is also important that the reader merges the self with the created self in the text, in order to admire the created text better than before. When the reader gets to know about the flesh and blood author, and knows that the characteristics of the author are quite different from the implied author, the admiration of the reader for the text would be much greater.¹⁵⁹

Therefore, it is important that the reader discovers the portraits of the implied author in his own level, that he joins the implied author in assimilating the text, and that he travels with the implied author along the text. It would offer a personal experience with the text. At the same time, knowledge about the real author would offer quite another dimension of the text. The implied author must be distinguished both from the real author and the narrator.

3.3.5.4 Real and Implied Author

In the context of discussion on the intention of the author, Booth introduced the term “implied author”. He would also substitute it with the term ‘the author’s second self.’ Booth’s concept of implied author has to be also understood against the background of Barthes’ *Death of the Author*. He illustrates that every author leaves a version of himself in his work. Mostly, this version of the author is superior, wiser, more sensitive and more perceptive than the real person of the author.¹⁶⁰ “When seriously engaged, authors grant us their works, the FBP (flesh and blood person) has created an IA (implied author) who aspires, consciously or unconsciously, for our critical joining. And the IAs are usually far superior to

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Wayne C. Booth 2008: 86.

¹⁶⁰ There will be no distinction between the real author and the implied, undramatized author, if the novel does not make any direct reference to the real author. Cf. Wayne C. Booth 1970: 151. Cf. Wayne C. Booth 1996: 143. Booth coined the term implied author as a reaction against the rigid textualism of New Criticism, which considered only the words of narrative as the sole legitimate source of meaning. It did not permit to seek the intention of the author through external documents. Booth attempted to restore the human dimension in literature. Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan. *Style* 45 (2011) 30. The implied author is more vivid in ‘first person narratives’, where the reader is interested to get to know the mind of the narrator. The reader should not think that in ‘third person narratives’, the narration comes unmediated. The reader should recognise the mediation from the time the author explicitly introduces a narrator in the text.

the everyday lives, the FBPs.”¹⁶¹ The words of Wolf Schmid are helpful in the understanding of the implied or implicit author. “The concept of implied author refers to the author-image contained in a work and constituted by the stylistic, ideological, and aesthetic properties for which indexical signs can be found in the text. ... but these indexes are perceived and evaluated differently by each individual reader.”¹⁶² The implied author could be called as a construct established by the reader on the basis of the whole structure of a text. It refers to the reader’s idea of the author, which he forms from what he collects from the text.¹⁶³ There are indications to identify him in the text. The implied author who doesn’t have a direct means of communication, can tell us nothing. An implied author is the total meaning of literary text, its moral, ethical and emotional content. At the same time, as the author it allows us to meet it through the text. He or she or it has no voice, but instructs us silently through all the means it has chosen to let us learn.¹⁶⁴

Rabinowitz does not concede that implied author is merely an abstract construct by the reader, but holds that implied author is also a conscious or at least partly conscious creation of the author of himself, as he or she creates characters and plots.¹⁶⁵ The common point of convergence is the creation of the implied author by the real author, which could be a conscious or unintended act.

¹⁶¹ Wayne C. Booth 2008: 78. See also Wayne C. Booth 1970: 67, 71. The dichotomy between the real author and the implied author would be possibly on greater degree in biographies. Most authors try to leave a better impression of their self in their works, leading to masking their real person. Rimmon-Kenan would prefer to call the implied author a construct, inferred and assembled by the reader from the components, the reader finds in the text. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan 1983: 87.

¹⁶² Wolf Schmid 2009: 161. The term ‘implied author’ does not mean that the author intends to create an image of him in the text, but rather that the image is a by-product of the text.

¹⁶³ Cf. Ansgar F. Nünning 2008: 91.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Seymour Chatman 1996: 162–63. Chatman prefers to call the implied author as ‘it’, rather than ‘he or she’. Even though it has no direct means of communication, it instructs the audience or readers silently. Cf. Seymour Chatman 1989: 148.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Peter J. Rabinowitz. *Style* 45 (2011) 103. The stance of Booth and the interpretation of the term implied author are under disputation. Schmid is of the opinion that the implied author is not an intentional creation by the author, but a construct or a reconstruct formed by the reader with the help of the evidences in the text, in respect to his/her reading of the work. Cf. Wolf Schmid 2009: 168. While interpreting the words of Booth (1970: 71), Shen says that during the process of writing, the writer may enter into a state of mind, quite different from what he or she usually is. In this process, the writer creates a different version of himself or herself, setting oneself in a different air. He calls it the encoding process. In the decoding process, the reader infers the image of the implied author from all the choices made by the implied author. Cf. Dan Shen. *Style* 45 (2011) 81–82.

The role of the reader in identifying and realizing the presence of the implied author is significant. All the same, there is a certain distance between the implied author and the reader. The distance could be in the intellectual or moral or other levels. When this distance between the implied author and the reader is reduced to zero, then it would mean a successful reading of the book from the point of view of the author. It is possible that a reader perceives more than one implied author in a text. While coherent texts would probably have a single implied author, in incoherent texts more than one implied author could be evoked. Competing values which are unsynthesized, heterogeneity of genres involved, and incompatible thematic trajectories are some of the signals of more than one implied author.¹⁶⁶ Perceiving different and multiple implied authors can also depend on the reader's ability for conceptualization on coherence. In this way, the same text could be perceived differently, either as with a single implied author or with multiple implied authors. It would mean that it is culturally and historically variable. If the reader is not aware of the collaboration of authors involved in the making of the story, it is possible that he/she does not notice multiple implied authors. In this case, the incompatibility and discrepancies are overlooked by the reader, who might consider them as if coming from one author.¹⁶⁷ The concept of implied author has two components, namely objective and subjective components. It has an objective component, when seen as a hypostasis of the structure of the text. It has a subjective component, when seen as the product of the activity of the reader.¹⁶⁸

The concept 'implied author' is not unanimously accepted, especially in recent times. Some dismiss this concept as superfluous and imprecise, isolating the authors from the ideologies of their work. However, one can content that this concept cannot be simply ignored from the attention of narratology. One cannot settle for another term with similar implication, as no alternative term has been totally accepted.¹⁶⁹ In spite of the disputations, one needs to agree that this concept

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Wayne C. Booth 1996: 142–47.

¹⁶⁷ The postmodern narratives have reduced the probability of multiple implied authors, as incoherence is acceptable to them to some extent and they usually display a unitary set of values. However, a disrupted overall trajectory of shifting values and norms in the story yield to multiple implied authors. Cf. Isabel Klaiber. *Style* 45 (2011) 142–44.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Wolf Schmid 2009: 162.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 165–68. Bal, Rimmon-Kenan, Toolan and Nünning are among those who expressed indictment regarding the concept and term of implied author. Among proposals for alternative terms, Chatman's concept of text implication, text instance, text design and text intent (not the intention of the real author) are noteworthy. Cf. Seymour Chatman 1990: 86.

helps the reader to be freed from the fixation of a general image of the author and helps to pay attention to the particular choices of the implied author and the specific stance in that particular text.¹⁷⁰ So long as this concept helps the reader get into deeper meanings of the text, this concept needs to be welcomed, nonetheless not spending much discussion on the term. The discussion and application of implied author should in no way ignore the real author and the real reader as theoretically irrelevant. Both the real author and the implied author would assist the reader in the process of interpretation.

3.3.5.5 Author as a Context of Interpretation

The role of the author and author's intention in the sphere of interpretation of the text need to be clarified. Danneberg's methodology in this context is to be paid attention to. He applies a methodological concept of author and the conception of author in order to avoid the arbitrariness of interpretation. He argues that the concept 'author' does not guarantee any correct interpretation. It can only attribute an intention of character to the text and place it in a context related to its origin. This context in turn helps the text to be placed against other contexts. The text as the primary context is not contingent on these contexts. These potential contexts are not limited by the primary context of the text. There is no natural

Lanser feels that the discussion on implied author is far too much and one needs to speak of its utility in hermeneutics. She points out the following views: Implied author is not an empirical entity, and so it should have no place in a model of communication. However, it is not always treated so. It has been treated as a figure, too (eg. Seymour Chatman 1989: 37–40). It is only a reading effect, which happens because of the reader, and therefore it has to be created from the work. The basic rationale for the concept of implied authorship is the belief that a particular text is an intentional human discourse. Therefore, the implied author should be a reconstruction by the reader, rather than a construction. The very concept of an implied author implies that it is a belief. It being a belief cannot be coerced. Using alternative terms is not going to settle the issue. The concept itself rests on certain contestable beliefs. We don't yet have adequate knowledge about this concept and need to trace the signals of an implied author in the text. Our attention needs to be on the difference, the application of this concept can bring in hermeneutics rather than on discussions over the concept. Cf. Susan S. Lanser. *Style* 45 (2011) 153–60. It is also to be noted that Rabinowitz contents that the implied author is not merely a source from the text, but consciously created by the real author. It is an attempt of the real author to create a second self of the self which could be better or otherwise. Cf. Peter J. Rabinowitz. *Style* 45 (2011) 103–104.

¹⁷⁰ The reader needs to pay attention to both the real author and to the implied author. The reader has to notice both the difference and the connection between them. Cf. Dan Shen. *Style* 45 (2011) 95. Ryan stresses the need for the importance to be given to the reader. The reader should be allowed to utilize the extra textual information regarding the author while interpreting the text. Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan. *Style* 45 (2011) 36.

context for a text, which would be placed closer to all other contexts or which would limit them. Generally, a text relates itself to everything and lets itself to be interpreted. For the secondary contexts, the primary context would serve as a scale. One of these contexts could be based on the intention of the author. A reader need not choose this context as author's intention, but should not mix it up with the primary context. Thus, for Danneberg, the question of the intention of the author plays a minimal role.¹⁷¹ But one cannot underplay the role and the intention of the author in the act of interpretation. However, the text is to be placed at the centre of interpretation. A quick look at the various functions of the author would enhance one's understanding of the author's role pertinent to this question deeper.

3.3.5.6 Functions of the Author

Jannidis and Winko have analysed several texts and studied the functions of the author. From the outcome, some categories which are common to both of their results could be identified. With it, one can formulate a specific catalogue for biblical exegesis. However, they are not all inclusive, but in accordance with specific situations, they could be extended. Starting point of these categories would be the traces in the text, left behind by the author.

3.3.5.6.1 Function of Choice

Every text contains some definite characteristics of writing, like the style, rhetoric, circle of characters, etc. These features help the reader to trace back to the author. The author has a choice before him to select from the totality of features of writing. These features should have been historically available. Therefore, one will be able to situate the text with the help of these features. It enables one to draw conclusions about the origin of the text. For example, the ancient orient has the characteristic of retaining their cultural tradition through the medium of writing, and the texts were composed in a way that they could outlast the time of

¹⁷¹ Cf. Lutz Danneberg 1999: 101–103. It is hard to get the intention of the real author in the ancient texts, as texts were produced over and above those created by an author in the antiquity. “Since the late 18th century, popular prose fiction has often been written by anonymous and pseudonymous groups of authors ...” Jörg Schönert 2014: 3–4. Walsh observes that since numerous contexts could be identified within a complex literary work, interpretation is equally a function of context as it is the function of the text as well. Cf. Jerome T. Walsh VT 39 (1989) 355.

writing. Hence, these texts are not only meant for the time of composition, but also for the future.¹⁷²

3.3.5.6.2 Function of Form/Composition

The important features of the text have to be composed and arranged orderly. This order of text formation would make it possible to trace back to the author. This order must have been historically probable and there must have been a public which could understand it. Nevertheless, in order to grasp the right audience, deeper study has to be carried out.¹⁷³

3.3.5.6.3 Function of the Selection of Contexts

The choice of symbols and form places the text in a specific context. This context should stand in relation with the reality of life, so that the readers understand its idea of the world and the capacity of imagination. It results necessarily in an intersection between these two contexts. From the selection of contexts, the reader would be able to go back to the author. This context would be possibly located at a particular point of time and place in history. This locating is identified by the reader.¹⁷⁴

3.3.5.6.4 Function of Meaning and Intention

The intention of the author can never be conveyed exactly. It does not mean that the intention of the author is unreliable, but that there is some devaluation about it. Even in a direct communication, it is difficult to get the intention of the sender. The sender formulates his message in such a way that his intention would be decoded by the receiver. However, the receiver constructs the intention of the sender from what he has read or heard. It is also possible that the sender intentionally lets the receiver misunderstand his intention. The receiver can decode the intention of the sender only from the text.¹⁷⁵

Eco speaks of three types of intentions, namely, the intention of the author, the intention of the text and the intention of the reader. A text can be read as though

¹⁷² Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 86.

¹⁷³ Ibid. 87.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. 87.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid. 88–89. The intentions of the author cannot be exactly grasped. Brockmeier reiterates that the private mind of the author is inextricably related to the social mind. One's own attempt to express one's private mind requires cultural grounds, and social and communal modes. The autobiographical narratives are based on the memory of the author. Therefore, there is hardly anything that can guarantee the most personal and intimate insights into one's own private mind. Cf. Jens Brockmeier. *Style* 45 (2011) 261.

it is unlimitedly interpretable, even when the text does not indicate several interpretations. A text can be also read with a single meaning, even when the author meant it to be unlimitedly interpretable. However this interpretation does not depend on any of the intentions mentioned above.¹⁷⁶ The illustrating text cannot be differentiated based on the day-to-day communication, because the text has a complex structure not only with the author but also with the Narrative Voice. When one asks about the intention of the author, it not only refers to the actual intention of the real author, but also refers to what the receiver understands as the intention from the text and what is attributed to the author as his intention. And meaning is not to be derived from the symbols of language in the text. The symbols have the rule of usage. The author presents his text in such a way that the reader understands this rule and decodes the meaning of the symbols. The meaning is to be derived not only from the word's and language's application, but also from the literary method used in the text and from the model of constitution of secondary meaning through the literature and in relation to the concept of the author.¹⁷⁷

Looking for the meaning through text interpretation does not place the author as the focal point, but the text. From the analysis of structure, one can evaluate the function of the author, because the elements in structure can be revealing the intention of the author. Even the fictional world (as if) is presented by the author, so to say, the Narrative Voice is a presentation of the author. The analysis of the function of the author is a work of the readers. From the remarks in the text, the readers construct the intention of the text and attribute it to the author. This does not need to be the real author. The real author may have the advantage of deciding the type of language he is going to use and the reference to the contradictory points in the text, which the reader may not perceive. He can collect only points of references and indicators to them.¹⁷⁸

The intention of the author is to be established through a methodologically legitimate way. It serves as a balancing act between the quest for the intention of the

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Umberto Eco 1992: 35–39.

¹⁷⁷ What helps one to interpret a symbol is the mental co-relation of the symbol which is related to a rule. The aim of the interpreter is to seek the intention of the speaker, through the assistance of the rule concerning the symbol in question. Cf. Rudi Keller 1995: 128–30.

¹⁷⁸ The meaning of words needs to be reconstructed based on factors like time, space, gender, age, social structure and standard of knowledge from the part of the author. The author's lifetime and linguistic socialization would help us contextualize his text. Fotis Jannidis 1999: 385–86.

author (not the reconstruction of it and the intention of the text) and the construction of the meaning, which the reader creates, making use of the indications available in the text (not subjectivism). The text is ultimately the meeting point between the receiving work of the reader and the conception of meaning targeted by the author. Interpretation of a text is to explore this tension between the two.¹⁷⁹

3.3.5.6.5 Function of Recognition

The meaning that is conveyed to the reader through the text also implies that it is made possible for the reader to recognise that meaning. The author makes it present in the text, intends to be recognised and the reader identifies it as the function of the author. The degree of recognition depends on the reading quality, knowledge and empathy of the reader.¹⁸⁰

3.3.5.6.6 Function of Innovation

Like the previous one, the function of Innovation is also strongly connected to the author, but greatly depends on the reader, who should identify the symbols and features of this function from the text. In order to call something new, the knowledge of the old and of other texts is warranted. It is to be noted that the literary historical model is not interested in just being new, but in being successful. So, from the new one, the literary conventional model can come out.¹⁸¹

3.3.5.6.7 Function of Fixing Space and Time

Every text can be situated in a particular place and at a specific time. The author has the capacity of leaving signals, to indicate to which place and period the text belongs. In modern texts, the name of the author and the year and place of publications would be made clear in the text itself. In the case of biblical text, in which we don't have such information, one can only suppose them at the end of the text.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ Barbara Schmitz 2008: 92.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 93.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Jannidis und Winko are of the opinion that when a text is interpreted, reference to the author is useful in fixing the space and time of the text, as it is the first and minimal function of the author, while Danneberg considers it as the only function of the author, also when one sees an historical event in the author. Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2001: 38. Winko further adds that reference to the author would reduce the universal statements to particular one and would narrow down the context of interpretation. Cf. Simone Winko 2002: 344. Cf. Lutz Danneberg 1999: 103–104.

3.3.5.7 Author-figuration

The several functions of the author found in a text lead the reader to create a picture of the author. The reader has every right to go beyond the knowledge of an implicit author towards that of the real author, but only when guaranteed by the text alone. The figuration that is formed from the text internal about the text external (author) is called the author figuration. It is a category of communication, constructed by the reader making use of his knowledge about the text.¹⁸³ The term can be used in plural, because the sundry functions of the author in a text would lead to a complex figuration of the author and not a coherent one. In the case of the biblical texts, often more people are involved in the process of the text, worked in different places and at different periods. There were additions, alterations, editing and changing of contexts to the original text. Therefore, not author figuration, but author figurations are relevant to biblical texts. The author figurations stand in certain relationship to and depend on each other. The author figuration is to be distinguished from the author, who is a real person, either individual or group. Author figuration is a construct from the text. The commonality between the two cannot be easily concluded. The term ‘author’ refers to what we know about the person of the author, not from his own works, but from other Lexicons and contemporary documents. This knowledge is limited in the cases of biblical texts, which were transmitted without fixing the time and place and the data about the author.¹⁸⁴

The author is a person outside the world of the text. The relationship between the author and the Narrative Voice is one of subordination, as the latter is dependent on the former. The Narrative Voice can express only what the author knows.¹⁸⁵ The reader recognises him only as author figuration, as presented in the text by the Narrative Voice. It denotes that author figuration is the totality of the traces about the author in the text. The plurality of author figurations can suggest plurality of authors, too. However, it need not be always right. It could be also possible, that the text has gone through several levels of redactions. It can mean that

¹⁸³ Cf. Fotis Jannidis 2004: 26–27.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 96–97.

¹⁸⁵ The elements of the narrative instance are to a great extent limited by the competence of the author. The same applies for the capacity with regard to the language. The narrative instance can only speak a language which the author speaks. At the same time, it is not absolutely contingent. It is possible that the narrative instance introduces itself of knowing a language which the author does not know. It means that the author can choose a narrative instance relatively at his will. Fotis Jannidis 2002: 548–49.

many authors have worked on the text at different points of time. From the perspective of the author figuration, one may be able to guess the real author, which could be correct or wrong. One can make only hypothetical judgements.¹⁸⁶ Besides the indication to the author, the author figuration also reveals how coherent the text is. Plurality of author figurations would suggest that the text is incoherent.

As from the view point of the production of the text, different contexts of the text can be arrived through author figuration, from the view of reception, different reading positions can be arrived. When a text is passed on to the next reader in a new language situation, the communication between the real author and the reader would be broken. The same is true of readers who receive the text in different centuries. The text would be read in different social, historical, cultural and linguistic situations. This is not only possible in relation to many readers, but it can happen to the same reader, who reads the text at different times in different personal situations.¹⁸⁷

3.3.6 Reader

Recent literary criticism has paved the way for the differentiation between and the study of various concepts of readers. From the second half of the 20th century, the perception on the readers began to change. It marked the beginning of the attention to the addressees which are textually inscribed and to the role of the audience in interpretation. Just like the term ‘author’, the term ‘reader’ contains several nuances. Reader in general could be called, “a decoder, decipherer, interpreter of written (narrative) texts or, more generally of any text in the broad sense of signifying matter”¹⁸⁸. A story is usually produced by an author and narrator who is created by the author. This story would be incomplete and full of gaps, as it has only a finite number of sentences and remains indeterminate in the narrative, not supplying the reader with fuller detailed facts about persons and projects. The reader supplements this text partly, filling the missing details and gaps. Thus, the reader can become a narrator or co-author.¹⁸⁹ As with the concept of

¹⁸⁶ Barbara Schmitz 2008: 101.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. 102–103.

¹⁸⁸ Gerald Prince 2009: 398.

¹⁸⁹ Franz K. Stanzel. *Style* 38 (2004) 203. Stanzel argues that the reader, based on his own experience and insights is capable of taking the end of a story further than what the author has made. It could vary from reader to reader. There is always a certain text-reader interaction. In order to understand the text better, the reader may have to fill certain blanks

author, this concept of reader has its shades of meaning with terms like intended reader and implied reader.

3.3.6.1 Intended Reader and Implied Reader

In order to elucidate the concept of implied reader, one needs to be familiar with the concept of intended reader. When writing a fictional narrative, authors would have an idealised image of a reader in mind. This reader would decode and decipher the information as intended by the author.¹⁹⁰ This reader, audience or addressee presupposed in the narrative itself is the intended reader. In some cases, the author makes the desired stance of the audience clearly in the text. The intended reader is an embodiment of the concepts and conventions of the contemporary public and carries the desires of the author.¹⁹¹

Implied reader is the reader deduced from the text. The implied reader could be also materialised as a character, or without a defined character but whose presence is felt in the narration. A narratee-character is a device by the author to tell the audience what kind of world view they should have in mind. In narratives without an explicit narratee, the audience have to infer the stance of the implied reader. The text creates a standpoint, from which the reader will be enabled to understand the world presented in the text.¹⁹²

Iser defines the implied reader as the one who “embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect-predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has its roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader”¹⁹³. The implied reader deduced from the text, is a mechanism which can produce mea-

found in the text. In doing so, he brings in his own projections, and may have to change his own projections, which however does not change the text. The mutual projections of the text and of the reader form a successful relationship between both. In the course of reading, there might arise various types of negations, which the reader has to cancel out and what is cancelled out will remain in view. Thus, there is a constitutive activity on the side of the reader. Wolfgang Iser 1978: 167–70.

¹⁹⁰ Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning 2008: 32. Peter Rabinowitz calls the flesh and blood reader ‘actual reader’. By ‘authorial audience’ he refers to the reader or audience imagined and idealised by the author, while designing the narrative. Peter Rabinowitz 1998: 20–21.

¹⁹¹ Wolfgang Iser 1978: 33.

¹⁹² Seymour Chatman 1996: 164.

¹⁹³ Wolfgang Iser 1978: 34. Also Wolf Schmid 2009: 169. The term implied reader is introduced by Iser, taking inspirations from the term ‘implied author’ of Booth.

ning of the text. This mechanism involves a set of mental operations like sense making and mental activity of reading.¹⁹⁴

In some texts, the reference to the narratee or implied reader is explicit and in some others it is not. The narratee could be explicitly mentioned or represented through a character or referred to in second person. Even if it is not explicitly mentioned, it is never forgotten entirely.¹⁹⁵ The implied reader plays the crucial role of relaying between the author and the reader. It also plays the role of characterization of the narrator and is part of the narrative frame work, especially when it contributes to the thematic of the narrative as narratee-character. It is helpful to understand the fundamental thrust of the narrative which becomes the medium of communicating the moral of the work.¹⁹⁶

Every work is designed with an implied reader in mind. The real reader plays a crucial role in his relationship with the implied reader. Ideally, the real reader needs to read like the implied reader. “And just as the narrator may or may not ally himself with the implied author, the implied reader furnished by the real reader may or may not ally himself with a narratee.”¹⁹⁷ It is highly probable that the real reader tries to assume the set of attitudes and qualities, the text asks to assume. In order to experience the language of the text, the real individual reader might take on the mask and costume of the implied reader.¹⁹⁸ In order to read as an implied reader, the actual reader should distance himself from one’s own needs and interests. It calls for an impersonal way of reading. However, there involves one’s own engagements and prejudices to some extent. It is not an attempt to be a pure reader, but to be a reader with beliefs, engagements, commitments, prejudices intended by the author.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Gerald Prince 2009: 402. The act of sense-making includes selecting and organizing information, bridging the knowledge of the past and the present, anticipating facts and outcomes, and constructing and modifying patterns.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Gerald Prince 1996a: 235–36. Though all the texts imply a reader, the author may not mention at times the existence of such a reader for variety of reasons.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid. 239–41.

¹⁹⁷ Seymour Chatman 1989: 150.

¹⁹⁸ Walker Gibson had originally used the term ‘Mock Reader’, while Booth replaced it with ‘Implied Reader’. Cf. Walker Gibson 1996: 156.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Peter Rabinowitz 1998: 25–26. Carter clearly distinguishes the implied reader from the real reader. He says that the real reader will have a possibility to obtain help from other sources to understand the text that one is reading, whereas the implied reader has only the information from the text and from the narrative world of the text. Warren Carter 2016: 309. Gerald Prince speaks of degree-zero narratee, whose personality and position

The art of authorial reading (reading as an implied reader) has a special status in reading, as it is important to read in a way the author intended. Authorial reading is also a necessary precondition for many other forms of reading. However, it is not the most complete form of reading. One needs to employ other ways of reading in order to arrive at a critical appraisal of the text. Peter Rabinowitz strikes a balance with his statement, “while authorial reading without further critique is often incomplete, so is a critical reading without an understanding of the authorial audience as its base”²⁰⁰.

It is necessary to note that the implied author and implied reader do not have a symmetrical relationship. The implied author is the image of the author, drawn by the reader based on the evidences of the text. But the implied reader is not the image of the real reader, drawn by the real author. In fact, the implied reader is only an attribute to the reconstructed implied author by the concrete reader. It means that the concept of implied reader is based on the reconstruction of the reader’s act of reading, and not by the real author. The implied reader could be called as the assumed addressee, to whom the work is directed. However, the concept is to be extracted from the work itself.²⁰¹

3.3.6.2 Fictive Reader

Fictive readers are character-readers within the narration. They are those who are attributed with the character of reading the same text in the narration. They belong to the fourth level of communication and they thematise the process of narration. The characteristics of fictive readers could be either well defined or generalised. They could be also invited to take part in the dialogue or merely to journey along in the narration.²⁰² Several elements could be ascribed to the notion of fictive readers in a narrative. It could be referring either directly or indirectly to the audience, whom the author would like to address. It could be employed to bring out the relationship between the author and the reader. Or it could be a product of the self-consciousness and playfulness of the author. It could be also a strategy to capture the attention of the reader. A few functions could be attributed to fictive readers, such as: expressing various relationships between the readers which

in the society does not change his perception of the events narrated in the text, who distances himself from connotations and conventions, is capable of reading the text without any distortion, has a sure memory of the events narrated and is not capable of interpreting the text without the assistance of the narrator. Cf. Gerald Prince 1996a: 229–30.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. 32.

²⁰¹ Cf. Wolf Schmid 2009: 169–70.

²⁰² Cf. Paul Goetsch. *Style* 38 (2004) 189–91.

the author wants to engage in; providing the author the scope for self-dramatization; keeping the readers aware of narrative procedures; and appealing the audience of their attention and their judgment.²⁰³

Usage of quotations, literary allusions, interpolation of stories within the story, reading out passages in a book, reference to literary genre, etc. could be occasions for the introduction of fictional readers. It may be aimed at reviving or revising the views and interpretation of the readers about a particular book or story. Introduction of fictive readers help the real readers to review and reflect on their reading activity.²⁰⁴ Fictive readers are not a must for a narrative. In fact, they are not a frequent phenomenon. But they can be effective in evoking reader's response.

3.4 Biblical Narratology

It is of high importance to know what the new literary criticism offers us for our understanding of the Bible. In this sense, the techniques employed in narratology, too, would be helpful in enriching this process of understanding. Narratology teaches that while reading a text, the focus shall not only be on the text, but also on how it is communicated. The components of narrativity in the Bible are aplenty. Some of the books in the Bible are undoubtedly narration.²⁰⁵ Alter echoes it in clear terms. "In the great narrative corpus from Genesis to the end of the book of Kings, there are perceptible artful devices for the manipulation of time, the deployment of episodes, the intimation of motive and character, the articulation of dialogue, the enunciation of theme ..."²⁰⁶ Moreover, narrative had and still has an important place in the didactic and parenetic means employed by every ancient culture including the ANE.²⁰⁷ Therefore, it is highly recommendable that the Bible is to be read as a narrative. Narrative criticism deals with this analysis. "Narrative criticism originated within the biblical studies. As a method, it typically appreciated narratology to analyse plot, characterization, point of view (or narrative perspective), narrative setting, temporal dyn-

²⁰³ Ibid. 191–93.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 194–95.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Antony John Baptist 2016: 1. The historical books and the books of the Maccabees, the Gospels and the Acts are clearly narrations.

²⁰⁶ Robert Alter. *Prooftexts* 3 (1983) 116–17.

²⁰⁷ The Talmudic Haggadah is entirely narrative in character. The Koran contains several historic and quasi-historic tales which are narratives. Cf. Juda L. Palache 1994: 10–12.

amics, and other stock features of biblical narrative, extending to the implied author, the narrator, and the implied reader.”²⁰⁸

Narrative Criticism is pertinent to the Deuteronomistic History as well. Every report of the occurrences is a narrative text and would be so constructed. Likewise, history writing is necessarily so constructed because narrative texts are applied in it. Therefore, it can be analysed in narratological methods. The Deuteronomistic History has not been created out of nothing, but rather based on older traditions.²⁰⁹ Narrative history is based on historical facts which might also contain elements of fiction. The remark of Barstad on narrative history might help us with a clear understanding: “narrative history is not pure fiction, but contains a mixture of history and fiction.”²¹⁰ In other words, narrative history and fiction are not exclusive to each other. It means to say that one can apply the method of narrative criticism in the interpretation of biblical texts. At the same time one needs to pay attention to the conflicting aspects in biblical narratology.

3.4.1 Issues in Biblical Narrative Criticism

There are difficulties one is confronted with, when one tries to read the Bible as a narration. Like in any other literary work, the language, style, presentation of characters, etc. in the Bible would be able to reveal the intention of the author, even the historical situation of the author. At the same time, each text has individual value, because each biblical writer had a distinct way of artistic expression. Therefore, interpretation now lies more in the text than in what lies behind the text.²¹¹ At this juncture, narrative criticism comes appropriate. But the application of Biblical narrative criticism is not to question the historical critical method or to replace it, but to enrich and complement biblical reading from various perspectives. “Here, ... narratology can supply insights that the field wherein (such) different objects are traditionally studied has not itself developed.”²¹² All the same, biblical narrative criticism has the danger of treating the Bible like

²⁰⁸ Stephen D. Moore 2016: 29.

²⁰⁹ Cf. Hans M. Barstad 2008:19.

²¹⁰ Ibid. 23.

²¹¹ Cf. Paul R. House 1992. 7–8. Antony John Baptist 2016: 3.

²¹² Mieke Bal. *Poetics Today* (1990) 730. Bal advocates an interdisciplinary interaction between Narratology and other disciplines which would be more productive and more profound. House compliments to the thought, stating that neither old methods are automatically bad, nor do new methods automatically command more preference. When good methods are applied over a long period of time, a certain regularity or even staleness can creep into a discipline. Cf. Paul R. House 1992: 6.

any other modern literature. One should understand that in most secular literature, the work is written and or supervised by one or a group of persons in a particular duration of time. In the case of the Bible, the final composition has gone through a different process. In this context, one needs to take into consideration the process of redaction the biblical books have gone through, and what are the narratives in the Bible and whether we have a narrator in the biblical texts.²¹³ Besides this, the purpose of the narrative criticism in biblical studies is to be clarified. And primarily a few concepts in the field of biblical narratology are to be articulated.

3.4.2 Repetitions

Repetitions or doublets are a phenomenon in the biblical narratives. It refers to events or statements recorded in the narrative more than once. The creation narratives (Gen 1:1–2:4 and Gen 2:4–25) and the multiplication of bread (Mt 14:13–21 and Jn 6:1–13) could be cited as classical examples. In such instances, the reader is confronted with the problem of reliability of the reported events. A reader of biblical narratives has three options: to trust that things happened twice or more times; to believe that things happened only once, but have been narrated several times inconsistently; to assume that the redactor who has gathered materials from different sources was not sure which one to include, and so amalgamated both or all the accounts in the narrative.²¹⁴ The third option would be relevant for the repetition in the creation narratives. The repetition of statements sometimes intended to place greater emphasis on a particular thought (cf. Prov 20:16 and Prov 27:13). In addition to the problem of repetitions, the reader may be also confronted with the order of the reported events. At times, the temporal order of the texts in the Bible is not chronological. Some texts are intentionally inserted in a different context than where it should have been, in order to set the agent of the redactor.²¹⁵ In such cases one needs to look into the aspects of composition and

²¹³ Cf. Antony John Baptist 2016: 4. There is certain reluctance, as it is understood by some that the reader oriented theory would threaten to unnerve a conventional understanding of biblical authority. “There is no objective, ideologically sterile reader to appropriate an ideological prescription embedded in the text.” David M. Gunn 1992: 416.

²¹⁴ Cf. David H. Richter 2008: 290. Saul throwing his spear at David (1 Sam 18:10–11; 19:10) and the death of Saul (1 Sam 31:1–4; 2 Sam 1:6–10) could be cited as further examples of doublets.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* 290. The author cites the example of the dark episode of handing over the descendants of Saul to the Gibeonites in 2 Samuel 21, who were later crucified by the latter. This should have been placed at the beginning of the reign of David. The reference to Mephibosheth as the only remaining descendent of Saul in 2 Sam 9:1 offers this clue.

seek to answer the question, why a particular event is narrated in a particular context.

3.4.3 Characters and Characterization

The information we receive from the biblical narrative about several characters is very minimal. The biblical narrators do not provide the readers with clear pictures of biblical characters. The Bible is silent on the aspects of thoughts, feelings and even behaviour of important personages in general. The reader may be given the privilege of knowing the mind of God at times, but the descriptions of human characters are concealed more often than not.²¹⁶ Amongst the little explicit characterization, the inner personality of a character could be known by direct characterization through the voice of God, narrator or another character. Inner personality could be also known by the mental states and other facets of the personalities of the characters.²¹⁷ Characterization is often shaped indirectly through the means of speeches, actions and comments. The reader often has to guess the characteristics of even the lead roles with a degree of uncertainty. “We are compelled to get at character and motive ... through a process of inference from fragmentary data, often with crucial pieces of narrative exposition strategically withheld and this leads to multiple or even wavering perspectives of characters. There is in other words, an abiding mystery in character as the biblical writers conceive it, which they embody in their typical methods of presentation.”²¹⁸

The book of Kings characterizes the kings with the attributes of faithfulness or sinfulness. The moral judgement by the narrator characterizes most of the kings, regardless of their individual acts.²¹⁹ There is also the aspect of intertextual char-

²¹⁶ Cf. Robert Alter. *Community* 66 (1978) 58. Alter points out that the Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian literary style is to maintain a simple treatment of characters. While following it, the biblical narrators have also brought out a subtle technique which results in an imaginative representation of human individuality.

²¹⁷ When the direct characterization is voiced by God (Gen 7:1; 22:12), it is of absolute validity which is followed by the voice of the narrator and then of other characters (2 Sam 18:27; 1 Kings 1:42). Cf. Shimon Bar-Efrat 1989: 53–54.

²¹⁸ Robert Alter. *Community* 66 (1978) 64. Cohn contrasts this with his opinion that minor characters in the book of Kings who play supporting roles are characterized vividly like the woman in Zarephath who is honest, loyal, furious, grateful and faithful (1 Kings 17:17–24), the honest and generous Naaman and the thoughtless, deceitful and conniving Gehazi (2 Kings 4:8–37). Cf. Robert L. Cohn 2010: 91–92.

²¹⁹ Cf. Robert L. Cohn 2010: 91–92.

acterization, by means of implicit comparison between characters. This comparison is often done with David, the choicest of the kings.

3.4.4 Fictionality and the Bible

Contemporary narratology is designed for the works from authors, who are known or whose information can be discovered. It is applicable also to anonymous works by unknown authors who can be located geographically and historically with some certainty. In the case of the latter, it functions with the presumption that the changes made by the later redactors have not made the original text beyond recognition. The possibility to distinguish fictional or factual texts or a combination of both is also presumed here. It presumes also the possibility to locate the meaning of the text with the help of the rules for the interpretation of secular narratives, like notice, signification, configuration and coherence. In the biblical narrative, it is not easy to identify the above factors.²²⁰ The authors of the major parts of the biblical texts are anonym. It would also imply that one is confronted with the probability of fictionality in the biblical narrative.

Blum points out that the anonymous authors do not present any revealed narrating subject, and the narrator is immanent. But these texts which are transmitted through the tradition presuppose an element of encompassing reliability for the interpretation of the lifeworld of the believing community. The same is applicable to the biblical texts whose authorship is mentioned in the text, where the narrator is a part of the narrated events (eg. the prophetic literature). Such narrations are treated as Israel's collective anamnesis.²²¹ Richter believes that the Bible is not without fictions, and even some biblical narratives absorbed into the Deuteronomistic History may have been designed to be read as fictions. He suggests that a biblical reader understands that there are fictional and nonfictional genres in biblical narratives, like any other narratives that have come to us from other cultural groups.²²² The characteristic of fictionality in the Bible does not reduce its reliability; for fictional texts too contain a world-knowledge and a

²²⁰ Cf. David H. Richter 2008: 286.

²²¹ Cf. Erhard Blum. *NZSTh* 47 (2005) 255–57. See also Friederike Schücking-Jungblut 2020: 12–16.

²²² Cf. David H. Richter 2008: 288. The author cites the examples of the story of the concubine of Gibeah in Judges, which he assumes to be a lampoon against King Saul, and the story of the faithless concubine from Bethlehem, which he interprets as referring to David, who switched his loyalty from Saul to his enemy, the Philistine King Achish of Gath.

major part of them may have originated from fictionalized realities.²²³ And so the reader of the Bible is to be aware that there are many fictional elements in the biblical narrative and that fictionality cannot be the deciding category for the ancient texts.

3.4.5 Historicity of the Bible

The biblical texts are products of historical authors delivered to historical readers. Historicity of the Bible is very much important in biblical traditions. Every book in the Bible has its own historical background, hence is to be interpreted in its wholeness and totality. A good exegesis would treat the text with historical concerns.²²⁴ On the contrary, historicity is not a key point of concern in narrative criticism, which does not treat a narration primarily as a historical occasion, but as an event in itself. But one cannot just ignore the historicity of the biblical text as unimportant. This automatically leads to the question, whether historicity and narratology are compatible with each another. On the one hand, there is a high level of reluctance in this regard in biblical hermeneutics. On the other hand, there is an effort to benefit from the utility and creativity the narratological method brings along. “Certainly, narrative criticism is not the appropriate method to ascertain answers to historical questions one might ask in relation to an ancient document like the Bible, but this does not mean that it vitiates historical concerns.”²²⁵ Indubitably, the synchronous element of story/discourse of narratology cannot replace the evidence based historicity, but can very well complement.²²⁶ Even though narrative criticism may not be able to establish historicity, biblical narrative criticism does not question the historicity of the biblical texts and it does not relegate historicity as unimportant and inconsequential. Narrative criticism is to be applied as another complementary method which would shed new lights onto the understanding of the Bible by the believing community.

While analysing the factuality of a text, three levels of historicity can be noticed. (i) The time in which the event took place. It is often assumed that the reported event took place at some point of time, mostly before it was written. (ii) The time in which the text is written. It is also the time of the author, who probably lives at a time later than the occurrence of the event. (iii) The time of the reader which

²²³ Cf. Oliver Dyma 2015: 48–49.

²²⁴ Cf. Denis L. Stamps 1997: 234–35.

²²⁵ Ibid. 234.

²²⁶ Cf. Dorrit Cohn. *Poetics Today* 11 (1990) 778.

is placed chronologically later than the former two. It could be also the present time. These three elements differ from each other on the level of certitude. We cannot be certain about the first element most of the time. Through the redaction history, we can obtain some information regarding the second element. We can be fully certain about the third element.

Biblical narrative criticism has to take the above mentioned elements into account. First, it has to be read from the point of view of the first recipient and figurations are to be attributed to the author. A biblical text can be placed historically at a particular point. Then it has to take into account the point of view of the Masoretic texts. The Masoretic texts carry the traces what the Masoretes have left behind. In these texts, it is clearly marked how the text is to be read.²²⁷ With these figurations, a theological frame work can be established. In the narratological historical method²²⁸, a place can be assigned to the elements of the historical critical method. This integrated model of narratological historical method can be also fixed on the sides of both the production and the reception. Both can serve as secondary contexts to the text as the primary context. It would blend the old tradition and a later reading method.²²⁹

3.4.6 Authorship and Origin of Texts

Unlike in secular literature, the quest for authorship and composition of biblical texts is still very active in biblical exegesis. While the question of authorship is treated with much interest in the historical critical method, it was admittedly not a matter of serious concern in the narrative text analysis, though in recent times some interest is being shown on authorship.

While noting that the real author and the real process of narrating are neglected in narratology, Dan Shen emphasises the need to go beyond the narrative world to the real world. An analysis on the real process of narrating would bridge the gap between the implicit author and the real author. The concern of the socio-historic situation would enrich our understanding of the narrative work as well.

²²⁷ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 103.

²²⁸ Schmitz suggest a narratological historical model, an integrated model in which a dialogue between narratology and historical critical method takes place. In this integrated approach, methodologically reflected questions of historicity could be integrated to the narratological method which in the past handled the biblical texts with ahistorical text immanent conceptualised analysis. Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 107.

²²⁹ Ibid. 107–108.

Hence, there is a need to combine both intrinsic and extrinsic criticism.²³⁰ Special mention is to be made about the recent developments in the German speaking areas, where a gradual interest to observe the difference between the author and the narrative voice is strongly noticed. It is sensible to raise questions about the author from a methodological systematic perspective. It looks to study, how we can historically look for the genesis of the text from the perspective of narrative text analysis and how we can integrate the category of authorship with the interpretation of the text. It offers the possibility of asking for the historical origin of the text from the narrative text analysis.²³¹ In this regard, the way proposed by Foucault and later developed by Jannidis and Schmitz is helpful. It aims at a narratological historical methodology which bridges the narrative-text-analysis and the historical-critical accesses. It is anchored both in the levels of production and reception of the text. It studies the author and editorial group and genesis of the text and will methodologically offer a connection between the narrative text analysis and text genetical positioning. The model would apply the author-concept in the research works on literature rooted in historiography and would not indulge in the research on the historical aspect of author-concept.²³²

3.4.7 Religious Aspects

The narrative criticism does not reject the religious aspects of the Bible. And the argument that religious texts should not be read as literature is not warranted²³³ as long as narrative criticism does not negate the fact of religiosity in the Bible. “Though it (Bible) is a religious document, the fact is that it contains narration and poetic portions. The right attitude should be that one needs to know narrative criticism even to understand the religious message of the text.”²³⁴

Another aspect to be taken note of is that the Bible is also read from the perspective of a believing community. The believers would see it as God’s revelation and Holy Scripture and therefore, as document of faith and inspiration. The Bible is a text of revelation, but there is limitation in our grasping. The faith of the

²³⁰ Cf. Dan Shen. *Narrative* 9 (2001) 124–25.

²³¹ Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 58–61.

²³² Cf. Fotis Jannidis 1999: 353–54. See also Michel Foucault 2000: 228–29. Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2008: 107–108.

²³³ It is argued that the Bible being a collection of religious documents should not be read as a literature. Doing so, would distort the Bible itself. R. Alter counters it stating that the Bible is a set of chiefly religious texts which uses abundant narrative and poetic to serve the covenantal ends. Cf. Robert Alter. *Prooftexts* 3 (1983) 116.

²³⁴ Antony John Baptist 2016: 5.

believer has a certain history, continuity and tradition. The faith experience of some leads to the unity of experience in the levels of faith, life and biblical text, and helps others have such an experience. The believer shares his/her faith with the respective ancestors. The believer preserves the Word of God and passes it on to the next generations. In the same way, the inspired editors/composers of the Bible inspire the readers.²³⁵ Within all these parameters, the interpretation of the Bible is based not only on a personal level, but also on a community level. The church as a reading community creates also a new room of interpretation. The continuity and sharing of faith demands that it is not totally deviated from what one receives from the ancestors. It equally calls for doing justice in understanding the changes it has undergone, in order to do justice to the present times. Biblical narratological criticism has to be aware of these elements in its attempt to interpret the Bible.

Having analysed the above aspects, one needs to admit that difficulties arise, when we apply narrative criticism in a biblical text. The method is also criticised for its limited purview and for being insufficiently holistic.²³⁶ But one needs to look at what biblical narrative criticism can bring to biblical interpretation than what it cannot bring. In this sense, the application of this method sheds new light on any biblical narrative. Every method has its own advantages and disadvantages. One should be able to exploit the advantages in order to get the correct meaning of the text. If narrative criticism sheds new light on biblical narrative and if it helps the reader understand the Bible better, we need to accept it, but without losing sight of the facts which cannot be established by narratology.

²³⁵ Cf. Joseph Ratzinger. QD 117 (1989) 40–41. The modern hermeneutics does not exclude multiple meanings of the text. Primarily the biblical text is to be interpreted in relation to the original context of the text, but it can contain new meanings in new situations. It is open to the spiritual meaning which is born as a result of the relationship between the text and the new reality, but not to any subjective interpretation which is an outcome of intellectual speculations. Cf. Päpstliche Bibelkommission. *Verlautbarungen des Apostolischen Stuhls* 115. (1993) 70–72.

²³⁶ Cf. Fludernik 1996: 330. Gibson points out the contribution it makes. Narratology was the culmination of a geometric tendency in the Anglo-American analysis of narrative. He adds that narratological analysis leaves out something that is absolutely essential to a narrative. Cf. Gibson. 1996: 5–6.

4 A Synchronic Analysis of 2 Kings 11

The books from Genesis to 2 Kings could be read as a continuous narrative. By and large, they communicate the history of Israel in the form of narrative.²³⁷ The biblical scholarship has been busy in exploring the history of its composition, and authorial and editorial sources.²³⁸ A narratological approach would be interested to read these books as a text, without watering down the importance of its composition and sources.

4.1 Salient Features of Narratology in 2 Kings 11

4.1.1 Narrativity in 2 Kings 11

This passage is a verbal narrative which contains several sequences which are connected with each other and move from the start to the end inexorably. The sequence from the time Athaliah learns of the murder of her son to her eventual death at the hand of her own soldiers offers space to the narrative. The speed of the narrative is in fact delayed²³⁹ through the depiction of the discourse and command of Jehoiada (2 Kings 11:5–8). This delay in the movement of sequences provides the narrative a longer space. It is to be noted that this delay does not cause any diversion or digression in the narrative, but only lets the reader understand the actions which are carried out by Jehoiada in preparation of the coronation of Joash. Furthermore, these details that cause the delay offer verification with historicity.

²³⁷ Cf. Raymond F. Person 2016: 79. In fact, Person holds the view that the books of Samuel–Kings and Chronicles compete even contemporary historiography, but may not have contained any theological divergences.

²³⁸ Cf. David G. Gunn 2016: 95–96. The term “First History” or “Primary History” claims Genesis–2 Kings as a single literary unit based on a demonstrable unity of subject and formal connections. Here, we do not enter into a discussion whether a single historian is responsible to the composition of these books. Our concern is only to note that these books form a continuous narrative, and especially Samuel–2 Kings belongs to the category of narratives.

²³⁹ Genette notes that acceleration and deceleration belong to the law of efficacy and economy, and to the narrator’s sense of relative importance of moments. Here in our text, the elaboration of the plan is equally important as the execution of it. It helps the reader understand the intensity of care needed to accomplish the planned task. Cf. Gérard Genette. *Poetics Today* 11 (1990) 760–61.

4.1.2 Wholeness

2 Kings 11 is presented as a complete narrative. The chain of events which are narrated form an unbroken sequence, and therefore can be treated as a narrative with wholeness. Wholeness of the text is advantageous in the study in narratology. “Narrativity also depends on the extent to which the events presented constitute (or pertain to) a whole, a complete structure with a beginning, a middle and an end.”²⁴⁰ Athaliah’s hearing of the death of her son and her murderous act serve as the introduction to a major event to follow. The narrative is concluded with a minor succession narrative. The middle portion is occupied by the plan to dethrone her and the execution of the same. There is connectivity from one event to those following.

Like every narrative, this can also be divided into different acts. Based on the criteria of the location of action, change of scene and time,²⁴¹ it could be classified into six acts. (i) Act I (vv. 1–3) revolves around the reaction of Athaliah on hearing the death of her son and the saving of Joash. It takes place in the house of the king. (ii) Act II (vv. 4–8) reveals the conspiracy sketched by Jehoiada, the priest to dethrone Athaliah. And there is a change of place, as it occurs in the house of YHWH. There is a gap of six years between the first two acts. (iii) Act III (vv. 9–11) describes the execution of the plan and the immediate preparation for the coup. The locations of the act are both the house of YHWH and the house of the king. There is also a short change of time, which is not specified in the narrative. (iv) Act IV (vv. 12–17) narrates the coup consisting of the coronation of Joash, the murder of Athaliah and the covenant. The first and third actions take place inside the house of YHWH and the second actions is carried out on the way leading to the house of the king. (v) Act V (v. 18) concerns the destruction of Baal’s worship places. Naturally there is a shift in the location of the

²⁴⁰ Gerald Prince 1982: 151. The author calls this structure a doubly oriented autonomous whole. He is also of the view that what is not narrated, but actually took place, would positively affect narrativity. Cf. Gerald Prince 1996b: 98.

²⁴¹ This classification is inspired by Shimon Bar-Efrat who classifies 2 Kings 11 into 5 acts. (i) Athaliah murders the members of the royal family except Joash (vv. 1–3) (ii) Jehoiada’s preparation for insurrection (vv. 4–8) (iii) Implementation of the revolt and the proclamation of Joash as king (vv. 9–12) (iv) Murder of Athaliah (vv. 13–16) and (v) Covenant between God, the king and the people (vv. 17–20). Cf. Shimon Bar-Efrat 2006: 117. The concept of event plays an important role in Narratology in recent times. Hühn explains the relation between events and sequentiality which helps to define narrativity. The changes of state in the represented world are the base for sequentiality. It also involves a change in time. Cf. Peter Hühn 2009: 80.

action. With regard to time, probably it directly follows the previous act. (vi) Act VI (v. 19–20) depicts a happy end, whereby Joash is seated on the throne and the city becomes peaceful. In the entire narration, one can recognise the relatedness of events within the represented world, and the changes of plots.

4.1.3 Location of the Occurrence

The general location of the event does not change throughout the text, even though there is a change of acts. The entire plot takes place in Jerusalem, but with every act, there is a quick shift of location within Jerusalem. It takes a forward and backward journey, starting from the palace and concluding in the palace. Thus, the plot offers a complete journey. The first act concerning Athaliah occurs in the palace and there is a special mention of the bedchamber. The next acts move to the temple, the house of the Lord. There is a short interruption, when the scene moves to the temple of Baal. Once again the house of the Lord becomes the central location of the act before it is eventually moved to the palace where the new king is enthroned.

Forward journey: palace → temple of YHWH → temple of Baal.

Return journey: temple of Baal → temple of YHWH → palace.

4.1.4 Perspective Structures

4.1.4.1 Levels of Communication

The incident of the murder and dethronement of Athaliah serves as the content plane of the narrative, and the narration and dialogues serve as the expression plane of the narrative. The entire pericope is in K II and K III levels of communication. The presence of the Narrative Voice is felt throughout the pericope. It is the extradiegetic voice that travels all along the story. The Narrative Voice lets the characters communicate among themselves, speak and deliver commands, which would fall under K III level. Nevertheless, the characters do not report any incident or narrate any story, and hence the narration is not carried forward to the next level. One might also note that there is no response to the words uttered by the speaking characters. The utterances are mostly monologues (vv. 5–8. 12. 14. 15), which do not evoke verbal responses but actions. The chief of the guards does not respond to the command of Jehoiada but only implements it through his soldiers. Similarly, the cry of Athaliah, when she utters the word ‘treason’, does not invite any denial of it from the part of Jehoiada and the chief of the guards. They go ahead carrying out their plan against her, without wasting much time to

respond to her allegation. As a whole, there are only monologues, instructions and expressions of inner feeling in this episode and no dialogue in the strictest sense.

4.1.4.2 Categories of Narrative Voice

The Narrative Voice is not identical to any of the characters, which implies that it is not present in the narration. It could be therefore called a Heterodiegetic Narrative Voice. It is also a non-perceivable and impersonal Narrative Voice which theoretically is to be endowed with strong reliability.

The reader gets the impression that the Narrative Voice has an overall view of the chain of events. The narration is in third person, and therefore the sources of the narrator's knowledge are undefined.²⁴² The reader is not sure, whether the author knows all that is going on in the mind of the characters. One will be able to derive the apparent intentions of some characters from their actions to some extent, notwithstanding what was actually going on in their minds and their ulterior motives are not explicitly mentioned.²⁴³ Probably the narrator presents to the reader only the information, which is necessary to drive home his/her points. Had the thinking of some of the leading characters been revealed, the reader would have grasped the intentions of the characters and of the narrator with certainty.

The narrator presents to the readers exclusively visual figures for the procedure of the scenes. Special mention is to be made on the plan orchestrated by Jehoiada, which is very descriptively narrated. For instance, the instruction for the deployment of the guards at specific places like the house of the king (v. 5), at the entrance of the Sur gate and the gate behind the runners (v. 6) and the house of YHWH (v. 7) illustrates several locations in the scene. The command to assem-

²⁴² The source of knowledge will be self-evident, if the narration is in first person. The traditional view is that in third person narratives, the narrator does not talk about himself. And therefore, the knowledge might be derived from omniscience. But this view is not devoid of contention. An omniscient narrator has direct access to the mind of the character and would be able to observe the thoughts and emotions of the character. Based on this argument, there arises the question of the need of omniscience for an author. Jon-K Adams 1996: 24–26. Gerald Prince questions the nature of a narrator's omniscience. Even the so-called omniscient narrators reveal sooner or later that they do not know everything of the characters. Gerald Prince 1982: 51.

²⁴³ It is not always necessary that the narrators reveal the mind of the character. Representation of events would equally be an effective narrative. Gerald Prince says that the representation of external events increases narrativity, even more than the representation of internal ones. Gerald Prince 1996b: 102.

ble around the king (v. 8) compels the reader to visualize the scenario. The act of the priest giving spear and shields to the centurions (v. 10) offers a similar treat. The subsequent murder of Athaliah contains a similar mode. Therefore, the reader is able to get a picturesque of the scenes narrated. In the realm of involvement of the Narrative Voice in the story, the reader gets the impression that it is not fully involved in the story as it is dealing with the narration of the story. A gender application of the Narrative Voice is not a light task, as there is no indication of it. The fact that the apparent target in the plot is a woman, need not imply male chauvinism or a masculine Narrative Voice. Athaliah in no way would represent the women of the time. It can be debated whether she was a symbol of Baalism, since her murder is directly followed by the demolition of Baalistic cult, even though their relatedness is not blatantly stated in the narrative.

4.1.4.3 Functions of Narrative Voice

Under the narrative technical function, one can speak of sequence, duration and frequency. The text contains both narration-sequence and chronological sequence. The duration of the entire events in 2 Kings 11 consists in a span of just above six years. The day of conspiracy against Athaliah falls definitely before the Sabbath mentioned in the narrative and probably both stand in proximity to each other. The event of the death of Athaliah and the central event, the crowning of Joash happen probably within the same day. The Narrative Voice brings out these events logically.

The death of Athaliah is apparently reported twice (vv. 16, 20), but with different purposes. In v. 16, the Narrative Voice reports the event of her death in actuality and in v. 20, it mentions it in causal connection with the peace in the city. In this way, the Narrative Voice takes up an analytic function and makes an evaluative comment that there was peace in the land. The Narrative Voice strategically positions the positive event of enthronement of Joash after the narration of the negative events of the bloodshed of the royal offspring and of Athaliah, so that there is a comforting conclusion to the narration. Nevertheless, the analytical function employed in the narration does not help identify the value system of the Narrative Voice, as there are no commentaries about the characters, either explanatory or evaluative. At the same time, the solitary evaluative comment about the death of Athaliah, i.e., "There was peace in the land", justifies the murder of the ruler. One could infer its value system that violence is justified in order to establish justice and peace.

4.1.4.4 Focalization

Focalization is employed at least thrice in the narrative (vv. 1, 13, 14). A descriptive analysis will be made under the respective verses. In all these cases, Athaliah is the sole focalizer. Therefore, this could be called Monofocalization, as Nieragden would name it.²⁴⁴ Another feature of the focalization in our text is that it occurs only from the part of the character. Bal considers such character-bound focalizations as liable to bias and limitation.²⁴⁵ In concomitance with the above statement of Bal, the view of Athaliah does not affect the reader in the formation of opinion. Focalization here serves only the purpose of revealing her viewpoint and expressing a clearer description but without influencing the reader's view in her favour.

4.1.4.5 Characters and Characterization

Athaliah, Ahaziah, Jehosheba, Joram, Joash, the wet-nurse, Jehoiada, the centurion, guards, David and Mattan are the ones who find mention in the text. Among them, Ahaziah, Joram and David do not appear in the story, but they are referred to: the former two in connection with Athaliah, and David in reference to the spear and shields. Jehoiada and Athaliah are the only two speaking characters, other than the acclamation of the crowd that occurs once. All other characters merely listen or act. There are also a few unnamed characters, like the wet-nurse, the centurion and the chief of the guards who are passive listeners and a collective character in the form of the people.

The characters presented in the text in general lack sufficient description and precision as in most of the biblical narratives.²⁴⁶ There is little information about them, albeit without any explicit mention of their characteristics. The imagination of the reader is restricted due to the absence of clues on how the characters

²⁴⁴ Cf. Goran Nieragden. *Poetics Today* 23 (2002) 692. In Monofocalization, the focalizer's perception would determine the highly individualized orientation of the complete story. But in the case of Athaliah, her focalization does not determine the orientation, because she is not the narrator.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Mieke Bal 1997: 146.

²⁴⁶ The physical traits of most characters in the biblical narratives are described only in general terms, like hairy, fat, tall, lame, beautiful etc. In the realm of physical description, they are under-described in the bible. It does not mean that the biblical authors were incapable of physical description, as there are several descriptions in the bible especially of locations and objects. Biblical narratives present to the readers a detailed description primarily to communicate important information for understanding the plot and not always to present a clear visual image of the characters. Jeremy Schipper 2016. 389–90. Simon Bar-Efrat 1989: 48–49.

look like. The reader has no direct knowledge about the thoughts of the characters and their perceptions. Even the verbal utterances of the characters do not reveal any aspects of the main characters. The characterization is therefore to be inferred from the internal evidences. The actions of the characters play a vital role in the inference of their traits. It is better revealed as the events progress further. A reader would be able to derive the characteristics of the speaking characters from their speeches, too. Some of the characters are introduced with the mention of their relationship with other prominent characters. All the characters form K III level in the layers of communication.

There is no mention of the attire of the characters, other than the lone reference to the upper garment of Athaliah (v. 15). The reader finds attestation to the weapons carried by the body guards. There is also a reference to the spear and shields of David. It shows the military set of the scene on the one hand, and the need for legality on the other hand. The Objectivity of the statements of the characters is to be deeply analysed. Athaliah and Jehoiada are the two characters who carry the entire story on their shoulders.

4.1.4.5.1 The Characterization of Jehoiada

Jehoiada is the head and the mastermind of the conspiracy against Athaliah. He is a priest by profession. His name means, “YHWH knows”²⁴⁷ or “YHWH has known”²⁴⁸. True to his name, Jehoiada’s act and speech reveal that he is equipped with the intelligence and strategic plan just like an experienced army commander. He wins the confidence of the guards by showing them the prince who was brought up in complete obscurity (v. 4). Apart from this evidence, the reader is not sure, whether he employed a definite tactic to convince the captains of the hundreds and bodyguards or they realised in the course of time that all of them were likeminded. Thus there is a gap in the narration. It paves way for the reader to fill this gap, for example, by assuming a preparatory ground work from the side of Jehoiada.

All the same, Jehoiada’s capacity to command (v. 5, 9) suggests that he is a man of meticulous planning. He was a man of conviction and had a well-defined and well-directed target. His concentration on the target and strategies designed to achieve it portray him as one with managerial skills. It is further proved in the

²⁴⁷ Hellmut Haug 2002: 203. The name is apt to the priest who is known by the Lord and his actions are known to him.

²⁴⁸ Hans Rechenmacher 2012: 137.

following chapter (2 Kings 12) which states that Joash ruled the kingdom under the guidance of Jehoiada. Most part of the speeches found in the text is uttered by him. Interestingly, he does not make any derogatory statement against his rival and antagonist Athaliah. His speeches do not contain any description of events or persons either of the past or of the present. In the narrative, we read only of the commands from Jehoiada and not any comment from him. Nowhere does he offer compelling reasons for the murder of Athaliah. It leaves the reader to guess at least three possible reasons: (a) in order to re-establish the Davidic dynasty in Juda; (b) in order to bring about a religious revival with pure Yahwism; (c) in order to assert his Jehoiada's power in the palace and the kingdom, which he can achieve by bringing a child to throne under his custody.

4.1.4.5.2 The Characterization of Athaliah

The name Athaliah literally means, "YHWH is ruler".²⁴⁹ Though Athaliah bears the name of YHWH and was a ruler, her life events do not match her name. And she is portrayed as a worshipper of Baal. Often she had to experience the premature death of her close relatives (2 Kings 9: 24, 27; 10: 13–14). She is portrayed as a sign of hope by her marriage with Jehoram, which should have brought a peaceful coexistence of both the kingdoms. But the narration shows us the contrary.

There is no explicit verbal characterization of Athaliah either from the Narrative Voice or from any other character. There is a sort of mystery surrounding Athaliah. Her reaction at the news of her son's death is confounding (v. 1). It is equally surprising that she pays no attention that one of her grandchildren is spared from her hands (v. 2). Thus the reader finds a gap in the narration, concerning the emotion and knowledge of Athaliah. It is astonishing that she, one of the two major characters in the episode, does not speak often. Athaliah speaks only once, when she cries, "Treason! Treason!" (v. 14). Obviously, it is an expression of shock. She is taken aback by what she witnessed, as she was met with the unexpected. Her expression of emotional outburst in crying out "treason" would indicate that she recognized the coup against her. It is up to the reader to fill the blanks concerning her psychological dispositions, as to whether the realization of the coup was an utter shock to her or whether she suspected it to have been making rounds in the palace and in the temple for quite some time and now

²⁴⁹ Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 1031. Haug translates the name as "YHWH manifested his grandeur (loftiness)". Cf. Hellmut Haug 2002: 60. Rechenmacher understands the meaning of the name as "YHWH is exalted". Cf. Hans Rechenmacher 2012: 127.

realized it as being executed. It would mean, either she trusted Jehoiada, or she was too complacent that there was no threat to her and her reign, or both. The reader knows nothing about the importance given to Jehoiada under the regime of Athaliah and of the confidence placed on him by her.

The actions of Athaliah speak louder than her words. She could be defined as a person of few words and of heavy actions. At the same time, she seems to be a bundle of paradoxes. At the death of her son, she does not utter a word of sorrow, but acts swiftly with the massacre of the children. Facing her own death, she cries that it was a conspiracy, but does not act at all. She neither calls for help, nor attempts to escape the situation. The reader understands that she was certain that there was no way out, presuming that the most of the people in the palace were involved in the conspiracy. By not entering into the discussion of morality involved in her actions, she is presented as a woman of strong will. She was bold enough to carry out the reign for six years, amidst seeming oppositions.

4.1.4.5.3 The Characterization of Jehosheba

Like most characters in the episode, Jehosheba²⁵⁰ does not utter any word, but plays a key role in saving the life of Joash the baby (v. 2). Only through this action, she is presented as a brave woman in the palace, who secretly goes against the plan of Athaliah. Though her act is laudable, there are a few gaps to be filled. The questions such as: why Joash and why Joash alone? Was it not possible to save other children of the royal family? How could she manage to keep him and his wet-nurse under hiding for six long years? What is her relationship with Jehoiada? The narration leaves several gaps in this regard. And so the reader should be active in order to produce the meaning of the scene. The solution offered by 2 Chr 22:11 that Jehosheba was the wife of Jehoiada can be considered here. One could think of other possibilities, such as, Joash was a favourite nephew of Jehosheba or the idea came from the wet-nurse to hide child with her in the temple. It is clear that there was a strong nexus and partnership between Jehoiada, Jehosheba and the wet-nurse. However, the extent of the partnership cannot be ascertained.

4.1.4.5.4 The Characterization of the Wet-nurse

Like Jehosheba, the wet-nurse is involved in the brave act of rescuing the baby Joash. She is involved in the risk that might incur death. No dialogue is assigned

²⁵⁰ The name Jehosheba means “YHWH is abundance”. Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 449.

to her in the narration. Though she is involved in the act of saving Joash, the narration presents it as a passive role, as someone who cannot make a decision of her own. However, the mention of the wet-nurse in 2 Kings 11 highlights Joash's state of infancy at the time of catastrophe.

4.1.4.5.5 The Characterization Centurions of the Carer and the Runners

The centurion and the head of the guards are supposed to be playing important roles with the security of the king/queen, both during the war and otherwise. The reader has to fill in some gaps in the context of the soldiers taking the side of the conspiring priest (v. 9) against the queen and might arrive at a few possible circumstances: (a) they did it under the threat of the priest, presuming that he held a great deal of influence in the royal family and outside; (b) they, like the priest, were dissatisfied with the rule of Athaliah (c) they were convinced that the death of Athaliah is imperative to peace in the nation.

The reader receives no help from the text to know any definite state of mind and thoughts of the centurion and the guards, as they do not take part in any other conversation. Their mute reception of the commands from the priest might indicate the state of helplessness or of accomplice. In any case, the priest is presented as being more powerful and intelligent than the centurion and the chief of the body guards. V. 11 mentions the Runners separately, who otherwise appear alongside the Carer (v. 4). The only instance of their speaking is, when they hail the newly crowned king, "Long live the king" (v. 12). Their acclamation in one voice tells the reader that either they cooperated with the plan of the priest or at least were happy about it.

4.1.4.5.6 The Characterization of Mattan

Mattan²⁵¹ is introduced as a priest of Baal (v. 18). No other information is to be gained from the text regarding his character. The narration tells us that he lost his life in a flash, immediately after Athaliah was assassinated. That the narrative is so designed to show that his life was the most sought after, second only to Athaliah, speaks of the significant role he might have played during the reign of Athaliah. It might also offer hints towards the secret motives of the conspiring

²⁵¹ Mattan could literally mean "his gift". Cf. Hans Rechenmacher 2012: 165. Mattan, as a priest of Baal becomes the object of the actions that take place in v. 18.

team. His eventual murder but indicates his status of helplessness in the absence of Athaliah.

4.1.4.5.7 The Characterization of the People

The people are abruptly introduced in v. 13, without attributing any specific role to them. They appear in v. 17 as parties of the covenant. In vv. 14, 18–20, there are mentions about “people of the land” who are attributed with certain action. The text does not explain whether they are identical or different. Due to the lack of mention of any attributive motive of the people, a reader may possibly fill the gaps in the following ways: (a) they looked for redemption from the reign of Athaliah; (b) they were looking forward to the rule by Davidic dynasty; (c) they had no other option than taking the side of Jehoiada and express their joy over the change of rule. However, none of the above mentioned possibilities could be concretely established from the text. In any case, it is clear that they apparently showed trust in the words and actions of Jehoiada.

4.1.4.5.8 Protagonist and Antagonists

There are only two lead characters in the episode, namely Athaliah and Jehoiada besides a few minor characters. Who among these two could be called the hero of the plot, will be difficult to answer. Jehoiada occupies a major portion of the narration, even though he is introduced to the reader only in v. 4. His name appears 5 times either alone or with his designation as priest (vv. 4, 9, 15, 17). He is referred to simply as priest without mentioning the name thrice (vv. 10, 15, 18) and in pronoun four times (vv. 4, 5, 12). These occurrences are far more than that of Athaliah whose name is mentioned merely six times (v. 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, 20). There is not even any indirect reference to her in the block in vv. 4–12, in which Jehoiada occupies the central stage. In the next portion which explains the death of Athaliah (vv. 13–16), Jehoiada is portrayed triumphant. In the final block (vv. 17–21), which narrates about the covenant, again Jehoiada plays the pivotal role. Thus, one can notice that the victorious Jehoiada is the protagonist of the episode. He is the hero who throws the antagonist Athaliah to death. Nevertheless, the story is not about the character of Jehoiada. At the end of the narration, he moves to the backdrops. It is Joash who sits on the throne.

From another angle, the entire chapter 2 Kings 11 revolves around a single person Athaliah. She is given greater introduction than Jehoiada. Jehoiada is introduced to the reader just by his profession. His relationship with the royal family is not mentioned by the narrator. It's not even certain that he was the high priest. Though the narrative does not elucidate the heroics of Athaliah, it presents her

as a powerful woman, against whom a conspiracy is designed. The episode ends with her assassination. She is mentioned by name only four times in the narrative and appears only twice in the scene. But the story begins and ends with her. Hence, she is the central point and could be called the antihero of the narrative.

Yet from another perspective, Joash can be seen as the central figure of the narrative. Though his name appears only once (v. 2) in the entire chapter, he is often referred to with the titles such as the son of the king (vv. 4, 12) and the king (vv. 7, 8, 11, 14, 17, 19) and several times in pronoun. Though he does not utter a word, the whole episode sheds its focus on the threat to his life and the rescue from it (vv. 2–3), and his coronation, covenant and enthronement (vv. 12–19). The narrative ends with a positive note after his coronation. Thus, Joash could be also called the protagonist of the narrative.

4.1.4.5.9 Perspectives of the Narrative Voice and of the Characters

The perspective of the Narrative Voice is intriguing, given the fact that it does not present the facts in detail and it does not make clear the motives behind the acts of Athaliah and Jehoiada neither. The absence of any moral commentary and judgement, which is an important topos of the biblical narrative, makes the standpoint of the Narrative Voice highly ambiguous. The text merely reports the success of Jehoiada over Athaliah and of Yahwism over Baalism. It does not however pass any judgement on any of the characters. In doing so, the Narrative Voice demands a judicious reading from the reader in order to know the thrust of the narrative.

Two opposing perspectives can be inferred in this pericope: one is the view of Athaliah and the other is that of Jehoiada, his supporters and guards. In order to understand their perspectives, the reader needs to understand the level of information, their psychological dispositions and their norms of value. Athaliah's act of murdering the entire royal heir is preceded by her reception of information regarding the murder of her son. Nevertheless, her act of massacre cannot be termed 'revenge', even though one cannot exclude the interconnectedness of two successive acts, namely the death of Ahaziah and the killings of all the possible incumbents to his throne. It is not improbable to state that her cruel act was directed in the quest for establishing her own safety. This psychological disposition of hers would form her perspective. In her perspective, she is the rightful occupant of the throne and her dethronement is purely 'treason'.

On the other side, the reader is confronted with the perspective of the side of Jehoiada. Since the narrative lacks a detailed introduction on the character of Jehoiada, the reader has to grasp his personality from the shades of the narration. So it can be imagined that Jehoiada had been witnessing the developments in the kingdom which he was serving at least as a priest. In this view, he was perhaps also a part of the pathetic and helpless witnesses to the massacre led by Athaliah. This experience formed his psychological disposition for revenge and re-establishment of the Davidic dynasty. Another possible thought is regarding the ulterior motive from Jehoiada. His sole aim doesn't seem to be the dethronement of Athaliah, but the destruction of the altars of Baal and the renewal of covenant with Yahweh. It warrants an investigation into his own personal motives in ousting Athaliah. The coup which he carried out in the seventh year after the massacre of the royal children characterizes him as a patient and prudent designer of plans.

Along with these contradictory perspectives, two sets of characters are polarised. Already at the start of the events, the murdering act of Athaliah and saving act of Jehosheba are juxtaposed. While the former is cruel and ruthless, the latter is compassionate and calculative. Later on, the reader is confronted with two characters that stand in opposites. The meticulous planning of Jehoiada stands contrary to the overconfident or underprepared Athaliah. The whole story ends with the death of Athaliah which is justified in the perspective of Jehoiada, but is called treason by Athaliah. Thus, two counter perspectives occupy the entire plot.

4.1.4.6 Real Author and Real Reader

The real author is the physical author responsible for the creation of the narration. He/she exists outside the text and therefore, is text-external. The real author of our text in study cannot be identified with certainty. All the same, the diachronic analysis will show that we need to accept the hand of various authors/redactors, as the text is embedded with several narrative works. The contribution of the priestly and deuteronomistic redactors to the final text will be shown based on the elements of the text which correspond to these redactors. In the same way, the real readers too vary depending upon the various aspects and their significance in the narrative.

4.1.4.7 Implied Author and Implied Reader

The narrative is in third person and it would imply that the narrator is not part of the events taking place. The motive of the text in terms of the reestablishment of

the Davidic dynasty gives some hints regarding the implied author. Besides it, the cultic reformation might indirectly point to the self-identification of the author. The narrator has interest in delivering instructions and details without offering explanations for his acts.

The text establishes a strong bond between the implied author and the implied reader through the chronological sequences within the narration and dramatic descriptions. There is a lack of clarity, when it comes to matters that evoke an incident. The motive of certain actions is not directly cited. The description of the location in the palace and the temple reveal some aspects of the implied reader. It takes for granted the knowledge of the implied reader about the structure of the temple at Jerusalem.

The author has a particular style of writing, for example, using two or more verbs continuously. His presentation of the narrative is orderly and logical. He places the narrative against the larger context of the two kingdoms. The intention behind the text seems to be validation of Davidic dynasty. The dethronement of Athaliah who does not have her roots in Davidic ancestry, and the reference to the spear and shields of David give indications to the reader of this hypothesis. Some of the incidents resemble the older biblical narratives like the rescue of infant Moses, the role of Nathan in the coronation of Solomon etc. The author does not leave any note indicating the place and time of writing.

4.1.4.8 Reliability

There is no explicit mention of reliability in the narration. The narrator does not offer any attestation for reliability. But its reliability is to be further verified from the coherence and inner harmony of the text. There is no sign of limitation of the knowledge of the narrator. The way the plan and execution of it by Jehoiada is reported, in fact shows that the narrator has an overall knowledge of the incidents. There is no sign of distortion of the real events. The value system represented by the extradiegetic narrator here does not give any traces for unreliability.

4.2 A Synchronic Reading in Detail

4.2.1 Delimitation of the Pericope

2 Kings 11 is often read as part and continuity of 2 King 9–10 as though 2 Kings 9–11 form a narrative unity. As a narrative, it appears to demonstrate continuity from 2 Kings 9–10, even though it is a separate unit that treats the Judean history, while its preceding chapters deal with the Israelite history.

Barré argues that behind our present biblical text, there is an original story about the destruction of the house of Ahab both in the North and South.

“Two Omrides, Athaliah and Jehoram, are removed from power. Finally, not only do the parallel literary structures of chapters 9–10 and chapter 11 provide evidence of common authorship, but also one can perceive a calculated attempt to contrast the characteristics of the Northern and Southern coups. Thus, the attempt to deny the ostensive continuity of 2 Kings 9–11 is not justified.”²⁵²

Jerome T. Walsh echoes similar thoughts and suggests that 9:14–11:20 is a coherent form and a symmetrical literary unit, and besides the removal of Ahab’s house in both the kingdoms, it focuses on the elimination of Baalism, introduced by Ahab and his family.²⁵³ A closer reading would but reveal that 2 Kings 9:14–11:20 contains two relatively long stories, namely, the coup of Jehu in the Northern kingdom and the usurpation of Athaliah in the Southern kingdom. Both must have been purely independent stories, as they contain no direct relation to each other. Eißfeldt observes a lack of unity between these two texts and opines that they have been delivered from the Northern and Southern traditions respectively.²⁵⁴ But Hoffmann favours to treat these chapters as a thematically unified account of traditions of religious reform by the Deuteronomists.²⁵⁵ As we will see later, 2 Kings 11 was not originally a part of the preceding two chapters, and both the blocks probably originate from two different sources, which were later brought together by some redactors.

²⁵² Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 8.

²⁵³ Walsh reads the major themes of the section as placed under three blocks: 3:1–8:6 (Miracle stories of Elisha), 8:7–9:13 (changes of rulers in several kingdoms) and 9:14–11:20 (destruction of the house of Ahab and of Baalism). And there are several subunits in these stories. These subunits bridge the gap between 2 Kings 9–10 and 11. Cf. Jerome T. Walsh. *CBQ* 72 (2010) 241 and 246–47. It is to be noted that these texts would form perhaps a thematic unity, but the plot is entirely different.

²⁵⁴ Eißfeldt states that 2 Kings 11 must have been an extract from a bigger portion whose parts are integrated within 2 Kings 9–10, especially the reports of the death of Ahaziah. Cf. Otto Eißfeldt 1922: 559.

²⁵⁵ Hoffmann looks at 2 Kings 11:1 not merely as a start to the narration in 2 Kings 11, but presupposes the already existing text in 2 Kings 9. He sees no differences of sources, but of transmissions of traditions. In the oral tradition rescuing the child who should occupy the throne from the murderous grandmother, a religious interest stands as the focal point and not political interest. The theme revolves around the priest Jehoiada who fights against the cult of Baal and its proponents. Cf. Hans-Detlef Hoffmann 1980: 111. See also Mark A. O’Brien 1989: 218.

As already noted, 2 Kings 11 is all about the Southern kingdom and it has no reference to the Northern Israel. 2 Kings 11 contains two coups, different from the one carried out by Jehu. Moreover, the fall of the house of Ahab could be directly related to the prophetic oracles of Elijah, while the same cannot be said as regards the coup against Athaliah. Ahaziah is the lone link to the narrative in 2 Kings 9–11. Athaliah cannot be linked to the northern narrative, even though she is related to the Northern kingdom.

Several biblical scholars²⁵⁶ treat 2 Kings 11 as a single unit and notice the hand of the Deuteronomists. From a literary perspective, too, 2 Kings 11 has a clear delimitation. 2 Kings 10:34–36 provides a conclusion to the Jehu narrative and it deals purely with Israel. 2 Kings 11 on the contrary deals with Athaliah and Joash and thereby with Judah. This narrative comes to an endpoint in 2 Kings 11:19–20. And 2 Kings 12:1 which contains the royal formula signals the beginning of a new narration and is concerned about the reign of Joash. Thus 2 Kings 11 is single literary unit.

11:1 *When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring.*

4.2.2 Characterization of Athaliah and Ahaziah in v. 1

Athaliah's act of bloodshed is reported to have been directly carried out by her. As queen mother, she only needed to deliver commands to the soldiers who would normally complete the task that she intended. But the narrator presents as if she has done it all by her own even though the reader would understand that she had the army by her side. Such type of expression would attach a strong responsibility on Athaliah for the barbarous act. The text vividly portrays that she was utterly ruthless. But whether she is an evil woman or a reasonable and sensible queen mother is not clearly known to the reader. The answer is still open at this stage. There are also other possibilities of reading, for example, Athaliah knew what should be done.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 475–76. Cogan and Tadmor would treat 2 Kings 11 as a single source and the author of Kings as an adherent of the Deuteronomistic school. Cf. M. Cogan and H. Tadmor 1988: 132; B. O. Long, too, reads 2 Kings 11 as a unified work of formal and thematic unity with a clear structure and plot. Cf. Burke O. Long 1991: 147. See also Patricia Dutcher-Walls 1996: 24–25.

The question one would here raise is: was Athaliah depressive, cunning and revengeful? The narrative reports the reader about Athaliah hearing the death news of her son and her reaction to it in a single verse. The hurriedness in the narrative offers hints on her psychological disposition. The reaction of Athaliah at this juncture is totally unexpected and uncalled for. Pain, sorrow and distress are expected from her, at the loss of her husband and her son in a short span of time. The reader would normally expect her to mourn for a while, take over the rule as a regent and then take revenge for the cruel death of her son. The actual revenge should have been directed towards Jehu, the murderer of her brother and son. But the victims here are the innocent children in the royal family, for she murders all the royal offspring, the potential successors to her son Ahaziah. This massacre of the royal offspring can neither be termed a revenge, nor in any way be justified.

The reader finds no apparent connection between the seeming cause and the effect, i.e., between the death of Ahaziah and the heinous reaction of Athaliah. One might even think that she was undergoing a constant struggle between life and death. She had to live as a foreign queen in Judah. After the death of her husband, the feeling of insecurity might have gotten intensified, which aggravated probably at the death of her son. It raises the question: Was she waiting for an opportunity to rule the country? Did she think, taking over the rule is an appropriate solution for her security concerns? The narrator does not specify a motive for the act of Athaliah. This absence of motive would enable the reader to explore the possible intentions and would demand from the reader a more active role in the process of decoding.²⁵⁷

4.2.3 Focalization in v. 1

The scenario in v. 1 is presented through the eye of Athaliah, and therefore she becomes the focalizing subject. Though she was not present at the time of the death of her son, the happening is presented through her perspective. She does not utter any word and hence her emotion is not immediately made known to the reader. Her quick actions, however, lead the reader to grasp them quickly. This literary device helps the reader understand the intensity of uncertainty Athaliah

²⁵⁷ The reader's effort in discovering the narrative's secrets would enhance his or her identification with the narrative. "The inclusion of the reader in the process of decoding the narrative makes him or her an active reader or even a reader who creates texts." Jonathan Grossman 2011: 1-2.

experienced at the loss of her son. This focalization of Athaliah leads to an action that she goes on to kill the descendants of her Son Ahaziah.

4.2.4 Intention and Causality

Narrating is commonly understood in terms of the intention of the narrator, in narrating particular events. Every narrative act and even the sequence of its presentation would have an intention. In order to get into the intention of the author, it is also important to get to know the intention of the character, which offers a link to it.²⁵⁸ In v. 1, the intention of Athaliah in murdering her grandchildren is not evident; therefore the link to the intention of the author is also missing. But what happens here is a kind of causality, one event following another. But the relation of causality²⁵⁹ between these events can only be inferred from the sequence of events. The entire event actually begins to unfold from the murder of Ahaziah at the hands of Jehu (2 Kings 9:27–28). As stated above, surprisingly Athaliah pays no attention to the act of her son's murder, causes and the murderer. The reader concludes that though one event follows another, there is no logical link to it.

2 Kings 11 is analysed here in detail and a possible understanding of the end text is offered. It focusses the end text on the one hand in relation to its canonical context and on the other hand with the perspective of the fictive fable enriched with historical information, which was possibly und partly a part of known text history. In the process, several authors representing different positions are referred to.

4.2.5 Massacre of the Children

The mention of Athaliah's name in v. 1 forces the reader to retrieve the events narrated in the previous chapters. She was already introduced to the readers in 2 Kings 8:18, 26. And the reader is also reminded of the reports of the destruction of the house of Ahab in Israel and the purge of the Baalistic cult (2 Kings 9:14–10:31). In addition to this, the previous texts, evaluating the roles of Jehoram and Ahaziah, in a way shed negative light on the characterization of Athaliah. Both

²⁵⁸ Cf. Jon-K Adams 1996: 143.

²⁵⁹ Causality of events is often derived from experience, that one type of event follows a particular type of event. Succession and continuity are part of causality, but not sufficient to explain causal relationship. Causal relationship could be predictive. It could be also in the level of inference. Ibid. 130–32.

of them walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, namely, the house of Ahab and not in the ways of the Lord.²⁶⁰ Evil is attributed to Athaliah already through the origin of her birth and to others due to her marital relation.

The verbal clauses in v. 1b indicate that the pericope takes a forward movement, indicating some future drastic events. Hobbs suggests that the combination of the verb קום (to rise or to proceed) with the verb הלך (to go) denotes preparation of action in some military contexts as in 2 Kings 7:12.²⁶¹ It would mean that Athaliah wasted no time in destroying the royal offspring. Nevertheless, the text does not focus on urgency, but a distinct intention to rule.

The plain meaning of the text would suggest that Athaliah wanted to become the ruler. No other inner motive is vividly presented, other than sitting on the royal throne. Therefore, the verb קום has to be figuratively understood: she rose and carried out an insurrection which would consequentially make her the lone ruler and regent, while all other possible candidates lay dead. We are, however, not sure whether she had been waiting for an opportunity or it was a spontaneous decision in the given circumstances. It is obvious that she did not want anyone else to become the successor to Ahaziah, her son, and intended to make sure that no competitor was left alive.

Athaliah's assumption to throne could be also ascribed as an attempt of desperation and insanity. Her insurrection occasioned with the destruction of the royal family of her brother in the North, which included her son, the reigning king of the South.²⁶² Athaliah's taking over the reign can be seen as an act of necessity as well.²⁶³ Jehu had eliminated the entire royal family of Ahab, bar Athaliah. The

²⁶⁰ Dutcher-Walls observes that the explanatory clause כִּי in both the regnal formulas attributes the source of evil to the marriage alliance with the North, as Jehoram married Athaliah, the princess of Israel. Cf. Patricia Dutcher-Walls 1996: 28. Taking a clue from the Chronicler's account (2 Chr 21:2–4), Bright speculates whether Jehoram's slaughter of his brothers and their partisans was prompted by his wife Athaliah. If this speculation were true, then the infanticide carried out by her is already foreshadowed in the previous slaughter. Cf. John Bright 1960: 249.

²⁶¹ T.R. Hobbs 1985: 138. The consecutive imperfect of the verb קום as an auxiliary to another consecutive imperfect could be also translated as 'she began to destroy' indicating an incipient action. Cf. Burke O. Long. 2 Kings 1991: 148. It could mean: 'she quickly destroyed' indicating a quick action. Cf. Patricia Dutcher-Walls 1996: 29.

²⁶² Cf. Zafirra Ben-Barak 1994: 177.

²⁶³ Reviv argues that Athaliah never usurped the throne, rather she put to death the false claimants to the throne and entrusted the young Joash to the custody of Jehosheba and became a queen-regent. The text which we have today is distorted by those who hated her because she was a foreign queen. Cf. H. Reviv. Beth Mikra 47 (1970/71) 541f. Cited in:

carnage has affected the royal family of Judah, too. Therefore, it was the need of the time that an experienced member of the family takes up the rule in the absence of any major male member. It is possible that she killed all the surviving infants, so as to eliminate all possible rivalry in the form of a new queen mother. Regardless of her intention, the murder of infants is inexplicably cruel and uncalled for.

If we take into consideration the reports of 2 Kings 9:27; 10:13–14; and 2 Chr 21:4, concerning the slaughter by Jehu, then there won't be many candidates left to ascend to the throne after the death of Ahaziah. It poses questions over the masterplan of Athaliah in murdering the remaining heirs to the throne. Ginsberg argues that if Athaliah had to get any member of the family out of her way, it must have been the adult members, which is not the case in the biblical account.²⁶⁴ On the other hand, it should have been important for Athaliah that Joash survived for the sake of her own survival, because, she did not have many surviving relatives since Jehu's revolt. Serge is very reasonable in arguing that Athaliah had some dynastic legitimacy to rule after her son.²⁶⁵ V. 1 signals what Athaliah willed, namely, כל זרע – to kill all the royal offspring; and v. 2 signals what actually happened ותגנב...ותקח – but Joash was stolen. This contrast expresses the need for legitimacy in the rule of Athaliah. However, she continued to rule as it was believed that all the descendants of Ahaziah were dead. In such a scenario, Joash became the key figure for a coup. Without him, the coup could not have gathered strength among the military and the populace. It suggests the

Tomoo Ishida 1977: 160. Such an interpretation can only be a hypothesis without any textual basis. Hayes and Hooker are right in assessing that Athaliah preserved the integrity of the Judean throne, regardless of a possible Jehu's intention to annex Judah with Israel. They also notice a strong connect between Judah and Tyre, to which Athaliah could appeal. John H. Hayes and Paul Hooker 1988: 43. Apparently, Jehu felt that he would not securely rule Israel, if Ahaziah was left alive. Therefore, he went after the fleeing Ahaziah and killed him. "It would seem that already he had his eyes upon Judah as virtually a part of his prospective domain." Edward Day. JTS 11 (1909) 78.

²⁶⁴ Ginsberg is of the opinion that the tradition of Athaliah's murderous act probably originated due to the confusion with several slaughters of those years. As an outsider and woman, one cannot survive in the kingdom after having massacred the royal offspring. Ginsberg 1965: 92.

²⁶⁵ It is likely that she left Joash unharmed with the intention of crowning him at a later stage or letting him sit on the throne after her death. Cf. Omer Sergi 2015: 109. Fritz suggests that the hiding of Joash was historical, but it was probably due to the fear for Jehu who killed all male members of the royal family. Cf. Volkmar Fritz 1998: 62.

possibility that 2 Kings 11 is a legitimating narrative for a usurper, in order to portray him as a descendant of David.

The Davidic dynasty had 21 rulers and can boast of its longevity, even though there were attempts to usurpation at different points of time.²⁶⁶ The only discontinuity came in the form of Athaliah's reign for six years. There is no clear ground for a premeditated plan of complete annihilation of the dynasty. Evidently her husband and son belong to the Davidic dynasty. In fact, Jehoram and his descendants are related to the Omrides by consanguinity (2 Kings 8:18). The biblical text does not report of any attempt to kill Ahaziah in the past. If her intentions were so, she should have fostered someone from the Northern family in Jerusalem or should have adopted someone else, so that the Davidic dynasty would have been replaced by another. The biblical author is silent about her attempts to perpetuate another dynasty.

11:2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, the sister of Ahaziah took Joash, the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the sons of the king, who were put to death, him and his wet-nurse in the bedchamber and they hid him from Athaliahu and he was not killed.

4.2.6 Characterization of Jehosheba, Joram, Ahaziah and Joash in v. 2

V. 2 speaks of four characters of which two are referral points and two are real characters in this Act. King Joram is mentioned in relation to his daughter Jehosheba. Joram means YHWH is exalted.²⁶⁷ The meaning of the name does not offer any hint in interpretation. In the same way, Ahaziah finds a mention here, whose sister is Jehosheba. The Hebrew name Ahaziah means "held by YHWH" has protectively struck.²⁶⁸ Jehosheba plays the role of the protagonist in this verse. Although hers is a cameo role, it is very crucial for the plot. This

²⁶⁶ Lamb recons the divine promise as one of the factors contributing to longevity of the dynasty. He argues that the potential usurpers would be reluctant to conspire against the dynasty which enjoyed a divine mandate to rule. In his opinion, there might have been an earlier source regarding divine promise to David already at the time of kings, which Dtr used in his work. Cf. David Lamb 2007: 218. The Judean kings Joash, Amaziah and Amon were victims of conspiracy, but then they were succeeded by someone from the Davidic dynasty, keeping the continuity of the dynasty intact. 2 Kings 12:21; 14:19–21; 21:24.

²⁶⁷ Cf. Hellmut Haug 2002: 206.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 36.

verse places Jehosheba as the counterpart of Athaliah of the previous verse. She is portrayed as the one who saves the life of baby Joash, who would inherit the throne in the days to come. In the context of the saving act of Jehosheba, the failure of Athaliah to notice that Joash was not among the dead, is perplexing.

4.2.7 The Wet-nurse in v. 2

From the Bible we get a scant idea about the role of wet-nurses in the biblical times. Deborah was a wet-nurse to Rebekah (Gen 35:8). Jochabed, the mother of Moses, was employed as wet-nurse to her own son (Ex 2:7–9). 2 Kings 11: 2 is the only place in DtrH where the Hebrew word מִיִּנְקָה for wet-nurse appears. All these references do not offer any clear description about the social life of the wet-nurses. Employment of wet-nurses was not a rarity in the ANE and in Egypt. Wet-nurses are generally assumed to have been women of lower classes or slaves. Employing wet-nurses could have been a strategy to maximise fertility. Some of them lived in the palace in order to facilitate better care of the child and even to educate it. They received ration from the palace, even after they could no longer perform their function.²⁶⁹ The relationship of the wet-nurse continued even after the child passed its childhood. And if the child became king, the woman and her immediate male relatives enjoyed special status. Then the wet-nurse would be freed from domestic tasks. In some instances, the names of the wet-nurses are mentioned at the tomb of the deceased king in Egypt.²⁷⁰ In 2 Kings 11 the wet-nurse is treated as a minor character, whose name is not mentioned. From the sociological point of view, the mention of the wet-nurse reminds the reader of the special status, these women enjoyed in the society, especially if they are related to the royal house.

V. 2 also marks a change in perspective. Athaliah is no more the focus, but the side of Joram gains significance. It is done by relating Jehosheba with Joram and Ahaziah, and not with Athaliah, even though Athaliah is the subject of the previous verse.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Jennie Ebeling 2010: 119.

²⁷⁰ Cf. Mercedes L. García Bachmann 2013: 257–58.

4.2.8 Characterization of Jehosheba in v.2

Against the murderous acts of one woman, another woman of the royal family performs a rescue act. Jehosheba²⁷¹ is introduced as the daughter of Jehoram and the sister of the just deceased king Ahaziah. The text is silent about the relationship of Jehosheba with Athaliah. It would mean that the text tries to establish the Davidic roots of Jehosheba, but distances her from Athaliah, regardless of a thinkable relatedness through consanguinity. She is the only active descendant of Jehoram other than Joash. Her active participation in the rescue act indicates that the female members of the family were not in danger from Athaliah. By merely mentioning the role of Jehosheba, which is very crucial to the plot, not revealing further details, the biblical text leaves several questions unanswered. The Chronicles states that Jehosheba was the wife of Jehoiada (2 Chr 22:11) which in a way would justify her accessibility to the temple.²⁷² However, 2 Kings 11:1–3 does not say anything about Jehoiada in the rescue act of Joash from the massacre, just as Jehosheba is not mentioned in the later stages of narration concerning the coup against Athaliah.

4.2.9 Information concerning Joash in v. 2

Joash, the sole surviving male descendant of David, plays only a passive role in our pericope. He was taken from the bedroom in the house of the king, where the other princes were murdered and was kept in the bedchamber in the house of YHWH. Dutcher-Walls notes a pair of analogues here: The house of the king and the house of YHWH stand in analogue. Similarly the Omride survivor (Athaliah) and the Davidic survivor (Joash) stand as parallels.²⁷³ Soon the reader

²⁷¹ Camp suggests that Jehosheba being a royal daughter probably occupied a remarkable position in the temple, which was not given due importance during the reign of Athaliah. It is not clear, whether she enjoyed an independent position in the temple or only had an attached power due to her husband Jehoiada, as reported by the Chronicler. Cf. Claudia Camp 1992: 111. The name of Jehosheba recalls Jehoshaphat, the last righteous king of Judah, who, too, was associated with Ahab's family. Cf. Steven McKenzie 2019: 429.

²⁷² Schulte makes an interesting hypothesis that Jehosheba was probably one of consecrated women who lived in the temple precincts. 2 Kings 23:7 speaks of women who did weaving for Asherah. The Mesopotamian culture attests that some royal and elite women were part of a high ranked consecrated circle in the temple. Schulte suggests that Jehosheba belonged to this group, which grounds her living in the temple area where she hid Joash. Cf. Hannelis Schulte. ZAW 109 (1997) 553–55.

²⁷³ Cf. Patricia Dutcher-Walls 1996: 32–33. Solvang sees the act of Jehosheba, the royal daughter fleeing with Joash the only surviving male member of the Davidic house to the house of Yahweh as the first step in re-establishing the house of Judah in place of the house of Ahab. Cf. Elna Solvang 2003: 162.

would experience a transition of importance from the house of the king to the house of YHWH, as the temple would be renovated and the regime would be removed from Athaliah and be handed over to Joash.

The biblical text has some gaps. For example, there is no special reason attributed to the rescue of Joash alone. One could imagine a certain political situation in the backdrop. Branch attributes the intention of acquiring a modicum of safety, as Joash's mother Zibiah hailed from Beersheba (2 Kings 12:1), which lay about 40 miles south of Jerusalem. It is based on the assumption that the people of the land extended their support to the queen mothers, based on the region of their origin.²⁷⁴ But Joash is not saved by the people of the land or by his own mother, but by his aunt. The text leaves it open whether the mother of Joash was alive or not, at the time of the death of Ahaziah.

Though the possibility of existence of political rivalry between the wives of the king cannot be ruled out, this rivalry cannot be attributed to the rescuing of Joash alone. We have no idea about the mother of Jehosheba in order to explore her maternal roots. In this context, the understanding about כָּל-יָרֵעַ הֵמֶמְלָכָה in v. 1 is very important. The text does not state whether Ahaziah or Joash had remaining siblings, after the 70 sons of Ahab had been killed (2 Kings 10:7) and the 42 kins of Ahaziah were slaughtered (2 Kings 10:14) at the commission of Jehu. Our text does not give such details, but expresses Athaliah's intention to annihilate the royal offspring. There are opposing views regarding the roots of Joash. It is debatable to say that he was genuinely a descendent of David.²⁷⁵ But the biblical

²⁷⁴ Branch sees the choice of Joash as an indication of the inherent rivalry of co-wives and their offspring and struggle over the throne's succession. Cf. Robin Gallaher Branch. *Skriflig* 38 (2004) 545. Such a pre-calculated might not be possible at the time of sudden assault by Athaliah. The Targum adds the information about his mother. Cf. Claudia Camp 1992: 111. We are not sure, whether Zibiah also was killed during the coup. An indication to her death is that it was Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, who saved the child Joash and not his mother Zibiah. Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 344.

²⁷⁵ Cf. E. Theodore Mullen 1993: 23. Liverani presents the hypothesis that Jehoiada re-worked on the facts according to a well-known story in order to prove the legitimacy of Joash. Cf. Mario Liverani 2004: 158–59. Jehosheba and Jehoiada are the only witnesses who can authenticate the parental roots of Joash. Jehosheba lost almost her entire family in Athaliah's purge. It is natural that Jehoiada, the priest, would have wanted a ruler who would adhere and support Yahwism. The lack of legitimate claim from the part of Athaliah would make things easier to look for a legitimate ruler. All these things would cause doubts regarding the authenticity on a Davidic descendant. Cf. J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes 1986: 304.

account does not offer any clues to justify this suspicion. Joash stands as the symbol of Davidic dynasty which continues through his survival.

11:3 *And he was with her in the house of YHWH hiding himself for six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land.*

The young Joash becomes the subject of this verse. It is clear to the reader that he is under the custody and care of Jehosheba and of the wet-nurse. But making him the main subject indicates the importance attributed to him by the narrator and the significant role he might take up in the future.

This statement bridges two successive events, namely the rash reaction of Athaliah and ploy of Jehoiada. The duration of six years is mentioned in just one sentence. The narrative does not provide the reader with any of the incidents which took place during this long period. The narrative does not evaluate the rule of Athaliah either. It might indicate that the author is not very much interested in the details of the rule of Athaliah, her abilities, her popularity and acceptability among the people of the land. The narrator is not even interested in the status of the rule, like, whether her rule found favour with the Lord. It leaves an impression that the evaluation of the rule of Athaliah is not the focus of the narrative.

4.2.10 Bedchamber in the temple

When we read v. 3 in relation to v. 2, we get the meaning, Jehosheba and the wet-nurse hid Joash in the bedchamber (v. 2) in the temple for six years (v. 3). The possible location of the bedchamber is disputed among the scholars. Some understand the location of the bedchamber to be the dormitory of the priests within the temple premises.²⁷⁶ However, no temple bedroom is documented in the Bible. In this context, the mention of the house of YHWH gains importance. Sweeney sees the act of hiding in relation to the person of Athaliah, who, in his

²⁷⁶ Cf. James Montgomery 1951: 419. T.R. Hobbs 1985: 138. From Josephus we learn that it was the chamber which stored the beds and couches. Cf. Josephus, Antiquities IX.7.1. The penthouse where the priests used to retire was preferred by the medieval commentators, as it receives support from the Chronicles. Mordechai Cogen and Hayim Tadmor 1988: 126. Rehm believes that the bedchambers mentioned here must have been one of the bedrooms in Jehosheba's house which has to be located within the temple precinct. Martin Rehm 1982: 115. Handy suggests that the bedchamber is the clue to authenticate the later coronation of Joash. This argument considers Samuel who other than Joash is the only biblical child who lived in the temple areas. Cf. Lowell Handy. Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies Proceedings 8 (1988) 161. Cited in: Elna Solvang 2003: 161.

opinion, would not get into the temple in Jerusalem as she was a foreigner. This would make the temple a safe place for Joash and his wet-nurse.²⁷⁷ Even though we are not sure of the proximity between the temple and the palace and of the accessibility of the types of personnel to the temple at that time, it could be considered that the temple premises could have been a safer area, where Athaliah had no reason for surveillance. The involvement of Jehoiada at this point is not reported in the text. All the same, accommodating Joash in the bedchamber would have not been possible without the assistance of the priests. Therefore, it is probable that Joash was brought up under surveillance of the priests.

4.2.11 Athaliah – a Ruler of Judah

Athaliah ruled over Judah after the sudden demise of her son. She was a ruler with her own right. But some of the common elements traced in the reports of the kings of Judah are found wanting in the Athaliah-narrative, like, the year of accession to throne, her age at that time, the names of her parents, a judgement on her rule, the report of the burial, major activities during the reign, and original sources. There is no indication of the presence of any prophet or man of God during her time as ruler, other than Jehoiada the priest. In addition to this, the death notice of Ahaziah does not mention the name of his successor Athaliah (2 Kings 9:28). Particularly important is the lack of regnal formula for Athaliah which should have contained some of the above mentioned vital elements.

4.2.11.1 Lack of Regnal Formula

The biblical report of Athaliah, who ruled over Judah for six years, is deprived of a regnal formula rendered to the other Judean rulers. Even her predecessor, her son Ahaziah who reigned just a year, is provided with a regnal formula (2 Kings 8:25–27; 9:29).

The biblical text made use of more or less similar formula at the beginning and end of every account pertinent to the history of the divided kingdom. The usual regnal formula includes the chronistic synchronization of dates for the two kingdoms and notes on the ways of the king and his reign. 2 Kings 3–11 contains some exceptions to this pattern. The narration of Jehoram of Israel has an opening formula (2 Kg 3:1–3), but doesn't have a closing formula (2 Kg 9:21–26). The narration of Jehoram of Judah has both standard formulas (8:16–24), while his successor Ahaziah is given only an opening formula (8:25). Ahaziah of Judah

²⁷⁷ Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 345.

and Jehoram of Israel died at the same attack and both their accounts are without a closing formula (9:27). Jehu of Israel has a closing formula (10:34–36), although the opening formula is wanting. Athaliah has neither of these standard formulas.²⁷⁸ Although there is a notable inconsistency in the regnal formula in 2 Kings 3–11, Athaliah is the only ruler fully devoid of any formula.

It is also usual that the name of the mother is mentioned in the introductory formula of the Judean kings.²⁷⁹ (1 Kings 14:21; 15:2; 15:10; 22:41; 2 Kings 8:26; 12:1; 14:2; 15:2; 15:33; 18: 2; 21:1; 21:19; 22:1; 23:31; 24:8). Interestingly, in the regnal formulas of Jehoram (2 Kings 8:16–18)²⁸⁰ and later on in that of Ahaz (2 Kings 16:2–3) the name of the mother is not mentioned. Added to this exception, the wife of Jehoram finds a mention in his narration (2 Kings 8:16–18). We know from the later text that his wife was Athaliah. Athaliah by name is rightly mentioned in the regnal formula of her son Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:26). Though she gets her rightful place here, the additional reference to her in the regnal formula of her husband and the denial of her own regnal formula raises questions regarding the motives in the biblical text in the present form. Its absence suggests that Athaliah is denied of the recognition as the rightful ruler.

²⁷⁸ Thiele recons that Athaliah ascended to the throne in 841, the same year that marked the death of Joram of Israel and the accession of Jehu. Cf. Edwin Thiele 1951: 66. R.D. Nelson calls the omission of Athaliah's name from the regnal formula as a major gap in the file structure which prevents the legitimacy of her usurpation in any way. Placing Athaliah's pericope between the closing file of Jehu (2 Kings 10:36) and the opening file of Joash (2 Kings 12:1), the biblical narrator keeps it out of real history. Cf. Richard Nelson. *JSOT* 40 (1988) 44. In the regnal notice of Joash, there is no mention of his father's name. Joash's Davidic ancestry can be derived only from the narrative of Athaliah which also mentions the saving act of Jehosheba. Thus, the Athaliah narrative fills the gap between Ahaziah and Joash, and covers up for the discontinuity between the father and the son. Cf. Elna Solvang 2003: 168. Branch attributes the silence of details about Athaliah's reign to the biblical author's intention of highlighting the illegality of this queen's reign. Cf. Robin Gallaher Branch. *Skriflig* 38 (2004) 545.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Tomoo Ishida 1977: 156. Maacah was the queen mother during the reign of both her son Abijah and her grandson Asa (1 Kings 15:2, 10).

²⁸⁰ There is a suggestion that the evaluation on Jehoram was reworked in accordance of an anti-Omride redaction and therefore the name of the queen mother is omitted. Adam points out that if one considers that Joram of Israel and Jehoram of Judah were actually the same person, then the omission of regnal formula would be quite understandable, just as in the cases of other rulers of the Northern kingdom. Cf. Klaus Peter Adam 2010: 37–38. Cf. Benjamin D. Thomas 2014: 82.

4.2.11.2 Lack of the Title “Queen Mother”

A title associated with the royal women in the ANE is *גְּבִירָה*²⁸¹ which is often translated as queen mother. Many biblical commentators attribute this title to Athaliah, even though it is not attested in the Bible, while it is attached to some other royal women in Judah. We also learn that the office of queen mother was common in the South, whereas it does not find a home in the traditional court life of the North,²⁸² to the exception of Jezebel of Israel, who is but referred to as queen mother by the Southern visitors (2 Kings 10:13). We are also not sure whether every Judahite queen was conferred with the title *גְּבִירָה*. Certainly, Maacah was conferred with this title (1 Kings 15:13). Jeremiah calls the mother of Jehoiachin *גְּבִירָה* (Jer 29:2). Some of the activities of the mothers of the kings seem to suggest that they held important positions. Solomon acknowledged the authority of Bathsheba by allotting a seat for her at his right hand (1 Kings 2:13–25). Later, as Israel fell to Babylonia, Jehoiachin was condemned along with his queen mother as the nation’s rulers subjected to exile (2 Kings 24: 12). The above mentioned examples of literary construction show that the queen mother enjoyed a high status in the kingdoms. One could presume that the title was conferred upon her at the designation of her son as the heir of the king or at his accession to the throne. This title would be retained by her for life.

The concept of *גְּבִירָה* in general obtains support from the neighbouring nations. Queen mothers or queens could occupy the throne in ANE, if there was no male

²⁸¹ Generally the term *גְּבִירָה* is translated as queen mother, meaning, the mother of the king. Smith argues that *גְּבִירָה* could be translated as ‘great lady’, a powerful woman, who does not need to be the mother of the king. Sarah (Gen 16) and the wife of Naaman (2 Kings 5:3) are given this title. It could be a recognition of their power and authority. When a royal woman obtains this title, she had certain authority in her official rank at the royal court. In the accession stories of Solomon and Abijah, their mothers exerted their influence over the royal circle. Cf. Carol Smith 1998: 143–44. Cf. Phyllis A. Bird 1997: 36. Ahlström holds the view that besides the specific function at the royal court, the queen mother had also a cultic function. Cf. Gösta Ahlström 1963: 75. Ackerman believes that the queen mother enjoyed socio-political responsibilities in Ancient Israel, besides her crucial role as cultic functionary, which was fundamental to her role at times of succession. Susan Ackerman. JBL 112 (1993) 388. Ben-Barak is of the view that the mention of the queen mothers in the regnal formulae was only to mark the solemnity and the uninterrupted dynastic continuity in Judah, and that it has been worked by the Deuteronomistic redactor. Cf. Zafira Ben-Barak 1994: 171–72.

²⁸² Of the nineteen queen mothers mentioned in the Bible, Bathsheba belonged to the time of united monarchy, and only Jezebel belonged to the North, and the rest belonged to the South. There is no biblical evidence for Northerners addressing Jezebel with the title *גְּבִירָה*. Cf. Susan Ackerman. JBL 112 (1993) 399.

heir. When there was a male heir who was a minor, then the queen could rule as regent.²⁸³ Sammuramat, wife of Shamshi-Adad V (823–810 BCE) was a Mesopotamian queen mother of Adad-nirari III (810–782 BCE), who became a regent of Assyria on the death of her husband. She ruled for five years in the place of her son Adad-nirari III who was then a minor.²⁸⁴ There are attestations to believe that the queen mothers in the Canaanite tradition served as regents in their sons' courts. It is also vivid that the Israelites adopted several elements from the Canaanites. It is no exception to the role assigned to the Israelite queen mothers.²⁸⁵

The authority of the queen mother, be it a Judean or a foreigner, depended upon her ancestry and the initial terms of her marriage contract. It also determined who would be the chief wife, a title which possessed a superior position in the court. The son of the chief wife had the primary right to succeed the king. After the death of the king and the coronation of her son, the chief wife of the deceased king would obtain her full authority as queen mother. Jezebel could be presented as a typical example for the authority of the queen mother. She was acting as the supervisor above hundreds of prophets and had authority over the elders (1 Kings 16:31–32; 18:19; 19:1–3; 21:7–16).²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Cf. Hennie J. Marsman 2003: 369.

²⁸⁴ Interestingly, little is known about her five years rule, just like the six years rule of Athaliah. She did not call herself 'Queen of Assyria', but only 'royal wife of Shamshi-Adad', and thereby stressing her role as regent. Cf. Moshe Weinfeld 1991: 99–103. See also Hennie J. Marsman 2003: 347. The archives found at the Late Bronze Age city-state of Ugarit (ca. 1550–1200 BCE) show that the Ugarit queen mothers wielded economic power, which the other women in general were deprived of. The queen mothers could possess land and other properties. They could have administrative personnel under them. A vast political power was ascribed to the Ugarit queen mothers. This has been attested by the documents from the Ugarit kings. Cf. Susan Ackerman 1998: 133–34. Several letters of the king to the mother are concerning political and administrative issues. The pertinent texts are U.V. No. 159–61 – the queen mother possessed land property and was able to buy lands; and *KTU* 4.143, and concerning political powers – *KTU* 2.11; 2.12; 2.13; 2.16 etc. Cf. Michael Heltzer 1982: 182–83.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Susan Ackerman. *JBL* 112 (1993) 386–88. Cf. Niels-Erik Andreasen. *CBQ* 45 (1983) 179–94. In Sumerogram the queen is called SAL.LUGAL, which does not however specify whether one was the chief wife of the king or the mother of the king. What is clear is that the mother of the king remained the highest-ranking woman in the kingdom. At her death or in her absence the chief wife of the king is elevated to that status. Cf. Elna Solvang 2003: 17.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Ktziah Spanier 1994: 187. Pippin surmises that Jezebel represents the political and spiritual power behind the throne and her character is reflected in Athaliah. Cf. Tina Pippin 1995: 227.

When we analyse the vocabulary of the biblical text, it suggests that the author does not deny that Athaliah was a ruler, for v. 3 clearly states that she ruled (מְלִכָּה) over the land, although the title “king” or “queen” is not directly attached to her name like other rulers of Judah and Israel. It is significant to note that the Hebrew word for queen מְלִכָּה is not used in the book of Kings in reference to any royal women in Israel or Judah. The only place where it is used is in reference to the Queen of Sheba (מְלִכַת־שָׁבָא 1 Kings 10:1) who was a foreign ruler in her own right. Since there was neither any precedence, nor an instance of a woman-ruler in later period in both the kingdoms, lack of title cannot be attributed to deprivation of royal status. It could be that women rulers were not called “queens” in Ancient Israel. The blatant statement that Athaliah ruled over the land would just mean that Athaliah was the queen in every sense and ruler of Judah.

According to the biblical text, Athaliah took over the reign immediately after the revolt of Jehu. In correlation between these two events, Levin and Mullen see the possibility that Athaliah’s taking over the throne was in view of averting the plan of Jehu consolidating his power also in Judah.²⁸⁷ Such a position would present Athaliah in good light, as the one who attempted to save Judah and the Davidic dynasty from the hands of Jehu. Jehu’s act of murdering the princes of Judah (2 Kings 10:14) should have had its share of impact in the Southern kingdom. But the biblical narrative does not state anything explicitly whether Jehu had any political intention like unifying Israel and Judah or wiping out Omri’s Judean kinship, etc. All the same, it is not a surprise, because 2 Kings 11 is concerned about the happening of the Southern kingdom, and particularly about the survival of the Davidic descendant.

The biblical text does not say anything definite about the quality of the reign of Athaliah, her intentions and the support from the populace.²⁸⁸ From the back-

²⁸⁷ Levin believes that in spite of the opposition from the people of the land, Athaliah had supporters in the royal court and with their help she could succeed to a great extent to eliminate those who opposed her. Cf. Christoph Levin 1982: 85. It was not enough for Jehu to kill Jehoram of Israel in order to destabilise the kingdom and to claim the throne, but he had to kill the queen mother Jezebel, too. Against this context, one can presume that it was imperative for Athaliah to consolidate the kingdom of Judah. Cf. Theodore Mullen Jr. 1993: 30–31. Ackerman presumes that Athaliah shared the responsibility of queen mother and regent after Ahaziah and her regency is portrayed as a failure for scheming to be the ruler permanently. Cf. Susan Ackerman 1998: 138.

²⁸⁸ It is possible that Athaliah depended upon the support of a pro-Israelite group in her attempt to usurp the crown. Probably this group enjoyed the favour of the king and the queen mother. It was opposed by an anti-Israelite conservative group, which had the

ground of ANE, we understand that Athaliah could rightfully rule the kingdom as queen mother after the sudden demise of her son. But the massacre of the royal offspring as reported in 2 Kings 11 presents a perplexing situation.²⁸⁹

It is not fair to say that women were not accorded with the title of a ruler and that women played only a minor role in leading the kingdoms in ANE. We come to know of at least four women who had played crucial roles in their respective kingdoms: Hatshepsut (15th century BCE) of Egypt, Ku-Baba (mid-third millennium BCE), the founder of the third dynasty of Kish in Mesopotamia, Shiptu (18th century BCE) who with her husband Zimri-Lim was active in political matters, and Sammuramat (9th/8th century BCE), who ruled Assyria alongside her son after the death of her husband Shamshi-Adad V. Though these instances were exceptions at that time, these women were recognised as rulers, when the occasion arose.²⁹⁰ The biblical author does not withdraw the title of a ruler based on gender qualification. Queen of Sheba is acknowledged with due title and three women are accredited with the title *גְּבִירָה*. It is denied to Athaliah, probably because she did not fit into the scheme of things envisaged by the biblical author to be a ruler or queen mother in Judah.

support of the priests and the people of the land. It could be assumed that this group consisted of free men, who possessed land in the kingdom and the servants of the royal palace and who desired the Yahweh religion, as opposed to the baalistic religion. Cf. Niels-Erik A. Andreasen. *CBQ* 45 (1983) 190. Camp is probably right in stating that her short term of rule does not necessarily lead one to suspect that she enjoyed the popular support of the folk or she was considered as the legitimate monarch. Cf. Claudia Camp 1998: 110. It is also possible that Athaliah had only a little support and that people were helpless as there was no prophet at that time until the priest took the initiative. It does not however rule out the possibility of a meagre number of loyal people. It is likely that she was not aware of the opposition both within the royal military and outside.

²⁸⁹ “The Southern kingdom ... appears to have been ruled all the time by kings from the Davidic dynasty. So every effort is made to present the reign of Athaliah, Ahab’s daughter, over Judah as illegitimate.” Thomas Römer 2007: 10. “In all likelihood, Athaliah was officially acting in behalf of the rightful king, though she may well have usurped that post and, in any case abused the authority she gained.” David Noel Freedman 1965: 298. Sweeney surmises that lack of regnal form could be because she herself was a usurper, a foreigner and the only woman to have ruled either of the Israelite kingdoms in the monarchic period. Cf. Mervin Sweeney 2007: 342. In a much later period, there was a woman ruler. Salome Alexandra (76–67 BCE) ascended to the throne after the consecutive deaths of her husbands, Aristobulus I (104–103 BCE) and his brother Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE). Cf. Marco Conti 2008: 192.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Theodore Jr. Mullen 1993: 27.

The text, however, does not hesitate to admit that she ruled the land (2 Kings 11:3) and we can also infer from 2 Kings 8:18, 26²⁹¹ that she exerted great influence during the reigns of her husband and son. Notable is the absence of any report of events during six years of Athaliah's rule other than her dethronement. It looks as if it was not of any interest to the author/redactor and he was in a hurry towards the reestablishment and re-legitimization of the Davidic dynasty.

11:4 And in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and took the centurions of the carer and the runners and made them come to him to the house of YHWH and he cut a covenant for them and made them swear in the house of YHWH and let them see the son of the king.

A few significant elements appear in v. 4. The reader learns of Jehoiada for the first time in the narrative in v. 4. And he would be playing significant roles in the events to follow. He is presented as a man who acts systematically. His shrewdness is revealed in the fact that he includes the guards in his plan by placing them under an oath. The place of the covenant is noteworthy, as the house of YHWH offers guarantee for reliability.²⁹² By showing to the guards the legitimate successor to the throne, the degree of trustworthiness is further increased. It shows that Jehoiada does not take the involvement and commitment of the guards for granted. And it reveals the strong character of the person.

The mention of 'seventh' also denotes the age of Joash. It would mean that Jehoiada would be the spokesperson of Joash. In the absence of any direct bond between both of them, the intentions of Jehoiada are to be questioned. It could be a selfless act, motivated by the love for David's dynasty or an act coupled with ambition to be the viceroy of the young Joash. The narrative keeps this a secret, which makes the narration livid.

4.2.12 Absence of Introduction to Jehoiada

Though Jehoiada appears in v. 4 for the first time in the pericope, he is not introduced in the text. However, there is nowhere such an introduction and his name is not listed by the chronicler in the genealogy of the priests in 1 Chr 5:27–41,

²⁹¹ Robker holds that 2 Kings 8:18, 26 go back probably to the Judean source or redaction. Cf. Jonathan Robker 2012: 172.

²⁹² When a covenant is cut in front of YHWH, YHWH becomes the guarantee and witness (1 Sam 23:18; 2 Sam 5:3; 2 Kings 23:3; Jer 34:15,18). The role of the gods as witnesses is also evident in the texts concerning Assurbanipal. Cf. Michael Pietsch 2013: 185.

even though he is called a priest in 2 Chronicles 22–24.²⁹³ Jehoiada appears only in 2 Kings 11–12 and its parallel in 2 Chronicles 22–24. It is also worth questioning his relationship to Joash. Jehoiada seems to be certain of the ancestry of Joash, implying that he knew all the court intricacies of the time. Understandable is also a close relationship between Jehoiada and Jehosheba either familial or by sharing common ideology.

4.2.13 Focalization in v. 4

Jehoiada lets the centurions and guards see the son of the king. There is an enforced focalization here. Though the centurions and the guards become the subjects of focalization, Jehoiada is the one who enables it. The reader sees the little prince only because these subjects of focalization see him. It has also a communicative function of the covenant concerning the authority of Jehoiada, viz., the focalization here brings out explicitly Jehoiada's power to command.

4.2.14 Carers and Runners – כָּרִי and הָרָצִים

The Hebrew word כָּרִי is variously translated, as the information about them is not very distinct.²⁹⁴ The noun *kar*, meaning ram, suggests strength or authority. They could be a class of soldiers between the officers and the foot soldiers.²⁹⁵ They are mentioned alongside pelethites in 2 Sam 8:18, and they played an important role in the succession of Solomon (1 Kings 1:38, 44). In 2 Sam 20:23, they are mentioned as cherethites (הַכְּרֵתִי). Incidentally, there is also a mention of another Jehoiada in the succession of Solomon. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada is one of the crucial characters along with Zadok, the priest, and Nathan, the pro-

²⁹³ 2 Chr 22:11; 23:8, 9, 14; 24:2.

²⁹⁴ Cf. James Montgomery 1951: 419. Smith and Snaith understand the Carites as foreign mercenaries who served as royal bodyguards who accompanied the king when he visited the temple too. Cf. W. Robertson Smith 1894: 245. Cf. Norman Snaith 1954: 247. It is also suggested that it was a folks' name, i.e., foreign soldiers or a troop of bodyguards. Cf. D. Wilhelm Nowack 1900: 246. Martin Rehm 1967: 235. In David's army, there were also foreign mercenaries other than the Carites and Pelethites who were his bodyguards, and whose head was at the disposal of the commander in chief. Cf. Benjamin Mazar 1986:101–102. The Carites are believed to have lived at the west coast of Asia Minor (Herodot 1,28). They seem to have served as bodyguards in the palace of Egypt (Herodot 2,152–154). It is reasonable to believe that they were discharging similar duties of the palace guards (1 Kings 14:27). Cf. Martin Rehm 1982: 115.

²⁹⁵ Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 345. Würthwein notes that the mention of the carer is a later addition, at a time when the political function of the people of the land was unknown. And so the author inserted the carer as key players of the coup. Cf. Ernst Würthwein 1984: 347–48.

phet. It is possible that the similarity of names caused some confusion on the levels of textual criticism. It is clear that in the text, they are treated as a specialised military group.

The expression **הַרְצִיִּים** (the runners) can be understood as royal security guards or royal escorts²⁹⁶ different from the above mentioned **כְּרִי**. They had to escort the king (2 Sam 15:1; 1 Kings 1:5; 14:28); watch over the doorway of the palace (1 Kings 14:27) and always be available as special guards (1 Sam 22:17; 2 Kings 10:25). They are distinguished from the captains (2 Kings 10:25). The runners are to be understood as personal bodyguards and to be differentiated from other guards. In 2 Kings 11, they not only ensure security to the temple, the palace and prince, but also take part in the coronation ceremony of the king.

4.2.15 Covenant and Oath

It was not uncommon that cutting a **בְּרִית** (covenant) was accompanied by **שָׁבַע** (oath). Both these acts are so closely associated, that they could be reaffirmed.²⁹⁷ In 1 Sam 20:16–17, Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David and made David swear by his love for Jonathan. We need to differentiate **בְּרִית** primarily from the covenant with God and secondarily from **שָׁבַע**. In our pericope, we have a combination of a covenant between two human parties in divine presence and an oath. This combination of **בְּרִית** and **שָׁבַע** is not to be understood as double reading, but a covenant, an obligation followed by an oath.

בְּרִית could be used in the context of military cooperation as in 1 Kings 15:16–22, whereby Asa of Judah sends emissary to King Ben-hadad of Aram and requests alliance (v. 9) with him. Summoning the carers and the runners, the royal guards, Jehoiada reveals to them the survival of a legitimate heir to Ahaziah, to whom they should offer their service. One can assume that the guards were loyal to Athaliah for above six years and Jehoiada instructs them to change their loyalty

²⁹⁶ The term is also understood as *Trabant* which was a military term meant for the bodyguards of aristocrats, especially in the Middle Ages. *Trabants* usually travelled on foot and formed the core of household divisions or field troops. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabant_\(military\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabant_(military)).

²⁹⁷ Cf. Timo Veijola 1975: 85. (Ps 89:4, 35–36; 105:9). The same expression is found in Job 31:1, where it means, Job made a promise/resolution to himself not to look at any young woman lustfully. Perlitt points out that **בְּרִית** in 2 Kings 11 does not mean a covenant, but an obligation under oath. Cf. Lothar Perlitt 1969: 262. B.O. Long, too, prefers to understand it as a sworn agreement to secrecy or loyalty rather than a religio-political idea. Cf. Burke O. Long 1991: 148.

to Joash. This is sought under a covenant in the temple. The combination of *קְרִית* and *שָׁבַע* thus means that both parties are bound by the obligation which involves both divine and human elements explicitly.

11:5 *And he commanded them: This is what you should do. One third of you, who come on duty on Sabbath, shall undertake the watch in the house of the king.*

From v. 5 onwards the monologue of Jehoiada occupies the narrative up to v. 8. In the Bible, there are several instances which are presented in dialogical form. But here it is surprising that the centurions and the head of the guards are not given any dialogue. Like in several biblical narratives,²⁹⁸ the narrator avoids the third person narrative but makes it a monologue.

In v. 5, Jehoiada is the major speaking character. He does not merely offer his suggestions to the guards, but rather commands. It is astonishing that instructions are not delivered by the commander in chief, but by Jehoiada. He seems to have taken over the control over the guards. It shows that the entire event revolves around the character called Jehoiada.

4.2.16 Conspiracy against Athaliah

vv. 5–8 illustrate the plan of Jehoiada and v. 9 tells us that the centurions followed his instructions. One can discern two things concerning Jehoiada: (i) as a priest he knows the location very well (ii) he assumes the role of a commander and assigns duties to the centurions and the guards. Thus he is a combination of both a priest and a commander. In fact, the plan consists in stationing the guards in appropriate locations and aims at protecting Joash.

The guards who are on duty are divided into three groups and positioned in three places. The guards who were supposed to be off duty are assigned to take up positions within the temple to guard the king.²⁹⁹ There is no mention about executing Athaliah at this point, though Jehoiada commands to kill anyone who comes inside the rank. Part of the strategy is to lead the coup on the Sabbath.

²⁹⁸ In the opinion of Alter, by presenting narratives in dialogical forms, the biblical writer desires to give only a minimum authorial intrusion, focussing at the same time on a marked thematic direction and moral-psychological depth. Cf. Robert Alter 1981: 86.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Mordechai Cogen and Hayim Tadmor 1988: 127.

4.2.17 Coup on Sabbath

The text indicates that it was customary on שַׁבָּת (Sabbath³⁰⁰) to shift the guards on duty both in the temple and in the palace (vv. 5, 9). It is the only place in the Bible which speaks of change of guards on Sabbath. Regarding the division of guards on other Sabbaths, one can infer from the text that there were two divisions: one coming off duty and the other coming on duty. The text only speaks of the division of guards according to the plan of Jehoiada, which should have been different from other Sabbaths. It, however, suggests a double guard of duty by marking the change of guards at the conclusion of Sabbath. The house of the king seems to have had additional guards on this particular Sabbath. The emphasis placed on Sabbath in the text would indicate some strategic benefits.³⁰¹ The change of guards on Sabbath suggests that a higher number of guards were employed on that day with a specific purpose.

³⁰⁰ Initiated by Meinhold, it is widely believed that in the pre-exilic period, Sabbath was on a full moon day. Hos 2:11; Am 2:5; Is 1:13 and 2 Kings 4:23 attest to this thesis. Sabbath was probably a religious feast which was celebrated by the Israelites all over their land. Besides Sabbath, the new moon day was also considered important in the days of settlement. Sabbath was a day of rest from the agrarian work, nevertheless the donkey and slaves could be used for other works. Cf. Johannes Meinhold. ZAW 29 (1901) 82–84. It was believed that on new moon day/Sabbath, god showered lots of blessings as he was coming closer to the people. And so special cultic worship was done on this day (Is 1:13; Hos 2:13; 2 Kings 4:23). Sabbath was celebrated as family feasts and religious feasts. The feast on full moon and offering on black moon need not be traced back to Cannanites, as it is possible that the Israelites knew it already in their nomadic times. Cf. Johannes Meinhold. FRLANT 5 (1905) 1–5. Cf. Theophile James Meek. JBL 33 (1914) 207. Cf. Corinna Körting (2017) 1–2. Hyatt argues that Sabbath was a unique religious institution which held the seventh day sacred. There were socio-ethical and cultic elements in the seventh day Sabbath. Cf. Philip Hyatt. Encounter 26 (1965) 204. Grund rightly points out that the references to Sabbath in our text do not give any indication to show that they speak of monthly Sabbath. Cf. Alexandra Grund 2011: 89–90. The change of guards mentioned in 2 Kings 11:9 clearly suggests a weekly Sabbath, which is surely a later understanding. But the above mentioned biblical attestations show that Sabbath was initially on full moon days. Probably, it underwent a change in Israel after the fall of Jerusalem.

³⁰¹ Curtis opines that Jehoiada chooses an apt time, when two teams of guards come from the palace to relieve the third. Cf. E.L. Curtis. BW 17 (1901) 273. Cf. Niels-Erik A. Andreasen 1972: 52. Gnana Robinson suggests that on pre-exilic Sabbath, it was customary that the ruling king visited the temple, as it was a day of festivity. And so Jehoiada was aware that Athaliah would visit the temple and chose the day for his plan. Cf. Gnana Robinson 1975: 92–93. Gnana Robinson further argues that Jehoiada manages to retain both the divisions of guards on this particular Sabbath for a specific purpose, which otherwise is not common. And so, it does not indicate that a large number of pilgrims thronged at the temple on normal Sabbaths. Cf. Gnana Robinson. VT 27 (1977) 57, 61.

The advantages of a Sabbath might include the availability of more guards for the planned insurgency. Obviously the entire troop was kept on duty with clear divisions and instructions with the intention of maximising the number of soldiers and of preventing anyone entering from outside the temple. Sabbath would be also practically a convenient day, as the presence of a good number of citizens in Jerusalem would add advantage to the deposition of the occupant of the throne and the coronation of the Davidic successor. It is no surprise that the author of the text chose such a day for the coronation of Joash, as he was looking for the support and validation from the public.

11:6 One third at the entrance of the gate of Sur and one third at the gate behind the runners and so you keep watch over the house alternatively.

The instruction is given to the guards and they are the main characters in this verse. No statement of characterization is made here, as the focus of the verse is the command delivered by Jehoiada.

11:7 And the two divisions of you who leave on Sabbath, and they should undertake the watch on the house of YHWH for the king.

This verse contains a reference to the day on which the coup should take place. But it is not mentioned, why Sabbath is chosen to execute the plan. Perhaps it was a ploy to gather as many guards as possible, in order to get them engaged in the discharging of the plan. Later we would learn about the presence of the people. Bringing more people to the place of the events would be an added reason for the choice of Sabbath.

11:8 And you shall assemble around the king, everyone and with weapons in his hand. If anyone comes inside the ranks, let him be killed. Be with the king, when he goes out and when he comes in.

The mention of the weapons here carries attention. Generally, it would be understood that the guards would be bringing the weapons when they are on duty. By specifically mentioning it, the reader is informed of the intensity of what is going to happen. It also emphasises on the security cover to be provided to the future king. At the same time there is stress on the annihilation of the enemies.

11:9 The centurions did as all that Jehoiada the priest commanded and they took, each (of them) his men who come (on duty) on Sabbath, and who leave on Sabbath. They came to Jehoiada, the priest.

4.2.18 Characterization of the Centurions in v. 9

As noted above, the centurions do not respond to the command they receive from the priest, which is an indication that they were part of the conspiracy against the queen. They play the role of executing the command of the priest compliantly. Their silence is also an indication of their submission to the priest or their dissatisfaction with the rule of Athaliah or their desire to re-establish the rule of a Davidic king again. Their silence at the command might also reveal their little-ness in the discussion under the highhandedness of the priest and the commander in chief. Whatever may be, obedience and compliance seem to be the hallmark of their characteristic.

11:10 *The priest gave to the centurions the spear and the shields which belonged to David and were in the house of YHWH.*

Images could also be strong narrative instruments. Images can evoke the memory of the audience and help them recall something from the past. In our text, the narrator creates a mental image of the spear and shields of King David in the minds of the reader and makes a symbiotic relation with them. Images can also reveal psychological motivation of the narrator.³⁰²

Reference to the spear and shields of King David which were kept in the house of the Lord is an auctorial note. The narrator here tries to evoke in the reader a thought of connectivity between the acts of Jehoiada with David, and thereby seeks validity for the actions of Jehoiada. The previous action of Jehoiada was in v. 4, where he showed the son of the king to the centurions, followed by his long command (vv. 5–8). After delivering the commands, he gave the spear and shields of King David to the centurions. These two successive actions, disjointed by the commands in the narration, connect Joash directly with David. By doing so, the narrator emphasizes the authenticity of Joash as the actual descendent of David.

³⁰² While speaking on the potentiality of still pictures as narratives, Ryan points out that static pictures in narratives are capable of importing logical relations and psychological motivations from a known story. Cf. Marie-Laure Ryan 2004: 139. Steiner adds further that paintings have symbolic meanings. The most favoured narrative method of the Babylonians was allusive rather than explicit, employing the culminating scene at the climax of series of events. Cf. Wendy Steiner 2004: 156. What is said of pictorial narrativity could be also applied to the images as allusive medium of narration.

4.2.19 Spear and Shields

הַחֲנִיָּה (the spear) and הַשָּׁלְטִים (the shields) of David mentioned in v. 10, if they had been used by David, must be around 200 year old weapons which may not be ideal for an assault.³⁰³ But the mention of them in the text has significance in relation to David. The plain reading shows that they were stored in the temple, probably under the custody of the priests. It would also indicate the temple's association with the Davidic dynasty.

The guards are already instructed to come with their weapons in v. 8. So the priest does not need to equip them with weapons. Handing the spear and shields over to the centurions might mean: (i) they are used only as honorific armour or as relics for ceremonial³⁰⁴ or (ii) only these could be used within the temple precincts for purity reasons. The noun חֲנִיָּה (spear) which stands in singular form would underline the aspect that it is honorific armour. At the same time, the name of David here seeks our attention. The spear and shields of David were probably seen as symbols of legitimacy. In fact, it is easy to believe that the men themselves brought their weapons as it had been commanded to them in v. 8. But the text probably intends to validate the act of Jehoiada through the presentation of the armours of David. Here we can see an attempt to show that the priests were the guardian of the dynasty and without the weapons, safeguarded by them in the temple, the coup would not have been possible.

³⁰³ Gray proposes that they might be the weapons regularly used by the guards in the temple and were probably specially consecrated to be used only by the guards at the temple precinct. Cf. John Gray 1964: 517. The word הַשָּׁלְטִים could be translated as something like a quiver, which is filled with arrows. This could stand in relation to Cant 4:4 which compares a warrior's שָׁלְטִים hung in preparation for fighting (Ez 27:11). Cf. Hobbs 1985: 141. Cogen and Tadmor consider them as those taken by David from the servant of Hadadezer, which he later brought to Jerusalem (2 Sam 8:7). Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 128. Sweeney is of the opinion that it might be enough for the task and that might indicate the function of these weapons, that they were arms of the palace and the temple. Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 346.

³⁰⁴ Cf. James Montgomery 1951: 420. See also Joseph Robinson 1976: 110. Benzinger proposes that the editor may have wrongly understood 1 Kings 14:27 that the weapons of the guards are stored in temple and be used on special occasions. Cf. Immanuel Benzinger 1899: 157. But it cannot originate from the wrong understanding of the author, rather the mention of the name David seems to be intentional. Jonestone considers the shields as symbols of defensive equipment (Deut 33:29) and also offensive equipment (2 Kings 19:32). The surrender of shields could mean one's acknowledgment of the receiver's protection for their people (2 Chr 12:9–10; 23:9; 32:7). Cf. William Jonestone 1997: 371.

11:11 *The runners stood, everyone and with his weapons in his hand, from the right side(wall) of the house to left side(wall) of the house, at the altar and at the house around the king.*

This verse depicts the picturesque placement in the scene, once again supporting the point that the author had a clear knowledge about the structure of the temple and that Jehoiada is presented as someone who had a clear plan in mind.

4.2.20 Significance of House in v. 11

2 Kings 11:11 has an interesting construction. This verse is the only instance in the entire pericope, in which the word בַּיִת (house) is mentioned thrice without any particular specification. In vv. 6, 15, too, the word “house” appears one each time without any specification. In all other occurrences, it is clearly mentioned whether it is the house of the Lord, the temple or the house of the king, the palace. One can understand from the context and the previous verses that it refers to the house of the Lord in v. 11. An important clue is the mention of the altar in the house, which definitely points to the temple. A complete protection is given to the temple, including the altar area, and to Joash, the crown prince. Thus, the text guarantees not only a prevention of profanation to the temple, but also an all-around protection for Joash.

11:12 *He brought the king’s son and gave the crown onto him, and the testimony. They made him king, anointed him and clapped their hands saying: Long live the king.*

Three things that stand out here are: crowning of the king, offering the testimony and clapping of hands. The crown is a symbol of a king’s majesty (2 Sam 1:10; 12:30). 2 Kings 11:12 indicates that crowning and testimony belong to the enthronement ceremony and its validation. The clapping of hands and the acclamation “Long live the king” could be seen as expressions of the acceptance from the people (1 Sam 10:24; 2 Sam 16:16).

4.2.21 Coronation of Joash

The coronation of Solomon (1 Kings 1:38–40) and that of Joash,³⁰⁵ are the only two instances of vivid coronation ceremonies in the Bible. A closer look at these

³⁰⁵ Based on the reckoning of the regnal years from the following New Year festival in Mesopotamia, Widregan suggests that the coronation ceremony of Joash might have taken

two texts will be taken up under the title “Solomon’s Accession”. The similarity to Solomon’s crowning ceremony underlines the importance of the throne-succession of Joash. The priest placed **נָזָר** and **עֲדוֹת** on the son of the king (v. 12). These two emblems are clearly signs of royalty and power, and thus play significant roles in the coronation ceremony of Joash. In this verse, Joash is called son of the king, contrary to vv. 7–8, where he is called the king. The elements like crowning, anointing and acclamation make the coronation ceremony complete.

4.2.22 The Crown – **נָזָר**

נָזָר could be translated as crown. The crown served as a sign of royal authority in ancient Israel (Ex 29:6; 39:30; Lev 8:9; 2 Sam 1:10; 2 Sam 8:7; Ps 89:40; 132:18; Zech 9:16). It was also part of an Assyrian ritual in which the king was crowned by the *šangû* priest with a diadem.³⁰⁶ **נָזָר** was also worn by high priests (Ex 29:6; Lev 8:9). Saul wore a crown on his head (2 Sam 1:10). The enthronement ceremony bears some similarities to Assyrian coronation rituals, in particular the role of the priest who would set the crown upon the head of the crown prince, and the procession of the king to the palace accompanied by music.³⁰⁷ But there is no clear evidence to show that the rituals bore similar meanings in the entire ANE.

4.2.23 The Testimony – **עֲדוֹת**

Many ancient translations have **עֲדוֹת** as testimony. The expressions **הָאָרֶן אֶת הָעֵדוּת** (Ex 25:16), **אָרוֹן הָעֵדוּת** (Ex 26:33) and **אָרוֹן הָעֵדוּת** (Ex 30:26) are used in the context of the Ark of the Covenant. The expression **לְאֹהֶל הָעֵדוּת** (Num 9:15) is used in the context of the tent of the covenant. In these contexts **עֲדוֹת** could be understood as covenant or testimony. **עֲדוֹת** could be understood as commandment in the expression **לְחַת הָעֵדוּת** (Ex 31:18) the context of the two tablets of testimony and in the expression **לְמִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת** (Num 1:53) in the context of the tabernacle of

place in the New Year. It took place in the seventh year after the death of the father of the newly crowned Joash. The seventh year connects the ceremony with the seven year cycle, indicating the birth of a new era, meaning the time of coronation was deliberately chosen. Cf. Uppsala Widengren. JSS 2 (1957) 7.

³⁰⁶ Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 128. Ex 29:6 speaks of a holy diadem placed on the headdress of the priest. It might suggest that Joash begins his rule with divinely ordained legitimacy. Cf. Burke O. Long 1991: 150. Ehrlich understands this verse as if Joash was wearing braces on the right hand. Cf. Arnold B. Ehrlich 1968: 305. In the opinion of Hobbs, the translation of crown is not very accurate. The root is **נָזַר** which means “to devote” implying the king’s dedication here. In Ps 132:18, it offers the meaning “clothing”. Cf. T.R. Hobbs 1985: 141.

³⁰⁷ Cf. Moshe Weinfeld 1972: 86.

the testimony. In 2 Kings 17:15, it is used in combination with *תְּקוּי* (statutes) and *בְּרִית* (covenant). The term *עֲדוּת* in 2 Kings 11:12 is variously understood by the scholars. Von Rad calls it a ‘royal protocol’.³⁰⁸ Weinfeld underlines a custom in Assyria whereby the priest conducted the coronation ceremony. Taking a clue from the ceremony conducted by the Assyrian Esarhaddon on his successor Ashurbanipal, in which a binding covenant is made with the people, Weinfeld understands *עֲדוּת* as a covenant document.³⁰⁹ But in 2 Kings 11, this ceremony takes place before the covenant is cut, and so it cannot be a covenant document. K.A. Kitchen maintains that v. 12 indicates that a Judean king after being crowned at the accession was given the basic stipulations of the Sinai covenant, a tangible expression of God’s commandments, often identified with the Ten Commandments (Ex 31:18; 32:15) or God’s law in general (Ps 19:8; 199:88; 122:4). He further suggests that *עֲדוּת* was presented to the king in the spirit indicated in Deut 17:18–19. It would signify that the king, too, was subject to the commandments.³¹⁰ This rite itself serves as symbolism for the responsibility on the king.³¹¹ This responsibility would mean that the king stands for the people and it is a call to be faithful to YHWH.

An Egyptian coronation ritual reflects similar elements, whereby a “*nekhbet*,” a formal protocol was handed over to the new king on his accession. This contained elements of divine promise to the king and emphasis on his responsibilities. The association of the diadem with the protocol offered the king divine sanction for his authority.³¹² This ritual is closer to what is narrated in 2 Kings 11:12,

³⁰⁸ Cf. Von Rad 1947: 207–208. Also Georg Fohrer. ZAW 71 (1959) 12.

³⁰⁹ Cf. Moshe Weinfeld 1972: 86–88. Falk understands *עֲדוּת*, as a piece of real evidence of the covenant reminding both the parties of their obligations. Cf. Zeev W. Falk. VT 11 (1961) 88–89.

³¹⁰ The association of crown and covenant is also found in Ps 89:40. Cf. Kenneth A. Kitchen 1966: 108–109.

³¹¹ Johnson understands *עֲדוּת* as a technical term to denote solemn promise and pledge, grounded on the purpose of reminding David’s successor of the responsibilities connected to the office and of the everlasting covenant of David with YHWH. Cf. Aubrey Johnson 1958: 210–11. Cf. Aubrey Johnson 1967: 24–25. The king should make sure the observance of the stipulation (1 Kings 2:3; 2 Kings 23:3). The crowning of the king is followed by anointing and the shout, “May the King live.” (1 Kings 1:25, 38–40; 1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 16:3). Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 346. The king being presented with the testimony is also a sign to show that the king of Judah was not an absolute monarch, but Yahweh’s anointed. It imposes upon them an obligation to rule in accordance with the will of God. Cf. Joseph Robinson 1976: 111.

³¹² In Egyptian coronation ritual *nekhbet* was given to the pharaoh. It gave him divine legitimation to rule. In the ceremony, the pharaoh also took a new name. Von Rad takes inspiration from this Egyptian ceremony and compares it with the divine adoption of the

in which the priests give the crown and testimony to the new king. Cogan and Tadmor translate עֲדָוֹת as jewels. This would mean that the new king was presented with a kind of royal insignia along with the crown.³¹³ But a diadem or a jewel on the already placed crown does not seem to add any further validation to kingship, such as a specific mention is not warranted.

Based on the findings from the concordance and the ANE parallels, עֲדָוֹת is to be understood in the context of 2 Kings 11, as a royal testimony which stands for divine legitimacy. As it is placed by the priest, the divine approval is revealed through it. It would reveal to the newly crowned king that God stands by his promise and would remind him of his responsibility to be faithful to him as king.

4.2.24 Anointing – מָשַׁח

V. 12 begins with the word הֵיטֵא meaning “he brought out” (the king’s son). The subject is in third person singular. There is a change in the subject in the second part of the verse. It states, “they made him king (וַיִּמְלִכוּ אֹתוֹ), anointed him ...” It is not clear who the subjects are in this part. But v. 11 offers the clue, suggesting it to be the runners, but in fact the subject might include others who were present over there as well. In the process of making a king, both God and people seem to be involved. מָשַׁח appears in the context of making Aaron and his sons priests (Ex 28:41; 29:7; Lev 6:20); in the context of anointing the tabernacle and the altar (Ex 40:9–11; Num 7:1); in reference to anointing kings (Judg 9:8, 15; 1 Sam 9:16; 10:1; 15:17; 2 Sam 19:10; 1 Kings 19:15–16, etc.); and in the royal anointing of David (2 Sam 2:4; 5:3), of Solomon (1 Kings 1:34, 39), of Jehu (2 Kings 9:6), of Joash (2 Kings 11:12) and of Josiah (2 Kings 23:30).

Judean king by YHWH. Cf. Gerhard von Rad 1947: 207–208. “But of course, for the Hebrew way of thinking, the royal protocol could only be a covenant made by Jahweh with the king.” Gerhard von Rad 2001: 40–41. See also John Gray 1964: 574. Kenneth A. Kitchen brushes away the comparison of coronation of Judean kings with that of Egyptian king, suggested by von Rad. He states that the Egyptian *nekhbet* can be merely subject of a decree and not the decree itself. It could have only been a titular ceremony. Cf. Kenneth A. Kitchen 1966: 107–108.

³¹³ Diadem and jewels with which the young king was bedecked should be seen as symbols of royal office. Cf. M. Cogan and H. Tadmor 1988: 128. Taking away from the context of the coronation, it could be compared with the instruction of David to Solomon to observe the testimony as written in the instruction of Moses (1 Kings 2:3). In Ps 132:12 Yahweh instructs the sons of David to observe his covenant and testimony. The restoration of this connection is indicated in 2 Kings 11. Cf. Elna Solvang 2003: 164. Cf. Richard Nelson 1987: 209. Curtis, too, is of the opinion that testimony is a corruption and that it could refer to bracelets, insignia of royalty. Cf. E.L. Curtis. BW 17 (1901) 273.

Royal anointing, however, was not typical of ANE outside of Israel and Judah, in particular at the time of the Kings. The royal anointing (1 Sam 10:1; 2 Sam 5:3) ceremony and enthronement might have been borrowed either from the Hittite enthronement rite or from Egyptian installation ceremony of vassals.³¹⁴ Though the biblical account contains records of anointing, it is restricted to a few kings. Saul (1 Sam 10:1; 24:6, 10; 26:9–11, 16, 23; 15:17; 2 Sam 1:14–15), David (2 Sam 2:4, 7, 3:39; 5:3, 17; 12:7), Solomon (1 Kings 1:34, 39, 45; 5:1) and Jehu (2 Kings 9:3, 6, 12) have several references to anointing, while Absalom (2 Sam 19:10), Hazael (1 Kings 19:15), Joash (2 Kings 11:12) and Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:30) have single reference. In the case of Joash, there is no divine nature of anointing as in the cases of the first four names. Following C.R. North, Cogan and Tadmor infer that though anointing was a regular part of the coronation ceremony (i.e. 2 Sam 2:4, 5:3; 1 Kings 1:34; 2 Kings 9:6; 2 Kings 23:30), it is specifically mentioned at the start of a new dynasty or when the succession is contested.³¹⁵ The ceremony of anointing the king indicates the intimate relationship between Yahweh and the king. In virtue of his anointment at the ceremonial rite, the king enjoyed the title ‘the Messiah of Yahweh’.³¹⁶

³¹⁴ Noth argues for Hittite origin. In ancient orient, it was believed that oil contained energy for life. Therefore by anointment, it was believed that the king received divine energy, through which he was sanctified and raised above the profane people (1 Sam 24: 7, 11; 26: 9, 11, 16; 2 Sam 1:14; 19:22). Cf. Martin Noth 1958: 321–22. Kutsch identifies the pattern of royal anointing in Israel in two forms: one by the people and the other by YHWH, on whose behalf the prophet would carry out the function (2 Sam 2:4; 5:3; 19:11; 1 Sam 16:3, 13). The former seems to be of Hittite origin, while the latter exhibits Egyptian character. Cf. Ernst Kutsch 1963. 52–54. There was no instance of anointment as part of coronation ritual in Assyria and Egypt. In Assyria, oil was used not only for the king but also for others, in view of making the ceremonial place fragrant. Cf. Ernst Kutsch 1963. 40. R. de Vaux argues for the Egyptian influence. See R. de Vaux 1972: 165.

³¹⁵ Cf. C.R. North. ZAW 50 (1932) 14. See also M. Cogan and H. Tadmor 1988: 106. The anointing of Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:30) seems to indicate that the rite of anointing the new king was in practice in Judah up to exile. Cf. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger 1976: 193. Adonijah who enjoyed the support of the priest Abiathar was not installed in accordance with the ritual ceremony. Therefore the legitimizing rite is a very crucial part of the coronation. Both the rituals are performed in order to confirm the Davidic lineage. It might suggest that these coronation rituals are like some sacrificial rituals performed in order to maintain a particular lineage, which were believed to have power to change the biological descent in favour of social stability. E. Theodore Mullen 1993: 49–50. For affinity between sacrifice and patrilineal descent, see: Nancy Jay. VT 38 (1988) 53–54.

³¹⁶ Through the royal anointing either by a priest or a prophet, the king would be regarded as the extension of the divine personality (Judg 9:7–21; 1 Sam 16:1–13; 2 Sam 2:1–7; 1 Kings 1:28–40; 2 Kings 9:1–13). Cf. Aubrey Johnson 1967: 13–15. There are early evidences for pouring oil and anointing the king. A letter of the fourteenth century BC., sent

Saul was anointed with oil by Samuel in a private ceremony (1 Sam 10:1). Solomon was anointed with oil by the priest Zadok (1 Kings 1:39). Jehu was anointed with oil by a prophet (2 Kings 9:6). Thus, in most instances, anointing took place by a prophet or a priest, except in the case of David, which is carried out by the people of Judah (2 Sam 2:4). Dietrich sees a democratic function in the act of anointing by the people of Judah, as there is no spiritual representative involved in the scene.³¹⁷ 2 Kings 11: 12 presents a similar scenario. It is important to note that it is not clearly mentioned that Jehoiada anointed Joash. The text is not specific about the subject, when it states, “they anointed him”. This gap could be variously filled. It is certain that the subject of anointing included more than one person. It reminds one of David’s anointment by the people. Anointment by the people indicates a relationship between the king and the people (2 Sam 2–3). Noth reasons that the people played an important role in anointing the king, because monarchy did not belong to Israel’s existence from the beginning, but it was the initiative of the people themselves.³¹⁸ Anointing in 2 Kings 11 establishes a stronger relationship between the king and the people. As Joash was made a king after six years rule of Athaliah, this anointing, i.e., renewal of relationship between the king and the people was essential.

4.2.25 Acclamation

Deut 17:15 (מֶלֶךְ עָלֶיךָ תִּשֵׂים·you shall set a king over you) shows that both God and humans are involved at the choice of the king. 2 Kings 11:12 uses another verb form הִמְלִיךָ which can also have both God (1 Sam 15:11; 2 Chr 1:11) and humans (Judg 9:6; 1 Sam 11:15; 2 Kings 8:20; 14:21; 17:21; 21: 24) as subject. In 2 Kings 11:12, Joash is made king by a group of people. In the case of David, who had already become the king of Judah, the elders of the Northern tribes acted as the representatives of the people and accorded him the status of king over Israel, too. David made a royal covenant with the elders and they anointed him as the king over Israel (2 Sam 5:1–3). 2 Sam 16:18 speaks of Absalom as the choice both by God and the people to succeed his father. During the revolt of Absalom and after his return from fleeing, David sought the recognition and ratification from the popular assembly. The same was the procedure in the case of

by Addu-nirari, king of Nuḫashshe reveals that the grandfather of the king of Egypt of the time had poured oil upon the head of his own grandfather, by which kingship was conferred upon him. Cf. J.A. Knudtzon 1915: 319.

³¹⁷ Cf. Walter Dietrich 2019: 322–23.

³¹⁸ Cf. Martin Noth 1950: 213.

Rehoboam, who went to Shechem to seek the acclamation of the Northern tribe, but could not be accepted as the negotiations failed. It only indicates the importance of the role played by the people in legitimising one as their king. The people had even power to place certain conditions before the claimant, which he had to accept.³¹⁹

It was customary in the Northern kingdom that different sections like the people, the army and the assembly had their say, whenever a new man was acclaimed king. Jeroboam was made king over Israel by the assembly (1 Kings 12:20). He was preferred over Zimri, the commander of half the chariotry, who slew the king Elah (1 Kings 16:8ff). Zimri was not even accepted by the army as their king. The support of the assembly helped Jehu to ascend to the throne of the Northern kingdom (2 Kings 9:13). A common characteristic in these instances is that a weaker one in the existing power-structure is preferred over the ruler. And the people (of the land) are actively involved in succession narrative of the Southern kingdom, too (2 Kings 14:21; 21:24; 23:30). It is a quasi-democratic functioning.

The narrative about the coronation of Joash is yet another instance of the involvement of the populace in acclaiming someone king. The installation of Joash as the king of Judah put an end to the short rule of a non-Davidic, non-male, non-Judahite ruler, and therefore, it reinstated the Davidic dynasty to the throne, which was unbroken otherwise. Besides Jehoiada, the participants in the coronation of Joash include the people of the land, and the carers and the runners. V. 12 does not specify who the subject is, and the previous verse speaks of the runners. We can assume that the third person singular pronoun refers to Jehoiada, who places the crown and offers the testimony to the king (2 Kings 11:12). In the same manner, we can assume that the third person plural pronoun in v. 12 refers to the runners and the people who are involved in making Joash the king, anointing him and acclaiming him with the words: יְהוָה יְהִי עִמָּךְ (2 Kings 11:12c–d, 13).

The major functions of the people in this narrative are blowing the trumpets, taking part in the procession, bringing the prince to the palace from the precincts of the temple and acclamation. Thus, the coronation of Joash is complete by the acclamation of people. It is evident there are definite efforts taken, in order to

³¹⁹ Cf. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger 1976: 116. The accession of the new king was an occasion for jubilation for the people. They exulted with loud noise (1 Kings 1:40). Cf. Von Rad 2001: 319.

present the coronation of Joash rightful and legitimate. These efforts and the crowning ceremony evoke memories of Solomon's succession after David.

11:13 *When Athaliah heard the noise of the runners the people, she came to the people in the house of YHWH.*

The noise of the guards and the people is expressive of their psychological disposition. It reveals their enthusiasm to be part of the plan hatched by Jehoiada, their involvement in the happenings. It could be an expression of the uproar indicating chaos in the temple.

4.2.26 Focalization in v. 13

This verse is presented in the perspective of Athaliah. There must have been noise all around. But the reader gets to know it exclusively through the perception and experience of Athaliah. The noisy scenario therefore is the focalized object which is understandably experienced by other characters, although not articulated in words. Through this device, the reader is enabled to visualize the atmosphere in the house of the Lord through the senses of Athaliah.

The noise in the house of YHWH establishes a contact between Athaliah and the crowning ceremony. This makes the scene more vivifying. From v. 4 onwards Athaliah was out of focus and the major concern of the narration was all about the safety of Joash until she reappears in v. 13. Now Athaliah hears the noise and comes to the scene. This change of perspective is very interesting: the focalization here has an ancillary function, because the noise in the house of YHWH can apparently offer Athaliah only a vague understanding of what is happening there.

11:14 *And she saw: behold! The king was standing on the podium according to the custom and the commanders and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land blew the trumpets and Athaliah tore her upper garment and cried: Treason, Treason!*

4.2.27 Focalization in v. 14

The word 'behold' serves as a focalization-marker here. Once again, the narrative is presented through the eyes of Athaliah. The reader gets the view of the setting, through her eyes. It helps the reader to visualize how and where the king was standing. It reveals the intensity of the agony Athaliah had, when she witnessed the rejoicing crowd. Through her eyes, the narrator revealed a feeling of rejection in Athaliah.

The entire verse is a reflector mode narrative, which contains a focalization from the view point of Athaliah. Athaliah is positioned at a particular distance from the focalized scene and the narrative presents a scenic spatial description of the focalized objects, i.e., the king standing on the podium, the commander and the trumpeter by the king. And there is an evaluative stance anchored in the focalizing character Athaliah. The focalization at this point is followed by a concrete expression through the utterance of words. The perspective of the focalizer is thus vividly expressed, when she cries aloud.³²⁰ Her cry could be termed as conceptual point of view.³²¹ Athaliah sees and thinks from her view point that there was a conspiracy against her, even though someone from the opposite camp might call it a revolution or movement of reformation.

There is also an auctorial note that the king was standing according to the custom. The auctorial narrative probably seeks to validate the coronation. It not only informs the reader that there was a customary podium on which the king stood during the temple visit or service, but also tells that Joash has taken the place of the king.

This scene of Athaliah seeing Joash occupying the place of the king creates a dramatic tension in the reader, as Athaliah is introduced in the beginning of the chapter as doing the unexpected. The reader is anxious to know the reaction of Athaliah. The expectation of the reader is in a way subverted, as Athaliah meekly surrenders without any resistance, revealing her helplessness by the act of tearing the garment. The turn of events and its narration here is an aesthetic pleasure to the reader.

The scene of the young prince standing on the podium provokes in the reader the question, whether Athaliah was able to recognize the one standing over there. Certainly, she was taken aback to see a child standing with the normal posture of the king. But it would not be a foregone conclusion that she would perceive in her mind that the one standing there would be a descendent of her son. The reader is not sure, whether she was able to recognize the child and whether she was able to grasp what went behind. It is certain that she was sure that it was an act of

³²⁰ Fludernik suggests that in a common description, one can find a combination of perspective and stylistic effect. In a particular passage, there could be a shift from one perspective to another. Monika Fludernik. *Style* 48 (2014) 473.

³²¹ A conceptual point of view according to Chatman refers to the point of view derived from one's attitude and way of thinking, even without any actual physical situation. Seymour Chatman 1989: 152.

treason against her and that she would be no more the ruling queen. Her understanding of the scene as the crowning ceremony would be further ascertained by the presence of the trumpeters and the people. Thus they, too, become important elements in the narration.

This scene presents an interesting case, too. The reader experiences the presence of two rulers. Joash has not yet sat on the throne and the coronation ceremony is not completely performed, and Athaliah is not yet dethroned. Therefore, the expression “according to the custom” is very crucial to the plot. It indicates that Joash has taken the place of Athaliah and so she perceives it as treason.

4.2.28 The People of the Land עַם הָאָרֶץ

עַם הָאָרֶץ translated as “People of the Land” appears four times in 2 Kings 11 (vv. 14, 18, 19, 20). It is noteworthy that the People of the Land appear at crucial junctures reported in the second book of Kings. For example: 2 Kings 16:15 – at the consecration of a new altar, the whole עַם הָאָרֶץ bring burnt offering after the king had brought his offering; 2 Kings 21:24 – they killed all those who plotted against king Amon and made Josiah his son as king. 2 Kings 23:30 – at the untimely death of Josiah, the people of the Land anointed his son Jehoahaz as king. Therefore, an analysis of the status of עַם הָאָרֶץ in 2 Kings 11 and their contribution to the change of the king is inevitable to the study of the pericope.

4.2.28.1 Meaning of the term עַם הָאָרֶץ

The People of the Land are related to the land in some form; either as the local people of the land or as people owning the land, who are seen carrying out some functions at crucial moments later on. Their role in some of the succession narratives especially in the book of Kings demands special attention.

4.2.28.1.1 In Relation to Functioning

The implication and function of עַם הָאָרֶץ in general are variously understood by the biblical scholars: Gillischewski understands the term as full member citizens of a political and ritual polity of a city state like Hebron (Gen 23:2) or Jerusalem (2 Kings 11 and 21; Jer 1 and 52; Is 7 and 33).³²² Nevertheless, it is questionable

³²² These people lived in the city and had owned land within the territory of the city state. Cf. Eva Gillischewski. ZAW 40 (1922) 140–41. In the second half of the second millennium B.C., the popular assembly in some cities of Syria-Palestine seem to have exerted at times big influence in the governance, either in the form of self-government of the city-state with or without a local royal authority. This instance here and in its neighbouring

whether the biblical cities at the time were functioning like city-states. Daiches understands this term as fundamentally referring to the people who possessed land: In the broader sense, it would mean all the landed gentry and landlords. In the narrow sense, it would signify the representatives of the landed gentry, the house of lords.³²³ These two understandings are based on Gen 23:7–13 (only the אֲדָמָה עַם could sell land to Abraham), Gen 42:6, (it was Joseph who sold to all the People of the Land) and Gen 47:20 (Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh. All the Egyptians sold their fields, because the famine was severe upon them; and the land became Pharaoh's).

4.2.28.1.2 In Relation to Habitation

Gordis believes that the term refers to the people in the countryside to the exclusion of the town-dwellers.³²⁴ It presupposes that land meant the land excluding the city, namely Jerusalem.³²⁵ The twofold explanation of Würthwein is widely accepted:³²⁶ (a) אֲדָמָה עַם referred to the elite body of land-owning

cities shows that the popular assembly wielded strong power, but it does not suffice to show that it had the authority to designate the ruler of the city regularly, but only under special circumstances. Cf. H. Reviv. JESHO 12 (1969) 283–85.

³²³ In the later period the אֲדָמָה עַם fell into disrepute and the prophets condemned them. And so this term began to be understood as ignorant people or ignorant peasants. Cf. Samuel Daiches. JTS 30 (1929) 245, 249.

³²⁴ Cf. Robert Gordis. JQR 25 (1935) 243.

³²⁵ Würthwein argues that after Jerusalem was made the capital of the united monarchy in the time of David, the soldiers of David, officials and those who served at the palace and the temple began to live in Jerusalem besides the native Jebusites. The men of Judah who made David their king (2 Sam 2:4) continued to live outside the city where they had their own properties. Cf. Ernst Würthwein 1936: 16. Albrecht Alt assumes that the people of the land were entitled with political right who rushed to the city on the revolt, which would mean that they were dwelling outside Jerusalem. Cf. Albrecht Alt 1953: 127. Buccellati rightly maintains that the dwellers outside Jerusalem cannot be deemed as a national state different from the city-state of Jerusalem, as there was no kingdom of Jerusalem, but only of Judah. Cf. Giorgio Buccellati 1967: 224–26. McKenzie defines this term as referring to all social classes outside the royal court. Cf. Steven McKenzie 2019: 208.

³²⁶ Since they were land owning citizens, they were economically sound, fit for and liable to military service and politically entitled. All these three aspects were inter-connected. The land owners could assist with their finance, workers and slaves during the time of war and so they enjoyed political influence, too. Ibid. 17. See also Gerhard von Rad 1953: 63–64. This term could also refer to landed aristocracy. They had a small role to play in the royal succession and loyalty to the queen mother. It is to be noted that when these people of the land were involved in the selection of the king, the respective queen mother was always from the provinces. Of the sixteen named queen mothers, apparently five are from the provinces: Zibia (2 Kings 12:1), Meshulemeth (2 Kings 21:19), Jedidah (2 Kings

citizens. (b) *עַם הַיְהוּדָה* were the entire Judean folk which had the right to approve the succession of a new king. But the level of their influence at all times is not certain. Rightly so, these two explanations are more appealing, although their right to approve the new king is not warranted. They do not seem to exhibit political rights legally attached to them.

4.2.28.1.3 In Relation to Affiliation

Talmon treats this term with two possible meanings: either the entirety of any particular group of people or a political group which consisted of staunch defenders of the Davidic dynasty.³²⁷ Mettinger believes that this term includes all those who enjoyed legal status, which excluded women, children, slaves and sojourners. They had no special influence in Judah, but they were a popular assembly of majority of the population.³²⁸ Taking a clue from Würthwein's suggestion that it could refer to the total folk of Judah, some others add another dimension to it, as an unorganised political factor, which acts during crises.³²⁹

Nicholson does not see it as a technical term but a term with varying meanings.³³⁰ Thames Jr. rejects all these attributes to the term and concludes that it refers to everyone in a particular locality who is relevant to a particular circumstance. It is an inclusive group in which particular subjects are not identified.³³¹

22:1), Hamutal (2 Kings 23:31) and Zebidah (2 Kings 23:36). Cf. Niels-Erik A. Andreasen CBQ 45 (1983) 191–92.

³²⁷ Cf. Shemaryahu Talmon 1986: 71–74. In the narrow sense, this term refers to a particular body of people in Jerusalem, who rose to some importance and held power, derived from their loyalty to Davidic dynasty. Cf. Shemaryahu Talmon. PWCJS (1965) 76. Therefore, it is not purely a democratic group, but a loosely constituted group among the Judeans. Poulssen, too, sees the *עַם הַיְהוּדָה* as an equivalent of “the men of Judah”, as people from the countryside who remained loyal to Davidic dynasty especially whenever it was in crisis, and infers that the idea of dynasty was very lively in the countryside. Cf. Niek Poulssen 1967: 42.

³²⁸ Cf. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger 1976: 124–30.

³²⁹ Noth treats the term as referring to the entire Judean full citizens. But it presupposes people who were not full citizens. Cf. Martin Noth 1950: 217. See also James Montgomery 1951: 422–23. Mario Liverani notes that it was the common population outside the court which acted for legitimacy at the time of the coronation of a new king and was silent at regular succession. Cf. Mario Liverani 2003: 131.

³³⁰ In the context of 2 Kings 11, Nicholson understands that it was a nationwide coup and that v. 20 distinguishes the people of the city from the people of the countryside. Cf. E. Nicholson. JSS 10 (1965) 60–62. Collinet rightly understands it with a double meaning: (i) small exclusive groups of inhabitants (ii) influential citizens of Judah who stood by the king and protected their cult. Cf. Benedikt Josef Collinet 2019: 173–74.

³³¹ John Tracy Thames Jr. JBL 130 (2011) 109–25.

In the Bible we do not find any representative function attributed to עַם הָאָרֶץ. Moreover, nowhere in the Bible great power is attached to such a group of people. The power they exercise comes out spontaneously. The plain meaning of the word might indicate inhabitants of the villages, opposite to the city dwellers. But there is no clear evidence for this understanding. During the famine in the time of Joseph, the entire folk had to buy corn and not the landlords alone. It is true that one can see עַם הָאָרֶץ as defenders of the Davidic dynasty, but this characteristic can be recognised only a few times in the Bible, that too, in the second book of Kings. An analysis of the application of the term עַם הָאָרֶץ in various books of the Bible might shed clearer light on the theme.

4.2.28.2 עַם הָאָרֶץ in the Pentateuch

The meaning and function of עַם הָאָרֶץ appear to be varying from context to context. And so it is important to study the variety of situations in which this term is used, and which show multiplicity of meanings. Some of the occurrences of this term in the Pentateuch would shed light upon its meaning.

In Gen 23:7 (Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites, the People of the Land), עַם הָאָרֶץ could be apparently understood as a representative body of the Hittite. In Gen 42:6a (now Joseph was governor over the land; it was he who sold to all the People of the Land), עַם הָאָרֶץ is used to refer to the Egyptian common folk. In the context of Ex 5:5 (Pharaoh continued, “Now the People of the Land are many and yet you want them to stop working!”) עַם הָאָרֶץ refers to the Hebrews in general. Likewise, the term stands for the people of Canaan in Num 14:9a (Only, do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the People of the Land, for they are no more than bread for us).

From the above usages, we know that the term עַם הָאָרֶץ was used in the Pentateuch mostly to refer to the folk of the local land.³³² It is used to refer to: (i) native inhabitants and not restricted to the Hebrews alone; (ii) a special body of representatives of the people. This term does not include those in royal administration,³³³ viz., the kings, his servants, priests and prophets, and those in the royal house.

³³² The view of Tomoo Ishida looks convincing that the term is used to refer to any autochthonous inhabitants in the first books, but in the book of 2 Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and 2 Chronicles, it is synonymous with the people of Judah. Cf. Tomoo Ishida 1977: 160–61.

³³³ Cf. Talmor. JWH 11 (1968) 67. Cited in: Tomoo Ishida 1977: 161.

4.2.28.3 עַם הָאָרֶץ in the Context of Succession to the Throne in Kings

As for the application in the books of Kings, the term refers to a group of people related to the land; a group which in normal circumstances is an unorganised body, but at the time of emergency, this folk could be mobilized in order to take major decisions like succession to the throne caused by sudden death of the king.

Not all the royal succession in Judah has occurred automatically and all the choice was made by the People of the Land. עַם הָאָרֶץ is not mentioned in the context of Solomon's accession to the throne which is purely a court intricacy, but upon his coronation all the people of Judah acclaimed him (1 Kings 1:39–40). The last two kings of Judah were appointed by foreign kings who conquered Judah. Only four times the People of the Land/Judah are involved in the enthronement at extraordinary situations.

The hand of עַם הָאָרֶץ is clearly visible in the accession of Joash, Azariah, Josiah and Jehoahaz. In the divided monarchy, the עַם הָאָרֶץ appear for the first time in 2 Kings 11. The People of the Land act in unison with Jehoiada, the priest, and acclaim Joash's accession to the throne. In 2 Kings 14:21, עַם הָאָרֶץ is not mentioned, but עַם יְהוּדָה (the people of Judah) who place the right king Azariah on the throne, upon the murder of his father Amaziah. King Josiah (2 Kings 21:24) is appointed king by עַם הָאָרֶץ. On his death, the People of the Land anointed Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah and made him king (2 Kings 23:30). There is another mention of the עַם הָאָרֶץ in 2 Kings 15:5 which states that Jotham governed the People of the Land. Thus, the involvement of the עַם הָאָרֶץ varies in all these instances. In the enthronement of Joash, Josiah and Jehoahaz, the עַם הָאָרֶץ play important roles and they are mentioned only as subjects in relation to the reign of Jotham.

The absence of the mention about the People of the Land in the accession of other kings shows that whenever the succession was smooth, neither they were consulted, nor was their approval sought. The observation of Talmon draws attention: "... 'am hā-'āreš is not an institution of deliberation, but rather an instrument of action. Any attempt to describe it as a 'national council' of some sort or other therefore is completely misleading."³³⁴ It implies that the People of the

³³⁴ Shemaryahu Talmon 1986: 75. The עַם הָאָרֶץ active in the period, when the Davidic dynasty was repeatedly experiencing internal rift, i.e., from the second half of the ninth cen-

Land had no legal rights attached to them. All the same, they seem to have enjoyed a great deal of influence and they took active part at the time of anarchy and enthroned the next king. Their approval and acclamation was important for the success and continuation of a new king.

Incidentally, four out of these five kings are judged favourably, albeit not in the perfect sense of the word. It has an exception in Jehoahaz, who ruled only for three months and is judged negatively. The otherwise positive judgments would suggest that there is some connectivity between the involvement of the People of the Land and the positive judgment of those kings approved by them.³³⁵ Basically, the construction of the term stands in harmony with the rules of the kings in Deut 17:15, which tells that the king should be one among the Israelites and not a foreigner. This shows that the terminology “People of the Land” used serves emphasize the role of the people of Israel (Judah) in the choice of the king.

Three out of the above mentioned four kings (except Jehoahaz) were of very young age at the time of accession to the throne. Such a situation makes the role of the People of the Land more crucial. They make sure that a descendant of David climbs to the throne.³³⁶ The exception in Jehoahaz is perplexing, but it is probable that the People of the Land were active during the reformation of Josiah and they continued their role at the succession of his son, in order that the reformation is continued.

As indicated by the biblical texts, the People of the Land extend their support to the Davidic Dynasty and make it possible that a descendant of David comes to the throne. This aspect is a mix of democracy and monarchy. Their act seems to be in concomitance with Deut 17:14–15, which instructs the Israelites to set one of them as king over them and forbids a foreigner to be the king.

ture to the first half of the eighth century. The people of the land must have been silent when everything was going smooth with the Davidic dynasty.

³³⁵ Cf. J. Alberto Soggin. VT 13 (1963) 192–95. Probably the Deuteronomist was in support of an old tradition which stood for the democratic choice of the king in accordance with Deut 17:14–20.

³³⁶ It is also possible that the Deuteronomist consciously creates the presence of the עַם הַאֲרֶץ which would affirm that these minors belong to the Davidic dynasty.

4.2.28.4 עַם הַאֲרֶץ in the Context of 2 Kings 11

4.2.28.4.1 The Political Elements

The death of a king is often a highly critical moment for any kingdom. The Ancient Near Eastern monarchies were no exception to it. While in the Northern kingdom usurpation was frequent, in the South it was not common. As the biblical author reports to us, all the rulers except Athaliah, who sat on the throne of Judah were descendants of David. Therefore, the effort to dethrone her as early as possible, so that the rightful successor from the Davidic dynasty ascends to the throne, is quite understandable from the perspective of the biblical narrative. The inaction of the עַם הַאֲרֶץ as soon as Athaliah killed the offspring of Ahaziah (2 Kings 11:1) is not in accordance with this perspective.

There is no mention about the involvement of the People of the Land in the planning and conspiracy prior to v. 14. Though “people”³³⁷ appear in v. 13, they are presented only as accomplices along with Jehoiada and the guards. Jehoiada commands the army (v. 15) to lay hands on Athaliah and it is they who slay her and not the People of the Land. Contrary to the instances of Azariah and Josiah where the עַם הַאֲרֶץ decide who should be the next king, the People of the Land in 2 Kings 11 do not determine who should sit on the throne. Even though the possibility is limited only to Joash, it is Jehoiada, the priest, the leader of the coup and of the subsequent decisions, who designs it. By the general acclamation of the עַם הַאֲרֶץ Joash is accepted as the descendant of David. But the text does not indicate any legal right for the עַם הַאֲרֶץ in succession of the king. Rather, their acclamation and approval would indicate the popular support rendered to the Davidic descendant.

2 Kings 11:13 speaks of people who were assembled in the house of YHWH. It indicates that the opposition to Athaliah was not merely confined to the royal court and the temple, but rather it was a larger coup spread throughout the kingdom.³³⁸ V. 14 points out the presence of the עַם הַאֲרֶץ for the first time in our pericope. The people in v. 13 are transformed into People of the Land in the

³³⁷ The mention of “people” here is to be differentiated from the later appearances by the People of the Land.

³³⁸ Cf. Theodore Mullen Jr. 1993: 50. Schniedewind presumes a clear opposition between the city and the people of the land, based on v. 20. He maintains that the urbanites supported Athaliah, who brought new religious traditions and cosmopolitan perspective to Jerusalem. The עַם הַאֲרֶץ played a pivotal role in the politics of the seventh century Judah which lasted until the fall of the nation. Cf. William M. Schniedewind 1999: 78–79.

subsequent verses. Consequently, their role becomes enormous. It is possible that the עַם הַאֲרֶץ is here introduced in order to show Athaliah in negative shades and to show her lack of popular support and eventually to justify her murder.

4.2.28.4.2 The Religious Elements

Though the involvement of the עַם הַאֲרֶץ in setting the new king on the throne is significant, their role in eradicating the cult of Baal is more intensive. From v. 18 onwards, the People of the Land take the central stage. It is the עַם הַאֲרֶץ who destroy the altars of Baal and kill his priest Mattan. They are involved in the enthronement of Joash, the new king (v. 19), and they rejoice over it (v. 20). Thus, they play only a secondary role in the assassination of Athaliah, but a primary role in the removal of Baalistic cult and again a significant role in the enthronement of Joash.

There is an obvious connection between the עַם הַאֲרֶץ and the priest. Jehoiada is presented as a loyalist to the Davidic dynasty and at the same time a strong Yahwist follower. He found a strong ally in the עַם הַאֲרֶץ who are presented with similar traits. But the People of the Land are not attributed with any significant contribution in the removal of Baalistic cult during the reformation of Josiah. It might suggest that not religious elements but the political sphere was a matter of concern for the People of the Land, even though our text claims that they were involved in removal of the cult of Baal.

4.2.28.4.3 People of the Land versus City Dwellers

The biblical account in the book of Chronicles presents a slightly different picture of the enthronement of Ahaziah and of Joash. According to the Chronicler, Ahaziah was made king by the inhabitants of Jerusalem (2 Chr 22:1), whereas the People of the Land set Joash as king (2 Chr 23:20). This distinguishes the People of the Land from the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

But in the book of Kings Athaliah's overthrow is shown as a court revolution carried out with the popular support. It appears that the "People of the Land" played a significant role and extended their cooperation to the priest. However, 2 Kings 11 does not show any difference between the People of the Land and the city dwellers, and there is no clue to believe that they were ideologically opposing groups. And so the residents of Jerusalem cannot be contrasted from the rest in the kingdom. The interpretation of McKenzie that both statements about the

People of the Land and the city are complementary is appealing.³³⁹ The peaceful situation³⁴⁰ of the city after the death of Athaliah cannot be seen as indicating a split between the city and the countryside. The People of the Land rejoiced, because the mission was successful in restabilising the Davidic dynasty. “The city was quiet”³⁴¹ could only mean that there was calmness in Jerusalem after a time of chaos and violence. Thus the statement that refers to the death of Athaliah (v. 20b) is significant in this context. It underlines that the death of Athaliah brings relief to the populace. And the quietness in the city of Jerusalem does not differentiate them from the population in the countryside, but rather would explicate that the whole population was relieved that everything came to a happy conclusion.

4.2.29 Meaning of עָמֹד in the Context of 2 Kings 11

The word עָמֹד could mean pillar or podium. Klein suggests that it would mean pillars and may refer to Jachin or Boaz, the pillars in front of the temple and at the entrance of the temple.³⁴² However, the meaning podium³⁴³ would be appropriate from the context of the young Joash being presented to the carers, the runners and the people in the temple-area by the coronation ceremony. 2 Kings 23:3 has a similar context, whereby the king Josiah read the book of the covenant in front of the gathered assembly which included the inhabitants of the land. In 2 Kings 11, the renewal of the covenant (v. 17), necessitated by the circumstances,

³³⁹ Cf. Steven McKenzie 2019: 439.

³⁴⁰ Jagersma reads v. 20 (the city was quiet) as an indication to the unhappiness of city dwellers contrary to the jubilation of the people of the land and concludes that Athaliah had enjoyed the support of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Cf. Hendrik Jagersma 1982: 145. Soggin has a similar view in seeing a divide between the population in Jerusalem, which he considers to be mostly Canaanites and the population outside who were mostly the Israelites. Cf. J. Alberto Soggin 1985: 213–14.

³⁴¹ Peace in the land is an important royal ideology and it emphasises that the king should overcome the chaotic situations in the land.

³⁴² Cf. Ralf Klein 2012: 327. In Ez 46:2, the prince takes his position at the doorpost of the gate. De Moor is of the opinion that the two pillars in the Solomonic temple (1 Kings 7:21) had a certain status in the Yahweh cult. Their names are attributed to the ancestors. Cf. Johannes de Moor 1997: 356–57. “The pillars may have had a ceremonial purpose, the king receiving an official position next to Jachin ... If the king had a recognized place to stand, the High Priest (at his consecration or regularly) may also have been accorded an official position next to Boaz. This would have indicated the (ideal or theoretical) symmetry of temporal and spiritual power.” Raymond Apple. JBQ 42/4 (2014) 225.

³⁴³ Gesenius prefers to translate as Podest (German) meaning podium, a raised place. Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 981.

takes the place of the reading of the book of the covenant. It shows that the text assumes that the king stood at a particular place in the temple.

Both texts express that the kings stand on a podium (על-עמוד). The preposition על (on) is crucial here.³⁴⁴ One cannot imagine that the king stands on the pillar. It is reasonable to understand that the king stands on the podium, an elevated place in the temple. The context of Athaliah recognising the child standing in the usual place of the king, in spite of the big crowd also implies that עמוד is an immediately recognisable place.

We have no biblical evidence to suggest that the newly crowned king stood in a particular place in the temple. And so one cannot be certain about the association between the coronation ceremony and the podium. In the coronation of Solomon, too, we do not read about standing on the podium. Hence, it can be understood from the text that the ruling king had a regular place whenever he visited the temple.³⁴⁵ That is indicated by the phrase “according to the custom” in v. 14. It was probably reserved to the king alone to stand on the podium. Joash standing on the podium was a clear indication to Athaliah, who was in fact not present at the coronation ceremony, that Joash is acknowledged as king. Standing on the podium and sitting on the throne³⁴⁶ together are the expression of the recognition of Joash’s kingship in Judah, both in the capacity of cult and governance respectively.

4.2.30 Reactions of Athaliah

The reaction of Athaliah to the coup is twofold. The first is through the deed of tearing her garment and the second is through the verbal utterance of treason.

³⁴⁴ על is also translated as ‘near’ or ‘by’. If one translates so, it can be understood that the king stood by the pillar. But in the context of the text, ‘standing on the podium’ is appropriate.

³⁴⁵ Cf. Rudolf Kittel 1900: 250. The king had a certain significant role in cult and stood in a particular place of honour. Cf. Josef Scharbert 1964: 131. Chun who also translates על-העמוד עמד as “standing by the pillar” sees it as the first action of the last step of the covenant making, gathering of elders (2 Kings 23:1a–b) and going up and reading (2 Kings 23:2a–b) being the other two steps. And so standing by the pillar is a decisive action in covenant making. Cf. S. Min Chun 2014: 211–12. He rightly points out that the expression כַּמִּשְׁפָּט (according to the custom) describes the legitimacy of the enthronement. Cf. S. Min Chun 2020: 262.

³⁴⁶ The throne denotes the power of the ruler. This expression occurs emphatically in 1 Kings 1:13, where it plays a larger role in the literary point of view. Cf. Martin J. Mulder 1998: 55.

Tearing of clothes symbolises sad events (2 Sam 1:11; 3:31; 2 Sam 13:19; 1 Kings 21:27; 2 Kings 19:1). In the case of Athaliah, it is an expression of anguish. Tearing of the garment could imply a change in status, as was in the case with Tamar (2 Sam 13:18–19.³⁴⁷ Here tearing of garment is an expression of the realisation that Athaliah is no more the ruler of Judah. It reveals that Athaliah could grasp in a moment that she would have to lose everything: her status and even her life as well.

קִשָּׁר is the technical term employed in the context of conspiracies, especially for military coup.³⁴⁸ Athaliah utters twice only the word: קִשָּׁר “Treason! Treason!” Branch suggests that the repetition of the word twice would remind of two occurrences of treason – once carried out by Athaliah and the other time executed against her.³⁴⁹ It could be understood as a spontaneous cry born out of dismay or an attempt to interrupt the coup with the expectation of help and sympathy. It would remind one of the last acts of Jezebel who painted her eyes and adorned her head at the arrival of Jehu after destroying her family (2 Kings 9:30). Both could be seen as acts of desperation.

11:15 Jehoiada, the priest commanded the centurions, the captains of the army and told them, “send her out in front of the house, through the ranks, and let anyone who follows her, be slain by the sword”; indeed the priest said, “she shall not be killed within the house of YHWH.”

Jehoiada once again assumes his new role as the commander in chief. The reader can note three aspects in his command, namely, Athaliah has to be murdered; none of her followers should be left out; and the temple is not to be defiled. It also makes it clear to the reader that Athaliah had some supporters in the palace, if not many.

From a narratological perspective, the following aspects can be observed: (i) There is no direct response to the cry of Athaliah. (ii) There is no direct action from Jehoiada, but he rather commands that she be removed from the scene. Thereby, she is treated with contempt and degradation as a disturbing factor at the crowning ceremony. (iii) The command to kill her is not direct, and no judg-

³⁴⁷ The narrator states that Tamar was a virgin and of high rank. The tearing of the long robe symbolizes not only sorrow, but also the drastic change which has taken place in her life, to be cast out by Amnon and his servant. Cf. Shimon Bar-Efrat 1989: 52.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Christian Frevel 2019: 306.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Robin Gallaher Branch. *Skriflig* 38 (2004) 543.

ment is passed on Athaliah. (iv) The command to kill her is made in passive voice as in v. 16. There is also no mention of any particular agent of her execution.

11:16 *They laid hands on her and she came the way of horse-entrance to the house of the king and there she was killed.*

This verse describes the way by which Athaliah came to the place of murder, while the details and modes of the murder are lacking. The attention of the narrator is on the procedure and the location of the event. It also suggests that the narrator is very much particular in saying that she was not killed within the temple premises.

4.2.31 The Death of Athaliah

Jehoiada commands that Athaliah be safeguarded until she was officially executed outside the temple precincts (v. 15). Shedding blood in the temple area would be a sacrilege (Lev 21:11–12) and therefore, it is prevented. The same is pronounced against those who might follow her.

The soldiers lay hand on her (v. 16). The combination of יָשַׁם and $\text{יָרַד$ would refer to picking up something (Judg 4:21; 1 Kings 20:6) or giving someone control (Ps 89:26).³⁵⁰ In the context of 2 Kings 11:16, it would mean that Athaliah lost her power and control. The guards made her enter through the horse-entrance leading to the palace. Through this information, v. 16 notifies that Athaliah was led through this entrance, meaning she was killed at the palace and clearly outside the temple.

Parts of the reports that are lacking include also the burial formula for Athaliah. The book of Kings usually reports the burial of the kings, but not of those who were murdered and replaced by another. It could be believed that the burial reports were recorded by the successor of the deceased king.³⁵¹ When the successor

³⁵⁰ Cf. Elna Solvang 2003: 166. When a king was struck dead or committed suicide, the Hebrew word מוֹת is used (2 Kings 9:27–28; 12:21; 14:19; 21:23 etc). The word שָׁכַב is used to mean “to lie with his fathers” (1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:31; 2 Kings 8:24; 15:7; 16:20; 20:21; 21:18 etc.). Cf. Benjamin D. Thomas 2014: 108.

³⁵¹ Cf. Shoshana Bin-Nun. VT 18 (1968) 430. The exception to the lack of information regarding the burial of Hezekiah may be attributed to the ones who are guiding the young Manasseh or exercised power until Manasseh grew up. Suriano attributes Athaliah’s the missing burial formula to the disruption of the paternal descent of power in Judah caused by her reign. He also assumes that this disruption led to a temporary halt in certain rituals

was a usurper or from a different dynasty, the burial of the murdered king was not recorded. For instance, Jehu did not record the burial of his predecessor Joram of Israel. An exception is with the burial report of Ahaziah of Judah. Even though he was murdered by Jehu, the Bible records his burial, probably because his mother succeeded him.

4.2.32 Judgment on Athaliah

There were nine Judean kings between Rehoboam and Ahaz, among whom three are evaluated negatively (1 Kings 15:3–4; 2 Kings 8:18–19, 27). Among these three, two negative summaries (Abijam and Jehoram) are mentioned with Yahweh's promise of an everlasting Davidic lamp in Jerusalem. This formula is not found in the evaluation of Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:27) who is labelled as a bad king. Lowery surmises that this change is due to the rule of Athaliah, who succeeded Ahaziah and in whose time the Davidic lamp undeniably sputtered and died for a while.³⁵² In the observation of Bishoff, the negative evaluation of Ahaziah places a greater emphasis on the fact that he was the son of Athaliah.³⁵³ Besides the mention of the name of Athaliah, the northern connections of

associated with the death of a king. It could be also the reason for the missing formula *וַיִּשְׁכַּב עִם-אֲבֹתָיו* (so he slept with his fathers) in Joash's epilogue (2 Kings 12:22) and its idiomatic application to his son Amaziah (2 Kings 14:22). Cf. Matthew J. Suriano 2010: 84.

³⁵² A common thread binds all the six good kings together, i.e., the high places were not removed during their reign. It would indicate that a Judean king could do right in the eyes of Yahweh, even if the high places were kept intact. Cf. Richard Lowery 1991: 63–64.

³⁵³ All the kings are evaluated according to religious criteria. Most of the kings of Israel are accused of maintaining two national shrines against Jerusalem, which is referred to as 'sin of Jeroboam'. The worst negative evaluation of a Judean king would be that he was as bad as the kings of Israel. Of the three Judean kings who are very harshly judged, barring Manasseh, the other two are directly related to Athaliah: Joram, her husband and Ahaziah, her son. Cf. Willem Bishoff 2000: 28, 33. Weippert observes five instances whereby the sons stand in comparison to their fathers who were good examples: Solomon with David (1 Kings 3:2f), Jehoshaphat with Asa (1 Kings 22:43f), Amaziah with Joash (2 Kings 14:3f), Azariah with Amaziah (2 Kings 15:3f) and Jotham with Ussiah (2 Kings 15:34f). Interestingly, Joash of Judah is not shown in relation to his father Ahaziah on two grounds: Ahaziah does not obtain a positive judgment from the Deuteronomist and the reign is disconnected due to the rule of Athaliah. Therefore, Jehoiada the priest is mentioned in the judgment of Joash (2 Kings 12:3f). Cf. Helga Weippert. *Biblica* 53 (1972) 313. Day argues that the alliance with the Northern counterpart was imperative for the Southern kingdom for their survival at that time. But the Deuteronomist does not perceive the need for it and condemns the Southern kings for their affinity with Israel. Cf. Edward Day. *JTS* 11 (1909) 77.

Ahaziah are also highlighted in his evaluation. In this way, Athaliah, Omri and Ahab are given negative portraits in the evaluations of Ahaziah.

Lowery observes significant differences within the evaluation formula before and after the rule of Athaliah. In the former, the formula begins with וַיֵּלֶךְ (and he walked ...) and in the latter, it begins with וַיַּעַשׂ (and he did ...). The evaluation after the time of Athaliah is more rigid and stereotyped, while the evaluation before Athaliah contains diversity in expression. The interruption of Athaliah's reign in the Davidic dynastic rule is expressed through a visible shift in the form and language of the evaluation of kings.³⁵⁴ Thus, the episode of Athaliah serves as a divider in the long history of the Davidic dynasty. The break in the longevity of the Davidic dynasty is indicated, albeit clandestinely. Athaliah is contemptuously evaluated, even without a proper judgemental formula for her, but by the evaluation on the reigns of Jehoram and Ahaziah.

11:17 Jehoiada cut the covenant between YHWH and the king and the people that they should be people of YHWH; and between the king and the people.

The murder of Athaliah does not immediately take the reader to the rejoicing leaders and the crowd, but to the renewal of the covenant. Thereby, the crowning of Joash is once again affirmed and validated through the covenant ceremony. Moreover, the killing of Athaliah is not the primary concern of the narration, but rather the coronation of Joash and the collective support of the people for him. The narrator tries to establish these factors rather hurriedly.

4.2.33 כְּרִית – Covenant

The covenant theology is an important theme in the Bible. In 2 Kings 11:17, we read of a peculiar type of covenant which does not occur anywhere in the Bible. The nature and number of covenants in this verse is variously understood due to the internal tension between v. 17a and v. 17b, as v. 17b looks like an apparent repetition.³⁵⁵ Adding strength to this lack of clarity is the point that LXX omits

³⁵⁴ Similarly the reference to the high places in the post-Athaliah formula is different from the ones before her. Cf. Richard Lowery 1991: 64–66. There are a few exceptions: Asa breaks the pattern of the formula for the good kings, probably because he is reckoned as a great reformer along with Hezekiah and Josiah. The rigid formulation of evaluation after Athaliah is slightly deviated in the account of Joash (2 Kings 12:3) and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:3).

³⁵⁵ Mettinger treats it as a repetition that could have been caused by the revision of the covenant formula in v. 17a. Cf. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger 1976: 143. On the contrary, Veijola

v. 17b and the Chronicler does mention this covenant but not in this context, but relatively at the beginning of the chain of events (2 Chr 23:3).

Keil sees a double covenant in 2 Kings 11:17. In the first covenant, YHWH is one partner, while the king and the people form the other partner. The second covenant is cut obviously between the king and the people.³⁵⁶ Fohrer is of the view that since there was a break in the continuity of the Davidic dynasty and therefore in the divine promise in 2 Sam 7:8–16, 18–29, it was required to renew the divine legitimation which is done through the covenant between God and the king of Judah.³⁵⁷ D.J. McCarthy and A. Malamat argue for a twofold covenant – one between God and the people and the other between the king and the people.³⁵⁸ Baltzer, too, proposes a double oath-taking ceremony like Hittite treaties. In the Hittite treaties, the vassal pledges his fealty to the Great King who in turn makes the land take an oath to the vassal. In such treaties, both the Great King and the vassal are concerned about the continuity of the treaty even after their death. They could even appoint successors while still alive and they should be recognized by the other party.³⁵⁹

doubts the authenticity of v. 17b and suggests that it could be a result of dittography, a copying error of doubling a letter. Cf. Timo Veijola 1975: 64.

³⁵⁶ Keil understands the first covenant as the renewal of the covenant which God made with Israel through Moses, in which the people promise their loyalty to God (Ex 24). Cf. Carl Friedrich Keil 1876: 299. Noticeably, there is no mention of the king here, as it took place in pre-monarchic period. Pederson, too, reads this verse as indicating a double covenant, and adds that the order of these two should have been the other way. Cf. Johannes Pedersen 1914: 61.

³⁵⁷ In fact the covenant of God with David is not merely concerning the person of David but includes his dynasty. Hence, the covenant in 2 Kings 11:17 is to be seen as a renewal and reinforcement of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam 7. Cf. Georg Fohrer 1969: 342–43. Gerbrandt argues that 17a cannot be referring to the Davidic covenant, as it is already done in v.12. In his opinion, it should be rather a confirmation of Mosaic Covenant (Deut 27:9) through which Israel becomes people of the Lord. Cf. Gerald Eddie Gerbrandt 1980: 261.

³⁵⁸ In 2 Kings 11, the *עַם הַיְהוּדָה* take part in the covenant and later they play a key role in the enthronement of Joash. Cf. Dennis J. McCarthy 1978: 285. The continuity in fact need not be biological. But in Judah, permanency and legitimacy of the Davidic dynasty appears to have been generally accepted. Cf. John Bright 1977: 57.

³⁵⁹ Cf. Klaus Baltzer 1971: 79–83. See also Moshe Weinfeld 1972: 87–88. In Jerusalem, the royal tradition of the connectivity between kingship and covenant was alive even after the cessation of kingship. The terminology used in the covenant with Abraham and with David resembles that of the Royal Grant of the Hittite and neo-Assyrian. The Grant is to be understood as a reward for loyalty already performed. (Gen 26:4–5; 1 Kings 3:6). It was not without any conditionality even though annihilation is not implied. Cf. Moshe Weinfeld. *JAOS* 90 (1970) 194–96.

Gary and von Rad are of the opinion that it was a threefold covenant: between God and the king, between God and the people, and between the king and the people. Ishida opines that this covenant in effect implies the Davidic covenant, in which the king is a mediator between God and the people.³⁶⁰

2 Kings 11: 17, in fact, speaks of a single covenant³⁶¹ cut after the coronation of Joash. Moreover, neither David nor Solomon made any twofold covenant with God and with people. As such, there is no precedence for a threefold covenant either. Basically, the covenant renewal ceremony in 2 Kings 11 is necessitated due to the interim rule of Athaliah, even though Joash was a biological descendant of David.

The first part of the covenant binds the people and the king with YHWH, which is only half of the covenant formula. It contains the characteristic of a covenant-renewal. The mention of the second addressee expresses the second consequence of covenant, which concerns the relationship between the king and the people. It demands the acceptance of the king by the people in the form of just concluded covenant renewal.

4.2.33.1 Between Yahweh, the King and the People

The first constellation of the covenant concerns the relationship between YHWH and the people including the king, a specially mentioned partner. It contains both religious and theological factors. For the Israelites, the *בְּרִית*³⁶² with God cannot

³⁶⁰ A covenant between God, king and people is not an everyday affair but marked a new beginning with YHWH and adherence to religious aims. Cf. G. von Rad 1953: 63–64. See also Tomoo Ishida 1977: 114–15. The Sinaitic covenant is a Yahweh-Israel relationship in which the House of David had no power. The prophecy of Nathan solves this ideological problem. It maintains that Yahweh made a new covenant with David and therefore the old Sinaitic covenant is valid only in accordance with the new covenant. Thus, the Davidic kings became mediators between Yahweh and Israel. Cf. Delbert R. Hillers 1969: 113. This covenant legitimises not only David's kingship, but also that of his descendants. Cf. George Fohrer 1969: 340. McCarthy juxtaposes this passage with 1 Sam 12:14–15 which uses a covenantal formulation between God, king, and people. Cf. Dennis J. McCarthy 1978: 215.

³⁶¹ Greengus holds that it is a single covenant between YHWH as one partner and the people and the king as the other partner. He also treats this as a religious covenant different from the covenant mentioned in v. 4, which he calls a political covenant like the one David made with the elders in 2 Sam 5:3. Cf. Samuel Greengus 2014: 123–24.

³⁶² *בְּרִית* can mean covenant, agreement, treaty, solemn assurance, obligation, oath. Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 176. Pedersen sees *בְּרִית* as a mutual relationship of solidarity, binding the parties concerned with all rights and obligations. Cf. Johannes Pedersen 1914: 38–40. Pedersen bases his arguments on the Arabic understanding of the concept *בְּרִית* and appeals

be confined within the context of liturgy alone, but is to be understood as an exclusive relationship between YHWH and his people. It has an absolutely binding character that calls for the acknowledgment of the Lordship of YHWH in Judah. Prevalence of Baalistic cult in Jerusalem, therefore, meant going astray from the relationship with YHWH. Hence, it was imperative that such a covenant precedes the destruction of Baal's altar and images.

The covenant and the destruction of Baal cult carried out here resemble the later covenant done at the time of Josiah after the abolition of pagan cult,³⁶³ that the kingdom and the people would follow the book of law discovered in the temple. The king is here included along with the people. It would add strength to the authenticity of the covenant. The difference is that the priest is officiant here, while it is the king in the reform pericope of Josiah.

Besides the religious significance, this verse calls for attention on the importance of theological elements. Ishida illustrates it as follows:

In the Judaeen royal ideology, it is taken for granted that every king is a descendant of David and that Yahweh dwells on Mount Zion. For the Judaeen kings, it was of fundamental importance that they were the successors to David and that their kingship was validated by Yahweh who dwelt in the temple of Jerusalem. Thus, the royal ideology asserts that Yahweh sets the king on Zion as his son (2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; Ps 2:6–7), sends him help, support and protection from Zion (Ps 20:2–3), gives him justice and righteousness (Ps 72:1–2), makes him victorious over his enemies (Ps 2:9; 2 Sam 22:51), and promises him a long reign and an everlasting dynasty. The long history of the House of David teaches us that this royal ideology was accepted by the people of Judah. Despite a fair number of coups d'état, in which Judaeen kings were killed (2 Kings 12:21; 14:19; 21:23), the

to do away with the European understanding. In his attempt, he too is one-sided limiting the understanding within the Arabic sources. Cf. Klaus Baltzer 1971: 4. To the etymology of בְּרִית, two derivations are suggested: the Akkadian *birītu/birtu* meaning 'bond' and the Egyptian loan word from West Semitic *bi-ri-ta* meaning 'treaty'. There is also the Akkadian preposition *birīt* which means 'between'. Cf. Frank Moore Cross 1973: 267.

³⁶³ Speaking on Joash's covenant, Montgomery states, "This item, if historical, interestingly enough precedes the theme of the so-called Deuteronomic reform." James Montgomery 1951: 422. Haran differentiates these two covenants on account of their models. Josiah's covenant was based on the book found in the temple and on the commitment to it (2 Kings 23:1–3), while the basis for the covenant at the time of Jehoiada is not known. Cf. Menahem Haran 1978: 136.

covenant of David never lost its validity in Judah. This is shown by the words of Jehoiada the priest and of Jeremiah the prophet (2 Chron 23:3; Jer 33:20–21).³⁶⁴

David made a covenant with the elders of Israel (2 Sam 5:3). It is not clear, whether it was a unilateral or bilateral one. If one assumes that it was a bilateral covenant, then the people had to swear allegiance to the House of David and the king probably had his prescribed duties, and he had to show fidelity to YHWH the national God of Israel. Thus, the House of David was involved in a Yahweh-Israel relationship.³⁶⁵ The first constellation of the covenant in 2 Kings 11:17 is a reflection of this relationship. From a theological perspective, it is a renewal of relationship with YHWH which is necessitated by the intrusion of Athaliah to the throne. Therefore, it was needed for the biblical text to articulate both the parties, i.e., God and the people, including the king as a significant component of the second party. It necessitates that the king be mentioned distinctly.

In accordance with Deut 17, the king is part of the people. If people are to be the Lord's people, the king has his definite role in this function in letting them and him to be the people of the Lord. So the inclusion of king along with God and people in the first part of the covenant probably means to say that the king concurs with decision that the people will be the people of YHWH and not of Baal. The covenant in 2 Kings 11:17 does not speak of mutual obligation but demands commitment from the people alone, i.e., to be God's people. The loyalty of YHWH is taken for granted, as he has proved it time and again. The people of Judah went astray partly through Baal worship and partly through allowing it to take place in Jerusalem. Therefore, the covenant demands that they rectify their ways and acknowledge YHWH as their sole Lord. The events that follow in v. 18 demonstrate that the people are committed to the covenant.

4.2.33.2 Between the King and the People

The second constellation of the covenant in 2 Kings 11:17 is concerning the relationship between the king and the people. This element of the covenant reflects

³⁶⁴ Tomoo Ishida 1977: 149–50. Fensham argues that the father-son terminology in a covenant context would indicate only a covenantal relationship. And in 2 Sam 7:14, the father and son formula between God and David need not be an adoption formula, but a covenant formula, in which the king is willing to stay in covenant relationship with God. Similar expressions are attested in Mari letters and Amarna letters as well. It would prove that the concept of divine kingship did not exist in Israel. Cf. Charles Fensham 1971: 130–32.

³⁶⁵ Ibid. 111–12.

the covenant cut between Jehoiada and the centurions of the carer and the runners in v. 4. Throughout the monarchic period, the people of Israel expressed their hold over the centralized authority of the king in one form or the other. The men of Judah anointed David over the house of Judah (2 Sam 2:4a). Abner suggested to get the support of the people in order to establish the kingdom (2 Kings 3:21). David cut a בְּרִית with the tribes of Israel (2 Sam 5:3). Thus, the covenantal relationship between the king and the people was an inevitable component in the kingdom of David. It is also significant to note that the contract between the king and the people was customary in some parts of ANE.³⁶⁶ This type of covenant is political in nature and is to be understood as contracts.

The covenantal relationship between the king and the people is the source of their political allegiance to the throne and dynasty.³⁶⁷ The second constellation in 2 Kings 11:17 is a tacit reminder of this factor. It seeks to establish Joash as the legitimate king, which would imply that the Davidic dynasty is reinstated.

11:18 *And the entire people of the land came to the house of Baal and they destroyed it, its altars and its images they broke thoroughly and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal in front of the altars and the priest appointed guards over the house of YHWH.*

It is all not over. The drama continues to unfold further events drastically and unexpectedly. As it is with the previous verse, here, too, the reader is forced to question the sequence of events, viz., the rationale behind the covenant and destruction of Baal's temple taking place before the enthronement. The destruction of the altars of Baal by the people of the land may point out the following: They were not in a hurry to rejoice over the new king; what is more urgent was to destroy the worship places of Baal; This act is portrayed not as an official act of removal of Baalistic worship, but a revolution by the people of the land. By involving the people in this act of destruction and murder of Mattan, the entire event is converted into a movement of the people of the land. Thus this verse marks a progressive transition for the people of the land. They were merely blowing trumpets in v. 14, where the new king and the commanders have major role

³⁶⁶ Theodore Mullen Jr. 1993: 51. בְּרִית as contract could be between both equal and unequal partners. The contract between Solomon and Hiram of Tyre was made in view of establishing peace between both the nations (1 Kings 5:26). The Israelites made a contract with the Gibeonites, whereby the latter became the slave of the former (Joshua 9:1–27). Udo Rüterswörden. <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/15777/>.

³⁶⁷ Cf. Moshe Weinfeld 1972: 88.

to play. They become now the main actor and lead the act of the destruction of Baal's cult.

4.2.34 Characterization in v. 18

Like other characters of the event, the reader is not offered any direct reference to the character of Mattan, the priest of Baal. What is significant is that his name is mentioned here. His name means "gift of the Godhead".³⁶⁸ Unlike the usual style of narration, the scene unfolds itself here very concretely with a great amount of straightforwardness. The final act portrays him as helpless and forsaken. He is struck by vicissitudes of life as he falls from grace to condemnation. However, this does not invite sympathy from the reader. Thus the narrator achieves his goal in neutralizing the murder of Mattan.

4.2.35 Baal Worship under Athaliah's Patronage

1 Kings 16:31–34; 2 Kings 10:18–28; 11:20 elaborate the existence and elimination of Baalism in the divided kingdoms. According to the biblical construction of the text, Baal worship had been practiced already in the pre-monarchic period and later been abandoned, though not completely. It makes its appearance at times in the history of Israel. Deuteronomy condemns the worship of foreign gods (Deut 6:14–15; 7:4; 8:19; 11:16–17, 28). In the books of Judges and 1 Samuel, we read of Baal worship among the Israelites (Judg 2:11–13; 3:7; 6:25; etc.).

2 Kings 11 projects a picture that Baalism stood as the counterpart of Yahwism at the time of Athaliah and its worship places were destroyed by the people of the land. But it is nowhere mentioned by the biblical author that Athaliah introduced Baalism in Jerusalem or that she patronaged it. On the contrary, her name *אֶתְלִיָּה*, being a derivative of the name of YHWH, might indicate that the bearer of YHWH's name also worshiped him. Nonetheless, the narrative in our pericope implicitly links the cult of Baal with Athaliah.

2 Kings 11:18 mentions explicitly the existence of a temple and an altar for Baal. It offers hints towards a likely connection between the murder of Athaliah and the destruction of the temple of Baal.³⁶⁹ When the altar of Baal's temple is destroyed, Athaliah is no more. It leads one to presume that her death and the destruction of the altar are not isolated events, but rather closely related to each

³⁶⁸ Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 764.

³⁶⁹ Cf. Sara Japhat 1997: 205–206.

other, and that Baalism survived in Judah due to her patronage. The construction of the text would suggest that the removal of Baal cult was possible only after the elimination of Athaliah.

The destruction of the cultic places in 2 Kings 11:18 adds religious elements to the text, which naturally intensifies the reason for the coup led by Jehoiada. Conceivably, it did not suffice to get rid of the person of Athaliah, but it was also important to show that some practices related to the North are thrown away in the form of a reform. The Baal-worship which was generally treated as a Northern cult, had to be demolished along with Athaliah.

11:19 *And he took the Centurions of the carer and the runners and the entire people of the land and they let the king descend from the house of YHWH, and they entered through the runners-gate into the house of the king. And he sat on the throne of the kings.*

Though a short ceremony of coronation took place in v. 11, the newly crowned king is seated on the throne only in v. 19. Between these two acts the murders of Athaliah and Mattan have taken place. From a narratological perspective, a parenthesis is placed here. It means to say that the coronation is fully accomplished, only when the possible hindrances are eliminated. And then narrator speaks of the peaceful situation in the city. It also means that between the two acts in v. 11 and v. 19, the regime and religion is won in favour of Joash.

4.2.36 Enthronement

The covenant follows a mutual obligation. The obligation from the part of the people is affirmed by the destruction of the Baalistic cult and enthronement of the Davidic descendant. Anointing and enthronement are separated by the report of the covenant. It would highlight the importance of annihilation of Baal cult and the interconnectedness of anointing and enthronement, and covenant and allegiance to YHWH alone.

11:20 *The entire people of the land rejoiced and the city was peaceful, and Athaliahu they had killed by sword in the house of king.*

This verse deserves a note on redundant telling. Phelan explains it in the following words: "Redundant telling occurs when a narrator gives an unmotivated

report of information to a narratee that the narratee already possesses”³⁷⁰. V. 16 already narrates the killing of Athaliah. Although v. 20 mentions an event which the reader is already informed of. But this retelling is not without any reason. This redundant telling is necessitated for a clear and targeted communication of the presence of peace in the city. The peace in the city is cited as the consequence of the enthronement of Joash. On the other hand, it is worth questioning whether it is redundant at all, since there is no repetition of the narration about the event, but only a reference to it. Irrespective of the presence of an instance of redundant telling, the reader is clear that the death of Athaliah is mentioned a second time, in order to express the peaceful situation in the city.

The mention of the death of Athaliah for the second time is formulated in active voice, unlike the previous occurrence in v. 16. However, in v. 20, Athaliah is the object of the sentence, even though it stands in the beginning of the second part of the sentence. From a narratological point of view, the emphasis is on the death of Athaliah, which death contains a tone of brutality in v. 20.

The rejoicing of the people of the land marks the accomplishment of the effort to dethrone Athaliah and to set Joash in her place. It is not to be disjointed from the peaceful situation of the city, as both rejoicing and peace are the results of the one and same act. The verb *טָקַף* (to be quiet or peaceful) is used to indicate the quiet and peaceful situation after battle or war (Joash 1:23; 14:15; 2 Chr 13:23; 14:5).³⁷¹ There is also the mention of the death of Athaliah. It is not to be treated as a repetition of v. 16, but as a kind of summary or signature of the episode, which reiterates the crux of the matter at the end of the narration.

4.3 Conclusion

The synchronic analysis reveals that the text of 2 Kings 11 in its final form contains various goals. The reign of Athaliah causes a huge damage on the continuous rule of the Davidic dynasty. A rescue from this predicament comes from some protagonists, namely Jehosheba who hails from the Davidic royal family,

³⁷⁰ James Phelan. *Narrative 9* (2001) 210. It is interesting to note that Phelan mentions that redundant telling belongs to the author and not to the narrator. It poses a question on the motive of the author in employing this phenomenon. Genette speaks of ‘repeating narrative’, by which he refers to the instance of narrating a single event several times, but each time with a different point of view. Cf. Gérard Genette 1980: 115–16. This phenomenon is not applicable to the instance in v. 20 in our pericope.

³⁷¹ Cf. T.R. Hobbs 1985: 144. McKenzie sees a parallelism between Athaliah and Jezebel in whose time there was unrest in Israel (2 Kings 9:30–37). Cf. Steven McKenzie 2019: 433.

Jehoiada, the guards consisting of the carer and the runners, and the people of the land. Thereby, various themes emerge, like the relation between the temple and the palace, between the priesthood and the military, cutting of covenants with three different shades of meanings: an alliance for conspiracy against Athaliah (v. 4), a covenantal relationship of the people with YHWH (v. 17) and a covenant of loyalty of the people to the king (v. 17), the common elements between the Jehu narrative and 2 Kings 11, especially in the report on the annihilation of Baal cult, setting the character of Athaliah as parallel to Jezebel, etc. This narrative brings to light some characters like the wet-nurse, the carer and the runners, some places in the palace-temple arena like the bed chamber, the podium on which the king stands, the Sur gate, the horse-entrance and information like the division of guards and shifts to guard the temple. All of them paint a vivid picture about the political, social and religious life of the past.

2 Kings 11 contains rich narratological elements, even though it is silent about the characteristic of several characters involved in the narrative. The role of the Narrative Voice exhibits sufficient reliability. The forward and backward movement in the plot indicates urgency in narration. The happenings narrated in the text, too, take place in haste, except the discourse of Jehoiada. Though the discourse in the narrative is dominated by Jehoiada, he does not offer the readers any substantial reason for the act of dethronement of Athaliah. The reader can only presume that Joash is alive and so Athaliah loses her legitimacy. The visibility of the value system is meagre, as there is seldom any comment of the narrative voice. Thus, Athaliah is presented negatively through her murderous act, but not her regime. The focalization through the character of Athaliah does not create any sympathy towards her.

There is a thread that connects three focalizations spread in three verses, viz., vv. 1, 4, 14. In v. 1 Athaliah sees the death of her son. In v. 4 Jehoiada lets the guards see the son of the king, and in v. 14 Athaliah herself sees the son of the king. These are the only three occurrences of “seeing” in the narrative. They reveal a gradual progression to the succession to the royal throne and drive home the message unequivocally that Joash is the legitimate successor to Ahaziah. Thus, from the point of focalization, the reader understands that legitimacy of Joash is the key concept of the text.

Thus, from a narratological point of view, it is clear that there is no evidence to state that Athaliah’s regime was awful, but there are sufficient indications to

show that it was unacceptable. The narrative establishes the legitimacy of Joash as the ruler of Judah.

The synchronic study of 2 Kings 11 has revealed that there are some close connections between certain elements within the text in spite of the tensions with it. It establishes a close relationship between the house of YHWH and the house of the king, between the priest and the guards, between priesthood and the Davidic dynasty, and between the political and religious realm. It also highlights the religious elements spread throughout the text and the role of the people of the land both in political and cultic spheres. This study also invokes comparison between the cultic reforms of the South with that of the North and between Athaliah and the Omride royal family. This synchronic understanding of the text and the visibly noticeable discrepancies in the final text takes the reader to a diachronic analysis of the same text in order to read it from a different perspective.

4.4 Themes Concerning Historicity

4.4.1 Extra-biblical Attestations

While there are sundry extra biblical attestations to Omri, Ahab and Jehu, the reference to Athaliah in extra biblical sources is wanting. The Mesha Stela states that Omri oppressed Moab and the oppression continued till the half of the days of his son. The 31st line of Mesha stele identifies a new enemy of Moab. From the damaged description, it is believed to be “the house of David”. The Assyrian sources of the Kurkh Monolith on the battle of Qarqar (853 BCE) make reference to the chariots and foot soldiers of Ahab. The black obelisk of Shalmaneser III speaks of the tribute from Jehu around 841 BC. According to the Bible, Omri and Ahab are biologically related to Athaliah, and Jehu is her counterpart in Israel. Standing in relation to them in the biblical text need not necessarily prove the historicity of Athaliah. There is no direct historical source available to us about Athaliah. Even if Athaliah had actually existed, there is no guarantee that she had any connection to the Omride. On the other hand, Judah’s connection to or even its dependency on Israel at that time is plausible and hence the details about Athaliah is also thinkable.

4.4.2 Identity of Athaliah

Identifying Athaliah’s parents entails certain difficulties. The difficulty arises, because nowhere in the Bible it is clearly stated who her parents are. 2 Kings 8:26 calls her בַּת עֲמֹרִי (daughter of Omri). Based on this reference, some tend to

take her to be the daughter of Omri. 2 Kings 8:18, on the contrary, offers a clue to suggest that Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab, even though the Syriac version replaces בַּת with אָחֻוֹת and reads that Jehoram married the sister of Ahab.³⁷² Begrich, too, firmly believes that Athaliah was not the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (2 Kings 8:26), but of Omri. He understands בַּת־אֶחָב in 2 Kings 8:18 as “from the house of Ahab,” and not the daughter of Ahab, and thereby it would correspond to 2 Kings 8:27. In this way, Athaliah would become the sister of Ahab, and the daughter of Omri.³⁷³

However, the plain reading suggests that Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab. It is to be noted that בַּת could also refer to the granddaughter. Even though this usage is not common in the biblical tradition, by identifying Athaliah as בַּת Omri (8:26), she is introduced to the reader in the context of overthrowing the house of Omri and thus as a member of a condemned dynasty. So it was important for the biblical text to relate Athaliah to the Omride dynasty. The narration in 2 Kings 11 would place her also in the same predicament.³⁷⁴ Thus, the expression

³⁷² Replacing the daughter of Ahab with the sister of Ahab in the Syriac version was probably in the light of 2 Kings 8: 26 and chronological calculations. The chronological calculations show that it is not possible that Ahab had a grown up daughter to be given in marriage. Beecher and Harper calculate the time of Athaliah’s marriage to be between the 6th and 7th year of the reign of Jehoshaphat. Cf. W. Beecher and W.R. Harper. *OTS* 7 (1988) 158.

³⁷³ Cf. Joachim Begrich. *ZAWKNJ* 12 (1935) 78–79. Katzenstein concludes that Athaliah was the daughter of Omri and grew up as a young orphan in the royal court of Ahab. Cf. H.J. Katzenstein. *IEJ* 5 (1955) 197. Barrick proposes that Athaliah from Israel was not married to Jehoram of Judah, but to his elder brother whose name is not mentioned in the Bible; Jehoram was married to a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and he became the king of Israel after the death of his brother-in-law Ahaziah and later became also the king of Judah at the demise of his father Jehoshaphat. At the death of Jehoram, his nephew Ahaziah, the son of Athaliah succeeded him. Cf. Boyd Barrick. *VT* 51 (2001) 24–25. Such an explanation will make the chronological calculations tougher and will be contrary to 2 Kings 8:24 which clearly mentions that Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram. Whenever the normal father-son order of succession is disturbed, the biblical author does not fail to notify. Pharaoh Necco replaced Jehoahaz with his brother Jehoiachim (2 Kings 23:34). Jehoiachin is succeeded by his uncle Zedekiah (2 Kings 24:17).

³⁷⁴ Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 323.

“daughter of Omri”³⁷⁵ is to be understood in the context of marriage alliance³⁷⁶ between both the kingdoms and as relating Athaliah to the Omride dynasty and its condemnation.

³⁷⁵ Omri built up his domain through the policy of regional pacification and a series of diplomatic and strategic agreements, which enhanced commercial engagements with the Phoenicians to the north and the Judeans to the south and with their trading partners in the remote areas. Marriage alliance was part of this diplomacy. Ahab was married to Jezebel, the daughter of the Sidonian king Ethba'al, and Athaliah was given in marriage to the Judaeen king Jehoram. Cf. Ktziah Spanier 1993: 79.

³⁷⁶ When two equal parties contract a marriage, it meant that they wanted to maintain peaceful relation. If the stronger party offered his daughter to the weaker party, it meant that he wanted to add the weaker to his might. When the weaker party offered his daughter to the stronger one, it meant that he looked for protection from the other. Cf. Wolfgang Rölling. *Saeculum* 25 (1974) 11. The marriage alliance between the prince of Judah and the princess of Israel is variously understood. Dillard reads it as an indication of the influence of Omride Israel over a weaker Davidic Judah. Cf. Raymond B. Dillard 1987: 174. Bright understands it only as a friendly treaty between equals. Branch maintains that the marriage alliance included military and commercial benefits like revival of overseas trade (1 Kings 22:48). Cf. Robin Gallaher Branch. *Skriflig* 38 (2004) 539. But in the historical context of the marriage, it appears that the Omri dynasty of Israel was stronger than the ruler in Judah at this point of time.

5 A Diachronic Analysis of 2 Kings 11

5.1 Sitz im Leben

The pericope begins with the ו (waw) followed by a subject, which is an expression of narrative forms for introducing a new topic.³⁷⁷ 2 Kings 11 also marks a shift of attention from Israel to Judah after a long gap of narration. This shift contains a change in the plot and its location as well. The form of 2 Kings 11 contains credentials for a historical narrative in which events are depicted in a realistic manner without the involvement of any divine intervention. Its purpose is to report past events.³⁷⁸ 2 Kings 11 deals with court history depicting coups and changes in the kingship, but at the same time it blends it with an imaginative construction. For example, there is an element of imagination in the conscious parallel setting of events of the North and the South. Though the name of YHWH is mentioned, no miraculous happening by him is reported. Hence, in line with the view of Barré,³⁷⁹ 2 Kings 11 could be called a political narrative.

5.2 The Discrepancies in the Final Text

Athaliah is mentioned by name 6 times, out of which twice the longer form, i.e. Athaliahu is found. The first instance is relatively at the start of the narration (v. 2) and the other is at the end (v. 20). In both the instances, it is used in the context of explanation of an act: the former explains the reason why Jehosheba hid the child and the latter explains the reason for the jubilation of the people. Both are obvious to the reader even without explanations. Athaliah is already mentioned with the longer name in 2 Kings 8:26. This type of inconsistency occurs in the Bible. For example, the name of Ahaziah of Israel (1 Kings 22:40, 49, 51) has a shorter form (2 Kings 2:1); Jehoram of Judah (2 Kings 8:16, 25, 29) is at times called Joram (2 Kings 8:21, 23); and Ahaziah of Judah (2 Kings 11:2) is also called Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25, 26, 29; 11:1, 2).

³⁷⁷ Robin Gallaher Branch. *Skriflig* 38 (2004) 543.

³⁷⁸ Coat introduces the term “novella”, which has a complex structure unlike the tale and may contain a series of subplots which support the principal theme. It develops the particular intention of the author, be it humour, theological situations or a problem in the society. Cf. George Coats 1983: 8.

³⁷⁹ Barré calls the form of 2 Kings 9–11 a political novella. Cf. Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 46–47.

There is an obvious discrepancy with regard to the designation to Jehoiada. Jehoiada appears for the first time in the pericope in v. 4, which mentions him without any designation. Only in v. 9, he is introduced as a priest. From then on there is no consistency in the references to him: at times he is called by name without designation (vv. 4, 17), sometimes only with the designation without the proper name (vv. 10, 15c, 18e) and at other times with a combination of both (vv. 9a, 9d, 15a).

2 Kings 11:4 appears to be containing an apparent repetition of the clause “the house of YHWH”. LXX omits this repetition which adds strength to the view that the mention of the house of YHWH is not warranted a second time. Benzinger calls the double mention superfluous.³⁸⁰ It is, all the same, possible that the basic text had both. The MT provides an easy solution. The guards come to the house of YHWH to Jehoiada, as it is the location of his position. Then they cut a covenant and make an oath in the temple, because it is a holy place. The covenant is pertinent to the coup which seeks reliability in the house of YHWH, and the oath is concerning the secrecy about the son of the king, which also seeks its validity in the house of YHWH. As such, the house of YHWH becomes both the place of meeting, covenant and oath. Thus, it is not a repetition and it does not disturb the flow of narration.

Noteworthy is the reference to Joash as king even before he is anointed a king. Joash is first introduced as the son of Ahaziah in v. 2. Thereafter, he is not called by his proper name, but by the terms, either as “the son of the king” or “the king”. Vv. 4, 12 call him the son of the king, rightly so, as he is not yet made a king. Vv. 7, 8 (twice), 11 call him the king, even though the coronation is yet to take place. Fittingly, he is referred to as king after he has been crowned. It reveals a transition from being called “the son of the king” in v. 4 to being called “the king” in vv. 7, 8, 11. The plain reading of the final text would mean that Jehoiada and the military accepted Joash as king, even before he was ceremoniously enthroned. What is problematic is that Joash is once again called “the king’s son” in v. 12. Thus, v. 12 looks disconnected from v. 11, or even from vv. 7, 8 where Joash is addressed as king four times.

³⁸⁰ Cf. Immanuel Benzinger 1899: 156. Levin removes both the clauses “the house of the Lord” and the oath with the centurions from this verse and holds the plain reading, “Jehoiada took the centurions and made a covenant with them” as from the basic text. Cf. Christoph Levin 1982: 32.

V. 12 begins with third person masculine singular verb form. Jehoiada the priest is obviously the agent of action, even though it is not explicitly mentioned. Since the subject of the preceding verse is the runners, v. 12 should have mentioned the name in order to introduce another person as subject. In this way, there is a lack of connectivity between v. 11 and v. 12 in the final text.

The inconsistency between the terms “the people” and “the people of the land” is noteworthy. The people are mentioned for the first time in v. 13, where the startled Athaliah comes to the people. V. 14d speaks of the people of the land. Again in v. 17, we read about the people who are partners in the covenant, but immediately thereupon the people of the land jump into the action of destroying the cult of Baal. It does not clearly state whether the people and the people of the land are identical or different. In this context, it is important to note that v. 14c already speaks of the trumpeters standing by the king and yet again v. 14d speaks of the people of the land blowing the trumpets, thus doubling the act of blowing trumpets. In a way, the people of the land in v. 14 are presented as competitors to the trumpeters who are already present there.

The mention of the covenant in vv. 17–18 presents an interesting case. Jehoiada is the subject of cutting the covenant. The addressees include the king, the people and YHWH, which is peculiar to this pericope. The removal of Baal cult (v. 18) can be seen as a logical consequence of the covenant made in v. 17. All the same, it interrupts the narration between the covenant-making and enthronement.

5.3 Layers in the Text

The aforementioned observations have shown that the discontinuity between v. 11 and v. 12, and rupture after v. 4 (Joash is called the son of the king) and somewhere before v. 7 (Joash is called the king for the first time) should stand in correspondence with each other. V. 4 is directly related to v. 12, as in these verses Joash is called the son of the king.

In vv. 9, 10, 15, Jehoiada is called a priest³⁸¹ and a lot of importance is attached to him. It is the priest who commands the centurions of the carer and the runners and it is he who gives the centurions the spear and shields of David. In vv. 5, 7, 9, we

³⁸¹ There is also a mention of the priest in v. 18. But in the previous verse, there is no designation attached to Jehoiada and so we are not sure, whom does the designation in v. 18 refer to.

read of the Sabbath and these verses offer hints regarding the house of the Lord and keeping watch over it.

The change of language and thematic concern does not begin in v. 7, but rather in v. 5. And the change of subjects from v. 11 to v. 12 can be explained only if the block vv. 7–11 begins already in v. 5. Thus, vv. 5–11 forms a block. It shows that a bigger block from v. 5 running up to v. 11 and v. 15 contains interests over religious matters and demonstrates the authority of the priest.

The texts about the people of the land and the destruction of the cult of Baal could be distinguished from the rest. The appearance of the people of the land disturbs the flow of narration in vv. 14d, 18a, 19b, 20a. V. 18 begins a new topic of the destruction of the images of Baal, though the previous verses are concerned about the death of Athaliah and the covenant between the king and the people and YHWH. V. 19 contains a technique, similar to v. 14: the people of the land appear to be an addition to the centurions of the carers and the runners. The basic text probably ends with v. 19 which offers an appropriate climax to the exciting court narrative. It would also make the basic narrative a whole, beginning with a reference to the death of Ahaziah (v. 1) and ending with the enthronement of his son (v. 19). Thus, v. 20 probably does not belong to the basic text, but rather carries the theme of vv. 14d, 18 forward. Thus, the portions which speak of the people of the land seem to belong to the same layer.

The people, who appear for the first time in v. 13, appear again in v. 17. The people of the land appear first in v. 14 and thereafter thrice more. Some take the people as identical to the people of the land in vv. 14, 18–20.³⁸² But the analysis of the text shows that both cannot be treated as synonyms. Athaliah comes to אַחַזְיָהּ (v. 13). And the אַחַזְיָהּ אֲנֹכִי are blowing the trumpets (v. 14). It indicates functional differences between them. The people in v. 13 are not assigned with any specific role other than being mentioned as a party in the covenant (v. 17), but the people of the land are accredited with various roles, like blowing the trumpets (v. 14), destroying the Baal images (v. 18) and joyfully rejoicing (v. 20). In fact, they are added to the trumpeters (v. 14) which doubles the act of trumpeting. Similarly, they are added to the centurions of the carer and the runners in v. 19 in the act of

³⁸² Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 129. S. Talmon suggests that it is a conflation of two readings, even though LXX has both the elements with an emendation, as in the Chronicles. Cf. Shemaryahu Talmon 2010: 242. Fricke observes that the people of the land are added in v. 19, while the guards are added to the report in v. 15 and v. 16. Cf. Klaus Dietrich Fricke 1972: 145.

bringing the king. But the people of the land are not included in the original addressees of Jehoiada in v. 4, but they are attributed with the function of the trumpeters and of the centurions of the carer and the runners.

It further suggests that the people of the land mentioned in vv. 14, 18–20 belong to a layer different from the one in v. 13. Moreover, in vv. 14d, 18a–d, 20, similar redaction techniques can be traced. In v. 18, the people of the land appear in order to carry out the annihilation of the temple, altars and the images of Baal. Prior to this, the text focusses on the killing of Athaliah followed by covenant making. The target of the narration is changed to destruction of the house of Baal in v. 18. Likewise, v. 20 states that the city was peaceful. The previous verse reports that Joash sits on the throne. V. 20 changes the focus, as if the people of the land made sure that the city was peaceful. In this way, the people of the land are projected to have been the custodians of Yahwism and people who strived for peace in Jerusalem. Thus, the portions reporting the acts of the people of the land stand together stylistically and thematically. This would suggest that they could together be accredited to a later tradition.

As already noted, the construction of v. 17 is not clear. The number of covenants in it stands under question. In the Chronicler's account (2 Chr 23:16) and in LXX, it is mentioned only once. We do not have any evidence in the Bible for such a type of covenants with multiple covenant-partners and constellations. However, the covenant in v. 17 comes closer to the covenant between YHWH and Josiah, which the king made in the presence of the people (2 Kings 23:2–3). Apparently, 2 Kings 11:17 gives an impression that there were two covenants cut between three partners. But a closer reading suggests only a single covenant, obviously, with a double constellation: the first formulation in the covenant comprises YHWH, the king and the people. The second formulation binds the king and people together. The first part insists that the people should be the people of YHWH. The second part does not have any explicit implication attached to it, even though a commitment from the side of the people is implied.

Jehoiada has already made a pact with the centurions of the carer and the runners before the murder of Athaliah (v. 4). It is understandable that he makes a covenant between the new king and the people after the death of Athaliah. As noted above, these people are already mentioned in v. 13. And they appear again in v. 17, suggesting a connection between these two verses. But the element of obligation that the people should be the people of YHWH disturbs the flow of narration, about which there is no other indication in the previous verses. This obli-

gation is the consequence of the first constellation of the covenant, viz., between YHWH, the king and the people (v. 17b–c). Therefore, this constellation does not belong to the basic text, but to another layer. Again, the flow of v. 18 from this character of the covenant shows that the elimination of Baal is presented as the result of the covenant of the people with YHWH. In all probability, 2 Kings 11:17 has undergone changes, whereby an addition is made to the basic text. It is highly probable that the second constellation, namely the covenant between the king and the people would belong to the basic text and the first constellation containing the obligation to belong to YHWH and its subsequent action of removal of the cult of Baal in v. 18 would belong to a later redaction. If we extract the above mentioned verses from the final text, then what remains should have formed the basic narrative.

The above analysis shows that there are two major blocks, (i) vv. 1–4. 12–14. 16–17a.d and (ii) vv. 5–11. 15. There are also additions in vv. 14d. 17b–c. 18. 19b. 20. Based on these fragments, the text can be reassembled as follows:

(i) 2 Kings 11:1. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring. 2. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, the sister of Ahaziah took Joash, the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the sons of the king, who were put to death, him and his wet-nurse in the bedchamber and they hid him from Athaliah and he was not killed. 3. And he was with her in the house of YHWH hiding himself for six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land. 4. And in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and took the centurions of the carer and the runners and made them come to him to the house of YHWH and he cut a covenant for them and made them swear in the house of YHWH and let them see the son of the king. 12. He brought the king's son and gave to him the crown and the testimony. They made him king, anointed him and clapped their hands saying: Long live the king. 13. When Athaliah heard the noise of the runners, she came to the people in the house of YHWH. 14(a–c). And she saw: behold! The king was standing on the podium according to the custom and the commanders and the trumpeters by the king. 16. They laid hands on her and she came the way of horse-entrance to the house of the king and there she was killed. 17(a.d). Jehoiada cut a covenant between the king and the people. 19. And he took the centurions of the carer and the runners and they let the king descend from the house of YHWH, and they entered through the runners-gate into the house of the king. And he sat on the throne of the kings.

(ii) 2 Kings 11:5. And he commanded them: This is what you should do. One third of you, who come on duty on Sabbath, shall undertake the watch in the house of the king. 6. One third at the entrance of the gate of Sur and one third at the gate behind the runners and so you keep watch over the house alternatively. 7. And the two divisions of you who leave on Sabbath, and they should undertake the watch on the house of YHWH for the king. 8. And you shall assemble around the king, everyone and with weapons in his hand. If anyone comes inside the ranks, let him be killed. Be with the king, when he goes out and when he comes in. 9. The centurions did as all that Jehoiada the priest commanded and they took, each (of them) his men who come (on duty) on Sabbath, and who leave on Sabbath. They came to Jehoiada, the priest. 10. The priest gave to the centurions the spear and the shields which belonged to David and were in the house of YHWH. 11. The runners stood, everyone and with his weapons in his hand, from the right side(wall) of the house to left side(wall) of the house, at the altar and at the house around the king. 15. Jehoiada, the priest commanded the centurions, the captains of the army and told them, “send her out in front of the house through the rank, and let anyone who follows her, be slain by the sword”; indeed the priest said, “she shall not be killed within the house of YHWH.”

(iii) 2 Kings 11:14d. and all the people of the land blew the trumpets. 17b–c. YHWH and the king and the people that they should be people of YHWH; and between. 18. And the entire people of the land came to the house of Baal and they destroyed it. Its altars and its images they broke thoroughly, and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal in front of the altars and the priest appointed guards in the house of YHWH. 19b. and the entire people of the land. 20. The entire people of the land rejoiced and the city was peaceful, and Athaliahu they had killed by sword in the house of king.

Among these three fragments, only the first block can stand independently. It is the basic text and it narrates the survival of young Joash and his eventual coronation. The second major block cannot stand alone, even though it contains a flow of narration after an abrupt beginning. This block is characterized by priestly elements and concerns of the temple. The third fragment is mostly scattered additions. Its major interests are the people of the land and the destruction of the Baal cult.

5.3.1 Coherence of the Basic Text

Contrary to the final text in the Bible which describes the dethronement of Athaliah through the coup, underlining the contributions of the priest and the

people of the land, the basic narrative contains a succession story, involving the appropriation of the throne by Athaliah, its overthrow through her killing and eventually the successful enthronement of Joash. It begins with the report on Athaliah's ascent to the throne (v. 1). The saving act of Jehosheba (v. 2) who hid Joash in the temple (v. 3) suggests the closeness of the Davidic family to the temple personnel.

It should be followed by the preparation for the coup by Jehoiada (v. 4) and his act of convincing the centurions of the carer and the runners through the presentation of Joash, the sole survivor in the Davidic dynasty. It is followed by v. 12, whereby the subject matches the subject of v. 4. It would mean that after winning the confidence of the guards, Jehoiada brought the son of the king, crowned him and gave him the testimony. The guards made him king, anointed and acclaimed him as king. The basic narrative further reports the arrival of Athaliah on hearing the noise of the runners (v. 13) and her witnessing the scenes in the temple (v. 14a–c). Athaliah realized that there was a coup and reacted to it by tearing her garment (v. 14e–f). The basic text then narrates that the guards laid hands on her (v. 16). After her death, we are informed of a covenant between the king and the people (v. 17a.d). Subsequently in v. 19, the centurions of the carer and the runners are commissioned to bring Joash from the temple to the house of the king. The same verse reports that Joash sits on the throne. The basic narrative ends here. Thus, it has a perfect conclusion in the enthronement of Joash (v. 19). The basic narrative, in this way, illustrates the crux of the narration, i.e., the usurpation of throne by Athaliah, the survival of Joash, the campaign of Jehoiada, the military protection to Joash and the coronation of Joash.

With the above mentioned basic narrative (vv. 1–4, 12–13, 14a–c.e–f, 16, 17a.d, 19a.c–e), certain things become clear. The focus of the text is the enthronement of Joash and no one else. Even though Athaliah occupies a major portion of the narration, the elimination of Athaliah from the royal throne and her eventual murder serve only as subplots. It is also to be noted that the basic narrative does not call Joash a king³⁸³ before the coronation; rather it refers to him consistently as the son of the king (vv. 4, 12). This basic narrative speaks of the presence of the people (vv. 13, 17). But the involvement of the people of the land in the process of enthronement and the religious elements in the final text in all probability belong to later accretions.

³⁸³ Contrary to it, the redactions call Joash a king even prior to his coronation (vv. 7, 8, 11).

5.3.2 The Redactions

There are clearly two redactions in the text as it has been already noted. It is also evident through the themes which they are carrying forward. Though the removal of Athaliah from the throne and succession of Joash are the main themes of the basic narrative, the themes of the religious elements and the cult reform run through the text in its final form. The main theme of the enthronement of Athaliah takes a diversion due to the verses involving the commands of the priest and the emergence of the people of the land. The priestly redaction takes forward the theme of the authority of the priest and the sanctity of the temple, offering a huge significance to the role of the priest. Whereas the dtr redaction takes forward the theme of covenant and cult reform placing importance to the role of the people of the land.

5.3.2.1 Deuteronomistic Redaction

The term “people of the land” which appears in vv. 14, 18, 19, 20, is a significant terminology of the dtr writings (2 Kings 15:5; 21:24; 23:30). Barré rightly notes the special fondness of the dtr redactor for the people of the land and remarks that this fondness moved him to portray them as religious reformers and political supporters of Joash.³⁸⁴ In the contexts of the second book of Kings, the people of the land are portrayed as people who extend their support to the Davidic dynasty and are involved in the succession of the Davidic kings.

The hand of the dtr redactor is clearly visible also in vv. 17–18. Its ideological considerations, namely, covenant renewal and the removal of Baal worship are remarkable. Regarding the nature of vv. 17–18, there are conflicting views among the scholars.³⁸⁵ Würthwein’s reading of this section in 2 Kings 11 is compelling. He attributes a major portion of vv. 17–18a to DtrN. In his opinion, the redactor added the name of YHWH to the original text in order to bring a religious flavour and to derive the obligation “to be people of YHWH”. The subsequent event of destruction of the worship place of Baal is to be understood as the

³⁸⁴ Cf. Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 28–29.

³⁸⁵ Stade is also of the opinion that vv. 17–18 have deuteronomistic elements. Cf. Bernhard Stade. ZAW 5 (1885) 281–82. The dtr redactor expanded the account of Jehoiada’s coup to include an episode of cult reform. Cf. Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 120. Koch treats v. 17 as belonging to dtr covenant theology. Cf. Christoph Koch 2008: 269. Thomas holds that the text regarding the destruction of cultic objects of Baal in 2 Kings 11:18; 21:3; 23:4–5, 11b, 13 are part of post Hezekian History. Cf. Benjamin D. Thomas 2014: 201.

consequence of this covenant with YHWH.³⁸⁶ The insistence on the belongingness of the people to YHWH is evidently deuteronomistic.

2 Kings 11:17–18 can be related to 2 Kings 23:2–3, where we read of a covenant between YHWH, the king and the people. Even though the latter is differently formulated, it speaks of a triangle relationship and thereby stands closer to the covenant in 2 Kings 11:17–18. The dtr passages in 2 Sam 7:7–10, too, express the same kind of relationship. Even though the word *בְּרִית* is absent, the word *עַמִּי* (my people) is expressive of the same aspect.³⁸⁷ It indicates that the language in 2 Kings 11:17–18 is deuteronomistic.

2 Kings 11:18 tells us that the people of the land destroy the house and images of Baal. It would suggest that the destruction of Baal's house is the direct consequence of the covenant that they and their king make with YHWH. The renewal of the covenant and belongingness to YHWH demand that the people should do away with every other foreign cult (Deut 7:5–6)³⁸⁸ and adhere to exclusive Yahwism. Besides this, the mention of the temple of Baal is noteworthy. It is widely believed that most of the texts regarding the rejection of Baal worship belong to the dtr redaction.³⁸⁹ Robker underlines the verb *נָתַץ* (to break or destroy) which is used also in Deut 7:5 and Deut 12:3 in connection to the breaking of the images, and points out that Deuteronomy prescribes four actions against foreign cult: breaking of altars, smashing of pillars, cutting down their sacred poles and burning their idols.³⁹⁰ 2 Kings 11:18 also reports that *וַיִּתְצֶהוּ אֶת־מִזְבְּחֵיהֶוּ* (they destroyed his altars) *וַאֲת־צַלְמֵי שִׁבְרֵוּ הֵטֵב* (and broke his images thoroughly). It points to dtr expression. The overall interest of the Deuteronomist in covenant theology

³⁸⁶ Würthwein holds that the basic text described only a covenant between the king and the people. Cf. Ernst Würthwein 1984: 348.

³⁸⁷ Israel is not the people of the king, but the people of YHWH. 2 Sam 7:7 makes clear the relationship between God, the ruler and the people. God commands the king to rule over his people and thereupon lies the authority of the human ruler. Cf. Till Magnus Steiner 2017: 87.

³⁸⁸ Cf. Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 122.

³⁸⁹ Dtr theology attributes the collapse of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah to the disobedience of the deuteronomistic laws. In other words the forsaking of YHWH and turning to Baal led them to the catastrophe (2 Kings 17:35), especially after the marriage alliance between Ahab and Ethbaal (1 Kings 16:31–32). Cf. Simone Paganini. WiBiLex (2005) <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/10678/>. Cf. Sebastian Grätz. WiBiLex (2006) <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/14309/>.

³⁹⁰ The usage in 10:27b is similar to the usage in 11:18. Cf. Jonathan Robker 2012: 49. Hasegawa too ascribes 2 Kings 10:25b–27 and 2 Kings 11:18 to dtr redaction. Cf. Shuichi Hasegawa 2012: 24.

and the involvement of the people of the land indicate the hand of the dtr redactor in these verses.

The layer of dtr redaction has brought some visible changes in the basic text. It has extended effect of the revolt of Jehu in the North to the South as well, creating a link between the political revolt and religious reform. It insists upon the dtr ideology of cult centralisation and the theology of exclusive Yahwism. The destruction of the cult places of Baal demands the sole importance for the Jerusalem temple. Similarly, it demands that YHWH alone is the God of Judah and no other.

The dtr layer further attempts to justify the murder of Athaliah through the addition of cult reform in its redaction. It lets the reader deduce that Baalism flourished in Judah under the patronage of Athaliah. Athaliah, who has been already accused of misleading her husband and son (2 Kings 8:18, 26–27), is again presented by the Deuteronomist negatively in 2 Kings 11.

The analysis on the terms “the people” and “the people of the land” suggests that the mention of “the people” was found in the basic text and the Deuteronomist has expanded it with his specific term “the people of the land”. Through this redaction, the people of the land are not only brought into the narrative, but also are projected as having a huge share of responsibility in the elimination of both Athaliah and the Baalistic cult. The final verse of the chapter summarizes it all, whereby they are presented as those who brought peace in the city and as those who killed Athaliah. The basic narrative reports that Athaliah was killed by the guards (v. 16). The third person plural subject in v. 16 can only refer to the carers and the runners who are equipped with the weaponry. But v. 20 makes it appear that the people of the land had killed Athaliah. It is akin to the act of the people of the land who avenged the death of Amon (2 Kings 21:24) and placed Josiah on the throne of his father.

If these elements are removed from the final text, then the basic narrative would appear as a narrative about the enthronement of Joash as king amidst a palace intrigue concerning the succession of the king in Jerusalem resulted by the death of Ahaziah. Thus, the dtr accretion reveals the redactor’s theological interest in covenant, Yahwism and in the role of the people of the land. Conspicuous is the mention of the promise of God concerning the Davidic everlasting dynasty. The lack of regnal formula for Athaliah, too, attempts to hide the interruption in the long rule of the Davidic dynasty.

5.3.2.2 Priestly³⁹¹ Redaction

2 Kings 11:5–11, 15 reflect priestly interests and are concerned about the sanctity of the temple. The block of vv. 5–11, 15 employs a similar style of language. Even v. 15, which is physically distanced from the rest, carries the same tone of vv. 5–11. There is a specific command not to kill Athaliah inside the house of YHWH in v. 15 and it is thereby concerned about the sanctity of the temple. All these verses reveal the redactor's interests in religious affairs. They deal with some kind of concern over the purity of the temple, duties on Sabbath and validity through the weapons of David.

This block also marks a digression from what happens in the royal family to what Jehoiada the priest and the centurions do. These congruous features suggest that these verses together belong to a later tradition.

These additions to the basic narrative divulge common tendency in their communication. The interest to portray Jehoiada as a priest is vivid in these verses. Even though, Jehoiada is called a priest for the first time in v. 9, his commands in vv. 5–8 describe him as someone who has a thorough knowledge about the structure of the temple and the division of guards on Sabbath. These verses bring him closer to being a military authority. This can afford one to believe that these portions belong to the same layer. As this layer highlights the commanding authority of the priest and shows interest in the cultic affairs, it can be categorized as priestly redaction. The priestly redactor expanded the basic text by which he offered a greater role to the priest and elaborated his preparations. In the process, he designed the character of the priest in accordance with the understanding about the high priest of his time. Thus, this redaction also seeks to convey that Jehoiada the priest could command the guards and that the guards complied with his commands.

Another major concern of this redaction is the sanctity of the temple. It is clearly evident in the command of the priest in v. 15, “she shall not be killed within the house of YHWH”. Lev 21:11–12 prohibits the priests of any defilement of themselves and of the sanctuary due to contact with the dead. 2 Kings 11:15 looks to emphasize the priestly concern of the redactor that the temple shall not be defiled by bloodshed.

³⁹¹ The elements of priestly tradition could be different from the Pentateuchal Priestly Source.

In vv. 7, 8, 11, Joash is already called a king even before his coronation. For the monarchy, just like the high priesthood, dynastic succession is important. The crowning ceremony confirms it through the ritual but for the priestly redactor, Joash is automatically king immediately after the death of his father. Therefore, the priestly text calls Joash a king before he is ceremonially anointed a king. Besides this, the reference to David in v. 10 also contains significance. It shows that the priest had the weapons of David at his disposal. The concerns of these verses stand in concomitance with the intentions of the priestly writings.³⁹² Rhyder gives a clear description of the goal of the priestly writing in the following words:

Regardless of how many members of the community had access to P's prescriptions in the Persian period, the priestly groups that produced the text clearly aspired to use their history of origins, and its detailed ritual prescriptions, to stake their claim to central authority in the Yahwistic cult, and to reinforce the importance of centralizing social and cultic behaviours for the imagined community of Israel. Such a discourse might have bolstered the confidence of the Jerusalem priesthood at a difficult time in its history, a time when it needed to reimagine its claim to cultic centrality and its strategies for rallying communal support for building and financing its shrine.³⁹³

The concept of Sabbath in the final text, too, reveals the works of a later redactor. As shown earlier, the mention of Sabbath in vv. 5, 7, 9 displays a weekly understanding of the Sabbath. This aspect of the Sabbath is perceptible in other places of the Bible as well, like, the seventh day of creation narrative (Gen 2:2–3) and the additions to the manna narrative (Ex 16:5, 22–30).

The final text of 2 Kings 11 states that the covenant took place on the Sabbath. The choice of Sabbath by the priestly redactor which he relates with the covenant theology found in v. 17 could contain theological significance. Sabbath in the Hebrew Bible is a day to remember the creation (Gen 2:1–3), life in harmony with God (Ex 20:8–11) and the covenant relationship (Ex 31:12–17).³⁹⁴ As Sabbath was a day that recollects the history of Israel, it fits into the scheme of things. The thrust to be the people of the Lord in the renewal of covenant in 2 Kings

³⁹² For the priestly writings were intended to appeal the Israelites to shared socio cultic centers consisting of a unifying sanctuary, common ritual standards for sacrifice and purity and a core priestly family led by an Aaronide high priest. Julia Rhyder 2019: 166–67.

³⁹³ Ibid. 168.

³⁹⁴ Cf. Andrew Shead. RTR 61 (2002) 19.

11:17 echoes particularly their relationship with God expressed in Ex 31:12. Therefore, Sabbath would be an appropriate day for the renewal of the covenant, as it concurs theologically with one of the purposes of the day. Therefore, it is probable that the priestly redactor designed the text in such a way that the covenant takes place on Sabbath.

As noted above, the priestly text in 2 Kings 11 endows the priest with secular powers, to whose commands the guards obey. It projects a picture of the priesthood in accordance with the model of Phinehas with secular powers attached to it. It attempts not only to specify the priestly status of Jehoiada but also to expand his functioning as a priest. The priestly redactor makes efforts to show that: (i) the priest is the guardian of the house of YHWH and he pays attention to the cult in the temple and to the sanctity of the temple (ii) the priest is not merely the caretaker of the weapons of David, but also the custodian of the interests on Davidic dynasty (vv. 10, 12). Interestingly, the priestly text of 2 Kings 11 does not mention the people at all.

The priestly redactor attempts to show that both the religious and secular powers are invested in the priest. In doing so, the priest is made to appear as the central figure in the enthronement of Joash. If we remove the priestly layer from the text, it would still show Jehoiada as the one who initiated the coup, but the importance attached to him as priest would disappear. Then the focus on the enthronement of Joash would be very much visible.

5.4 Conclusion

The diachronic analysis explains some problems concerning the coherence of the narration from the domain of the formation of the text. This attempt also sheds light on the themes analysed in the synchronic method and offers clarity over them. As a result, the text can be understood from a different perspective. In this process, this thesis suggests a new reconstruction for the literary historical formation of the text.

The basic narrative is far less differentiated than the final text and follows a precise and factual narrative style. Athaliah as a character has a bigger share in the basic narrative, due to which it looks as an authentic Athaliah-narrative. Athaliah is the only character who speaks (v. 14). She also appears to be a power conscious woman who is quick to react. For instance, immediately after the death of her son, she takes over the reign of the kingdom through the murder of her grandchildren. Similarly, on seeing the newly crowned king Joash, she reacts instan-

taneously with the tearing of her garments and with the utterance “treason”. The temple bears a very strong accent in the basic narrative, where it becomes the place of asylum for the young Joash and later the place of his coronation. The elimination of Athaliah from the throne and replacing her with Joash is accomplished through a palace revolt carried out under the guidance of Jehoiada. The carers and the runners are called to his aid in the coup and they carry it out per his direction. As a whole, the basic text is a narrative about the threat to and the rescue of the Davidic dynasty.

The dtr redaction adds essentially two elements to the basic narrative. By the addition of the removal of the cult of Baal, the dtr redaction lets one presume the existence of such a cult in Jerusalem and thereby it creates a parallelism between the reign of the Omride dynasty of the North and the reign of Athaliah in the South and between Jezebel and Athaliah. Accordingly, the political coup receives a religious aspect of annihilation of cultic aberrations. This element could be compared to the revolt of Jehu in the Northern kingdom. The people of the land, whom we find in other dtr texts, too, as strong supporters of the Davidic dynasty, are presented here as agents of all the happening in Jerusalem. With these two elements, the narrative is harmoniously integrated with the narrative course of the books of Kings.

The priestly redaction, which is called so on account of its interest on priests, is relatively strongly engaged in the text. This redaction calls the character of Jehoiada, a priest, adorns him with a long speech and construes military authority in him from his deed of assembling the military officials in the temple. The redaction also adds a phase of planning and preparation for the coup. In its course, it speaks of the shifts in duties for guarding the temple. In fact, this redaction transports the method of keeping watch over the temple by the priestly circle in the post-exilic period to the happenings of pre-exilic times. This strategy is probably intended to show that the priest could get ready with a huge number of armed guards for the overthrow of Athaliah. The priestly redaction also conveys that it is because of the priest, Athaliah was murdered in the palace and not in the temple, thereby it holds on to the purity of the temple and the contribution of the priests towards it.

6 An Intertextual Analysis of 2 Kings 11

Intertextuality has become a lively topic of discussion in the domain of the biblical studies in the recent times. It is an acknowledged fact that some biblical texts make intentional references to other biblical texts. There could be deliberately cited texts and also subtle echoes of another text, with specific words, phrases, images, themes, forms, and structures as connecting devices.³⁹⁵ Some texts seek to assert their meaning by relying on another text, while some do it by overthrowing another text. Yet some other texts make references to the texts which are well known to the readers in view of obtaining authority for the present text and of enhancing the understanding of the reader. Intertextuality studies these elements and interprets the text in the light of its concurrence with other texts.

The likelihood of connection between two or more biblical texts is strengthened by common vocabularies and shared themes in the wider context of the texts, either with explicit references or with implicit connectivity. Intertextuality can occur on the level of the author, when the author makes the literature dependent on other literatures. It can also take place on the level of reception, when the reader relates a literature with others and derives its meaning through their relation. In the intertextual analysis, the time of composition of the related texts play an important role, so as to determine, which of the texts inspired the other and to know whether one alludes to another.

This chapter analyses the interrelatedness of 2 Kings 11 with Ex 1:1–2:10; 2 Sam 7; 1 Kings 1:28–40; 2 Kings 9–10; 2 Chr 22:10–23:21 and the book of Esther.

6.1 Exodus 1:1–2:10

The obvious similarity of infanticide in Exodus 1:1–2:10 and 2 Kings 11 offers a strong platform of correspondence which is to be uncovered. The central theme of Ex 1:1–2:10 is the birth of Moses who was destined to be the deliverer of the Israelites out of the bondage in Egypt. 2 Kings 11, too, informs us of the happening which took place during the infancy of Joash.

³⁹⁵ Cf. Joyce Baldwin 1984: 26. Cf. Suk Yee Lee 2015: 24.

There are a few similar vocabularies handled in both texts, but they are sharp in meaning. The word ‘arose’ is of significance. The expressions, “Athaliah arose” (וַתִּקַּם in 2 Kings 11:1) and “a new king arose” (וַיִּקַּם in Ex 1:8) have קום as the root word. In Exodus, rising would mean, getting up or standing up or rising from slumber. In the context of Athaliah, it would mean: rising to the state of greater activity. The arising of the new king in Exodus would normally mean: to come on the scene or appearance of a king. In the context of Ex 1:8, it contains a hostile sense and indicates not a peaceable ascension to the throne.³⁹⁶ Thus, in both the contexts the verb is used, not merely to denote a mere rising, but also to indicate turmoil to follow.

The verbs used to mean “to kill” differ in both the texts. The expression וַתִּשְׁמַד in 2 Kings 11:1 whose root word is שָׁמַד would mean annihilate, obliterate, make them vanish, put to death, etc.³⁹⁷ In Ex 1:16 וַתִּמָּוֶת means ‘you shall put him to death’. Its root מוּת means ‘to die’.³⁹⁸ The hiph’il form here contains a sense of causative. Though different verbs are used in both the texts, the meaning implies causative.

In Ex 2:3, the statement “she could hide him no longer” has the word הִצְפִּינוּ whose root is צָפַן. Here it is used as a transitive verb with a person as the object. 2 Kings 11: 2 uses הִתְחַבֵּא twice in the same verse to mean ‘to hide’.

Both in Ex 2:7 and 2 Kings 11:2, the same root word יָנַק is used in order to refer to the wet-nurse. In both the places the hiph’il verb form is applied. In Ex 2:7 prefix conjugation is used besides the participle.

Thus, the thematic considerations, the use of common vocabularies and their implications point to the intensity of the relationship between Ex 1:8–2:10 and 2 Kings 11. Therefore, our study requires an analysis of Ex 1:1–2:10 and then a comparison between both the texts.

6.1.1 Traditions of Ancient Birth-Narratives

The birth of Moses marks two transitions. For the Israelites, it is a time of transition from settlement in Egypt to exodus and wilderness. For the Egyptians, it

³⁹⁶ The verb קום in the combination of the preposition על would often mean ‘to rise inimically’ or ‘to arise against someone’ (Judg 9:18; 2 Sam 18:32; Is 31:2; etc.). Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 1158. Cf. Paul J. Ray Jr. *The Shiloh Excavations* (2019) 1.

³⁹⁷ Cf. Wilhelm Gesenius 2013: 3.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. 650.

is a time of transition from one dynasty to another. This observation is brought out in the text through the phrase “a new king ... who did not know Joseph”. The background of transitions moulds the character of Moses, the deliverer. The birth-story of Moses bears shades of similarity with the birth-story of Gilgamesh³⁹⁹ and Sargon. Gilgamesh is believed to have ruled the city of Uruk around 2800 BCE. He was the pre-historic ruler of the first dynasty. His mother gave him birth in secret. At the time of his birth, it was reportedly expected that a hero would be born and would set the world in movement, cause the collapse of the existing kingdom and world order, and create a new era. The mother of the child threw him down from the top of the tower in order to escape the wrath of the king. The child was miraculously saved by an eagle which carried him on the wings. The expectation about the new era was later fulfilled by Gilgamesh.⁴⁰⁰ Although there is no event-to-event correlation between the birth narratives of Gilgamesh and Moses, the motif of miraculous escape from infant-death and deliverance of the people binds them together.

The birth narrative of Moses bears close similarities also to a Mesopotamian legend regarding Sargon of Akkad, the founder of the Semitic dynasty in Babylon around 2300 BCE. Sargon is said to be born of a changeling mother, who was probably a priestess and of an unknown father. Not willing to reveal the birth of her son, his mother set him adrift in a basket and left it on the river Euphrates. A certain gardener named Akki drew him out of water and adopted him as his son. Sargon rose to conquer the kingdom and ruled for 45 years.⁴⁰¹

In all probability, the legend of Sargon was already known to the editors of Exodus, by the time the story of Moses was written. They have adapted and incorporated it with the birth narrative of Moses.⁴⁰² In general, this type of adaption is

³⁹⁹ The episode of the birth of Gilgamesh is not recorded among other texts concerning him in the ancient Sumerian and Akkadian sources. Most of the texts came from the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh. Some of its versions antedate the first millennium B.C., although important fragments of an Akkadian recession have come from the middle of the second millennium. The birth narrative is found in a later Greek version. Cf. Ephraim Avigdor Speiser (trans.). *Epic of Gilgamesh* 2011: 39.

⁴⁰⁰ The theme of the epic was translated with some variations into many cultures of the neighbourhood. Cf. M. El-Attar 2009: 24.

⁴⁰¹ Cf. Ephraim Avigdor Speiser (trans.). *ANET* 119 2011: 82–83. It is to be noted that the role of the gardener in the legend of Sargon is similar to the role of the gardener who found Gilgamesh after he had been rescued by an eagle. Cf. Paul E. Hughes 1997: 14. M. El-Attar 2009: 25–26.

⁴⁰² Cf. M. El-Attar 2009: 25–26.

utilized in order to legitimize a ruler who has come to power under extraordinary circumstances and through strange ways.⁴⁰³ Utzschneider and Oswald extract three common elements in most of the mythical stories regarding exposed child in the antiquity. (i) The life of a new born future ruler would be in danger, due to various reasons, like legitimate connection of the child to the throne or prophecy that the child would cause the fall of the present ruler, etc. Consequently, a general massacre would be ordered. (ii) A compassionate person, probably a relative of the exposed child comes to the rescue of the child. This person might send the child either to a desert or set it on a river. Another goodhearted person would appear on the scene and would adopt the child. (iii) The child would grow up, overcome the existing predicament, and eliminate the cruel ruler. The exposed child with the doubtful parentage who was once rescued would thus become the deliverer of others.⁴⁰⁴

The dramatic events around the birth of Moses need to be analysed against the background of the above mentioned ancient birth narratives. Beegle fixes the adaption of this birth narrative into Moses' story even prior to the time of the biblical author. He hypothesises that after Moses became famous among the Israelites, the story about the basket on the river was inserted into his birth narrative in order to make it more dramatic and offer such a person of grandeur a remarkable beginning just like Sargon.⁴⁰⁵

There is a phenomenon of reception in this regard which bases its ground on the prediction about a glorious future, as in the case of Sargon. Even though it is not explicitly stated in the biblical account, taking inspiration from this legend, it is said that the Pharaoh in the book of Exodus attempted to prevent the emergence of a king from among the Israelites. It is attested by a late embellished version of the birth story of Moses which ascribes the scheme of the Pharaoh to kill the Hebrew male babies to a warning of a wise man that a Hebrew woman was about to give birth to a deliverer.⁴⁰⁶ Redford argues that a prophetic warning need not have taken place for a general massacre, but it is certain that the king would be

⁴⁰³ Cf. Helmut Utzschneider and Wolfgang Oswald 2013: 66.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Dewey M. Beegle 1972: 53.

⁴⁰⁶ Josephus speaks of sacred scribes who announce the birth of an Israelite baby who would later humble the rule of the Egyptians and elevate the Israelites. Cf. Flavius Josephus 2000: 188–89. Cf. Donald B. Redford. *Numen* 14 (1967) 218.

unaware of the particular identity of his future rival.⁴⁰⁷ From this analysis one can assume that both the motifs of killing the male babies of the Israelites and causing death of the first born of Egyptians (Ex 12:29) can be seen as attempts to prevent the rising of a saviour.

Besides the above comparison, it is interesting to note some of the unique features of the biblical account. (i) The names of the parents are not mentioned in the tale of Sargon, while the family of Moses is actively at play in the tale of Moses, and the names of the parents and his sister appear in the later narrative in the book of Exodus. (ii) People involved in the rescue act are either close relatives of Moses or people of significance. Moses is nursed by his own biological mother; he is rescued by a family member of the one who seeks to kill him; (iii) The narrative contains no mythological and extraordinary elements; it contains no religious element either,⁴⁰⁸ unlike the legend of Sargon in which unnatural elements are at play. (iv) The beneficiaries of deliverance in both the narratives are contrasting. Sargon emerges as a hero for the people who adopted him, but Moses on the contrary becomes a hero for the people of his birth against the people who adopted him.⁴⁰⁹ In this way the birth narrative of Moses stands apart. The semblance of infanticide during the time of the birth of Jesus the Messiah (Mt 2:16), would also show new light into this theme. One can draw links between Josephus' narration of Moses and the report of infanticide in Matthew.

The massacre of the Hebrew children at the time of the birth of Moses was against the context of the rapid growth of population of the Hebrews in Egypt. It is related to the promise of God to Abraham (Gen 15:3–5; 17). But the lack of mythological elements in the birth narrative of Moses differentiates it from the legends of Gilgamesh and Sargon. All the same, the influence of the legends of

⁴⁰⁷ Redford does not see the Moses birth story as a secondary reworking on a primary Egyptian version in which the daughter of the Pharaoh is the mother of Moses. He deems the canonical version as the primary adaptation of the motif to the person on Moses. Cf. Donald B. Redford. *Numen* 14 (1967) 219. Davies speaks of two possible versions of the same legend. The Egyptian legend relates that a king is warned of a boy to be born to his daughter and of being killed by him in the future. The Israelite version has modified it to the biblical account. Cf. G. Henton Davies 1967: 62.

⁴⁰⁸ The affection and concern of the mother of Moses, the mercy of the daughter of Pharaoh and the intelligence of the sister of Moses have played crucial roles in the saving act of Moses. All these have taken place through the providence of God. Cf. Paul Heinisch 1934: 42. Though there is no explicit mention of a deity at play in the rescue act of Moses, it involves belief that a special providence watches over the child from its birth. It is unravelled as the story progresses. Cf. Philip Hyatt 1971: 62.

⁴⁰⁹ Cf. George W. Coats 1988: 47.

the region in the biblical writing cannot be overruled.⁴¹⁰ We understand that Moses had close affinity with the Egyptian royal court. The biblical author tries to ground it with his explanation in the birth narrative. The author probably ascribed some sagacity to the birth of Moses influenced by the legends prevalent in ANE at the time.

6.1.2 Characters and Themes in Ex 1:1–2:10

A deeper analysis of the various characters in Ex 1–2 is imperative, if we want to establish the nexus between this text and 2 Kings 11. It is notable that not only the story of the surviving child but also some characters in a text would remind the reader of some other characters in the other.

6.1.2.1 Pharaoh

The biblical author does not mention the name of the Pharaoh at the time of Moses' birth. The mention of the new king in Ex 1:8 presupposes the end of the previous king and of comparatively benevolent days. It is striking that this extremely powerful character lacks proper name and background information. It stands in contrast to the preceding verses which offer genealogical certainty of the sons of Jacob. Bodner considers this anonymity of the new king and the paucity of data indicating a kind of fear that would befall amidst the Israelites.⁴¹¹ The Pharaoh's disassociation from the Hebrews is explicitly revealed by the verb *יָדַעַ* (to know). This verb denotes a long term and deep relationship. Durham is right in his observation that since this king did not have any experiential knowledge about Joseph, he should have been the first king of a new dynasty, and so had no obligation to respect or show consideration to a non-

⁴¹⁰ Gressmann takes clues from the legend of Sargon and concludes that the original attempt of the Pharaoh was to destroy the deliverer-child. This motif is secondarily expanded with the story of threat to the existence of whole people which serves as the backdrop to the story of the birth of Moses. It would suppose that the birth story is the oldest tradition and the attempt to kill Moses in his babyhood had originally nothing to do with the attempt to genocide. Cf. Hugo Gressmann 1913: 1–4. Childs on the contrary argues that the birth story of Moses is an exposure saga which reflects several traditional materials common to the Near East. Cf. Brevard S. Childs. JBL 84 (1965) 112–115. The point of Childs is convincing. Certainly ANE materials are found in the birth narratives of Moses. It would also question the historicity of the genocide carried out by the Pharaoh.

⁴¹¹ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016 /b: 47–48. The paradigm “Pharaoh” in this phase of Israel's history could be established as a ruler whose methods of control were ruthless. Cf. David M. Gunn 1982: 74.

native group.⁴¹² The art of narration itself differentiates the new Pharaoh from his predecessors mentioned in the book of Genesis. The very introductory verses about the Pharaoh are expressive of his oppressive tendencies.

6.1.2.2 Depiction of the Pharaoh

It is a rhetorical ploy that first-person plural is used in the Pharaoh's address to the people (Ex 1:10), as he reveals the intended action against the Israelites. Through this formulation in first-person plural, the text identifies the Pharaoh as part of the people of Egypt. He is presented as if standing in solidarity with the people. At the same time, his speech contains negative shades, too. He is the one who speaks before the officials. The speech of the Pharaoh addressing the people of Egypt is effusive and aimed at influencing the people with his opinion against the Israelites. It might suggest a more insecure and malignant personality.⁴¹³ Gendi delineates the characteristics of the Pharaoh from his speech in the following words: "It is clear that Pharaoh's speech is deliberative, not judicial. He is trying to persuade the Egyptians against the sons of Israel. He does not prove anything against them. Instead, he speaks in hypothetical terms, even while suggesting a specific plan ... Pharaoh's rhetoric may be irrational but that does not mean it lacks cogency."⁴¹⁴ It becomes vivid through the act of the Egyptians who plunge into action and appoint taskmasters over the Israelites. However, his speech could be conceived as paradoxical. He succeeds in his goal, but not in its effects. He presents himself wise, but makes himself a fool. He deceives himself winning one group of people while losing another.⁴¹⁵ The lack of unanimous public support is further revealed in his interaction with the midwives. Indu-

⁴¹² Cf. John I. Durham 1987: 7. The statement "Pharaoh ... did not know Joseph" need not be understood as absence of knowledge, but rather lack of appreciation of Joseph and his contribution to Egypt. Miketta holds that it is more reasonable to think of a change in the system than a change of dynasty. Only a Pharaoh who was not a Semitic would ignore the good deeds of Joseph. Cf. Karl Miketta 1903: 27–28. In the ancient biblical world, knowledge was not considered as rooted in the intellect and mental activity, but rather experiential, embedded in emotions. So knowledge might encompass contact, intimacy, concern, relatedness, and mutuality. Not knowing would imply dissociation, indifference, alienation. Umberto Cassuto 1967: 9. Cf. Nahum M. Sarna 1991: 5. The new king's ignorance of Joseph marks a change in generation among both the Egyptians and the Israelites. Cf. S. Joel Baden. VT 62 (2012) 136. Naturally, lack of knowledge can be attributed to the change in generation. All the same, the approach and the language point to change in dynasty, too.

⁴¹³ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016/b: 72.

⁴¹⁴ Magdi S. Gendi 2012: 58–59.

⁴¹⁵ Cf. Gordon F. Davies 1992: 54–55.

bitably the midwives are not loyal to him. The Pharaoh thinks that he acts shrewdly, but he is a fool who is easily deceived by the midwives. Thus, his plans and results are bundles of paradoxes.

The Pharaoh is not presented in the Bible as one enjoying absolute power and popularity. Childs remarks, “The Egyptian king is not presented as the incarnate Son of Re, who rules with absolute sovereignty over a nation, but as a clever despot who sets about to convince his supporters of his plan.”⁴¹⁶ Like any new king, he is faced with a series of problems, which were not probably noticed by his predecessors, or were handled differently by them or were viewed as advantages (Gen 47:6). The large and incredibly prolific colony of foreigners in the delta region, a territory unfashionable to his predecessors, but the very corner of the kingdom counted among his problems. He had a double task: to deal with this people shrewdly and to find justification for doing so.⁴¹⁷ In his own words, there was insecurity for him and his people in their own land. The Pharaoh himself makes reference to the unchecked growth of Hebrew population. It suggests that fear and envy of a group of people can lead one to oppression, persecution and even extermination.

The miscarriage of his attempts makes the Pharaoh furious. The choice of verbs used is expressive of his frustration. Earlier he spoke to his people (Ex 1:8) and then to the midwives (1:15). Both the times, his plan was aborted and the Israelites were not enfeebled. Hence, he commands the third time (1:22), not clandestinely but openly. The difference in the verbs highlights the intensity.⁴¹⁸ There is a shift from אָמַר (vv. 8, 15) to צָוָה (v. 22). The title attributed to him is to be underlined. Initially the ruler is mentioned as מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם (the king of Egypt) in 1:15a, 18a, but in the context of the answer of the midwives he is called פַּרְעֹה (Pharaoh) in 1:19a, 22a.⁴¹⁹ This change of attribute marks the intensity of his

⁴¹⁶ Brevard Childs 1974: 15. The speech of this Pharaoh is incidentally the first speech in the book of Exodus. Meyers remarks that this is part of larger rhetorical strategy that sheds bad light on the new Pharaoh, for the Bible is not shy of mentioning the names of foreign kings. Denying this particular Pharaoh his proper name may serve to demean him. Cf. Carol Meyers 2005: 34.

⁴¹⁷ Cf. John I. Durham 1987: 7.

⁴¹⁸ Cf. Umberto Cassuto 1967: 16. Royal words open and close the story. The addressees expand from midwives to all the people. Along with harder words, his orders are expanded. Cf. Phyllis Tribble 2012: 300.

⁴¹⁹ Pharaoh is not a personal name. Literally it means ‘Great House’. This term was designated to the royal palace and later it became an epithet for the king of Egypt. Cf. Philip

anger and determination. He turns gradually crueller than before. The whole episode reveals that the Pharaoh was not astute enough, but was unrelenting and would go any extent to achieve the target.

6.1.2.3 Midwives

In ancient times, the midwives played a crucial role in birth-giving and in the ceremony related to it.⁴²⁰ Bodner remarks that the midwives in the Bible are minor characters who can utter words of direct speech which can play an important role in furthering the plot and theme. Shifra and Puah have such an opportunity in the book of Exodus.⁴²¹ Prior to the genocide, the Pharaoh had commanded the midwives to kill the Hebrew male boys. But the midwives did not follow his words and thus contributed to the failure of the project. It is a paradox that the Pharaoh wanted to handle things wisely, but those who practised in conformity to the old wisdom tradition are the midwives. Their astute answer saved several innocent children. Their answer indicates that either the midwives were lying that they couldn't massacre the children due to quicker delivery of Hebrew babies or it was a biological fact. If they had been lying, it could be due to reverence for life as it is a gift from God (Ex 20:12–13).⁴²² Thus, both the midwives are presented in good light in the text.

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- Hyatt 1971: 58. The title Pharaoh might contain a mild irony, reminding the reader of the tremendous power of the ruler, when things go out of control. Cf. Gordon Davies 1992: 81.
- ⁴²⁰ The Hittite word for midwife meant 'woman who knows the internal organs'. She is the one who is skilled in causing to give birth. The Hittite midwife's practice included antenatal rituals and preparation for the mother, besides establishing the date of birth. She also incanted mythological recitations during labour pain, in order to cast off the evil. Cf. Jackie Pringle 1993: 132. Midwifery was one of the few occupations meant exclusively for women. It seems to have been a prestigious profession in ancient Egypt. Cf. Nahum Sarna 1991: 7.
- ⁴²¹ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016: 68. Shifra and Puah attributed with proper names are easily distinguished from the rest of the women in the episode. The other women stand only in relation to a male character, viz., either of Moses or of the Pharaoh. Cf. Drorah O'Donnell Setel 1992: 34.
- ⁴²² Cf. Alan Cole 1977: 55. The response of the midwives is witty. The response implies that the Hebrew women were more vigorous and healthy than their Egyptian counterparts. Cf. John Durham 1987: 12.

6.1.2.3.1 Ethnic Belongingness

The proper names of the midwives Shifra and Puah⁴²³ are not part of the higher ruling class. It is interesting to note that these two characters of lower ranks on the socio-economic status of the time are adorned with proper names⁴²⁴ by the author, whereas the king who occupied the highest rank was deprived of it. Moreover, these two women will be rewarded with houses by God (Ex 1:21), while the dynastic house of the new king remains a mystery.⁴²⁵ It adds to the debate over the ethnicity of the two midwives, whether they were Egyptian midwives for the Israelites or Hebrew midwives themselves. Ackermann and Propp suggest that the midwives were of Hebrew origin.⁴²⁶ At the same time one cannot avoid

⁴²³ The meanings of the proper names, Shifra and Puah are “beauty” and “girl” respectively. Puah is also used in verbal form in Is 42:14 to depict the birth process. Cf. Umberto Cassuto 1967: 13–14.

⁴²⁴ The author’s intention in establishing these two characters is debated. It could be to make the readers to remember their virtues or to project the typical characteristics of Israelite women in general. Davies thinks that it is more important to talk about the effect it has wrought than to discuss the reason. These two names are set with the mention of two store cities Raamses and Pithom (Ex 1:11) and against the omission of the name of Pharaoh. It would indicate that the significant people are not the mighty, but those who do the will of God. Cf. Gordon Davies 1992: 78–79.

⁴²⁵ Keith Bodner 2016: 71. Isbell is not certain that this God is YHWH, but ascribes it only as an unidentified deity. Charles Isbell 1982: 40. The reward of the house is also understood as the reward of longstanding family. Josef Scharbert 1989: 16.

⁴²⁶ Ackermann explains that the description of the midwives could be rendered as “to the Hebrew mid-wives” or “to those midwiving Hebrew women”. The vocalizers of the Hebrew Bible opted for the former. Cf. James Ackermann 1974: 84–86. Propp observes that their names are not of Egyptian origin, but either of Hebrew or a dialect related to Hebrew and that their courageous defiance of Pharaoh indicates their Hebrew ethnicity. Cf. William Propp 1999: 137. Langston argues that if the midwives were Egyptians, it can be understood that they exemplified God’s ability to use non-Hebrews to achieve his purpose; and if they were Hebrews, it can be understood that they became symbols of the national struggle for freedom. Cf. Scott M. Langston 2006: 18. Schmidt assumes that the narrative treated the midwives originally as Egyptians. And the editors of the biblical text enforced this change in order to make them look like Hebrews, because of the reading that God let them play a crucial part in the increase of the Israelites. Cf. Werner H. Schmidt 1988: 19–20. On the contrary, Jacob argues that it is unlikely that the names of the midwives were Hebraized, for the author would not have changed their names out for gratitude for them, if they had been Egyptian names. Cf. Benno Jacob 1992: 18. In my opinion, it is clear that the midwives were at service both for the Hebrews and the Egyptians (1:19). By their names the midwives appear to be Hebrews, but from the command they receive from the Pharaoh, it is reasonable to hold that they are Egyptians. In general, the Pharaoh commands the cooperation of the Egyptians in reducing the population of the Hebrews. The assumption finds support from Ex 1:18–19 which gives the impression that the Pharaoh accepts their reasoning for the failure of the plan, which portrays the Hebrew women stronger.

the question, how could the Pharaoh rely on the fidelity of the Hebrew midwives in his effort to kill the male babies belonging to the race of the midwives themselves. It is to be reiterated that the Bible does not fail to mention the goodness present in the Gentiles too. Like the Egyptian princess, the midwives exhibit respect for human life. Beyond the question of their ethnicity, the biblical author tries to emphasise the goodness and fear of God exhibited by these two women who become instruments of God's saving act.

6.1.2.3.2 Religious and Moral Aspects of the Midwives

The midwives are portrayed as people of high religious values. "The midwives disobey their ruler. Unlike him they have a sense of right and wrong, they know what is acceptable and what is not."⁴²⁷ Their fear of God overwhelms their fear of the king. Incidentally, the midwives are the first to fear God in the book of Exodus and thus they become the forerunner of the Pharaoh who would later fear the Lord God in the plague narrative (Ex 10:16–17), even though the reasons vary. The midwives in Ex 1 are presented with the traits of wisdom, viz., fear of God. Childs rightly observes: "The piety of the midwives reflects the religious ideal of the wisdom circle. Their refusal to obey Pharaoh stems from a 'fear of God'. This piety evidences itself in cleverness and in the ability to meet the accusation of Pharaoh with rational arguments."⁴²⁸ While the Pharaoh wanted to deal with the situation cleverly, it is the midwives who possess the characteristics of wisdom through their fear of God. Therefore the midwives are not merely clever but wise.

Through their clear and bold arguments, the midwives in fact ridicule and outsmart the new king. They dealt the royal order astutely and made the king to change his tactics. Thus, they indirectly express the powerlessness of the king in this regard,⁴²⁹ and their courage is set against the fear of the Egyptians at the

⁴²⁷ Cornelis Houtman 1993: 223.

⁴²⁸ Brevard S. Childs 1974: 13.

⁴²⁹ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016: 79. Setel notes that the rebellion of the midwives is highly suggestive from a literary point of view, within the larger Exodus story and is part of the larger pattern of female deception as in Rebekah (Gen 27:5–17) and Rachel (Gen 31:34–35). Cf. Drorah O'Donnell Setel 1992: 34. Raveh sees the act of the midwives in resisting the order of the ruler, as a symbolic act in the birth of a new nation called Israel. Theirs is a revolutionary act in the context of slavery and it contains hope for the future. Cf. Inbar Raveh. *Nashim* 24 (2013) 12.

Hebrews.⁴³⁰ In fact, they initiate the resistance to the highhandedness of the Pharaoh, though tacitly, which would be later carried out massively by Moses.

The answer of the midwives contains a paradox. “Shifra and Puah take advantage of their profession in order to finagle the king of Egypt: they pretend to disclose a trade secret and he falls for the ruse.”⁴³¹ Nonetheless, the midwives cleverly save their lives by producing a reason, which the king believes.⁴³² Thus, the midwives are presented to the reader as astute women who fear God rather than Pharaoh and who overcome the punishment of disobedience by their adroit answer.

6.1.2.4 Pharaoh’s Daughter – Preserver of Life

The daughter of the Pharaoh is one of the three characters who were instrumental in saving the life of baby Moses. Besides her, the list includes the mother of Moses who decided to risk her life in the act of saving her baby⁴³³ and the elder sister of Moses who was left to care for the child after their mother left the child (v. 4). Pharaoh’s daughter is anonymous like the Pharaoh himself.⁴³⁴ It is notable that she is introduced as the rescuer of the child, and not with her proper name.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁰ Cf. Gordon F. Davies 1992: 74.

⁴³¹ Keith Bodner. *An Ark on the Nile*. 82.

⁴³² What the midwives said, could be a lie. It could be treated as the annunciation to the Pharaoh regarding the birth of Moses. Cf. James Nohrnberg 1981: 52. On the one hand, the answer of the midwives apparently portrays Hebrew women stronger than their Egyptian counterparts. On the other hand, it shows the Hebrew women as barbarians who give birth like animals. The problem is due to the disagreement in the translation of 1:19. Some translate it as: the Hebrew women are animals who do not need help delivering. James Edward Hogg translates as follows: “... these Jewesses are not like the ladies of Egypt, but are mere animals – before the midwife can get to them they have been their own midwives”. James Edward Hogg. *AJSL* 43 (1927) 299. The midwives save themselves with the contemptible expression “the Hebrew women are like animals”, by which they are not suspected of disobeying the king. This expression will be more offensive without the article of comparison. Cf. Arnold Ehrlich 1968: 261. Driver rejects this translation and presents it as: “the Hebrew unlike the Egyptian women were speedily delivered when they were in labour or because they were prolific.” G.R. Driver. *ZAW* 67 (1955) 247.

⁴³³ While the mother of Moses plays a crucial role in the saving act of Moses, his father Amram plays only a subordinate role. He is only mentioned later (Ex 6:20) as a man from the house of Levi.

⁴³⁴ The book of Jubilees ascribes her the name Tharmuth. It is an effort to anchor the story in historical names.

⁴³⁵ Presenting the princess as the rescuer of the child is not a typical characteristic of Egyptian folk tales. Usually it is the task of the goddesses. But here an Egyptian princess is presented in Hebrew perspective. Cf. Brevard S. Childs. *JBL* 84 (1965) 116. It seems to be improbable that an Egyptian princess would bathe herself in the Nile at the time of this event. Cf. Philip Hyatt 1971: 64.

She is shown in better light that she sympathises with the child, knowing well of its Hebrew origin. Providentially, the child was entrusted to the care of its real mother for some time.⁴³⁶ Childs looks at Pharaoh's daughter as a woman of spontaneous pity and recons that the author gave a completely open and positive description of her.⁴³⁷ She is described as a neutral figure due to the mercy shown to the opponents of her father. The rescue act of the daughter of Pharaoh is full of challenges. This challenge is overcome with her positive attitude towards the suffering resulting in courageous decisions.

The pericope also reveals a transition in the daughter of Pharaoh. She not only rescues the baby Moses but also adopts him and so becomes his adoptive mother.⁴³⁸ By rescuing and then adopting the infant Moses, the daughter of Pharaoh becomes the adoptive mother of Moses, a Hebrew boy. As a whole, the daughter of Pharaoh is portrayed as the mother of life.

6.1.2.5 Increase in Population

Ex 1:1–2:10 deals with two intertwined sections: The first section (1:1–7) is introduced with the genealogy of a people-group and substantiated by the mention of wrath of the Pharaoh. And the second section (1:8–14) describes the failure of the attempts to thwart the increasing population.⁴³⁹ The episode takes place after a considerable time had been passed since the death of Joseph. Hence an increase in population is understandable. The growth in population has not exploded all of a sudden, but was gradual though rapid. The four verbs in v. 7 – פָּרָה (to be fruitful), יָרָב (to be prolific), רָבָה (to multiply) and עָצַם (to grow strong) – are indicative of it and they could be seen as representing important phases of human

⁴³⁶ It is uncertain, how long the child was with its mother. Keil and Delitzsch consider it as until the time of weaning, which is about two to three years. Cf. Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch 1949: 429. Fagnani surmises that Moses was at least seven and not more than twelve when he was brought back to the daughter of Pharaoh. Cf. Charles P. Fagnani. *BW* 10 (1897) 424.

⁴³⁷ Cf. Brevard Childs 1974: 13.

⁴³⁸ Cf. Charles Isbell 1982: 41.

⁴³⁹ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016: 41. After mentioning here the names of the sons of Jacob, the book of Exodus does not mention it again. It is to be noted that the subject of Exodus is always the people of Israel as a whole. The people of Israel are not to be seen as having been fragmented by tribal differentiation, but as one unit. Cf. Cornelis Houtman 1993: 220. There are considerations to argue that Ex 1 need not have been the original introduction to Ex 2. Without the first chapter of the book of Exodus, Ex 2:1–10 is understandable. Cf. Konrad Schmid 2010: 140.

life.⁴⁴⁰ It is also seen as the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham.⁴⁴¹ The hand of God, thus, is to be seen behind this steady growth of the Hebrew population.

The author leaves a note of transition from v. 1 to v. 7, from the sons of Jacob to the people of Israel. It intends to show that the Jewish people are numerous now.⁴⁴² The Hebrews had to experience a reversal of fortunes due to the increase in their population. In fact, the narrative relates three plans of Pharaoh⁴⁴³ to curb the increasing Hebrew population: savage workload; killing the male babies through the cooperation of the midwives; and drowning the born babies in the Nile. The target of the first plan was the Hebrew men and it was done quite openly. The next two plans targeted the male babies of the Hebrews, in which the former is handled clandestinely and latter quite openly and even with a public order.

6.1.2.6 Forced Labour

The event of Exodus has been attested at several places in the Bible.⁴⁴⁴ Exodus presupposes enslavement in Egypt which determines in effect the importance of Exodus itself within the complex of sacred historiography. Thus, the element of

⁴⁴⁰ Cf. Georg Fischer and Dominik Markl 2009: 29. This interpretation is originally given by Raschbam, a Jewish scholar in the middle ages.

⁴⁴¹ In the context of the fulfilment of God's promise, His silence amidst adverse suffering of His people raises many eyebrows. Gowan proposes that the apparent absence of God in Ex 1–2, in contrast to His depiction as the dominant figure in the rest of the book is intentional. Cf. Donald E. Gowan 1994: 2–4.

⁴⁴² Cf. Brevard S. Childs 1974: 2. The genealogical frame work of Gen 46:8ff is used in Ex 1:1. But the actual order of names follow the older tradition based on the eponymic wives of Jacob mentioned in Gen 35. Ex 1:6 mentions the death of Joseph, with which the entire generation of Genesis is dead. The reader is to be aware of this shift to Israel as a nation, even though many would locate this shift only from the time of settlement in Canaan. Cf. Terence E. Fretheim 1991: 24.

⁴⁴³ Dohmen notes four plans of the Pharaoh: the burden of construction, brutal enslavement with the imposition of savage works, murder of the new born babies through the help of midwives, and the drowning of male babies in the Nile. He sees the second as the harder form of the first. This makes Egypt the House of Slavery for the Hebrews (Ex 13:3, 14; 20:2; Deut 5:6; 6:12; Jer 34:13; Mi 6:4; etc.). Cf. Christoph Dohmen 2015: 104–105.

⁴⁴⁴ The Elijah and Elisha cycle (1 Kings 16–2 Kings 13), the covenant renewal and the reform of Josiah (2 Kings 23:21–22), Ezra's journey to Judea (Ezra 6:19–22), Hosea's call to repentance (Hos 2:16–17) and several other biblical narratives bear allusions to the Exodus. Barmash highlights the places of Exodus in the biblical narratives as follows: "The Exodus served as the matrix of memory in which other events were fitted, and the present was fused into the past ... The Exodus was a narrative template, a matrix of events and concepts, that when imposed on other events and concepts revealed new dimensions." Pamela Barmash 2015: 14.

forced labour and enslavement is the basis for biblical historiography.⁴⁴⁵ Forced labour was very common in the ancient world. The Egyptians were no exception to it. The Hebrews had to undergo a hard time at the change of regime probably by a new dynasty. The new ruler showed no regard for the history of these task forces.⁴⁴⁶ This must have been a profound shock for them, as it came due to the change in regime and not a gradual enforcement. Even though it does not mean enslavement, one cannot ignore the affliction involved in it. The repletion of the word עָבַד which means “to serve” (Gen 30:26; 31:6), “to work or till the ground” (Gen 3:23; 4:2), “to labour” (Ex 6:5) etc., makes the reader understand the agony of the Israelites in Egypt. In fact the root word signifies some kind of bondage.⁴⁴⁷ Reportedly, they had to experience hardships due to the rise in their population. Beyond building the storage cities Pithom and Raamses⁴⁴⁸, the Israelites are now made into a forced labour group.

The biblical narrative, however, does not focus on the servitude of the forced labour, but on the attempt to impede the population growth. For forced labour is

⁴⁴⁵ Cf. Samuel E. Loewenstamm 1992: 24–29. Ps 81 has allusions to the enslavement in Egypt. The intent of v. 7 becomes clear in the light of the book of Exodus. One can understand the various stages of manufacture of bricks and that a labourer had to carry heavy heap of wet clay, grasping it with his hands. *Ibid.* 50.

⁴⁴⁶ Cf. Godfrey Ashby 1998: 9. Cole suggests that the task masters were the Egyptian officials under whom there were minor Israelite officials. Cf. Alan Cole 1977: 54.

⁴⁴⁷ Jacob considers that the Israelites initially only laboured for Pharaoh (1:11), but later as the Egyptians got involved into the act (1:13), life became harder for the Israelites. During this time, the status of the Israelites remained the same as free immigrants and in theory, they retained their legal rights, but in fact the situation was cruel. Jacob further notes that although the term עָבַד is used five times in v. 11, there is no formal statement that calls the Israelites עֲבָדִים (slaves). Cf. Benno Jacob 1992: 15–16. The biblical Hebrew does not have the vocabulary to distinguish different types of servitude. What the Israelites underwent in Egypt was probably one form of compulsory state labour. Cf. Carol Meyers 2005: 34–35.

⁴⁴⁸ The mention of the Egyptian cities, Pithom and Raamses in Ex 1:11b obviously underlines the historicity of the event. But these two cities were built much later than the Exodus event. Redford states that v. 11b is a later interpolation. One cannot rule out the possibility that the Israelites knew the tradition that their ancestors built cities in Egypt and to this tradition the names of Pithom and Raamses were added later. Cf. Donald Redford. *VT* 13 (1963) 416. Zenger pays attention to the psychological and social aspects of the situation and defines the Israelites at this phase as a minority which was persecuted, pushed to the edge, exploited and not understood. Cf. Erich Zenger 1978: 32. The reference to building store-cities has a parallel in 1 Kings 9:19. Solomon used only foreign population as labour force and the Israelites served as taskmasters. The labour force consisted of those who had survived the general genocide of the natives by the Israelites. Cf. John Van Seters 1994: 24.

used only as a means to achieve the target of curbing the Hebrew population. The failure of the measures to control it necessarily leads to other strategies.

6.1.2.7 Aborted Plan of Male Infanticide

The attempt to birth-control in Ex 1:16–22 takes a more focussed approach after the Egyptian strategy to inflict forced labour was destabilised.⁴⁴⁹ The Hebrew midwives were ordered to kill all their male babies. The midwives normally guarantee lives of babies and not the other way. This plan was strategically plausible, because according to the Jewish custom, the father of the child won't be present at the time of the delivery of the child. The midwife alone would be with the mother and so there won't be any witness over there.⁴⁵⁰ But the midwives did not comply with the order (Ex 1:15–22) and caused the eventual failure of the second plan, too. The actual reason which thwarted the second plan was neither the bold defying action of the midwives nor their loyalty to the Hebrews, but rather their fear of God. The biblical author underplays the elements of threat for the midwives for omission of a command which was diametrically opposed to their office as bearers of life.⁴⁵¹ A plan that was designed secretly and communicated secretly by the Pharaoh is eventually aborted mysteriously through the God-fearing midwives. The fear of God would mean “trust in God's redemption”. The midwives' fear of God here has led to the rescue of the child Moses.

6.1.2.8 Command to Genocide

The third strategy of the Pharaoh is communicated to all the natives and so it is no more a secret plan. Genocide was not only to be executed by the Hebrew functionaries, whose refusal would put their loyalty in question, but also by the entire Egyptian populace. It involves the entire native folk which is commanded to comply with the order. They are ordered to drown all the male babies in the Nile.⁴⁵² Causing death by drowning was probably a common method in a country like Egypt which has sufficient water flow. However, this strategy of the Pharaoh too did not meet with total success, although partial execution of the plan cannot

⁴⁴⁹ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016: 65. Zenger reads the strategies of the Pharaoh and the counter effects worked out by YHWH as a battle between the wisdom of the Pharaoh and that of YHWH. Cf. Erich Zenger 1978: 33.

⁴⁵⁰ Cf. Erich Zenger 1978: 35. Speaking of infanticide, Josephus mentions only the male children fathered by Hebrew men and adds that the Egyptians midwives should watch over such deliveries. Cf. Flavius Josephus 2000: 189.

⁴⁵¹ Cf. Brevard Childs 1974: 17.

⁴⁵² Drowning the children could have possibly been also an offering to the river god. Cf. Godfrey Ashby 1998: 11–12.

be negated. For, if this plan were totally successful, then there would have been a complete eradication of the Hebrew progeny.⁴⁵³ We have no report of the children who were saved like Moses and of the duration of this murderous act.

It is clear that the Egyptians targeted only the male babies. In the view of Houtman, the Pharaoh chose to kill only the male children, because men were viewed as bearers of the essence of any particular group of people, and women could be absorbed in another people through marriage.⁴⁵⁴ But it leads to the natural question, why has the Pharaoh not ordered to kill the men, which could have been a swifter way to annihilate the Hebrews. Especially the efforts to put away the lives of the new born males suggest that there was another reason other than the apparent increase of population.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, the theme of Egyptian attempt to check the Hebrew population is dropped, once Moses survives from the attempt. Thus, this theme provides only as a backdrop for the birth account of Moses,⁴⁵⁶ and loses its validity after Moses is secure. The above analysis suggests that fear of increase in Hebrew population may not be the only cause of the massacre.

6.1.3 Comparisons and Motivations

6.1.3.1 Pharaoh and Athaliah

Scholars draw comparison between the Pharaoh in the book of Exodus and Haman, the Agagite in the book of Esther.⁴⁵⁷ The character of Athaliah bears no lesser resemblance with Pharaoh. Herod in Matthew's Gospel could be added to this list of merciless murderers. The common element of all these narratives is genocide or infanticide, albeit in varying forms. Here we restrict ourselves to the comparison between Pharaoh and Athaliah.

⁴⁵³ Cf. John I. Durham 1987: 12. Brueggemann calls the plan of Pharaoh to systematically murder the babies, irrational suggesting insanity caused by fear and rage. Cf. Walter Brueggemann 1994: 695.

⁴⁵⁴ Cf. Cornelis Houtman 1993: 261. Females could be also taken as concubine and they were not seen as serious threats to the Egyptians, but partially as useful members. Cf. Godfrey Ashby 1998: 11–12.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. 1993: 261–62.

⁴⁵⁶ Cf. J. Cheryl Exum 1994: 40.

⁴⁵⁷ Brevard S. Childs 1974: 13. Pharaoh and Haman rely on their own wisdom, intending to destroy Israel but both perish in their own folly. Cf. James Ackermann 1974: 80–81. A comparison between Athaliah and Haman would be taken up in the later part of this chapter.

There is a resistance movement against the plans of Pharaoh. His orders were routinely undermined by his daughter, the midwives and the mother of Moses.⁴⁵⁸ It is also a paradox that the Pharaoh considers females as not problematic and allows them to live, and the females defy the order of the Pharaoh. In the same way, Jehosheba, a daughter of the royal family boldly but secretly works against the plan of Athaliah.

The speech of the Pharaoh (Ex 1:9–10) suggests an impending war against the enemy nation. At this juncture, the loyalty of the Israelites is placed under suspicion. Unchecked multiplication of population cannot be the sole reason for this suspicion. As pointed out earlier, the hypothesis of fear that Israel would go up from the land cannot be ruled out. Along with it, there could have been signs which might have disturbed the internal security of Egypt.⁴⁵⁹ Moreover, the murder of the male babies to the exclusion of the female babies provokes relevant questions. Depriving a folk of its male offspring would indubitably weaken its fighting capacity. But it would bear dividends in the future. Thus, more than the fear for an impending war, the fear for the growing population of the Hebrews and the fear for a possible dethronement of the Pharaoh seem plausible.

It indicates a fear that the Israelites might rule over the natives in the future. Based on this hypothesis, it is worth asking whether the action of Athaliah has something to do with the fear of losing importance in the kingdom as an immediate effect of the death of her son. This consideration finds support in the reference to her in the regnal accounts of both her husband (2 Kings 8:18) and in the mention of the name of Athaliah in the account of her son (2 Kings 8:26).

6.1.3.2 Pharaoh's Daughter and Jehosheba

Pharaoh's daughter, בַּת־פַּרְעֹה and Jehosheba, בַּת־יְהוֹשֻׁבָבֶל belong to the royal families of their times and are presented as the rescuers of life. Both women were portrayed as courageous characters that stand by a child in danger of death. They dare even to go against the will of the respective rulers. The Egyptian princess

⁴⁵⁸ Cf. Keith Bodner 2016: 91–92.

⁴⁵⁹ The generation which longed to get into the land of Canaan was probably dead. It is not probable that the Israelites in Egypt fostered the thought of leaving Egypt as long as they had a comfortable living. They are but still strangers. Neither does the reader see any indication of a desired settlement in Egypt. Nonetheless, Egypt can be only a passage way and a temporary residence from the perspective of the promise of God. Strangely, these strangers do not get merged and integrated with the natives. This is how God plays in history. Cf. Cornelis Houtman 1993: 221.

rescued the child purely out of compassion and the narrative blatantly mentions it. The element of compassion is not mentioned in the text regarding Jehosheba. Jehosheba knew who the child was, but her saving act was equally brave. It is to be seen, whether it was part of her plan already at the time of saving the child that she would later on produce the child and get the throne back from Athaliah. Both the characters disappear from the main stream of further narration in the respective texts. The intentions in the respective rescue acts too do not play any important role in the narrative.

6.1.3.3 Moses and Joash

Both the infants, Moses and Joash have gone to the edge of death and were rescued. Both were destined to be leaders of their folks. Moses was to become a great liberator of the Israelites from slavery. Joash had also a heavy responsibility of stabilizing the kingdom and the Davidic dynasty. Such elements in the story bring both the infants nearer. Jonestone describes it in the following words: “In both cases there is a systematic attempt to slaughter all the relevant male children; in both there is a royal princess, the ruler’s own daughter, who frustrates the design of the royal parent; in both there is the hiding of the child and the procuring of a wet-nurse.”⁴⁶⁰ The transition of Moses and Joash could be cited as examples for wisdom elements. Both of them rose from danger to the status of being the head of their people. Rising from danger and becoming the saviour is an aspect of wisdom. It overcomes the evil plans of the wicked and succeeds eventually.

6.1.3.4 The Midwives and the Wet-nurse

The instructions given to the midwives in the book of Exodus appear to have been done in private (v. 15–19). It implies that the midwives must make sure that the boys were to be secretly suffocated and declared to be stillborn.⁴⁶¹ These two midwives become an example for wisdom, for they choose to fear and obey God and to disobey the civil authorities.⁴⁶² The wet-nurse in 2 Kings 11 had to carry on her duty in secret and she had to remain in hiding, too. The text is silent about her in the later part of the narration. Bravery is the hallmark of all these three women. But the difference lies in the recognition for their good deeds. The midwives in the book of Exodus are rewarded by God (Ex 1:21), whereas there is no

⁴⁶⁰ William Jonestone 1998: 122.

⁴⁶¹ Cf. William T. Miller 2009: 16.

⁴⁶² Cf. Christoph Dohmen 2015: 108.

mention about the reward given to the wet-nurse in 2 Kings 11. It exposes the social life of the midwives and the wet-nurse in their respective times.

6.1.3.5 Life versus Death

The birth story of Moses contains a bunch of antithetical characters. Pharaoh and Moses are the first of this kind. While the Pharaoh looks to destroy life, several characters like the mother and sister of Moses, the daughter of Pharaoh, the maid-servants and the midwives attempt to preserve life.⁴⁶³ The same can be said in the context of the life of Joash. Athaliah and Joash are antithetical characters here. Athaliah looks to take away the lives of the grandchildren. Jehosheba serves as foil to her. The wet-nurse and Jehoiada, too, belong to those who protect life in the first part of the narration.

6.1.4 Inspirations from Ex 1:1–2:10

6.1.4.1 The Motif of the Birth of a Saviour

The common thread that connects the birth-narratives of Moses, Joash and Jesus is the infanticide. At the birth of Moses, the Israelites hoped for redemption from slavery in Egypt. The events immediately after the birth of Joash show that a considerable section among the Israelites desired to be relieved from the reign of Athaliah. At the time of Jesus, the Jews hoped for freedom from the Romans. The common event of assassination of the innocent children is naturally connected to the ancient legends like that of Sargon.

Though these narratives converge at the point of a common motif, i.e., the rescue of a future saviour, the effects are contrasting. Moses emerges as one of the greatest leaders of the Israelites and leads them out of Egypt. The survival of the child Moses is followed by the fulfilment of a great plan of God in relation to Exodus. Though the motif is same in the case of Joash, as the rescue of the child Joash did not bear any astonishing impact in the life of the Israelites, except for the restoration of the temple works in Jerusalem. He is not seen as a saviour of the folk and not counted among the greatest of the kings of Judah. Even his goodness is attributed to the guidance of the priest Jehoiada (2 Kings 12:2). Had Joash been not rescued, the Davidic dynasty would have seen its end, but not the entire nation of Judah and not the entire folk Israel. And so the function of this motif can be different.

⁴⁶³ Cf. Paul E. Hughes 1997: 20–21.

6.1.4.2 Two Promises in Crises

The murder of children by Pharaoh puts the promise of God to Abraham in jeopardy. If the Hebrews were not let have their male offspring alive, then there is an enormous danger that the entire race soon would come to extinction. Therefore, the Pharaoh does not merely challenge the Hebrews in Egypt, but God himself, who promised Abraham to multiply his progeny.⁴⁶⁴ Through the rescue of Moses, the promise of God is sustained. At the same time, the slavery of the Hebrews in Egypt is to be seen as fulfilment of God's words in Gen 15:13–14. The suffering in Egypt should antecede Exodus as a preparation for deliverance and blessings for the future. It would only delay the fulfilment of the promise of the land, but does not cancel it.

Similarly, the murder of all the children of Ahaziah sets the promise of God to David (2 Sam 7) at stake, but does not abort it. 2 Sam 7 promises three things: (i) establishment of a place of worship (v. 10); (ii) the provision for peace for the people (v. 11a); and (iii) a dynasty for David (vv. 11b, 16). 2 Kings 11 describes that these are under crisis. But within a span of 6 years, they are re-established:

(i) There is an emphasis in 2 Sam 7:10 on fixing a place of worship, on its permanence and immobility. The place can be understood as a place where the deity arises and manifests himself (Num 10:35; Ps 132:8). Here it looks forward to the erection of a sanctuary in Jerusalem.⁴⁶⁵ In 2 Kings 11, Jerusalem is already established as the central place of worship for Judah. Though there is no direct mention that the worship in Jerusalem was jeopardised during the reign of Athaliah, a cult for Baal is part of the narrative. The destruction of its altar by the protestors under Jehoiada brings back the importance to Yahwism in Jerusalem.

(ii) God promised David that he would build a dynasty for him. The house mentioned in 2 Sam 7:11 refers to the dynasty of David. This dynasty should be built

⁴⁶⁴ Cf. Christoph Dohmen 2015: 107. Scharbert notes that the fulfilment of God's promise leads to a severe crisis of being targeted by the ruler. Cf. Josef Scharbert 1989: 14. Exum, too, agrees that the theme of Israelite proliferation is in accordance with the blessing of Gen 1:28 and the promise in Gen 17:4–8 and Gen 35:11–12. This theme is reflected all throughout the first chapter of Exodus. A variation of the multiplication motif is found in Ex 2:1–10. Cf. J. Cheryl Exum 1994: 40–41. Siebert-Hommes opines that Moses carries forward the life of the twelve tribes, which is signalled by the narrative that he was assisted by twelve daughters. They include the two midwives, the mother and the sister of Moses, Pharaoh's daughter and the seven daughters of the priest of Midian under the twelve daughters. Cf. Jopie Siebert-Hommes 1994: 62–74.

⁴⁶⁵ Cf. Kyle McCarter Jr. 1984: 203.

by David's descendants in general. This should be a collective promise of ruling for the זָרַע (offspring) (2 Sam 7:12).⁴⁶⁶ זָרַע in fact can refer to both an individual and all the successors. Dietrich underlines the expression עַד-עוֹלָם (for ever) in 2 Sam 7:16. Here God promises David that his house and his kingdom will be established for ever. The reign of Solomon would mark its beginning and it will be continued by several of his offspring successively.⁴⁶⁷ This Davidic dynasty should be a lasting one, even though the erring kings would be punished. V. 14–15 clearly shows that the heirs of David, who are the adopted sons of Yahweh, would be chastened, if they are disobedient. V. 15 assures that the grants of kingship will remain in effect and would not be conditional to the future behaviour of the heirs. Thus, a continued divine favour is promised by Yahweh.⁴⁶⁸ The promise of an everlasting Davidic dynasty would face an immediate end, if the massacre carried out by Athaliah against כָּל-זָרַע הַמְּמַלְכָה (all the royal offspring) had been completely successful. The word זָרַע in 2 Sam 7:12 and in 2 Kings 11:1 links the promise and the threat. But the plans of Athaliah were averted thanks to the timely intervention of Jehosheba and Jehoiada. Thus, the promise of God for a long Davidic dynasty was upheld.

However, on the level of the basic text, 2 Kings 11 does not emphasize any direct relation to David other than the reference to David in v. 10, and it does not assume the promise of David either. Possibly both the promise of David in 2 Sam 7 and the basic text of 2 Kings 11 have their origin in the time of Josiah⁴⁶⁹ and were formulated in view of securing a direct relation to David. This was impe-

⁴⁶⁶ The insertion of v. 13a narrows it to refer to Solomon. Probably the deuteronomistic editor added v. 13a in order to focus the promise on Solomon, the temple builder. Cf. Henry Preserved Smith 1951: 300. See also John Mauchline 1971: 230. Pietsch believes that the oldest portion of the prophecy of Nathan concerning the dynastic royal oracle could be traced in 2 Sam 7:11b–16. The original oracle on David was later formulated in accordance with the Judean royal ideology, in order to legitimize the rulers of the house of David. And the redactor of 2 Sam 7 historicized this oracle and adapted to Solomon and related it to the motive of the construction of the temple. Cf. Michael Pietsch 2003: 31–32.

⁴⁶⁷ Cf. Walter Dietrich 2019: 670.

⁴⁶⁸ Cf. Kyle McCarter Jr. 1984: 207–208. The descendant of David would become the adoptive sons of God. However, they would be punished for their transgressions in cult and politics in order to bring them back to God. Cf. Walter Dietrich 2019: 671–674.

⁴⁶⁹ Pietsch suggests that the oldest portion in the prophecy of Nathan, i.e. the oracle on David could be ascribed a date as early as 9th CBC. The redaction which interprets of the promise of Nathan as referring to the house of David and as grounded on the unconditional fidelity of YHWH probably took place in the late-preexilic period. It was followed by the redaction of a broader national Davidic theology and of the temple theology in the later periods, i.e. in the exilic and post exilic period. Cf. Michael Pietsch 2003: 31–53.

rative for 2 Kings 11, since a regnal formula for Athaliah would otherwise show that the dynasty is no more Davidic.

6.1.5 Conclusion

The birth narrative of Moses bears signs of impact from the legends. The great rescue of Moses is attached to the narrative, probably, following the sagacity of the great leaders of the folks in ANE. The infancy narrative of Joash is only a subplot in 2 Kings 11, but it has the shades of the birth narrative of Moses. In both the instances, royal women, midwives and wet-nurse contribute to the rescue of the child in danger. A striking similarity is that in both narratives, the divine intervention is absent and thus they differ from the legends. As the Hebrews underwent suffering in Egypt, likewise, the people in Jerusalem might have been discontent with the reign of Athaliah, though not on equal degrees. However, 2 Kings 11 does not describe the social life of the people. The participation of the people in the revolt and the statement that the city Jerusalem was peaceful after the death of Athaliah (2 Kings 11:20) might express the discontentment of the people. As Exodus is an event of transition from slavery to freedom, the death of Athaliah marks a transition for the people of Judah, from the rule of Athaliah to the rule of a descendant of David.

On the level of a dtr connectivity between the books of Samuel and the books of Kings, the act of Athaliah murdering the עֲרֵב is an endangerment to the promise of a lasting dynasty to David in 2 Sam 7. This endangerment is overcome in the narration through the coronation of Joash. Thus it is crucial to show that Joash was a עֲרֵב of Ahaziah and a descendant of David.

The birth narratives of Moses and Joash show God's loyalty to the people of Israel and His faithfulness to his promise. The fulfilment of God's promise was at risk at times, but it only delayed the eventual realisation of the promise. Joash, the only hope of the Davidic dynasty during the rule of Athaliah, is presented as the new Moses who is used as a tool to carry on the divine promise. Like Moses, he too was destined to deliver the people of God from the clutches of foreign powers and worship of foreign gods.

6.2 A Comparison between 2 Sam 7; 1 Kings 1 and 2 Kings 11

As seen in the diachronic analysis, the crux of the basic text in 2 Kings 11 is the accession of Joash to the throne of Judah as a descendant of David. This suc-

cession narrative reminds the reader of the succession narrative of Solomon, the direct successor to David.

6.2.1 Coronation Ceremony

The texts concerning the coronation of Solomon and of Joash stand very close to each other. Hence, it is worthwhile to study the intertextual elements in the accounts of the throne succession of Solomon and that of Joash. The presence of guards (1 Kings 1:38; 2 Kings 11:13–14), anointing (1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 11:12), blowing of trumpets (1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 11:12), presence of the people (1 Kings 1:39–40; 2 Kings 11:13–14), acclamation (1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 11:12) and rejoicing (1 Kings 1:40; 2 Kings 11:14) are to be seen as common to both the texts. There are also differences between both the contexts. While Solomon had many surviving siblings, Joash was the only surviving royal offspring. While 1 Kings 1:39 specifically mentions that Solomon was anointed with oil by Zadok the priest, 2 Kings 11:12 does not specify the subject of anointing. Besides, there is no mention of oil in the latter text. Apart from the ceremonies, there are other elements which bring both the events closer. Solomon was not the automatic choice to succeed David. There were several of the other aspirants to the throne. Solomon was a surprise candidate overtaking his elder brothers. It was inconclusive until the plan, hatched by a group of insiders in the palace became successful. The entire turn of events included the removal of other claimants to the throne and the prophecy and counsel of the prophet Nathan, besides the appeal from Bathsheba.

6.2.2 Elimination of Contenders to the Throne

The theme of Solomon's succession also includes the elimination of various candidates for the throne.⁴⁷⁰ Twice the sons of David are listed based on the places of birth: at Hebron (2 Sam 3:2–5) and at Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:14–16). The first list entails also the names of their mothers. The biblical narrative accounts for the elimination of three of the brothers of Solomon. We do not read about the rest of

⁴⁷⁰ Flanagan argues that originally there existed a Court History which was later given a succession character. The intention of the Court History, according to Flanagan, is to show how David maintained legitimate control over the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. He argues that a theological reason is given for the failure of Absalom to succeed his father (2 Sam 17:14), but no theological reason is cited for Solomon's ascent to the throne. It might indicate two different authors. Moreover, the words of David do not contain any positive comment of Yahweh's concern. Cf. James W. Flanagan. *JBL* 91 (1972) 173–75.

the possible candidates. Bodner highlights the violence involved in this pursuit as follows: “The reader’s initial impression is therefore a mixed one, as David’s heir has undeniable talent but also a proclivity toward bloodshed ...”⁴⁷¹ One should keep in mind that at that time a hereditary monarchy had not been established in Israel.⁴⁷² Therefore, it was not necessary that the eldest son, for that matter any other son inherited the throne from the father.

Elimination of the contender to the throne takes place in the coronation of Joash as well. Not the candidates to the throne, but one who has occupied the throne had to be eliminated, so that Joash could claim the throne without any contention. The other rivals to the throne were already eliminated either by Jehu or by Athaliah. The reader would understand that Joash is designated to be the future king by the very mention that he alone is spared (v. 3). Solomon’s rivals on the contrary are pushed away from the race and mostly killed either shortly before or after the coronation of Solomon. As Jehoiada and the centurions lead the campaign for Joash, there are people like Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon and Nathan, the prophet, who prepare the way for Solomon to sit on the throne of his father. In this context, the role of Nathan is noteworthy.

6.2.3 The Roles of the Prophet and the Priest

The Prophet Nathan is given a significant part in making Solomon the king. In fact, Nathan is not called up on, but he volunteers to intervene. Clever machination is choreographed by Nathan at a time when David was thinking of his successor. It is Nathan who reminds Bathsheba of the promise made by David. It is

⁴⁷¹ Keith Bodner 2016: 205. Besides the elimination of rival claimants, Gnana Robinson notes other similarities between the account of Solomon and Joash, such as: in both the accounts the princes do not take any counter measure, but the leaders loyal to the family do it; there is the presence of armed forces; both the ceremonies fall in two parts; instances of trumpet blowing and loud cheering; opponents are killed outside the sanctuary. Cf. Gnana Robinson 1975: 83–84.

⁴⁷² Cf. Gillian Keys 1996: 46–47. It is to be noted that the assets of a demised father was divided between all his sons, with the first born usually receiving a double share as each of the others (Deut 21:15–17). This practice of inheritance of property had exceptions, too (Judg 11:1–2). It is probable that the first born was not always the chief inheritor of his father’s assets. Notwithstanding this practice, we need to bear in mind that succession to throne and inheritance of properties are entirely different categories, because only one can succeed the throne while many can share the property. Cf. Norman K. Gottwald 1979: 286–87.

certain that the narrative presents Nathan, the prophet as someone who has played a very crucial role in the choice of Solomon (1 Kings 1).⁴⁷³

Likewise, Jehoiada's contribution in the coronation of Joash is very significant.⁴⁷⁴ Jehoiada did all that he could do in order to establish the legitimacy of succession. The close relationship between Nathan and Solomon, which the texts build, is once again revealed in the list of Solomon's administrative officers in 1 Kings 4:1–19. The list includes Azariah and Zabud, two sons of Nathan. The former was placed over the officials and the latter was a priest and the king's friend (1 Kings 4:5). Likewise, we read that Jehoiada has been a guide to the young king Joash (2 Kings 12:2).

Nathan played only a secondary role, whereas the role of Jehoiada was primary. Even though he is carrying out a political coup in Jerusalem, the priestly regulations are followed. He represents the religious institution, which has its existence on the support of the house of David. He plays the key role in legitimising the Davidic dynasty as God's choice to rule Judah.⁴⁷⁵

Jehoiada is the first Jerusalemite priest to be mentioned after the list of Solomon's officers mentioned in 1 Kings 4:5. The history of Israel often suggests that there was a nexus between cult and throne in the ancient Israel and priests contributed to governance and were considered in the higher ranks. 2 Kings 11 is another example of this nexus. All the same, it is crucial to note that wherever the name of Jehoiada appearing with the priestly attribute, the text tries to highlight the role of the priest.

6.2.4 Promise of God to David

The promise of God to David mentioned in 2 Sam 7:13 is the key to the choice of Solomon. Nathan's prophecies in 2 Sam 7 were interpreted for the legitimation

⁴⁷³ Prophet Nathan does not appear in a typical prophetic manner in 1 Kings 1. He does not utter any word from YHWH, any prophetic proclamation formula and does not attest the candidature of Solomon to the word of YHWH. Cf. Wolfgang Oswald: 2008: 168–70.

⁴⁷⁴ Mettinger suggests that because at the elimination of Athaliah, dynastic ideology played a crucial role, it is possible the prophecy of Nathan could be dated before Joash. Cf. Tryggve N. Mettinger 2008: 290.

⁴⁷⁵ Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2007: 345. McConville observes that reference to Jehoiada by the title priest without his proper name would recall Eli (1 Sam 1:9) and Azariah, the son of Zadok (1 Kings 4:2) and thereby place emphasis on the priest's control over the events. Cf. J. Gordon McConville. VT 49 (1999) 83.

of Solomon.⁴⁷⁶ Rost, Whybray, Kenik and others see the Succession Narrative as pro-Solomonic propaganda, intended to increase the support for Solomon's legitimacy.⁴⁷⁷ Today we understand it differently that 1 Kings 1–11 portrays a negative picture of Solomon, mostly ironically presented. The succession narrative in 1 Kings 1, in fact, is to be read in relation to the promise of God in 2 Sam 7. Pietsch rightly points out that the promise of dynasty (2 Sam 7:12–15) is collectively applicable to the descendants of David in general. But it was reinterpreted in favour of Solomon through later redaction especially through 2 Sam 7:13.⁴⁷⁸

2 Sam 7 in its present form serves to establish the legitimacy of Solomon as the successor to David. Likewise 2 Kings 11 is an attempt to establish the legitimacy of Joash.

6.3 Athaliah Narrative and Jehu Narrative

2 Kings 11:18 reports the first popular reform in Jerusalem, not to forget the reform initiatives of Asa (1 Kings 15:12) and Jehoshaphat which originated from the kings. Later on we read of the reform carried out by Josiah in 2 Kings 23. The major difference is marked by the importance attributed to the persons. While in 2 Kings 11, Jehoiada the priest bears greater responsibility, king Josiah plays the lead role in the later reformation where the priest Hilkiah plays only a muted role. McConville is of the opinion that the importance acceded to priesthood in 2 Kings 23 is overshadowed by the belief that Josiah was the culmination

⁴⁷⁶ The prophecy assures that David will be succeeded by his seed. Since the word seed is in singular, it was not understood as referring to the generation of David but to his son. Cf. Matitiahu Tsevat. HUCA 34 (1963) 77. See also Matitiahu Tsevat. Biblica 46 (1965) 356. Weiser argued that the text cannot be originated in the deuteronomistic times, but might have had its origin in the period of Solomon and the oracle had Solomon in mind. Artur Weiser. ZAW 77 (1965) 156–57. A possible rift between Judean followers of Adonijah and the Jebusite-Jerusalem party was also considered to have stood behind the formation of the text. Nathan belonged to the latter party. Cf. Niek Poulssen 1967: 42. Cf. Klaus Seybold 1972: 29. Cf. Gwilym Jones 1990: 51–52.

⁴⁷⁷ The preceding events of Solomon's enthronement serves as the prehistory of succession narrative (2 Sam 9–13) and 1 Kings 1–2 acts as the conclusion of his accession. Leonhard Rost 1926: 210–12. Cf. Roger Norman Whybray 1968: 51–53. Cf. Helen A. Kenik 1983. 116.

⁴⁷⁸ The redaction also includes the relative sentence in the end of v. 12. Cf. Michael Pietsch 2003: 21–25. Cf. Till Magnus Steiner 2017: 29–33. נָרַע in 2 Sam 7: 12 is a collective term which is changed to individually referring to Solomon through the pronoun הוּא in v. 13. The word עַד-עוֹלָם (for ever) is key here. It does not refer to the immediate successor to David, but to the descendants. Cf. Walter Dietrich 2019: 670–71.

of faithfulness to the covenant.⁴⁷⁹ Both the reforms illustrate the connectivity between cult and politics, between priesthood and kingship, and between temple and kingdom. The reforming kings act under the guidance of priests. It becomes visible in 2 Kings 12 where we read that Joash organised finance towards the restoration of the temple under the supervision of Jehoiada. In spite of these similarities of reformations, the one carried out in the North by Jehu and the one headed by Jehoiada in the South bore more similarities in character, which includes revolt and bloodshed, too.

When one speaks of the reforms carried out by Jehoiada and Jehu, it stands always in concomitance with the revolt they were leading. Jehu is presented in positive frame for his revolt. His righteous evaluation and his dynamic promise are unique and Jehu unlike the other Northern kings receives a favourable presentation.⁴⁸⁰ Joash is also presented in good light on account of Jehoiada (2 Kings 12:2). Besides this positive judgment, 2 Kings 11 mirrors 2 Kings 9–10 in several other ways, notwithstanding their differences.

The commonality in the religious reformation⁴⁸¹ is more striking. It consists of the killing of the priests, demolishing the pillars/altars and destroying the temple of Baal (2 Kings 10:26–27; 11:18). All these similarities show that both these texts are intentionally formulated as parallels.⁴⁸² This parallelism exposes the

⁴⁷⁹ The narrative of 2 Kings 11 is the key text with its priestly and cultic language, which exemplifies the relationship between the king and the priest. Cf. J. Gordon McConville. *VT* 49 (1999) 85–86.

⁴⁸⁰ Fritz argues that even though the removal of Baal cult by Jehu is positively evaluated, 2 Kings 10:28–33 in general is a negative presentation of Jehu, especially through the allusion to Jeroboam. Lamb on the contrary sees the evaluation positively. Cf. Volkmar Fritz 1998: 58. See also David Lamb 2007: 26–27. Robker rightly treats 2 Kings 10:26–28 as Israel source (except “they tore down the pillar of Baal”) and 2 Kings 11 as Judean source. Cf. Jonathan Robker 2012: 32–33.

⁴⁸¹ Robinson calls the revolution of Jehu as a political disaster as he became a vassal to Shalmaneser, but it is more important in the religious sphere, as Baal cult the rival to Yahweh was completely razed. Cf. Theodore Robinson 1932: 350. Along with the religious reformation, Jehu usurped the kingdom. The bloodshed is condemned in Hos 1:4. Through his revolt, he lost the friendship with Phoenicia and Judah. Apparently, he gave up all external politics. Cf. Martin Noth 1966: 225. Montgomery sees the revolt against the context of uprising in the name of the national God both in the North and South around the mid 9 CBCE. It aroused the religious sentiments of the people. The movement in the South might have been a foreshadow of religion taking control over politics and the people. Cf. James Montgomery 1951: 416–17.

⁴⁸² Hoffmann treats the entire incident of Jehu’s revolt and that of Jehoiada as reformation of cult. Cf. Hans-Detlef Hoffmann 1980: 105. Brueggemann sees in the support of Jehonadab the Rechabite (2 Kings 10:15–17) to Jehu a religious motive, as the Rech-

spread of the Northern apostasy in the South. By doing so, the Dtr redactor portrays Athaliah in parallel lines to Jezebel. At the same time, it is an appeal in favour of exclusive Yahwism and against Baalism which is portrayed as a foreign religion. This pattern also suggests that one text has exerted certain influence over the other.

The prophetic element involved in the northern episode stands out. In accordance with the command of Elijah (1 Kings 19:16), Jehu was anointed by the delegate of the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 9:1–6). And it took place in secret, something like a private oracle. Whereas, the child Joash is anointed by the guards and the people in a public forum and it takes place in connection with his coronation. There is no mention of an involvement of Elisha in the coup of Jehu, but Jehoiada the priest carries out the coup in the South.

Jehu's violence against the royal family of Ahab and his demolition of Baal cult are justified through prophetic fulfilments. "... the textual emphasis on Jehu's obedience to the oracles condemning Ahabite idolatry appears to come from Dtr. These prophecies and their fulfilments contain extensive language that is commonly considered as Deuteronomistic."⁴⁸³ No such prophetic justification or divine commission is found in the purge of Baalistic cult in the Southern kingdom. In the absence of any prophet, the priest takes up the lead role in the coup. And the destruction of Baal's temple is spontaneously carried out by *עַם הַאֲרָץ* motivated by the covenant. All the same, it is deprived of a divine sanction dissimilar to its northern counterpart. In addition to it, it is clear that Jehu himself would be ruling Israel after he eliminated the family of Ahab, but the context in the South is totally different, where the successor to Athaliah is only a kid on whose behalf the priest himself and the people had to carry out the purge. The emphasis placed on reform in Jerusalem in v. 18 indirectly justifies the murder of Athaliah.

Though Jehu is described as the founder of a new dynasty, the Assyrian documents attest him as "son of Omri". And so there is lack of consensus among the scholars regarding the familial roots of Jehu. The double patronymic attributed to Jehu (2 Kings 9:2 – Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, son of Nimshi) could be seen as an effort to disengage him from the Omride dynasty.⁴⁸⁴ If one considers Jehu as

abites are believed to be a sect known for unqualified and uncompromising loyalty to Yahweh (Jer 35). Cf. Walter Brueggemann 1982: 36.

⁴⁸³ David Lamp 2007: 97.

⁴⁸⁴ Other rulers of Israel barring Jehu are given only a single patronymic. Moreover the Assyrian texts refer to Jehu as son of Omri. It is suggested that Nimshi, the grandfather of

a kinsman of Omri based on the extra biblical evidences, the rule of Jehu is to be seen as a continuity of the Omri dynasty.⁴⁸⁵ On the contrary, Athaliah from the Omride dynasty whose reign disjoins the Davidic dynastic rule is not accredited with it. Instead, the Davidic dynasty is presented as ruling continuously. Regardless of the intentions, it has reduced the longevity of the Omride dynasty which would otherwise be challenging that of the Southern kingdom. It sheds light upon the work of the dtc redactor who shows special interests for Davidic dynasty.

6.4 The Chronicler's Account of the Athaliah-Narrative (2 Chronicles 22:10–23:21)

In general, the Chronicler reports the core events which are narrated in Samuel and Kings, albeit with some changes. The changes found in the Chronicles are due to the theological themes of the Chronicler who has made additions, omissions and substitutions. It is generally established that Chronicles is a rewriting of Samuel-Kings at a later period. The Chronicler reproduces the narration of 2 Kings 11 in his writing. Nonetheless, there are obvious additions and omissions as it is common for the entire book, in accordance with the political and religious views of the author.⁴⁸⁶ At the same time, one cannot rule out the possibility of later redactors of 2 Kings 11 being influenced by the writings and ideologies of the Chronicler. The Chronicler places the story of Athaliah in the context of a larger threat looming to destroy the Davidic rule. Brian Kelly articulates it as

Jehu was a sibling of Omri, which could have been a reason for Jehu's position in the army of Ahab. Cf. Filip Čapek. *CV* 56 (2014) 26–31. Juxtaposing the title “son of Omri” ascribed to Jehu and the title “son of nobody” ascribed to Haza'el the Arameann king, a contemporary of Jehu in the inscription of Shalmaneser, Baruchi-Unna suggests that the Assyrians present Jehu as “son of Omri” from their knowledge that Jehu was part of the previous royal family and that the biblical text and the Moabite stone insist that he eliminated the House of Ahab. It appears reasonable to hold that Jehu who was also a descendant of Omri overthrew the House of Ahab from its reign and consequently the Omride dynasty. Cf. Amitai Baruchi-Unna. *JSOT* 42 (2017) 8–13.

⁴⁸⁵ Baruchi-Unna defends the Deuteronomistic author stating that it is not his style to leave out anything from his source. Probably, it was absent in his source too, which he took for granted that the reader of his time knew that Shamsi was the son of Omri. Cf. Amitai Baruchi-Unna. *JSOT* 42 (2017) 20–21.

⁴⁸⁶ Coggins reasons that the Chronicler had a version of 2 Kings which is somewhat different from what is available to us, and thus he justifies the difference of account between the editor of 2 Kings and the Chronicles. But he is content to let his source tell the story, as he falls in line with the editor of 2 Kings in matters pertinent to the repugnance of Athaliah's action. Cf. Richard J. Coggins 1976: 233. Idealization of David could be one of the theological themes of the Chronicler. Cf. Raymond F. Person Jr. 2016: 80.

follows: “2 Chronicles 21–24 are specially modified to depict the threat of destruction standing over the dynasty, in the form of repeated catastrophes affecting the Davidic house.”⁴⁸⁷ Indubitably, the Chronicler answers some of the questions which stand open in 2 Kings 11 and attempts to offer clarity concerning the rule of Athaliah and the coup initiated by Jehoiada, notwithstanding the insertion of his own interests into the text.

6.4.1 Dissimilarities in both the Accounts

Both 2 Kings 11 and 2 Chr 22–23 have additional information which is not found in the other. Comparatively the Chronicler’s account has more such information than 2 Kings. In particular, 2 Chr 23:1–6, 18–20 have large additional information which is not found in 2 Kings 11. 2 Kings 11:7 has no parallel in 2 Chr 23.

There are also some differences in the parallel verses. The significant differences are marked in the table below. It is followed by a detailed analysis of the differences in both the narratives.

⁴⁸⁷ Brian E. Kelly 1996: 163. The marriage alliance brings the Davidic house under the control of Ahab’s family which leaves it at the verge of extinction. The Chronicler sees the dynastic promise as the ground for restoration of the legitimate Davidic ruler.

<p>2 Kings 11 (BHS)</p>	<p>2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)</p>
<p>וַעֲמַלְיָהוּ אִם אֲחִיזְיָהוּ רָאָתָה כִּי מָת בְּנֵיהָ וַתִּקַּם וַתִּמְצָד אֶת כָּל־יָרֵד הַמַּמְלָכָה׃</p>	<p>1. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziahu saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>וַעֲמַלְיָהוּ אִם אֲחִיזְיָהוּ רָאָתָה כִּי מָת בְּנֵיהָ וַתִּקַּם וַתִּמְצָד אֶת כָּל־יָרֵד הַמַּמְלָכָה׃ לְבַיִת יְהוּדָה׃</p>
<p>וַתִּקַּח יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַ בַּת־הַמֶּלֶךְ־ יֹרָם אֲחֹת אֲחִיזְיָהוּ אֶת־ יֹאָשׁ בֶּן־אֲחִיזְיָה וַתִּגְבַּב אֹתוֹ מִחוּךְ בְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִיּוֹמָתָם׃ אֹתוֹ יָאֵת מִיִּנְקָתוֹ בְּחוּר הַמַּשׁוּת וַיִּסְתְּרוּ אֹתוֹ מִפְּנֵי עַמְלִיָּהוּ וְלֹא הָמָת׃</p>	<p>2. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, the sister of Ahaziahu took Joash, the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the sons of the king, who were put to death, him and his wet-nurse in the bedchamber and they hid him from Athaliahu and did not he was not killed.</p>	<p>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;</p>	<p>וַתִּקַּח יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַ בַּת־הַמֶּלֶךְ־ אֶת־יֹאָשׁ בֶּן־אֲחִיזְיָהוּ וַתִּגְבַּב אֹתוֹ מִחוּךְ בְּנֵי־ הַמֶּלֶךְ מִיּוֹמָתָם וַתִּמְצָד אֹתוֹ וַאֲתֵּי מִיִּנְקָתוֹ בְּחוּר הַמַּשׁוּת וַתִּסְתְּרֵהוּ יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַ בַּת־ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְיֹרָם אִשָּׁת יְהוֹיָדָע הִסְתְּרוּ אֹתוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲחֹת אֲחִיזְיָהוּ מִפְּנֵי עַמְלִיָּהוּ וְלֹא הָמָת׃</p>
<p>וַיְהִי אַתְּמָה בֵּית יְהוּדָה מִתְחַבֵּא שָׁשׁ שָׁנִים וַעֲמַלְיָה מָלְכָת עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃ פ</p>	<p>3. And he was with her in the house of YHWH hiding himself for six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land.</p>	<p>12 he remained with them six years, hidden in the house of God, while Athaliah reigned over the land.</p>	<p>וַיְהִי אַתְּמָם בְּבֵית הָאֱלֹהִים מִתְחַבֵּא שָׁשׁ שָׁנִים וַעֲמַלְיָה מָלְכָת עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃ פ</p>

<p>2 Kings 11 (BHS)</p>	<p>2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)</p>
<p>וּבִשְׁנַת הַשְּׁבִיעִית שְׁלַח יְהוֹיָדָע נִימָקָה אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאֹת לְכָרִי וְלְרָצִים נִיבְא אֲתָם אֲלֵי בֵית יְהוָה וַיִּקְרָת לָהֶם בְּרִית וַיִּשָּׁבַע אֲתָם בְּבֵית יְהוָה וַיֵּרָא אֲתָם אֶת־ בְּרִיתֵיהֶם:</p>	<p>4. And in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and took the centurions of the carer and the runners and made them come to him to the house of YHWH and he cut a covenant for them and made them swear in the house of YHWH and let them see the son of the king.</p>	<p>23:1 But in the seventh year Jehoiada took courage, and entered into a compact with the commanders of the hundreds, Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri.</p> <p>2 They went around through Judah and gathered the Levites from all the towns of Judah, and the heads of families of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.</p> <p>3 Then the whole assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. Jehoiada said to them, "Here is the king's son! Let him reign, as the Lord promised concerning the sons of David.</p>	<p>וּבִשְׁנַת הַשְּׁבִיעִית הִתְחַזַּק יְהוֹיָדָע נִימָקָה אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאֹת לַעֲזָרָהוּ כְּדִירְלָתָם וַיִּלְשָׁמְעֵאל כְּדִירְחֻמָּנוּ וְלַעֲזָרָהוּ כְּדִיעֹבֵד וְאֶת־ מַעֲשִׂיָהוּ כְּדִיעֲזָרָהוּ וְאֶת־ אֲלִישָׁפָט כְּדִירְזַכְרִי עִמּוֹ בְּבֵרִית: וַיִּסְבּוּ בִיהוּדָה וַיִּקְבְּצוּ אֶת־ הַלְוִיִּם מִכָּל־עִיר יְהוּדָה וְרֹאשֵׁי הָאֲבוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל־יְרוּשָׁלַם: וַיִּקְרַת כָּל־הַקְּהָל בְּרִית בְּבֵית הָאֱלֹהִים עִם־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם הִנֵּה כֵן הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּמְלֹךְ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה: עַל־בְּנֵי דָוִד:</p>

<p>2 Kings 11 (BHS)</p>	<p>2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)</p>
<p>וַיִּצְוֶם לְאָמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן הַשְּׁלֵשִׁית מִכֶּם בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וְשָׁמְרֵי מִשְׁמֶרֶת בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ:</p>	<p>5. <i>And he commanded them:</i> This is what you should do. One third of you, <i>who come on duty on Sabbath, shall undertake the watch in the house of the king.</i></p>	<p>4 This is what you are to do: one-third of you, <i>priests and Levites, who come on duty on the sabbath, shall be gatekeepers.</i></p>	<p>זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּ הַשְּׁלֵשִׁית מִכֶּם בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת לַמְשָׁרְתִים וְלַלְוִיִּם לְשֹׁמְרֵי הַמִּסָּפִים:</p>
<p>וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁית בְּשַׁעַר סוּר וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁית בְּשַׁעַר אֹהֶר הַרְצִיִּים וְשָׁמְרֵתֶם אֹת־ מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִבַּיִת מִסָּתָה:</p>	<p>6. <i>One third at the entrance of the gate of Sur and one third at the gate behind the runners and so you keep watch over the house alternately</i></p>	<p>5 <i>one-third shall be at the king's house, and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation; and all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the LORD.</i></p>	<p>וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁית בְּבַיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַשְּׁלֵשִׁית בְּשַׁעַר הַיְסוּד וְכָל הָעָם בְּחִצְרוֹת בַּיִת יְהוָה:</p>
<p>וַיֵּשְׁתִּי הַיְדוּת מִכֶּם כֹּל יְצֵאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וְשָׁמְרוּ אֶת מִשְׁמֶרֶת בַּיִת־יְהוָה אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ:</p>	<p>7. <i>And the two divisions of you who leave on Sabbath, and they should undertake the watch on the house of YHWH for the king.</i></p>	<p>6 <i>Do not let anyone enter the house of the LORD except the priests and ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy, but all the other people shall observe the instructions of the LORD.</i></p>	<p>וְאֶל־יִבְוֹא בַיִת־יְהוָה כִּי אִם־הַכֹּהֲנִים וְהַמְשָׁרְתִים לְלוּיִם הַמֶּה וְיָבֹאוּ כִּי־יִקְדָּשׁ הַמֶּה וְכָל־הָעָם יִשְׁמְרוּ מִשְׁמֶרֶת יְהוָה:</p>
<p>וְהַקְּפֹתֶם עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב אִישׁ וְכַלְיוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְהִבָּא אֶל־ הַשְּׁוֹדְרוֹת יוֹמֵת וְהָיוּ אֹת־ הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּצֵאתוֹ וּבָבֹאוֹ:</p>	<p>8. And you shall assemble around the king, everyone and with his weapons in his hand. If anyone comes inside the ranks, let him be</p>	<p>7 <i>The Levites shall surround the king, each with his weapons in his hand; and whoever enters the house shall be killed. Stay with the king in his comings and goings."</i></p>	<p>וְהַקְּפוּ הַלּוּיִם אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב אִישׁ וְכַלְיוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְהִבָּא אֶל־הַמִּבְתֵּי יוֹמֵת וְהָיוּ אֹת־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּצֵאתוֹ וּבָבֹאוֹ:</p>

2 Kings 11 (BHS)	2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)	2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)	2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)
	killed. <i>Be</i> with the king, when he goes out and when he comes in.		
<p>וַיַּעֲשׂוּ עָרֵי הַמְּצוּדוֹת כָּל־כָּל אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אֲנָשָׁיו בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת עִם יָצְאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וַיָּבֵאוּ אֶל-יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן:</p>	<p>9. <i>The centurions</i> did as all that Jehoiada the priest commanded and they took, each (of them) his men who <i>come</i> (on duty) on Sabbath, and who <i>leave</i> duty on Sabbath. <i>They came to</i> Jehoiada, the priest.</p>	<p>8 <i>The Levites and all Judah</i> did according to all that the priest Jehoiada commanded; each brought his men, who were to <i>come on duty</i> on the sabbath, with those who were to <i>go off</i> duty on the sabbath; <i>for</i> the priest Jehoiada <i>did not dismiss the divisions</i>.</p>	<p>וַיַּעֲשׂוּ הַלְוִיִּם וְכָל-יְהוּדָה כָּל־אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ אֶת-אֲנָשָׁיו בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת עִם יוֹצְאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת כִּי לֹא פָטַר יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הַמַּתְקָנוֹת:</p>
<p>וַיִּתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן לְעָרֵי הַמְּצוּדוֹת אֶת-הַתְּנִיחִים וְאֶת-הָאֵשֶׁר לַמִּלָּךְ דָּוִד אֲשֶׁר בְּבֵית יְהוָה:</p>	<p>10. The priest gave to the centurions the spear and the shields which belonged to David and were in the house of the <i>YHWH</i>.</p>	<p>9 The priest <i>Jehoiada</i> delivered to the centurions the spears and <i>the large and small</i> shields that had been King David's, which were in the house of <i>God</i>;</p>	<p>וַיִּתֵּן יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן לְעָרֵי הַמְּצוּדוֹת אֶת-הַתְּנִיחִים וְאֶת-הַמַּגִּנּוֹת וְאֶת-הַשֵּׁלֶטִים אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד אֲשֶׁר בֵּית הַבָּאֵלִהִים:</p>
<p>וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ הַרְצִיִּים אִישׁ וְכַלּוֹ בְּיָדוֹ מִקְטָנָהּ הַבַּיִת הַקָּטָן עַד-כְּתֹף הַבַּיִת הַשְּׂמֹאלִית</p>	<p>11. <i>The runners stood, everyone and with his weapons</i> in his hand, from the right side(wall)</p>	<p>10 <i>and he set all the people as a guard for the king, everyone with weapon</i> in hand, from the</p>	<p>וַיַּעֲמֵד אֶת-כָּל-הָעָם וְאִישׁ שַׁלְחוֹ בְּיָדוֹ מִקְטָנָהּ הַבַּיִת הַקָּטָן עַד-כְּתֹף הַבַּיִת</p>

2 Kings 11 (BHS)	2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)	2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)	2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)
לְמִזְבֵּחַ וְלַבַּיִת עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב:	of the house to left side(wall) of the house, at the altar and at the house around the king.	south side of the house to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house.	הַשְּׂמֵאלִית לְמִזְבֵּחַ וְלַבַּיִת עַל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב:
וַיֹּצֵא אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ נִימָן עָלָיו אֶת־הַסֵּנֶר וְאֶת־הָעֵדוּת וַיִּמְלֹכוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּקְשְׁרוּהוּ וַיַּכּוּהוּ וַיִּהְיוּדָע וַיִּכְנֹוּ וַיִּאֱמְרוּ יְהוִי הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס	12. He brought the king's son and gave the crown onto him, and the testimony. They made him king, anointed him and <i>clapped their hands</i> saying: Long live, the king.	11 Then he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and gave him the covenant; they proclaimed him king, and <i>Jehoiada</i> and <i>his sons</i> anointed him; and they shouted, "Long live the king!"	וַיֹּצֵא אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ נִימָן עָלָיו אֶת־הַסֵּנֶר וְאֶת־הָעֵדוּת וַיִּמְלֹכוּ אֹתוֹ וַיִּקְשְׁרוּהוּ וַיַּכּוּהוּ וַיִּהְיוּדָע וַיִּכְנֹוּ וַיִּאֱמְרוּ יְהוִי הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס
וַתִּשְׁמַע עֲתִלְיָה אֶת־קוֹל הַרָצִיז הָעֵם וַתְּבֵא אֶל־הָעֵם בֵּית יְהוָה:	13. When Athaliah heard the noise of <i>the runners</i> the people, she came to the people in the house of YHWH.	12 When Athaliah heard the noise of the people <i>running and praising the king</i> , she went into the house of the LORD to the people;	וַתִּשְׁמַע עֲתִלְיָהוּ אֶת־קוֹל הָעֵם הַרָצִים וְהַמְּהַלְלִים אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתְּבֵא אֶל־הָעֵם בֵּית יְהוָה:
וַתִּרְא וַתִּהְיֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ עוֹמֵד עַל־הָעַמּוּד בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהַשָּׂרִים וְהַתְּצִרֹת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־עַם הָאָרֶץ עֹמֵם וְתִקַּע בַּתְּצִרֹת וַתִּקְבַּע וְהַמְנוּחִים בְּכֵלֵי הַשִּׁיר	14. And she saw: behold! The king was standing on the podium <i>according to the custom</i> and the commanders and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land blew the trumpets and Athaliah tore her upper garment and cried: Treason, Treason!	13 <i>and</i> when she looked, there was the king standing by <i>his pillar at the entrance, and</i> the captains and the trumpeters beside the king, and all the people of the land rejoicing and blowing trumpets, <i>and the singers with their musical instruments leading in the</i>	וַתִּרְא וַתִּהְיֶה הַמֶּלֶךְ עוֹמֵד עַל־עַמּוּדוֹ בַּמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהַשָּׂרִים וְהַתְּצִרֹת עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־עַם הָאָרֶץ עֹמֵם וְתִקַּע בַּתְּצִרֹת וַתִּקְבַּע וְהַמְנוּחִים בְּכֵלֵי הַשִּׁיר

<p>2 Kings 11 (BHS)</p> <p>עֲמִלְקָה אֶת־בְּגָדֶיהָ וַתִּקְרָא קִשָׁר קִשָׁר׃ ׀</p>	<p>2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)</p> <p><i>celebration.</i> Athaliah tore her clothes, and cried, “Treason! Treason!”</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)</p> <p>וַתִּקְרָא עֲמִלְקָה אֶת־בְּגָדֶיהָ וַתִּקְרָא קִשָׁר קִשָׁר׃ ׀</p>
<p>נִצְוָה יְהוֹדָע הִפְתָּה אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲוֹת פְּקוּדֵי הַחַיִל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הוֹצִיָּא אֵתָה אֶל־מִבְּרֵית הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת וְהִבָּא אַחֲרָיִךְ יוֹמֶת בְּתוֹרֵב כִּי אָמַר הִפְתָּה לֹא תִמְיוּתֶיךָ בֵּית יְהוָה׃</p>	<p>15. Jehoiada, the priest <i>commanded</i> the centurions, the captains of the army and told them, “send her out in front of the house, through the ranks, and let anyone who follows her, <i>be slain by the sword</i>”; <i>indeed</i> the priest said, “<i>she shall not be killed</i> within the house of YHWH.”</p>	<p>14 Then the priest Jehoiada <i>brought out</i> the captains who were set over the army, <i>saying to them</i>, “Bring her out between the ranks; anyone who follows her <i>is to be put to the sword</i>.” For the priest said, “<i>Do not put her to death</i> in the house of the LORD.”</p>	<p>וַיֹּצֵא יְהוֹדָע הִפְתָּה אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמַּאֲוֹת פְּקוּדֵי הַחַיִל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶיהָ הוֹצִיָּא אֵתָה אֶל־מִבְּרֵית הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת וְהִבָּא אַחֲרָיִךְ יוֹמֶת בְּתוֹרֵב כִּי אָמַר הִפְתָּה לֹא תִמְיוּתֶיךָ בֵּית יְהוָה׃</p>
<p>נִישְׁמוּ לָהּ יָדַיִם וַתִּבְּרֹא דַרְךְ־מִבְּוֹא הַסּוּסִים בֵּית הַמַּלְכָּה וַתּוֹמֶת שָׁם׃ ׀</p>	<p>16. They laid hands on her and she came <i>the way of horse-entrance</i> to the house of the king and there <i>she was</i> killed.</p>	<p>15 So they laid hands on her; she went <i>into the entrance of the Horse Gate</i> of the king’s house, and there <i>they put her</i> to death.</p>	<p>וַיִּשְׁמוּ לָהּ יָדַיִם וַתִּבְּוֹא אֶל־מִבְּוֹא שַׁעַר־הַסּוּסִים בֵּית הַמַּלְכָּה וַתּוֹמֶת שָׁם׃ פ</p>
<p>וַיִּבְרֹת יְהוֹדָע אֶת־תְּבָרֵית בֵּינוּ יְהוָה וּבֵינוּ הַמַּלְכָּה וּבֵינוּ הָעָם לִהְיוֹת לְעַם לַיהוָה׃</p>	<p>17. Jehoiada cut the covenant between <i>YHWH</i> and the king and the people that they should be people of YHWH; <i>and between the king and the people</i>.</p>	<p>16 Jehoiada made a covenant between <i>himself</i> and <i>all the</i> people and the king that they should be the LORD’s people.</p>	<p>וַיִּבְרֹת יְהוֹדָע בְּרֵית בֵּינוּ וּבֵינוּ כָּל־הָעָם וּבֵינוּ הַמַּלְכָּה לִהְיוֹת לְעַם לַיהוָה׃</p>

<p>2 Kings 11 (BHS)</p>	<p>2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)</p>
<p>וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ בֵּית־הַבַּעַל וַיִּתְּצוּהוּ אֶת־מִזְבְּחֵי וְאֶת־צִלְמֵי שִׁבְרוּ וַיִּטְּבוּ וְאֶת־מִטְּחַת הַבַּעַל הַבְּעַל לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבְּחֹת וַיִּשֶׁם יְהוָה:</p>	<p>18. And the entire people <i>of the land</i> came to the house of Baal and they destroyed it, its altars and its images they broke thoroughly and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal in front of the altars <i>and the priest ap-pointed guards over the house of YHWH.</i></p>	<p>17 Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces, and they killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars.</p>	<p>וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־עַם הַבְּעַל בֵּית־הַבַּעַל וַיִּתְּצוּהוּ וְאֶת־מִזְבְּחָיו וְאֶת־צִלְמָיו שִׁבְרוּ וְאֶת־מִטְּחַת הַבַּעַל הַבְּעַל לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת:</p>
		<p>18 Jehoiada assigned the care of the house of the Lord to the levitical priests whom David had organized to be in charge of the house of the LORD, to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David. 19 He stationed the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the Lord so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean.</p>	<p>וַיִּשֶׁם יְהוֹיָדָע פְּקֻדֹת בֵּית יְהוָה בְּיַד פְּלִטְיָהם הַלְוִיִּם אֲשֶׁר חָלַק דָּוִד עַל־בֵּית יְהוָה לְהַעֲלוֹת עֹלוֹת יְהוָה בְּכַחוּב כְּתוּרַת מֹשֶׁה בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְשִׁיר עַל יְדֵי דָוִד: וַיַּעֲמֵד הַשׁוֹעֲרִים עַל־שַׁעֲרֵי בֵּית יְהוָה וְלֹא־יָבֹא טָמֵא לְכַל־זָבָח:</p>

<p>2 Kings 11 (BHS)</p>	<p>2 Kings 11 (Patrick Antony)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (NRSV)</p>	<p>2 Chr 22:10–23:21 (BHS)</p>
<p>נִיקַח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאוֹת וְאֶת־הַכְּרִי וְאֶת־הַרְצִיִּים וְאֵת כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיְרִידוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִבַּיִת יְהוָה וַיָּבִיאוּ דָרֶךְ־שַׁעַר הַרְצִיִּים בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים:</p>	<p>19. And he took the centurions <i>of the carer and the runners</i> and the entire people of the land and they let the king descend from the house of YHWH, and they entered through the <i>runners-gate</i> into the house of the king. <i>And he sat</i> on the throne <i>of the kings</i>.</p>	<p>20 And he took the captains, <i>the nobles, the governors of the people</i>, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, marching through the <i>upper</i> gate to the king's house. They set the king on the <i>royal</i> throne.</p>	<p>נִיקַח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאוֹת וְאֶת־הָאֲרִיִּים וְאֵת־ הַמְּוֹשְׁלִים בָּעָם וְאֵת כָּל־ עַם הָאָרֶץ וַיְרִיד אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִבַּיִת יְהוָה וַיָּבִיאוּ בְּתוֹךְ־ שַׁעַר הָעֲלִיּוֹן בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשִׁיבוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים:</p>
<p>נִישְׂמַח כָּל־עַם־הָאָרֶץ וְהַעִיר שָׁקֵטָה וְאֵת־ עַתְלָהּוּ הַמִּיתוּ בַחֶרֶב בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס</p>	<p>20. The entire people of the land rejoiced and the city was peaceful, and Athaliahu they had killed by sword <i>in the house of king</i>.</p>	<p>21 So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet after Athaliah had been killed with the sword.</p>	<p>נִישְׂמַחוּ כָּל־עַם־הָאָרֶץ וְהַעִיר שָׁקֵטָה וְאֵת־עַתְלָהּוּ הַמִּיתוּ בַחֶרֶב: ס</p>

6.4.1.1 Athaliah Antagonized

Unlike the author of 2 Kings, the Chronicler makes a detailed presentation of Athaliah which is unsympathetic in character. The Chronicler holds her responsible for the downfall of Ahaziah, her son and accuses her of wrongly guiding him (2 Chr 22:3), while the narrative of 2 Kings does not blame Athaliah directly but holds the relationship between Ahaziah and the house of Ahab as the reason for his wicked ways (2 Kings 8:27). The Chronicler further adds the house of Ahab to the list of bad counsellors beside Athaliah. Myers remarks, “As might be expected, the Chronicler makes Athaliah much more of an adjutrix diabolic than does Kings.”⁴⁸⁸ According to the Chronicler, Athaliah intended to destroy the royal family of the house of Judah (2 Chr 22:10). 2 Kings 11 mentions only the royal offspring as her target (2 Kings 11:1). However the emphasis of the Chronicler’s statement can be understood in connection to that of 2 Kings that Athaliah killed the children of the royal family. At the same time, the Chronicler explicitly states that Athaliah intended, not merely to rule the kingdom, but also to destroy the house of Judah, whereas 2 Kings 11 presents it implicitly.

6.4.1.2 Jehosheba Identified

The marital relationship between Jehosheba and Jehoiada is conspicuous in the book of the Chronicles, while we do not find any clue to it in the book of Kings. From their marital status, one can infer that there were marriage ties between the royal and high-priestly families.⁴⁸⁹ There is an elaborate introduction about Jehosheba in 2 Chr 22:11, in which some information is redundant. The second part of the verse explains the first. The first part says that Jehosheba is the daughter of the king and the second part augments it by specifying that Jehoram is the king mentioned in it. The second part explains it further stating that she is the sister of Ahaziah and the wife of Jehoiada. By offering a larger introduction to Jehosheba, the Chronicles attempts to clarify the link between Jehosheba and Jehoiada and answers the question why she should reside in the temple precincts.

⁴⁸⁸ Jacob S. Myers 1965: 127.

⁴⁸⁹ Cf. Jacob S. Myers 1965: 129. Klein contents that Jehosheba is mentioned as the wife of Jehoiada the priest only to justify her easy access to the palace and the temple and it need not be historically true. Cf. Ralf Klein 2012: 322. The explanation of marriage does not solve the problem of Joash’s stay over there. Moreover, the marriage of Jehoiada with Jehosheba seems to have violated the purity regulations of the priests mentioned in Lev 21:10–15. Cf. Steven James Schweitzer. *Biblica* 84/3 (2003) 397.

The Chronicler writes that Joash remained with them (2 Chr 22:12). It is not clear whether the plural form refers to Jehosheba and her priest-husband or Jehosheba and the wet-nurse.⁴⁹⁰ In both the applications, the role of Jehosheba stands out, as she is the main protagonist here. Whereas, in the book of Kings we read that he was with her (2 Kings 11:3). Here it is inconclusive whether “her” refers to Jehosheba or to the wet-nurse.

6.4.1.3 Jehoiada, the Central Figure

Both 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles portray Jehoiada⁴⁹¹ as a man of valour, though the latter qualifies him quite resolutely. 2 Kings 11:4 says that Jehoiada שָׁלַח (sent) and took the centurions. Its parallel 2 Chr 23:1 mentions that Jehoiada took courage. The expression קָיַם “took courage” in its Hitpaël form is used in the Chronicles only to refer to the acts of the kings (Solomon – 2 Chr 1:1; Rehoboam – 2 Chr 12:13; 13:7; Abijah – 2 Chr 13:21; Asa – 2 Chr 15:8; Jehoshaphat – 2 Chr 21:4).⁴⁹² The role of Jehoiada is stressed further in Chronicles by adding his sons along with him to anoint Joash a king (2 Chr 23:11), while 2 Kings 11:12 merely puts in pronoun (they). The subject “they” would directly include the runners who are the subject in the previous verse and also Jehoiada who is the subject of v. 12. Besides this, the sons of Jehoiada are not mentioned in the narrative of 2 Kings 11 at all.

By identifying Jehoiada as the husband of Jehosheba, the Chronicler offers him a dual responsibility both as priest and as the brother-in-law of Ahaziah, the deceased king. Naturally, he becomes the rightful spokesperson next only to Athaliah, for Joash was still a minor.

6.4.1.4 Extended Role of the People

The people in general play a more extended role in 2 Chronicles than 2 Kings. Unlike the book of Kings, the people become essential partners of the coup initiated by Jehoiada. 2 Chr presents the event as an uprising of the people, who

⁴⁹⁰ Cf. Raymond B. Dillard 1987: 177.

⁴⁹¹ Jehoiada is called רֹאשׁ – the chief (priest) in Chronicles (2 Chr 24:6), whereas the author of 2 Kings calls him simply as “priest”, except in 2 Kings 12:10, where he is referred to as הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל (the high priest), even though his name is not explicitly mentioned. The Chronicler tends to replace the term high priest with the term chief priest. While he acknowledges such an office, he diminishes this title in the second temple period. Cf. Steven James Schweitzer. *Biblica* 84 (2003) 389.

⁴⁹² Cf. Ralf Klein 2012: 323. It is to be noted that Jehoiada was also buried with the kings (2 Chr 24:16).

restore the scion of David to the kingdom.⁴⁹³ The statement “they gathered all the heads of the families of Israel” (2 Chr 23:2), stresses the unanimous support of the public for Jehoiada and Joash. The unanimous support is once again confirmed from the protective circle they make around him.⁴⁹⁴ The action attributed to the guards in 2 Kings 11:11 is given to ‘all the people’ in 2 Chr 23:10. This change makes the number of people around the king enormous. Moreover, “the people of the land” mentioned in 2 Kings 11:14, 18, is changed into “all the people” in 2 Chr 23:10, 17. Willi traces a democratic tendency of the Chronicler in it, besides his major concern for the Davidic dynasty.⁴⁹⁵ The Chronicler clearly expresses the blessings of the people for Joash, which Athaliah was deprived of. By the active involvement of the people, the Chronicler paints the coup as people’s movement and implicitly reveals the lack of popular support which Athaliah had during her reign.

6.4.1.5 Significance of the Covenant

2 Chr 23:1–3 speaks of two covenants even before the execution of the plan. The first one which is also reported in 2 Kings 11:4, occurs between Jehoiada and the commanders (2 Chr 23:1). The expression in Chronicles slightly varies from the one in 2 Kings. 2 Kings 11:4 reads: “... he took ... and he cut a covenant for them and made them swear.” In Chronicles, it reads: “he took courage (הִתְעוֹזָק) and entered into a covenant with (בְּכִרְיִית) ...” This formula appears only in this context. The second covenant is between the royal prince and the assembly (2 Chr 23:3). In Chronicles, these two covenants which are non-religious in character take place at an earlier stage, i.e., as part of the plan hatched against Athaliah. There is also another covenant after the death of Athaliah. This covenant is made between the common folk, the priest and the king. The role of Jehoiada is specifically mentioned in the Chronicles. “Jehoiada then made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king that they should be the Lord’s people” (2 Chr 23:16). The threefold covenant in the Chronicles is gradual and chronological: Jehoiada primarily ensures the cooperation of the commanders (23:1), then of the assembly (23:3) and after the death of Athaliah he lets the third covenant (23:16) happen between all the parties involved in the coup, i.e., the priest, the

⁴⁹³ Cf. Sara Japhet 1993: 829.

⁴⁹⁴ Cf. Ralf Klein 2012: 325.

⁴⁹⁵ The concept of “people of the land” was no more relevant to the time of the Chronicler. And terms like “the entire people” and “whole of Judah” are counted among the typical expressions of the Chronicler, who has a tendency towards generalization (2 Chr 32:9). Cf. Thomas Willi 1972: 161.

people and the king. In the book of Kings, the priest does not make any covenant with the assembly prior to the murder of Athaliah, but only with the centurions of the carer and the runners. The covenant between the king and the people is in fact reported at different contexts by both the narratives, i.e., according to the Chronicles, it happens before the coup and according to 2 Kings 11 it happens after the coup.

In the covenants reported in the Chronicles, God is not a partner, unlike 2 Kings 11:17. Both the parties here are human. Nevertheless, the purpose of the covenant is not different, i.e., fulfilling of God's commandments and to remain His people. The Chronicles does not change the nature of the covenant, even though it looks non-religious.⁴⁹⁶ An obligatory covenant like the Sinai covenant follows the treaty pattern prevalent in ANE. A treaty constitutes an obligation of the vassal to the master and tries to protect the rights of the master. The promissory covenant in the Bible does not contain a specific judiciary prototype. The Davidic promise (2 Sam 7), the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 15; 17:1–14) and Noahic covenant (Gen 9:8–17) fall under promissory covenants, which involve an unconditional divine promise for the future. The Sinaitic covenant on the contrary is conditional.⁴⁹⁷ This covenant should and would lead to reform. For the Chronicler, the Davidic covenant is an extension of the Sinaitic covenant⁴⁹⁸ and reflects a fundamental development in the covenantal basis of God's relationship with Israel. Therefore, the Chronicler emphasises the faithfulness of YHWH to the Davidic promise, which is expressed in the restoration of legitimate ruler and legitimate worship in Jerusalem, both of which form the Chronicler's perception of theocracy.⁴⁹⁹ Thus, the combination of covenant making and religious reformation is well grounded (vv. 16–17). It is also highlighted by the involvement of the priest who is a covenant partner. In this fashion, the threefold covenant in 2 Chronicles reminds the reader of the Davidic promise and of God's constant faithfulness to it.

⁴⁹⁶ Cf. Sara Japhet 1997: 107–108.

⁴⁹⁷ Weinfeld shows that the gift of land to Abraham and assurance of dynasty to David are in accordance with the pattern of royal grants to the servants who excelled in loyalty. They are unconditional in nature. While a treaty presupposes a curse on the vassal, if he violates the rights of the master, a grant presupposes a curse on the one who violates the right of the vassal. Cf. M. Weinfeld. *JAOS* 90 (1970) 185–89.

⁴⁹⁸ Cf. Brian E. Kelly 1996: 23. (1 Chr 17:12; 2 Chr 7:18; 13:5; 21:7; 23:3).

⁴⁹⁹ The theocracy in Chronicles consists in the union of two interests which trace their origin in the Davidic covenant, the dynasty and temple. *Ibid.* 101, 157.

The underlining difference between both the reports regarding the covenant lies in the role of God as a covenant partner. The priest taking the place of God in the third covenant in the Chronicles is defining its theology. Whereas, the religious element in 2 Kings 11 is very strong, as it treats God as a covenant partner. Japhet grounds it on the change on historical developments in the life of the Israelites. Probably, the concept of covenant, too, has already undergone changes at the time of the Chronicler. The people had difficulty in conceiving a covenant with God in the traditional sense. It began to be understood as an obligation to God. Thus, the covenant is understood no more as describing the relationship between God and Israel, but as a unilateral commitment to God.⁵⁰⁰ It also reveals the greater role the priests played at the time of the Chronicler.

6.4.1.6 Judgement on Deeds

The Chronicler certifies Jehoiada as a man of good deeds (2 Chr 24:14). As a reward for his good contribution to Israel, he is blessed with long life and burial in the city of David among the kings (2 Chr 24:15–16). Interestingly the book of Kings describes Joash as doing good in the eyes of the Lord due to the guidance of Jehoiada (2 Kings 12:2). All the same, he is defeated by Hazael king of Aram and murdered by his servants (2 Kings 12:20). In the observation of Japhet, this description of the historical books does not fit into the scheme of the Chronicler. Therefore, the Chronicler divides the reign of Joash into two periods, situating the death of Jehoiada as the central point. The first part which bore the influences of Jehoiada had its positive effects (2 Chr 24:2–16), whereas the second part after the death of Jehoiada is described with the evil ways and their appropriate consequences (2 Chr 24:17–21).⁵⁰¹ By his appreciation for the priest Jehoiada, the Chronicler expresses his interest for the temple and the liturgy, and reiterates the faithfulness of priests. Thus, the Chronicler attributes the goodness of Joash to Jehoiada the priest.

⁵⁰⁰ Cf. Sara Japhet 1997: 115–16. Other than 2 Chr 23, there are three covenants mentioned by the Chronicler as taking place in the monarchic period. Josiah makes a covenant with the people but before God. During the time of Asa, the people make a solemn oath to obey God's commandments. Hezekiah's covenant is clearly a unilateral commitment in the strict sense.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. 173–74. Japhet also notes, "Whenever righteousness or piety is displayed with no mention of recompense, the Chronicler adds a fitting reward." Ibid. 166–67. Peace, security and military success during the reigns of Asa (2 Chr 14:5–7, 11–14; 15:15) and Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 17:2–5, 10–19; 20:1–30), military victories of Uzziah (2 Chr 26:6–15), Jothan (2 Chr 27:3–6) and Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:27–30) can be cited as further examples.

The Chronicler calls the alliance between Judah and Israel evil (2 Chr 22:4). This alliance led to the removal of the Davidic dynasty for a while. In the words of Wright, “with the reign of Ahaziah’s mother, Athaliah, Judah moves farther away from the ‘historical’ norm established several times throughout its ‘history’. Only the temple and the faithful priesthood remain.”⁵⁰² Like the author of 2 Kings (8:18; 8:27), the Chronicler (2 Chr 21:6; 22:2–5a) brings out clearly the corruption caused by influence of the North over the Southern kingdom and the Chronicler reveals his disgust against the alliance between the divided nations. Thus, the Chronicler does not spare to condemn the alliance between Israel and Judah.

6.4.1.7 Baal Worship

The book of Chronicles does not directly accuse all the kings of Judah of worshipping foreign gods. Either it avoids the sins of certain kings reported in the book of Kings, or it is soft towards their sinful deeds. But in the case of some Judean monarchs like Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah, the Chronicler’s presentation is much more vivid and elaborate than that of 2 Kings. Jehoram is accused of introducing pagan practices in Judah and leading the kingdom and the inhabitants of Jerusalem astray (2 Chr 21:11–13).⁵⁰³ It is significant that the above mentioned monarchs are related to Ahab of Israel. Through their condemnation, the Chronicler stresses that the pagan worship was imported in Judah due to the familial connections of Judean rulers with Israel.

The episode of Athaliah is treated quite differently from the one in 2 Kings. The Chronicler assumes the existence of a legitimate cult for YHWH. In emphasising the actions of Jehoiada in preventing any defilement in the temple (2 Chr 23:18–19a), the Chronicler points out the interruption in this legitimate cult during the time of Athaliah.⁵⁰⁴ The Chronicler does not blatantly express that Yahwism and

⁵⁰² John W. Wright 1997: 71. Ackroyd notes that the death of Athaliah marks the removal of the evil influence of the alien north. Cf. Peter R. Ackroyd 1973: 158.

⁵⁰³ Cf. Sara Japhet 1997: 207–208. In contrast to the book of Kings, the Chronicler portrays Solomon as a paragon of virtues. The steady interchange between good and bad periods reported in the Kings is missing here. His sin of building altars for foreign gods is not mentioned. In fact, the pagan practices began with Solomon. The details of Rehoboam’s evil ways (1 Kings 14:22–24) are not reported by the Chronicler. There is no reference to the sins of Abijah as in 1 Kings 15:3.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. 233–34. See also William de Wette 1806: 55–56. There is no detailed information regarding the temple of Baal in Jerusalem. Galling presumes that it was the private chapel of Athaliah and was situated at the acropolis between YHWH temple and the palace. Cf. Kurt Galling 1954: 136.

Baalism coexisted side by side, but does suggest Athaliah promoted Baalism at the cost of Yahwism (2 Chr 24:7). This reflects the religious policy ascribed to the Omrides. Dillard points out, “the Omrides have become so identified with Baalism that coups against that dynasty inevitably entailed religious reforms and the suppression of Baalism.”⁵⁰⁵ The Chronicler categorically offers several clues to show that Athaliah who belongs to the family of Omri was responsible for the wider spread of Baalism in the Southern kingdom which had been already prevalent in the time of Jehoram her husband.

The temple repair carried out by Joash later on, in the view of the Chronicler, was not due to routine deterioration, but caused by the sons of Athaliah, who broke into the temple and confiscated the ritual vessels in order to use it for Baal (2 Chr 24:4–14). Thus, the reign of Athaliah is shown as the cause of damage in the temple of YHWH and of affecting YHWH worship in Jerusalem. It necessitated a renewal in the temple in the time of Joash.

The activities of the sons of Athaliah stand against the royal ideology in Judah. YHWH should be the prime God and the king should be the patron of the YHWH cult. He can bring offering to the temple and reorganize the cult (1 Kings 12:28–33; 2 Kings 23:4–20). The legitimacy and identity of the royal house in Judah finds its expression in the cult of the royal sanctuary in Jerusalem (Jer 22).⁵⁰⁶ But 2 Chr 24:4–14 reports of activities which are not in conformity with it. Thus the Chronicler makes it clear that the temple ritual was in a way disrupted in the time of Athaliah and her reign did not adhere to the royal ideology of Judah, which the book of Kings does not explicitly mention.

6.4.1.8 The Place of Cult and Religious Aspects

The entire episode of deposing Athaliah from the royal throne is presented by the Chronicler with an orientation towards cult and worship. The Chronicler’s interest for the sanctity of the temple is apparent at several places. The functions carried out by the priests and the Levites are far more descriptive than those mentioned in the book of Kings.

The command of Jehoiada is differently presented in both the books. According to the Chronicler, Jehoiada commands that anyone who enters the sacred pre-

⁵⁰⁵ Raymond B. Dillard 1987: 183.

⁵⁰⁶ Cf. Michael Pietsch. „König/Königtum“ (2004). <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/23844/>.

cinets is to be slain (Chr 23:7). The author of Kings speaks of only those who follow Athaliah (2 Kings 11:15). The intention of the Chronicler is to preserve the sanctity of the temple, while the narrator of the Kings pays attention to the ouster of Athaliah.⁵⁰⁷ The receivers of the command, too, are different in both the texts. In Kings the addressees are the military personnel, whereas in Chronicles they are priests and Levites. The command of Jehoiada, “do not kill her (לֹא תִמְיִתוּהָ) in the house of the Lord,” (2 Chr 23:14) is in active voice, contrary to the passive voice expression in 2 Kings 11:15, “she shall not be killed (תִּמְיִת אֶל־הַיְהוָה) within the house of YHWH”. The hiphil imperfect form in 2 Chr and the hophal imperfect form in 2 Kings 11 indicate the difference in both the texts on the levels of perspective and focus. All these instances underline also the difference in the intentions of both the authors.

A sharp contrast in narration is noted in the deployment of personnel in the temple. According to the Chronicles, cult officials are placed in the temple, whereas in the book of Kings we read of the military deployment.⁵⁰⁸ As per the Chronicler’s report, Jehoiada entrusts the house of YHWH to the hands of the priests and the Levites, who assume the duty of the guards. Jehoiada also stations guards at the gates of the temple, so that no one who is unclean would enter. This is not found in 2 Kings.⁵⁰⁹ From the context, it is clear that there were also others present who were not priests. In such a situation, their entry into the precincts could have been foreseen as unavoidable. If the captains were military officers, they should be staying out of the inner courtyard in the temple which was the plot of all significant actions. Therefore, it was needed for the Chronicler to emphasise that the actions were carried out by the priests and Levites.⁵¹⁰ These changes in

⁵⁰⁷ Cf. Edward Curtis and Albert Madsen 1910: 426.

⁵⁰⁸ This shift in emphasis is not to be dismissed as falsification. Coggins explains its twofold reasons: the Chronicler narrates this event in terms of what is appropriate for his own day, in which the religious leaders of Jerusalem were the closest equivalent to a royal body-guard; and the Chronicler wanted to stress the religious significance of the restoration of the right authority. Cf. Richard J. Coggins 1976: 236.

⁵⁰⁹ From the Chronicles, we learn that the safeguarding of the holiness of the temple lay within the gatekeepers’ responsibility. The major threat to the cleanliness and holiness of the temple was the possible ritual impurity from within the sacred community itself and seldom from outside. Those who were suffering from ritual impurities were to be debarred from temple service and entry into it. The temple gatekeepers had to restrict access to the different areas of the temple based on their requisite degree of sanctification. Cf. William Jonestone 1997: 126.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Raymond B. Dillard 1987: 181–82. The extensive role of the Levites in the book of Chronicles in general induced many to suggest that the author was either a Levite or one of the members of the temple choir. This interest has been mellowed down after

narration suggest that the Chronicler is stringent about the observation of purity in the temple.

E. Curtis and A. Madsen are probably right in their reasoning that the change was necessitated due to the concept of profanation in the temple at the time of the Chronicler.

The motive of the Chronicler's reconstruction of the narrative is clear. In view of stringency with which the Temple in his time was guarded from profanation by foreigners, he could not conceive that the high priest could have called upon the royal body-guard for service in the temple. Hence, he transformed the carers and Runners into Levites, and made the whole movement an ecclesiastical one.⁵¹¹

Thus, the Chronicler takes care that the temple is not profaned by the entrance of non-priestly members, like the military and the people. The royal family is also apparently not permitted to enter into the holy place. 2 Chr 23:13 states that the king was standing on the podium at the entrance, and understandably Athaliah too did not enter into the temple. In 2 Kings 11:14, the actual location of the podium is not mentioned, but in addition it has "according to the custom". The Chronicler has probably changed this in order to emphasize that neither Joash nor Athaliah entered the temple,⁵¹² and to indicate that no member of the royal house may have access to the holy place.

Rudolph's theory indicated that most of those passages which show the Levites higher role in Chronicles are best considered as later expansions. Cf. Roddy L. Braun 1979: 52. Rudolph himself does not rule out the possibility that the Chronicler belonged to the rank of Levitical singers, but with the caution that they are mostly secondary material and that the appreciation for the Levitical singers is done only in view of praising YHWH aright. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph. VT 4 (1954) 407–408.

⁵¹¹ Edward Curtis and Albert Madsen 1910: 425. They assign the Chronicler a date to the close of the 4th CBC or 300 BC (p. 5–6). The Levites had a traditional quasi-military role in the post-exilic period when a military establishment was absent. Cf. Raymond B. Dillard 1987: 180.

⁵¹² Klein believes that it was to stress that the king and the queen were not permitted in the temple. Cf. Ralf Klein 2012: 327. It is not the personal intention of the Chronicler to limit the privileges of the royal family in the cultus. The divine law forbids the king entering into the temple and sacrificing in the temple. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph. VT 4 (1954) 407. The outer entrance for the entrance is mentioned in 2 Kings 16:18. In Jer 38:14, the king Zedekiah receives Jeremiah at the third entrance of the temple.

For the Chronicler it is important that the new king is anointed with oil by Jehoiada and his sons.⁵¹³ The high priest is conspicuously set in the background.⁵¹⁴ The subject of this anointing in the narrative of 2 Kings is inarticulate. Thus, besides the care for the sanctity of the temple, the Chronicler is insistent on the significant functions of the priests and Levites.

Both the author of the Kings and the Chronicler seek the authorization from David (2 Chr 23:18). The Chronicler goes a step ahead in stating that David determined the personnel of the servitors in the Temple (1 Chr 6:16, 23, 24, 26). He emphasises that Jehoiada strictly follows this customs and in the process communicates to the readers that it is the duty of the Levitical priests to offer burnt offerings in the temple as per the order of David (2 Chr 23:18). The Chronicler's account obviously gives a more profound role to the priests and Levites which expresses his intention to preserve the sacrosanctity of the temple amidst the chaos in and around the temple.

6.4.1.9 Other Changes

The Chronicler narrates the events mentioned in 2 Kings 11 more deliberately and elaborately in his text. The names of the captains are mentioned by the Chronicler.⁵¹⁵ To the name of Jehoshaba ת is added.⁵¹⁶ In the book of kings, the temple is referred to as house of YHWH, whereas the Chronicler changes it to house of God. 2 Chr 23:9 uses the name אֱלֹהִים whereas its parallel 2 Kings 11:10 uses the name יְהוָה. 2 Kings 11:10 speaks of the spear (הַחֶגְגִּית), while it is in plural (הַחֶגְגִּיתִים) in 2 Chr 23:9, which in addition speaks of the large shields (הַמְגִנּוֹת). The Chronicler omits the clapping of the hands (2 Kings 11:12). The presence of the

⁵¹³ Cf. Joachim Becker 1988: 76.

⁵¹⁴ Willi understands that no priority is given to the High Priest in Chronicles. He argues that 2 Chr 23:3 deals with religious ceremony and so Jehoiada takes with him people who are loyal to him. The central role in the covenant is played not by the High Priest but by the king. And so the focus is on the Davidic dynasty, rather than on the role of the priests. And so, he argues the text does not bear the intention of reinforcing the status of the high priest. Cf. Thomas Willi 1972: 127–28. Myers notes that the Chronicler is consciously offering equal roles both for the priests and the Levites. “Most significantly, the claim of the Levites to an equal share with the priests in the cultic services is reaffirmed and care is taken to guard against desecration of the temple.” Jacob S. Myers 1965: 132.

⁵¹⁵ The names which are mentioned give an impression that they could be Levites. Cf. Joachim Becker 1988: 74. The first three names are introduced with the preposition ל, and the last two names are with את. We are not sure, whether it is only a stylistic variation or the last two are not captains of hundreds. Cf. Raymond B. Dillard 1987.

⁵¹⁶ It may be to give a grammatically feminine form. Cf. Ralf Klein 2012: 321–22.

trumpeters and the singers with musical instruments⁵¹⁷ (2 Chr 23:13) is an addition in the Chronicles.

In the account of the Chronicler, priests appear only in 2 Chr 23:4, 6 and only thereafter Jehoiada is called Jehoiada the priest which is continued up to the murder of Athaliah (v. 15). Interestingly, the priestly qualification is absent in 2 Chr 23:1, 3, just like their parallel in 2 Kings 11:4. There is no further mention about the priests in 2 Chr 23 after v. 6. Thus, v. 6 marks two shifts, viz., (i) the priests disappear and (ii) Jehoiada, from hereon, will be called a priest. Thus, the core content of the narration in both the books is similar, but the emphasis varies, in accordance with the intention and goal of the writers.

6.4.2 Inspirations from 2 Chr 23

The effort to overthrow Athaliah and to replace her with Joash is both religiously as well as politically motivated. These two aspects are vividly and effectively brought out by the Chronicler.

6.4.2.1 The Share of the Priests and the Levites

The Chronicles replaces the military officials with the priestly clan in the temple for the task of exterminating Athaliah. The temple and David are the two main features which stand out conspicuously, besides the emphasis upon the cult personnel.⁵¹⁸ Greater emphasis is ascribed to the religious aspects in the Chronicles, i.e., the concern of the Chronicler to avoid the desecration of the temple is evidently higher than that of the author of the book of Kings. He makes Jehosheba the wife of Jehoiada, so that she too has access to the temple. The role played by the priests and Levites is significant. The emphasis that Athaliah was executed outside the temple would further add value to his conviction on the purity of the temple.

6.4.2.2 Cult of YHWH versus Cult of Baal

Besides the possible annihilation of the entire Davidic dynasty, the rule of Athaliah threatened to put the YHWH cult to perils. In the words of Klein, “The

⁵¹⁷ Riley considers the mention of the assembly (2 Chr 23:3), musical instruments and praise (2 Chr 23:13) as elements of liturgy than of a political coup. Such elements of liturgy make the Davidic elements subordinate. Cf. William Riley 1993: 124. Kelly observes that the Chronicler tends to express interest in ritual music and Levitical singers. (1 Chr 6:16–32; 9:14–16; 15:1–16; 2 Chr 5:11–14; 7:1–6; 23:12–13 etc.). Cf. Brian E. Kelly 1996: 169.

⁵¹⁸ Cf. Jacob S. Myers. II Chronicles. 131.

danger of Athaliah for the Chronicler is that she threatened to end the Davidic dynasty and bring the worship of Yahweh at the Jerusalem temple to an end”.⁵¹⁹ The violence against the house of Baal after the death of Athaliah confirms the involvement of cult element in the coup.

6.4.2.3 Involvement of the People

The deposing of Athaliah is not to be limited to Jehoiada and the military. The coup is shown as an act of the people, and not merely by a priest with the help of the army, other priests and Levites. It shows the popular support which the overthrow of Athaliah gained.

The Chronicler informs us that Ahaziah was made king by the inhabitants of Jerusalem (2 Chr 22:1). The People of the Land form a part of those who set Joash on the throne (2 Chr 23:20). Thus, the dwellers of the city are contrasted from the people of the land. There is also a clear division between the people in general (23:5, 6, 10, 12, 16) and the people of the land, in which the latter are attributed with significant tasks, like blowing trumpets (23:13), setting the king on royal throne (23:20) and rejoicing (23:21), whereas the former are attributed with the duties of guards and of shouting. In the covenant making the entire people are involved. Thus, it becomes important to analyse the different sets of distribution of roles between the common people in general, the city dwellers and the people of the land, and their respective support system in the book of Chronicles.

6.4.3 Conclusion

The additional textual elements found in 2 Kings 11 and 2 Chr 23 make it difficult to understand the relationship between the texts. In the same way the nuances of differences between the parallels make it hard to measure the degree of their interrelatedness. Large additions in the Chronicles in comparison to the additions in the book of Kings suggest that the Chronicler tries to fill the gaps found in 2 Kings with his characteristic information. In doing so, he exposes his ideals very clearly.

In General, 2 Chronicles gives more importance to the cultic element. Both the texts speak of the existence of Baalism under Athaliah. The close connection between Athaliah and the foreign cult is strongly stated in 2 Chr 21:6 and 22:2–4. Obviously the priests and Levites play a larger role in the coup according to the

⁵¹⁹ Ralf Klein 2012: 330.

Chronicles. Even the responsibility of guarding the son of the king with the weapons is entrusted to the Levites, which is clearly due to the change of understanding at the time of the writers. It might suggest that the profanation by the entry of the non-priestly group in the temple is very strongly emphasised in the Chronicles, which would indicate its time of composition.

The Chronicles report that the Levites from all over Judah were brought to Jerusalem in view of the coup (2 Chr 23:2). It intends to bring more Levites to the city, whereas 2 Kings 11:4 intends to increase the number of guards in the temple-palace area. Besides the difference in personnel, bringing the Levites to Jerusalem (2 Chr 23:2) makes a clear division between the city of Jerusalem and other places of Judah.

A similar vein runs through the distinction between the people in general and the people of the land in the Chronicles. Other than the priests and the Levites, Jehoiada invites also the heads of the families. The whole assembly takes part in the pact (2 Chr 23:3) and receives the command from Jehoiada (v. 4). Again the people are instructed to observe in instructions of the Lord (v. 6), assigned to guard the king with weapons in the hand (v. 10) and they proclaim Joash as king (v. 11). Again, it is the people who destroy the cultic places of Baal (2 Chr 23:17) and not the people of the land as in 2 Kings 11:18. Thus, the Chronicler offers an extensive role to the people, but prohibits them to enter into the holy place (vv. 6, 19). Such differentiations necessitate a deeper analysis on the concept of the people of the land in Chronicles.

6.5 The Book of Esther

While reading the book of Esther, one would be confronted first and foremost with certain questions related to its theology and historicity. Its theology paints God as much less visible, audible, and dramatic than other biblical texts, as God is not mentioned by name in the text. Therefore, it won't be a surprise if one states that the divine character is apparently absent in the narrative of Esther.⁵²⁰

⁵²⁰ The book of Esther has been treated often as a historical novel. Talmon describes it as an enactment of standard wisdom motifs, and calls it a historicized wisdom tale. S. Talmon. VT 13 (1963) 422–26. Crawford explains that there is of course an implied theology which assumes a belief in God and God's action in history. Cf. Sidnie White Crawford 2003: 68. Stern contents that the book of Esther tries to demonstrate through comic techniques that the form of Jewishness that was being developed in the Persian Empire was just a reversal of a fantasy of life in Israel which was being propagated in Judea at that period. 32. Elsie Stern. JQR 100 (2010) 32. But we need to note that the lack of religious piety

This aspect sets the text in a direction different from 2 Kings 11 which revolves completely in and around the temple and the palace in Jerusalem. The second theological observation concerning the book of Esther is the judgment of the biblical author on the active participation in administration and on foreign kings and the loyalty of the Israelites to them. Surprisingly, the Hebrew Bible does not hold Esther sinful for becoming a part of the harem of a Persian king and Mordecai for guiding her to do so. Rather it lauds her ascent to the status of queenship in a foreign land.⁵²¹

The royal women in the Achaemenid Empire enjoyed varying status among themselves. Their rank was determined by their relationship with the king. In the order of ranks, the mother of the ruling king stood first, followed by the chief of the wives whose son would succeed the king. Then there were other wives of the king. After them, the concubines, the king's wives with foreign origin were placed in order.⁵²² The name Esther is often used in combination with the term מַלְכָּה (queen), 14 times to be precise and thrice she is referred to as מַלְכָּה without specifically mentioning her name. The term מַלְכָּה does not necessarily refer to the chief wife. The royal women born in Israel and Juda were not attributed with this term. The chief wife was called גְּבִיָּרָה (queen mother).⁵²³ Therefore, calling Esther with the term מַלְכָּה does not necessarily imply that she was the chief in rank among the royal women of her time. The queen at the time of Xerxes is said to have been Amestris, a daughter of a Persian General. But the harem of the Persian king had several women.⁵²⁴ Therefore, one cannot rule out the possibility that the story of the book of Esther revolves around one of the

in the text of Esther explicitly doesn't make it a secular text. Besides the political themes running throughout the book, it is shrouded with the religious elements which carry the events forward.

⁵²¹ Karl Jaroš 1996: 94. The ascent of Esther to the position of a queen is an important theme in the book. But the primary theme is the redemption of the Israelites. The elevation of Esther helps towards it and in a way anticipates the rescue that they will be experiencing later. Arndt Meinhold 1983: 35.

⁵²² The king's mother must be regarded as the head of the female members in his family. Only the king's wife whose son would be the heir to the throne had equal rank as that of king's mother. Even the king's mother had no political power. Cf. Maria Brosius 1996: 186–87.

⁵²³ Cf. Tal Davidovich 2013: 43. OT attests the term מַלְכָּה in singular form only to three women: Vashti and Esther in the book of Esther and the queen Sheba in 1 Kings. Even Jezebel is not given this title.

⁵²⁴ Cf. Karl Jaroš 1996: 90.

women in the harem who was raised to the status of the queen, who need not have been the chief wife of the king.

The fact that Athaliah, born in Israel, became the queen mother and then the ruler of Judah and that Esther was a royal woman if not the first of the queens as reported in the Bible and the fact that there were members of the royal family in a foreign land would place them in similar predicaments, if not on equal footings. It does not mean that both these biblical personalities are similar in character but that the contexts are similar. The text of Esther explains the situation in detail, but the characters are not very much described just like 2 Kings 11. Despite these differences in their respective plots, there is a considerable amount of similarities between both the events. A detailed characterization of the leading characters would bring this aspect to light.

6.5.1 Characterization

6.5.1.1 Esther – Epitome of Emotional Valour

The narrator introduces Esther with two names, viz., Hadassah and Esther (Esth 2:7). It is to be noted that the name Hadassah appears only once, and the author prefers to call her ‘Esther’ throughout the story. The origin of the name Hadassah is not very clear. It could be the feminine form of Hadas, a plant, the myrtle.⁵²⁵ It is also suggested that the name ‘Esther’ could be the Persian equivalent of Hadassah. It was proposed in the nineteenth century that the main characters of the book of Esther were Babylonian and Elamite deities. It means to say that the names of Esther and Mordecai supposedly resemble the ancient Mesopotamian divine names Istar and Marduk.⁵²⁶ It is also reasonable to believe that a Jewish family of a higher social class in Persia had a Persian name, besides a Hebrew name.⁵²⁷ If it were true, then the book of Esther offers thrust on the higher status

⁵²⁵ Cf. Tal Davidovich 2013: 40. There are assumptions which claim that Hadassah was her birth name and she received the name Esther after she became the queen. Cf. Maria Brosius 1996: 185. There is a view that Hadassah was the Jewish name and Esther a foreign name. Cf. Carey A. Moore 1971: 20.

⁵²⁶ This link with the Mesopotamian deities is derived from the cuneiform literature of the Babylonians and Assyrians. But these connections are a matter of dispute. The fear of being accused of anti-Semitic prejudice cannot be ruled out and so are the Assyrian elements in the story of Esther. Cf. Stephanie Dalley 2007: 3–4. See also Jonathan Grossman 2011: 75. These names reveal to us that some Hebrew heroes who fought for their folk bore gentle names. Cf. Alberto Soggin 1976: 403.

⁵²⁷ Cf. A. S. Yahuda 1982: 269. The court connections of Mordecai would indicate a higher social class.

of Esther. The ethnic identity is an integral part of her characteristics. Her familial situation and her status within the family of Mordecai are well introduced. And her family connections and lineage remain strongly felt throughout the episode.⁵²⁸ Therefore, the mention of her royal connects and the double name put her on a high status in the narration.

There are contrasting opinions regarding the characterization of Esther derived from the internal textual evidences within the book. Esth 4:4–17 pictures her as a person of high emotions. She is greatly anguished about Mordecai. Her act of sending clothes to him indicates her emotion and grief. On the contrary, Esth 8:1–6 portrays Esther as a strong character, who boldly reveals to the king who was Mordecai to her and courageously requests the king to revoke the orders given by Haman. “She appears assured, confident, and courageous, and being in the king’s presence causes her no anxiety. Esther is in control of the situation, as well as her own response to it.”⁵²⁹ And her balanced attitude is evidenced through her expression of concern for various people. She does not place her life above the common interest of the Jews, but rather tilts the balance between both. L. Day expresses this attitude of Esther in the following words:

She bases her argument to Ahasuerus on both reason and emotion, and she exhibits concern with both individual and community, in asking for her own life and for the lives of her people. When informing the king about what has happened to the Jews, she expresses her concern for the pain of both the Jews and Persians. And Esther holds a median level of acceptable behaviour, as she will tolerate a certain amount of abuse but not to the extreme.⁵³⁰

Esther exhibits zero tolerance in matters concerning safety, as she is seen utilizing her influence over the king. She must have been holding a certain amount of power in the decision making after she became the queen, or at least she had a certain degree of influence over it. It is evidenced from the event in which Haman pleads with her and not with the king.

Esth 8:1–8 shows that she is intelligent and speaks persuasively. She is a person of sound arguments. Even after her ethnic identity is revealed, she maintains

⁵²⁸ Cf. Linda Day 1995: 43–44. Bal describes the mutual dependency of Esther and Mordecai as follows: “Esther and Mordecai serve to produce and motivate each other: without Esther, Mordecai would have no access to the court; without her cousin, Esther would have no access to news from the city.” Mieke Bal 1999: 234.

⁵²⁹ Ibid. 103.

⁵³⁰ Ibid. 133.

her regal authority. This episode also reveals her love for her people. Esther is a person of both emotional and mental strength. She has a strong will, required to overcome various pressures placed on her. There is also a great emphasis on her speaking ability, which she executes articulately and judiciously (7:4). She is moderate in her outward impression and expression. Her behaviour is often balanced.⁵³¹

On the one hand, the presentation of the character of Esther is praiseworthy as seen above. On the other hand, the text can be seen as negatively portraying her character as one lacking in virtues, as one who has not set the rescue of her people as her prime goal, and as one who just carries out the command, perhaps not knowing the possible result of it. For her, the major concern was to make a request to the king as directed by Mordecai, and saving herself and not the people was perhaps her attempt.⁵³² She is criticised for being “a handmaiden of patriarchy: obedient, pliable, silver-tongued and manipulative, a woman who gets her way by placatory language and ingratiating formulas. Her behaviour is said to undergrid the assumptions of patriarchal ideology by showing that a woman should be obedient and submissive”.⁵³³ Esther is marked for her unimaginable brutality. Dalley sees no justification for her disproportionate malevolent.

When Esther rose to a position of real importance with the power to overcome the enemies of the Jews, she behaved with an unnecessary ferocity, requesting of the king that an extra day be granted for the slaughter of the non-Jews in Susa, even though the story attributed hostility against the Jews only to the wicked courtier Haman and his family.⁵³⁴

Though the infight between Haman and Mordecai can be cited as the reason for the massacre, it would be hardly enough reason to justify the massacre of a huge number of the non-Jews. She is not considered to have received any divine commission towards this revenge. McGeough describes her as “one of many heroic

⁵³¹ Ibid. 150, 200–201.

⁵³² Ibid. 62–63. Moore wrote that Mordecai is the greater hero who supplied the brains while Esther simply followed his directions. Later he noted that his statement was written in a moment of chauvinism. Cf. Carey A. Moore 2003: 5.

⁵³³ Esther Fuchs 2000: 155–156. See also Michael V. Fox 2003: 50. While comparing Esther with Vashti, Moyer describes Esther as more obedient and less headstrong and is therefore more worthy in the eye of Ahasuerus. Cf. Clinton J. Moyer. VT 60 (2010) 609.

⁵³⁴ Stephanie Dalley 2007: 196. The author argues that the massacre of the non-Jews is beyond a personal vendetta against Haman. She is of the opinion that Esther acted like a deity and exults in carnage, and such retaliations belong to gods. Ibid. 197.

women (in the Bible) who act without any express instruction from God.”⁵³⁵ Thus, not only her characterization, but also her very motives come under severe criticism in the biblical scholarship.

Having demonstrated various observations regarding her characteristics, one can look at the character of Esther sympathetically. She retains the attention of the readers throughout the narration. She possesses wisdom and courage and is self-sacrificing. Her positives outweigh the negatives. In this context, her characteristics are to be weighed as per the standards of a Jewish woman in diaspora against the context of the time and are to be treated with due regard. With a fair consideration to this aspect, a reader would find a progressive change in her. In the beginning of the episode, the male protagonists assert their authority over her. But in the course of time, Esther establishes herself as the queen and as an instrument of the redemption of her people. This reveals that she possesses the trait of wisdom.

Obedience is another mark of her character, as Jones points out.⁵³⁶ She is obedient to Mordecai and then receives favours from Bougaios and the king. With regard to involvement in the happenings, she is presented as a passive character until the middle of the story. She does not initiate actions, but they are imposed upon her. The events take place without her consent. These events include the care shown to her by Mordecai after the death of her parents and her eventual adoption. After her arrival at the royal palace, she is fully guided and cared by Hagai. Thus, she plays a passive role in the palace, too.

Esth 4 marks a transition, as she begins to take some initiatives. She begins to give instructions, even while she continues to take instructions from Mordecai. In Esth 5, she takes matters in her hand and decides to approach the king for the good of her fellow Jews. Her stopping at the gate before meeting the king, might point out either she was reluctant or she was prudent. In any case, she was well prepared for this meeting. She does not express her difficulty to the king straight-away. Davidovich aptly terms her as one who is at times a reluctant doer.⁵³⁷ But the moment she becomes successful in convincing the king, she becomes strong and her courage is once again revealed, as she requests for another day of revenge. In her relationship with Mordecai, Esther is seen as an obedient child. She

⁵³⁵ Kevin McGeough, *CBQ* 70 (2008) 56–57.

⁵³⁶ Cf. Bruce William Jones 1982: 441–43.

⁵³⁷ Cf. Tal Davidovich 2013: 45–47.

followed the instruction of Mordecai literally. There is a progressive change after she became a queen. She begins to take control over the events. The distance between them increases in Esth 5–7. In Esth 8, she is no longer dependent on him either physically or mentally.⁵³⁸ She is dutiful and fully committed. She stands for the cause for which she has been sent to the palace. She is even ready to become a martyr for the goodness of her people. Thus, Esther is presented as an epitome of intelligent valour.

6.5.1.2 Mordecai and the Conflict between Personal or Ethnical Interests

The character of Mordecai⁵³⁹ is given wider attention by the biblical author. Three generations of Mordecai are mentioned in the text. It is a deviation from the normal biblical presentations of characters. Probably, it intends to place emphasis on the Jewish ancestry of Mordecai, i.e., he belongs to the family of Saul, though not necessarily a direct descendant. Thus, it might provide the reader a link between Mordecai and his kingly lineage, offering a glimpse of what is to come.⁵⁴⁰ However, Mordecai appears to be a bundle of paradoxes. He is a Jew with a name which looks most likely Babylonian, but serving the palace of Susa.⁵⁴¹ From the indirect characterization, Mordecai appears well informed, always present, vigilant and observing. Often he is seen making decisions for Esther. When compared with Esther, he plays a more dominant role. More often

⁵³⁸ Ibid. 49–52.

⁵³⁹ While there is no historical evidence to the existence of Esther, an attestation is found in an undated document (probably from the last years of Darius I or early years of Xerxes I) to the name of Marduka who served as an accountant on an inspection tour from Susa. This could be identified with Mordecai. Moore argues that the episode of Mordecai cannot be ruled out as a pure fiction and it is safest to conclude that the story of Mordecai may have a kernel of truth in it. Cf. Carey A. Moore. *BA* 38 (1975) 73–74.

⁵⁴⁰ Cf. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 71–72. A similar detail will be found also in Num 16:1. For a counter view, read: J. Liver. “Mordecai.” *Encyclopaedia Biblica* 5. 449. Y. Amit. 2006: 653. The word Mordecai is usually explained as a devotee of Marduk. But it does not necessarily mean that Mordecai was his devotee. Cf. Thomas Witton Davies 1909: 316. Mordecai as a name is also mentioned in Ezr 2:2 and Neh 7:7. And so there is no need to look for any mythological relevance to the name. Cf. Leonard Herbert Brockington 1969: 228. Though Mordecai is a Babylonian name, the emphasis in Esth 2:5 is his identity as a Jew. Cf. Arndt Meinhold 1983: 32. Besides Mordecai’s Jewish identity, the trauma of exile is also indicated. Esth 2:6 mentions exile explicitly four times. In the book of Esther, to be Jewish means to be aware of exile as a formative experience. Thus Mordecai’s character has a twofold identity: a Jew and one who is aware of the experience of exile. Cf. Timothy K. Beal 1997: 33.

⁵⁴¹ Cf. Karl Jaroš 1996: 85.

than not, she is a pawn in the hand of Mordecai. Ao expresses it in the following word: “He is the active party, and Esther merely conveys a message ‘in the name of Mordecai’ (Esth 2:22). Esther enters the story as an archetypal dependent, a female symbol of disenfranchisement, dependence, and an outsider in need of protection, resembling Ruth.”⁵⁴² This dependency is fulfilled by Mordecai. He catapults her to become a queen, giving instructions whenever needed.

A short analysis is required on the instruction of Mordecai to Esther not to reveal her Jewish identity, for it would expose some shades of his characteristics. The following plausible reasons could be postulated: (i) Mordecai thought that if the king had known that she is from the exile, he would not take her. (ii) Mordecai foresaw that redemption would come through Esther: These two arguments hold that Mordecai concealed her identity, so that it would facilitate her becoming the queen.⁵⁴³ (iii) It has to do with the ethnic struggle of the Jews amidst the Persians. Therefore, Mordecai instructed her to hide her identity.⁵⁴⁴ Esther, too, never displayed any sign of reluctance to become the queen or of disobeying the instructions of Mordecai. However, from the biblical account we do not know anything about the discrimination shown by the king. In fact, he deals with people of different ethnicity. Mordecai seems to have had a definite plan and calculated efforts in order to make Esther succeed in getting into the palace. Whatever be the reality, Mordecai could be described as the mastermind behind the whole drama.

The motives of Mordecai are placed under suspicion. He is seen as a man who works for his personal as well as ethnical interest. In the words of Laniak, “Mordecai ... is wise. He is patient for personal honor yet active for the great cause of vindication and deliverance for his people.”⁵⁴⁵ Mordecai’s sitting at the palace gate (Esth 2:21) offers some nuances of his greater plan. It was

⁵⁴² Atula Ao 2016: 73.

⁵⁴³ Cf. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 73–74. Moore argues that Esther wanted to become queen. She had the assistance of people like Mordecai and Hegai, but not to the exclusion of the providence of God. Mordecai’s appeal in 4:14 is indicative of this. Cf. Carey A. Moore 1971: 27. Adele Berlin 2001: 83.

⁵⁴⁴ Bush surmises that Mordecai feared that prejudice would be meted to Esther, if she revealed her identity, as he experienced the same from Haman. Cf. Fredric Bush 1996: 368.

⁵⁴⁵ Timothy S. Laniak 1998: 111. Laniak further sees him as one born with honor, acts with honor and who will soon defend his honor and as one who represents Israel the chosen, and as a loyal, proactive man of character. Cf. Timothy S. Laniak 1998: 66. The Rabbis treat Mordecai as a person endowed with responsibility towards the nation. His character is seen as providing spiritual leadership for the Jews in the diaspora. Cf. Julia Schwartzmann. *IJJS* 29 (2011) 128.

possible for him to monitor the happening of the palace and keep himself in contact with Esther.⁵⁴⁶ Mordecai learns about the rebellion of the chamberlains, and he decides to save the king. It appears to be concocted with ulterior motive and not borne out of loyalty to the king. He could have directly informed the king, but he does it through Esther. It lets the reader think that he had a great plan in store which had to be accomplished through Esther. All these characteristics present Mordecai as a shrewd and intelligent designer of events.

6.5.1.3 Haman and his Exaggerated Vengeance

The name of Haman bears high significance. Haman is introduced as the son of Hamedatha, the Agagite (Esth 3:1). Haman and Hamedatha are Ilmi-Iranian names, while Agagite refers to his clan and it is a Persian name.⁵⁴⁷ אגגי is a descriptive term for Haman. LXX mentions it as Βουγαῖος. In all probability, it was a local name in Persia.⁵⁴⁸

From the internal evidences of the text, Haman can be described as highly ambitious. He is also presented as a man who strives to promote himself (Esth 5:11; 6:6–9). In his folly, he presumes himself to be the man whom the king wants to honor and desires to be treated like the king wearing the royal robe, seated on a crowned horse and be led by a noble through the streets (Esth 6:9). Laniak describes him as a man who is greedy for the symbol of royalty.⁵⁴⁹ One cannot rule

⁵⁴⁶ Sitting in the palace gate implies an institutionalised public role. In ANE, gate was the place where trials were conducted and justice was dispensed. It is possible that after Esther became queen, she appointed Mordecai as a magistrate or judge, which is still a lesser position in the Persian hierarchy, but however would earn him access to the royal quarters. Cf. Robert Gordis. *JBL* 95 (1976) 47–48.

⁵⁴⁷ Some see Haman as the heir of Amalek, building a biblical connection for the conflict between Mordecai and Haman. Saul spares Agag (1 Sam 15:9), but Mordecai sees to it that Haman along with his family is exterminated. The mention that the Jews did not take the booty (Esth 9:10) further adds to the intention of the author. Cf. W. McKane. *JTS* 12 (1961) 260–61. See also A. Carey Moore 1971: 35. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 82–83. Jon D. Levenson 1997: 66–67. However, there no conclusive evidence for this enmity in Persian kingdom. And the term rendered as “Agagite” is a Persian name. It is likely to evoke the Jewish reader to recall Agag who inadvertently served as the agent of the dethronement of Saul. This motive is also found in the more ancient poetic oracle of Balaam in Num 24:7.

⁵⁴⁸ The title “Agagite” may be an allegorical nickname and does not indicate any natural descent from the Amalekites. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/esther/3-1.htm>.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Timothy S. Laniak 1998: 101. Haman is a straightforward example of a fool in the Bible. He falls into folly and cruelty eventually. Cf. Patrick Henry Reardon. *Touchstone* (2016) 56.

out Haman's treasonous intention to become the king.⁵⁵⁰ He wishes that all pay homage to him. The narrative also depicts him as one with extreme emotions and mood swings. On the one hand, he could be extremely dangerous when he is endowed with power, and on the other hand, he would go to his knees when he senses personal danger (Esth 7:8).

Haman is power hungry, dominating and highly revengeful. He is irrational and full of unlimited rage. He directs his fury not only at Mordecai, but also at the entire Israelite folk.⁵⁵¹ His desire to take action against Mordecai who refused to bow down to him is understandable. But his vengeance against the race to which Mordecai belongs, is inexplicable. Haman thus declares himself as the enemy of the Jews (3:10; 7:6).

6.5.1.4 Ahasuerus – Impressionable and Susceptible

The Persian king Ahasuerus is relegated to the background in the book of Esther and is attributed indirectly with human frailties. He is presented as one who is incapable of taking decisions on his own. He is portrayed as one who is incapable of controlling his own wife and as one who is unable to make decisions on his own.⁵⁵² The king punishes his wife on account of his friend and punishes his friend on account of his wife.⁵⁵³ In order to make decisions, he relies on others, be it, his dealing with Vashti's disobedience or with the extermination of the

⁵⁵⁰ The desire for investiture and royal parade is indicative of this assumption. It is unclear whether the royal diadem, as per the proposal of Haman, is to be placed upon the horse's head or upon the king's head. Cf. Jon D. Levenson 1997: 97.

⁵⁵¹ The initial conflict occurs only between the courtiers. Mordecai should have paid homage to Haman befitting to his newly elevated office. The subsequent conflict is to be understood in terms of the courtiers' concern over rank and position. Cf. W. Lee Humphreys. *JBL* 92 (1973) 215. Segal notes that the episode of Haman's fury is strategically positioned at the turning point of the narrative. Cf. Eliezer Segal. *Prooftexts* 9 (1989) 248.

⁵⁵² Cf. Stephanie Dalley 2007: 199. From the viewpoint of Dalley, the Hebrew version of the book of Esther was written at the time of decadence of the Assyrian empire, and therefore the author presents the king as one with no discretion of organizing the affairs of his own kingdom. In fact, Mordecai and Esther play a more important role than the king.

⁵⁵³ This tersely symmetrical statement is noted in Targum Sheni. In fact, the Targum mentions it as if the king put his wife to death, even though MT does not say so. Berlin unpacks this statement and explains further that the Rabbis also identified Memucan with Haman and on his account Vashti was put to death. Cf. Adele Berlin 2003: 12. Interestingly, Ahasuerus is defied by his first wife Vashti, but he is manipulated by his second wife Esther. He has a face of a fool, who also has several advisers but ends up in absurd decisions. Cf. Jonathan Magonet. *EJ* 47 (2014) 100–101.

Jews or with the crime of Haman or with the possibility of changing the unalterable law (8:15–17).

His role is also ambiguous. First, along with Haman, he stands as the co-enemy of the Jews, as the one who authorizes the latter's plan against the Jews. Later, he turns to be a helper of the Jews, as he commands the death of Haman and signs the edict of deliverance of the Jews.⁵⁵⁴ Bickerman illustrates his characteristics as follows: "Ahasuerus, the Shah, is like a modern general who gives routine approval to the reasoned opinion of this chief of staff."⁵⁵⁵ Ahasuerus is superfluous and showy, shallow and male chauvinist (2:12). Crawford describes Ahasuerus as mercurial and dangerous with aspects of the buffoon in his character.⁵⁵⁶ In the entire narrative, he has been treated like a toy by different people at different times. His merry making nature, his inability to take decisions and his characteristic of being easily influenced by others led the country to disaster, internal violence and loss of the lives of many citizens. To sum up, Ahasuerus is presented as a fickle character seated on the throne, swayed by the heat of the moment.

6.5.2 Binding Elements of Esther and 2 Kings 11

The book of Esther has several allusions to other biblical narratives. Esther can be compared to some of the strong biblical women like Ruth, Judith⁵⁵⁷ and Tamar. The narrative of Joseph in Egypt,⁵⁵⁸ the war of Saul against the Amalek, the end of David's life, succession narrative of Solomon and the book of Daniel

⁵⁵⁴ Cf. David J. A. Clines 1990: 34–36. The character of Ahasuerus is so ambiguous that "we never do learn his true feelings about the Jews since whatever he does to help them later is only due to his hatred of Haman and his positive attitude toward Mordecai and Esther". Joshua J. Adler. *JBQ* 19 (1991) 187.

⁵⁵⁵ Elias Bickerman 1967: 188–89.

⁵⁵⁶ Cf. Sidnie White Crawford 2003: 64.

⁵⁵⁷ Many parallels can be drawn also on the level of character of Esther and Judith. Both are described as beautiful face and figure (Est. 2:7; Jdt 8:7). But they hold marginalized status in the society as the key. The former is an orphan, while the latter is a widow. *Ibid.* 63.

⁵⁵⁸ From an intertextual perspective, it is to be noted that there are several motive based parallels to Joseph's narrative, which itself sets the prelude to the exodus event.

are some of the known allusions to Esther.⁵⁵⁹ Besides these allusions, the setting of Ex 1–12 seems to be reflecting in the setting of the book of Esther.⁵⁶⁰

Some individual events in 2 Kings 11 and the book of Esther bear resemblance. At the same time, a comparison between these two is a hard task, as the book of Esther contains several characters and a long narration in comparison to the relatively shorter narration of 2 Kings 11. Yet the following thematic similarities can be noted: both Athaliah and Esther become queen in a foreign land; tearing of the garment⁵⁶¹ by Athaliah and by Mordecai (Esth 4:1); massacre or attempt to genocide; conspiracy against the king or potential kings; and attempts to abort the conspiracies. Besides them, they contain the following common elements, too: Relationship between some of the key characters is not explicitly mentioned both in 2 Kings 11 and in Esther. The book of Esther lacks clarity on the relationship between Esther and Mordecai. Esth 2:7 relates them as cousins and nothing is said about the marital status of Mordecai.⁵⁶² Similarly, 2 Kings 11 is silent

⁵⁵⁹ Cf. William McKane. *JTS* 12 (1961) 260–61. Grossman adds the story of Jacob and Esau, Joseph and Daniel, Ahab and Jezebel and the greatness of Joshua to the list. Cf. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 219. See also Jonathan Magonet. *Judaism* 29 (1980) 167–76. Besides this, there are noted allusions to the story of Moses, too. The death of Haman’s ten sons illustrated in the Magillah is compared to the ten plagues of the Exodus. There are also attempts to see the connection between Purim and Passover. Esther is also seen as a redemptive figure prefiguring the Virgin Mary as one who is interceding for the people. Cf. Ori S. Soltés 2003: 138–40. Tkacz relates the fast and prayer of Esther topologically to the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. She further treats that the danger of death which Esther could have been glossed as foreshadowing Christ’s death. Cf. Catherine Brown Tkacz. *CBQ* 70 (2008) 712–13.

⁵⁶⁰ Gerleman points out some of the common features of both the texts such as the foreign court, the mortal threat, the deliverance, the revenge, the triumph, etc. The characters of Moses and Esther have several points of convergence, like secrecy of ethnic origin, appearing before the king, opposition to Amalekite, help of a spokesman, etc. Cf. G. Gerleman 1973. 11–18. See also Carey A. Moore. *HAR* 7 (1983) 174.

⁵⁶¹ The tearing of garments as mourning gesture is a widely known topos. In 2 Kings 11 and in the book of Esther, it can be seen as an expression of fear at the threshold of death, both at individual level and at the level of the society.

⁵⁶² Esther and Mordecai were closely related. Mordecai treated her as his daughter. This and the fact that he had access to the harem led some to think that he was an eunuch. Cf. Thomas Witton Davies 1909: 317. On the plain meaning of the text, one might understand that Mordecai and Esther were cousins. But scholars also think that Mordecai married Esther. The statement ‘the maiden was beautiful and lovely’ offers a clue. This statement makes some to propose that Mordecai cared for Esther when she was young and married her when she blossomed into an attractive young woman. Cf. Barry D. Walfish 2003: 115. But the statement that Esther was beautiful need not necessarily point to a marital relationship. The statement is to be read in the context of recruiting candidates for queen-

about the relationship between Jehosheba and Jehoiada, although the Chronicles would identify Jehosheba as the wife of Jehoiada.

In both the texts, unexpected things run through the entire story, which is vital to any narrative to be interesting. They are also marked by strange happenings. In the former, a priest is seen commanding the guards and in the latter a Jewish woman is seen becoming a queen of Persia. The actions of Esther are calling for attention of the reader and are not corresponding to the Persian laws. No queen or queen mother would be able to take the law in her hand. She had to always plead the king directly, who in turn would take a decision. But with Esther, it is all different.⁵⁶³ Her actions are adventurous, too. Esther was aware that Vashti whose place she took over as the wife of the king was punished for the violation of the law. Now Esther dares to violate the law by presenting herself before the king without being summoned. She was certainly aware of the new promulgated law in Persia that the women had to submit themselves to patriarchal authority.⁵⁶⁴ A similar adventurous position was taken by Jehoiada the priest. He assumes the power to command for himself. He was aware that Athaliah had taken the lives of her grandchildren and come to power. Jehoiada was working a plan against Athaliah now. He dared to command the centurions of the carer and the runners, preparing a coup against the ruler. He should have been certain that he would be facing the same predicament like those innocent kids murdered by Athaliah, if his plans miscarried. Coincidentally, both Jehoiada and Esther were successful in their attempt in taking the law in their hand.

Both episodes end with peaceful situations and celebrations. 2 Kings 11:20 points out that peace prevailing over the city and people rejoiced over the change in kingship. The book of Esther notes the celebration of the festival by the Jews after the success over their enemies. In spite of the presence of all the above commonalities, there is no one-to-one analogy in the strict sense between the Athaliah-Episode and the book of Esther. A single character in one narrative might correspond to two or more characters in the other. All the same an attempt is made here to correlate some corresponding characters.

ship. It is possible that the author wanted the readers to give the reason why Esther was taken to the palace along with other maidens.

⁵⁶³ Cf. Tal Davidovich 2013: 16.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 125.

6.5.2.1 Athaliah and Haman

Athaliah, who caused the massacre of the royal offspring in Judah, can be compared with Haman who schemed to destroy the Jews. Haman harbours grudge against the Jewish people, just like Athaliah showed no sympathy towards the royal children. While Athaliah took the reign and law in her hands, Haman could not do so, because he was only a vizir. He reports to the king that the Israelites do not observe the law of the land (Esth 3:8). The solution he offers is the total annihilation of this folk.⁵⁶⁵ At this point both Athaliah and Haman are seen as reflections of each other. Both wanted to destroy a group of people. Haman had to make a strategy in order to do it and the ground for his action is clear to the readers. On the contrary, Athaliah needed no canny strategy as she occupied the helm of affairs. The following characteristics are common to both the characters.

6.5.2.2 Bloodthirsty Reactions

The rage of Athaliah and the reaction of Haman are both equally staggering. Athaliah could have continued to be the queen mother of Judah despite the death of her son. Laying hands on the life of innocent children is beyond comprehension. The same can be said of Haman's indignation and the consequential violence. Though the rage of Haman at Mordecai's refusal to bow down⁵⁶⁶ to him is understandable, the intensity of revenge and the targeted range of people are not quite easy to grasp. There is no sufficient ground for an act of genocide here. Bechtel sounds this view as follows, "Even if we had begun to be slightly nervous about guilt by association on the basis of Mordecai's public identification as a Jew, the fact that Haman now proposes genocide as a solution to one individual's lack of respect is unimaginable."⁵⁶⁷ It would have been enough to target Mordecai alone. Haman transfers his anger against an individual to the innocent public.

⁵⁶⁵ There may be other suitable solutions, too. One of them is to disperse the troubling community into some other provinces. This strategy was not possible against the Israelites, as they were already scattered in several provinces of Persia. Cf. Elias Bickerman 1967: 189.

⁵⁶⁶ The meaning of bowing down before another varied from community to community in the antiquity. In the ancient orient, it was an act of acceptance of military power of the other. Among the Greeks it was an important gesture, which expressed respect, humility and reverence. It was not compatible with the ideals of freedom. For the Persians, bowing before the king meant to pay him the honour due to God. Cf. Beate Ego 2017: 196–98. This explanation would probably justify the refusal of Mordecai to bow down.

⁵⁶⁷ Carol M. Bechtel 2002: 38.

The edict to destroy the Jews is sent swiftly (Esth 3:13). The vehemence of Haman's hatred comes to expression in the series of words like *תִּשָּׁחַד* (slaughter), *יִרְחַל* (slay), and *יִמָּחַד* (destroy). The list of target victims includes all the Jews, young and old, children and women. Haman instigates the non-Jews against the Jews. Those people who have their ire against the Jews have now an opportunity to destroy them and to take possession of their property.⁵⁶⁸ Esth 9:2 reports the actions of the Jews against those who sought evil against them. Here, the action was directed only towards who would harm them, which means that their action was an act of resistance to acts of aggression against them, rather than an initiation of an act of aggression.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, the action of the Jews is different from that of Haman and his followers.

6.5.2.3 Events of Transition

The young prince Joash standing on the podium in the royal palace even as Athaliah stared at him in shock (2 Kings 11:14) and Mordecai being led on the horse back at the dismay and downfall of Haman (Esth 6:11) are crucial events in their respective narratives. Both these scenes are pivotal in picturing the change of scene in the progression of events. Athaliah was until then the unquestioned ruler of Judah who probably thought that there was no claimant to the throne. For in her opinion, there was no royal offspring spared. Unfortunately, the opposite happened. With this turn of events begins her downfall leading to her own death.

Haman who was second only to the king experiences something similar. "The episode of the horse is the central axis upon which the turnabout occurs. Up until this point, Haman was on the rise; from this point forward, Haman begins his fall."⁵⁷⁰ The actual reason for the punishment of Haman is perplexing. Esther succeeded in convincing the king that Haman rebelled against the king by writing the decree of annihilation. But to our surprise, the king did not punish him for rebellion, but for his presumed attempt to molest the queen. Haman is accused of attempting to molest Esther, the queen, an offence which in fact he did not commit. "Haman gets the punishment he deserves but is punished, in part, for a

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Michael V. Fox 1991: 54.

⁵⁶⁹ Cf. Tricia Miller 2015: 2015. Sweeny argues that the destruction of enemies here is in concurrence with the Bible's various expressions of punishment and salvation and it is in agreement with the universal right of self-protection against those who would murder. Cf. Marvin Sweeney 2000: 273. Cited in: Tricia Miller 2015: 28.

⁵⁷⁰ Jonathan Grossman 2011: 146.

crime he did not commit. Haman did not try to rape Esther, and he did not try to kill the queen as such, for he did not know that the queen was Jewish. Once again, ignorance, misapprehension, and bungling move events forward in the right direction.”⁵⁷¹ However, attempt to molest the queen cannot be an isolated event. It could be viewed as an attempt to inherit the queen and eventually to usurp the kingdom.⁵⁷² Even though Haman did not attempt to molest Esther in the strict sense, the hidden meaning behind the allegation suggests an attempt to usurp the kingdom. This is in line with Adonijah’s desire to have Abishag, David’s nurse and concubine, an act which was seen as an attempt to usurp the kingdom from Solomon (1 Kings 2:13–25). Absalom, too, had tried to usurp the throne of David, by going to his concubines (2 Sam 16:21–23). In this sense, both Haman and Athaliah fall under the same category in their attempt to take over the kingdom. While Haman’s attempt was thwarted, Athaliah’s was successful.

6.5.2.4 Reversal of Fortunes

In both our texts, there is a reversal of fortunes. Athaliah who swiftly carried out the massacre of the royal offspring would be later murdered in front of a royal offspring who had been spared from her ruthless act. The Jews who were the target point of the edict from the king, to be exterminated, killed and destroyed (Esther 3:13) receive another edict from Esther to stand for their lives, to exterminate, to kill and to destroy anyone who came against them (Esth 8:11). It includes Haman, the doyen of the conspiracy, who becomes a victim of the counter conspiracy. Both of these events teach the readers that one, who lives by the sword, will die by the sword.

6.5.2.5 Consequences of Death

Athaliah is slain (2 Kings 11:16) and Haman is hung on the gallows (Esth 8:1). Both the deaths have similar consequences. After Athaliah is killed, Joash begins

⁵⁷¹ Michael V. Fox 1991: 88.

⁵⁷² Grossman attributes the wrong understanding of the king either to his poor judgment or to his inebriated state. Cf. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 162. Haupt suggests that the king was fully aware of the allegations of Esther, but in Haman’s alleged attempt to molest the queen (Esth 7:8–9), he found a convenient reason to punish him. When the king had left the room (Esth 7:7), he was already convinced that Haman is culpable. Probably, he sought a way to punish him. When he returned to the room, he knew that Haman had no intention of assaulting the queen. Even then, he accused him of this crime. It shows how the king was disposed towards Haman. Cf. Paul Haupt. *AJSLL* 24 (1907–08) 150–51.

his reign (2 Kings 12:1). After the execution of Haman, his estate⁵⁷³ is handed over to Esther (Esth 8:7) and Mordecai assumes charge over it. Jehoiada guided the reign of young Joash (2 King 12:2). It looks logical to presume that Jehoiada had an important place in the reign of Joash. The death of Haman, too, turns the table in Mordecai's favour, as he assumed control over the ministry of Haman and rises to become the second in command, next only to the king. The book of Esther narrates how Esther and Mordecai enjoyed several benefits after the demise of Haman.

The aftermath of both the incidents of revenge is similar in nature. The people of the land were filled with joy and there was peace in the city once again after Athaliah had been killed (2 Kings 11:20). After Haman obtained the edict from the king, which permitted the Jews to defend themselves, the Jews rejoiced over it and there was joy and honour once again (Esth 8:16).

After the day of fighting, a day of rest followed for the Jews in the king's provinces (Esth 9:17). After two days of fighting in Susa, two days of celebration of Purim followed, which were days of rest (Esth 9:19). For the Persian Jews, rest was possible only through the annihilation of their enemies.⁵⁷⁴ The conclusion of the book of Esther speaks of a letter authorizing the edict. The words of greetings towards the end of the book of Esther (Esth 9:30), דְּבָרֵי שְׁלוֹם וְאֱמֶת (words of peace and truth), could be also rendered as friendly and sincere greetings. It could be also the initial formula of greeting in the letter, which is a common phenomenon in most cultures.⁵⁷⁵ These words can bear also a message of peace to the community. "The final words, 'peace and truth', bear a deeper meaning than the usual oriental greetings of 'well-being and prosperity'. They express wishes of peace and well-being to the community in both the material and the spiritual sense."⁵⁷⁶ The episode of Athaliah has a similar end (2 Kings 11:20) which states that וַיִּשְׁמַח

⁵⁷³ The meaning of estate is also critical. Was it the private house of Haman or does it refer to the official portfolio he was holding? In all probability, it refers to both. Entrusting the portfolio to Mordecai, which had fallen vacant due to the death of Haman seems logical. Entrusting the property with Mordecai would make him commensurate with his new office. Cf. Carey A. Moore 1971: 77. Cf. Jonathan Grossman 2011: 172. Having been ranked next to the king, in fact, Mordecai occupied a higher position than the one Haman had occupied. He could be compared to Joseph, who rides in the chariot of the second in command (Gen 41:43). Cf. Adele Berlin 2001: 95.

⁵⁷⁴ Cf. Tricia Miller 2015: 26.

⁵⁷⁵ Cf. Robert Gordis. JBL 95 (1976) 57.

⁵⁷⁶ Richard J. Coggins and S.P. Re'em 1929: 137.

(they rejoiced) and יְהִיעִיר שְׁקֵטָה (and the city was peaceful). Peace was possible for the inhabitants of Jerusalem only through the extermination of Athaliah.

The gladness of the people in both the texts contains a commonality. For the people of Israel, sorrow is turned into joy (Esth 9:22).⁵⁷⁷ There is joy and feasting (Esth 9:18–21). This joy is an outcome of the reversal of revenge on Haman who has plotted the genocide against the Israelites. Athaliah is met with the same fate which she inflicted upon the royal offspring. The difference is that Haman was hanged lawfully in accordance with the king's decree, whereas Athaliah was murdered in a coup.

6.5.2.6 Jehoiada and Mordecai and Esther

Jehoiada the priest can be compared with Mordecai who tries to prevent the destruction of his race and avenge the death of his people. The characteristics of both the personalities match each other rather well. The plan and its application display the intellectual and political acumen of Jehoiada. At the same time, one cannot deny the factor of danger involved in it. He knew for certain that he would be killed, if found plotting and conspiring against Athaliah. Esther too risked her life, meeting the king without being summoned. Esther 4:11 indicates that no queen will be able to meet the king without being summoned. Her life would be in danger, if the king doesn't favour her at her adventure. The risk is intensified a second time, when she articulates who should be invited for the banquet besides the king. In fact, inviting Haman could evoke suspicion in the mind of the king. The adventurous deeds of Esther might jeopardise not only her life, but also the life of Mordecai, the brain behind her actions. The impending risk that hangs over Esther is literally applicable to Mordecai, too. Understandably, Jehoiada too places himself at such type of risks. It could be a personal danger, a life threat or even a danger to the folk or to his religion.

Mordecai takes Esther under his care (Esth 2:20). Likewise Jehosheba becomes the guardian of the young Joash. Though Jehoiada does not hold any direct responsibility in this regard, the nexus between Jehoiada and Jehosheba is hardly disputable. While Jehoiada is portrayed as one who is loyal to the Davidic family, Mordecai stands firm for his ethnic community.

⁵⁷⁷ There is a motive of reversed fortunes here. See also Jer 31:13; Ps 30:11; Lam 5:15; Is 61:3. Cf. S. Timothy Laniak 1998: 135–36.

Mordecai is wise and knows when to speak. He instructs Esther to hide her ethnicity (Esth 2:10). He informs Esther of the conspiracy against the king (2:21–23). He shrewdly sends out an edict on the name of the king to allow the Jews of Persia to save themselves (Esth 8:9).⁵⁷⁸ Jehoiada possesses similar characteristics. The difference is on the risk placed on the common folk. A personal conflict between two persons paves way for an open enmity between the Jews and the masses of people in the empire in the book of Esther, while in 2 Kings 11, this risk is absent.

6.5.2.7 Jehosheba and Esther

In the book of Esther, we read of a conspiracy spawned just outside the bedchamber. It is orchestrated by two disgruntled eunuchs against the king Ahasuerus. As guardians of the king's private chamber, the eunuchs Bigthan and Teresh had the advantage of easy access to the king, even in his vulnerable moments.⁵⁷⁹ This conspiracy has been aborted through the timely intervention of Mordecai and Esther. Athaliah's attempt to exterminate all the potential royal princes, was almost successful, except in the case of Joash who has been saved from the carnage, thanks to the intervention of Jehosheba. While Mordecai and Esther are absolutely successful in their life-saving mission, Jehosheba can be also considered equally successful, even though the other children were not saved. Jehosheba's saving act and hiding Joash in the bedchamber for six years is crucial to the successful overthrow of Athaliah's regime. Likewise, Esther's silence⁵⁸⁰ regarding her ethnicity for a longer time and her concurrence with Mordecai are very crucial to the plot of the story.

6.5.2.8 Esther and Joash

Esther maintains her loyalty throughout the narrative and her obedience to Mordecai even after she enters the royal house. He instructs her to keep the ethnic identity secret. It is Mordecai who first expresses his view that she should no longer be silent. Joash is loyal and obedient to Jehoiada, as we read it in 2 Kings 12. It is Jehoiada who decides when Joash should appear (2 Kings

⁵⁷⁸ McGeough sees the character of Mordecai in concomitance with the wisdom precepts. For example, Mordecai exhibits the precepts mentioned in Prov 24:5–6 which praises knowledge, strategy and planning. Cf. Kevin McGeough. *CBQ* 70 (2008) 58–59.

⁵⁷⁹ Cf. Carol M. Bechtel 2002: 34.

⁵⁸⁰ Ahasuerus' authorization of Haman's edict against the Jews and his response to Esther's words in Esth 7:5–7 would not have been possible, if Ahasuerus had already known the identity of his wife. Cf. Sandra Beth Berg 1979: 7.

11:4, 12). There is no place for the consent of Joash and he seems to have complied with the designs of Jehoiada, understandably because he is only minor and is brought up under the patronage of Jehosheba. Esther has always been obedient to Mordecai. Michael Fox sees a glimpse of passivity in her obedience, as he states, “Esther has been always under the control of males, first owing obedience to her cousin Mordecai, her guardian, then to the eunuch Hegai, then to the king. When Xerxes wants a new queen, Esther ‘is taken’ – the passive voice dominates in this section Esther neither vies for queenship nor resists it.”⁵⁸¹ Though this observation sounds real, it does not indicate any subservient nature of Esther, as further events unfold.

Esther is raised to the status of the queen. The king places a crown on Esther (Esth 2:17), as Jehoiada did for Joash (2 Kings 11:12). Notwithstanding the difference in vocabularies (נָּרָה in 2 Kings and כְּתָרָה in Esther), the scenes evoke similar emotions. Mordecai is also dressed in royal attire (Esth 6:12). The royal robe denotes the promotion with political power. Authority is transferred through this act of clothing.

6.5.2.9 Conflict among People as a Major Theme

The reader should pay attention to the ethnic diversity of the Persian Empire against whose background the plot unfolds. There are more than two ethnic groups living in the empire at the time of the events narrated in the book of Esther. Royal edicts are proclaimed in each people’s tongue (Esth 1:22) which implies that there were several languages in vogue. The actions of Mordecai are perceived as belonging to a Judean, and not to an individual. At least ten times he is referred to as a Judean. Surprisingly, Esther is deprived of this title. The text evokes historical memories and a link to their homeland.⁵⁸²

The conflict is brought to light initially through the event of demand of bowing down. Haman’s demand that Mordecai should bow down before him means to prostrate on the floor before him (Esth 3:4–5). There are a few possible explanations for his refusal. Mordecai remains loyal to the king, but refuses to pay respect reserved to God. It is not even mentioned in the Bible in the context of worship reserved to God, but only here as demanded by Haman, to be paid to him. Mordecai’s refusal could be understood from a political and national point of view. Or it could be seen as an attempt to bring psychological pressure upon

⁵⁸¹ Michael Fox 2003: 52.

⁵⁸² Ibid. 124.

Mordecai, so that he does not become arrogant. The refusal is also seen as con-comitance to the first Commandment.⁵⁸³ The refusal of Mordecai to honour Haman and its dire consequences describe internal rifts between groups of people within a kingdom.

6.5.3 Inspirations from the Book of Esther

Amidst the several striking similarities between both our texts, a few important differences are to be noted. The geographical and political scenarios of the two stories are not the same. The plot in 2 Kings 11 finds itself in Jerusalem, whereas the book of Esther is set in Persia. As things are taking place in the diaspora, the book of Esther displays no interest in the biblical land of Israel. Crawford rightly notes that gentile rule does not seem to be a problem for the author of Esther as long as it is benevolent.⁵⁸⁴ The Jews had to accept the predicament as they found themselves in a foreign land. But 2 Kings 11 is seriously concerned about the ruler and it does not state anything concretely about the nature of reign by Athaliah who is to be dethroned. All the same, the book of Esther offers the reader some themes for discussion in the analysis on 2 Kings 11.

6.5.3.1 Self-Perpetuity and Self-Defence

The book of Esther deals with the story of the Jews who fought for their survival. Clines considers that it professes itself as the product of an oppressed group.⁵⁸⁵ It presents the story of a subject-folk, which defends itself and eventually has one of its daughters as the queen. Neither Mordecai nor Esther attempts to replace the king. Their ultimate aim is the destruction of their enemy Haman and his people and the defence of their own fellow Jews. 2 Kings 11 portrays similar themes. The group of revolutionaries did not want to usurp the kingdom; rather

⁵⁸³ Cf. Beate Ego 2017: 212–14. In the view of Brockington, Mordecai did not bow down, because to do so would be a virtual breaking of the first two commandments. Cf. Leonard Herbert Brockington 1969: 231. Targum Sheni, Rashi, and Midrash Esther Rabba claim that Haman demanded from Mordecai a divine homage, which is an offence against the monotheism of the Jews. But this is an ad hoc explanation. It is not credible, as there is no indication that the king himself demanded divine homage. According to Esther Rabbah, Haman had attached an embroidered image to his garment, so that everyone who bowed down to him also bowed down to the image. Mordecai's refusal to bow down is on this ground. Cf. Jo Carruthers 2008: 139.

⁵⁸⁴ Cf. Sidnie White Crawford 2003: 67.

⁵⁸⁵ Cf. David Clines 1990: 45.

they wanted a change in leadership. They desired that the legal descent of the kings of Judah assumes the throne.

The book of Esther narrates events which describe acts of self-defence at a time of notable decadence for the Jewish community. While the intention of Haman is clearly stated to be the annihilation of the Jews, 2 Kings 11 does not state clearly anything about the intention of Athaliah. One can only presume that the effort of Athaliah is a systematic attempt to annihilate the Southern kingdom and thereby the Davidic dynasty.

Thanks to Esther's influence and clever ploy, the Jews obtained permission to defend themselves when the time came. At the execution of this law, they killed hundreds of their enemies (Esth 9:6, 16). The victims included the sons of Haman, too.⁵⁸⁶ It is to be seen whether the coup and the consequent killing of Athaliah is an act of revenge for her act of murdering the royal offspring. It seeks to probe whether the coup was purely political.

The edict for massacre which includes women and children is disturbing (Esth 8:11) just like the murder of the children (2 Kings 11:1). The massacre in Esther seems to be patterned after the earlier edict (Esth 3:13) which was issued against the Jews. And so it is seen as retribution. Gordis argues that the second edict does not authorise the Jews to wipe out the women and children who stand against them, but to kill every armed force which attacks the Jews, their children and wives. He translates Esth 8:11 as follows: "By these letters the king permitted the Jews in every city to gather and defend themselves, to destroy, kill, and wipe out every armed force of a people or a province attacking 'them, their children and their wives, with their goods as booty.'"⁵⁸⁷ Taking clues from the story of Esther, one can postulate that a group of people of Judah had antipathies towards Athaliah who had almost brought an end to the Davidic dynasty. Their revolt

⁵⁸⁶ It only means to organize armed resistance against any attack on them and it does not mean any concerted effort to destroy the enemies without any provocation. Cf. Paul Haupt. *AJSLL* 24 (1907–08/ 1982) 62. The Law of the Medes and Persians had an irrevocable character, due to which the edict to annihilate the Jews could not be revoked. And so the king allowed Mordecai to issue a new edict, permitting the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies and to plunder their possession. Cf. Carey A. Moore. *BA* 38 (1975) 67. Jones questions the number of gentiles killed by the Jews. He argues that the gentiles should have been aware that Haman's edict became obsolete and there was a new edict against those who attack the Jews. Therefore, the number of gentiles killed is a deliberate hyperbole. Cf. Bruce William Jones. *CBQ* 39 (1977/1982) 446.

⁵⁸⁷ Robert Gordis. *JBL* 95 (1976) 51–52.

against Athaliah was not perhaps against her way of ruling but against what she did to the Davidic dynasty. The opening verse of the episode and v. 10 would strengthen this argument. It would attempt to show that they reinstated the dynasty of David in Judah and earned honours for themselves.

6.5.3.2 Religious Aspect

Though Esther was a Jew, the MT version of the book of Esther does not mention about her religious practices and does not attest to her status as a faithful Jew. The Greek version, however, portrays her as one who is faithful to the Jewish religious practices.⁵⁸⁸ The emphasis on the Jewish identity of Mordecai in the book of Esther paints him with a religious identity. It would tell us, how religion is integrated in the formation of identity in the Persian time. It would offer a hint to read 2 Kings 11 in the same vein, and to analyse the role of religious elements in the events that are reported in the narrative. 2 Kings 11:18 suggests a conflict between the cults of YHWH and Baal. The sequence of events in the episode connects Baal cult and Athaliah very closely.

6.5.4 Conclusion

Although there is no close parallel on literary elements between 2 Kings 11 and the book of Esther, both the texts are brought very close to each other through the similarities in their respective plot, characters, circumstances, events and their consequences. Both the texts revolve around power politics and security of the group of people and the nation. In both the cases, those who designed evil for others met with the same fate. They show that political and religious elements often stay intertwined with each other.

Athaliah, an Israelite princess, wedded to the king of Judah, took up the reign on herself through violent killing of the royal offspring. The usurpation of Athaliah left Judah in disarray. The coup seems to be an outcome of this situation. There are both political and religious motivations behind the acts narrated in the episode. Politically, it presents a scenario which attempts to revive the Davidic dynasty. Religiously, it looks to do away with the cults of Baal.

As the attack of the Jews under Mordecai against those who hated them is seen as an act of self-defence, the removal of Athaliah from throne by a coup could

⁵⁸⁸ Cf. Tal Davidovich 2013: 35. Jaroš suspects a hidden rivalry between the followers of the official Zoroastrianism and others who stand contrary to it. Cf. Karl Jaroš 1996: 95.

be seen as an outcome of an effort to secure one's own tradition and to affirm loyalty to the Davidic dynasty. The people feared that Athaliah who killed the descendants of David would bring an end to the kingdom of Judah as well. The revolt by the military under the direction of Jehoiada the priest which brought about Athaliah's downfall, can be, therefore, seen as being aimed at stabilizing the Davidic dynasty in Judah.

Though religious elements in the book of Esther are not openly recognisable, one can unearth them from the context of the narrative. 2 Kings 11 contains rich religious sentiments. Religious motivation, besides the political necessity formed the basis for the coup in Jerusalem. It is indicated by the leader of the coup, Jehoiada a priest of YHWH, and by the destruction of Baal cult, which was patronized by Athaliah.

7 Historical Considerations

7.1 Time of Athaliah

Athaliah, being a contemporary of Jehu lived at a time of turbulence in Israel and Judah in the 9th C. Branch postulates that she became the ruler of Judah in 840 BCE.⁵⁸⁹ In our understanding about the way, Athaliah climbed to the throne of Judah, the expression *וְיָרַע הַמֶּמְלָכָה* in v. 1 is very important. The text does not state whether Ahaziah or Joash had remaining siblings, after the 70 sons of Ahab had been killed (2 Kings 10:7) and the 42 kins of Ahaziah were slaughtered (2 Kings 10:14) at the commission of Jehu. Our text does not give such details, but expresses Athaliah's intention to annihilate the royal offspring, which assumes that there were children alongside Joash in the royal family. However, there are opposing views regarding the Davidic roots of Joash.⁵⁹⁰ Miller and Hayes argue that Jehosheba and Jehoiada are the only witnesses who can authenticate the parental roots of Joash. Jehosheba lost almost her entire family in Athaliah's purge. It is natural that Jehoiada, the priest, would have wanted a ruler who would adhere and support Yahwism. And both of them had a reason to come together. The lack of legitimate claim from the part of Athaliah would make things easier to look for a legitimate ruler. All these things would cause doubts regarding the authenticity of the Davidic descendancy of Joash.⁵⁹¹ Liverani presents the hypothesis that Jehoiada reworked on the facts according to a well-known story in order to prove the legitimacy of Joash.⁵⁹² Amidst all these opposing views, it is clear that the narrative plays a crucial role in establishing the Davidic descendancy of the ruling king and that it was the need of the time.

7.2 Dtr Redaction and its Connections to the North

Though 2 Kings 11 has its origin in the Southern kingdom, the influence from the literature about the Northern kingdom is very much evident. For example, the character of Athaliah is painted as parallel to Jezebel of Israel, who had a great influence over Ahab, her husband (1 Kings 21:25). 2 Kings 8:18, 26 claim that Athaliah has an Omride background by birth. It is clear that this information

⁵⁸⁹ Cf. Robin Gallaher Branch. In *die Skriflig* 38 (2004) 540.

⁵⁹⁰ Cf. E. Theodore Mullen 1993: 23.

⁵⁹¹ Cf. J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes 1986: 304.

⁵⁹² Cf. Mario Liverani 2004: 158–59.

is delivered to us through the Deuteronomist. It shows that the Deuteronomist consciously builds a parallel story between Jezebel and Athaliah.

The annihilation of Baalism is a common theme running through 2 Kings 9:14–11:20, besides the theme of the destruction of the house of Ahab. The form of dtr redaction in 2 Kings 11 resembles the section in 2 Kings 10. 2 Kings 11:14b (all the people of the land blew the trumpets) reminds one of 2 Kings 9:13b (They blew the trumpet and shouted, “Jehu is the king”). 2 Kings 11:18 (the entire people of the land went to the house of Baal and destroyed its altars) reflects 2 Kings 10:27a (they (the guards) demolished the altar of Baal and tore down the house of Baal. Thus, there is close connectivity between the Israel text and the Judean text, notwithstanding their distinct nature.

Fricke believes that the revolt of Jehu and of Jehoiada might have been two independent sources which the dtr redactor brought together in accordance with the total construction of his work and as subsequent happening of 2 Kings 10:28–36 which looks logical, too.⁵⁹³ At the same time, it is highly probable that the Deuteronomist remodelled the southern text after the model of its northern counterpart in order to emphasise his religious motives. This latter finds support from Robker who remarks, “... it seems more likely that the Jehu narrative inspired later redactors to cast their protagonists (cf. also Jehoash in 2 Kings 11:18 and Hezekiah in 18:4) in a light similar to Jehu than the other way around”⁵⁹⁴. Moreover, the mystery surrounding the temple of Baal in Jerusalem would justify a

⁵⁹³ Cf. Klaus Dietrich Fricke 1972: 144–45. Bin-Nun argues that the Israelite formula followed the method found in the books of Samuel, whereas the Judaeen formula followed the formulas applied to David and Solomon. The regnal formulas whether at the beginning or end of the kings of Judah and Israel show that they are not composed by the redactor but that they were taken from the Judaeen and Israelite records. Cf. Shoshana Bin-Nun. VT 18 (1968) 431. The royal archives of Juda would have provided the materials for 2 Kings 11–12, which the author of 2 Kings manipulated for his own literary purpose. Cf. T.R. Hobbs 1985: 135. The lack of it in the pericope regarding Athaliah would point out the hands of the redactor.

⁵⁹⁴ Jonathan Robker 2012: 49. “... it therefore becomes plausible that someone took Israelite material, added Judaeen material and the synchronistic notes to it, and that the Deuteronomist expanded this unified history of Judah and Israel to include regnal evaluations and other information pertinent to his theology.” Ibid. 76. See also Michael Pietsch 2013: 206. Bin-Nun had proposed such a dual system. Cf. Shoshana Bin-Nun. VT 18 (1968) 414–32.

suspicion of literary creation in which the destruction of the Baal's temple in Samaria by Jehu is duplicated here.⁵⁹⁵

Based on these observations, it is logical to believe that the original accession narrative of Joash came from a Southern writer and that the dtr redactor added his material to it which he modelled after the northern text. By constructing this parallelism, he paints Athaliah in negative shades and incorporates his ideals of cult reform in the Judean text. He also achieves to present the people of the land, besides Jehoiada, as the major force in both the political and religious arena.

7.3 Time of Composition

Barré opines that there was an early narrative source shortly after the events of 2 Kings 11, in order to justify the coronation of Joash.⁵⁹⁶ Würthwein attributes a much later date to it, which in his opinion does not belong to DtrH, the basic text of the Deuteronomist. It could be a part of the later redaction DtrN.⁵⁹⁷ Levin sees the possibilities of an early annalistic source, which underwent later redactions. The oldest is a Judean source, a fragment from the day books of the kings of Judah which recorded the events of 840 BCE. This was included intact in the Deuteronomistic History by the writer around 660 and 639. The next two centuries witness lots of redactions. Towards the end of 6th C and the beginning of 5th C, considered to be the time of major deuteronomistic works, the text underwent changes, shaped by the reflection of the post exilic community regarding their relationship with YHWH and covenant theology. The Athaliah text was then treated as a paradigmatic appellative unity. In the second half of the 4th C, the text underwent further changes, influenced by the religious situation of the time.⁵⁹⁸ Na'aman too assigns a later date in post-exilic period and sees the additions as belonging to not a later period than the time of composition.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁵ Cf. Jürgen Werlitz 2002: 252. See also Lester L. Grabbe 2017: 59. The revolt of Jehu had played havoc in the Omride dynasty and had its impact in the Davidic dynasty, too. If the punishment to Ahab and Athaliah is same, then the sin could have been same, too. And so the dtr author might have attributed the Baal cult also to the Southern kingdom. Cf. Christoph Levin 1982: 62–63.

⁵⁹⁶ Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 56.

⁵⁹⁷ Cf. Ernst Würthwein 1984: 345–46.

⁵⁹⁸ Cf. Christoph Levin 1982: 95–96.

⁵⁹⁹ The role of the priest fits into the post-exilic period. The text is rich with post-exilic elements. Na'aman further holds that the covenant with God is a later concept. Cf. Nadav Na'aman. *Semitica* 58 (2016) 191–93.

7.3.1 Time of the Basic Text

The basic narrative aims to authenticate the enthronement of Joash in the Davidic dynasty. It would suggest that it was written any time after the enthronement of Joash. We can also reasonably hold that the basic narrative is pre-exilic, because the dynastic interest on kingship becomes different after the exile. It can be reasonably postulated to a time shortly after the coronation of Josiah, at a time, when it was very important that the kings of Judah were the descendants of David. Josiah, too, was made the king of Judah by the people of the land when he was eight years old (2 Kings 21:24–22:1). F.M. Cross suggests that the Dtr writing first took shape before the exile, perhaps during the time of Josiah.⁶⁰⁰ It is also generally believed that literary activities took place during the period of Josiah. Considering these aspects, I would suggest to understand the basic text as a kind of propaganda for the Davidic descendancy and the legitimacy of Joash and also of Josiah, who found himself in the same predicament of losing the father and climbing to the throne at an early age. It would suggest that these incidents which were part of the Judaeen tradition were put in writing in the time of Josiah.

7.3.2 Time of Dtr Redaction

The concepts of covenant and the people of the land can provide hints regarding the time of the dtr redaction of 2 Kings 11. The dtr writings in general are postulated a date starting from the time of Josiah to the Persian period.⁶⁰¹ Longevity

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Frank M. Cross 1973: 274–89. Williamson, too, believes that divergent parts of the book of Kings continued to circulate for many centuries before its formulation. Cf. Hugh G.M. Williamson. VT 32 (1982) 243.

⁶⁰¹ Noth suggests that the deuteronomistic history was written around the middle of the sixth century BCE., around the time, in which the history of Israel was at an end in the original sense. Cf. Martin Noth 1981: 12–13. But many of the proponents of the dtr theory are of the opinion that the Deuteronomistic history underwent two phases of editing: the primary edition of the history was produced at the time of King Josiah and the other portion was worked upon during exile. Cf. Erik Eynikel 1996: 9. While accepting the basic compilation during the earlier period of exile, the Layer Model of the Smend School further proposes two more authors, i.e., the work of the Deuteronomic Historian was later reworked by a nomistic redactor (DtrN) and also by a prophetic redactor (DtrP). The Layer Model further holds that several redactions followed in the later period. Cf. Rudolf Smend 1984: 62–64. See also Thomas Römer 2009: 650. Mark O’Brien 1989: 7. Erich Zenger 2008: 87–88. The Block Model of the Cross School postulates the first redactor (Dtr1) to the time of the reign of King Josiah, who ended his compilation with 2 Kings 23:24. And it holds that this work was revised and expanded by the second redactor (Dtr2) around 550 BCE, who also included the information regarding the disaster in exile. Cf. Mark O’Brien 1989: 10–11. Römer believes that Deuteronomy to 2 Kings is the hand work of a school of scribes from 7th C up to the Persian period. Cf. Thomas Römer 2009: 651–52.

and stability of the Davidic dynasty are two important aspects of the dtr writer. The two instances which seem to threaten it are the emergence of Athaliah and the Babylonian exile. As it survived the threat from Athaliah, the Deuteronomist offers hope of reliving the unconditional promise of God even in exile. The insertion of the role of the people of the land also suggests a time without Judean monarchy. It would strengthen the argument for an exilic date.⁶⁰² But the covenant theology which appears in 2 Kings 11:17, as discussed earlier, would suggest still a later date. On these considerations, we can postulate a late exilic or early post-exilic date to the dtr redaction in 2 Kings 11.

7.3.3 Time of the Priestly Redaction

The mention of Sabbath plays a crucial role in the sphere of redaction. As shown earlier, the weekly understanding of Sabbath came to existence after the Deuteronomic Decalogue. Therefore, modern scholarship dates the priestly layer⁶⁰³ to exilic or post-exilic period or even to the Hellenistic period, revealed through texts like the one concerning Phinehas and the acts of the Levites (Ex 32). In this context, the redaction of the priestly layer is to be differentiated from the Priestly tradition which is one of the sources of the Pentateuch.⁶⁰⁴ The Priestly tradition which is found only in the Pentateuch is assigned a date around 520 BCE. The works of the priestly layers were militant in the Hellenistic period. Besides this, the act of the priest delivering military commands cannot be traced to the time

⁶⁰² Koch analyses Deut 13 and Deut 18 and concludes that the covenant theology in these texts have their origin in the exilic period after 587. Basing his argument on several levels of reception, he argues that the covenant concept between the king and the people is transformed into a covenant concept of God-people-relationship after the deportation. Cf. Christoph Koch 2008: 319–20.

⁶⁰³ Cf. Erich Zenger 1995: 209–10. The priestly writers could be understood with two characteristics. The first is the tradition of literate priests creating, coping and circulating scrolls containing the teachings of the priesthood. The other is the tradition of literate priests taking successive turns at shaping, censoring, expanding and modifying the already existing literature. Cf. Baruch J. Schwartz 2009: 1–2.

⁶⁰⁴ The priestly layer would mean the priestly redaction which added comments to the already existing non-priestly texts and incorporated priestly interests to it. Though it reflects the literary style of the P texts, it can be understood only in the context of the respective non-priestly texts which is worked upon. Cf. Peter Weimar 2008: 20–26. See also Peter Weimar. WiBiLex (2010) <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/31252/>.

of the kings. It would suggest that this portion belongs to a later period, when the priest was the highest authority, in the Persian and the Hellenistic period.⁶⁰⁵

It is clear that the priestly text in 2 Kings 11 does not display interests in the affairs of the priests and Levites in general, but is only concerned about Jehoiada the priest. It also does not involve the people in the coup unlike the Chronicles. The kind of portrayal of the priest, which the priestly redaction of 2 Kings 11 urges one to think that it attempts to portray Jehoiada after the model of Phinehas who was a grandson of Aaron (Num 25:11) and who also enjoyed secular power. The text about Phinehas in Judg 20:27b–28a from whose time perpetual priesthood is ascribed is probably a later text carrying priestly interests.⁶⁰⁶ The priestly elements in 2 Kings 11 resemble those of Phinehas especially in the aspect of the priestly instructing the soldiers. It consequently brings the priestly redaction in 2 Kings 11 closer to priestly circles of the Zadokites, who trace their origin to Aaron via Zadok and Phinehas. Taking into account these correlations, we can postulate that the priestly redaction took place in the late post exilic period, but just before the Chronicles.

7.3.4 The Time of the Chronicler's Account

The chronicler's edition of the narrative is later than the priestly layer in 2 Kings 11. The Chronicler adds materials which are not found in 2 Kings 11. In his account, the priests and the Levites are brought to the temple in Jerusalem, which expresses the intention of the Chronicler, i.e., the sanctity of the temple. The Chronicles also gives greater importance to the Levites by offering them the duty of guarding the temple and safeguarding the son of the king. It suggests that it is

⁶⁰⁵ Cf. Erich Zenger 1995: 203–204. Grund is right in her argument that 2 Kings 11: 5–9 contains an influence of the post-exilic order of priestly service in the temple. Cf. Alexandra Grund 2011: 89–90.

⁶⁰⁶ The redactor of Judg 20:27b–28a has in mind 1 Sam 4 and writes as if the Ark of the Covenant was in Bethel those days. He misplaced it with Phinehas who was also incidentally from Gibeah, but of Ephraim and not of Benjamin. Cf. Walter Groß 2009: 860. Baruchi-Unna suggests that the story of Phinehas' zeal for God is added in the context in order to explain the appointment of Aaronite priesthood which has its origin in Bethel. Cf. Amitai Baruchi-Unna. VT 65 (2015) 508–509. The priests of Bethel were Aaronites and were not Levites (Ex 32:25–29; 1 Kings 12:31). From another perspective, Aaron can be seen as a military leader from Judah (Ex 17:8–16). Scholars hold that the Aaronite narrative belongs to the post-exilic period. Cf. Klaus Koenen. WiBiLex (2017) <https://www.bibelwissenschaft.de/stichwort/11012/>. The portrayal of Jehoiada can be seen as a military leader which reflects the characteristics of Aaron. And so the priestly layer in 2 Kings 11 should belong to the late post-exilic period.

not the exchange of guards as in 2 Kings 11 that complied with the realities at the Persian times, but rather it is the exchange of duty in the temple by the priests and the Levites as reported in the Chronicles (2 Chr 23:4,8,18) that fitted into the context of his time. With this background the Chronicler replaced the guards with the priests and the Levites in his writing. In his time, only the priests and the Levites were permitted to enter the temple. And the others should remain in the temple courts. Thus the Chronicler's account points to a time when the priests and the Levites occupied important places both in the liturgical and the social realms. Moreover the Chronicler also makes a clear distinction between both the people and the people of the land. It also would suggest that the Chronicler had the dtr redaction already before him. And so we can surmise that the Chronicler of 2 Chr 22–23 had before him the text of 2 Kings 11 which had already undergone dtr and priestly redactions, and he expanded the text and inserted his interests and modified it in pertinence to his time.

7.3.5 Conclusion

The focus of the basic text of 2 Kings 11 is the legitimacy of Joash's succession to the throne. The same situation is reflected at the time of Josiah. It is also clear that the basic text is pre-exilic and therefore it could be postulated to the time of Josiah. The dtr redaction of 2 Kings 11 sets itself in parallel to the northern text concerning Omri dynasty and the revolt of Jehu. The function assigned to the people of the land hints a time without Judean monarchy. Further the covenant theology makes this case even stronger and suggests a later date. Therefore, a late exilic or early post-exilic date can be assigned to the dtr redaction in 2 Kings 11.

The pattern of the priestly redaction matches post-exilic or even late post-exilic texts, which likewise attach a great military authority to the high priest in view of governance, jurisdiction and armed forces and ascribe these characteristics to the priestly forms of the past (Num 25). The Chronicler's version of 2 Kings 11 adopts the priestly redaction and makes some creative changes to it. Probably, it is a clue to believe that there is not much gap between the time of the priestly redaction and of the Chronicler's version. In the Chronicles, different classes of the Levites take the place of the guards who are the agents of the overthrow according to the basic narrative. By doing this, the Chronicles integrates the shifts in duties which is already found in the priestly redaction into its version and blends with it the accentuation of the Levites, which is one of its intentions, in the text.

As a whole, the narrative of Athaliah, though very short, has gone through a great attention in the realm of the formation of the book of Kings and has become a vehicle of several claims to power. This claim to power includes not only Athaliah and Joash, but various post-exilic groups which have wrestled for power and religious significance in their respective times. At the same time, this text serves as a model for literary historical reconstruction from pre-exilic to (late) post-exilic times.

8 Summary and Implications

This dissertation attempts to elucidate the narration in 2 Kings 11, illustrate the literary problems contained in the text and seek appropriate answers to it. It also looks to study the major thrust in the text and analyse its context. The study makes use of the narratological approach, the intertextual approach, the historical critical method and their synchronic and diachronic implications. I do believe that all these approaches are and should be complementary to each other.

In an attempt to read 2 Kings 11 in a narratological perspective, first of all, important theories concerning the method are illustrated and significant themes are explained in the third chapter. It helps the reader to have a comprehensive understanding of the narratological method in viewing a text. Thereafter the text for our study is viewed under this light in the fourth chapter alongside the observations made by the sematic analysis. A good number of commentaries and writers are consulted in order to offer an overall survey on the academic reception.

The synchronic analysis of the text in the present form reveals that the text has various objectives, like presenting the reign of Athaliah as an assault on the Davidic dynasty, depicting the authority of the priest and highlighting the significance of cult elements. The text describes the interruption in the long rule of the Davidic dynasty, which comes in the form of the usurpation by Athaliah, who hails from Israel, a kingdom which experienced usurpation quite a few times. Athaliah wanted herself to sit on the throne of Judah, made vacant through the sudden demise of her son Ahaziah. However, the text in the final form does not see the short rule of Athaliah as a discontinuity of the Davidic dynasty, but rather as an interlude, even as Joash was still living in the temple premises. The lack of regnal formula and burial report for Athaliah strengthens this view.

The application of the narratological method observes that the narrator is not very much concerned about the way Athaliah ruled Judah. And the narratological elements find no clear expression in the narrative to believe that Athaliah's regime was hideous, even though she is introduced with gruesome acts. The narrative technical function of focalization is very well handled in the narrative. The narrator lets the reader see certain events through the eyes of the characters, often through the eyes of Athaliah. The point of focalization seeks to present the circumstances of the usurpation by Athaliah and the legitimacy of Joash as key concepts of the narrative.

Further, the characteristics of the characters narrated in the text are mostly to be inferred from the narration, as the Narrative Voice makes no direct comments about it. Especially the character of Athaliah looks mysterious and can be called a bundle of paradoxes. This analysis also probes into the psychological disposition of Athaliah and understands that the presentation does not arouse any sympathy from the reader towards her. The approach also looks to gather some information regarding the minor elements, like the social status of the wet-nurse and the share of the guards in the coup.

The act of hiding Joash in the temple area suggests a close connection between the palace and the temple, and between the royal family and the temple personnel. It is later evidenced in v. 10, which indicates that the spear and shields of David were stored in the temple. The pact between Jehoiada and the guards in v. 4 is highlighted by the combination of a covenant and an oath, which are not to be understood as synonyms.

The coup on Sabbath expresses the intention of doubling the guards for this action. The spear and the shields of David let the reader presume a connectivity between David and the happenings, which would intend to seek validity for the coup. The coronation ceremony seeks both formal validity for Joash to rule over Judah and popular acceptance. The acclamation, too, intends to convey the popular acceptance of the new king by the people (v. 12).

The involvement of the people and the people of the land portrays the coup as a mass movement and not merely as a military coup under the leadership of Jehoiada. An analysis on the concept of the people of the land reveals that they are to be differentiated from the people and that they were depicted as an influential body which spontaneously formed itself in times of crisis and stood by the Davidic dynasty, especially at the time of crucial successions. The mood of the people of the land is also brought to light by this narratological reading, which would vary from being mere participants to becoming the main actors, and then to people whose joy matters at the end. We would understand later through the redaction criticism, that the people of the land are a particular device to transmit certain ideologies which in fact belong to the post-exilic times.

The covenant and destruction of Baal cult are central themes in the narrative. The text speaks of a single covenant with two constellations of covenant partnership, one between YHWH and the people including the king and the other between the king and the people. The covenant is necessitated by the break in the dynasty created by the usurpation of Athaliah. The final text tells us that the destruction

of the temple of Baal (v. 18) is a consequence of the covenant (v. 17). The narratological reading arouses questions concerning the narratological functions in the occurrence of the covenant (v. 17) immediately after the death of Athaliah. In fact, a covenant between the king and the people would be relatively easier to understand, if it were to take place after the enthronement of Joash (v. 19). This narratological observation will reflect later in the redaction criticism which would reveal the hands of the redactors in both these verses.

The entire narrative makes a forward and a return journey in relation to the places of the occurrences, indicating the completion of the circle. As a whole, the synchronic approach offers a multifaceted picturesque description of the events to the reader.

Followed by the synchronic analysis, the literary problems which disturb the coherence of the final text are identified in the fifth chapter. Consequently, a new model of reconstruction for the formation of the text is proposed for 2 Kings 11. It would unfold the significant place of the text in the biblical history of Israel and offer a diachronic understanding of the text.

The new model of reconstruction for the formation of the text suggests that the basic text has undergone two major redactions, namely the dtr redaction and the priestly redaction. The basic narrative consists of vv. 1–4, 12–14c, 14e–f, 16–17a.d, 19a.c–e; the dtr redaction forms vv. 14d, 17b–c, 18, 19b, 20; and the priestly redaction forms vv. 5–11, 15. The crux of the basic narrative is the succession to the throne after the death of Ahaziah. It narrates the usurpation by Athaliah his mother, her removal from the throne and ascension of Joash the son of Ahaziah to the throne. The basic narrative offers a greater role to Athaliah. She is the only character that speaks (v. 14) in the basic narrative. At the same time, the basic narrative is particularly concerned about the survival of Joash, as it is vital for the narrative in order to prove that the newly crowned king is the legitimate successor to David and thereby the Davidic dynasty sustains its legacy of a long rule. Thus, establishing the legitimacy of the accession of Joash to the throne is the bottom line in the pericope.

The basic narrative is concise in narration and plain in its communication regarding the changeover in the kingship of Judah. It does not offer any information regarding the relationship of Jehoiada to the royal court. It also does not describe anything about the reign of Athaliah, but treats it as the link between the demise of Ahaziah and the enthronement of Joash. In this way, it makes its thrust visible, i.e., the continuity of the Davidic dynastic rule. One should concede that the text

sheds its focus on the happenings of the Southern kingdom. Therefore, it is highly probable that the basic text is Judean in nature and it should have been a single source which dealt with the history of the Judean kings.

As noted above, the analysis shows that the basic text was expanded further by later redactors, to be precise, by the dtr redactor and later by the priestly redactor. These redactors have not only inserted their own ideals, but also have painted Athaliah in a more negative image.

The dtr redaction is apologetic and justifies the dethronement of Athaliah and consequently the accession of Joash to the Davidic throne. This redaction has altered the covenant description of the basic narrative in accordance with its covenant theology and manages to present a covenant between YHWH on the one side and the king and the people on the other side (v. 17). From this covenant theology flows v. 18, which speaks of the destruction of the cult of Baal. In this way, the dtr redactor exposit his ideologies of Davidic kingship and exclusive Yahwism.

The Deuteronomist does not treat her as a rightful ruler, because she, as a usurper, is not counted among the descendants of David, and does not fit into the dtr code for kingship in Judah prescribed in Deut 17:14–20. A bigger narrative about her and her regime, for that matter, any narrative about her which would conform to the formal dtr requisites would bring to light the interruption in the Davidic dynasty even at the very first reading of the text. Therefore, the dtr redaction does not integrate a regnal formula, the names of her parents, a burial report and a judgement over her rule, as it would be expected for a king or queen of Judah.

In order to integrate his ideologies, the dtr redactor has introduced the people of the land in the episode who are presented not merely as sharing the work of the guards, but also as the executors of the destruction of Baal's temple, its altars and sacred things and as partakers in murdering Athaliah (vv. 18, 20). In this way, the people of the land are the agents of the Deuteronomist, through whom he expresses his ideals in support of the Davidic dynasty.

There is another redaction, different from the dtr redaction, present in 2 Kings 11. It expresses interests in the cultic elements and therefore would be labelled "the priestly redaction". In fact, the work of this priestly redactor is much more engaged in the text than that of the dtr redactor. Primarily the priestly redaction makes concrete efforts to portray Jehoiada as a priest who had the ability to command the centurions of the carer and the runners. The priest delivers a relatively

long speech addressing them which also includes the plan for the coup (vv. 5–8). This redaction presents the coup as if it takes place on a Sabbath. The shifting of the guards which reportedly takes place on Sabbath was perhaps the norm at the time of the redactor. He transports this system to an event of the pre-exilic times. The priestly redaction ensures to depict the sanctity of the temple (v. 15) and also informs us that the priest was also the custodian of the weapons of David in the temple (v. 10). In this way, the priest is portrayed as the one who was loyal to the Davidic dynasty, as the one who had the authority over the military and the one who was the custodian of the purity of the temple.

The sixth chapter makes an intertextual analysis of the text in study with the relevant biblical texts. Primarily the biblical texts which are related to our pericope through common vocabularies and themes were looked for. Then the texts whose correlations are selective and so need to be intensively analysed for this study are treated in this chapter elaborately. Other relevant texts are referred to in the course of the entire study. It is realized that 2 Kings 11 stands in text-to-text relationship with some texts, like Ex 1:1–2:10; 2 Sam 7; 1 Kings 1; 2 Kings 9–10; 2 Chr 22:10–23:21; and the book of Esther.

The intertextual analysis between Ex 1:1–2:10 and 2 Kings 11 reveals that the birth narrative of Moses and the aspects of 2 Kings 11 as an infancy narrative of Joash are closely related to each other. This analysis then sees Joash as a child in danger, bearing similarities with Sargon and Moses, who were abandoned as children but became leaders of their folk as grownups. Joash, too, becomes an important instrument in the fulfilment of God's promise to David. The conflict between Baal and YHWH as indicated in 2 Kings 11 might stand in correspondence to the opposition of the Pharaoh to YHWH in the Exodus narrative. Thus the intertextual study also exposes clearly that political and religious powers are often intertwined with each other.

The entire coronation ceremony sets Joash in parallel to Solomon (1 Kings 1), the direct successor to David and thereby seeks further to approve legitimacy of the coronation of Joash. The promise to David concerning a lasting dynasty (2 Sam 7:12–15) is to be collectively applied to the descendants of David. But the later redaction made it in favour of Solomon. The dtr redaction of 2 Kings 11 is set on the similar lines, whereby the legitimacy of Joash and the Davidic descendancy of Joash become the primary focus.

The revolt of Jehu and the destruction of Baal cult in Israel (2 Kings 9–10) are set as precursor to the revolt against Athaliah and the cultic reform in Judah (2

Kings 11. In fact, 2 Kings 11 does not explicitly speak of the connection between Athaliah and the Baal worship in Judah. However, 2 Kings 8:26 already relates her to the Omride dynasty. And so the narrative forms a parallelism between the coup against Athaliah with the revolt of Jehu which is followed by demolition of the Baalistic cult in the North. The revolt of Jehu also took place against the Omride dynasty. Such a narration makes one to think of Athaliah as a reflection of Jezebel of the North. This parallelism between the demolitions of the Baalistic cult in both the kingdoms also reveals the intention of the texts in the larger context of composition. The diachronic study shows that the covenant partnership between YHWH, the king and the people and the consequent destruction of Baalistic cult belong to the dtr redaction, as it reveals the dtr ideologies. The dtr redactor has placed the material regarding the elimination of the Baalistic cult in a similar fashion as the one which took place in the North. Through this parallel presentation, the dtr intends to present Athaliah negatively in parallel lines with Jezebel who, in the view of this redaction (cf. 2 Kings 8:18) is also biologically related to her. Such a presentation establishes a stronger religious ground for the ouster of Athaliah.

A comparative study of 2 Kings 11 with 2 Chr 22–23 reveals that both the texts have additional information when compared to the other. Obviously 2 Chr contains far more of them than what 2 Kings 11 has. In the additional information found in 2 Chr 22–23, one can find some answers to the questions which stay open in 2 Kings. For example, it identifies Jehosheba as the wife of Jehoiada, the priest and answers the question why Joash was hidden in the temple. The text also gives a clearer picture about the relatedness between the temple and the palace, and between the priests and the royal family. 2 Chr 23 stresses the popular support for Joash, the descendant of David and accentuates the role of Jehoiada, the priest in its narrative. Its concentration on the sanctity of the temple and the inclusion of the priest as a covenant-partner reveal its interest in the affairs of cult and priesthood. By replacing the guards mentioned in 2 Kings 11 with the priests and the Levites, 2 Chr 23 echoes not merely its interest, but also the time of composition of the book of Chronicles. The diachronic analysis also confirms the relatedness of the secondary characteristics of 2 Chr 23 to the final text of 2 Kings 11.

For a comparative study with the book of Esther, not merely a particular chapter, but the entire book is taken into consideration. The exposition of the background of the events in the book and a look at several characters narrated in Esther reveal its connectivity to 2 Kings 11. The book of Esther demonstrates the struggle and

conflict between the Jews and their enemies under the leadership of Haman, likewise 2 Kings 11 narrates the conflict between Athaliah and a bigger group consisting of Jehoiada, the military, the people and the people of the land. This intertextual analysis also exposes the religious aspects in both the texts.

The seventh chapter takes up the historical assessment based on the diachronic analysis and the intertextual study. The intertextual analysis shows that the dtr redaction in 2 Kings 11 finds itself obviously in the context of 2 Kings 8–11 and hence it can be regarded as a formative dtr redaction. Therefore, in all probability the dtr redaction of 2 Kings 11 belongs to the late exilic or early post-exilic period. This hypothesis finds support in the position of the Smend School. Similarly, the weekly understanding of the Sabbath and the shifting of the guards on the Sabbath, place the priestly redaction clearly to a (late) post-exilic date. The portrayal of Jehoiada the priest who is invested with authority over the military also suggests a time, in which the office of the high priest developed a strong ambition for worldly powers. Therefore, it is highly probable that the priestly redaction of 2 Kings 11 took place after the dtr redaction of the text, and in all probability in the (late) post-exilic period.

The Chronicler's version of 2 Kings 11 makes notable changes in its narrative, besides the additional information it offers. In this context, one can observe that the Chronicler makes very strong differences in his version of the priestly redaction, when compared to the rest of the text. More particularly, the guards, who play an important part in 2 Kings 11, are replaced by the priests and the Levites in the Chronicles. The Chronicler's version also pays more attentions to the sanctity of the temple and exhibits similar goals like the priestly redactor, of course with greater intensity. It unearths the time of composition of the Chronicles which was probably at a time when the priests and the Levites had a huge role to play, i.e., the (late) post-exilic period, chronologically not very much distanced from the priestly redaction. Therefore, the time of composition of the Chronicler's version could be conveniently placed after the time of the priestly redaction.

2 Kings 11 is a fascinating story about succession to the throne, power and conspiracy. It exposes the struggle for power in various forms, contested by several people in the narration, like Athaliah and Joash, Jehoiada's accomplices and Athaliah's supporters, the priests of YHWH and the priests of Baal, and the believers of both the religions. The study has shown that the text is not merely biblically interconnected, as it would appear in the first glimpse, but that in the

course of the formation of the text, several groups have brought in their interests in it, in order to make it appear a relevant text for the identity of Judah.

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10 Abbreviations

AASF	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae
AB	The Anchor Bible
ABD	The Anchor Bible Dictionary
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
AJSL	American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATDGB	Das Alte Testament Deutsch – neues Göttinger Bibelwerk
AThANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AUSS	Andrews University Semitic Studies
BA	The Biblical Archaeologist
BAR	Biblical Archaeology Review
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BBET	Beiträge zur Biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BCLC	Blackwell Companion to Literature and Culture
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament
BS	Biblische Studien
BWo	Bible World
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBC	The Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQMS	CBQ Monograph Series
EHAT	Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FCB	A Feminist Companion to the Bible
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HAR	Hebrew Annual Review
HBM	Hebrew Bible Monographs
HeBAI	Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

HKAT	Hand Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC	The International Critical Commentary
IECOT	International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
IEKAT	Internationaler Exegetischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
ITC	International Theological Commentary
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ	The Jewish Bible Quarterly
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JQR	The Jewish Quarterly Review
JPS	The Jewish Publication Society
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup	Supplement to JSOT
JSSt	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	The Journal of Theological Studies
LBS	Library of Biblical Studies
LTHS	Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures
LWU	Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NEchtBAT	Die Neue Echter Bibel: Kommentar zum Alten Testament mit der Einheitsübersetzung
NIB	The New Interpreter's Bible
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar Altes Testament
NZStTh	Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTRM	Oxford Theology and Religion Monographs
OTS	The Old Testament Studies
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studien
QD	Quaestiones Disputate
RE	Review and Expositor
RTR	The Reformed Theological Review
SB	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien

SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	SBL Dissertation Series
SBM	Stuttgarter Biblische Monographien
ScrHie	Scripta Hierosolymitana
SDSSRL	Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature
SemeiaSt	Semeia Studies
SESJ	Suomen Eksegeettisen Seuran julkaisuja
SOTBT	Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology
STSL	Studien und Texte zur Sozialgeschichte der Literatur
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TW	Theologische Wissenschaft
VAB	Vorderasiatische Bibliothek
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Supplements to VT
WiBiLex	Das wissenschaftliche Bibellexikon im Internet
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
ZB	Zürcher Bibelkommentare
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZAWKNJ	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde des Nachbiblischen Judentums

Miscellaneous

ANE	Ancient Near East
BCE	before the Common Era
ed(s).	editor(s)
et al	and others
n.d.	no date
trans.	translator
v(v).	verse(s)
vol.	volume

11 Presentation of Layers in 2 Kings 11

For the purposes of this presentation, the text will be marked as follows:

normal: basic Judean text

2 Kings 11:1–4.12–14c (except ׀ָעָה in v. 13).14e–f.16.17a.d.19 (except ׀ָל־עֵם הָאָרֶץ in v.19).

strikethrough: glosses

2 Kings 11:13 (only ׀ָעָה).

italic: priestly redaction

2 Kings 11:5–11.15.

bold: deuteronomic redaction.

2 Kings 11:14d.17b–c.18.19b (only ׀ָל־עֵם הָאָרֶץ).20.

- 11:1 When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring.
- 11:2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, the sister of Ahaziah took Joash, the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the sons of the king, who were put to death, him and his wet-nurse in the bed-chamber and they hid him from Athaliahu and he was not killed.
- 11:3 And he was with her in the house of YHWH hiding himself for six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land.
- 11:4 And in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and took the centurions of the carer and the runners and made them come to him to the house of YHWH and he cut a covenant and put them under an oath in the house of YHWH and let them see the son of the king.
- 11:5 *And he commanded them, “This is what you should do. One third of you, who come on duty on Sabbath, shall undertake the watch in the house of the king.*

- 11:6 *One third at the entrance of the gate of Sur and one third at the gate behind the runners and so you keep watch over the house alternatively.*
- 11:7 *And the two divisions of you who leave on Sabbath, and they should undertake the watch on the house of YHWH for the king.*
- 11:8 *And you shall assemble around the king, everyone and with weapons in his hand. If anyone comes inside the ranks, let him be killed. Be with the king, when he goes out and when he comes in.*
- 11:9 *The centurions did as all that Jehoiada the priest commanded and they took, each (of them) his men who come (on duty) on Sabbath, and who leave on Sabbath. They came to Jehoiada, the priest.*
- 11:10 *The priest gave to the centurions the spear and the shields which belonged to David and were in the house of YHWH.*
- 11:11 *The runners stood, everyone and with his weapons in his hand, from the right side(wall) of the house to left side(wall) of the house, at the altar and at the house around the king.*
- 11:12 He brought the king's son and gave to him the crown and the testimony. They made him king, anointed him and clapped their hands saying: Long live the king.
- 11:13 When Athaliah heard the noise of the runners (~~the people~~), she came to the people in the house of YHWH.
- 11:14a–c And she saw: behold! The king was standing on the podium according to the custom and the commanders and the trumpeters by the king,
- 11:14d **and all the people of the land blew the trumpets**
- 11:14e–f and Athaliah tore her upper garment and cried: Treason, Treason!
- 11:15 *Jehoiada, the priest commanded the centurions, the captains of the army and told them, “send her out in front of the house, through the ranks, and let anyone who follows her, be slain by the sword”;*

indeed the priest said, “she shall not be killed within the house of YHWH.”

- 11:16 They laid hands on her and she came the way of horse-entrance to the house of the king and there she was killed.
- 11:17a Jehoiada cut the covenant between
- 11:17b–c **YHWH and the king and the people that they should be people of YHWH; and between**
- 11:17d the king and the people.
- 11:18 **And the entire people of the land came to the house of Baal and they destroyed it, its altars and its images they broke thoroughly and killed Mattan, the priest of Baal in front of the altars and the priest appointed guards over the house of YHWH.**
- 11:19a And he took the Centurions of the carer and the runners
- 11:19b **and the entire people of the land**
- 11:19c–e and they let the king descend from the house of YHWH, and they entered through the runners-gate into the house of the king. And he sat on the throne of the kings.
- 11:20a–b **The entire people of the land rejoiced and the city was peaceful and Athaliahu they had killed by sword in the house of king.**

12 Translation of 2 Kings 11

1. When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal offspring.
2. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, the sister of Ahaziah took Joash, the son of Ahaziah and stole him away from the sons of the king, who were put to death, him and his wet-nurse in the bedchamber and they hid him from Athaliahu and he was not killed.
3. And he was with her in the house of YHWH hiding himself for six years, while Athaliah ruled over the land.
4. And in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent and took the centurions of the carer and the runners and made them come to him to the house of YHWH and he cut a covenant for them and made them swear in the house of YHWH and let them see the son of the king.
5. And he commanded them: This is what you should do. One third of you, who come on duty on Sabbath, shall undertake the watch in the house of the king.
6. One third at the entrance of the gate of Sur and one third at the gate behind the runners and so you keep watch over the house alternatively.
7. And the two divisions of you, all who leave on Sabbath, and they should undertake the watch of the house of YHWH for the king.
8. And you shall assemble around the king, everyone and with his weapons in his hand. If
- וַעֲתִלְיָהּ אִם אֶחְזִיָּהּ רָאָתָה כִּי מֵת
בָּנָהּ וַתִּקָּם וַתֹּאבֵד אֶת כָּל־זָרַע
הַמַּמְלָכָה:
- וַתִּקַּח יְהוֹשֻׁבֵעַ בַּת־הַמֶּלֶךְ־יֹרָם
אֲחֹת אֶחְזִיָּהּ אֶת־יֹאָשׁ בֶּן־אֶחְזִיָּהּ
וַתִּגְנֹב אֹתוֹ מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי־הַמֶּלֶךְ
הַמּוֹמְתִים אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־מִינְקָתוֹ בַּחֲדָר
הַמְטוֹת וַיִּסְתְּרוּ אֹתוֹ מִפְּנֵי עֲתִלְיָהּ
וְלֹא הוּמָת:
- וַיְהִי אִתָּהּ בֵּית יְהוָה יְהִי מִתְחַבֵּא שָׁשׁ
שָׁנִים וַעֲתִלְיָהּ מְלָכָת עַל־הָאָרֶץ: פ
- וּבַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁבִיעִית שָׁלַח יְהוֹיָדָע
וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמְּאֹת לְכָרִי
וְלָרָצִים וַיָּבֵא אֹתָם אֵלָיו בֵּית יְהוָה
וַיִּכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית וַיִּשָּׁבַע אֹתָם
בְּבֵית יְהוָה וַיִּרְא אֹתָם אֶת־בֶּן־
הַמֶּלֶךְ:
- וַיִּצְוֶם לֵאמֹר זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשׂוּן
הַשְּׁלִישִׁית מִכֶּם בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וְשָׂרֵי
מִשְׁמֶרֶת בֵּית הַמֶּלֶךְ:
- וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁית בְּשַׁעַר סוּר וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁית
בְּשַׁעַר אַחֵר הַרָצִים וְשִׁמְרָתָם אֶת־
מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַבַּיִת מִסָּח:
- וְשְׁתֵּי הַיְדוּת בְּכֶם כָּל יֵצְאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת
וְשָׂמוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת בֵּית־יְהוָה אֶל־
הַמֶּלֶךְ:
- וְהִקְפַּתֶּם עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ סָבִיב אִישׁ
וְכָלְיוּ בְּיָדוֹ וְהָבֵא אֶל־הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת

יִמָּת וְהָיוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּצֵאתוֹ
וּבְבֹאוֹ: anyone comes inside the ranks, let him be killed.
Be with the king, when he goes out and when he
comes in.

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ שָׂרֵי הַמַּאוֹת כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה
יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אֲנָשָׁיו
בְּאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת עִם יֵצְאֵי הַשַּׁבָּת וַיָּבֹאוּ
אֶל־יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן: 9. The centurions did as all that Jehoiada the
priest commanded and they took, each (of them)
his men who come (on duty) on Sabbath, and
who leave on Sabbath. They came to Jehoiada,
the priest.

וַיִּתֵּן הַכֹּהֵן לְשָׂרֵי הַמַּאוֹת אֶת־
הַחֲנִית וְאֶת־הַשְּׁלֵטִים אֲשֶׁר לַמֶּלֶךְ
דָּוִד אֲשֶׁר בְּבַיִת יְהוָה: 10. The priest gave to the centurions the spear
and the shields which belonged to David and
were in the house of the YHWH.

וַיַּעֲמֵדוּ הַרְצִיִּים אִישׁ וְכַלְיוֹ בְּיָדוֹ
מִכְתָּף הַיְמָנִית עַד־כְּתֹף הַיְמָנִית
הַשְּׂמָאלִית לְמִזְבֵּחַ וְלַבַּיִת עַל־הַמֶּלֶךְ
סָבִיב: 11. The runners stood, everyone and with his
weapons in his hand, from the right side(wall) of
the house onto left side(wall) of the house, at the
altar and at the house around the king.

וַיּוֹצֵא אֶת־בֶּן־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּתֵּן עָלָיו אֶת־
הַכִּתֹּנֶת וְאֶת־הָעֵדוּת וַיַּמְלִכּוּ אֹתוֹ
וַיִּמְשְׁחֻהוּ וַיִּכְוֹדוּ וַיֹּאמְרוּ יְחִי
הַמֶּלֶךְ: 12. He brought the king's son and gave the
crown onto him, and the testimony. They made
him king, anointed him and clapped their hands
saying: Long live, the king.

וַתִּשְׁמַע עַמְלִיָּה אֶת־קוֹל הַרְצִיִּין
הָעָם וַתָּבֹא אֶל־הָעָם בַּיִת יְהוָה: 13. When Athaliah heard the noise of the runners
the people, she came to the people in the house
of YHWH.

וַתִּרְאֵהוּ וַהֲגִיָּה הַמֶּלֶךְ עֹמֵד עַל־הָעַמּוּד
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט וְהַשָּׂרִים וְהַחֲצֹצְרוֹת אֶל־
הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכָל־עַם הָאָרֶץ שָׂמֵחַ וְתֹקֵעַ
בְּחֲצֹצְרוֹת וַתִּקְרַע עַמְלִיָּה אֶת־
בְּגָדֶיהָ וַתִּקְרָא קָשָׁר קָשָׁר: 14. And she saw: behold! The king was standing
on the podium according to the custom and the
commanders and the trumpeters by the king, and
all the people of the land blew the trumpets and
Athaliah tore her upper garment and cried: Treason,
Treason!

וַיִּצְוּ יְהוֹיָדָע הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמַּאוֹת
פְּקָדֵי הַחַיִל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם הוֹצִיאוּ
אֹתָהּ אֶל־מִבֵּית לַשְּׁדָרֹת וְהָבֵאוּ
15. Jehoiada, the priest commanded the centuri-
ons, the captains of the army and told them,
“send her out in front of the house, through the
ranks, and let anyone who follows her, be slain

- אֶחָרֶיהָ הִמַּת בְּחֶרֶב כִּי אָמַר הַכֹּהֵן
אֶל־תּוֹמַת בַּיִת יְהוָה:
by the sword”; indeed the priest said, “she shall
not be killed within the house of YHWH.”
- וַיִּשְׁמְוּ לָהּ יָדַיִם וַתָּבוֹא דְרָדֶךְ־מְבוֹא
הַסּוֹסִים בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתּוֹמַת שָׁם: ס
16. They laid hands on her and she came the way
of horse-entrance to the house of the king and
there she was killed.
- וַיַּכְרֹת יְהוֹיָדָע אֶת־הַבְּרִית בֵּין יְהוָה
וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם לִהְיוֹת לְעָם
לַיהוָה וּבֵין הַמֶּלֶךְ וּבֵין הָעָם:
17. Jehoiada cut the covenant between YHWH
and the king and the people that they should be
people of YHWH; and between the king and the
people.
- וַיָּבֹאוּ כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ בַּיַּת־הַבַּעַל
וַיִּתְּצוּהוּ אֶת־מִזְבְּחֹתָיו וְאֶת־צִלְמָיו
שָׁבְרוּ הַיֵּטֵב וְאֶת מַתָּן כֹּהֵן הַבַּעַל
הָרָגוּ לִפְנֵי הַמִּזְבְּחוֹת וַיִּשָּׂם הַכֹּהֵן
פְּקֻדוֹת עַל־בַּיִת יְהוָה:
18. And the entire people of the land came to
the house of Baal and they destroyed it, its al-
tars and its images they broke thoroughly and
killed Mattan, the priest of Baal in front of the
altars and the priest appointed guards over the
house of YHWH.
- וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שָׂרֵי הַמַּאוֹת וְאֶת־הַכַּרְי
וְאֶת־הַרְצִיִּים וְאֶת כָּל־עַם הָאָרֶץ
וַיִּרְיֶדוּ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִבַּיִת יְהוָה
וַיָּבֹאוּ דְרָדֶךְ־שַׁעַר הַרְצִיִּים בַּיִת
הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיֵּשֶׁב עַל־כִּסֵּא הַמְּלָכִים:
19. And he took the centurions of the carer and
the runners and the entire people of the land and
they let the king descend from the house of
YHWH, and they entered through the runners-
gate into the house of the king. And he sat on the
throne of the kings.
- וַיִּשְׂמַח כָּל־עַם־הָאָרֶץ וַהֲעִיר
שָׁקֵטָה וְאֶת־עַתְלִיָּהוּ הֵמִיתוּ בְּחֶרֶב
בַּיִת מֶלֶךְ הַמֶּלֶךְ: ס
20. The entire people of the land rejoiced and the
city was peaceful, and Athaliahu they had killed
by sword in the house of king.

Succession to the Throne

Patrick Jayaraj Antony

This book unfolds the narrative intricacies in 2 Kings 11, the text about Athaliah, the only woman ruler of Judah. The synchronic analysis which utilizes the narratological approach highlights the narrative techniques of the text and makes a semantic study of the text. The diachronic analysis seeks to answer the inconsistencies of the text through textual and redaction criticism, identifies the particular interests of the deuteronomistic and priestly redactions knit together in the final text. The intertextual analysis unfurls the relation of 2 Kings 11 to other biblical texts like the birth narrative of Moses, the succession narrative of Solomon, the revolt of Jehu, the reform of Josiah, the Chronicler's parallel account and the book of Esther. Their results enable the study to explicate the complexities found in 2 Kings 11 and thereupon to propose a new model of reconstruction for the formation of 2 Kings 11.

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