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Models, monarchs and misconceptions: Athaliah and Joash of Judah

Schearing, Linda Sue, Ph.D.

Emory University, 1992
MODELS, MONARCHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS:
ATHALIAH AND JOASH OF JUDAH

Approved for the Department

Adviser

Date

Accepted:

Dean of the Graduate School

Date
MODELS, MONARCHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS:
ATHALIAH AND JOASH OF JUDAH

By
Linda Sue Scheering
B.A., Southeastern College, 1968
M.A.T., Rollins College, 1970
M.Div., Candler School of Theology, 1981
Adviser: Dr. John H. Hayes

An Abstract of
A Dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate School of Religion

1992
ABSTRACT

Jehu's coup signaled the end of the Omride era and the beginning of a hundred year period of dynastic stability in the North. Jehu's coup also had repercussions in Judah. As part of Jehu's bloody ascent to the throne, he killed Ahaziah, King of Judah. At the death of her son, Athaliah, the queen mother, seized control and began her reign as the only woman in Israel or Judah to reign as sole monarch.

Little is known of the internal developments in Judah during the reigns of Athaliah and Joash. Historians, for the most part, have concerned themselves with the preceding Omride period and then focused their attention on the rise of Assyrian influence in the Syro-Palestinian area. Since extra-biblical verification of this period is extremely limited (if not impossible) historians frequently rely on commonly held assumptions and models of ninth-century Judean life to guide their interpretations of the biblical text.

This dissertation discusses the role that models play in modern historical reconstructions of the Athaliah-Joash period. It questions many of these
traditionally held assumptions and suggests that an alternate scenario for this period might be possible.
Acknowlegements

As I think back over my years at Emory, I realize there are many who deserve mention on this page.

Brooks Holifield,
whose work reflects a type of excellence
I've rarely encountered since,

Chuck Gerkin,
whose perception and care
went far beyond the classroom,

The Old Testament department--
   Carol, Gene, Martin, and Max--
who whetted my appetite and skills
for biblical studies,

My friend, confidant, and colleague
   Valerie Ziegler,
without whom work and life
would be very boring indeed,

My mentor and adviser
   John H. Hayes,
whose warmth, intellect, and caring
make him an inspiration
   to aspiring teachers and scholars,

My husband, Angel Fitzpatrick,
whose patience and love
are written between the lines
   of each and every page,

And finally, the rest of my family--
   Ariel, Sean, and Brittany--
who played and grew while
I had to work,

To these, and the countless others
who aided me along the way,
I dedicate this dissertation.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>The Anchor Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>AcOr</td>
<td>Acta Orientalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJBL</td>
<td>Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AJSL</td>
<td>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</td>
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<tr>
<td>AnBib</td>
<td>Analecta Biblica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOAT</td>
<td>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATANT</td>
<td>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>The Biblical Archaeologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASOR</td>
<td>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BWAT</td>
<td>Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BZAW</td>
<td>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift fur die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>The Cambridge Bible Commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQ</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBQMS</td>
<td>Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Deuteronomistic History</td>
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<tr>
<td>DtrH</td>
<td>Deuteronomistic Historian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOTL</td>
<td>The Forms of the Old Testament Literature</td>
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<td>FRLANT</td>
<td>Forschungen zur Religion und Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
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<td>GL</td>
<td>G MSS, Lucianic recension</td>
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<tr>
<td>HAT</td>
<td>Handbuch zum Alten Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSAT</td>
<td>Die Heilige Schrift des Alten Testaments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSM</td>
<td>Harvard Monograph Series</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTR</td>
<td>Harvard Theological Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Critical Commentary</td>
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<td>IDB</td>
<td>The Interpreter's Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEJ</td>
<td>Israel Exploration Journal</td>
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<td>IJH</td>
<td>Israelite and Judean History</td>
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<td>JAOS</td>
<td>Journal of the American Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JBL</td>
<td>Journal of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</td>
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<td>JNES</td>
<td>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>JPOS</td>
<td>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JQR</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review</td>
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<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
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<td>JTS</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Studies</td>
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<td>LTQ</td>
<td>Lexington Theological Quarterly</td>
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<td>NCC</td>
<td>New Century Bible Commentary</td>
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<td>Or</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTL</td>
<td>Old Testament Library</td>
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<td>S</td>
<td>Syriac</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBT</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Theology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SHANE</td>
<td>Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East</td>
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<tr>
<td>SVT</td>
<td>Supplements to Vetus Testamentum</td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Targum</td>
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<tr>
<td>TZ</td>
<td>Theologische Zeitschrift</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>Vulgate</td>
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<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WBC</td>
<td>Word Biblical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCJS</td>
<td>World Congress of Jewish Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHJP</td>
<td>World History of the Jewish People</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZAW</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Writing biblical history is never "easy." Some periods and events, however, are harder to reconstruct than others. Patriarchal history is more difficult than monarchical history; the escape from Egypt more problematic than the fall of Jerusalem. The key difference between these periods and events lies not only in the nature of the biblical materials but also in the availability of extra-biblical sources for correlation.

While archaeological and epigraphical evidence does not guarantee "accurate" reconstruction, it can confirm, challenge, or supplement biblical data.1 A classic example of this is the case of King Omri of Israel. The biblical account of Omri's reign (1 Kgs 16:23-28) is short and negative:

In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri began to reign over Israel; he reigned for twelve years, six of them in Tizrah.

He bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; he fortified the hill, and called the city that he built, Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill.

Omri did what was evil in the sight of the Lord; he did more evil than all who were before him.
For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam son of Nebat, and in the sins that he caused Israel to commit, provoking the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger by their idols. Now the rest of the acts of Omri that he did, and the power that he showed, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel? Omri slept with his ancestors, and was buried in Samaria; his son Ahab succeeded him. (NRSV)

According to this passage Omri was an evil king whose infamy outshone his one achievement—the establishment of a new capital city. Archaeological and epigraphical remains, however, paint a different picture of Omri. They suggest he was an effective and influential monarch of significant proportions. In Omri's case, extra-biblical evidence: (1) affirms Omri's historical existence, (2) challenges the Bible's position that his reign should be evaluated in almost totally negative terms, and (3) supplements the information given in the Bible. Such dialogue between the biblical text and extra-biblical sources is not possible for figures like Abraham or Moses, for whom we have little (if any) external information.

Not all Israelite/Judean rulers are as accessible to historians as Omri and his son, Ahab. Some—like Athaliah (2 Kings 11/2 Chr 22:10-23:22) and Joash (2 Kings 12/2 Chronicles 24)—are never mentioned in
and there are no archaeological remains which can be dated explicitly to their reigns. Like the patriarchs, they lack extra-biblical verification. Unlike the material about the patriarchs, however, the biblical accounts concerning their rule are embedded in a narrative matrix which can be correlated (at points) with archaeological and epigraphical materials. This, in itself, lends some credence to certain specifics noted about them in the Bible.

Three options are available to historians who wish to investigate the reigns of Athaliah and Joash. They can either: (1) presuppose that 2 Kings 11-12 (= 2 Chr 22:10-24:27) mirror historical reality and read these passages as completely reliable historical accounts only needing harmonization and elucidation; (2) insist that external evidence is necessary for sound reconstruction and thus be content with a "minimalist" description of the period; or (3) analyze these passages on intrinsic grounds and, on the basis of this analysis, hypothesize what the underlying historical circumstances may have been. While this dissertation takes the third option, it does so realizing that all analytical strategies work
within the matrix of historians' presuppositions and models. That the writer is committed, like her mentors, to a radical reconstructuralist position with regard to the history of Israel will be seen in her willingness to challenge both the biblical portraits of Athaliah and Joash and contemporary historians' scenarios of the period.

Chapter one of this dissertation addresses the epistemological dilemma presented by narrative history such as that found in the biblical accounts of Athaliah and Joash's reigns. Chapter two examines the analytical strategies best suited to examining these accounts and draws attention to the role that assumptions and models play in reconstructing the period prior to Athaliah's accession. Chapters three and four explore interpretations of Athaliah and Joash and challenge commonly held assumptions about their reigns. Lastly, we will conclude with a summary of the dissertation's contributions.
NOTES: Preface

1. This does not happen automatically. Archaeological remains have to be interpreted. Scholarship has moved far from expectations of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century when archaeological expeditions were conducted in hopes of "proving" the Bible.


3. No mention is made of Athaliah, Joash, or Amaziah in extra-biblical materials, nor are there any building projects, destruction levels, or any other distinctive artifactual remains which can be confidently assigned to the period of their reigns. Y. Yadin ("The 'House of Baal' of Ahab and Jezebel in Samaria, and That of Athaliah in Judah," in *Archaeology in the Levant, Essays for Kathleen Kenyon*. Eds. R. Moorey and P. Parr [Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978] 127-35) has identified remains at Ramat Rahel with the temple of Baal in 2 Kgs 11:18, but this site is normally dated later than the ninth century.
CHAPTER ONE
THE ART OF WRITING HISTORY

The biblical accounts of Athaliah and Joash's reigns (2 Kings 11-12 = 2 Chronicles 22-23) are primarily narrative in form. Events of their reigns are described in beginning-to-end sequences and populated with various characters. This formal narrative arrangement, so characteristic of much of the biblical material, raises the issue of the relationship between biblical narrative and reconstructed history.

Modern historians are divided in their opinions on the relationship between narrative and history and the role of narration in the reconstruction of history. Some view narrative as either unsuitable (not "scientific" enough) for writing history or as a "neutral" vehicle which communicates (but does not affect) information. Others insist that narrative is more than a vehicle. If historical events have the character of "story," then narrative reflects the structure of the past and is indispensable to writing history.

The debate over narrative's significance for
history intensified in the mid-1960's. Emerging theories of literature challenged narrative's supposed neutrality and its ability to mirror the past.

Narratives, it was argued, are constructs. They are fashioned from story elements selected by the writer. Each element is then located within a plot structure by an author employing a variety of literary devices and strategies. The placement and connection of elements imbue them with both significance and meaning. No matter what the writer begins with, the result is always an imaginative construct requiring and reflecting the writer's creativity and interpretation. In addition, the very act of arranging events along a beginning-middle-end continuum, even in the most conscientious reconstruction, interjects an artificial order onto "factual" materials. Causation in the real world is neither as accessible nor coherent as it appears in the narrative world.

The most skeptical response to narrative history is the objection that narrative, by its nature, cannot operate referentially. French post-structuralist Roland Barthes is one example of those who hold this
position. Barthes argues that historians fall victim to the "fallacy of referentiality" by thinking that narratives actually reconstructed reality. Barthes concluded:

...'What takes place' in a narrative is from the referential (reality) point of view literally nothing; 'what happens' is language alone..."11

Historical narratives may seem "real," but this is illusionary:

...in objective history, the real is never more than an unformulated signified, sheltering behind the apparently all-powerful referent. This situation characterizes what might be called the realistic effect.12

Somewhat rhetorically, Barthes asked:

...does this form of narrative [history] differ, in some specific trait, in some indubitably distinctive feature, from imaginary narration, as we find in the epic, the novel, and the drama?13

There are several ways to deal with Barthes skepticism. One is to argue that history does differ from fiction. This position suggests that narrative history has identifiable characteristics which distinguish it from narrative fiction.14 Some of the more frequently cited criteria are: (1) formal elements15 (history contains chronology, causation, etc.);
Another option is to recognize both the similarities and differences between narrative history and narrative fiction. According to this position, history is generally distinguishable (though not in an "absolute" sense separable) from fiction. Yet there are no clear-cut criteria with which a distinction can be made. Matt Oja's article, "Fictional History and Historical Fiction: Solzhenitsyn and Kis as exemplars," is a good example of this position.

Oja's immediate concern is an analysis of source materials for Stalin's purges and the rise of the Gulag system. Many of these sources, Oja observes, suffer from an "ambiguity of genre." They contain a "confusing hybrid quality, seeming to be something more than fiction, yet something less than strict historiography." In his treatment he compares two such pieces--Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago* and Danilo Kis's *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*.

Oja begins with the assumption that there is no absolute qualitative difference between history and
Instead, they represent two poles of the same spectrum.

NARRATIVE

HISTORY

Oja accepts as "axiomatic" the fact that The Gulag Archipelago is a history of both the camp system and USSR society. He admits, however, that it is a "highly unusual kind" of history—"history with so fictional a flavor that it reads like historical fiction." Kis's A Tomb, on the other hand, is historical fiction "so convincing that the reader can scarcely avoid a sense of weird confusion about whether it is all fictional or not." These observations cause Oja "to ponder the question of just what is the difference, if any, between history and fiction." Oja identifies five "broad" criteria which serve as "suggestions" for why certain documents evoke a reader's subjective identification of them as history: (1) the kind of truth in which it traffics; (2) the scope of the work; (3) the writer's desire to focus on the why of events; (4) the relationship of the author to the subject; and (5) the demands which the writer makes upon the reader vis-
Oja realizes that all of his criteria are vulnerable to rebuttal, but insists that they are what readers usually use to identify what is very slippery subject matter. 33

While the debate concerning narrative history and fiction raged in university history and literature departments, a similar dialogue was taking place in the adjacent field of religion.

Published in 1981, Robert Alter's book, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, won the National Jewish Book Award for Jewish Thought. 34 Reviewers found Alter's approach to the Bible refreshing, offering "new insights" 35 and promising to make "the Bible fun again." 36 More importantly, Alter's book gave momentum to the growing "new" literary critical movement in biblical studies. 37

In *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Alter's goal was to identify literary strategies (characterization, reticence, etc.) employed in biblical narratives. 38 Chapter two, however, tackled the Bible's status as "sacred history." 39 According to Alter, readers have been so preoccupied with historical issues concerning the Bible, that they have paid little attention to the
Bible's literary character. To correct this, Alter suggests that biblical narratives are best understood as "prose fiction." Drawing from examples in the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets, Alter argues that biblical narratives contain a range of "modalities."

There are narratives which are fiction claiming to be history and those which contain historical data in a fictional format:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical Narrative</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HISTORICIZED FICTION</strong>---------<strong>FICTIONALIZED HISTORY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primeval history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tales of Patriarchs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much of Exodus story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Conquest story</td>
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</table>

This continuum is "uneven" because the Bible constantly weaves historical detail with "purely legendary 'history'" and presents this legendary history as if it reflects how things actually happened. An "instructive central instance" of this "intertwining of history and fiction" is the David cycle. The David cycle is history "transmuted" into fiction. It corresponds to Israelite history as Shakespeare's historical stories correspond to English history. What leads Alter to arrive at this
conclusion? In reading the story closely, one becomes aware of its imaginative elements. Interior monologues, verbatim dialogues (which take place in private settings) and other such literary devices indicate the writer's constructive presence in the story. It is the writer's artistry, not historical correspondence, which makes David and Saul emerge as moral and psychological figures. For Alter, this "process of imagination" makes biblical characterizations fictitious. David's stories are not "strictly speaking, historiography" but the "imaginative reenactment of history".

Alter finds evidence of literary artistry throughout the Bible's "historical" literature. Another passage he specifically examines is Judges 3, the story of Ehud. Although it may contain data about Ehud, Alter is far more interested in how the writer skillfully manipulates this information. By giving it a "forceful thematic shape," the writer creates a "satiric vision" of the Moabite king's destruction. While Ehud's story may be "less historicized fiction than fictionalized history," it nevertheless employs the "technical resources of prose fiction" to give feeling
and meaning to the events described.\textsuperscript{56}

Alter was not concerned in 1981 with writing an epistemological essay on historical knowledge\textsuperscript{57} or with championing the new narratology movement.\textsuperscript{58} He was responding to years of biblical study which often undervalued the text's aesthetic crafting. Nevertheless, his approach to the Bible raised for biblical historians the same questions being discussed in history and literature. Historical skepticism, one response to the dilemma of narrative history, may be seen in the work of Burke Long.

Three years after the appearance of The Art of Biblical Narrative, Long published his commentary on 1 Kings.\textsuperscript{59} In the preface, he drew attention to the commentary's emphasis on the "literary features of Hebrew historical narrative."\textsuperscript{60} Elements of literary art in 1 Kings (such as "style, metaphor, imagery, inner associations, and allusions") are expressions of the writer's "narrative genius" and seek to awaken an "imaginative response" in the reader.\textsuperscript{61}

In Long's introductory essay ("Introduction to Historical Literature"),\textsuperscript{62} Alter's influence becomes
clear. Quoting Alter, Long describes the Bible as "an interfusion of literary art with theological, moral, or historiosophical vision" and uses Alter's definitions and spectrum in his discussion of narrative.

According to Long, the Bible manages "to resist the label of either history or fiction." Stories in 1 Kings frequently reflect a "varied relationship" between history and fiction. While the Kings' characters and events "are rooted in plausible time and space," they have contours "conceived in the writer's particularizing imagination." As a result, they are simply an "imaginative reenactment" of the past.

The year after his commentary appeared, Long published the article, "Historical Narrative and the Fictionalizing Imagination." Although it focused on 1 Kings 20, Long describes it as "part of a larger investigation" of the "imaginative creativity" of the authors of Kings. In his concluding remarks, Long warns that literary sensitivity to the text will give "scant comfort to the modern biblical historian."

In 1986 Long voiced his growing skepticism of historical approaches to Kings. When asked to comment on a recently published history of ancient Israel and
Judah, Long remarked:

...a persistent question has hold of me and will not let go. Should one even try to write a modern critical history of Israel...?  

Long's study of the Bible's literary features (with their "imaginative" component) led him to question whether "historical narratives" in 1 Kings functioned referentially. Not all biblical scholars, however, were willing to "give up" reconstructing Israel's history. Baruch Halpern, criticizing what he termed "historical pyrrhonism," addressed the epistemological problems of biblical narrative in his book, The First Historians (1987).  

Halpern's argument against "literary critics of the (post-) New Critical variety" can be summarized briefly. Biblical authors who wrote "recognizably historical" works had "authentic antiquarian intentions." They meant "to furnish fair and accurate representations of Israelite antiquity." Although art and ideology played important roles in their writing, Halpern suggests that it is naive to think that this is incompatible with history writing. Narrative history is fictional. It portrays the past "through the
imaginative lenses used to create all fictions." To this extent literary critics are correct when they note that "all history is fictional, imaginative." Thus, history is "a literally false but scientifically more or less useful coherence imposed by reason on reality."77

The issue, Halpern argues, is not determining whether a source is history or fiction (as if these are two separate genres), but whether it is history or, say, a romance or fable. For Halpern, the main criterion for making this judgment is "what its author meant to do."78 History is distinguishable from romance by neither form nor content, but by authorial intention. A good example of Halpern's position (as opposed to a literary critic like Alter's) is found in his treatment of Ehud.

In chapter three of The First Historians ("A Message for Eglon: The Case of Ehud ben-Gera"), Halpern examines the story of Ehud in Judges 3 and concludes that it is "history defictionalized"79 (in contrast to Alter's label of "fictionalized history"80). Citing narrative economy (the restrained use of dialogue, characterization and unessential action) as his primary evidence, Halpern argues that the author of Judges 3
meant to write "history." Hypothesizing that the author's original source was more like romance than historiography, Halpern suggests that the author purposefully "defictionalized" his source. From the original romance (which carried "the events aloft, soaring on the wings of poetic fancy") the historian fixed "the events in the sights of history" and brought "them to solid earth." Thus Judges 3 is a "modestly ornamented" work of history not "historical romance." Halpern admits that authorial intention guarantees neither pure motives nor accuracy. Thus, in Judges 3 the writer's representation and interpretation of sources are open to question. What is not questionable for Halpern, though, is the authorial intent behind the writing.

Halpern's approach to history emphasizes the dialectical relationship between literary and historical concerns. While "historical assumptions condition literary interpretations," it is literary interpretations which "determine historical conclusions." As "history vs. fiction" is a false genre dichotomy, so "literary vs. historical" is a false separation of methodologies.
In spite of these important observations, Halpern's treatment falls short of resolving the epistemological issues raised by literary critics. His thesis—"those who wrote works recognizably historical, had authentic antiquarian intentions"—begs the question that Halpern never fully answers: How does one determine a "recognizably historical" work?

Halpern repeatedly argues that history is "recognizable" by examining the author's (1) perceived intentions, (2) claim that the account is accurate in its particulars; and (3) sincerity. Yet Halpern freely admits that authorial intent:

...can only be proved through a comparison of the account with its sources....If it digests and represents the source data with a view of conveying data, the account is historical.

Since proof of this type is impossible because the sources of biblical narratives are not extant, Halpern argues that the reader must settle for evidence of probability. In his treatment of Judges 3, Halpern's "evidence" consists of the "contrast between the nature of the pericope and the probable nature of the sources."

Thus Halpern's claim that Judges 3 should be read as
"history" is itself based on an hypothetical reconstruction of the writer's source.

It is comparatively easy to fault Halpern for his reconstruction of non-extant sources. Yet Halpern's exercise of disciplined imagination is part of the historian's craft. Historians (especially those dealing with ancient history) rarely have the luxury of verifying their sources by external documentation. If they are to write history at all, they must employ imagination (as well as the tools of analytical reasoning) in their reconstruction.

There is no consensus opinion on the epistemological problem presented by narrative history. Each position identified in this chapter has inherent weaknesses. An attack on narrative history's referentiality is an attack on the entire enterprise of history writing. (Even annals and chronicles have their "creative" components and their principles of selectivity.) An attack on narrative history's distinctiveness is an invitation to ambiguity. How can any document be trusted to convey literal historical truth if it cannot be distinguished from a good historical novel? Perhaps the best position to accept
is the one which acknowledges the blurred borders between history and fiction.

Although the epistemological issue of historical narrative remains partially open, one can outline some basic assumptions about history writing.

The writing of history is not an optional enterprise. Memories of the past are part of being human. Moreover, these memories (accurate or inaccurate, faithfully preserved or cunningly constructed) are powerful. We cannot stop remembering/preserving/revising any more than we can afford to ignore existing histories. Historical nihilism is more than a philosophical position, it is society's death warrant. If scholars refrain from reconstructing the past, others, less discerning, will take up the task to their own advantage.

We must write history using the sources available to us. Burke Long criticized the authors of A History of Israel and Judah for accepting the Bible's outline of events "without much of either corroborative or disconfirming information from outside the Bible." Long's critique implies that if the authors had more
external sources and if they had "history" rather than historiography, then and only then could they write a critical history of Israel and Judah. Long assumes that historians can write more and more accurate (and thus less fictional) histories as additional information is available. In reality, regardless of the number of external sources available to historians, the resulting reconstruction is still an imaginative reenactment or retelling of the past. Subsequent revision may account for new information, but this does not mean that the history produced will be more "accurate." In a sense, Long faults Miller and Hayes for doing what all historians must do if they are to write history--for using the only sources they have to the best of their ability.

The writing of history involves imagination and risk taking. There are no "definitive" histories--only an unending stream of revisions. To attempt historical reconstruction is to invite criticism--whether one is incorporating new information into old models, or interpreting old information in a new way. Writing history is both exciting and dangerous. This is doubly true for reconstructing periods like those of Athaliah.
and Joash for which we have so little information.
NOTES: Chapter One

1 P. Roth ("Narrative Explanations: The Case of History," History and Theory 27 [1988]) calls this a "methodological" objection and describes it as follows: "Explanations have a characteristic logical form...while the precise constituents of narrative form are a subject of much study and debate in literary theory, there exists a prima facie distinction between narratives and the standard form of a proper scientific explanation. Specifically, narratives relate discrete events; they do not invoke laws."

2 Historians such as M. Mandelbaum ("A Note on History as Narrative," History and Theory 6 [1967] 416-17; The Anatomy of Historical Knowledge [Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1977]) and L. Goldstein (Historical Knowing [Austin: University of Texas, 1976]) argue that history is not a literary genre, but a disciplined inquiry concerning knowledge of the past. Narratives are only one way the results of this inquiry are "written up" for public consumption.

3 These historians maintain that narrative is conceptually essential to history writing. More recently, the work of D. Carr (Time, Narrative, and History [Bloomington: Indiana University, 1986]) emphasizes the continuity between narrative and the real world. Carr (Time, 9) insists that "narrative structure pervades our very experience of time and social existence, independently of our contemplating the past as historians." Thus much of what Carr writes seems to be aimed at providing "a way of answering the charge that narrative is nothing but window-dressing or packaging, something incidental to our knowledge of the past."

could be said without exaggeration that until about 1965
the critical philosophy of history was the controversy
over the covering law model."

With the publication of works by W. S. Gallie
(Philosophy and Historical Understanding [London: Chatto
and Windus, 1964]), M. White (Foundations of Historical
(Analytical Philosophy of History [Cambridge: Cambridge
University, 1965]) discussion shifted from covering laws
to narrative. Scholars in the fields of literary
criticism, history and the analytic philosophy of
history, began to explore once again the relationship
between narratives and the events they depict (Carr,
Time, 5).

According to Carr (Time, 8), studies of narrative
in the philosophy of history and theory of literature
ran parallel without much reciprocal influence until
Hayden White's Metahistory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
University, 1973), in which White argued that
differences in historical explanation were influenced by
modes of emplotment rather than differences in fact.

5Roth ("Narrative Explanations," 1) sums up the
issue presently confronting historians: "The use of
narratives to explain is unquestioned; what is subject
to philosophical dispute is whether this habit is to be
tolerated or condemned."

6R. Anchor, "Narrativity and the Transformation of

7As Mink ("History and Fiction as Models of
observed: "Stories are not lived but told....Life has
no beginnings, middles and ends....Narrative qualities
are transferred from art to life."

H. White echoes this criticism in his essay "The
Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality"
in On Narrative, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago:
University of Chicago, 1981) 4: "Does the world really
present itself to perception in the form of well-made
stories...? Or does it present itself more in the way
that the annals and chronicles suggest, either as mere
sequence without beginning or end or as sequences of
beginnings that only terminate and never conclude?"
According to Mink ("Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument" in The Writing of History, ed. R. H. Canary and H. Kozicki [Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1978] 145) the term "narrative history" is an oxymoron (a combination of contradictory words): "As historical it claims to represent, through its form, part of the real complexity of the past, but as narrative it is a product of imaginative construction which cannot defend its claim to truth by any accepted procedure of argument or authentication."

H. White reaches the same conclusion as Mink, but for different reasons. Events and processes of narrative history are artifacts of different strategies of emplotment. This being the case, narrative "is neither true nor false in any sense congruent with the correspondence theory" (Roth, "Narrative Explanations," 12).

The Annales school eschews narrative in favor of the chronicle format while the Post-structuralists reject the concept of narrative's referentiality. Moreover, individual historians such as Louis Mink, Hayden White, etc., also argue that narrative history constructs (rather than describes) history.


White, "Narrative," 12.

F. R. Ankersmit (Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language [Hague: Nijhoff, 1983] 19) describes the confidence and the dilemma of this position: "On the face of it, it does not appear to be difficult to draw the line of demarcation [between history and fiction]. Unfortunately it turns out to be depressingly hard to find a formal justification for our intuitions."

Ankersmit (Narrative Logic, 24-26), for example,
identifies three characteristic features: (1) Historical discourse is "expositive and argumentative" because the writer "is engaged in building up historical knowledge, in gaining or acquiring it." Ankersmit contrasts this to the novelist who "applies...general historical knowledge to one or more particular (imaginary) historical situations." (2) Truth functions differently in history. Novelists begin with a general knowledge of the period and invent plausible particular, individual cases. Historians begin with the particular and move towards forming a general picture. (3) Novels show historical reality through the eyes of fictitious people living in the past. Thus while the "historian argues for 'points of view' on the past, the historical novelist applies them."

16 Otherwise known as the "truth-criterion." This position reflects a "common-sense" approach to history. In the words of R. G. Collingwood (The Idea of History [London: Oxford University, 1956] 246): "As works of imagination, the historian's work and the novelist's do not differ. Where they do differ is that the historian's picture is meant to be true. The novelist has a single task only: to construct a coherent picture, one that makes sense. The historian has a double task: he has both to do this, and to construct a picture of things as they really were and of events as they really happened."

17 Consider, for example, M. C. Beardsley's (Aesthetics. Problems in the philosophy of criticism [New York: Hackett, 1958] 421) "non-assertion theory of fiction." Whereas historians intend to write truth (although they may miss the mark), novelists make no such claims. Indeed, according to Beardsley, novelists employ a variety of conventions to signal their readers of the nonassertive nature of their writing. For Beardsley, authorial intent is the key to distinguishing history from fiction.

18 Ankersmit (Narrative Logic, 19-20) points out that if the borderline between genres is "unstable" it is helpful to "...establish a scale in such a manner that each individual narratio [his term for historical narrative] or novel corresponds with a particular point
on that scale. If for instance, on the left side of the scale we put the historical novels and on the right the narratio, historical novels in which the purely historiographical component is more prominent than in others shall be placed a little closer to the centre of the scale. Something similar could be done for narratio..." Once this scale is established, Ankersmit believes that historians have two options, either "a) we can be content with providing each narratio or historical novel with its appropriate place on the scale and declare that it would be nonsense to look for a zero point, a particular point, that is, that marks the exact distinction between narratio and historical novels, [or] b) we can hope that it will be possible to establish where zero lies on the scale."

While Ankersmit opts for "b," other historians are more comfortable with the ambiguity of "a."


20 Because of this, Oja ("Fictional History," 111) suggests that this literature offers "...a useful context in which to consider on a theoretical level the question of just what it is that distinguishes narrative historiography, on the one hand, from narrative fiction which deals with an historical topic, on the other."

21 Oja, "Fictional History," 112.

22 Oja ("Fictional History," 112) explains that "The theoretical ends of such a spectrum are...narrative which contains only purely historiographical characteristics (if such a thing were possible), and...that possessing only purely fictional ones. Everything between these points...possesses characteristics of both...."

23 Oja, "Fictional History," 113.

24 Oja, "Fictional History," 114.

By "truth" Oja ("Fictional History," 115-17) does not mean "that the difference lies in the fact that history deals with true events and fiction with invented ones." Common sense understandings of truth are of "little help" because there are quantitative degrees of truth ("a history may contain much that is postulated or invented, and a work of fiction, much that is historically factual") and qualitative degrees of truth. Oja identifies three qualitative types of truth: (1) literal historical truth--"the issue of whether a certain event or chronology of events did in fact occur;" (2) artistic truth--"that elusive quality of craftsmanship which makes an account of human actions or emotions 'ring true' to the reader;" (3) non-literal historical truth--"the degree to which a given set of events, including human actions and emotions, is consistent with what we know about individuals and society in a specific historical context." For Oja, history is characterized by attention to literal historical truth while fiction tends more toward non-literal historical truth.

According to Oja ("Fictional History," 118), works operate on two levels: microhistory (which focuses on an individual) and macrohistory (which deals with a society or some group). A "macrohistorical" focus (with an emphasis on class, ideology, political factors, etc.) characterizes history, while a "micr.\text{historical}" focus (with an eye to a person's emotions, mentality, etc.) characterizes fiction.

According to Oja ("Fictional History," 119), history writers are actively concerned with causation, while fiction writers are "primarily concerned with exposition."

Oja ("Fictional History," 120) suggests that historians approach narrative from the "outside" while writers of fiction "operate from within the narrative, pushing its contours out this way and that to develop their themes and images."
Writers of fiction, Oja ("Fictional History," 112) argues, demand a more emotional, passionate involvement of their readers than do historians.

Oja, "Fictional History," 112.


Los Angeles Times Book Review, as cited on back cover of paperback edition of The Art of Biblical Narrative (author's name not given).


Alter (Biblical Narrative, ix) states in his preface: "The aim throughout is to illuminate the distinctive principles of the Bible's narrative art." For Alter, however, "biblical" means "Hebrew Scriptures" rather than the Christian New Testament. New Testament narratives, written in a different language and at a later time, operate according to "different literary assumptions."

Chapter two of The Art of Biblical Narrative is entitled: "Sacred History and the Beginning of Prose Fiction" (23-46).

Alter (Biblical Narrative, 23) describes the dilemma facing many readers: "...if the text is history, seriously purporting to render an account of the origins of things and of Israelite national experience as they actually happened, is it not presumptuous to analyze these narratives in the terms we customarily apply to prose fiction, a mode of writing we understand to be the arbitrary invention of the writer, whatever the correspondences such a work may exhibit with quotidian or even historical reality?"
Alter (Biblical Narrative, 24) remarks, "As odd as it may sound at first, I would contend that prose fiction is the best general rubric for describing biblical narrative."

Alter, Biblical Narrative, 27.

That is, "fiction laying claim to a place in the chain of causation and the realm of moral consequentiality that belong to history" (Alter, Biblical Narrative, 32).

Or in Alter's words, "history given the imaginative definition of fiction" (Biblical Narrative, 32).

These terms are not always used consistently by Alter who uses "historicized fiction" to refer to Genesis and Kings. In describing Judges 3, however, he says it is less "historicized fiction" than "fictionalized history." Later writers, building upon Alter's work, use "fictionalized history" and "historicized fiction" to conceptualize his ideas. For this reason, I have used these terms to help visualize what Alter describes.

Alter (Biblical Narrative, 33) also suggests a second spectrum based on the concept of human nature caught between design and disorder, providence and freedom: "The ancient Hebrew writers...seek through the process of narrative realization to reveal the enactment of God's purposes in historical events. This enactment, however, is continuously complicated by a perception of two, approximately parallel, dialectical tensions. One is a tension between the divine plan and the disorderly character of actual historical events...the other is a tension between God's will, His providential guidance, and human freedom, the refractory nature of man....The various biblical narratives in fact may be usefully seen as forming a spectrum between the opposing extremes of disorder and design."

Alter uses these dialectical tensions as poles for his second spectrum:

Biblical Narrative
DESIGN------------------------DISORDER

Esther Ruth Judges Samuel

According to Alter (Biblical Narrative, 33-34), Esther is a "kind of fairy tale," or "comic fantasy utilizing pseudo-historical materials." It has a "schematic neatness" which distinguishes it from other books. Judges, Samuel and Kings, however, contain the "recalcitrant facts of known history" (i.e. specific political movements, military victories and defeats, etc.). This means that on occasion both the narrator and the characters have to struggle to reconcile divine promise with present reality. Ruth, with its realistic psychology and inclusion of actual social institutions, is a "verisimilar historicized fiction." Alter places it towards the "design" pole but distinguishes it from Esther.

46 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 33.
47 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 35.
48 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 36.

49 Alter (Biblical Narrative, 35-36) compares the two in this manner: "Shakespeare was obviously not free to have Henry V lose the battle of Agincourt, or to allow someone else to lead the English forces there, but, working from the hints of historical tradition, he could invent a kind of Bildungsroman for the young Prince Hal; surround him with invented characters that would serve as foils, mirrors, obstacles, aids in his development...making out of the stuff of history a powerful projection of human possibility. That is essentially what the author of the David cycle does for David...."

50 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 35.
51 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 36.
52 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 37.
53 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 35.

54 Alter (Biblical Narrative, 37) refers to this account to convince his readers that the David cycle is not "merely the exception that proves the rule."

55 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 39.

56 Alter, Biblical Narrative, 41.

57 Alter (Biblical Narrative, 24) does argue that "history is far more intimately related to fiction than we have been accustomed to assume" and acknowledges that "it is important to see the common ground shared by the two modes of narrative, ontologically and formally." Nevertheless, Alter maintains that "...it also strikes me as misguided to insist that writing history is finally identical with writing fiction. The two kinds of literary activity obviously share a whole range of narrative strategies, and the historian may seem to resemble the writer of fiction.... Yet there remains a qualitative difference...."

58 Alter (Biblical Narrative, x) warns "students of narrative" in his preface that they will "...find no more than a couple of passing allusions to the new narratology that has flourished in France and America over the last decade because, quite frankly, I find its usefulness limited, and I am particularly suspicious of the value of elaborate taxonomies...."


60 Long, 1 Kings, xv.

61 Long, 1 Kings, xv.

62 Long, 1 Kings, 2-8.

63 Long, 1 Kings, 7.

64 Long, 1 Kings, 7.
65 Long, 1 Kings, 4.
66 Long, 1 Kings, 7.
73 Halpern (The First Historians, 4-5) objects to calling this movement "new" because "...modern literary study of the Bible is as old as literary study in the postclassical West, with roots in the work of Goethe, Lowth, and Herder."
74 This is the thesis of The First Historians (3).
75 Halpern, The First Historians, 97.
76 Halpern, The First Historians, 8.
77 Halpern, The First Historians, 7.
78 Halpern, The First Historians, 8.
79 Halpern, The First Historians, 66.
80 The term "fictionalized history" is for Halpern an "almost right" word. As to the value of "almost right" words, Halpern (The First Historians, 68) cites Mark Twain: "The difference between the right word and the almost-right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."
81 Halpern, The First Historians, 65-68.
82 Halpern, The First Historians, 97.
83 Halpern, The First Historians, 3.
84 Halpern, The First Historians, 97.
85 Halpern, The First Historians, 5.
86 Halpern, The First Historians, 3.
87 Halpern, The First Historians, 8.
88 Halpern, The First Historians, 61.
89 Halpern, The First Historians, 61.
90 Long, On Finding, 11.
CHAPTER TWO
METHODOLOGY

The analysis of the narratives in 2 Kings 11-12 (=2 Chr 22:10-24:27) and any attempt to reconstruct a picture of the events involve asking certain questions common to all historical enterprises. What is the nature and character of the source material? What probably happened? Where did it happen? When did it happen? Who was involved? Why did it happen? Since there is no extra-biblical material which explicitly deals with Athaliah and Joash, we must focus on the intrinsic logic of the texts themselves: What are their special nature and Tendenzen? What rhetorical strategies do they employ and to what purpose? What information can be inferred from the reports? How does this information correlate with the biblical image of Judah and Israel and with the general circumstances of the period as known from biblical and extra-biblical sources?

To avoid a naive reading, each statement about Athaliah or Joash must be approached with suspicion.¹ Such suspicion recognizes the roles that self-interest
and propaganda play in the texts' shaping. How credible is each statement? How do the writers claim to know what is reported? What do they want readers to believe? In other words, can the authors of the material be trusted as reliable informants and can the information supplied be considered reliable? Generally, informants can be considered truthful when: (1) lying would be of no advantage and telling the truth could not harm; (2) telling the truth would be advantageous and lying could harm; (3) they are constrained by the public nature of the matter to keep within the limits of truth; (4) private interests or those of their party/group are not involved.²

Another factor in determining a source's usefulness for historical reconstruction, although somewhat ambiguous in itself, is the source's relation in time to the event that it describes. This assumes, of course, that the closer the report is to the event, the more accurate it is likely to be.³ The complex literary history of Athaliah and Joash's accounts, however, make these rules of verification especially difficult to follow.
It is commonly recognized that Kings is the product of a lengthy compositional history. Whether one accepts the idea of a single redactor (DtrH), four redactors (DtrH₁ and DtrH₂), multiple redactors, or a whole "school" of writers, current theories usually assume that whoever was responsible for the final form utilized information found in older sources. That is, while the final form of Kings has (as its earliest date) a terminus point of the mid-sixth century (cf. 2 Kgs 25:27), it incorporates sources much older. Three such sources are mentioned explicitly in Kings: The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kgs 11:14); The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (1 Kgs 14:19 + 16 t.) and The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (1 Kgs 14:29 + 14 t.). Citation formula (i.e. "Now the rest of the acts of..., and all that he did, are they not written in...") appear at the end of most kings' reigns, indicating the writers' use of a particular source. Unfortunately, it is not specified which data are taken from these sources. Nor are any of these sources available for examination.

There is a general consensus among scholars that 2 Kings 11-12 contains basically three types of materials:
(1) annalistic information, (2) narratives, and (3) editorial structuring and expansion. There is great division, however, on the exact date, authorship, and source for each section. For example, the account of Athaliah in 2 Kings 11 is entirely narrative in form. At least three theories have been proposed to explain the origin of this material. One posits two sources (a priestly narrative and a popular one), another argues for only one source (with DtrH/post-DtrH additions), while still another sees the chapter as a unified narrative. The dates assigned to these materials range from ones contemporaneous with the events that they describe to others as late as the Josianic period or the final editorial stage of the DH.

The Joash material is even more complicated. It shows evidence of special editorial structuring and comment (see the introductory and concluding regnal formulas) which may incorporate information from court records. It has narrative sections which are variously assigned to: (1) annalistic sources, (2) priestly histories, or (3) courtly circles. We will be discussing these matters in further detail below.
(chapters 3-4), but this preliminary summary highlights the uncertainties that historians face with regard to the 2 Kings' narrative about Athaliah and Joash's reigns.

Like Kings, Chronicles contains citation formulas indicating the compiler's sources. Like those cited in Kings, none of the Chronicler's cited sources have survived. The most obvious source used by the Chronicler (although never cited) is some form of Samuel-Kings. This is obvious from verbatim parallels between Samuel-Kings and Chronicles. In this regard, information provided by the Chronicler may be classified into three categories: (1) data parallel and in agreement with Kings; (2) data parallel but contradictory to Kings; and (3) data unique to Chronicles. Each type of information presents its own problems for the historian.

Ordinarily, conflicts between two sources can be resolved by appealing to one or more additional sources. Since this is impossible for the Athaliah-Joash materials, the historian must rely on other means or approaches, such as general guidelines, to resolve differences between 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles. One set
of such general guidelines has been formulated by Garraghan:\(^8\)

1. If a testimony has no sort of probability, it should be disregarded.
2. If a reliable witness contradicts one who is only probably so, the testimony of the former carries more weight.
3. If a testimony of the highest probability is contradicted by a less reliable source, both sources need to have their probability tested anew.
4. Care should be taken to check if the contradiction in either source can be traced to party interest.
5. A contradiction between sources may be apparent rather than real (i.e., witnesses may not be referring to the same thing).
6. If both sources have the same degree of probability, and the contradiction cannot be explained, then judgment of the alleged fact must be suspended.

Kings and Chronicles presents a classic case of overlapping, yet obviously conflicting, sources. While the guidelines offered above may be generally useful, they certainly do not provide a simple recipe which can be followed for negotiating the conflicts between Kings and Chronicles. Often such guidelines raise secondary questions which, in turn, must be addressed. For example, to say that one source is "more reliable" than another is a very relative observation and begs the question of whether either is probable. Or, whether one
decides to risk a decision on conflicting passages with the same degree of probability or simply to suspend judgment, one must realize that each is a "judgment call" on the part of the historian. Thus it is important to remember that, even with such guidelines as those offered above, there are no "simple solutions" to the conflicting nature of the materials in Kings and Chronicles. In the final analysis, each bit of information provided in Chronicles and Kings must be examined individually to assess its historical probability and to ascertain whether a historian should employ it in offering a reconstruction of the events.

The type of methodological issues which we have just noted represent the customary steps undertaken in practically all historical investigation. There are, however, specific analytical strategies which should be noted since they may be particularly helpful in approaching 2 Kings 11-12 (= 2 Chr 22:10-24:27). These involve the use of inferential logic and the examination of the passage's rhetorical and poetic dimensions.

A. Analytical Strategies
1. Inferential Logic

Correlating biblical narratives with archaeological and epigraphic remains may yield "demonstrable proof" (a term used by N. Cantor and R. Schneider to describe that which is demonstrated as opposed to merely inferred). Arguments leading to "demonstrable proof" are possible when: (1) the problem is sufficiently narrow (i.e., was Jericho occupied in the thirteenth-century BCE?), and (2) the artifactual and/or literary sources available are adequate for such proof.19 When demonstrable proof is not possible (as in the case of Athaliah and Joash) inferential or synthetic proof is the best for which one can aim.20

"Inferential proof" is proof arrived at on the basis of probability. After considering a number of variables, the historian decides in which direction the weight of probability lies.21 Is the alleged fact possible? If not, the historian need go no further. Possibility, however, does not guarantee probability. Just because something might have happened does not mean it probably happened.22 To assess probability the historian relies on the logic of inference.

Inference is the process of passing from one
statement considered to be true to another whose truth seems to follow from it.23 Take, for example, the conditions surrounding Amaziah of Judah's accession (2 Kgs 14:1-6).

2 Kgs 14:5 states: "As soon as the royal power was firmly in his [Amaziah's] hand he killed his servants who had murdered his father the king." The phrase "as soon as the royal power was firmly in his hand" is suspicious. Why did Amaziah not automatically succeed his father? What hindered the normal transfer of power?

Having identified an issue, the historian then moves to suggest "possible" answers. Perhaps Amaziah was sick (or otherwise indisposed) and could not immediately assume control of the throne. Or maybe the Davidic principle failed and there was indecision as to who should succeed Joash. Or perhaps there was active opposition to Amaziah's kingship. All of these suggestions provide possible explanations of 2 Kgs 14:5. Now the historian must ask, what probably happened and which set of circumstances would best explain the inferred events?

Inferential reasoning is not simply "good
guessing." While historians may start with a "likely guess," they follow recognizable lines of logic, which allow movement toward a greater degree of probability.\(^{24}\)

There is no evidence to suggest that Amaziah was unable to assume his royal duties because of sickness. Thus, this suggestion has no way of moving towards a degree of probability higher than pure conjecture.

As for failure of the Davidic dynastic principle, this possibility is contradicted by evidence in the surrounding chapters. While the principle did not work in the case of Athaliah, in all other cases Judah is portrayed as selecting what it thought was a member of the Davidic household as its next king. In the face of this fact, the probability of a break in tradition in Amaziah's case is possible but unlikely.

Option three--active resistance to Amaziah's kingship--could be an attractive explanation for several reasons. Generalization supports the possibility of factional opposition to Amaziah. In monarchies, courts are often divided along lines of personal or party interests. Analogical reasoning suggests that Amaziah's court, like David's at Solomon's accession, was divided on questions of loyalty and succession.
Using *a priori reasoning*, the existence of a hostile court faction at Amaziah's accession may also be deduced from the fact of Joash's assassination. If Joash's death was the result of a conspiracy (and not merely the act of deranged or disgruntled individuals), then it is reasonable to suppose that the faction responsible still existed and stood in opposition to Amaziah.

The preceding paragraphs have illustrated the point: in the absence of external sources, inferential logic is an important (although "last resort") tool for historical reconstruction.

Reconstructions based on inferential logic, however, are limited. Since the process assumes that behavior is based on logic, and since human behavior is frequently illogical, the process cannot anticipate and reconstruct irrational actions. In spite of this limitation, readings based on "inferential logic" provide an alternative to literal readings of 2 Kings 11-12 (= 2 Chr 22:10-24:27) on the one hand and pessimistic withdrawal from any historical reading on the other.

2. Rhetorical and Poetic Analysis
Since the accounts of Athaliah and Joash contain narrative material, it is also important to analyze their literary structures. This analysis (usually more concerned with literary merit than historical truth) normally focuses on how events are narrated rather than on the events themselves. There is an important connection, however, between the text's rhetorical and poetic features and the historical context which helped determine the text's shaping. By analysing a text's literary posture, the historian may glean clues as to the writer's socio-political position and ideological motivation. Two areas of literary analysis which may provide access to this information are:

1. Characterization and (2) point of view.

a. Characterization

As mentioned previously, written reports do not give historians direct access to historical persons/events. At best, knowledge is mediated through a reporter who may (or may not) be contemporary with the figure or event that is described, and who may (or may not) be a source of reliable information. Often the reader is several levels removed from the event itself. Regardless of the temporal location of the author, the
result is a literary representation of the historical figure called "characterization."  

Literary critic Adele Berlin argues that it is impossible to "get behind" a character/event—to know it in a way other than the narrator presents it. Historians, by the nature of their task, however, are forced to reconstruct probable persons and scenarios from historiographic characterizations.

Characterization is evident in: (1) direct and indirect statements and evaluations of the narrator; (2) statements by others in the narrative; and (3) inference from the character's speech and action. In one sense, of course, "characters" in a narrative are different from "people." While we know "people" only imperfectly, "characters" (through the comments of the narrator and others) can be transparent.

A variety of techniques are used by narrators to develop characters. A character can be described by the narrator or another character, or a character's reported speech and actions may speak for themselves. Literary techniques such as repetition, reticence, contrast, etc. all present the writer with tools for
skillfully molding a character's persona.\textsuperscript{31}

Not all characters are equally developed. Some are "flat" (built around a single trait), some are "round" (manifesting a number of traits), and others emerge only as "agents" (performing a function and then disappearing from the narrative stage).\textsuperscript{32} The literary representation of a character is generally and purposefully selective and employs a number of strategies and techniques.

Historians themselves engage in characterization. A narrator's characterization may be extended, developed, or modified by the interpreter. In fact, the historian's reading of the material always tends to be based on and to produce a particular characterization or set of characterizations.

Chapters 3-4 of this dissertation critique and challenge certain readings of the characters in 2 Kings 11-12 (= 2 Chr 22:10-24:27) by modern historians. Images such as "Evil" Queen Athaliah, "Loyal" Priest Jehoiada and "Pious" King Joash are thus viewed as carefully crafted portraits emerging from or built upon the writers' point of view.

b. Point of View

Point of view is the technical term for the
perspective from which a story is told. Although there are several theoretical frameworks available for studying point of view, the work of Boris Uspensky\textsuperscript{33} has proven useful for biblical studies (see R. Nelson\textsuperscript{34}, R. Polzin,\textsuperscript{35} and R. Culpepper\textsuperscript{36}). Uspensky argues that there are "basic semantic spheres" in which viewpoint is generally manifested. These are fixed on certain "planes of investigation." Uspensky identifies four such planes: (1) the \textit{ideological} (the point of view through which the narrative event is evaluated), (2) the \textit{phraseological} (the linguistic features which indicate point of view), (3) the \textit{spatio-temporal} (the location of the narrator in relation to the narrative), and (4) the \textit{psychological} (the view through which characters/events are described).\textsuperscript{37} According to Uspensky, the psychological, spatio-temporal, and phraseological levels are usually traced in the text's surface compositional structure, while the ideological (which involves the ideas which shape the work) belongs to its deep compositional structure.\textsuperscript{38}

In his article entitled "The Anatomy of the Book of Kings," R. D. Nelson utilized Uspensky's categories in
analyzing narratives of the monarchical period. He found them useful in studying individual passages, though he admitted to being more interested in Kings' "unity" than burrowing "below the present shape of the text to earlier written and oral forms." Nelson was not interested in the connection between point of view and historicity. His goal of overcoming Kings' "fragmentation" necessitated keeping "the persistent questions of historicity at bay." Unfortunately, Nelson's approach to Kings obscured the usefulness of Uspensky's insights for historians.

Of all Uspensky's categories, the "ideological plane" is the most important for historical reconstruction. Uspensky admits that it is the "least accessible to formal study," yet he insists that it can be detected. Aside from literary devices such as epithets, the narrator or a character can be its carrier within a text. More importantly for our study, Uspensky draws attention to the relationship between the ideological and phraseological levels of a text.

In the stories of Athaliah and Joash, characterization is the key to unlocking the narratives'
ideological points of view. Thus, when we deal with the narrative sections of 2 Kings 11-12 (2 Chr 22:10-24:27) we will take special care with each characterization. Observations about characterization can help identify the writer/s' ideological point of view and shed light on the writers' socio-political position. This, in turn, can provide additional information to assess the report's probability.

Thus far we have argued that the stories of Athaliah and Joash need to be examined in light of their intrinsic logic. In order to achieve this we have discussed two analytical strategies. Inferential logic addresses the coherence between the text and its actual or presumed historical context, while rhetorical and poetic analysis, deal with the logic of the text's literary world. Neither of these strategies operates in an objective vacuum. Each is implemented within the context of presuppositions and models held by the historian.

Commonly held assumptions play a key role in the way historians "read" 2 Kings 11-12 (= 2 Chr 22:10-24:27). Often these assumptions have been held so long
or are held so strongly that they seem impregnable truths.

B. Models and Assumptions

The relationship between historical data and historians' assumptions about Athaliah and Joash is complex. On the one hand, superimposing models on 2 Kings 11-12 (2 Chr 22:10-24:27) clearly involves predetermining the reconstruction. Should not an interpretive theory inductively emerge as much as possible from the text itself? On the other hand, assuming that a body of value-neutral data exists is naive. How would historians recognize "significant" information if they did not already know what to look for? Having a theory in mind "privileges" data correlating with the hypothesis. Thus, historians' assumptions guide both the selection and the construction of evidence.

This does not mean that historians have to resign themselves to a morass of relativism. Models and assumptions are speculative instruments. They are useful "fictions," which provide a frame of reference into which historians can "fit" information. As long as models remain "alive"--open to modification--they are
helpful. When a model or assumption reaches axiomatic status, it obstructs rather than aids historical vision.\footnote{49}

Three kinds of models confront historians who write about ninth- and eighth-century BCE Judah: (1) the models found in the biblical text, (2) the models employed by historians as they reconstruct various periods, and (3) the models stated or implied by commentators as they draw historical conclusions from their exegeses. At the basis of these operating models are assumptions concerning God's nature, Israelite religion, and the politics of the "divided" monarchy.

A good example of the interplay between assumptions and explanations is found in interpretations of Jehu's revolt (2 Kings 9-10). Since Jehu's revolt is the catalyst for Athaliah's rise to the throne, it is not surprising that some of the assumptions used to explain Jehu's revolt are the same as those used to interpret the reigns of Athaliah and Joash.

According to 2 Kings 9-10, Jehu ben Jehoshaphat ben Nimshi led a bloody coup that toppled the Omride dynasty. While historians disagree on the account's
literary history and the historical value of certain sections, few doubt the historicity of the revolt itself. Explanations vary widely, however, as to what precipitated it. Some suggestions are:

1. Yahweh's judgment on the Omride dynasty,
2. antagonism towards Omride support of Baalism,
3. outrage at Jezebel's atrocities,
4. vengeance for the Naboth incident,
5. a power struggle between royalty and aristocracy,
6. anger at the Omride's lavish lifestyle,
7. dissatisfaction with economic conditions,
8. opposition to Omride cosmopolitan policies,
9. disappointment over Omride military failures,
10. a move to appease the Assyrians,
11. the renewal of a charismatic ideal of succession,

In the final analysis, historians construct their explanation for Jehu's coup using a combination of theory, evidence, and personal bias. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss at length each of the above, certain assumptions operative in these explanations dovetail with historians' reconstruction of
Athaliah and Joash's reigns. Especially germane to our study are the concepts of: (1) divine agency in Israel's history, (2) Israel's historical uniqueness, (3) the primacy of ideational and religious motivation, and (4) woman, especially foreign women, as potent sources of trouble and evil. Each of these biblically derived concepts continues to affect the way that modern historians write Israelite and Judean history.

1. Divine Agency in Israel's History

The biblical account is clearly written to portray Yahweh's hand in Jehu's revolt. Jehu is anointed and commissioned by a "son of the prophets" sent by Elisha (2 Kgs 9:1-10). Moreover, the destruction of the house of Omri (2 Kgs 9:14-10:17) is twice (2 Kgs 10:10, 17) said to be in accord with the word of Yahweh spoken to Elijah (1 Kgs 21:20-24). 65

Understanding Jehu's revolt as Yahweh's judgment assumes divine agency in historical causation. This principle is a chief feature of biblical models of history. 66 It portrays Yahweh as an active agent in history who rewards and punishes individuals and
nations. Yahweh's hand is thus seen in a host of occurrences—from military victories and defeats to harvests and famines.

Divine agency as a form of historical explanation is problematic on a number of counts. First of all, it has distracted some historians from exploring other forms of causation. Secondly, it assumes a deity who is able and willing to intervene in human affairs. Thirdly, its claims are frequently private and non-verifiable. Ancient writers may say they know the mind of God, but such access is not open to academic scrutiny. Critical histories written in the twentieth-century usually eschew divine agency as a legitimate form of explanation. Texts describing Yahweh's "point of view" are thus understood as vehicles of the writers' own theological position.

2. Israel's Uniqueness Among the Nations

Insisting on Israel's uniqueness often means positing its radical discontinuity with surrounding belief systems. Usually this emphasis presents Israel's neighbors in a pejorative light. The following are some frequently mentioned aspects of Israel's supposed uniqueness.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISRAEL</th>
<th>OTHER NATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monotheistic belief system</td>
<td>polytheistic belief system</td>
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<tr>
<td>god which acts with moral purpose</td>
<td>gods which manifest themselves in nature and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>seasonal cycles</td>
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<tr>
<td>linear perspective on reality</td>
<td>cyclical or nature oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emphasis on religious and social equality</td>
<td>predetermined or fixed class system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>promotion of justice</td>
<td>condoning of oppression and slavery</td>
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<tr>
<td>simple and honorable worship</td>
<td>human degradation with licentious sexual</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>worship practices</td>
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<td>mode of expression: epic literature</td>
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R. Gnuse calls this the "holy history" approach to ancient Israel. It is not only a characteristic theme in Kings and Chronicles but one which often finds its way into modern critical histories of Israel. Jehu's revolt, for instance, is a good example of how the assumption of Israel's uniqueness shapes both biblical and modern evaluations of the Yahweh-Baal conflict and the Naboth Vineyard incident.

In the form in which the narrative is cast, Omride support of Baalism was a crucial factor in the dynasty's
demise. After eliminating the house of Omri (2 Kgs 9:14-10:17), Jehu reportedly destroyed a temple of Baal (2 Kgs 10:18-27). Jehu is thus portrayed as a zealous Yahwist who upheld the cause of Yahwistic monotheism—Israel's "true" religion. Moreover, Jehu's stand for Israel's unique monotheism is interpreted as mirroring the legitimate religious fervor which supposedly existed in Israel.

That ninth-century Israel was monotheistic, or even so solidly Yahwistic as the narrative implies (and many modern historians have tended to assume) is no longer granted the status of a truism. Instead, some would argue that textual and archaeological evidence indicates that monotheism gained a majority status only in the later exilic and post-exilic periods of Israel's history. Since the final editions of Kings and Chronicles date to these periods, it has been suggested that biblical writers and theologians may have projected their own monotheistic values back onto pre-exilic Israel. In fact, it is possible that even a henotheistic or monolatrous Yahweh-only view (accepting the reality of other gods, but rejecting the worship of them) did not represent the majority position in ninth-
century Israel. While this does not mean there were no religious overtones to the revolt, it does call into question the biblical portrayal. That is, one cannot automatically assume that some form of the practice of Baalism in Israel would have caused a wellspring of antagonism to erupt from a Yahwistic populace. After all, even the biblical narrative itself implies that most Israelites had bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kgs 19:18).

Within the Bible, as well as in many historical reconstructions, the concept of Israel's religious uniqueness is inextricably bound to its ethical uniqueness. Unlike other ancient Near Eastern kings, Israel's kings are portrayed in the Bible as being accountable to Yahweh's covenant law. This law supposedly reflected the essence of Israel's "authentic" ethical tradition which was committed to justice and fair play in society—the implication being that while other cultures operated on principles that encouraged slavery and oppression, Israelite practices stressed social equality and justice.75

1 Kings 21 records the execution of Naboth the
Jezreelite as a case of judicial murder. According to the text, this incident prompted Elijah's condemnation of Ahab and his family. Historians frequently view Naboth's execution as a murder indicative of the moral and social decadence of Omride rule in contrast to the otherwise rather lofty moral values of the Israelites in general. Elijah's condemnation thus appears to mirror popular outrage which, in turn, fueled Jehu's revolt.

Although despotic acts of injustice may be fodder for popular revolts, viewing the Naboth incident as the "clarion call" of Jehu's revolt (as one commentator labels it) overstates the evidence. Aside from the formidable problem of 1 King 21's literary history, the explanation assumes an idealized notion of Israel's kingship and of the culture's general moral and ethical sensibilities. Whereas Phoenician regnal practices are imaged by many historians as secular and Phoenicians as tolerant of despotic royal whims, Israelite kings--governed by covenant law--were supposed to be religiously oriented and more "democratic." Moreover, Israelites are perceived as holding their kings accountable to a high ethical standard. In reality, foreign practices were probably not as immoral and
unjust as the Bible portrays them. Moreover, probably neither Israelite kings nor their subjects were pure champions of social justice and equality. While some act of injustice might have constituted one of the factors precipitating Jehu's revolt, it is unlikely that the coup stemmed from a pure regard for covenant law.

3. Primacy of Ideational and Religious Motivation

Inherent in the "holy history" approach, is the methodological corollary of privileging ideational and religious motivation. This privileging is not surprising because models, in Finley's words, tend toward a "one-sided concentration on, an isolation of, certain factors to the neglect of other, relative or total." This "blinder" effect is seen in the way that the Bible explains the motivation of its characters.

In the Bible, many reports of historical actions are invariably colored by theological interpretation. Persons often act in accordance with, or in contrast to, religious motivations, and political changes often occur in accordance with religious developments. This biblical perspective carries over into modern treatments of Israelite history. A good example of how this
dynamic shapes modern histories of Israel can be seen in the way that Martin Noth explains Jehu's actions in 2
Kings 9.

Jehu rebelled against the house of Omri and its worship of Baal in Samaria in the name of the ancient Israelite tradition. He
acted as champion of the unsullied worship of Yahweh. Noth seems to accept unquestionably the Bible's
characterization of Jehu with its emphasis on the coup's religious causes. This privileging of ideational/
religious causation ignores the coup's possible socioeconomic, geographical, and political factors. Moreover it downplays the role that personal elements such as greed and ambition play in influencing human
decisions. The resulting explanation tends to be pious and idealized. It is history as "it ought to have happened" (according to the writer's point of view).
The inscriptions of Shalmaneser III note that Jehu paid tribute to the Assyrians, that is, he adopted a policy of pro-Assyrianism, thus reversing the international political stance of the Omrides. This factor may have been more causitive than any religious-ideational issues for the revolt carried out by Jehu.
4. Antipathy Towards Women

The last twenty years of biblical scholarship have been heavily influenced by the modern feminist movement. As a result, attention has been focused on how women are presented or imaged in the Old Testament. A feminist perspective on the material can claim that trickery, deception, and seduction are often stock elements in biblical characterizations of women. Whether or not the Bible condemns or praises these acts depends upon who benefits from them and the viewpoint of the narratives in which they appear. In the biblical text, a Rahab (who deceives for Israel) is praised, while a Delilah (who lies for Philistia and silver) is condemned.

Jezebel has clearly been presented as the most notorious female figure in the book of Kings (and perhaps the entire Old Testament). The biblical material, in both its narrative presentation and in its authorial value judgments, presents Jezebel as a causative influence on Ahab, pushing him to "do evil" (1 Kgs 21:25-26). As the imaged villain, she is singled out for Yahweh's special vengeance in Jehu's commission to overthrow the reigning monarch (2 Kgs 9:7). While
the text attributes to Jezebel the iniquities of Ahab's reign (and thus the necessity of Jehu's revolution), the historian must ask: How much of this is fact? How much is characterization? To what extent is Jezebel's persona a vehicle for the writers' own point of view?

Jezebel is first mentioned in 1 Kings 16 but does not emerge as a developed literary character until 1 Kings 21--the Story of Naboth's Vineyard. Prior to 1 Kings 21 most information about Jezebel is mediated through direct statements by the narrator or other characters. Through their words the reader is told: (1) that Jezebel's marriage to Ahab was considered an indictment against Ahab (1 Kgs 16:21), (2) that Jezebel persecuted Yahweh's prophets in general and one Elijah in particular (1 Kings 18-19), and (3) that Jezebel supported 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 18:18). The effect of these references is cumulative, each heightening a burgeoning sense of Jezebel's wickedness.

The first spoken words attributed to Jezebel are in 1 Kgs 19:2, where she vows to kill Elijah. Their sinister tone comes as no surprise to the alert reader,
but it is not until 1 Kings 21 that Jezebel's words and actions unite to disclose her character.

Naboth the Jezreelite owns a vineyard which Ahab, King of Israel, wants for a vegetable garden (1 Kgs 21:1-2). Naboth refuses to sell and Ahab returns home where he sulks, refuses his dinner, and goes to bed (vv. 3-4). When asked why he is so distressed, Ahab tells Jezebel of Naboth's refusal (vv. 5-6) and Jezebel replies, "Get up, eat some food, and be cheerful" (v. 7). Jezebel's call to action stands in stark contrast to Ahab's inaction. She confidently promises, "I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite" (v. 7). What Ahab cannot or will not do, Jezebel sees no difficulty in accomplishing.

Jezebel writes letters in Ahab's name, seals them with his seal, and sends them to the elders and nobles of Naboth's village (v. 8). The message involves a plot to accuse Naboth of blasphemy (vv. 9-10). The men do as Jezebel commands and send word to the execution (vv. 11-14). A triumphant Jezebel declares to Ahab: "Go, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead" (v. 15). Ahab does
as his wife commands (v. 16).

In 1 Kings 21, Ahab is presented as a weak, petulant, and somewhat impotent ruler--obvious prey for a strong, aggressive queen. His passivity is skillfully contrasted with Jezebel's decisiveness. This combination proves to be fatal for Ahab (in the writers' point of view). The reader is informed that in all Israel there was "no one like Ahab, who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of the Lord like Ahab" (an Ahab, that is, "urged on by his wife Jezebel"; v. 25). The account ends in 1 Kings 21 with a repentant Ahab and a Jezebel over whom Yahweh's judgment hangs (vv. 27-29).

Jehu's revolt provides the occasion for Jezebel's death. Before describing Jezebel's demise, the narrator has Ahab die in battle (1 Kgs 22:37), subsequently to be succeeded by two of his sons. Both sons are evaluated with reference to Jezebel. Jezebel appears along with Ahab and Jeroboam ben Nebat as one of the bad influences on Ahaziah (1 Kgs 22:52), while Jehoram does evil, but not like his father and mother (2 Kgs 3:2). The implication is clear: the influence of Ahab and Jezebel
continues in their offspring. The image of Jezebel as the source of Israel's religious apostasy is reinforced by the narrator's presentation of Jehu's exchange with Jehoram (2 Kgs 9:22). Jehoram asks: "Is it peace, Jehu?" Jehu replies: "What peace can there be, so long as the whoredoms and the sorceries of your mother Jezebel continue?"

The final scene in the narrative in which Jezebel appears is found is in 2 Kings 9:30-37. Jehu kills Jehoram, and enters the city of Jezreel. Jezebel sees Jehu and calls out, "Is it peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?" Upon hearing her greeting, Jehu calls her eunuchs who throw her down to her death. She is then trampled by horses, her body eaten by dogs, so that what little is left is hardly worth burying. So ends the narrative presentation of Israel's most powerful, albeit nefarious, queen--Jezebel.

Those who accept Jezebel's biblical characterization either damn her or try to exonerate her. In the first camp are those who add to the text's already negative portrayal. Jezebel is identified as an "evil genius," who was "notorious" and "unscrupulous," the "diabolical" wife of Ahab. Her
preparations for confronting Jehu in 2 Kgs 9:30 have so touched the imagination of English speakers that to be a bold and shameless woman, in modern idiom, is to be a "jezebel."

Those who accept Jezebel's characterization, yet try to exonerate her, may employ arguments no better than those used by scholars who damn her. A good example of this approach is offered by S. B. Frost, who begins with the suggestion that "time is long overdue that [Jezebel]...be given a fresh trial." He proceeds to argue the following points in her favor:

1. Jezebel was the result of Ahab's Baalistic policies rather than its cause.
2. Her actions were motivated by a desire to civilize Israel and bring it into the mainstream of ancient Near Eastern culture.
3. The strength of her "outstanding character" is evidenced by the "true husband and wife combination" between Jezebel and Ahab.
4. Jezebel died as she lived, "flamboyantly and with character."

Having said all of the above in an attempt to "understand" rather than condemn Jezebel, Frost concludes with a judgment on Jezebel no less damning than those who speak against her:
Jezebel's basic crime was not to recognize that this living, creative Yahweh held more promise for the future than her own eternally-about-to rule-Baal. . . .

What then shall our judgment on Jezebel be? I suggest that we must acknowledge that given her times, her upbringing, her opportunities, she played a very creditable part in world history. She was a strong character, a determined one and a courageous one, who fought with sincere conviction for what she thought to be right. She hardly deserves for this to be held up to shame and infamy. Yet she made one fatal and, as far as the Bible is concerned, unforgivable blunder. She met Israel, with a chance to recognize Israel's unique nature, and she failed to do so. . . .

In other words, Jezebel, I suggest, passes all the tests of history save one--she failed the question on the doctrine of Israel's election. Rahab, Jael, Ruth, Judith pass on this question and although they fail in goodness, hospitality, morality, they pass the examination as a whole. 95

Having delivered his "judgment" Frost then proceeds to raise the stakes dramatically by declaring, "Either Jezebel was condemned justly, or Christianity forfeits its claims to uniqueness and finality." 96

At one point in his treatment Frost observes that Jezebel serves "as a foil to the heroes of the prophetic tradition," 97 but never follows up on what this observation implies. When all the references to Jezebel (spread out over sixteen chapters) are analysed, the
following elements of her characterization emerge:

(1) she is foreign (1 Kgs 16:31);

(2) she is a liability to her husband (16:31; 21:25), and her son (22:52);

(3) she is a killer—both of Yahweh's prophets and of Naboth (18:4, 13; 19:2; ch 21);

(4) she supports the prophets of Baal and Asherah (18:19);

(5) she has access to political power and uses it;

(6) she initiates action rather than being acted upon.

P. Ackroyd recognizes that Jezebel is a "type" and views her characterization as part of a "stylized" polemic against Yahweh's goddess consort. While Ackroyd may be right about the cultic relationship between goddesses and Israel's royal women, Jezebel's power base appears broader than the cult.

Other factors than Jezebel's influence or Baalistic religion might be given privilege in explaining Jehu's coup. If one emphasizes socioeconomic factors in historical causation, for example, one might explain the coup in terms of the "haves" and "have nots." As trade increased as a consequence of the cooperative alliance of Israel, Judah, and Tyre, revenues no doubt began to flow into both Judah and Israel. This new wealth could
have resulted in a polarized society and it makes sense to posit the existence of a dissatisfied group who might have been moved to revolutionary action against the Omrides.

Or, if personal factors are emphasized, then one might highlight Jehu's personal motivation. Elements such as greed and ambition would then figure prominently in explanations of the coup.

If one approaches the issue from the perspective of international politics, Jehu's coup may be seen as a move away from a policy of participation in an anti-Assyrian western coalition to a policy of cooperation with and dependence on Assyria. Even if the western coalition had already dissolved as a consequence of Hazael's usurpation of the throne in Damascus, Jehu's reliance on Assyria can be seen as a move toward a major international power for support. Such a move for political and military reasons could have been made purely on the basis of expediency in which Baalistic issues and Jezebel may have played no role whatever.

All of this is to say that the approach and assumptions that one makes about life in general and
Israel in particular, affect the way one reads and chooses data to explain Jehu's coup. Thus, historians need to be constantly aware of their own biases as well as those of their sources.

Jehu's coup brought the Omride era to an end and ushered in a century of dynastic stability in the North. It also brought an abrupt end to Omride foreign policy, Israel's participation in a western international coalition, and the resulting trade revenues. Israel's relations with Tyre and Judah worsened, and the balance of power between Syria and Israel shifted in favor of Syria. Jehu's coup also had repercussions in Judah.

Judean history during the Jehu dynasty usually receives little attention from modern historians. For the most part, histories of biblical times cover the Omride dynasty and then move quickly to the rise of Assyria and its significance for Syro-Palestinian politics. At best, the reigns of Athaliah, Joash, and Amaziah are treated as an interim period, stuck between Omri/Jehoshaphat and Jeroboam II/Uzziah. Herrmann is correct when he refers to this as one of the dark centuries of the Judean monarchy.

In lieu of extra-biblical evidence referring
explicitely to Athaliah and Joash, historians make regular use of models of Judean life and thought as heuristic devices by which they interpret the narrative evidence. Chapter 3 will identify and examine some of the models and assumptions behind modern reconstructions of Athaliah's reign.
NOTES: Chapter Two

1 M. I. Finley (Ancient History: Evidence and Models [New York: Viking, 1986] 32) so aptly observes:

The first question to be asked about any document is about the reason or motive for its having been written. That question is not asked often enough, because it is unconsciously assumed that motives and purposes are self-evident...that they are more or less the same as our own. On the contrary, I would argue that in antiquity the purpose of all documents was either to communicate some information (or misinformation) or to memorialize something, but not to provide data for policy-making or for analysis, past, present or future.


3 This assumption is, of course, debatable. One might argue that a reporter contemporary with the event lacks the perspective of someone writing ten years later. Nevertheless, in evaluating ancient sources, historians frequently give priority to those closest to the period being reported.

4 Noth's classic theory of the Deuteronomistic History (DH) and its author--the Deuteronomistic Historian (DtrH)--was first published in 1943. Arguing on the basis of vocabulary, style and ideology, Noth suggested that Deuteronomy through 2 Kings was the work of a single author/redactor writing in Palestine during the exile.

5 Although anticipated by Kuenen and Wellhausen, this idea gained popularity through the writings of F. M. Cross ("The Themes of the Book of Kings and the Structure of the Deuteronomistic History," in Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic [Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1973] 274-89). Cross discerned two redactors behind the DH. The first (Dtr') wrote during the time of Josiah and emphasized the permanence of the Davidic dynasty. The
The second writer (Dtr²) wrote during the exile. The latter's main contribution was to update the DH and explain the exile. This was achieved by emphasizing the evil nature of Manasseh's reign and by making conditional the promise given to the Davidic family.

R. Smend and several of his students argue for two or more redactions of an exilic DH. For the most recent discussion see S. L. McKenzie, The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History (SVT 42; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1991).

Both E. W. Nicholson (Deuteronomy and Tradition [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967] and M. Weinfeld (Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972]) argue that DH was the product of a school of writers. Nicholson identifies them as refugees from Israel who entered Judah after 721 BCE. They were from prophetic circles and supported the reforms of both Hezekiah and Josiah. Although they completed their work in the exile, Nicholson argued DH had its beginning in pre-exilic Judah. Weinfeld agreed that work on DH began before the exile but was completed during it. Unlike Nicholson, Weinfeld located the literary work responsible for DH in wisdom circles.

Much debate has centered on the nature of the "chronicles" of the Kings of Israel and Judah. What were they? When, where and by whom were they composed? At least five theories have been suggested:

1. Official annals. B. Maisler (Mazar) ("Ancient Israelite Historiography" IEJ 2 [1952] 82-88) suggests that official annals were kept in the North and South. Information was recorded either at the time it happened or shortly afterwards. The compiler/s of Kings took information from these official records and inserted it into a framework fashioned after that found in Babylonian chronicles.

2. Adaptations of official annals. M. Noth suggested both the North and South kept official annals composed while at the time of the events. After the period
was over, unofficial adaptations, based on the official records, were written and circulated. The DtrH selected specific information from these (i.e. the chronological framework, various historical accounts, etc.) and included it into his theological framework.

(3) Synchronistic chronicle. A. Jepsen (Die Quellen des Königsbücher [2nd ed.; Halle, 1956]) envisioned a single chronicle composed at the end of the 8th c. (after Babylonian models) which contrasted the stability of the Davidic dynasty to the unrest in the northern kingdom. This was combined with an annal composed in the first half of the 7th c. by priestly circles in Jerusalem and slightly expanded ca. 580 BCE in Jerusalem. A second redaction, by prophetic circles, took place sometime after 561 BCE, in Mizpah.

(4) Official Chronicles (of similar form). J. Van Seters ("Histories and Historians of the Ancient Near East: The Israelites," Or 50 [1981] 137-85) hypothesized the existence of two types of records in the North and South: king lists and annals. The latter recorded military campaigns, building projects, and various religious reforms. From these records, two chronicles (a Northern and Southern one) were written. The DtrH combined selected material from these chronicles and added standardized introductions with synchronisms.

(5) Official Chronicles (of different form). S. R. Bin-nun ("Formulas from Royal Records of Israel and Judah," VT 18 [1968] 414-32) argues that the North and the South kept chronicles with different formats. This explains, for example, why the introductory regnal formulas for Israel do not contain the age of accession or the queen mother's name. The regnal formulas reflect the form of the original chronicle (with the exception of the synchronisms which were added by the compiler).

In addition to the three sources explicitly mentioned in Kings, historians have hypothesized other sources as well (i.e. a Court History, sagas and hagiographies of Elijah and Elisha, etc.).

9 I have purposely refrained from using the term "primary" sources in relation to these materials.
10 B. Stade, "Anmerkungen zu 2 Kön.," ZAW 5 (1885) 275-97.


12 See M. Liverani and H. Hoffmann.

13 See portions of the introductory and concluding regnal formulas for Joash of Judah.

14 J. Wellhausen (Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1899] 293ff) assigned 2 Kings 11 and 12:5-17 to a "Temple History."

15 See M. Noth.

16 The Book of the kings of Israel and Judah (1 Chr 9:1; 1 Chr 27:7; 35:27; 36:8)
The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chr 25:26; 28:26; 32:32)
The Royal Book of Judah and Israel (2 Chr 16:11)
The Book of the Kings of Israel (2 Chr 20:34)
The Acts of the Kings of Israel (2 Chr 33:18)
The Midrash of the Book of Kings (2 Chr 24:27)
The Chronicles of Samuel the Seer (1 Chr 29:29)
The Chronicles of Nathan the Prophet (1 Chr 29:29; 2 Chr 9:29)
The Chronicles of Gad the Seer (1 Chr 29:29)
The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilohite (2 Chr 9:29)
The Visions of Iddo the Seer Concerning Jeroboam Son of Nebat (2 Chr 9:29)
The Chronicles of Shemiah the Prophet and Iddo the Seer (2 Chr 12:15)
The Midrash of the Prophet Iddo (2 Chr 13:22)
The Chronicles of Jehu Son of Hanani which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel (2 Chr 20:34)
A history of Uzziah by the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz (2 Chr 26:22)
The Vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, the Prophet, in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (2
Chr 32:32)
The Acts of the Seers (2 Chr 33:19)
A genealogy of Gad (1 Chr 5:17)
The Chronicles of King David (1 Chr 27:24)
The Lord's plans for the Temple (1 Chr 28:19)
Directions for the organization of the Temple (one written by David and the other by Solomon) (2 Chr 35:4)
The Lamentations for Josiah, written by Jeremiah and others (2 Chr 35:25)

NOTE: These titles may not represent separate sources. For example, citations concerning prophets may imply excerpts from a prophetic record (cf. 1 Chr 29:29); those pertaining to kings may be different titles for a common work on the monarchy; etc.


20 Cantor and Schneider, How to Study History, 177.


24 Garraghan (A Guide, 143-67) discusses forms of logical proof, such as analogy, generalization, statistics, hypothesis, conjecture, argument from silence, and the argument a priori.

26 A. Momigliano ("Biblical Studies," 3) is skeptical of what he calls the "overappreciation of rhetoric and ideology as instruments for the analysis of the literary sources." Momigliano (7) admits, however, that he has:

...nothing to object in principle to the present multiplication in methods of rhetorical analysis of historical texts. You may have as much rhetorical analysis as you consider necessary, provided it leads to the establishment of the truth.

27 A. Cook ("Fiction and History in Samuel and Kings," JSOT 36 [1986] 47) argues that "every interpreter of a historiographic text is...at least at a fifth remove, and possibly more."

28 Characterization can be defined as "the art and techniques by which an author fashions a convincing portrait of a person within a more or less unified piece of writing" (R. Culpepper, Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983] 105.)

29 A. Berlin, Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative (Sheffield: Almond, 1983) 43.

30 Culpepper, Anatomy, 102.


32 Berlin, Poetics, 23.

33 Boris Uspensky, A Poetics of Composition (Berkeley: University of California, 1973).


36 Culpepper, Anatomy.

37 Uspensky, A Poetics, 6.

38 Uspensky, A Poetics, 8.


42 Uspensky, A Poetics, 13.

43 Uspensky, A Poetics, 14.


45 Uspensky, A Poetics, 15-16.

46 Greenstein, "Theory," 78.


48 M. I. Finley (Ancient History, 66) argues that:

...models are subject to constant adjustment, correction, modification, or outright replacement....The familiar fear of a priorism is misplaced: any hypothesis can be modified, adjusted or discarded when necessary. Without one, however, there can be no explanation; there can be only reportage and crude taxonomy, antiquarianism
in its narrowest sense.

49 Greenstein ("Theory," 85) makes the point that:

Once a number of workers in a field become convinced of a hypothesis or model, they accept it as an axiom and proceed from there....They make deductions from their shared axioms.


51 The depictions most open to debate are: 1) the massacre of Judean princes (2 Kgs 10:12-14) and 2) the extermination of Baalism from Israel (10:28).

52 For an exception to this see H. Hoffmann (Reform und Reformen, 97-104).

53 This is the position adopted by the writers of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.


55 Gray, I & II Kings 538. For an interesting departure from this standard approach, see M. A. Cohen, "In all fairness to Ahab: A sociopolitical consideration of the Ahab-Elijah controversy," Eretz Israel 12 (1975) 87-94. Cohen argues that Elijah and his followers were basically political conservatives who were unable to adapt to the changes brought by Omride policies. His attempt to "demythologize" Elijah and to stress Ahab's Yahwist tendencies is refreshing.
56 Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 120.

57 A. Wolff as cited in Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 120. Wolff posited tension between the "men of means" (the tribal based Israelite aristocracy) and the "newly rich" royal establishment.

58 Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 120. Except for the famous "ivory house" mentioned in 1 Kgs 22:39, the text tells us little of Omride lifestyles.

59 Gray, *I & II Kings*, 538; Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 120.


Hill, 1966) 208-12.

66 Thus von Rad speaks of a "theology" of history in 1 and 2 Kings ("The Deuteronomic Theology" 208-212). There are a number of literary devices and techniques used in the Bible to convey divine agency. Some are common throughout the OT (such as narrator's comments concerning Yahweh's actions and thoughts). Others are characteristic of particular writers. The deuteronomist uses a prophecy-fulfillment schema (see preceding note) to present history as the enactment of Yahweh's will. The Chronicler, on the other hand, is fond of employing an immediate retribution schema. An event is described which constitutes YHWH's immediate punishment for a prior activity.

67 A distinction should be made between types of non-verifiable data. Data which is non-verifiable because of limited sources (i.e. the reign of Athaliah) is different from data which entails private revelation. The latter is by nature (not accident of history) unverifiable.

68 This does not mean that modern historians completely abandon the concept. Noth's introductory to his history are a good example of a cautious embracing of divine causation. Noth's work clearly marked a watershed in the writing of Israel's history and formed one of the poles of a historical debate which raged for decades (the other "pole" being Bright's history, published in 1959). Noth was by no means a conservative. His history went against tradition by starting with the period of the Judges rather than with Genesis 1-11, the patriarchs, or even Moses. Nevertheless, even Noth was reluctant to rule out divine agency in history. Noth (The History, 1-2) insisted that history was "not merely a constant repetition of complicated concatenations of cause and effect." Rather, God was indeed "the ever present Lord working within the superficial interplay of cause and effect." To his credit, however, Noth warned his readers against the ease of assigning events to this "unhistorical" sphere.

69 R. K. Gnuse, "Holy History in the Hebrew


Gnuse, "Holy History," 128. The depiction of a radical contrast between Israelite and other cultures can be found in works of George Ernest Wright, Martin Noth, Georg Fohrer, Sigmund Mowinckel, Theodore Vriezen, etc.

According to N. M. Sarna ("The Biblical Sources for the History of the Monarchy," in The Age of the Monarchies: Political History, World History of the Jewish People Vol. 4 [Jerusalem: Masada Press, 1979] 124) biblical historiography about the monarchy is characterized by three motifs: (1) the election of Israel, (2) the election of David, and (3) the election of Jerusalem and the Temple. This stress on "election" serves to highlight Israel's uniqueness in the ancient world.

As Gnuse ("Holy History," 127-35) observed, the last twenty years of biblical scholarship challenged this stereotype of Israel's religion. Emphasis has shifted towards viewing Israel's faith as emerging from a "complex and multifaceted milieu" in which the "prophetic-priestly Yahwistic tradition...remained a minority position until after the exile" (132). A good example of this position can be found in the work of Morton Smith, Palestinian Parties and Politics That Shaped the Old Testament (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).


Gnuse, "Holy History," 130.

Gnuse, "Holy History," 130.

W. F. Albright (Archaeology and the Religion of
Israel [Garden City: Doubleday, 1969] 68) viewed the Naboth incident as the "dominant theme in the upsurge of popular discontent."

78 Cogan and Tadmor (II Kings, 120) suggest the Naboth incident became a cause celebre in Israel. As such, the clarion call of Jehu's revolt was, "Avenge the blood of Naboth!"

79 J. M. Miller (History 254) says the account is little more than "historical fiction." Moreover, Miller ("The Fall," 308) argues that the actual incident took place in Jehoram's reign. It was subsequently embellished and associated with Ahab and Jezebel.


81 As Gnuse ("Holy History," 130) argues:

[Ancient Near Eastern] Kings were viewed ideally as the defenders of the poor and marginal citizens of their realm; they were to rule with justice and gentleness. If biblical theologians point out the oppressive nature of particular ancient near eastern kings, they must admit that Israelite and Judean kings acted in the same manner.

82 Finley, Ancient History, 85.

83 Noth, The History, 246.

85 Fuchs, "Who is Hiding," 141.

86 Montgomery and Gehman, Kings, 330.

87 Gray, I & II Kings, 565.


91 Frost ("Judgement on Jezebel," 506) thinks that Ahab married Jezebel as part of his Canaanization of Israel.

92 In Frost's words ("Judgement on Jezebel," 507), Jezebel had been condemned to marry a "ruler of a barbarous, hillcountry kingdom with which her father needed to have good relations. Thus she saw it as her 'mission' to civilize it."


95 Frost, "Judgement on Jezebel," 515-16.

96 Frost, "Judgement on Jezebel," 516.

97 Frost, "Judgement on Jezebel," 506.


99 In a Hittite case that parallels Jehu's revolt, rivalries at the court of King Murshili II (mid-fourteenth century BCE) led to charges of witchcraft and sorcery against a surviving queen from Babylon. See S. Bin-Nun, The Tawananna in the Hittite Kingdom (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1975) 178-190.
CHAPTER THREE

ATHALIAH

According to the biblical text, for a span of seven years, ninth-century BCE Judah was ruled by an Omride queen—Athaliah. Modern reconstructions of her reign tend to be highly critical of her person and rule. To a great extent this negative imaging is the result of the biblical text's own point of view coupled with modern historians' operating assumptions concerning ninth-century Judean life and thought. Like Jehu's coup discussed in the last chapter, Jehoiada's coup is often viewed through the filter of models that which have almost axiomatic status among historians. To examine the effect of such readings and to suggest an alternative scenario for understanding Athaliah's reign, it is important to begin with the text itself and the question of its integrity.

A. The Biblical Materials on Athaliah

1. 2 Kings

a. 2 Kings 8:18

The first allusion to Athaliah in the Hebrew Scriptures appears in Jehoram of Judah's introductory
regnal formula (2 Kgs 8:16-19).

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

Referred to as the "daughter of Ahab," Athaliah reportedly causes her husband to follow Northern practices. While these alleged acts are never specified, they are nonetheless evaluated. Jehoram does "evil" in Yahweh's sight because the Omride Athaliah is his wife.

The indirect reference to Athaliah in v. 18 marks a departure from the formula used in 1-2 Kings to introduce Southern rulers. In keeping with that of other Judean kings, one would expect Jehoram's introduction to include: (1) the synchronizing of his accession with that of his Israelite counterpart, (2) his age at accession, (3) the length of his reign, (4) his capital city, (5) his mother's name, and (6) an evaluation of his rule. In place of the expected reference to the Queen Mother, however, one finds mention of Jehoram's marriage to the "daughter of Ahab." This attention to marital rather than maternal ties in
v. 18 is unique among Judean regnal introductions in 1-2 Kings.²

b. 2 Kings 8:26b-27

The first reference to Athaliah by name occurs in the introductory formula of her son, Ahaziah (2 Kgs 8:25-27).

His [Ahaziah's] mother's name was Athaliah; a granddaughter of King Omri of Israel. He also walked in the way of the house of Ahab, doing what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab. (2 Kgs 6:26b-27)

V. 26b occupies the customary position in Judean regnal formulas allotted the queen mother. As in the case of his father before him, the text views Ahaziah's relationship to Athaliah and the house of Ahab in negative terms.

In addition to her name, Athaliah is also identified in v. 26b (in the Hebrew) as the "daughter of Omri, king of Israel." Attempts to reconcile this identification with the one found in v. 18 ("daughter of Ahab") either, (1) broaden the semantic understanding of bat to include "granddaughter" so that one reads "daughter" in v. 18 but "granddaughter" in v. 26b (see the above example from the NRSV), ¹ or (2) emend the text
so that both references read the same;\(^5\) or (3) leave the
text as is, understanding "daughter of Ahab"
metaphorically rather than literally.\(^6\)
c. 2 Kings 11:1-20

The account of Athaliah's reign in 2 Kings 11 is
located between Jehu's concluding regnal formula (2 Kgs
10:34-36) and the introductory formula for Joash of
Judah (12:1-4). 2 Kings 11 is the thematic sequel to
Jehu's coup in 2 Kings 10. According to 2 Kings 10,
Jehu decimated the house of Omri (with the exception of
Athaliah) and killed Judah's king (2 Kgs 9:27) and
forty-two Judean noblemen (2 Kgs 10:12-14). 2 Kgs 11:1,
with its reference to Ahaziah's death, presents
Athaliah's accession as predicated upon the power
vacancies created by Jehu in 2 Kings 10.

The narrative in 2 Kings 11 can be divided into two
movements: (1) Athaliah's rise and reign (vv. 1-3) and
(2) the coup which deposed her (vv. 4-20).

1) Vv. 1-3

According to the text, when Athaliah\(^7\) received the
news of her son's death she "arose" and "destroyed" the
royal family.\(^8\) In comparison with the narrative time
used to describe the coup in vv. 4-20, the brevity of this note is striking. The reader is given no clue as to Athaliah's motives or emotions nor how the grisly deed was carried out. Jehosheba (Joram's daughter and Ahaziah's sister)⁹ reportedly kidnaps¹⁰ the infant Joash (Ahaziah's son)¹¹ and hid¹² him and his nurse in a bedchamber (v. 2). In v. 3, the reader is told that Joash spends six years of Athaliah's reign hidden away in the temple.¹³ Like the massacre mentioned in v. 1, the escape of Joash from Athaliah's purge in vv. 2-3 is flat in detail. The reader is told neither why Jehosheba intervened nor how she was able to keep Joash's existence secret within the close quarters of the palace/temple complex.

2) Vv. 4-20

The bulk of 2 Kings 11 is devoted to the coup and its aftermath. Unlike Athaliah's rise to the throne, the coup's planning and implementation are related in painstaking detail. According to the temporal introduction in v. 4, the coup takes place in the seventh year of Athaliah's reign.¹⁴ Its key figure is Jehoiada, who appears without introduction in v. 4.¹⁵ Jehoiada is the subject of the verbal action in vv. 4-
5a, where he orders the captains of the Carites and the guards to the temple where he makes a covenant with them and "puts them under oath." When these actions are complete, Jehoiada reveals to them the child identified by the narrator as the "king's son."

Vv. 5b-7, with their detailed description of the positioning of the guard, are difficult to understand. Nevertheless, even though the guards' number and nature are open to different interpretations, their function in the account is clear—to supply the military support for the action of vv. 9-12.

Vv. 9-12 describe the coup's implementation. As in vv. 4-7, Jehoiada is either the subject of or the motivation for the actions being described. This focus is underscored by the comment in v. 9 that the captains did "all that the priest Jehoiada commanded." After the guards receive David's spears and shields (v. 10), they assume their assigned positions (v. 11). The fruit of Jehoiada's planning is Joash's coronation in v. 12. After crowning Joash, Jehoiada presents him with the "testimony" and proclaims him king and anoints him. Those assembled clap their hands and cry,
"Long live the king!"

Vv. 13-16 report the death of Athaliah. Briefly the verbal activity shifts from Jehoiada as subject to that of Athaliah, Queen of Judah. According to the text, Athaliah hears a noise in the Temple and goes to investigate (v. 13). Upon entering the Temple, she sees Joash by the pillar, the guards and musicians by Joash, and the "people of the land" rejoice (v. 14). Athaliah's cry of "Treason" in v. 14 reveals that she recognizes the scene for what it is, but apparently no one is willing to support her in her accusation. This lack of support is mirrored in the text in the grammatical shift back to Jehoiada as verbal subject. Jehoiada commands the guards to take her away (to avoid her being killed within the Temple precincts) and to kill anyone who tries to help her. According to v. 16, the guards follow Jehoiada's instructions without question. Athaliah is taken through the horses' gate and killed at the king's house.

Vv. 17-20 describe actions taken in the coup's aftermath. In v. 17 Jehoiada makes a covenant between "the Lord, the king, and the people" but the nature and significance of this action are far from clear. V. 18
reports the destruction of a Baal temple by the "people of the land," who now function (unlike their presence in vv. 12 and 14) as active participants in the coup. According to the text the people of the land destroy the temple, altars, and images of Baal and then kill the Baalistic priest Mattan. Jehoiada resumes control at the end of v. 18, when he posts guards at Yahweh's temple and orchestrates a processional which places Joash on the throne (v. 19). The chapter ends with the observation,

...all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet after Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the king's house. (v. 20)

2. 2 Chronicles

a. 2 Chronicles 21:6

2 Chr 21:5-7 parallels Jehoram's introductory regnal formula in 2 Kgs 8:16-19. Like 2 Kgs 8:18, 2 Chr 21:6 has Athaliah's name instead of the queen mother's.

b. 2 Chronicles 22:2

2 Chr 22:2-4 parallels Ahaziah's introductory regnal formula in 2 Kgs 8:25-27. According to the Chronicler, Ahaziah did evil because "his mother was his
counselor in doing wickedly" (v. 2c). This indictment makes explicit what is only implied in 2 Kgs 8:27: "for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab."

c. 2 Chronicles 22:10-23:21

This account parallels 2 Kings 11. Supplementary material includes: Jehoshabeath's identification as Jehoiada's wife (2 Chr 22:11), the names and lineage of the commanders of the guards (2 Chr 23:1), mention of Jehoiada's sons at Joash's anointing (2 Chr 23:11), and reference to singers and instruments at Joash's coronation (2 Chr 23:13). Contradictory materials includes: the Levites as key actants in the coup, the involvement of "all Israel" in the coup, the presence at Joash's enthronement of three groups not mentioned in Kings (the captains, nobles, and governors of the people, 2 Chr 23:20), and the people involved in the covenant (in Chronicles it is between the priest, people, and king while in Kings it is between the Lord, king and people, 2 Chr 23:16).

In 2 Chronicles 23 the priests and the Levites (not the Carites and the guards) receive Jehoiada's instructions and implement them (vv. 3-10). Jehoiada,
sensitive to preserving the temple's sanctity, remarks, "Do not let anyone enter the house of the Lord except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may enter, for they are holy..." (v. 6). No such injunction is found in 2 Kings 11. While in 2 Kgs 11:8 Jehoiada orders that "whoever approaches the ranks [guarding the king] is to be killed," in 2 Chr 23:7 he says, "whoever enters the house [of the Lord] shall be killed."

Finally, in 2 Kgs 11:18, the narrator says, "The priest [Jehoiada] posted watchmen over the house of the Lord."

The Chronicler, however, expands this considerably:

Jehoiada assigned the care of the house of the Lord to the levitical priests.... 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. (2 Chr 23:18-19)

In addition to Jehoiada's sons and the Levites and priests, the Chronicler includes in the coup a number of other groups not mentioned in 2 Kings 11. In 2 Chr 23:8 Jehoiada commands "all Judah" and they obey him. Moreover, in v. 20 the "nobles" and "the governors of the people" (in addition to the captains and the people of the land) escort Joash to the palace.

The Chronicler also emphasizes popular support for
the coup. Not only do Levites participate, but they also are from "all the cities of Judah, and the heads of fathers' houses of Israel" (v. 2). Instead of merely the Carites and guards covenanted with Jehoiada (2 Kgs 11:4), "all the assembly" make a covenant with him (2 Chr 23:3). While in the account in Kings the courtyard is empty, in Chronicles Jehoiada insists, "all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord" (v. 5). Lastly, in 2 Chr 23:10, it is "all the people" who are armed and serve as a guard for the king.

The coup is also portrayed on a much larger geographical scale in 2 Chronicles than in 2 Kings. In the Kings account, Jehoiada's supporters come "to the house of the Lord" (2 Kgs 11:4). In Chronicles, however, support comes from all Judah "to Jerusalem" (2 Chr 23:2).

3. The Nature and Integrity of the Athaliah Materials

a. Kings

The material in Kings concerning Athaliah represents two genres: introductory regnal formula and historical narrative. While we have discussed the nature and function of regnal formula in our last
chapter, it is important to address the nature of the narrative in 2 Kings 11.

Scholars are divided concerning 2 Kings 11's literary integrity. Some argue that it is a conflation of two separate sources. Others view it as a narrative with several layers of expansion. Still others argue for its literary unity. The question of 2 Kings 11's nature has implications for its dating. For many historians, historical accuracy is often assumed to be predicated upon a report's proximity to the event it describes. If data can be proven to come from a later level of expansion, then that may be reason to question whether or not it represents accurate historical memory.

1) Two Source Theory

According to B. Stade, two sources stand behind 2 Kings 11. The first (and primary) source is in vv. 1-12, 18b-20, while the second (the interpolation) is in vv. 13-18a. Stade's theory accounts for what he viewed as three textual peculiarities within 2 Kings 11: (1) the two different forms of Athaliah's name used within the chapter (vvs. 4-12, 18b-20 use "Athalyah" while vvs. 13-18a use "Athalyahu"), (2) the doublet of Athaliah's
death in vv. 16 and 20, and (3) the shift from a priestly to a popular point of view in vv. 13-18a. To account for these observations, Stade concluded that vv. 1-12, 18b-20 belong to a "priestly" source, while vv. 13-18a belong to a "popular" one. Stade's identification pf vv. 1-12, 18b-20 as the main account and vv. 13-18a as an interpolation, raised doubts about the historical veracity of vv. 13-18a.  

In the wake of Stade's theory, many commentators accepted the concept of two sources behind 2 Kings 11. What they were not unanimous on, however, was how the relationship between these sources was to be understood. Montgomery and Gehman, for example, argued that both sources came from the same historical period, their authors possibly being "spectators" to the events that they described. An official Judean scribe, they suggested, was responsible for vv. 1-12, 18b-20, while vv. 13-18a displayed the "vivid style of Northern raconteurs."  

The two accounts were then combined early in the tradition to form the account now standing in 2 Kings 11. This placement of both sources in close proximity to the events that they described enabled
Montgomery and Gehman to insist that both sources contained accurate historical information.42

Other commentators argued against locating both reports in the period immediately following Athaliah's reign. J. Gray, for example, observed that the "priestly" source reflected the "sober and self-critical mood of the priests in and after the Deuteronomic reformation."43 Accordingly, Gray suggested that the sources behind 2 Kings 11 were combined in the post-Josianic period. Although Gray did not discount the historical veracity of either source, he reminded his readers that 2 Kings 11 is not annalistic material but "historical narrative."44

2) Multi-layered Theory

Within the last decade, several treatments of 2 Kings 11 have argued against viewing it as conflation of two sources. Instead, they insist that 2 Kings 11 is better understood as a basic narrative with various redactional layers. The work of C. Levin and L. Barré are notable examples of this position.

C. Levin identifies in 2 Kings 11 a basic, pre-exilic narrative (vv. 1-2, 3b, 5-6, 8a, 12b, 13a, 14b, 16, 17b, 19a, 20a.).45 This narrative (based on the
"Tagebüchern der König von Juda") was written by someone closely associated with the events of the year 840 BCE and constitutes about forty-five percent of the chapter in its current form. The rest of 2 Kings 11 (with the exception of a few glosses) Levin assigns to three redactional levels: (1) the "bundestheologische Bearbeitung"; (2) the "priesterliche Bearbeitung"; and (3) the "frühchronistische Bearbeitung." Levin's "bundestheologische" layer is found in vv. 14, 17, and 18 and is dated to the late deuteronomistic period. It is especially concerned with the people of the land's participation in the anointing of Joash and the covenant and cultic reform which followed. Levin's second layer, the "priesterliche Bearbeitung," is the largest expansion and is found in portions of vv. 3-5, 7-9, 11-13, and 15. It is bound together by a priestly emphasis (excluding the theme of the sanctity of the temple) and dates to the second half of the fourth century. The third and final layer, Levin's "frühchronistische Bearbeitung," is relatively short, consisting of portions of vv. 10, 15, 18 and 20 and concerned primarily with the maintenance of the temple's
Although L. Barré's approach to 2 Kings 11 is similar to C. Levin's, he differs as to the content of the original narrative and the nature of its expansions. Like Levin, Barré sees behind 2 Kings 11 a document which has been subject to various redactional revisions, but according to Barré, the "original" strata of 2 Kings 11 is part of an autonomous literary entity which stands behind 2 Kings 9-11. In ch. 11, this narrative can be found in vv. 1-5, 7-9, 11-15a (excluding the phrase dealing with the people of the land in v. 14), 16-17aa, 17b, and 19-20a (excluding the phrases dealing with the people of the land),  which Barré dates to the period immediately following the events being described, possibly even to the early years of Joash's reign (ca. 837 BCE). According to Barré, the document was a response to criticism which likened Joash's accession to that of Jehu's bloody purge in the North. Barré thus suggests that Jehoiada commissioned a scribe to provide for the elders an account which served to legitimize the coup.

Barré's first layer of expansion, which he simply calls "Dtr additions" is as follows:
v. 14 while all the people of the land rejoiced
v. 17 Yahweh, the king and the people to be the people of Yahweh, and between
v. 18 Then all the people of the land entered the temple of Baal and tore it down. And the altar and its images they completely smashed, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altar.

Thus, with the exception of the excerpts from vv. 19-20, Barré's "Dtr additions" corresponds to Levin's "bundestheologische Bearbeitung." For Barré, this layer (with its imaging of the coup as basically a cultic reform supported by the people of the land) parallels Jehu's purge of Baalism in the North.61

Barré's second (and last) level of expansion, which he labels "Post-Dtr additions,"62 is concerned with the temple's sanctity:

v. 6 and a third of you, those at the Horse Gate, and a third of you, those at the Guards' gate, shall keep watch over the temple for defense
v. 10 Then the priest gave the commanders the spears and shields that belonged to King David and were kept in the temple of Yahweh.

v. 15b For the priest had said, 'Let her not be killed in the temple of Yahweh.'

v. 18b And the priest stationed guards over the temple of Yahweh.

v. 20 And they killed Athaliah with the sword at the palace.

Barré therefore combines Levin's two later layers to
form one that deals with general cultic interests.

3) Unified Narrative Theory

Not all commentators accept Stade's two source theory or argue that 2 Kings 11 is a multi-layered document. Instead, some argue that 2 Kings 11 is a literary unity.

W. Rudolph found the logic behind Stade's two source hypothesis unconvincing and proposed instead that v. 20b was not a doublet of v. 16, but a summation of it. As for the shift in vv. 12-13 and 18a-18b from priestly to popular interests, Rudolph emended the text to exclude all references to the "people of the land," except that found in v. 20a. Rudolph thus concluded that there was no reason for positing sources behind 2 Kings 11 and therefore no reason for doubting the veracity of vv. 13-18a nor for seeing it as an interpolation into an older document.

Arguments for the unity of 2 King 11 do not always imply its acceptance as an accurate historical record. Both M. Liverani and H. Hoffmann have argued for the unity of 2 Kings 11 while questioning the accuracy of the materials it contains.
M. Liverani draws attention to the "theatrical" character of 2 Kings 11. The report, Liverani argues, displays plot elements found in other ancient accounts of coups and usurpations. By comparing the account of Idrimi, King of Alalakh, with the report of Joash in 2 Kings 11, Liverani described the following structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDRIMI</th>
<th>JOASH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) revolt in his father's house; flight of family</td>
<td>murder of Ahaziah; Athaliah massacres family; Joash escapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) for seven years Idrimi hides in Ammia (in the land of Canaan) while an usurper reigns in Alalakh</td>
<td>for six years Joash is hidden in the Temple while the usurper Athaliah reigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Idrimi is acknowledged as the son of the former king by the refugees (who assist the troops in the recovery of the throne)</td>
<td>Joash is acknowledged as the son of the former king by the Carites and the guards (who assist in the recovery of the throne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) in the 7th year, Idrimi retakes the throne by military action</td>
<td>in the 7th year, Joash (with the aid of Jehoiada) retakes the throne by military action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) the people are content</td>
<td>the people are content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) oath between the god Barattarna and the new king in the presence of the people</td>
<td>oath between Yahweh and the new king in the presence of the people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) cultic reform</td>
<td>cultic reform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Liverani also found similar elements in the account of Hattusili III: 65

(1) death of Muwatalli
(2) for seven years Urhi-Tesub reigns, while Hattusili hides
(3) through divine intervention (in a dream), the dignitaries recognize the royal destiny of Hattusili
(4) the army arrives and helps take the throne
(5) the population of Hattusa is pleased
(6) the aid of the deity (in this case, Sauska) and the new king's dependence on her is noted
(7) the new king's piety and cultic reforms are mentioned

According to Liverani, the histories of Joash, Idrimi, Hattusili III, and others like them are apologies which serve as propaganda. As apologies, they focus on the king's right to the throne. As propaganda, they counter rumors and accusations directed against the current ruler's right to rule. When royal succession is accomplished through acceptable channels (as in the case of a son's designation by his royal father), then such justification is unnecessary. But when traditional means are circumvented (as in the case of a coup d'état), then the legitimacy of the current usurper is often questioned. The apologies provide a dramatically persuasive defense of the usurper's actions. A prior usurpation thus legitimates a current one. The victim
of the first becomes the hero of the second. Thus Liverani's conclusions, which see 2 Kings 11 as a unified narrative written during the reign of Joash, challenge its accuracy on ideological grounds.

Another scholar who accepts the literary unity of 2 Kings 11 without also arguing for its historical accuracy is H. Hoffmann, who attributed 2 Kings 11 to the DtrH. Standing behind this document, Hoffmann concedes, might be an oral tradition which described Athaliah's rise and fall in political terms. This tradition was creatively reshaped and written down by the DtrH to correspond to the structuring themes of "Reform and Revolution." Thus, for Hoffmann, 2 Kings 11 is the creative literary effort of a writer writing over 200 years after the event--a writer primarily concerned with current political realities rather than with details of past historical events.

b. Chronicles

While it is true that not all of the material in Chronicles parallels that found in Kings, there is no reason to argue for a separate "source" behind the account of Athaliah's reign. Most scholars are content
to assign the majority of the differences to the Chronicler's own ideological interests and hand.\textsuperscript{70}

Lemke, for example, views 2 Chr 22:10-23:21 as a revision of 2 Kings 11, in which the changes reflect four areas of the Chronicler's interests: (1) the pan-Israelite impulse, (2) the prominence of the Levites, (3) the temple's sanctity, and (4) liturgical emphases.\textsuperscript{71}

Other additions, such as the note concerning Jehosheba's marriage to Jehoiada may (or may not) reflect a dependence on a different form of the text from that of the current text of 2 Kings 11.\textsuperscript{72}

3. The Literary Characterization of Athaliah

The construction of literary characters is often influenced by cultural stereotypes. The characters of Genesis, for example, are replete with overtones of the tensions and polarities in Israelite society: urban vs. rural (Lot vs. Abraham), youngest vs. eldest (Jacob vs. Esau), barren vs. fertile (Rachel vs. Leah). A. Brenner, author of \textit{The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Literature}, observes that women—who are accorded far less literary development in the Bible than their male counterparts—are often
defined "not...as individuals but...as generalized representatives of their type." In analyzing the possible impact of type-casting on literary characterization, Brenner suggests the following useful methodological steps:  

(1) read a relevant passage closely,  
(2) identify the type(s) or personality that it describes,  
(3) define the literary model or convention it follows, and then  
(4) pay careful attention to deviations, elaborations, and specific details which constitute departures from the basic structure.  

Using the above methodology, we shall examine Athaliah's literary characterization in Kings and Chronicles.  

a. Kings  

As noted previously, there are two types of material concerning Athaliah in Kings: the editorial comments concerning Jehoram and Ahaziah, and the narrative about Athaliah's rise and fall. Taken individually, each paints a somewhat different picture of Athaliah (we will discuss the implications of this when we reconstruct Athaliah's reign). Our purpose in this section, however, is to analyze the impact both editorial comments and narrative have on the reader when combined in the form in which Kings now stands.
The references to Athaliah in her husband's (2 Kgs 8:18) and son's (vv. 26-27) regnal formulas, clearly present Athaliah as a woman whose influence is detrimental to those closest to her. Both husband and son stand indicted because of their relationship to Athaliah. This negative viewpoint, explicit in the regnal formula's evaluative comments, is implicit in the narrative structure of 2 Kings 11.

Athaliah's reign is presented in 2 Kings 11 with neither introductory nor concluding remarks. This omission sets Athaliah apart from other Judean rulers whose presentations have at least part (if not all) of the standard regnal formulas. By withholding their customary formal recognition, the writers' mark Athaliah's seven year reign as different—less legitimate. Moreover, this implied evaluation, combined with the explicit one found in the regnal formula of her husband and son, prepares the reader for the events described in 2 Kings 11.

The account of Athaliah and her reign in 2 Kings 11 is mediated through the narrator's voice. Athaliah "speaks" only in v. 15, where her cries of "treason,
"treason" are pointedly ignored by the characters around her. Unlike previous evaluative strategies, the narrative itself is free from any negative statements concerning Athaliah. Nevertheless, the reader—primed by the negativity of the regnal evaluations and the absence of the customary framework—is encouraged to view Athaliah's reign in a correspondingly negative way.

When one combines the editorial comments about Athaliah (found in Jehoram and Ahaziah's regnal formula) with the narrator's presentation of Athaliah in 2 Kings 11, the following emerge as key elements of Athaliah's characterization:

1. she is from the "house of Ahab" (2 Kgs 8:18, 27),
2. she is considered a liability to both her husband (2 Kgs 8:18) and son (2 Kgs 18:27),
3. she kills to achieve her goals (2 Kgs 11:1),
4. she is connected (implicitly) with Baal worship (2 Kgs 11:18),
5. her words are confrontational and defiant (2 Kgs 11:14),
6. she functions as the literary foil to the heroic and pious Jehoiada.

Elements 1, 2, and 4 (foreign [from the "house of Ahab"], a liability, and worships other gods) sound strikingly like those associated with the "foreign woman" character type. What is this type and can it inform our reading of Athaliah?
Interruption between Israelite men and "foreign" women have a long history of narrative treatment in the Bible. The Genesis stories of Hagar, Rebecca and Esau's Hittite wives, for example, stress that a foreign wife is somehow inferior to one from the husband's own clan or ethnic-national group. With the advent of the monarchy, intermarriage (especially on a royal level) became increasingly practiced. The classical prophets, wisdom circles, and writings from the Second Temple period respond—in a variety of different ways—to the social tolerance of intermarriage.\(^{75}\)

Much has been written about the "foreign woman" character type.\(^{76}\) That it has both positive (Tamar, Ruth, etc.) and negative (Potiphar's wife, Delilah, etc.) manifestations points to the basic polarity inherent in many symbols. It is, however, the foreign woman in its negative aspect which is important to our study of Athaliah. Brenner identifies several characteristics of the foreign woman as she is imaged in her "negative temptress" mode:\(^{77}\)

1. she is married and an adulteress,
2. she is a foreigner,
3. she is motivated by lust and/or foreign fertility cult practices,
(4) she has considerable rhetorical powers as well as sexual charms
(5) she is not always successful in her attempts to manipulate men.

At first glance it would appear that Athaliah's literary presentation incorporates many of the characteristics of the "foreign woman." Firstly, Athaliah is an Omride and either related by blood to the Phoenician Jezebel or educated in Jezebel's Tyrian influenced court. Thus, Athaliah is presented by the writers as that which is "foreign" to Judean culture. Secondly, the writers imply that Athaliah influenced (manipulated?) her husband and son and thus present her as a threat to the men closest to her. Thirdly, the destruction of the Baal temple after Athaliah's death implies some type of connection between Athaliah and Baal worship.

Even though the image of "foreign woman" may well have contributed to Athaliah's biblical characterization (and the way in which that characterization was later interpreted), there are two important differences between Athaliah and the typical "foreign woman." Athaliah displays neither the rhetorical skills nor the sexual charms usually imaged as the foreign woman's
source of power. This is not to say, however, that issues of power and control are absent in the account of Athaliah. As a royal figure, her account depicts her public activity as reflecting a power similar to that found in the accounts of Jezebel and to some degree, Maacah.

Both Athaliah and Jezebel:

1. are foreign,
2. are associated with Baalism,
3. are portrayed as a liability to their husbands and sons,
4. use the authority of their position to command others,
5. abuse their authority by killing those who are innocent,
6. are female antagonists killed in coups instigated by Yahwist representatives (for whom they serve as literary foils).

The same similarity—on a smaller scale—can be seen in brief information preserved concerning Asa's mother, Maacah (1 Kgs 15:9-13):

1. she is foreign,
2. she is associated with Asherah worship,
3. she is a liability to her son,
4. her public action of erecting an Asherah is given as the reason for her deposition by her son

Thus three (Maacah, Jezebel and Athaliah) of the four queen mothers receiving narrative treatment in DH act in public ways which reflect their claim to power
and control. Moreover, they often do this in contrast to, rather than compliance with, the male characters in their stories.

The notable exception to this negative depiction of royal women in the DH's narrative world is Bathsheba. Throughout 1 Kings 1-2 Bathsheba appears as the object, rather than the subject, of the verbal action around her—action dictated by various males within the story:

1. Nathan instructs her to go to David and she obeys (1 Kgs 1:11-15).
2. After David speaks to Nathan, David calls her into his presence, and she comes (v. 28).
3. Adonijah asks her to go to Solomon with a request and she goes (1 Kgs 2:13-19).

Twice Bathsheba bows and does obeisance to her husband (1 Kgs 1:16, 31). Only once does Bathsheba seem to be treated with deference befitting her rank. Solomon bows and places her seat on his right side—motions which seem to indicate Bathsheba's authority and prestige (1 Kgs 2:19), but this impression is lost on the reader in the exchange that follows (vv. 20-23). Bathsheba—having "one small request" of Solomon—implores that he not refuse her. Solomon replies, "Make your request, my mother; for I will not refuse you" (v. 20). Then the request is made and Solomon does as he pleases.
Significantly, Bathsheba's is the only story of a queen mother whom the writer/s do not condemn. Admittedly, one must keep in mind that Bathsheba is probably Israelite, the wife of David (the ideal king) and the mother of Solomon (the temple builder). Nevertheless, there is another important difference in the way Bathsheba is depicted that distinguishes her from her more infamous counterparts. Maacah, Jezebel and Athaliah are depicted as women whose public actions are free from (or in opposition to) the restraining control of the male characters around them, while Bathsheba's activities appear circumscribed by the men around her. This is not to say, of course, that Bathsheba is portrayed as a "weak" woman in 2 Kings 1-2. It has been suggested, for instance, that by relaying Adonijah's message to Solomon, Bathsheba is manipulating Solomon into getting rid of a dangerous rival—Adonijah. Even if this is true, however, such activity reflects a type of power different from that imaged in the Maacah, Jezebel and Athaliah accounts.

The realization that the accounts of Maacah, Jezebel and Athaliah may have been shaped both by the "foreign woman" motif and by the writers' notions of
appropriate and inappropriate types of women's power, does not automatically mean that in reality these women were virtuous and kind. It does, however, caution readers against assuming that the negative portrait of Athaliah in 2 Kings 8-11 is an accurate rendering of the historical Athaliah. While it might correspond to her historically, it can also be seen as a product of the writers' bias against foreign women who publicly wield power.

b. Chronicles

There are three notable differences between the characterization of Athaliah in Chronicles and that in Kings. Firstly, Athaliah's evil influence on her son is underscored in 2 Chr 22:2 with the addition of the phrase "his mother was his counselor in doing wickedly." These words make explicit the indictment of 2 Kgs 8:27, "for he was son-in-law to the house of Ahab."

Secondly, the narrative account of Joash's reign (2 Chr 24:1-27) includes a note referring back to the reign of Athaliah:

For the children of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had even used all the dedicated things of the house of the
Lord for the Baals. (2 Chr 24:7)

Thus the Chronicler not only makes the linkage between Athaliah and the Baal temple explicit, but also heightens the sense of Athaliah's evil nature with the epithet "that wicked woman."

The third significant aspect of the Chronicler's characterization of Athaliah is an offshoot of the Chronicler's overall approach to history writing in general. Unlike the DH (which covers the reigns of both Northern and Southern kings) the Chronicler's history focuses on the history of the Southern kingdom. This means that while the story of Athaliah is covered, the story of Jezebel is omitted. On the one hand, this means that the negative context for Athaliah, furnished by the Jezebel story in Kings, is missing from the Chronicler's presentation. On the other hand, the Chronicler's additions (which heighten Athaliah's wickedness in a way missing in Kings) serves to make up for this omission.

B. Interpretations of Athaliah and her Reign

If we inquire, we find that nearly all the kingdoms of the world have been overthrown
by women. Troy, which was a prosperous kingdom, for the rape of one woman, Helen, destroyed, and many thousands of Greeks slain. The kingdom of the Jews suffered much misfortune and destruction through the accursed Jezebel, and her daughter Athaliah, queen of Judah, who caused her son's sons to be killed, that on their death she might reign herself; yet each of them was slain. The kingdom of the Romans endured much evil through Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, that worst of women. And so with others. Therefore it is no wonder if the world now suffers through the malice of women.79

Thus wrote two Dominican Inquisitors in their infamous 1486 witch hunter's manual, Malleus Maleficarum or Hammer Against Witches. For Heinrick Institor (Kraemer) and Jakob Sprenger, women such as Jezebel of Israel, Athaliah of Judah, Helen of Troy, and Cleopatra of Egypt were historical examples of women's nefarious power. Biblically based anti-suffrage arguments of the nineteenth-century issued similar warnings. Orestes A. Brownstone, when writing in 1873 about "The Woman Question," appealed to images of biblical women as proof that:

[woman's] ambition and natural love of power, without masculine direction or control, ... [results in] a social anomaly, sometimes a hideous monster, which men seldom are, excepting through a woman's influence.80
Fifteenth-century witch hunters and nineteenth-century anti-suffrage advocates alike saw in stories like that of Jezebel and Athaliah women's inability to wield political power wisely.

Today, few historians could draw explicit parallels between Athaliah's negative image in the Bible and women's nature in general without being criticized. Harsh evaluations of Athaliah and her reign, however, are often accepted without much comment. Even noted historians such as S. Herrmann, M. Noth, and J. Bright had little good to say of Athaliah's rule. S. Herrmann considered it "probably...tyrannical," while M. Noth said that she ruled "very despotically" for six years. J. Bright wondered if Athaliah was responsible for the slaughter recorded in 2 Chr 21:2-4 (she was, he insisted, "certainly capable of it"). While Noth admitted that "no details of her [Athaliah's] reign have come down to us," and Bright confessed that "there is no shred of proof" for his association of Athaliah with the slaughter in 2 Chronicles 21, both nevertheless went on to portray Athaliah as a despot and tyrant.

Readings such as the ones mentioned above often reflect a common approach to the Athaliah materials.
They (1) accept a straightforward reading of Athaliah's biblical characterization, (2) analyze the textual evidence from basically the text's viewpoint, and (3) fill in the narrative gaps in the accounts by using specific models and assumptions about Judean society and politics. We can see these interpretive strategies more clearly by examining how historians and commentators treat Athaliah's rise to power (2 Kgs 11:1-3) and the coup which deposed her (2 Kgs 11:4-20).

1. Athaliah's Rise to Power

After reading 2 Kgs 11:1-3, one modern commentator typically concluded that Athaliah "ruled as a despot and alienated the people." To arrive at this type of conclusion (reached in spite of the commentator's confession that "no details are given" about Athaliah's actual reign) the commentator: (1) assumed the massacre to be historical, (2) condemned the massacre on moral grounds; and then (3) extrapolated the tenor of Athaliah's reign, in part, from the condemnation of the massacre. In short, modern historians and commentators have been inclined to accept the general reliability of the statements about the massacre. They then proceed to
"fill in the gap" the text leaves between Athaliah's rise (vv. 1-3) and fall (vv. 4-20) by assuming that she continued this "pattern" of behavior. In order to evaluate such a historical reconstruction and interpretation of Athaliah's reign, we must examine the issue of the massacre's historicity and the role that this has played in reconstructions of Athaliah's reign.

a. The Massacre

At least three options are available to readers concerning the massacre's historicity. Either (1) the massacre occurred essentially as described in 2 Kgs 11:1, or (2) a massacre occurred but with significant differences from the one described (either it was a very limited massacre or else it was a total massacre with no survivors from the royal line), or (3) some other slaughter/massacre may have been incorrectly attributed to Athaliah. Beginning with the last, we will examine the assumptions behind each position.

Scholars who hold the last option conclude that there was no massacre. H. L. Ginsberg, for example, summarizes the various options but personally doubts the event's historicity. According to Ginsberg, the massacre would not have been a politically expedient act
on Athaliah's part, for

...even a ruthless--but obviously not unintelligent--old woman will not seek to destroy an infant who is not only her own flesh and blood, but being an infant, can do her no harm and, being both the legitimate heir to the throne and her infant grandchild, constitutes the sole claim of her rule to legitimacy.89

Ginsberg goes on to suggest that 2 Kgs 11:1-3 might have arisen out of a confusion with other slaughter(s) of the period.90

Ginsberg bases his argument against the historicity of the massacre on the following assumptions: (1) Joash was Athaliah's own grandchild--her "flesh and blood" whom she would not have destroyed, (2) being only an infant, Joash could not have harmed Athaliah, and (3) Joash was Athaliah's sole claim to legitimate rule. Are these assumptions valid?

Firstly, Ginsberg suggests that Athaliah would not have killed Joash because she was Joash's grandmother. In other words, Athaliah's maternal instincts (Ginsberg refers to Joash as her "own baby grandson")91 would have made the killing of Joash personally deplorable and thus unlikely. This type of argument, based as it is on gender stereotyping, reads Ginsberg's own viewpoint
into the text. Just because Ginsberg feels this is not how grandmothers should act, however, is no indication of how Athaliah did act.

Ginsberg's second point—that Joash's age would have negated any threat he posed to Athaliah—is also problematic. Even a young child, with dynastic legitimacy, could have been used by a group opposed to Athaliah's sole rule or to her function as a regent.

The third assumption of Ginsberg's argument—that Joash was Athaliah's sole claim to legitimate rule—appears to be the strongest point in his position. Ginsberg argues that Athaliah, being a "hated foreigner" and "a woman," would not have been allowed to live had she indeed ordered the massacre as the text suggests. At any rate, if she ruled as "regent," the young Joash was indispensable for her claim.

To say that Athaliah was a "hated foreigner" assumes that Judah was fervently anti-Omride during the time of Athaliah and that any Omride in power would have been hated. As our discussion of Jezebel in chapter two showed, there is no question that the text itself is anti-Omride. What is questionable is whether this
polemic should be read literally as proof of the political atmosphere in Judah during the time of Athaliah. (In the concluding section of this chapter, we will present several reasons why it is possible to argue for a substantial pro-Omride faction/sentiment in Judah during this period.)

While one can, like Ginsberg, challenge the massacre's historicity, another option is to argue that a massacre occurred but that it differed considerably in scope from the account in 2 Kgs 11:1. This approach usually takes one of two forms—either the massacre is imaged as smaller (and more focused) than the one described in 2 Kgs 11:1, or else it is seen as more extensive, killing all the Davidic heirs.

As one of his alternative scenarios for 2 Kgs 11:1, Ginsberg describes circumstances under which it might have happened (in this he is followed by H. Reviv). If Athaliah ordered the massacre, according to this position, she probably did so to protect Joash from uncles and cousins who might have arranged an unfortunate accident for "the poor child." Viewed in this manner the massacre was not a wanton extermination, but the intentional elimination of potential threats to
the young king's life.

On the one hand, Ginsberg's suggestion that Athaliah protected Joash's life (by killing possible rivals) has merit especially if her actions are viewed in light of her own self-interest (i.e., the securing of a regency). On the other hand, Ginsberg's use of the emotive phrase "the poor child" suggests that Ginsberg attributes to Athaliah protective feelings towards Joash beyond those dictated by self-interest. Ginsberg seems to assume that Joash's male relatives (his uncles and cousins) may well have plotted to kill him while Athaliah (his grandmother) would have acted to save him. That is, when it comes to political killings, men are more likely to kill their relatives than women. While this may be the case, it may also reflect the fact that, historically, men, not women, are more likely to be in positions of political authority.

As attractive as opting for a limited massacre might be to explain why Athaliah might have acted against what seems to be her best interests, it must be remembered that such a reconstruction is contradicted by our one and only source for the event.
At the other end of the interpretive spectrum is the argument that the massacre was more successful than the one described in 2 Kgs 11:1, killing all the contenders to the throne. A. Soggin, building upon Liverani's 1974 study (discussed previously in this chapter) argues that the scene portrayed in 2 Kgs 11:1-3 "seems historically most improbable" because "the theme is frequent in popular tradition." Soggin accepts the historicity of a massacre but doubts Joash's "miraculous" escape, concluding that:

...in reality it would seem that the Davidic dynasty, too, was interrupted and was only reconstituted later, somewhat precariously, by means of a boy chosen by the priesthood and the sister of the dead king in the temple... 

Like Soggin, J. M. Miller questions the identity of Joash, wondering:

Who was this child whom Jehoiada presented as a royal heir and succeeded in placing on the throne? Clearly the compilers of Genesis-II Kings were satisfied that Joash was an authentic son of Ahaziah, presumable born the year of Ahaziah's death. In view of the circumstances as described, however, one can hardly avoid wondering if Joash might have been an impostor whom Jehoiada used to get rid of Athaliah and bring his own influence to bear on the nation. 

2 Kings 11:2-3, Miller observes, describes what is
essentially a private event. One has only the "word" of Jehosheba—and later her husband Jehoiada (both of whom stand to gain through Jehoiada's regency on behalf of Joash)—as to Joash's identity.

2 Kgs 11:2-3 strains the credibility of its readers in a way that v. 1 does not. The elimination of potential threats to the new ruler happened frequently in the ancient world. Even the "ideal" David reportedly made a "hit list" for Solomon (1 Kings 2). Joash's escape in vv. 2-3 is much harder to believe. How could Joash have been overlooked? Considering the evidence of other texts, by the time of Athaliah's action the royal family had already suffered several purges. 2 Chr 21:1-4 reports that Jehoram killed "all his brothers with the sword" (v. 4) upon assuming the throne. Later, 2 Chr 22:1 mentions an Arab attack on Jerusalem which resulted in the death of Jehoram's sons (with the exception of Amaziah). If read as reflecting historical reality, these texts imply the elimination of two generations of Davidides. Moreover, Jehu's purge in the north is said not only to have killed Amaziah (2 Kgs 9:27-28) but also forty-two of Ahaziah's kinsmen as well (2 Kgs 10:12-14). As Miller cogently points out, is it
likely that "anyone with a remote claim to the crown" was able to survive the purges described in the text? 100

Whereas option "2" (a massacre differing in scope from the text) and option "3" (no massacre) challenge traditional readings of 2 Kgs 11:1-3, option "1" accepts a straightforward reading of the text and thus the historicity of both the massacre and Joash's escape. This assumes, however, a historical correspondence between text and reality that shows little appreciation for the creative shaping of the story. While one might, after critical analysis, agree with the portrait that the text presents, it cannot simply be assumed to mirror the historical reality that it reportedly represents.

Did the massacre described in 2 Kings 11:1 take place? There are several factors which argue for its historicity. First of all, the massacre is believable when set within the context of 1-2 Kings' portrayal of Judah's monarchical period. The killing of rivals by a would-be monarch is not unique to the Athaliah accounts. Secondly, it is hard to imagine that the massacre could have been fabricated and still be credible to its original audience if that audience stood in proximity to
the events being reported. As discussed previously, L. Barré dates the original of the story found in 2 Kgs 11:1 to Joash's reign, where it functioned as an anti-Athaliah legitimation of Joash's rule.\textsuperscript{101} (Although the text provides few or no clues about the original story's audience, Barré suggests that it might have been "the elders" who, being both literate and politically influential, would have been likely targets for its message.)\textsuperscript{102} If Barré is correct about the original story's date, then the event described in 2 Kgs 11:1 had to have been credible to people who lived during the time of Athaliah's rise to the throne. In other words, public knowledge would have placed a certain constraint on the storyteller's art. If there was no massacre and the story was fabricated as pro-Joash propaganda, then it would have been ineffectual propaganda at best.

If Athaliah's bid for the throne resulted in the deaths of the royal family (as argued above), then how might it be significant for understanding her and the nature of her reign?

b. The Massacre's Significance

The narrator of 2 Kgs 11:1 provides no clues as to Athaliah's motivations or feelings concerning the
massacre. We are not told why Athaliah felt it necessary to eliminate the royal family. Once again, historians must "fill in" this narrative gap when they discuss the issue of historical causation. To explain Athaliah's actions, most historians focus on personal and political factors:

1. Athaliah was protecting her life. Jehu could have convinced Judah's next king to murder Athaliah (the only surviving Omride). By making herself queen and eliminating her rivals, Athaliah acted shrewdly to protect her life.

2. Athaliah was protecting her position. Fearing a reaction from conservative and nationalistic factions, Athaliah eliminated those most likely to spearhead future opposition.

3. Athaliah was displaying her flawed character. Deprived of her queen mother status by Ahaziah's death, Athaliah became power hungry. Her ruthlessness reflects her Omride heritage.

While suggestions "1" (the protection of her life) and "2" (the protection of her position) do not carry the explicit negativity of "3" (her flawed character), the actions they imply are rarely understood in positive terms (such as, for example, reflecting Athaliah's political acumen and sagacity). Instead, all three explanations are usually combined and seen as evidence
of Athaliah's insidious, power-hungry nature. Should the massacre be interpreted as indicating that Athaliah was an evil person, who ruled subsequently with a tyrant's iron fist?

In assessing the morality of Athaliah, much depends on how one views the killing of political rivals as a means of self preservation and securing power. If one assumes that political executions are morally evil, then it might be said that Athaliah was an "evil" person. Given this reasoning, it would appear that the text's assessment of Athaliah is "correct." But whether or not Athaliah's actions were "evil" by some moral standard is neither the deciding factor in interpretations of Athaliah and her rule nor the key to understanding whether or not she exercised a rule supported by her people.

Interpretations of Athaliah should have little to do with a strict moral assessment of her actions if they are evaluated in the same fashion as other rulers' actions. Brenner, for example, likens Athaliah's actions to that of Solomon's (1 Kgs 13-25) and Joram's (2 Chr 21:4). According to Brenner, it is because
Athaliah was

a woman and a foreigner who presumed to occupy the
Davidic throne, she does not receive the lenient
treatment accorded to Solomon who, after all, had
behaved similarly.

If Athaliah's story in 2 Kings 11 were being told by a
member of the pro-Athaliah faction--and not from the
Davidic dynastic perspective so important to the DtrH--
then Athaliah's actions in vv. 1-3 might well have been
evaluated like Solomon's and been viewed as examples of
her wisdom and political shrewdness.

As far as Judah's response to Athaliah, the general
populace probably would not have based their reaction to
Athaliah on a strict moral assessment of her actions.
Whether she gained support would have depended on
whether or not the people of Judah were predisposed to
accept Athaliah as ruler. There may have been a pro-
Omride or even pro-Phoenician sentiment in Judean
society or in certain circles which would have looked
favorably on Athaliah. In such a case it would be self-
interest, not moral sensitivity, which would have shaped
their response to Athaliah. Moreover, Athaliah's
position as queen mother could have given her a power
base and a respectability that might well have
constituted a claim to legitimacy in many people's eyes. To them, royal interfamily power struggles may not have been reason enough to contest her rule. Finally, to assume that all Judah would have responded actively to changes in power in Jerusalem may be politically naive. Then, as now, political apathy may have marked the lives of those engaged in the everyday struggle for survival. Thus, while some Judeans either actively supported or opposed Athaliah as queen, many no doubt passively accepted her accession.

Attempting to develop a picture of the reign of Athaliah based on the account of the massacre in 2 Kgs 11:1 is a highly speculative task. It must be emphasized again that the text gives no information concerning Athaliah's tenure as queen except for its length—seven years. The text moves from the massacre and Joash's reported escape in 2 Kgs 11:1-3 to plans for the coup, which ultimately deposed her in 2 Kgs 11:4-20.

If one sees in the massacre merely Athaliah's disregard for custom and her readiness to superimpose her will on Judah regardless of the cost, then it might be argued that this incident is a microcosmic portrayal
of the brutality of the next seven years of Athaliah's rule. If, however, one views the massacre as indicating Athaliah's political shrewdness in assessing a political situation and acting accordingly, then one could just as well argue that this "microcosmic" view is evidence of the political acumen with which Athaliah reigned for seven years.

How one interprets Athaliah's reign does not depend solely on how one extrapolates from the massacre, but also on how one explains the coup which finally deposed her.

2. The Overthrow of Athaliah

2 Kgs 11:4-20 (= 2 Chr 23:1-21) describes the coup which deposed Athaliah. Some historians and commentators see it as the most persuasive evidence that Athaliah's reign evoked the anger and hatred of the Judean people. Using circular reasoning: (1) the coup is seen as indication of Athaliah's despotism, (2) a hypothesized reaction to Athaliah's assumed despotism is posited, and then (3) the hypothesized reaction becomes a keystone in understanding why the coup occurred. In actuality, historians' explanations of the coup vary
according to which participant they choose to emphasize and which motivations they choose to see as shaping the reconstructed course of events. Let us first examine the literary presentation of each participant and then explore how historians explain what precipitated the coup.

a. The Coup and its Participants

The accounts in Kings and Chronicles mention a number of people in connection with the coup: Jehoiada, Jehoiada's sons, Joash, the Carites and the guards, the priests and the Levites, the people, "all" Judah and the nobles, governors of the people, etc.

1) Jehoiada

Jehoiada appears abruptly in 2 Kgs 11:4 without introduction.\(^{107}\) It is not until v. 9, with its double reference to "Jehoiada the priest", that the reader learns of Jehoiada's sacral position in the Jerusalem temple.\(^{108}\) The Chronicler adds to this meagre description several details concerning Jehoiada's personal life. In 2 Chr 22:11, Jehosheba (Jehoshabeath)--rescuer of the infant Joash--is identified as Jehoiada's wife. Moreover, Jehoiada reportedly had several sons (2 Chr 23:11) one of whom
was Zechariah (2 Chr 24:20).

In 2 Kings 11, Jehoiada is presented as the coup's pivotal figure. As previously mentioned, the verbs used to express his role are forceful and portray him as the conspiracy's leader. Significantly, no one is pictured questioning his commands. Thus, according to the text, Jehoiada was the coup's initiator and organizer—the driving power behind the usurpation. The text also describes him as performing several sacral acts such as placing the royal insignia on Joash and mediating a covenant. For this reason, L. Barré describes Jehoiada's characterization as combining "political sagacity" with "religious piety." Jehoiada is clearly the hero of the story. 109

2) Jehoiada's Sons

While 2 Chr 23:11 reports that Jehoiada and "his sons" anointed Joash, this detail is not mentioned in the Kings account. An intriguing note, however, is found in 2 Kgs 11:12 - "they [?] anointed [Joash]." The verse begins with two singular verbs: "And he brought out [3rd pers. m. sing.] the king's son and he gave [3rd pers. m. sing.] him..." In both
instances the subject refers to "the priest" (Jehoiada) mentioned in v. 10. 2 Kgs 11:12 ends, however, with four verbs in the 3rd person plural: "they proclaimed, they anointed, they clapped, and they shouted." If one accepts the Kings text as it stands, then the subject of these verbs refers to previously mentioned groups (i.e., the guards, Carites, etc.). If one attempts to harmonize the Kings account with that in Chronicles, then one might argue that, while three of the verbs (they proclaimed, clapped, and said) refer to previously mentioned groups, it is difficult for the reader to imagine the guards, Carites, etc. participating in the actual anointing. Thus the last plural may refer to the tradition about Jehoiada's sons mentioned by the Chronicler or have been the basis for the Chronicler's reading.

3) Joash

Introduced as Ahaziah's son, Joash's name occurs only once in 2 Kings 11 (v. 2). All other epithets in the chapter emphasize his royal identity. He is called either "the king's son" (vv. 4, 12) or simply "the king" (vv. 8 [2], 12 [2], 14, 17 [2], 19). According to 2 Kgs 12:1 [Heb.] he was seven years old when the coup
took place.

Joash's characterization in chapter 11 emphasizes his identity rather than his actions. Quietly passive, he is the object rather than the subject of the action around him. Jehoiada "shows" him to the guards (v. 4) and brings him out before the people (v. 12). At the conclusion of the report he is "brought down" from the Temple. Thus, Joash is imaged as the coup's figurehead rather than its instigator.

4) The Carites and the Guards

In 2 Kgs 11:4-7 two military groups are identified as supporting the coup—the Carites and the guards. Both act under Jehoiada's direction. They covenant with him, swearing an oath to support and protect the king's son (vv. 4-8). They bring their men to him (v. 9), station their troops according to his instructions (vv. 5-7, 9-11), receive from him the spears and shields of King David (v. 10), and obey his orders to kill Athaliah (vv. 15-16).

According to the text, the Carites and guards are present throughout the coup. Initially, they stand watch over the temple and palace ("from the south side
of the house [of the Lord] to the north side of the house, around the altar and the house [of the king]," v. 11). After the anointing of Joash they clap and shout, "Long live the king" (v. 12), and escort Joash from the temple to the palace (v. 19).

The Carites were probably foreigners employed at the royal court and temple complex as mercenaries whose allegiance would have been to those in command. Whether the guards were Judean or not remains uncertain.

5) The Priests and the Levites

In 2 Chronicles 23 the priests and the Levites (not the Carites and the guards) receive Jehoiada's instructions and implement them (vv. 3-10). As previously discussed, their presence reflects the Chronicler's interest in preserving the sanctity of the temple, and in bringing the story in line with the cultic practices of his intended audience.

6) The People

In 2 Kings 11, the word "people" appears three times by itself (vv. 13, 17a, 17b) and four times as part of the phrase "the people of the land" (vv. 14, 18a, 19, 20). Athaliah comes to the temple because she hears the noise of the guards and the "people" (v. 13).
The "people of the land" rejoice and blow trumpets before the new king (v. 14). In v. 17, Jehoiada makes a covenant between Yahweh, the king, and the "people". Apparently a second covenant is made between the king and "the people" (v. 17b). The "people of the land" destroy the temple of Baal and kill Mattan (v. 18a). Finally, the "people of the land" join the procession, which takes Joash from the temple to the palace (v. 19), and rejoice after Joash assumes the throne (v. 20).

Two literary issues have a bearing on the term "people" in 2 Kings 11: (1) Stade's two source theory and (2) the possible Deuteronomistic redaction of the chapter. Five of the seven references referring to the "people" occur in vv. 13-18a. As mentioned previously, Stade identified these verses as one of two sources found in 2 Kings 11. According to Stade, vv. 1-12 and 18b-20 come from a priestly source, while vv. 13-18a is an interpolation from a popular one. Thus, the historicity of the people of the land's participation as seen in vv. 13-18a is usually dependent upon the date assigned to this "interpolation."

Whereas Stade's theory relegates the people's
presence to an interpolated source, others see it as stemming from the hand of the DtrH. Barre, for example, argues that both the cultic reform (17-18a) and the presence of the people of the land (vv. 14a, 18a, 19a, 20a) are secondary additions to the story. Since the "people of the land" were influential in Josiah's accession, Barre believes that the DtrH injected them into Joash's account in order to legitimate their actions in his own period. Barre's argument for attributing vv. 14a, 18a, 19a, 20a to the hand of DtrH can be summarized as follows:

1. Vv. 17-18a display deuteronomistic language and theology and thus are from DtrH.
2. Since one out of the four references to "people of the land" occur in vv. 17-18a then "we are prompted to consider the possibility that others also originate from him."  
3. Examination of v. 14a confirms this suspicion. The phrase "the people of the land" disrupts connection between subject and verb of clause and the sudden appearance of this group violates the story's logic. 
4. The situation in vv. 17-18a and 14a, lead to an examination of v. 19a and the inference (based on 18a and 4a ) that it is from the same hand. 
5. V. 20a is also suspect because of the similarity of its clause with 14a.

Barre's argument displays a domino effect in its
reasoning. Once vv. 17-18a are labeled "deuteronomistic" then this, in turn, influences the interpretation of the other three verses. What effect does his literary theory have on reconstructing the people's historical role in the coup?

Barré is primarily concerned with the four references to "the people of the land" in 2 Kings 11. Although the three references to the "people" are often viewed as being synonymous to the "people of the land," Barré does not address these directly. To be sure, one of them is found in the portion of v. 17 which Barré ascribes to the hand of the DtrH redactor. This leaves two references to the "people": (1) in v. 13, where Barré translates *əm as "the crowd," and (2) in v. 17, where Barré retains the covenant between the king and the "people" as part of the original narrative. In v. 13, the "people" are in the temple with the guards making the "noise" that Athaliah overhears, whereas in v. 17 they cooperate with Jehoiada in covenant making. Thus, while Barré's drastic excision of secondary material curtails the people/people of the land's role in the literary representation in chapter 11, it does not eliminate them entirely from the narrative stage.
7) All Judah, Nobles, Governors of the People, etc.

As previously discussed in our analysis of 2 Chr 22:10-23:21 (see section A.2.c.), the addition of these groups is tendentious and represents a desire to emphasize the coup's popular support and its far-reaching geographical scale.

If one subtracts from the participants mentioned in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles those who reflect the Chronicler's interests, the following participants remain: Jehoiada, Joash, the Carites and the guards, and the people/people of the land. The historical roles assigned to each of these groups vary according to how modern historians view the coup's essential nature.

b. The Coup's Origins

2 Kings 11 gives no explicit reason for why the coup happened. In their speculations about its causes, historians frequently explore points of antagonism which Athaliah's reign might have evoked. Setting aside Athaliah's gender and morality (which many historians see as contributing but not primary factors) they usually explain the coup in terms of religious, nationalistic, or political factors.
1) The Coup as a Religious Revolt

According to the text, after Athaliah's death "all the people of the land" tore down the house of Baal and killed Mattan, a priest of Baal (2 Kgs 11:18). Although the text never links Jehoiada explicitly with this action, it is often assumed that he was responsible for it. Understood in this manner, the coup becomes an anti-Baal/pro-Yahweh movement led by Yahweh's priest, Jehoiada.

2) The Coup as a Nationalistic Rebellion

Proponents of this position draw attention to the disruption of the Davidic dynasty, which occurred when Athaliah assumed the throne. Understood in this manner, the coup becomes an anti-foreign/pro-Davidide movement aimed at the restoration of legitimate rule in Judah.

3) The Coup as a Political Power Play

Viewing the coup as the result of a power struggle focuses on the professional and personal factors which may have influenced Jehoiada and the priesthood. Logically, one may ask who benefited the most from the coup? The immediate answer, of course, is Joash. While Joash was king de jure Jehoiada ruled de facto.

H. Reviv suggests that the motive of Jehoiada and
the priests is best determined by looking at what he sees as the "change of status and prestige" of the temple of Yahweh.\textsuperscript{121} On the basis of the description of repairs in 2 Kings 12 (= 2 Chronicles 24), Reviv concludes that the temple of Yahweh had fallen into disrepair—perhaps because it had been denied the monies needed for maintenance. The monies, Reviv argues, may have been diverted toward the house of Baal mentioned in 2 Kgs 11:17. In support of this, Reviv cites 2 Chr 24:7, which records that the temple had been broken into and vessels taken to the house of Baal for use.\textsuperscript{122}

A distinction between Reviv's argument and other similar positions which label the coup as a "religious" action is that, for Reviv, the issue facing the priesthood was not primarily religious but political or economical. The Jerusalemite priesthood, he argues, saw the house of Baal emerging as a "center of power in whose benefit interest, income and prestige" were slowly being taken away from Yahweh's temple (and hence, themselves).\textsuperscript{123}

C. Models and Misconceptions

Thus far, we have explored scenarios of Athaliah's
the priests is best determined by looking at what he sees as the "change of status and prestige" of the temple of Yahweh.121 On the basis of the description of repairs in 2 Kings 12 (= 2 Chronicles 24), Reviv concludes that the temple of Yahweh had fallen into disrepair—perhaps because it had been denied the monies needed for maintenance. The monies, Reviv argues, may have been diverted toward the house of Baal mentioned in 2 Kgs 11:17. In support of this, Reviv cites 2 Chr 24:7, which records that the temple had been broken into and vessels taken to the house of Baal for use.122

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C. Models and Misconceptions

Thus far, we have explored scenarios of Athaliah's
reign which paint her as a tyrant, who worshipped Baal, ruled oppressively, and was hated by her subjects. Methodologically, we have suggested that such scenarios are based on three kinds of evidence/argumentation: (1) a straightforward reading and acceptance of the biblical characterization of Athaliah, (2) an analysis of existing textual evidence from the text's point of view, and (3) a "filling in" of the narrative gaps in the accounts by using specific models and assumptions about Judean society and politics. Moreover, we have argued that the way in which historians and commentators "fill in" narrative gaps is shaped by their own assumptions about life in ninth-century BCE Judah. That is, some (with the exception of those like Reviv) operate with assumptions like the following: (1) Judeans were opposed to women in positions of authority (especially foreign women), (2) Judean national religion was exclusively Yahwist (and would have abhorred the Baal worshipping Athaliah), (3) Judah was loyal to David's house and fervently anti-Omride; and (4) Judah's population and leaders were motivated primarily by religious and ideational loyalty.
In chapter two we examined historians' explanations as to what precipitated Jehu's rebellion. Although the list for Jehoiada's coup is not as lengthy as that for Jehu's revolt, there are some striking similarities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jehu's Coup</th>
<th>Jehoiada's Coup</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antagonism towards Omride support of Baalism</td>
<td>Antagonism towards Athaliah's support of Baalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral outrage at Jezebel's atrocities</td>
<td>Moral outrage at massacre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewal of a charismatic ideal of succession</td>
<td>Renewal of Davidic dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power struggle between royalty and aristocracy</td>
<td>Power struggle between royalty and priesthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehu's personal greed and ambition</td>
<td>Jehoiada's personal greed and ambition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, in addition to the above explanations, historians go on to suggest that Athaliah's nationality and gender may well have been contributing factors in her downfall.

Like historians' reactions to Jehu's revolt, reconstructions of Athaliah's reign are dependent upon a combination of evidence, theory and assumptions. We saw this clearly in chapter two when we examined commonly held assumptions about Israelite life and thought. Concepts such as Israel's historical uniqueness, the
primacy of ideational and religious motivation in Israelite activity and Israel's general antipathy towards women were crucial in determining how historians interpreted the "evidence." It should come as no surprise that these same ideas also buttress historians' explanations of Jehoiada's coup.

1. Israel/Judah's Uniqueness Among the Nations

Described previously as the "holy history" approach to ancient Israel, this assumes that Israel and Judah, unlike their polytheistic neighbors, were Yahwist monotheists who would not have tolerated Baalism.

Unlike the explicit role Baalism played in the Jezebel stories, textual connections between Baalism and Athaliah are remarkably slim. In spite of this, historians and commentators alike suggest that it was Athaliah's support of Baalism which was the crucial factor in her demise. The destruction of the Baal temple (v. 18) is seen as evidence of the popular religious fervor which existed in Judah and which supported Jehoiada's coup. Thus, some historians and commentators conclude that: (1) Athaliah was a Baal worshipper who introduced or actively promoted Baalism
in Judah as an official alternative (or substitute) to Yahwism, and that (2) the majority of Judeans would have found Baalism abhorrent enough to support Athaliah's deposition and murder.

Aside from the textual problems concerning the destruction of the Baal temple in 2 Kgs 11:18 (Stade, for example, located this in the "interpolation" while Levin identified the verse as a DtrH expansion), there are a number of logical problems with viewing Baalism as the primary factor behind the coup.

Was Athaliah a zealous Baal worshipper? She is labeled such because the destruction of the house of Baal takes place after her death (presumably indicating the temple's royal protection/patronage?), and because she is related to Ahab and Jezebel, who reportedly worshipped Baal. Frequently discounted or ignored are the facts that Athaliah's name retains a Yahwist element, and that Athaliah does not, as far as we are told, attempt to remove the Yahwists from the temple in Jerusalem. Thus, from the text, it is not really clear whether Athaliah worshipped Yahweh or Baal or Baal and Yahweh.
It is difficult to determine how the Baal temple and its destruction should be understood in connection with Athaliah. When, for example, was it constructed? Who commissioned its building? If Athaliah was responsible, then it might have been either a personal chapel or part of a cult reform. If the temple was built for Athaliah by either Jehoshaphat (her father-in-law), Jehoram (her husband), or Ahaziah (her son), then its significance changes. If built by Jehoshaphat it may have been a gesture to strengthen diplomatic relations between Israel, Judah, and Phoenicia. If Jehoram or Ahaziah built it, it may simply have been an act of duty (political or personal) toward a wife or mother. The problem is that the text is absolutely silent as to when and by whom the temple was built. In spite of this omission, there are textual clues which suggest something of the temple's size (and thus possible function).  

Was the temple part of a cultic reform imposed on Judah by Athaliah? If it was, one would expect the writers to make explicit mention of the fact. In keeping with their polemic against Baalism and their editorial comments concerning Athaliah in her husband
and son's regnal formulas, it would be to their advantage to emphasize it. Instead, the King's text is silent on Athaliah's connections with Baalism. Moreover, the description of the temple's destruction in 2 Kgs 11:18 states that one priest (Mattan) was killed (hardly an impressive vanguard for a national cult reform). Thus the text's description of the event implies that the sanctuary was a small one. Perhaps it served as a chapel for Athaliah or other pro-Phoenician elements in the population.

Would the people have thought that even a small sanctuary was abhorrent enough to warrant Athaliah's deposition and murder? Obviously, if the event is accepted as historical, someone did not approve of its presence. According to 2 Kgs 11:18, it became the object of a thoroughly destructive attack by "the people of the land." Yet the text presents its destruction more as a reaction to--not a motivation for--Athaliah's death. (Once again, in a history which underscores the religious motivations of its actants, it is significant that Baalism is not linked with the coup itself.)

Can we extrapolate from the temple's destruction
that its destroyers were fervent Yahwists? While this is one interpretive option, it is not the only way the temple's destruction can be understood. M. Smith, for example, argues that there is no proof that a "Yahweh alone" party existed in Judah at this time. For Smith, the temple's destruction, coming as it does after Athaliah's death, could simply reflect an outburst of one group's resentment toward the memory of Athaliah.\footnote{227} A more sociopolitical approach, taken by Reviv, suggests that the attack was directed toward the population's pro-Omride faction, which the temple of Baal symbolized.\footnote{228} Thus, neither Smith nor Reviv find it necessary to focus on the destroyers' religious motives to explain the temple's destruction.

2. Primacy of Ideational and Religious Motivation

As mentioned in chapter two, inherent in the holy history approach to ancient history is the methodological corollary of privileging ideational and religious motivation. Persons are seen to act in accordance with, or in contrast to, religious or ideational factors. Take, for example, Jehoiada's status as a priest and his role as the coup's
orchestrator. Does the former imply the motivation for the latter? Should historians and commentators see in Jehoiada's priestly status evidence for understanding the coup's nature?

In interpreting Jehoiada's presence in the coup, much depends on whether one uses religious, professional or personal (or some combination of these factors) as the primary impulse for Jehoiada's actions. Historians and commentators who emphasize religious factors view Jehoiada as a priest of Yahweh, who piously led the coup to rid the nation of Baalism. Yet if one emphasized Jehoiada's professional status, one could just as easily suggest that he either (1) wanted more power for the priesthood, or (2) felt that the house of Baal represented unwanted competition. Still another interpretive option is to identify the personal factors behind Jehoiada's actions. In that case, Jehoiada might emerge as a shrewd, politically clever priest, who was able to manipulate both the priesthood and the court to get what he wanted—a regency with himself as regent.

These three images of Jehoiada—all predicated on his position as priest—obviously do not equally imply that Jehoiada's motives were solely religious ones.
What is surprising is that the text itself never
Jehoiada's pious motives. While one needs to remember
the gap between representation and reality, it is
nevertheless significant—in a history which emphasizes
religious motivation—that Jehoiada's activities are not
more glorified.

Another influential assumption commonly held and
acted upon by historians is that Judah was unwaveringly
committed to the Davidic dynastic principle. A
corollary to this position, as it appears in
explanations of Athaliah's downfall, is that Judah would
have also been fervently anti-Omride. In short, the
fact that Athaliah was an Omride, not a Davidide, would
have been the determining factor which precipitated
Jehoiada's coup.

Arguments supporting the above position usually
incorporate elements of the following argumentation:
(1) the massacre's magnitude reflects the opposing
nationalistic party's strength, (2) the rescue of Joash
and his subsequent six year hiding period reflects the
influence and resources of the nationalistic party, (3)
the guards shifted their allegiance to Joash when
Jehoiada presented the child to them, (4) the "people of the land" in 2 Kings 11 were the nationalist group that supported the Davidic dynasty, and (5) the covenant(s) in v. 17 restored the Davidic covenant interrupted by Athaliah's six-year, illegitimate reign.

According to 2 Kgs 11:4-8, Jehoiada made a "covenant" with the guards, put them under oath, showed them Joash, and explained to them the plans for the coup. No mention is made concerning the guards' loyalty. Not once do the guards challenge Jehoiada's right to organize a coup against the reigning monarch, Athaliah. This "trust" which both sides display towards the other in the text is interpreted as reflecting the guards' united loyalty to the Davidic principle in Judah.

It is interesting to note that the guards are imaged as covenanting and swearing an oath to Jehoiada before he brings out Joash. Unfortunately, we are not told the content of the covenant and oath. Did they establish the guards' personal loyalty to Jehoiada? Did they include some promise of future benefit? Did the guards swear loyalty to the Davidic dynasty (after which it would be "safe" to reveal Joash)? Or did the
covenant and oath imply a more direct, personal loyalty to Jehoiada and the priesthood? The issue is further complicated in that a portion of the guards—the Carites—were probability mercenaries. It is difficult to imagine why mercenaries would choose to support a Judean dynastic principle of Davidic rule over their current loyalty to Athaliah. H. Tadmor notes that the phrasing in the Hebrew indicates that the agreement was not between equals but is that given by special grant to former enemies switching allegiance to a new master. 130

A different type of argument for viewing the coup as basically nationalistic is made on the basis of the presence of the "people of the land" in 2 Kings 11. A. Alt, 131 and E. Wurthwein 132 after him, argued that Judah was polarized into two sociogeographical groups—Jerusalem and Judah ("the people of the land"). The Jerusalemites were not only a distinct political entity from the "people of the land" but were frequently in opposition to these non-Jerusalemites. The latter, by virtue of their proximity to the Judean court, were more subject to the intrigues and power struggles inherent in
court life. Judah's rural population, however, more isolated from the "politics" of court life, remained loyal to the Davidic principle. Thus, according to Alt and Wurthwein, while the Jerusalemites might have supported Athaliah's reign even though she was not a Davidide, Judah's rural population would have opposed her. Supposed "proof" of this tension during Athaliah's reign is seen in the notice following her death in 2 Kgs 11:20a: "So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet...." Alt interprets this last verse as evidence of "the situation which must regularly have arisen between Judah and Jerusalem as a result of such upheavals."133 Thus, the people's presence in 2 Kings 11 is seen to reflect their interest in restoring the Davidic dynasty and becomes evidence that the coup was a nationalistic one.

If the coup in chapter 11 was a popular uprising one would expect the role of the people to be more prominent (since, once again, this would be in keeping with the text's own viewpoint). Instead, they are portrayed as passive throughout the coup and function primarily as onlookers (though apparently sympathetic ones) to the actions of Jehoiada and the military. They
make noise and rejoice (vv. 13-14) and agree to a covenant initiated and mediated by Jehoiada (v. 17). Only in v. 18a, with the destruction of Baal's temple and the killing of its priest, are they imaged as full participants. This destruction, however, takes place after the coup. Thus "the people" in chapter 11 are portrayed as having little to do with the coup, except in acquiescing with what they see taking place and participating in a mob action once Athaliah is dead.

The referent of the expression the "people of the land" is difficult to determine. While some scholars identify it as a technical term for a specific social or political group, others argue that its meaning varies from context to context. Thus, while the people of the land's presence at Josiah's enthronement (2 Kgs 21:24) seems to indicate a specific group with political power, the same is not necessarily true of their presence in the coup in 2 Kings 11. Although the people's participation may have been due to loyalty to David's house, it must be remembered that they are portrayed as a relatively small and passive group. Their only action is essentially to ratify the coup after it takes place.
Thus, while it may be correct to suggest that this group supported the coup out of nationalistic motives, one cannot then, on the basis of the report in 2 Kings 11, conclude that their presence reflects the sentiments of Judah as a whole.

If the presence of the people is, of itself, insufficient evidence upon which to conclude the coup was primarily a nationalistic revolt, then what of the covenant making actions described in v. 17? Should these be interpreted as concerned with a restoration of the Davidic dynasty, and thus the objective of the coup itself?

The biblical text contains only one reference to a king other than Joash who enters into covenant during his accession—King David (2 Sam 5:3). David reportedly made a covenant between himself and the elders of Israel at Hebron. As a result of this agreement, David becomes king over "all Israel" (v. 5). Thus, it could be argued that while the covenant ceremony described in 2 Sam 5:3 marks the acceptance of David's rule over the northern kingdom, it did not necessarily imply acceptance of a Davidic dynastic principle.

There are textual issues which complicate the
statements about the covenant mentioned in 2 Kgs 11:17. As it now stands, the NRSV translation of the verse reads:

Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and people, that they should be the Lord's people; also between the king and the people.

The key issue evoked by this verse revolves around the number of covenants, whom they involved, and what they signified. Much depends on whether one:

(1) accepts the text as it currently stands, (2) decides that v. 17a, with its mention of a covenant between Yahweh and the king and the people, is a gloss on v. 17b, 134 (3) argues that 17b with its mention of a covenant between the "king and the people" is a case of ditto graphy, 135 or (4) views the whole covenant theme in v. 17 as a DtrH addition. 136 The issue is further complicated by the parallel passage in 2 Chr 23:16 which reads, "And Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and all the people and the king."

Opinions vary as to how to interpret the primary concern of the covenant(s?). Some see it as involving (1) loyalty to the Davidic dynasty, 137 (2) a rededication of the people as witnessed in the Sinai
covenant, or (3) the point of view of the writers as to what should have happened after Athaliah's death. Thus, it is not at all clear, let alone persuasive, that the covenant-making in v. 17 should be read as evidence of a coup based on nationalistic interests or concerns to restore the Davidic dynasty.

Regardless of the number of covenants involved in the actions noted in v. 17, it is interesting that the image of covenant operates as a framing device to the coup's literary presentation. Verse 4, which begins the section describing the coup, describes a "cov enant" between Jehoiada and the guards after which Jehoiada makes the guards swear an oath. Likewise, at the conclusion of the coup, which culminates with the death of Athaliah in v. 16, we once again have the theme of covenant making. Placed as it is at two crucial junctures of the story, the theme of covenant presents the coup as an orderly action legitimated by the consent of its participants and Yahweh.

Thus far, we have examined two commonly held positions concerning ninth century BCE Judah as they apply to reconstructions of Athaliah's rule: (1) that
Judah was unique among the nations, and (2) that ideational and religious motives should be seen as the primary factors in explaining political activity in Judah. This brings us to the final assumption pertinent to our study—that women (especially foreign women) were understood to be a potent source of evil.

3. Antipathy Towards Women

We have argued that, to some degree, the characterization and interpretation of Maacah, Jezebel, and Athaliah reflect the writers' own bias against elite foreign woman who publicly wield power. But should this characterization be read as mirroring the general feeling of Athaliah's subjects?

Since the possible impact of Athaliah's nationality on her subjects will be discussed in our next section, let us for now focus our attention on the issue of Athaliah's gender. To what degree does the fact that Athaliah was a woman (1) affect the way in which her subjects probably viewed her, and (2) affect the way that modern historians interpret her reign? To address the first issue we need to examine the position of royal women in ancient Near Eastern politics in general and in Judean politics in particular.
The 18th Dynasty (ca. 1570-1320 BCE) represented a high point in the history of Egyptian Queens. Queen Hatshepsut (wife of Tuthmosis II and stepmother of Tuthmosis III) assumed control upon her husband's death and undertook several building projects (i.e. the mortuary temple at Deir el-Bahri; additions to the Temple at Karnak; etc.). In addition to this, two other queens, Tiy (wife of Amenophis III) and Nefertiti (wife of Akhenaton), are given unusual prominence in both statuary and inscriptive remains.\textsuperscript{139}

Although information is scarce concerning Mesopotamian queens, at least one woman, Ku-baba, achieved the position of queen regent. She reportedly ruled Kish in the 3rd millennium and is the only example of a ruling queen known. Other queens achieved prominence as consorts. Baranamtara (wife of Lugalanda) and Shag-Shag (wife of Urukagina), are mentioned in various Temple records. Wives of the last rulers of Lagash (Early Dynastic Period), they apparently functioned in a cultic capacity. In addition to these examples, two Neo-Assyrian Queens--Sammuramat (wife of Shamshi-Adad V; mother of Adad-nirari III) and Zakutu
(wife of Sennacherib; mother of Esarhaddon)--were active as queen mothers. Sammuramat served as regent for her son Adad-nirari III, while Zakutu was probably influential in getting Esarhaddon, the youngest of Sennacherib's sons, appointed his heir.\textsuperscript{140}

The correspondence of the women at Mari (Old Babylonian Period) provides readers with an unusual glimpse into the world of Sibtu--queen of Mari. Daughter of one king (Yarim-Lim of Yamhad) and wife of another (Zimri-Lim of Mari), Sibtu exerted great influence on the royal court. Though the king retained supreme authority, she often served as his deputy in his absence. As queen it fell within her duties to oversee the palace, supervise court officials, engage in cultic affairs, and serve as the king's representative in both domestic and state matters.\textsuperscript{141}

Hittite queens, titled "tawannannas," also occupied positions of great influence. A tawannanna served as regent in the event of the king's death or as his deputy during his absence. She participated in a broad spectrum of activity--political, military, diplomatic--and could, on occasion, oppose the king. In addition to this, she had a special relationship with the sun
goddess and played an important role in the cult. One of the more notable tawannannas was Paduhepa, wife of Hattusili III, who had her own seal for state affairs.\textsuperscript{142}

There is also cuneiform evidence which suggests that as early as the eighth-century, female rulers in Arab tribes were not unusual. Tiglath-Pileser III, during his campaigns against Syria and Palestine is reported to have received tribute from "Zabibe, the queen of Arabia" and "Samsi, the queen of Arabia."\textsuperscript{143}

Given the fact that ancient Near Eastern women were accepted, on occasion, by their subjects as legitimate rulers, is there any indication that Judean royal women held specific rank and powers like that of their neighboring counterparts?

All but two Judean kings (Jehoram and Ahaz) have their mothers' names preserved in the text. In at least one instance, the mother of a Judean king (Jehoiachin) possessed her own ceremonial attire and throne (Jer. 13:18). Judean kings' mothers also occupied a position of power from which she could be removed. Asa, for instance, found it necessary to depose his mother/grandmother(?), the implication being that she
impaired his cultic reforms (1 Kgs 15:11-13).

Suggestions vary widely as to the origin and function of the queen mother's position in Judah. G. Molin argued that Judah was originally a matriarchal society which came under the influence of the Hittites. In this context, the queen mother functioned to insure the succession of the male regent. H. Donner, while acknowledging Hittite influence, rejected positing a matriarchy in Judah. Rather than viewing the position of queen mother as an indicator of Judah's social structure, Donner identified it as part of Judah's political structure. A. W. Alhstrom takes a different approach by locating the position in the cult. As representative of the goddess, the queen mother participated in Jerusalem fertility rites. Rejecting the suggested social and cultic origins, N. A. Andreasen turns to the world of politics as the queen mother's original location. For Andreasen, the queen mother was a "lady counsellor" whose role is reflected in the motif of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs.

Within the last decade, there have been several attempts by scholars to discredit the notion of a regular position of gebira (lit. "great woman") at
the Judean court. Brenner, for example, argues that there were only three gebira in Israelite/Judean history—Jezebel, Asa's mother and Jehoiachin's mother. (Athaliah, Brenner notes, became a "self-styled" queen, but is never given, in the text, the title of gebira.) Thus Brenner argues that only those women whom the text labels gebira had, in fact, the rank of great "Lady." That is to say, while all mothers of kings were queen mothers, few queen mothers achieved the title of gebira.\(^{148}\)

According to Brenner, only as a queen mother could a woman enjoy an "institutional position of influence in court."\(^ {149}\) Nevertheless, the position of queen mother was a "relatively powerless position." Only in cases of emergency (i.e., the death of the king) could the queen mother assume the sovereign power of a ruler (and then only until male rule was reestablished).\(^ {150}\)

What is especially interesting for our study of Athaliah is that Brenner, having eviscerated the power normally thought to reside in the queen mother's position, is left with the problem of explaining how Athaliah was able to take and hold the throne. Brenner
admits that,

Had she [Athaliah] carried the title gebira, 'Lady,' we might have understood the political meaning of her role better. As it is, we are faced with a problem: when her son died after a short reign of a single year, Athaliah became self-styled queen. She could not have achieved that position without enjoying some measure of political and military support. She therefore must have held a fairly strong position during her son's lifetime, a position which entailed not only the right to advise but also the ability to exercise royal authority.  

Since (1) Athaliah is not called gebira in the text, and (2) Brenner argues that the position of queen mother was relatively powerless, Brenner is forced to view Athaliah as an anomaly—a "clever" and "tough" woman whose "political and organizational skills must have been immense." Thus Brenner, while attacking the idea of a conventional power base inherent in Athaliah's court position, nevertheless arrives at a strikingly strong image of Athaliah as a ruler.

A different approach to the subject of the gebira is taken by Z. Ben-Barak. Unlike Brenner, Ben-Barak collapses the distance between the position of queen mother and the rank of gebira. Ben-Barak then concludes that,

...the...queen mother had no official
political status in the kingdom, and
the mere fact of her being a queen mother
did not bestow upon her any official
political status beyond the honor due to her
by virtue of her position as mother.\textsuperscript{154}

Thus, like Brenner, Ben-Barak attacks the traditional
notion of the queen mother as a position vested with
recognized political power. Unlike Brenner, however,
Ben-Barak is unwilling to admit to even the possibility
that there was a rank (Brenner's "great Lady") which
could, on occasion, be given a woman. Ben-Barak's
argument supporting his conclusion can be summarized
briefly:

(1) there are too few examples of powerful queen
mothers in Judah to draw any conclusions about
the position,
(2) the power ascribed to Bathsheba, Maacah,
Hamutal and Nehusta can be explained in terms
of their personalities, and
(3) each woman's actions should be understood as
having been taken on behalf of a younger son
who was not by right in line for the throne (in
this Ben-Barak draws analogies from other
ancient Near Eastern situations).\textsuperscript{155}

Repeatedly Ben-Barak draws attention to the lack
of material concerning queen mothers in the biblical
text. As one of his key arguments against traditional
assumptions concerning the status and power of the
gebira, Ben-Barak remarks,

First, out of all the queen mothers in Judah
and Israel, only in the case of four do the historiographic texts go into any detail concerning the person of the gebira. Moreover, each of them is connected with the house of David—Bathsheba, Maacah, Hamutal, and Nehushta. It is puzzling, therefore, that scholars should have arrived at their conclusions regarding the gebira on the basis of so sporadic and insubstantial a sample of instances in kind.\textsuperscript{156}

Of course, Ben-Barak can make such a sweeping attack precisely because he has discredited the two most substantial narratives concerning queen mothers—those of Jezebel and Athaliah. These, narratives, Ben-Barak argues, "are not relevant to our concern, since nothing regarding their activity or status has any connection with the function of the queen mother."\textsuperscript{157}

According to Ben-Barak, Jezebel's account should be dismissed because (1) she was a royal princess (and thus her status came from her father not her position as queen mother), (2) her story is found in prophetic sources which are problematic for historical reconstruction, and (3) there is no reference to her status or actions in the capacity of queen mother.\textsuperscript{158} More important, however, is what Ben-Barak does with the Athaliah material:
Concerning Athaliah, her assumption of the throne cannot be regarded as evidence of the political power of the queen mother, and it furnishes no firm ground for a general hypothesis about the high status of the gebira. More likely, this was an act of desperation to which she had been compelled as a descendant of her family. Athaliah's rage and her fears regarding her own destruction at the hands of the God-fearing people of Judah (which did in fact take place seven years later) are entirely understandable in the light of the annihilation of the royal family of the northern kingdom and the murder of her son and all of the brothers of the king.159

Thus, apart from dogmatically stating that the Athaliah materials do not furnish proof of the power of a queen mother, Ben-Barak offers little in the way of substantive proof for his position. The argument that Athaliah's accession may have been motivated by desperation does nothing to challenge the fact that she was, in fact, able to take and secure the throne. One could imagine that a woman might desperately want to become ruler, but unless she had some power base to support that desire, the result would be a foolish, failed attempt, whatever its motivation.

It is difficult to determine from our current state of knowledge--apart from the rare glimpses provided by the text--exactly what the position of queen mother
entailed. What is important, however, is that regardless of how Athaliah came to the throne (i.e., via her position as queen mother or her own skill and ability), Athaliah was able to maintain it for seven years--an indication that, regardless of her gender, she was accepted as ruler for that period.

Our discussion thus far has focused primarily on how Judeans might have felt towards Athaliah's gender. A different focus, however, involves the role that Athaliah's gender plays in modern reconstructions of her reign. For example, why should Athaliah's elimination of her opposition and the securing of her throne (actions which historically have been the normal fare of monarchs) be evaluated in such negative terms by both historians and commentators?

There is, of course, the fact that the text itself labels Athaliah as evil (i.e. the regnal evaluations, the Chronicler's epithet about Athaliah's wickedness). Readers sometimes adopt the text's attitude towards the characters it describes. If it presents a character in a heroic light (i.e. David the ideal king, Solomon the wise) then readers are often predisposed to do the same. When one starts with the premise that Athaliah is evil
(given to readers in the regnal formulas of her husband and son) then it is easy to see 2 Kings 11:1 as evidence of Athaliah's evil, greedy nature. Yet villains, like heroes, are constructs--crafted out of the moral judgment and bias of those who tell their stories.

Secondly, gender differences between a kin slayer like Solomon and one like Athaliah evoke different reader responses. For modern historians (as apparently for many in ancient Israel) women are identified primarily as nurturers. Their image as instruments of life (not death) becomes a key factor in creating a particular viewpoint for understanding the story. If images of "woman as killer" are repugnant, reactions to women killing their children or their children's children, are especially horrific. Even biblical writers, when wanting to portray the extremes to which famine drove its victims, did not choose the image of mere cannibalism (an act horrible in itself) but the specific picture of mothers eating their children (the ultimate of horrors) (2 Kgs 6:24-31). It should therefore come as no surprise that the story of Athaliah's killing of her grandchildren evokes a more
horrified response from commentators than that of Solomon's or Jehoram's reported fratricide. Resulting evaluations of Athaliah as a person are often more emotional and more severe than those accorded male characters who kill their kin. Thus modern negative reactions to Athaliah's actions are based, in part, on typical culturally conditioned responses concerning women.

D. Athaliah, Queen of Judah

In their commentary on 2 Kings, Cogan and Tadmor observe that:

The historical record of the reign of Athaliah (842-836 B.C.E.) is slim; few facts can be recovered from the tendentious narrative in 2 Kings 11.160

This prompts them to conclude that "any number of scenarios can be written" about Athaliah's reign. In this chapter we have explored one type of scenario which emerges frequently from historians and commentators' readings. In it, Athaliah is painted as a tyrant who worshipped Baal, ruled oppressively, and was hated by her subjects.

The reconstruction described above often neglects three important aspects of the report of Athaliah's
Firstly, according to the text, Athaliah ruled for seven years before she was deposed. Regardless of how one reconstructs her rise to power, one must deal with the fact that Athaliah was able to hold on to her throne for an extended period of time. This implies—at the very least—that Athaliah did, in fact, have some type of power base and some way of representing her legitimacy to the people.

Secondly, given the harsh treatment of Athaliah in the regnal formula and the withholding of the framework for her own rule, it is noteworthy that 2 Kings 11 is remarkable restrained in any negative judgment concerning Athaliah. If Athaliah had indeed been the tyrant later interpreters made her out to be, it is difficult to imagine why the writers of this material would have passed up such confirming details of their own perspective. Since none are given this, this silence may (or may not) point to just the opposite.

Thirdly, as for her reign evoking the hatred of her people, it is interesting to note that, according to the text, Jehoiada seemed to be expecting opposition to his coup—opposition which either was not forthcoming or not reported. Twice (2 Kgs 11: 8, 15) Jehoiada
reportedly instructs the guards to kill anyone who either approaches the ranks or who attempts to follow Athaliah. Each reference implies that Jehoiada anticipated problems and wanted to make sure the coup went as smoothly as possible. Moreover, in 2 Kgs 11:18, Jehoiada is said to have posted guards outside Yahweh's temple after the death of Athaliah. Should this be seen as evidence that "the populace was badly split between the two parties" as one commentator suggests or merely that a "contrary-minded minority" existed? The image of Athaliah as a cold blooded tyrant is, we have argued, a mixture of Bible's viewpoint concerning Athaliah, historians' own assumptions (frequently held as axiomatic) about Judean life, and historians' own culturally influenced attitudes towards women. If one challenges these elements, however, it is possible to draw a "different" scenario.

Prior to Jehoshaphat's peace with Omri (1 Kgs 22:44), Judah and Israel had been at war (1 Kgs 14:30; 15:6, 16, 32). During those fifty years it is difficult to imagine Jerusalem accepting a northern queen. By the time of Jehu's revolt, however, North/South
relationships had changed dramatically. Jehoram's marriage to the Northern princess Athaliah was the diplomatic vehicle which ended the prolonged war between Israel and Judah. Subsequently, Omride rule resulted in a period of relative peace and prosperity for both nations. Thus, it is reasonable to suppose that some quarters of Judean society—those that had benefited from Omride rule and trade with Phoenicia—harbored pro-Omride sentiments. Another point to remember is that Jehu's purge of Omrides and Davidides in 2 Kings 9-10 many well have resulted in (1) a Judean anti-Jehu reaction to the slaughter of their king (and princes?), and (2) a wave of loyal Omride supporters who fled southward as refugees. Whereas the first could have created sympathy for the surviving member of the Omride dynasty, the latter would have given support to the pro-Omride sympathizers already in Judah. While there is no way to estimate the size of either group, Athaliah's rule might well have been supported by this pro-Omride/pro-Phoenician segment of the population.

Finally, our studies have shown that it is possible to argue that Athaliah's rise to power indicates she was a politically shrewd leader, who, after ruling
successfully for seven years, was deposed by an ambitious priesthood.

In the end, as Cogan and Tadmor remarked, the evidence is slim and tendentious concerning Athaliah, making any scenario extremely speculative. Does it really matter, then, which one is chosen to represent Athaliah's reign? Yes it does—for two reasons. First of all, since "history" is actually a construct imposed upon the past, historians should constantly revise and reevaluate their reconstructions. Historical knowledge and understanding are in a constant state of flux—changing to accommodate new evidence and to reinterpret old information. To persist in filling the narrative gaps in Athaliah's accounts by using well-worn assumptions which themselves are not based on firm evidence but upon hypotheses (i.e., all Judah was fervently anti-Omride and worshipped Yahweh alone) is to stagnate historical investigation.

Secondly, historians who work with biblical materials need to be ever-mindful of the impact of their own contexts and the importance of these on the manner in which they both read the text and fill in and flesh
out the material with which they work. Earlier in this chapter we mentioned two incidents in the history of the interpretation of Athaliah. Witch hunters and biblically based anti-suffragists alike accepted unquestionably the text's negative imaging of Athaliah. Both added to it their own bias against women in political power. For those who accepted the scenarios these people drew, the accounts of Athaliah functioned as a powerful tool for women's oppression.

In this chapter we have identified and challenged several traditional assumptions about Athaliah and her reign. We explained the massacre in terms of political strategy rather than moral turpitude. More importantly, we suggested that the coup which deposed her was limited in its scope--more like a palace coup than a national uprising. Thus, we have presented the possibility that Athaliah fell victim to the priesthood rather than an outraged populace.

Imaging Athaliah as the victim of an ambitious priesthood spearheaded by Jehoiada also has interpretive implications for the reigns of Joash and Amaziah. As we shall see in the next chapter, subsequent events reported in 2 Kings 12 and 14 seem to support the idea
that Jehoiada was working for his own advancement and that of the Jerusalem temple.
NOTES: Chapter Three

1 The only particulars about Jehoram's reign (outside those given in the regnal formula) are the Edomite revolt, the Judean response by Jehoram, and the Libnah revolt (2 Kings 20-22). Since there is no apparent reason to connect these events with those mentioned in Jehoram's evaluation, one can only speculate on what is being referred to in the evaluation. L. Barre (The Rhetoric, 121), for example, suggests that Jehoram was responsible for building the temple of Baal referred to in 2 Kgs 11:18 and that Jehoram's support of baalism stands behind the condemnation of 2 Kgs 8:18.

2 There are some notable exceptions to this pattern. The age at accession, for example, is missing for Abijah, Asa, and Joash, while the entire formula is missing for Athaliah.

3 Ahaz is the only other Judean king for whom the name of the queen mother is not given. Both Jehoram and Ahaz are said to have walked in "the ways of the kings of Israel." Unlike that of Joash, Ahaz's introduction makes no mention of his wife.

4 The NRSV, NEV, and NIV translate v. 26 as "the granddaughter of Omri." T. R. Hobbs (2 Kings [WBC 13; Waco: Word, 1985] 104) suggests that the term could mean "female descendant" rather than biological daughter. As supporting evidence he cites the analogous broad application of the term "son."

5 This is what probably stands behind the variant texts found in the GL and S. The GL reads "daughter of Ahab" in v. 26 while S reads "sister of Ahab" in v. 18. While each text arrives at a different conclusion as to Athaliah's identity (Athaliah is Ahab's daughter in GL and Omri's daughter in S), both represent an harmonization of vv. 18 and 26.

6 Making a number of assumptions concerning Athaliah (e.g., that she was not the daughter of Jezebel, that...
her birth date was ca. 881/80 BCE, that she was ca. 15 years old when she married, etc.) J. Katzenstein ("Who were the Parents of Athaliah?" IEJ 5 [1955]: 194-97) concludes that Athaliah was Omri's daughter. Omri, according to Katzenstein, died while Athaliah was young (ca. 873/74 BCE) leaving Athaliah to be raised by Ahab and Jezebel. Katzenstein therefore understands the phrase "daughter of Ahab" in v. 18 to reflect Athaliah's childhood in Ahab's court rather than Ahab's literal parentage of Athaliah.

Although T. Ishida ("The House of Ahab," IEQ 25 [1975]: 135-37) approaches the problem differently than Katzenstein, he also concludes that "daughter of Ahab" in v. 18 should be understood figuratively. Ishida argues that vv. 18 and 26 represent qualitatively different information. Although both verses are found in regnal formulas, Ishida identifies v. 26 as primary source material and v. 18 is editorial comment. Ishida thus concludes that v. 26 contains the more reliable tradition. Since Athaliah was Omri's daughter, the phrase "daughter of Ahab" is to be understood as a quasi-designation of the Omride dynasty. If this is the case, then the writer's intention in v. 18 is not to refer to Athaliah's father at all but to underscore her membership in Ahab's house.

7 While "Athalyahu" is used in vv. 1, 3, 13, and 14, the form "Athalyah" appears in vv. 2 and 20.

8 The text is not gender-specific as to the massacre's targets. It is interesting to note, however, that Jehosheba is not imaged as being in danger from Athaliah in vv. 2-3.

9 Hobbs (2 Kings 133) reads "stepsister" instead of "sister" and argues that Jehosheba and Athaliah were not related by blood. However, since we do not know whether Athaliah had a daughter or if Athaliah was Jehoram's only wife, Jehosheba's relationship to Athaliah is impossible to determine. On the basis of the unusual way in which the text mentions the relationship between Jehoahaz and Amaziah, Cogan and Tadmor (II Kings, 126) conclude that both may have been children of the same mother--Athaliah.
10 Literally, "stole him away" (see Gen 40:15; Ex 21:16; and Dt 24:7).

11 G reads "her brother" for "Ahaziah."

12 MT reads 3rd person masculine plural--"they hid him" while G, S, and V read the 3rd person feminine singular--"she hid him."

13 Some versions of G omit the term "Yahweh," understanding the building to be the palace instead of the temple.

14 Barré (The Rhetoric, 88 n. 68) suggests that the number seven refers to the minimum age necessary for accession. Although this is an intriguing idea, he presents no evidence to support his theory.

15 2 Kings 11 describes Jehoiada as "the priest" (vv. 9, 10, 15, 18), "Jehoiada the priest" (v. 15), or simply "Jehoiada" (vv. 4 and 17). Many Gk mss add to v. 4 the title "the priest" in keeping with the reference in v. 9. 2 Chronicles 24:6 refers to Jehoiada as "the high priest." Cogan and Tadmor (II Kings, 126) suggest that Jehoiada's abrupt introduction may be due to the story having been "part of a longer one in which the priest was previously mentioned."

16 Every verb in these verses has Jehoiada as its subject.

17 The identification of the Carites is difficult. While they are twice mentioned in 2 Kgs 11: 4, 19, the only other MT reference is the reading preserved in the ketib of 2 Sam 20:23. The Carites are often identified with either the Carians or the Cherethites. (See G. Robinson, "Is 2 Kings XI 6 a Gloss?" VT 27 [1977] 56-61.

The Carians were an asiatic people who served as mercenaries. Herodotus (II, 152-52) mentions that Psammeathchos of Egypt (663-609 BCE) employed "Carians from Cilicia" as his bodyguards. Hobbs (2 Kings, 139) argues against the Carite/Carian identification, because he feels it "improbable that the Judean court would have entertained the notion of foreign troops so close to the..."
seat of power." Moreover, both Hobbs and Cogan and Tadmor (II Kings, 126) challenge the linguistic basis of this association.

The Cherethites, frequently mentioned with the Pelethites, were a part of David's personal army, possibly recruited from among the Philistines, and led by Benaiah (2 Sam 8:18/1 Chr 18:17). They accompany David when he flees Jerusalem (2 Sam 15:18), are part of the armed forces who pursue Sheba (2 Sam 20:7), and are present at the anointing of Solomon (1 Kgs 1:38, 44). Both Ezek 25:16 and Zeph 2:5-6 locate their home on the seacoast and associate them in some way with the Philistines.

18 Translated literally, the term used for "guards" means "runners." In 2 Sam 15:1, fifty go before Absalom's chariot and horses. They also precede Adonijah when he declares himself king in 1 Kgs 1:5. In both instances, the term seems to refer to an escort which may have served as a protective vanguard. At least twice they are portrayed in close proximity to the king. In 1 Sam 22:17, they stand around Saul while in 1 Kgs 14:27 they keep "the door of the king's house." In both cases, they appear to function as the king's bodyguards. Apparently they carried out executions. In 1 Sam 22:17, Saul orders them to kill the priests at Nob (but they refuse in this instance), while in 2 Kgs 10:25, Jehu orders them to kill Baal's priests. In exilic and post-exilic usage, the term eventually came to mean simply a "courier" (Jer 51:31; Job 9:25; 2 Chr 30:6, 10; Esth 3:13, 15; 18:10, 14).

19 This covenant appears to be distinct from that found in v. 17 (the latter, according to Cogan and Tadmor [II Kings, 127] "expressing mutuality between partners of equal status").

20 No mention is made as to why the guards would have been willing to switch their allegiance from Athaliah to Jehoiada before being presented with the "king's son."

21 Aside from the mention of his proper name in v. 2, Joash is referred to as the "king's son" or the "king" in the rest of 2 Kings 11.
Opinions as to how many divisions took part in the coup depend upon how one approaches the textual history of vv. 5-8.

If v. 6 is a gloss, then the third in v. 5 and the two divisions (or remaining two thirds) in v. 7 equal the total contingent. This interpretation, first proposed by Wellhausen, suggests that during the week two divisions guarded the palace while a third guarded the temple. On the sabbath this arrangement was reversed (two divisions guarding the temple while one guarded the palace) (J. Wellhausen, in F. Bleek, Einleitung in das Alte Testament [Berlin: Reimer, 1878] 258 n.1.). For a summary and critique of his position see G. Robinson, "Is 2 Kings:" 56-61.

If v. 7 is a gloss, then the third in v. 5 should be read with the two-thirds in v. 6 (C. Levin, Der Sturz der Königin Atalja [SBS 105; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1982] 32-36). If vv. 5-7 are rearranged to read 5, 7, 6, then the problem is solved. The two divisions mentioned in v. 7 are given logistical directions in v. 6 (A. Sanda, Die Bücher der Könige [Münster: Aschendorffscher Verlag, 1912] 124ff.).

Another suggestion is that vv. 5-9 refer to two groups containing six sections. In v. 9, two groups are specified as obeying Jehoiada's instructions: those coming on duty on the Sabbath and those going off duty. However, no specific commands are given to these two groups in the previous verses. This omission is rectified if the groups in v. 9 are identical to the ones in v. 7. Thus, those going off duty were divided into three sections (vv. 5-6) and were joined by their relief (also divided into three sections). This would make two groups with six sections who were present at the coup (G. Robinson, "Is 2 Kings," 59-61).

Or perhaps vv. 5-7 refer to two groups containing five sections. The first group mentioned in vv. 5-6 are those coming off duty. This group was divided into three sections. The second group—those coming on duty—was divided into two sections (v. 7). This explains the reference to two groups in v. 9, and would reflect a total of five sections (M. Rehm, Das Zweite Buch der Könige [Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1982] 115-16).

A final suggestion is that v. 7 needs emendation.
G. Robinson ("Is 2 Kings," 60) proposes to emend v. 7 to agree with v. 9 on the basis of the Chronicler's addition in 2 Chronicles 23. Thus one would read:

...both the detachments of you, all those coming in on the sabbath with those going off on the sabbath, shall keep the watch of the house of Yahweh for the sake of the king.

23 This corresponds to his leadership role the in the previous section.

24 Cogan and Tadmor (II Kings, 128) identify them as the ones taken from Hadaezer and brought to Jerusalem (2 Sam 8:17). They suggest that the weapons served as symbols of Joash's legitimacy and the continuation of the Davidic principle.


26 All verbs in vv. 13-14 have Athaliah as their subject.

27 In 2 Kings 11, the word "people" appears three times by itself (vv. 13, 17a, 17b) and four times as part of the phrase "the people of the land" (vv. 14, 18a, 19, 20). Athaliah comes to the temple because she hears the noise of the guards and the "people" (v. 13). The "people of the land" rejoice and blow trumpets before the new king (v. 14). In v. 17, Jehoiada makes a covenant between Yahweh, the king, and the "people". A second covenant is made between the king and "the people" (v. 17b). The "people of the land" destroy the temple of Baal and kill Mattan (v. 18a). Finally, the "people of the land" join the procession which takes Joash from the temple to the palace (v. 19) and rejoice.
after Joash assumes the throne (v. 20).


28 See v. 15.

29 Targ and S read "they cleared a way for her," while G and V imply that she was forcibly removed from the temple.

30 This gate was located east of Ophel and provided access to the Horses Entrance which led into the palace complex (Cogan and Tadmor, II Kings, 130).

31 A number of suggestions have been made as to the number and nature of this covenant activity:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Covenant Type</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>single covenant</td>
<td>Yahweh / King &amp; People</td>
<td>(von Rad)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People / King</td>
<td>(Noth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twofold covenant</td>
<td>Yahweh / People</td>
<td>(McCarthy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>King / People</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32 Two significant changes from the Kings text are found in v. 7: (1) instead of "Judah" (2 Kgs 8:19), v. 7 reads "the house of David," and (2) instead of "for the sake of David his servant," v. 7 has "because of the covenant which he had made with David."

33 Notable difference are: (1) Ahaziah's age at accession (42 in Chronicles instead of the 22 in Kings), (2) the addition of the words "he also" in v. 3 to link Ahaziah's story to that of his father, Jehoram, and (3) the phrase "for after the death...their counsel."

34 Scholars' opinions vary as to the veracity of this hitherto unknown information concerning Jehoiada. Williamson (1 and 2 Chronicles, [NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982] 314-15) admits that this might represent the Chronicler's attempt to justify Jehoshabeath's presence in the
Temple, or merely guesswork as to how Jehoiada came to protect the infant king. Williamson also suggests that the Kings text is defective at this point.

35 Those mentioned are: Azariah, the son of Jehoram; Ishmael, the son of Jehohanan; Maaseiah, the son of Adaiah; and Elishaphat, the son of Zichri. It is important to note, with Williamson (1 and 2 Chronicles, 315) that all of these names "with the exception of the otherwise unattested Elishaphat" are "found elsewhere in priestly or Levitical lists." This underscores the Chronicler's emphasis on the temple's sanctity by providing the coup with ecclesiastical guards rather than military ones.

36 For a discussion of this addition see A. Schoors (OTS 20; 1977) pp. 93f.

37 See B. Stade ("Anmerkungen," 275-97), Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 416-18), Gray (I & II Kings, 565-69, etc.

38 See C. Levin and L. Barré.


41 Montgomery and Gehman, Kings, 418.

42 Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 418) insist that vv. 13-18a contain "true history."

43 Gray, I & II Kings, 568.

44 Gray, I & II Kings, 568.

45 Levin, Der Sturz, 79.
Levin, *Der Sturz*, 95.

Levin, *Der Sturz*, 95.

Levin (*Der Sturz*, 18-19) identifies these as:

v. 6  "Und ihr sollt die Wache des Hauses...halten."
v. 13 "der Trabanten"
v. 15 "den Befehlshabern des Heeres"

Levin, *Der Sturz*, 16.

Levin's (*Der Sturz*, 19) "bundestheologische" layer is:

v. 14  "Und das ganze Volk des Landes freute sich und
stiess in die Trompeten."
v. 17  "zwischen Jahwe, dem König und dem Volk, dass es
Jahwes Volk sein solle, und"
v. 18  "Da kam das ganze Volk des Landes in den Tempel
des Baal und zerstörte ihn. Seine Altaere und
seine Götzenbilder zerbrachen sie gründlich. Und
Mattan, den Priester des Baal, erschlugen sie
vor den Altaeren."

Levin, *Der Sturz*, 95.

Levin, *Der Sturz*, 59-77.

Levin's (*Der Sturz*, 18-19) "priesterliche"
layer is:

v. 3  "Und er war bei ihr im Hause Jahwes sechs Jahre
lang versteckt"

v. 4  "und ließ sie zu sich in das Hause Jahwes
kommen...und ließ sie schwören im Hause
Jahwes"

v. 5  "die am Sabbat den Dienst antreten"

v. 7  "Und zwei Abteilungen unter euch, alle, die am
Sabbat vom Dienst abtreten, sollen Wache halten
im Hause Jahwes bei dem König."

v. 8  "und seid bei dem König, wenn er auszieht und
wenn er einzieht!"

v. 9  "Da taten die Hundertschaftsführer nach allem,
was ihnen der Priester Jojada befohlen hatte,
und nahmen ein jeder seine Leute, die am Sabbat antretenden samt den am Sabbat abtretenden, und kamen zum Priester Jojada."

v. 11 "von der südlichen Seite des Hause bis zur nördlichen Seite des Hauses vor dem Altar und dem Hause"

v. 12 "Und er führte den Prinzen heraus und legte ihm das Diadem und das Gesetz auf"

v. 13 "und kam zum Volk in das Haus Jahwes"

v. 15 "Und der Priester Jojada befahl den Hundertschaftsführern...und sagte zu ihnen: 'Führt sie hinaus in das Innere der Reihen, und wer ihr folgt, ist mit dem Schwert zu toten!'"

54 Levin, Der Sturz, 29-57.
55 Levin, Der Sturz, 95.
56 Levin's (Der Sturz, 18-19) "frühchronistische" layer is:

v. 10 "Und der Priester gab den Hundertschaftsführern die Speere und die Kocher des Königs David, die sich im Hause Jahwes befanden."

v. 15 "Denn der Priester hatte gesagt: 'Sie soll nicht im Hause Jahwes getotet werden.'"

v. 18 "Und der Priester stellte Wachen auf beim Hause Jahwes"

v. 20 "Atalja aber hatten sie in der königlichen Burg mit dem Schwert getotet."

57 Barré, The Rhetoric, 4-8.
59 Barré, The Rhetoric, 52.

Liverani, "L'histoire," 447-450. See also the stories of Mattiwaiza and Bentesina.


Hoffmann, Reform, 104-113.

Hoffmann, Reform, 112.

Hoffmann, Reform, 104.

Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 312-13;


Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 315.

A. Brenner, The Israelite Woman: Social Role and Literary Type in Biblical Narrative (JSOT Suppl, 21; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985) 97.

Brenner, Israelite Woman, 88.

Brenner, Israelite Woman, 115-18.

See Brenner, Israelite Woman, 106-121; C. V. Camp, Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs (Decatur: Almond, 1985), etc.

Brenner, Israelite Woman, 111-14.

Such a reconstruction, however, is highly speculative.

Heinrich Institor (Kraemer) and Jakob Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum, 1486. As cited in Women and Religion: A Feminist Sourcebook of Christian Thought, Elizabeth Clark and Herbert Richardson, eds. (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) 123.

Orestes A. Brownstone, "The Woman Question," 1873. As cited in Up From the Pedestal, Aileen S. Craditor,


82 Noth, The History, 237.

83 Bright (A History, 252) suggests that Athaliah's insecurity prompted the murders described in 2 Chr 21:2-4. See also Ishida ("The People," 25) who remarks that "undoubtedly, Athaliah, his wife, actively participated in the oppression [of Jehoram's brothers].

84 Noth, The History, 236.

85 Bright, A History, 252.


87 MacLean, "Joash," 2.910.


90 Ginsberg has in mind the report of Jehu's murder of the princes in 2 Kings 10. In a similar vein, C. Levin (Der Sturz, 83-90) argues that Jehu—not Athaliah—massacred the brothers of Joash. Thus, 2 Kgs 10:13-14 contains a variant account of the massacre which is to be preferred over 2 Kgs 11:1-3.

91 Ginsberg, "The Omride-Davidide," 91.

92 Ginsberg, "The Omride-Davidide," 92.

93 Ginsberg, "The Omride-Davidide," 92.

94 Ginsberg, "The Omride-Davidide," 92.
H. Reviv, "On the Days of Athaliah and Joash," Beth-Mikra 47 (1971) 541-48 (Hebrew). T. Ishida (The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel [BZAW, 142; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1977] 160) agrees that the massacre was very "selective" and it is "probable" that Athaliah gave consent to Jehosheba's role as foster mother. Ishida, however, insists that subsequently Athaliah did usurp control of the throne from Joash.

Ginsberg, "The Omride-Davidide," 91.

Soggin, A History, 213.

Soggin, A History, 213.

Miller and Hayes, History, 303-4.

Miller, A History, 303-4.

Barre, The Rhetoric, 54.

Barre, The Rhetoric, 54.


See Gray, I & II Kings 565; Jones, 1 and 2 Kings 475, 477-478; T. Ishida, "The People," 25ff.; etc.


See Hobbs (2 Kings, 144): "Athaliah's behavior following the news of her son's death provides an insight into her character which is predictable, given her ancestry." See also Katzenstein, "Who Were the Parents," 194-97.

In 2 Chronicles 24:6 he is called the "high" priest.

The account describes him as "the priest" (vv. 10, 15, 18) or "Jehoiada the priest" (v. 15) or simply "Jehoiada" (v. 17). Thus, the majority of references to
Jehoiada in ch. 11 emphasize his priestly position.


112 Barre, *The Rhetoric*, 141.


115 Barre, *The Rhetoric*, 28-29


117 According to Barre (*The Rhetoric*, 27-28) "Jehoiada had taken special precautions to reveal his plans to a select few...Now 'people of the land' suddenly emerge...as initiated participants."

118 Ishida ("People," 28), for example, says that "undoubtedly Jehoiada's initiative was behind" the destruction.

119 Montgomery and Gehman (*Kings*, 417) refer to the coup as a "popular uprising in the name of the national God--fanatical, as ever since in the history of monotheism."

120 Herrmann (*History*, 224) remarked that "this priest at the Jerusalem sanctuary regarded himself as the guardian of the Davidic tradition." Adherents of this position do not discount the coup's reportedly religious dimension. Ishida ("People," 28) for example, notes that:

The main purpose of the rebellion was the restoration of the Davidic line. From the ideological point of view, it was inseparably connected with the purge of Baalism...

121 Reviv, "The Priesthood as a Political Pressure-
Group in Judah," in Beiträge zur Erforschung des alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang) 205.


123 The actions ascribed to Jehoiada in 2 Kings 11 raise an interesting question as to the political activity of the pre-exilic priesthood. L. Rost ("Der Status des Priesters in der Königszeit," in Wort und Geschichte, Festschrift für Karl Elliger, AOAT 18 [Kirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer, 1973] 151-56) argues that the priesthood's political influence was limited and that Jehoiada was the exception to the rule. Reviv ("Priesthood," 105), however, suggests that the priesthood functioned as a "political pressure-group" in Judah where it was "deeply involved and thoroughly integrated in affairs of state, society and economy." Thus, assuming that Judah was no different than its neighbors, Reviv argues that Judah's priesthood, "like similar institutions in the Ancient Near East and elsewhere," had its political dimension.

124 According to Hobbs (2 Kings, 138), Athaliah's name is a combination of the Hebrew verb "to grow large," "to become exalted" and the divine name "Yahweh."

125 Josephus (Ant. 9.154) records that the temple was built by Athaliah and Jehoram.

126 Gray (I & II Kings, 580) interprets the temple's implied size as evidence that Athaliah had little success in implementing her cultic reforms. Such a conclusion, however, is predicated on there being a reform in the first place. It is more probable that the smallness of the sanctuary was due to the select nature of its clientele.

127 Smith, Palestinian Parties 37-38.

128 H. Reviv ("The Priesthood," 205) sees the temple as representing the life-style and accomplishments of the privileged echelon of Judean society (those who benefited from international trade with Phoenicia—officials, courtiers, merchants, etc.).
129 The note in 2 Chr 23:3 concerning Jehoiada's linking of the covenant with the Davidic principle should be read as the Chronicler's attempt to fix clearly the coup as a restoration of legitimate Davidic rule.

130 Cogan and Tadmor, *II Kings*, 127.


134 The phrase "and the king and the people" is missing from 2 Chr 23:16, GL and some miniscules of G to v. 17.

135 This is commonly done on the basis of its reflecting Dtr terminology.


137 Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, 486.


142 G. W. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite*

143 ANET, 283.


149 Brenner, Israelite Woman, 17.


151 Brenner, Israelite Woman, 29.

152 Brenner, Israelite Woman, 30-31.


154 Ben-Barak, "Status," 34.


160 Tadmor and Cogan, II Kings, 134.

161 Gray (I & II Kings, 567) argues against seeing the coup as simply the work of a minority. For Gray the priests in the account are "leaders of public opinion." Nicholson ("The Meaning," 62) also views the coup as a "national revolution."

162 Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 417) suggest that religious motives influenced "an intense minority," who were then able to "mass the populace to its colors for the actual crisis." Ishida ("People," 28) also argues against seeing the coup as initially a "national revolution." Instead, Ishida refers to it as a "court rebellion" which gained the support of the people.
CHAPTER FOUR

JOASH

The coup that deposed Athaliah also placed Joash of Judah on the throne. In general, we know little about the pre-exilic priesthood's relationship to Judah's rulers. For this reason, 2 Kings 12 (with its account of palace/temple affairs) provides readers with an important glimpse into the power relationships of ninth-century BCE Jerusalem.

A. The Biblical Materials on Joash

1. 2 Kings

2 Kgs 12:1-22 [Eng 11:21-12:21] contains the account of the reign of Joash of Judah. While vv. 1-4 and 20-22 present the customary regnal framework, vv. 5-17 and 18-19 are the narrative accounts of two events that reportedly took place during Joash's reign.

a. Vv. 1-4

Vv. 1-4 contain the introductory regnal formula for Joash, King of Judah. In the seventh year of Jehu (King of Israel), Joash (son of Zibiah of Beersheba) began his forty year reign (v. 2). Joash does "right in the sight of the Lord all his days" for Jehoiada is his teacher
(v. 3). This praise is qualified, however, for the people are still permitted to sacrifice and burn incense at the high places (v. 4).

b. Vv. 5-17

Joash's first recorded act as king is to order the temple's repair (v. 5). The priests are entrusted with the task and given specific instructions concerning its financing (vv. 5-6). By the twenty-third year of Joash's reign, however, the Temple is still in disrepair (v. 7). Joash questions both Jehoiada and the priests concerning their failure and once again issues orders (vv. 8-9).

Jehoiada initiates a new fund raising project for the repairs (v. 10) aided by the "king's secretary" (v. 11). The money received is turned over to the supervisors, who use it to pay various workers (i.e., carpenters, builders, masons, stonecutters) as well as to buy materials necessary for the repair work (i.e., timber, quarried stone, vv. 12-13). The money is not used, however, to make vessels of gold or silver (i.e., basins of silver, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, etc.). Nor is an accounting required, for the supervisors "dealt honestly" with the money (vv. 14-16).
Two specific monies—the guilt and sin offerings—are not brought into the temple, for these belong to the priests (v. 17).

c. Vv. 18-19

Whereas vv. 5-17 are concerned with the allocation of temple finances for repair work, vv. 18-19 deal with the role temple finances play in Judah's international affairs. Hazael, king of Syria, captures Gath and makes plans to move toward Jerusalem. Joash "persuades" Hazael to turn aside from his plans by offering tribute gleaned from the temple (i.e., votive gifts of previous kings, etc.).

d. Vv. 20-22

The account of Joash's reign concludes with a report of his death in vv. 20-22. V. 20 and the latter part of v. 22 contain the standard concluding formula used by the editor to frame each Judean king's reign. V. 21 and the first part of v. 22, however, describe a conspiracy by Joash's servants (Jozacar, the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabab, the son of Shomer), which results in Joash's death. No motivation for their actions is given.
2. 2 Chronicles

As in the case of Athaliah, the Chronicler's account of Joash both supplements and contradicts that found in Kings. Isolated details found in 2 Chronicles 24 but not found in 2 Kings 12 include: Jehoiada's procuring two wives for Joash and the subsequent mention of Joash's sons and daughters (v. 2), the temple's defilement by Athaliah's "children" (v. 7), and the motivation for the conspiracy (v. 25). Complete blocks of material unique to 2 Chronicles include: the account of Jehoiada's death (vv. 15-16), Joash's subsequent worship of idols (vv. 17-19), and the murder of Zechariah (vv. 20-22).

The Chronicler's report of the reign of Joash contradicts the Kings' account at four points. First, the positive evaluation of Joash is limited to "all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (v. 2) rather than extended to "all his [Joash's] days" (2 Kgs 12:3). Second, details of the temple's repair differ as to: those responsible for the repair (the priests and the Levites, v. 5), those responsible for its initial failure (the Levites, v. 6), the source of its financing (the Mosaic tax, v. 6), and in the making of utensils of
silver and gold for service the temple (made from unused repair money, v. 14). Third, the conflict with the Syrians is portrayed as an actual military engagement rather than as a mere threat. The Syrians "came up against" Joash and killed the princes of the people (v. 23). Due to the apostasy of Joash, Judah's army is "delivered" into the hands of the Syrians (v. 24). Moreover, Joash is severely wounded by the Syrians (v. 25). No mention is made of any attempt by Joash to offer tribute. Finally, the servants named in the conspiracy are different. In Chronicles it is two men of foreign origin--Zabad, the son of Shimeath the Ammonite, and Jehozabad, the son of Shimrith the Moabite--who kill Joash (v. 26).

3. The Nature and Integrity of the Joash Materials

a. Kings

2 Kings 12 can be divided into two types of materials: (1) the introductory and concluding regnal formula (2 Kgs 12:1-4, 20-22) and (2) narratives concerning Joash's reign (the accounts of the temple repairs in vv. 5-17 and Hazael's march on Jerusalem in vv. 18-19.)
As mentioned previously, the regnal formulas in Kings are a literary framing device constructed by the DtrH who, combining editorial evaluations with older archival (?) materials, fashioned a structure which encompassed the narrative events of each ruler's reign.

As for vv. 5-17 (the account of the temple repairs), scholars have suggested that it was written by either a priest or a court historian. Often the choice between these options is made on the grounds of whether or not vv. 5-17 are understood as being pro- or anti-priestly in tone.

If vv. 5-17 are understood as being pro-priestly, then it is thought that this ideological stance reflects the verses' priestly origins. Thus, Wellhausen argued that vv. 5-17 were part of an independent temple history, which was later incorporated into the DH. Other commentators, however, have suggested that vv. 5-17 are from a larger history of Judah written by the priests and may represent archival material from the temple.

On the other hand, when vv. 5-17 are understood as being markedly anti-priestly, then scholars have been
predisposed to look towards the royal court for the author's location. Montgomery and Gehman, for example, after identifying what they felt was a "royal rebuke of the priests" in the text, concluded from this that the writer could not have been a "temple annalist." We will come back to this issue later in this chapter.

Regardless of whether or not vv. 5-17 are from the hands of a priest or court historian, the DtrH has now incorporated this material into the regnal framework and thus underscored its literary importance for the presentation of Joash's rule.

The account of Hazael attack on Jerusalem (vv. 18-19) presents the same type of interpretive problem found in vv. 5-17. On the one hand, it deals with kings and proposed battles--the expected fare of court historians. On the other hand, it also deals with the temple and how Joash appropriated its treasury--material dealing with priestly matters.

b. Chronicles

As we saw in our previous comparison between 2 Kings 12 and 2 Chronicles 24, there are enough similarities between the two accounts to point to the Chronicler's dependence on Kings. Some of the
differences, however, are so marked that they raise the questions of whether the Chronicler was dealing with a radically different version of Kings, or had sources not available or not used by the author of Kings.

B. Jehoiada, Joash and the Temple

Since little is known about the pre-exilic priesthood, historians draw their operating assumptions about it from passages like 2 Kings 12. De Vaux, for example, assumed that Judean monarchs were the priesthood's "patrons." J. Morgernstern argued that Judah's monarchs were priest/kings wielding both secular and sacred powers. He concluded,

\[
\text{All religious authority centered in him [the king], and all the priests throughout the land, at all the sanctuaries, recognized this authority unquestioningly.}
\]

Both De Vaux and Morgernstern assume that kings controlled the priesthood. Both read 2 Kings 12 as an example of how Joash subdued an unruly/corrupt priesthood. We will argue, however, that 2 Kings 12 provides us with a portrait of a politically powerful priesthood—a priesthood who controlled, challenged and may even have attacked a Judean ruler. To examine this interaction between priests and king, it is necessary to
explore four areas: (1) Joash's personal relationship to Jehoiada, (2) temple/palace relations concerning the temple's repairs, (3) temple/palace relations concerning international matters, and (4) the attack on Joash. This will be followed by an excursus, in which we conclude our look at the priesthood by exploring possible traces of its activity during the reign of Joash's son, Amaziah.

1. King Joash and Jehoiada the Priest

According to 2 Kgs 12:3 (Joash's introductory regnal formula), Jehoiada was the boy-king's tutor/regent(?). The Chronicler adds to this meager description by further identifying Jehoiada as: (1) Joash's uncle by marriage (2 Chr 22:11), (2) the procurer of Joash's two wives (2 Chr 24:3), and (3) the primary reason why Joash does "right in the sight of the Lord" (2 Chr 24:2).

The image of Jehoiada as the primary positive influence on Joash is suspect because of the schematization of Joash's reign. Only the Chronicler divides Joash's reign into a "good" period (when Jehoiada was alive) and a "bad" period (after Jehoiada's
This evaluation reflects the tendentious interests of the author who emphasizes the importance of priests and their influence on royal policy. Moreover, it privileges religious factors over others in evaluating Joash's kingship. This is not surprising given the Chronicler's interpretation of Joash's reign vis à vis Joash's supposed "apostasy" (2 Chr 24:18). The Chronicler's history thus displays a simplified moral patterning.

According to the Chronicler, Jehoiada died when he was 130 years old (v. 15) and was buried in the city of David among the kings because he had done "good in Israel, and for God and his house" (v. 16). Immediately following Jehoiada's death, the "officials of Judah came and did obeisance to the king" (v. 17).

Jehoiada's age (130 yrs.) is, of course, immediately suspect. Rather than interpreting it literally, it is better to see it as a literary device highlighting Yahweh's favor on Jehoiada's life. Jehoiada's burial place (in the royal tombs) raises a different kind of problem. Either his burial place, like his age, represents the Chronicler's attempt to magnify Jehoiada's memory, or the evaluation in v. 16b
is the Chronicler's theological interpretation of an accurate historical memory—Jehoiada's burial in the royal tombs. If Jehoiada was regent (as well as the king's uncle) then his inclusion in the royal tombs is possible.

Another curious episode recorded only by the Chronicler is the story of Joash's apostasy (2 Chr 24:17-19). True to the Chronicler's previously discussed agenda, Joash is portrayed as pious as long as Jehoiada is alive. When Jehoiada dies, Joash and the princes of Judah reportedly forsake Yahweh for the worship of idols and Asherah. What is intriguing, however, is that the Chronicler says that the princes came to offer obeisance to Joash after Jehoiada's death. Curtis views this move as "a revolt of the nobility against the hierarchy," while Reviv thinks the action was definitely "anti-priestly" and possibly occurred only after Jehoiada's death. Possibly the death of Jehoiada represented a shift in the balance of power in Judah as will be discussed below.

2. Financing Temple Repairs (2 Kgs 12:5-17)

Aside from the regnal formulae (vv. 1-4; 20-22), 2
Kings 12 describes two events which pertain to Joash's dealings with the temple. Vv. 5-17 focus on financing temple repairs, while vv. 18-19 concern temple revenues and international negotiations.

Cogan and Tadmor view 2 Kgs 12:5-17 as "further evidence of the prominent role played by Judah's monarchs in the affairs of the country's main sanctuary." Citing Joash's commands in v. 5, Hobbs also concludes that in "the period before the exile it appears that the King was the superior of the Jerusalem priesthood." Before conclusions can be drawn from vv. 5-17, however, the material must be examined in detail with three considerations in mind: (1) What is the point of view from which this story is being told? (2) Does the text itself image Joash in "control" of the priests? (3) What is the significance of this story for reconstructing historical relationships between priests and kings in pre-exilic Judah?

Although the general concern of 2 Kgs 12:5-17 is the repair of the temple, the account is more interested in describing the financial arrangements than in the repair itself. These arrangements fall into two
narrative sections, vv. 5-9 (the first attempt) and vv. 10-17 (the second attempt). In each section it is important to examine carefully: (1) the characterization of the actants, (2) the monies specified for financing the repairs, and (3) the significance of the proposals' failure/success for the storyline.

a. The First Attempt (2 Kgs 12:5-9)

1) The King

Joash's actions in vv. 5-9 signal a change in his characterization. In 2 Kgs 11:1-12:4, Joash is a passive figure, never speaking or acting on his own accord. In 2 Kgs 12:5-9, however, Joash initiates the repair project, specifies the monies to be used, and delegates responsibility for their collection and distribution of the latter (vv. 5-6). No time frame is given for this command other than the note that by Joash's twenty-third year the repairs had not been done (v. 7). When the repair work fails, it is Joash who once again issues orders (v. 8). The twofold imperative in v. 6 is echoed in the verbal pattern in v. 8. Thus vv. 5-9 portray the king as one who acts with authority, expecting to be obeyed.20
2) The Priests

The role of the priests in vv. 5-9 likewise reflects a radical change in their imaging. Whereas the priesthood (represented by Jehoiada) is in control in 2 Kgs 11:4-12:4, in vv. 5-9 they appear under royal control. Joash addresses them and orders them into action in vv. 5-6, while in v. 8 they are summoned, interrogated, and once again receive royal orders.21

3) The Monies

Identification of the proposed repair monies is difficult. In v. 5, the term "money" occurs four times, each time with qualifying information:

- the money offered as sacred donations that is brought into the house of the Lord
- the money for which each person is assessed
- the money from the assessment of persons
- the money from the voluntary offerings brought into the house of the Lord

Scholars generally agree that...
refers to a distinct source of income (voluntary offerings). It is more difficult to discern the number and nature of the other sources. Suggestions range from two to four sources of income based on the syntactical analysis of the verse.

Those who see two sources of income in v. 5 usually analyze v. 5 along this pattern:

- money offered as sacred donations = summary statement
- money for which each person is assessed = SOURCE OF INCOME
- money from the assessment of persons = gloss defining previous phrase
- money from the voluntary offerings = SOURCE OF INCOME

The sources themselves are usually defined in two broad categories: obligatory taxes and voluntary offerings. Cogan and Tadmor, the NEB and the NAB see three sources in v. 5:

- money offered as sacred donations = summary statement
- money for which each person is assessed = SOURCE OF INCOME
- money for the assessment of persons = SOURCE OF INCOME
- money from the voluntary offerings = SOURCE OF INCOME

Although Cogan and Tadmor, the NEB, and NAB agree as to
the number of sources, they differ concerning the identification of the types of money. 23 Alternatively, the NRSV arrives at three sources by treating the "money offered as sacred donations" as a separate source, and "the money for the assessment of persons" as a definition of the previous phrase.

Another position differs from the above in that it discerns four sources of income in v. 5:

- Money offered as sacred donations = SOURCE OF INCOME
donations
- Money for which each person is assessed = SOURCE OF INCOME
- Money for the assessment of persons = SOURCE OF INCOME
- Money from the voluntary offerings = SOURCE OF INCOME

Hobbs, 24 who argues for the above analysis, identifies these four sources as: money for the making and purchase of temple utensils, census taxes, taxes levied against those who offered their services to the temple, and voluntary offerings.

The identification of finances for the repairs is further complicated by the phrase in v. 6, which the NRSV translates - "let the priests receive, each from his donors." To what money does this phrase refer? A common approach is to translate יָּדָעָה in a relational or
vocational sense. That is, the priests are to collect money from a person or group of people. Suggestions as to the identity of the givers vary from either a "friend," "client," or "benefactor" to a class of temple personnel (i.e., "business assessors," "treasurers," or "temple tellers"). An alternative is to identify the term with the verb "to sell." Translated this way, it would indicate the priests' personal funds, rather than those collected from others. If the latter interpretation is correct, then vv. 5-6 refer to two general types of income: money brought to the temple for its upkeep (v. 5) and money which constituted the personal income of the priesthood (v. 6).

4) The Attempt's Failure

According to the text, by the twenty-third year of Joash's reign, no repairs work on the temple had taken place. V. 7 is all the more striking for the terse way it reports the priests' failure. No explanation is given. Nor do the priests offer one when interrogated by Joash (v. 8).

Thus, while the king's actions and speech in vv. 5-
6 imply his royal control and authority, v. 7 reveals that his commands were ignored, his authority defied. While the priests' silence in vv. 5-6 implies their submissiveness and passivity, v. 7 indicates that their preference, not the king's, finally won out. This conflict of wills between king and priests is further developed in vv. 8-9.

In v. 8, Joash commands the priests to hand over their personal income for the repair work. In response, the priests agree to stop taking money from the people, and not to aid in repairing the temple (v. 9). The key to understanding this exchange lies in what Joash "demands" and what the priests "agree" to do.

V. 8 reports that Joash attempted to get them to utilize their personal income—a source of income which the king had hoped would be targeted for the repairs. If the mentioned in v. 6, then it was already a source of income which the king had hoped for repair work. In response to this demand the
priests are portrayed as suggesting a compromise. 37
First, the priests agree to take no more money from the
people. The "money from the people" -- refers to those monies mentioned in v. 5, that is, the
monies contributed directly to the temple rather than to
the priests individually. These monies, previously
targeted by Joash for the repair work, would now be
made available.

Secondly, the priests agree not to repair the
temple. This is interesting because the account never
says that Joash commanded them to relinquish this
task. What was implicit in their lack of action now
becomes explicit in their speech. They "agree" to
remain firm in their refusal to oversee the repairs.

Thus, the account of the first attempt to repair
the temple in 2 Kings 12 ends with a defiant priesthood
willing to make only limited concessions, a king who
issues commands which are largely ignored, and a temple
still in need of repair.

b. The Second Attempt (2 Kgs 12:10-17)
1) The King

The king's absence is conspicuous in 2 Kgs 12:10-
17. Joash's name is never mentioned. Not once does he utter a word nor appear on the narrative stage. His only representation is an official--"the king's secretary"--who helps gather the money and distribute it (vv. 11-12).

2) The Priests

In contrast to v. 5, it is Jehoiada who now takes control. With the priests, Jehoiada sets up a box to collect money (v. 10) and then distributes the money with the help of the king's secretary to the supervisors (vv. 10-11).

3) The Attempt's Success

The second attempt at financing the temple repairs is apparently successful. It is initiated by Jehoiada and uses only the monies contributed directly to the temple (v. 10)--that is, only those monies previously agreed upon by the priesthood (v. 9). The priests' personal income (v. 17) is not used as requested by Joash (v. 8). In other words, the repair work is reportedly accomplished when a priest initiates the action (not the king) and on the priests' terms (not those outlined by royal decree). Far from showing Joash's power over the priesthood, the success
in 2 Kgs 12:10-17 reveals the priesthood following its own determined program and acting independently of the king.

The above analysis of vv. 5-17 suggests that Joash was not in absolute control of the priesthood. Instead, the temple repair is portrayed as the result of negotiations in which priests and king reach a compromise and operate on that basis.

2 Kgs 12:5-17 (aside from the information it preserves about the temple's fiscal affairs) reports a power struggle between the temple and the palace. While Solomon's temple (if it had not been repaired before this) might well have needed the repairs Joash ordered, one could hypothesize that, standing behind the issue of repairs, is Joash's attempt to "shake off" the shackles of priestly domination. It is difficult, however, to move from the stories in 2 Kings 11-12 to a description of the nature and role of the priesthood in pre-exilic Judah. Whether the priesthood's activities in these chapters should be seen as simply Jehoiada's assumption of or genius for leadership or the "norm" for priest/king relations remains a question open to further
research. At the very least, however, 2 Kgs 12:5-17 stands as a warning to historians against assuming that priestly submission and passive obedience to the palace were normal in pre-exilic Judah.

As for the charge that 2 Kgs 12:5-17 is hostile towards priests, such arguments are usually based on: vv. 7-9 (the exchange between Joash and the priests), vv. 14-15 (the restriction on making vessels of silver), and v. 16 (the comment on the workers' honesty).

In v. 8, Joash asks the priests: "Why are you not repairing the house?" Although no answer is forthcoming in the text, commentators and historians have speculated as to why the priests had not carried out Joash's command. This priestly "failure" is usually explained with reference to their corruption⁴¹ or to Jehoiada's inability to manage them in his old age.⁴² In other words, the failure of the first attempt and Joash's subsequent question to the priests is often interpreted as a critique of the priesthood. It was, after all, the priests' "duty" to obey their king—a duty which they "failed" to carry out. But did the priesthood during this period agree with this definition of their duty? Or did Jehoiada's position as kingmaker and regent
propel the priesthood into a position from which they could negotiate with Joash? H. Reviv views the priesthood's refusal to repair the temple as evidence of the power that they had attained in Jerusalem. This interpretation is supported by our analysis of these verses. If this is a correct reading of the passage, then vv. 7-9 are not "anti-priestly" at all. It is not the priests' failure they describe, but Joash's failure to impose his royal will on the priesthood.44

As for the restriction on making silver vessels (vv. 14-15) and the comment on the workers' honesty (v. 16), neither section (by itself) displays a negative attitude towards the priesthood. Accusations that the priests had been overspending on temple utensils, or manipulating the silver content are purely speculative. If one wishes to speculate on the reason for the restriction on the vessels, one just as easily hypothesize on the desire of the administration to economize (especially in the wake of Hazael's treatment). One could even suggest that the text indicates the magnanimity of the priests since nothing was spent on the items they would have used
personally. Yeivin suggests that, since repairs were underway at the time Hazael threatened Jerusalem (vv. 17-18), vv. 14-15 describe the austerity which was necessary after the stripping of the temple and palace for Hazael's "tribute." Viewing the comment on the workmen's honesty in v. 16 as a sarcastic allusion to vv. 7-9 only makes sense if the failure in vv. 7-8 is the result of priestly embezzlement or some other dishonest practice. If, as we have argued, it is defiance rather than dishonesty which is implied in vv. 7-9, then there is no basis upon which v. 16 can be seen as hostile to the priesthood.

At least two features of vv. 5-17 argue for its priestly origin. First of all, the detail in which the temple finances and repairs are described reflects an interest in temple affairs one might expect to find in priestly circles. Secondly, the characterization of the priesthood and Joash implies a priestly perspective. Whether the story was originally part of the temple archives or a larger literary history about the temple is difficult to say with any certainty.

3. Temple Monies and International Politics
2 Kgs 12:18-19 contains a report regarding Joash and Hazael of Syria. According to the text, Hazael, fresh from a victory over Gath, set out to besiege Jerusalem (v. 18). In an attempt to placate Hazael, Joash reportedly offered him treasures from both palace and temple. The amount of detail concerning the tribute is striking when compared to the brevity of the campaign itself. Joash reportedly sent Hazael: (1) all the votive gifts given by Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, and himself, (2) all the other treasure found in temple, and (3) all the treasure found in the Palace. After receiving the treasure, Hazael "went away from Jerusalem" (v. 19).

The report in 2 Kings 12 tells us little about Hazael's actual campaign. It says nothing, for example, about when the battle took place. At least four dates have been suggested: (1) soon after the temple reform,51 (2) after the death of Shamsi-Adad V (811 BCE),52 (3) before Adadnirari III reduced Damascus (i.e., before 806 BCE),53 (4) near the end of Joash's reign. Options (1) and (2) locate the invasion at a time when it is assumed Syria would have been relatively free from immediate Israelite or Assyrian opposition (i.e., during
the chaos following the death of Jehu in Israel or Shamsi-Adad V in Assyria.). Option (3) simply provides a terminal point for the campaign. If Adadnirari's campaign to the west in 806 BCE (ANET, 282) attempted to reverse the gains reportedly made by Hazael in 2 Kings 12:18, then Hazael's campaign must be placed before 806 BCE.

In addition to providing no information about the time of Hazael's invasion, 2 Kgs 12:18-19 does not specify the location of Gath nor why Hazael would have been there. R. A. S. Macalister, for example, identified the Gath of 2 Kgs 12:18 as the Gath in Philistia, while Mazar argued that Gittaim (Ras Abu-Hamid), not Gath of Philistia, is what Hazael reportedly captured. According to which location one envisions, Hazael could have been interested in: (1) securing access to trade routes (i.e., the western terminal towards Gaza), (2) subjecting the territory to his south in case of renewed hostilities with Assyria, (3) aiding a neighboring ally, Philistia, and/or (4) reducing Judah by cutting off Jerusalem from the important city of Lachish. Any, all, or a combination of the above reasons might have caused Hazael to mount a campaign...
like the one reported in the text.

In other words, we have very little "hard" information about the campaign itself. Moreover, the account in Chronicles differs significantly from that in Kings. According to the Chronicler, instead of buying off Hazael, there was a battle between the Syrian and Judean forces. Jerusalem was defeated, the princes of the land killed, and Joash wounded. True to his sin and punishment schema, the Chronicler interprets this defeat as divine retribution for the sins of the princes (v. 17) and the king. Thus the difference between the Chronicler's account and that found in Kings is so marked that scholars have suggested that they represent separate, irreconcilable accounts. As to which is more historically reliable—the account in Kings or in Chronicles—opinion remains divided.

Vv. 18-19 is of special interest in light of the role played in the account by the temple treasury. In Kings there are references to 3 monarchs who placed gifts in the temple: David (1 Kgs 7:51), Abijam (1 Kgs 15:15), and Asa (1 Kgs 15:15). These three, along with the four mentioned in 2 Kgs 12:19 (Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah,
and Joash) represent all but two of the Judean kings who reigned prior to Joash. With such treasures the temple furnished a tempting target for invading looters. According to 1 Kgs 14:25-26, Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and looted the treasuries of both palace and temple. Later, during the reign of Joash's son, Amaziah, the temple was sacked again by Joash, king of Israel (2 Kgs 14:14).

The temple on occasion provided a source of ready capital for Judean kings. King Asa, for example, reportedly dipped into temple cofferers to "persuade" Ben-hadad of Syria to attack Baasha, King of Israel (1 Kgs 15:18-19). The actions of Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:8) and Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:14-16) echo this practice of using temple treasures for international purposes. The latter, in search for valuables to use as tribute, reportedly scraped the gold off the Temple doors.

Given our reconstruction of the events behind 2 Kgs 12:1-17, one might expect some note about the priests' reaction to Joash's actions, yet none occurs. A number of reasons might be proposed to explain the silence of the text at this point: (1) unlike the previous section, this account probably stems from state archives...
and is not interested in what the priests thought about Joash's actions, (2) Jehoiada might have been dead by this time and priestly opposition less vocal (although no date is given for his death, the Chronicler places it before the invasion), or (3) Joash's actions might have had priestly support, given the alternative of Hazael sacking the temple as he invaded Jerusalem. Whatever the reason, the report is silent as to what the priests thought of Joash's removal of temple funds.

4. The Conspiracy

According to 2 Kgs 12:21-22, the last episode noted about Joash, the king was "struck down." Vv. 21-22 identify the attackers by name and occupation. They were Jozacar (the son of Shimeath) and Jehozabad (the son of Shomer) "servants" of Joash. Even the site of their crime is given: the attack took place in "the house of Millo, on the way that goes down to Silla" (v. 21). There, we are told, Joash was attacked (and killed?). In fact, vv. 21-22 include all the ingredients of a good mystery: a victim, two alleged attackers, and a scene for the crime. Only one small, but important, detail is missing--motivation. Assuming
the attack was not the random act of two deranged servants, what might have motivated these men to turn on their sovereign?

Once again, the Chronicler supplies us with information not found in Kings. After Jehoiada's death, Zechariah ben Jehoiada confronted Joash (2 Chr 24:20-22) with the message that Yahweh's blessing had departed from him. In response, Joash has Zechariah put to death in the temple courtyard. According to the Chronicler, it was Zechariah's death which lay behind the conspiracy against Joash (v. 21). While the Chronicler's theological assessment of the event is suspect, the causal linking of the attack on Joash with the priests' antagonism is interesting.63

The alleged confrontation between Zechariah and Joash would be consistent with our reconstruction of the priesthood's activities during the Athaliah-Joash period. After Jehoiada's death, it is quite possible that his son attempted to exert the same kind of power over Joash that his father had enjoyed. According to the Chronicler's story, Zechariah met his death in his power struggle with Joash. If this contains any accurate tradition whatsoever, then it could be an
indication of why the priesthood was dissatisfied with the king they helped put on the throne.

From the biblical tradition about Joash's reign, one could hypothesize at least three possible reasons why discontent with his rule could have led to an attack against him: (1) the loss of temple and palace funds to Hazael, (2) the quarrel with the priesthood over temple finances for repairs, and (3) the death of Zechariah. All three involve, in some manner, palace/temple relations. It is for this reason that, when we look for those responsible for the attack on Joash, we find the priesthood the most likely candidate. Reviv argues persuasively that only the priesthood was:

...hostile to such an extent and ready to go to extremes in order to regain its positions or at least to prevent their further encroachment.64

According to Reviv, the attack was "inspired" by the priesthood.65

The above discussion suggests that Joash came to the throne as a result of a coup organized and supported by priests. A priest (Jehoiada) probably served as regent during the king's childhood. After reaching adulthood, Joash and the priesthood became engaged in a
power struggle, of which the struggle over temple repairs is a microcosm. In this phase of the confrontation, a compromise was reached in which the priests dictated the terms. After Jehoiada died, his son Zechariah succeeded him. In a bold, but fatal move, Zechariah attempted to establish control over Joash and was subsequently executed. At some point in Joash's reign, Hazael threatened Jerusalem and received tribute from Joash. This, along with the other clashes between Joash and the priests, might well have prompted the priesthood to remove the king they had placed on the throne.

5. Excursus: Judean Politics in the Aftermath of Joash

An important factor in understanding the reigns of Athaliah and Joash is the role played by the priesthood in Judean politics. If the Athaliah/Joash period is viewed against a backdrop of priestly influence and manipulation, then the question can be reasonably asked: What happened to the power which the priesthood exerted during this period? Is there any evidence pointing to its activity following the deposition of Joash?

After the death of Jehoiada and his son Zechariah,
there is some indication that the priesthood tried to continue its influence in Judean politics. Two events in the reign of Joash's son, Amaziah, raise this possibility: his accession (2 Kgs 14:1-6) and his assassination (v. 19).

2 Kgs 14:1-6 contains the introductory regnal formula for Amaziah, King of Judah. According to v. 5, Amaziah had to get power "firmly in his hand" before dealing with his father's attackers. The reader is made aware of this almost as an aside--as if to explain why the criminals were not brought to justice sooner. Thus, v. 5 implies that Amaziah's accession and his exercise of royal authority were not easy.

Amaziah's was not the only "troubled" accession in Judah's history. 1 Kings 1-2 records the account of Solomon's rise to the throne. Before David dies (1 Kings 2), he advises Solomon concerning troublesome factions at court (i.e., Joab, etc.). Solomon does all that his father suggests and more, killing his brother Adonijah in the process. At the conclusion of this machiavellian account, the narrator remarks, "So the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon" (2:46c).
1 Kings 1 reveals why Solomon needed to "establish" his kingdom. The royal court was divided into two parties—those who supported Adonijah and those who preferred Solomon. Regardless of David's fiat proclaiming Solomon his heir, Adonijah and his followers were considered a threat to Solomon. Thus Solomon had to "establish" his throne (i.e., execute or banish his rivals) before it was secure.

While 2 Kings 14 contains no reference to hostile factions within Amaziah's court, the "securing" of his throne implies their existence. Who might they have been? Although the text is silent, there are clues which point to the identity of Amaziah's opponents. Joash had been attacked by his "servants." If our prior reconstruction is correct, his "servants" were either in the employ or under the influence of the priesthood. Joash's removal, while addressing the immediate cause of irritation, would not have resolved the power struggle between the temple and the palace. Either the residual tension concerning Joash may have attached to his son, and/or the priesthood may have preferred another (younger) son of Joash as king. Miller suggests a third possibility, that Amaziah's Davidic legitimacy
might have been in question:

Were there other claimants to the throne--perhaps candidates who raised questions about Joash's legitimacy? Possibly the inner circle of leadership in Jerusalem knew all along that Joash was an imposter and allowed him to rule as a figurehead until he began asserting too much independence.

According to the text, Amaziah was free to deal with his father's attackers only after he had firmly gained control of the government and secured his rule. Thus, the trouble surrounding Amaziah's accession could point to the possibility of an attempt, perhaps priestly inspired, to influence Judah's succession process. Can the same influence be detected in the subsequent assassination which ended Amaziah's rule?

The concluding regnal formula for Amaziah is found in 2 Kgs 14:17-22. Like the last fifteen years of his life, Amaziah's death is shrouded in mystery. V. 19 states that "they" conspired against Amaziah in Jerusalem. When he fled to Lachish, "they" sent after him and killed him. To whom is the writer referring? Is it possible to see the hand of the priesthood in this assassination?

The problem with identifying Amaziah's assassins
with the priesthood is that the text provides us with a number of additional groups who also may have had reason to kill Amaziah. Possible "assassins" could easily have come from one of the following groups:

a. The Court/Palace

According to the text, the families of his father's killers were still alive. Amaziah's defeat at Bethshemesh might have given them courage to act. Military leaders too could have had reason to want Amaziah's death.

b. The Temple

Joash of Israel looted the temple when he sacked Jerusalem. The priesthood may not have looked kindly on Amaziah's failure to protect the house of Yahweh and the cost that his indiscretion placed upon the temple.

c. The People

Judah suffered defeat and humiliation during Amaziah's kingship. It is not unlikely that many of Judah's populace harbored anti-Amaziah sentiments.

d. The Royal Family

If, as a result of the defeat at Bethshemesh, Amaziah was taken captive and Ahaziah appointed regent in his father's stead (v. 21), then after his release,
Amaziah may have tried later to reclaim his throne. The text never mentions Ahaziah putting to death the men responsible for Amaziah's death. Perhaps Ahaziah was somehow connected with his father's murder.

The problem is that there are too many suspects and too few clues. Any (or a combination) of the above groups could have supported the killing of Amaziah. Since Amaziah's death took place at least fifteen years (if not more) after the battle of Bethshemesh, however, it is likely that he was killed for one of three reasons: (1) some group harbored a longstanding grudge against Amaziah, or (2) the cumulative effect of Amaziah's failures was too much for the people, or (3) Amaziah committed some act towards the end of his life which is not recorded in the text (i.e., a bid to recover the throne) which prompted the assassination.

While we feel confident in ascribing the "trouble" Amaziah had at his accession to the priesthood, the priesthood's role in Amaziah's assassination (if any) is no longer discernible from the evidence available.
NOTES: Chapter four

1 The references contained in this chapter follow the Hebrew versification.

2 Wellhausen (Composition, 293ff.) suggested that the Temple History contained part of the Athaliah account (2 Kgs 11:1-12, 18b-20), materials concerning Ahaz’s changes (2 Kgs 16:10-18), Josiah’s reform (2 Kgs 22-23), the temple’s final plundering (2 Kgs 25:13-17), and perhaps parts of 1 Kings 6.

3 Gray, (I & II Kings, 583) also suggests that the work may have originated from a priest during the post-Josianic period.

4 Hoffmann (Reform, 118-25) argues that vv. 18-19 are derived ultimately from temple archives.

5 Montgomery and Gehman, Kings, 426.


7 J. Morgenstern ("A Chapter in the History of the High-Priesthood," AJSL 55 [1938] 5-6), for example, argues:

Throughout the entire pre-Exilic period, from David to Zedekiah...the king discharged likewise the functions of chief or high-priest. The evidence for this, while not overabundant and detailed, is still adequate to establish the matter convincingy.


9 According to the text Joash was seven years old when he became king. This number naturally raises suspicions. Aside from Liverani’s study which draws attention to the literary significance of the seventh year in accounts of usurpations, 2 Kings 11-12 is replete with "sevens." In the seventh year of Athaliah’s reign, a coup is carried out which places the "seven" year old Joash on the throne. This takes place,
incidently, in the seventh year of Jehu's reign (Hobbs, 2 Kings, 150). In spite of doubts as to the actual number, there is no reason to question Joash's relative youth and need for a regent. While Joash is the youngest (?) king whose accession age is given, two other kings are said to be twelve years old or younger when they became king—Josiah (eight years old, 2 Kgs 22:1) and Manasseh (twelve years old, 2 Kgs 21:1).

10 This identification (attested by Josephus, Ant. ix. 141) is accepted by Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 418); Hobbs (2 Kings, 138); and J. M. Myers (II Chronicles [AB 13; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965] 131): Gray (I & II Kings, 570) views it as "very probable," while Jones (1 and 2 Kings, 477) agrees with Williamson (1 and 2 Chronicles, 315) that the relationship "may contain a reliable tradition."


12 Old age is often seen as a sign of Yahweh's blessing (E. L. Curtis and A. A. Madsen, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles [ICC; New York: Schribner's, 1910] 437; Myers, II Chronicles, 138; Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 322.)

13 Curtis and Madsen (Chronicles, 437) views both age and burial site as "delightful touches of the Chronicler to the honor of the priest."

14 R. B. Dillard (2 Chronicles [WBC 15; Waco: Word, 1987] 192) remarks, "By virtue of his [Jehoiada's] regency over his young ward, Jehoiada was somewhat a priest/king, and he is given a royal burial among the graves of the kings...." Myers (2 Chronicles, 138) too accepts the burial place as authentic—a sign of the honor accorded Jehoiada by the nation.

15 McKenzie (The Chronicler's, 104) notes that this is in keeping with the Chronicler's periodization schema.

16 Curtis and Madsen, Chronicles, 437.
Although the Chronicler's story is different at several points, Joash's aggressive image remains the same (see 2 Chr 24:4-7).

The Chronicler includes the Levites in his account in 2 Chr 24:4-7 (see vv. 5-6). This is in keeping with his tendency to emphasize their role in temple affairs (McKenzie, The Chronicler's, 110). Apart from this, the imaging of the priests is similar to that in Kings.

See Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 428-49), Gray (I & II Kings, 584-85), and Jones (1 and 2 Kings, 490-91).

Cogan and Tadmor, II Kings, 135-37.

Hobbs, 2 Kings, 152.

Deriving the word from nakar, "to be familiar", "to recognize", i.e. an "acquaintance" (RSV). It is hard to imagine, however, priests collecting money only from their friends.

NAB.

Deriving the term from makaru (Assyrian), "to give abundantly" suggesting a "benefactor". Sanda (Konig, II.140) envisions here the devout within assigned districts.

Deriving the term from mkrm (Ugar.), a class of persons listed with other types of temple personnel (Cf. Gordon, Textbook II, texts 81, 82, 113). If this is the case, it is the only mention of such a group in the OT.

Gray (I & II Kings, 586) suggests these "assessors" were responsible for the selling of the sacrificial animals and possibly the investment of
Temple monies.

30 NIV.

31 Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 429) have in mind the "moneychangers" who appear later in the Jerusalem temple (i.e. Mt 21:12, etc.).


33 Hence the NEB's translation "from his own funds." See also Hobbs (2 Kings, 146), "let each priest take from his income."

34 See Wright "MKR," 438-44. The Chronicler's account differs in that it envisions only one source of money--the "tax levied by Moses" (2 Chr 24:9). In this the Chronicler has in mind the half-shekel tax mentioned in Ex 30:11-16 and 38:25f. This is in keeping with the Chronicler's attempt to draw a parallel between the Tabernacle and the temple (Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 321).

35 The Chronicler assigns all the failure to the Levites (2 Chr 24:5).

36 See Hobbs (2 Kings, 153), "you shall take no monies from your incomes."

37 The Chronicler omits all negotiations between the priesthood and the king.

38 Jones (1 and 2 Kings, 491) admits this "goes a step further than what was originally demanded in v. 7."

39 The Chronicler's account differs markedly from that found in Kings. In 2 Chr 24:8 the king orders the chest made and works with Jehoiada in the distribution of the funds (v. 12). Later, when the work was finished, the unused money was brought to the king and Jehoiada to be made into utensils (v. 14). The making of silver utensils contradicts the note in 2 Kgs
12:14. These changes are in keeping with the Chronicler's desire to minimize the friction existing between priest and king at this point in the narrative. It is not until Jehoiada dies that the Chronicler admits to a tension between the two parties.

Gray (I & II Kings, 586) views the presence of the "king's secretary" as proof that Joash attempted to "reassert his royal authority."

Montgomery and Gehman, Kings, 426.

Gray, (I and II Kings, 586).

Reviv, "Priesthood," 207.

Reviv, "Priesthood," 207.

Miller (History, 304) for example, remarks that:

Apparently the matter was handled haphazardly and, without any accountability, the collected funds had been misused or embezzled.

See Montgomery and Gehman (Kings, 428) and Jones (1 and 2 Kings) 491. This suggestion is unconvincing in light of their obedience elsewhere (2 Kgs 12:10-11). It is the Chronicler who holds Jehoiada responsible for the Levite's failure (2 Chr 24:6).

This idea was suggested by J. H. Hayes.

S. Yeivin, "The Divided Kingdom," WHJP (Jerusalem: Masada, 1979) 156.

Hobbs, 2 Kings, 154.

Jones, 1 and 2 Kings, 488.

Jones, (1 and 2 Kings, 495) suggests a date after 815 BCE, while B. Maisler (Mazar) ("Gath and Gittaim," IEJ 4 [1954] 230) suggests after 814 and Gray (I & II Kings, 589) after 813.
52 This alternative date is suggested by Gray (I & II Kings 589) and Jones (1 and 2 Kings, 494).

53 Gray, I & II Kings, 589.

54 R. A. S. Macalister, Excavations in Palestine During the Years 1898-1900 (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1902) 63-68.


56 Myers, II Chronicles, 138-39; Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 325.

57 Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 325.

58 Curtis and Madsen, Chronicles, 439.

59 The MT reads: "Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer." Since Jozabad and Jehozabad are variants of the same name, the RSV, following other manuscript witnesses, emends the first name to "Jozacar." The parallel account in 2 Chr 24:26, however, identifies him as "Zabad, son of Shimeath the Ammonithess." While the difference in names is usually attributed to textual corruption (Williamson, 1 and 2 Chronicles, 326) the identification of his Ammonite ancestry is largely thought to reflect the Chronicler's polemical interests. For the source of the Chronicler's names, see M. P. Graham, "A Connection Proposed Between II Chr 24,26 and Ezra 9-10," ZAW 97 (1985) 256-58.

60 The Chronicler identifies him as "Jehozabad the son of Shimith the Moabitess" (2 Chr 24:26).

61 The text here is very corrupt. See Jones (1 and 2 Chronicles, 496) for a list of translation options. The Chronicler has Joash being killed "on his bed" (2 Chr 24:25). This is in keeping with his report that Joash was wounded in a battle with the Syrians.

62 J. H. Hayes and P. K. Hooker (A New Chronology for the Kings of Israel and Judah [Atlanta: John Knox, 1988] 46) suggest that Joash was severely--but not
fatally--wounded during the attack. Since the verb "to attack" or "to wound" is used in v. 22 instead of "to kill" (v. 21), and the later form of נֳָוַּֽוּ is Qal sing, not hiphil pl. (v. 22), they conclude that an unsuccessful assassination was attempted but the king was only wounded. They argue that, while the wounded Joash was forced to abdicate his throne, he lived on for at least ten years. In their opinion, the attack was motivated by the desire to place a stronger, more nationalistic figure upon the throne.

63 Although the Chronicler's theological interpretation is immediately suspect, the causal linking of the attack on Joash with the priests' antagonism is considered by some as historically reliable (See Gray, I & II Kings, 590; and de Vaux, Ancient Israel, II:377.

64 Reviv, "The Priesthood," 208.


66 Miller, History, 305.
CONCLUSION

Writing history is never easy. But it is possible and it is important. In chapter one we addressed the epistemological dilemma inherent in narrative history. While the problem remains unresolved, we affirmed three basic observations: (1) History writing is not optional. (2) Historians must do the best they can with the evidence available. (3) History writing involves imagination and risk taking.

In chapter two we examined the two analytical strategies best suited for examining the accounts of Athaliah and Joash: inferential and rhetorical/poetic logic. Both are intrinsic modes of investigation and are useful for periods where extra-biblical verification is limited, if not impossible. In addition to this, we discussed how historians' models and assumptions shape their reconstructions. We did this by examining Jehu's revolt, the incident which precipitated Athaliah's rise to power. Four assumptions stood out as especially influential:

(1) that history is shaped by divine interaction and response;
(2) that Israel was "different" (more moral,
ethical and spiritual) than its neighbors; 
(3) that Israel's political fortunes were dictated by its faith experience; and,
(4) that women abuse power and are a bad influence on men.

We argued that these assumptions shape many historians' working models of Israel's life and religion and thus influence the way that they interpret the textual evidence.

In chapter three we identified and challenged traditional interpretations of Athaliah and her reign. Most notably, the massacre in 2 Kgs 11:1 is explained in terms of political strategy rather than moral turpitude. (This is not do say that massacres are moral. It simply recognizes that evaluations of politically motivated killings are dependent upon the reporter's vantage point.) Another important area of interpretation involves the coup and its participants. We suggested that the coup was limited in its support, more like a palace coup than a national uprising. The alternative scenario in chapter four thus images Athaliah as a politically shrewd queen, who fell victim to the priesthood's ambitions.

Chapter four interprets Joash's reign in light of a politically powerful priesthood. Instead of viewing the
temple repairs account as Joash's triumph over the priesthood, it portrays Joash as an essentially weak king--able only to wrest a compromise from the priesthood that he challenges. Moreover, we suggested that there is a strong possibility that ultimately Joash fell victim to a priestly inspired conspiracy.

From the methodological study and reconstruction of Athaliah's and Joash's reign in this dissertation we can make several observations.

First of all, even though current narrative theory challenges the enterprise of writing history, history writing is not only justified but mandatory. Moreover, literary techniques honed by recent attention to narrative theory can aid historians in their reconstruction activity.

Secondly, when it comes to the Athaliah-Joash materials, it is necessary to realize the extent to which many modern historians and commentators accept the biases and interpretive themes of the biblical materials and the way that these control subsequent reconstructions of Athaliah and Joash's reigns.

Thirdly, while we have no information about
Athaliah and Joash other than what is in Kings and Chronicles, and while even this information is problematic on a number of counts, it is nevertheless possible to envision an alternative and plausible scenario which accounts for the events reported without relying on standard biblical biases and interpretive themes.
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