

# Jeroboam and the Division of the Kingdom: Mapping Contrasting Biblical Accounts

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The division of the united monarchy following the death of Solomon is related in several biblical passages, beyond its initial report in 1 Kgs. 12:1–24. Several additional biblical passages, and a passage original to the LXX, also describe the event, all in ways that are distinguishable from the account of 1 Kings 12:

- 1) the prophetic foreshadowing of the division, which, of course, precedes the event itself, is recorded twice: once in the retribitional rebuke of Solomon in 1 Kgs. 11:11–13, and a second time in the words of Ahijah to Jeroboam in 1 Kgs. 11:29–39;<sup>1</sup>
- 2) the parallel passage to the account of the division in Chronicles, 2 Chr. 10:7–11:4, which contains material parallel only to 1 Kgs. 12:1–24, but not to 1 Kings 11;
- 3) the theological review in 2 Kings 17, which relates to Jeroboam and the establishment of the Northern Kingdom (vv. 21–22);
- 4) the oratory of Abijah, King of Judah, contained in 2 Chr. 13:4–12, in which he castigates Jeroboam and his followers for banding together against him, within an overall address concerning the division of the kingdom;
- 5) the supplement to the LXX following 1 Kgs. 12:24 (3 Kgdms. 12:24a–z), which relates a broad range of events, from Jeroboam’s appointment by Solomon to the death of Jeroboam’s son.

While these texts contain common subject matter, each is nonetheless distinctive. Our aim in this study is to characterize and to underscore the distinct perspective adopted by each text and to locate them along a continuum. We will begin by examining each text in and of itself with an eye toward its perspective concerning the division of the united monarchy and its position concerning Jeroboam’s role in the division.<sup>2</sup>

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1. A retrospective viewpoint upon these prophecies is found in the judgment oracle spoken to Jeroboam’s wife (1 Kgs. 14:7ff.).

2. Our study will address the cumulative position of each text, even though in a given text one may discern competing tensions concerning the issue at hand. For example, the statement: “Thus Israel revolted against the House of David” (1 Kgs. 12:19), may indicate an assessment of schism that does not reflect the overall view of the narrative of 1 Kgs. 12:1–24 concerning the schism, as portrayed here. Other discrepancies between the cumulative impression of a given text and a small segment of that text may arise when a character within the story expresses an opinion that is not necessarily that of the narrator. Concerning such a discrepancy within 1 Kgs. 12:21–24 between the stance of Rehoboam and that of the prophet (and the narrator), see A. Frisch, “Shemaiah the Prophet Versus King Rehoboam: Two Opposed Interpretations of the Schism (1 Kings XII 21–4),” *VT* 38 (1988), 466–68.

In our examination of these texts we will also attend to the reliance and borrowing that can be discerned between one text and another. Within this context we will pay particular attention to the *transformation* of semantic elements that appear originally in 1 Kings 11 and 12, and are transmitted to other texts, where they appear in a different form, in accordance with the nature and program of the new text. We will also attend to the *analogies* that are established between Jeroboam, on the one hand, and David, Adonijah and Solomon, on the other, and to how these analogies complement the tone and tenor of each text.

After probing the perspective each text brings to the personage of Jeroboam, we will propose a mapping of these texts along a continuum. The texts will be mapped according to their view of Jeroboam's role in the division of the monarchy (and not according to their perspective on Jeroboam overall). Following this determination, we will then attempt to evaluate our findings and account for the differences among the texts concerning Jeroboam's role in the division of the monarchy. We will probe to see if a correlation can be established between a text's (estimated) time of composition, and its disposition toward Jeroboam. If major lines of difference can be discerned within a particular biblical book, we will attempt to account for these differences. We will question the genesis of these differences: are they attributable to the differing sources that pre-date the book, differences that were introduced in the final redaction without attempt at harmonization? Or, alternatively, can these differences be seen as reflective of literary and rhetoric concerns, each in accordance with the nature and tone of that particular section of the book?

### 1. *The Prophetic Forecast of the Division of the Kingdom in 1 Kings 11*

The first prophecy, the shorter of the two, is addressed to Solomon (11:11–13). It contains three parts: first, a harsh sentencing of the king, whose import is his removal from the throne: "I will tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants" (v. 11).<sup>3</sup> This is followed by two mitigating elements: the postponement of the execution of the sentence until the reign of his son (v. 12), and a limitation of the territory to be ceded (v. 13). While Jeroboam is not explicitly mentioned, he is the referent of the clause, "and give it to one of your servants (לעבדך)." The appellation לעבדך, in my opinion, bears no derogatory connotation,<sup>4</sup> and is rather intended to underscore the stinging nature of the punishment: Solomon will be usurped by none other than one of his own servants. The theological and literary import of the phrase is rooted in its allusion to the phrase "My servant" in reference to David in the same passage (v. 13). We have here, then, a punishment "measure for measure": Solomon breached his part of the covenant between the king and God (as

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3. Unless otherwise noted, translations of biblical verses are from the new translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America. In some instances, particularly when demonstrating semantic links between two sources, I have found the NJPSV wanting. In such circumstances, I have adopted the JPS translation for one of the verses in question, while adapting the translation of the second in accordance with the first in order to preserve the semblance of language found in the Hebrew. The adapted words appear bracketed.

4. Contrast J. Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary*, 2d ed.; OTL (London, 1970), 279–80, who sees this appellation as reflective of a Judean Deuteronomist viewpoint.

evidenced in v. 11: “you have not kept My covenant<sup>5</sup> and the laws which I enjoined upon you”) in contrast with “My servant David” (v. 13). As punishment, therefore, the covenant between the king and the people is to be ruptured as one of his own “servants” is destined to rebel against him. Jeroboam emerges, then, as the whipping stick with which God disciplines Solomon. In light of this contrastive parallel it is worth noting that while Scripture underscores the impending rebellion of a servant, it does so in tones that render that servant entirely passive: “and give it to one of your servants” (v. 11). It is God who is executing this punishment on Solomon, and it is God who is delivering the kingdom into the hands of “one of your servants.”

The second prophetic forecast of the division of the kingdom is addressed to Jeroboam by Ahijah of Shiloh, following the symbolic rending of the new cloak (11:29–39). The act seems to bear a dual message: first, it presages Solomon’s punishment, symbolized by the rending of the garment; second, it heralds Jeroboam as the new heir apparent, signified by Jeroboam taking possession of the rent pieces. As recipient of the prophecy, Jeroboam son of Nebat here stands as the focus of attention. He is portrayed in distinctly positive terms. Above all, his ascension to the throne is to represent the fulfillment of prophecy, and the division of the kingdom is cast as a punishment of Solomon. Ahijah’s prophecy not only grants a divine imprimatur to Jeroboam’s kingship, but does so in tones of high regard, as he is cast as someone who could potentially equal David, both in conduct and in recompense: “If you will heed . . . as My servant David did, then I will be with you and I will build for you [an enduring house] as I did for David” (11:38). While the comparison of Jeroboam to David does not stem from Jeroboam’s record to present, it nonetheless stands as a potential future, a sign of regard for the figure of Jeroboam.

This explicit casting of Jeroboam in David-like terms is buttressed by a more oblique set of references that likewise link the two: (1) the determination “reign wherever you wish” (v. 37) is a verbatim allusion to Abner’s proposal to David (2 Sam. 3:21). (2) The phrase “enduring house” (v. 38) recalls Abigail’s words to David: “for the Lord will grant my lord an enduring house” (1 Sam. 25:28), and in inverse order God’s words to David through the agency of the prophet Nathan: “[Enduring shall be your house and kingship forever]” (2 Sam. 7:16).<sup>6</sup> (3) The pledge, “and I will take you (RSV)<sup>7</sup> . . . and you shall be king over Israel” (v. 37), recalls Nathan’s words to David: “I took you . . . to be ruler of My people Israel” (2 Sam.

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5. Those who adopt here the reading of the LXX, employing “My commandments” instead of “My covenant,” fail to note the attention here to the covenant. It stands to reason that God’s words to Solomon, which mention the breach of the covenant and in which the word “servant” appears twice, are set in contrast to Solomon’s own words at the outset of his petition at the Temple dedication ceremony (8:23–26). There, Solomon refers to God’s guidance in these terms: “[You] who keep Your gracious covenant with Your servants when they walk before You in wholehearted devotion” (8:23), where the noun, “servant(s)” and verb “to keep” abound (each occurring four times; vv. 23–26).

6. The compound term “an enduring house” appears in one other instance, not in reference to David: “I will build for him an enduring house, and he shall walk before My anointed evermore” (1 Sam. 2:35). Even so, this verse does bear a veiled reference to David, for the phrase “My anointed” refers to him or to his line.

7. This accords with the MT (ואתך אקח), without resorting to the emendation suggested by Ehrlich, “ואתה תקח”; A. B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* (Leipzig, 1908–1914), 7.243.

7:8). (4) Additionally the pledge itself, “I will be with you” (v. 38), recalls the similar pledge of Nathan to David: “and I have been with you” (2 Sam. 7:9), though this terminology is not distinctive to David. These semantic parallels all heighten the casting of Jeroboam as a potential equal to David. We may even say that the “copied” pledges here to Jeroboam are of even greater authority than their Davidic antecedents, for they are all uttered by a prophet of God, while some of the statements concerning David were not (those by Abigail and Abner).

The frame story surrounding this prophecy (vv. 26–28, 40) also casts a favorable light on Jeroboam as capable: “This Jeroboam was an able man (גבור חיל), and when Solomon saw that the young man (הינער) was a capable worker,” etc. (v. 28). The verses of the frame story likewise point to an oblique analogy to David.<sup>8</sup> The fact, however, that both the frame and internal stories parallel Davidic stories, does not mandate the conclusion that they are from the same source.

While the overall portrayal of Jeroboam here is positive, the editorial unit of 11:26–40 does contain one possible element of criticism. I refer to the report that he had already rebelled against Solomon (vv. 26–27)—even though the prophecy dictated that Jeroboam would rule only following Solomon’s death, and that Solomon would reign until death (11:34). Nonetheless, the supply of information in the account actually turns the tables, and leaves a negative impression formed concerning the king himself. Notice that the details of the rebellion are cut short, and that instead we read of the prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh concerning the downfall of Solomon and the ascent of Jeroboam.<sup>9</sup> Solomon’s expressed desire to kill Jeroboam, presented only after the prophecy, colors our perception of Solomon’s motives, which are no longer understood sympathetically. The reader, aware of Ahijah’s prophecy, cannot help but deem the aging king as misguided in his judgment. Moreover, the juxtaposition between God’s pledge, “I will be with you and I will build for you [an enduring dynasty]” (v. 38) and, virtually without break, “Solomon sought to put Jeroboam to death” (v. 40), creates a damning impression of Solomon as one who acts to thwart the divine plan. The unfavorable portrayal of Solomon blunts the critical impression that could have been inferred against Jeroboam.<sup>10</sup>

Another analogy may be discerned in this context, and that is between Solomon and Saul. We mention this only in passing, as the focus of this study is upon Jeroboam, and not upon Solomon. Even the casual reader will immediately sense the similarities between the symbolic act of rending the garment and the attendant prophecy found in both 1 Samuel 15 and in 1 Kings 11 (though, I will submit that there are some major differences between the accounts as well!). Moreover, the

8. The common elements: גבור חיל (compare 1 Sam. 16:18), נער (compare 1 Sam. 17:33, 42, 55, 58), אפרתי (compare 1 Sam. 17:12—in a different sense!); both bear the motival development of a talented young man being raised through the ranks by a patron king, who later turns on him, prompting his escape to a foreign land, only to return later to take over the reins of power in fulfillment of prophecy.

9. Cf. E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige 1: Das erste Buch der Könige, Kapitel 1–16, ATD* 11/1 (Göttingen, 1977), 143.

10. In contrast, the LXX supplement places the report of Solomon’s intention to kill Jeroboam immediately after the report of the latter’s insurrection, thereby offering implicit justification of Solomon’s desire: “And he exalted himself over the kingdom. And Solomon sought to have him killed” (12:24b–c). This, as well as all other Supplement translations, is taken from Z. Talshir, *The Alternative Story of the Division of the Kingdom: 3 Kingdoms 12:24a–z* (Jerusalem, 1993).

impression given that Solomon attempts to thwart the fulfillment of the prophecy, likewise contributes to the analogy between Solomon and Saul, who sought to kill David, the candidate of prophetic choice. This analogy complements the analogy between Jeroboam and David, and together they create a series of analogies: the son of David is compared to Saul, the king who was replaced by David on account of his sins. On the other hand, it is Jeroboam the Ephraimite who is likened to David. We can see, therefore, how redactional work (the juxtaposition of the frame narrative to the account of prophecy of Ahijah) nicely complements the tone and tenor of each of the two texts, respectively.

## 2. *The Account of the Division in 1 Kings 12:1–24*<sup>11</sup>

The characterization of Jeroboam in 12:1–24 is positive, if not quite to the same degree as in chapter 11. Here we read of the popular support that he garnered and of his election by the assembly of tribes: “When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent messengers and summoned him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel” (v. 20).<sup>12</sup> Jeroboam’s modesty and reason are borne out by his participation in the negotiations with Rehoboam, and his stated eagerness to maintain fealty to Rehoboam (“and we will serve you” [v. 4]), if only he lighten the burden of work. His earnestness to acquiesce to Rehoboam’s dictate is particularly evident in v. 12: “Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, since the king had told them: ‘Come back on the third day.’” Here Jeroboam, slated to be king, acts out of deference and fidelity to the son of Solomon, without advancing his own ascension.<sup>13</sup> Note that precisely at the moment that the rabble decide to

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11. The text dealt with here is not ch. 12 as a unit, but only 12:1–24, as the continuation of the chapter does not focus upon the division. For this accepted distinction between vv. 1–24 and 25–33 see J. A. Montgomery, *The Book of Kings*, ICC (Edinburgh, 1951), 248, 254; Gray, *I & II Kings*, 299, 311; B. O. Long, *I Kings*, *FOTL* (Grand Rapids, 1984), 131, 141. Indeed, criticism of Jeroboam appears in vv. 25–33, but not regarding the division itself. Rather, it is with regard to his religious innovations which are presented as a latter stage and not as concomitant with the schism.

12. Reviv has stressed the significance of the mention here of “the assembly,” and sees through it “the legitimization of the secession from Judea . . . and most significantly—the stress that the establishment of the new kingdom and regime are to be considered positive developments in and of themselves”; H. Reviv, “History and Historiography During the Time of the Division of the Kingdom: Toward an Understanding of the Term *Edah* in 1 Kings 12:20,” *Zion* 50 (1985), 62 [in Heb.].

13. This is in accordance with the impression garnered from the MT, where in vv. 3 and 12, Jeroboam appears as a partner in the negotiations. In the LXX, however, Jeroboam does not appear in these verses. For discussions concerning the variant texts here between the LXX and the MT concerning the involvement of Jeroboam, see D. W. Gooding, “The Septuagint’s Rival Versions of Jeroboam’s Rise to Power,” *VT* 17 (1967), 174–89; R. W. Klein, “Jeroboam’s Rise to Power,” *JBL* 89 (1970), 217–18; D. W. Gooding, “Jeroboam’s Rise to Power: A Rejoinder,” *JBL* 91 (1972), 529–33; R. W. Klein, “Once More: ‘Jeroboam’s Rise to Power,’” *JBL* 92 (1973), 582–84; J. C. Treballe Barrera, *Salomón y Jeroboam: Historia de la rescisión y redacción de 1 Reyes 2–12, 14*, Bibliotheca Salmanticensis, Dissertationes 3 (Salamanca/Jerusalem, 1980), 49–83; S. L. McKenzie, “The Sources for Jeroboam’s Role at Shechem (1 Kgs. 11:43–12:3, 12, 20),” *JBL* 106 (1987), 297–300; T. M. Willis, “The Text of 1 Kings 11:43–12:3,” *CBQ* 53 (1991), 37–44; A. Schenker, “Jéroboam et la division du royaume dans le texte massorétique et la Septante ancienne,” in B. A. Taylor, ed., *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, Cambridge 1995 (Atlanta, 1997), 171–76.

break ranks and secede (v. 16) the cry is heard from “all of Israel,” yet now with no mention of Jeroboam.

From here we can attend to the problematic phrase in v. 2, “[and he lived (וַיֵּשֶׁב) in Egypt].” Most modern commentators have understood this to be an error, and have instead preferred to amend the text to read “and Jeroboam returned (וַיָּשֹׁב) from Egypt,” in consonance with the parallel passage in 2 Chr. 10:2.<sup>14</sup> Yet the MT version of Kings may perhaps be understood as yet another sign of Jeroboam’s restraint. Even upon learning of Solomon’s death, he remains in exile until called for (“they sent for him,” v. 3), without instigating or accelerating events ahead of their own pace.

Jeroboam’s passivity is evident in v. 20 referred to above: “When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent messengers and summoned him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. . . .” Jeroboam’s activity in this narrative focuses on acquiescing to Rehoboam’s sovereignty (while achieving a better lot for the people), while taking no initiative to advance his own hegemony. This passivity creates an analogous field between Jeroboam and Solomon at the dawn of his ascension to the throne. In the face of an aggressive and assertive opponent—Adonijah—Solomon remained passive. Jeroboam’s passivity is also highlighted through the stark contrast with the behavior of a later Northern king. Jehu had likewise received a prophetic foretelling of his ascent, yet spares no action in his pursuit of the throne—even murder (2 Kgs. 9:24ff.).

If we also consider v. 15 and vv. 21–24,<sup>15</sup> which relate this event to chapter 11, we see that Jeroboam is granted prophetic legitimacy; his ascent to the throne is an expression of the divine will, and a fulfillment of Ahijah’s prophecy. This context as well suggests an analogy to the career of Solomon. Rehoboam’s stubbornness in the face of the people’s request, which ultimately leads to Jeroboam’s ascent, is accounted for by the narrator: ‘כִּי הִיְתָה סִבָּה מֵעַם ה’ “For it was a turn of affairs brought about by the Lord” (RSV, 12:15). The language here is highly reminiscent of the language used by Adonijah to explain his sudden loss of the kingship to his younger

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14. See B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings* (Leipzig, 1904), 127; Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, 244; Gray, *I & II Kings*, 301 n. (a). For an opinion that adopts the MT reading, see J. Trebelle, “Redaction, Recension, and Midrash in the Book of Kings,” *BIOSCS* 15 (1982), 14–19; G. N. Knoppers, *Two Nations Under God: The Deuteronomist History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies 1: The Reign of Solomon and the Rise of Jeroboam* (Atlanta, 1993), 210–13.

15. These verses are generally considered as not integral to the story itself—v. 15 is thought to be an editorial addition, which expresses the theologizing of an original non-theistic story. See, e.g., J. Liver, “The Book of the Acts of Solomon,” *Biblica* 48 (1967), 99; Y. Zakovitch, “From Oral to Written Tale in the Bible,” *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* 1 (1981), 10 [in Heb.]; G. H. Jones, *I and 2 Kings*, NCB (Grand Rapids, 1984), 1.252. Vv. 21–24 are considered late additions; see, e.g., Würthwein, *Könige*, 150; Jones, *I and 2 Kings*, 248, 254–55; S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, 1993), 649–50. In my opinion, vv. 15 and 21–24 do not interrupt the narrative flow, and rather convey the message of the story by virtue of its placement following the prophetic foreshadowing of chapter 11, and by virtue of the other allusions contained within it; see A. Frisch, “The Narrative of Solomon’s Reign in the Book of Kings” (Ph.D. diss., Bar-Ilan University, 1986), 368–76 [in Heb.]. Concerning the question of the place of v. 15 within the account of the division in the Book of Kings, Japhet’s position is worthy of note: “In the context of 1 Kings 12, v. 15 is perfectly placed to unite all the separate stories into one variegated theological construct”; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 656. According to G. N. Knoppers (*Two Nations 2: The Reign of Jeroboam, The Fall of Israel, and the Reign of Josiah* [Atlanta, 1994], 19–22), vv. 21–24 are “an integral part of the deuteronomistic presentation.”

sibling: *כי מה' היתה לו . . . ותסב המלוכה* “the kingdom has turned about and become my brother’s, for it was his from the Lord” (RSV, 2:15).<sup>16</sup>

### 3. *The Parallel Passage in 2 Chronicles*

Chronicles does not include a parallel passage to 1 Kings 11 (with the exception of the final three verses of 2 Chronicles 9, the formulaic closing statement on Solomon’s reign).<sup>17</sup> No reference is made to any of Solomon’s failings, and hence neither to the prophecy of Ahijah of Shiloh and its favorable disposition toward Jeroboam. Nonetheless, the Chronicler does preserve some hints of the perspective of the *Vorlage*, to the effect that Jeroboam was predestined to ascend to the throne following the death of Solomon. This is accomplished by the inclusion of the lone verse that explained the division as the fulfillment of prophecy (“The king did not listen to the people; for the Lord had brought it about in order to fulfill the promise which the Lord had made through Ahija the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat”; 12:15), and by preserving the passage containing the prophecy of Shemaiah forbidding military action against the secessionists (12:21–24 = 2 Chr. 11:1–4). There are some who see in v. 15 an editorial misstep by the Chronicler, who copied the *Vorlage* without realizing that this verse would stand as an anomaly within his reworking of the material, which omits the entire passage of Ahijah’s prophecy. Nonetheless, the presence of v. 15, as well as the passage contained in vv. 21–24, coupled with the Chronicler’s explicit reference to the prophecy of Ahijah as a source for Solomon’s reign (2 Chr. 9:29), all lead me to prefer the position that v. 15 is a deliberate inclusion.<sup>18</sup> This reworking of the material preserves two of the primary ideological underpinnings that govern the Chronicler, namely (1) the defense of the name of Solomon and the House of David and (2) the firm belief in divine recompense on an individual basis. Were chapter 11 of the *Vorlage* to be included, both these premises would be compromised, as Solomon is incriminated, while his punishment is only to be meted out during the reign of his son. Therefore, all disparaging references to Solomon are omitted, while the statements of 1 Kings 12, which address the rise of Jeroboam, without denigrating the Davidic line, are preserved. Within Chronicles, Ahijah’s prophecy may be read as a blessing to Jeroboam, independent of any commentary on Solomon.

Moreover, the verse in Kings that reports of Jeroboam’s election by “the assembly” (12:20) is omitted by the Chronicler. Recall, that this verse granted legitimacy

16. A. Frisch, “Structure and its Significance: the Narrative of Solomon’s Reign (1 Kings 1–12.24),” *JSOT* 51 (1991), 9. Concerning the meaning of the root סבב as signifying, “a situation where divine power is displayed and confirmed precisely as it opposes the normal order of things, and remakes that order into a new one,” see P. Machinist, “The Transfer of Kingship: A Divine Turning,” in A. B. Beck et al., eds., *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman* (Grand Rapids, 1995), 105–20.

17. Within 2 Chr. 9:29 one may discern an oblique allusion connecting the behavior of Solomon with the ascent of Jeroboam through the reference to “the prophecies of Ahijah the Shilonite” as a source for Solomon’s history, and through the approach to the prophecy “concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat.” Nonetheless, these cannot be considered any more than oblique allusions.

18. Cf. S. Japhet, *The Ideology of the Books of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought*, 2d ed. (Frankfurt am Main, 1997), 310–11.

to Jeroboam's rule by virtue of his election by the people; the Chronicler, uninterested in the reign of Jeroboam, omits this detail.

The characterization of Jeroboam in the Book of Chronicles, then, is less favorable than it is in Kings, though this is not due to the addition of criticisms absent from Kings (as the Chronicler employs regarding Saul—1 Chr. 10:13–14). Rather, the impression is created from the omission of central elements of the account in the *Vorlage*.

#### 4. *The Septuagint Supplement to 1 Kgs. 12:24*

The LXX supplement to 12:24 colors Jeroboam in a critical light, as scholars have already noted.<sup>19</sup> Here we discover several disparaging remarks about his actions, even his lineage, and we proceed to review these in order of appearance:

- 1) His mother is referred to as “a harlot” (24b).
- 2) “And he had three-hundred horse-drawn chariots” (24b)—the motif of a chariot corps signifies aspiration to rule (compare with the description of Absalom [2 Sam. 15:1] and of Adonijah [1 Kgs. 1:5]). Moreover, although such a force constitutes a status symbol for the two aspiring princes, in the case of Jeroboam it suggests the mobilization of a private militia.
- 3) “And he exalted himself over the kingdom” (24b)—here a direct parallel is made to Adonijah, who anoints himself: “Now Adonijah son of Haggith [exalted himself, saying], ‘I will be king!’” (1 Kgs. 1:5). True leadership is attained by being called to lead, not by advancing oneself to a position of power. Jeroboam, then, emerges here as power-hungry.<sup>20</sup>
- 4) “And Jeroboam fortified the place” (24f)—the fortification of his base at Zererah represents a mutinous move upon his return from Egypt.
- 5) The presentation of Ahijah's prophecy of admonishment prior to the offense (24h–n)—this ordering of the material suggests that Jeroboam was destined to be punished before he assumed power (in contrast to the implication of the biblical passages, where his future seems undetermined prior to his rise to power).
- 6) “And assembled the tribes of Israel there” (24n)—here Jeroboam serves as a catalyst for the insurgence against Rehoboam. The report contained in 12:1, “for all Israel had come to Shechem to acclaim him as king,” is missing here, an omission of an element of the biblical passage that demonstrates Jeroboam's willingness to submit to Rehoboam's rule.

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19. See, e.g., Montgomery, *Kings*, 253–54; Gooding, “The Septuagint's Rival Versions,” 187–88; Talshir, *The Alternative Story*, 286. Recently, Ch. S. Shaw, “The Sins of Rehoboam: The Purpose of 3 Kingdoms 12.24a–z,” *JSOT* 73 (1997), 55–64, has maintained that the purpose of the supplement is actually to implicate Rehoboam. In spite of the cogency of his arguments, it is difficult to see how Rehoboam could be conceived as the subject of the supplement, when half of it (b–o) centers around Jeroboam and not Rehoboam, with the exception of a single phrase, “and Rehoboam the son of Solomon went to confront him” (n), and this only by diminishing his stature vis-à-vis the original version in 12:1. To this are added all of the fundamental criticisms of Jeroboam that we are positing here. It is still possible, however, that the text also bears some element of criticism of Rehoboam (compare, Talshir, *The Alternative Story*, 287).

20. The implication of this source stands in contrast to that of the biblical account, where we tried to establish (see above, section 2) the analogy between Jeroboam and Solomon at his outset, where Solomon's demeanor stands in sharp contrast to that of Adonijah.

- 7) The symbolic act of presenting Jeroboam with the ten pieces of the rent garment is explained in the Book of Kings in terms that explicitly destine Jeroboam to rule: “and I will give you ten tribes” (11:31). In the Supplement account, however, the explanation is muted: “It is just so that the Lord has determined concerning the ten tribes of Israel” (24o).
- 8) The intonation of 12:15 states that Rehoboam’s steadfast refusal of the people is the product of overt divine intervention, so that the prophecy of Ahijah to Jeroboam will be fulfilled. This passage is entirely omitted in the Supplement.
- 9) The element of Jeroboam’s election by “the assembly” in 12:20, is entirely absent.

It may be that some of the disparaging elements found in the Supplement are designed to suggest that Jeroboam is unfit to rule, as he fails to conform to the regal typology set forward by Deut. 17:14–20. The clearest indication of this is the statement that Jeroboam had many horses, in violation of the injunction: “he shall not keep many horses” (Deut. 17:16).<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the casuistic statement that opens the law of the king depicts circumstances far different from those surrounding Jeroboam’s ascent to power in the Supplement: “If, when you have entered . . . you decide, ‘I will set a king over me’ . . . you shall be free to set a king over yourself, one chosen by the Lord your God” (Deut. 17:14–15). In contrast, the Supplement casts Jeroboam as aggressive and assertive in his drive for the throne, chosen neither by God nor by the people. The law of the king concludes, “thus he will not act haughtily toward his fellows” (Deut. 17:20); conversely here, Jeroboam’s haughty disposition is underscored, “and he exalted himself over the kingdom” (24b).

### 5. *The Theological Review of 2 Kings 17*

The theological review of 2 Kings 17 is more critical still.<sup>22</sup> The establishment of the Northern Kingdom is no longer the impetus of divinely inspired prophecy, but of human initiative: *כי קרע ישראל מעל בית דוד וימליכו את-ירבעם בן-נבט* “For Israel [tore] away from the House of David, and they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king” (17:21). Following his assumption of power, “Jeroboam caused Israel to stray from the Lord and to commit great sin” (ibid.). The opening of this verse echoes 1 Kgs. 12:20 (“When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned they . . . made him king over all Israel”) regarding the election of Jeroboam as king by “the assembly.” Within the context of 2 Kings 17, however, the event is cast negatively, and joined together with the implication that Jeroboam was a sinner and brought the masses to sin as well. Note the use of the verb *קרע*, “to tear.” It is significant because it is precisely the term used to inform Solomon of his punishment (1 Kgs. 11:11–13), in Ahijah’s prophecy (11:31; cf. 14:8) and in the symbolic act that accompanies it (11:30). Yet whereas in 1 Kings 11 God is the subject and the division is given divine sanction, God goes unmentioned as agent in the division in the account of 2 Kings 17. It stands to reason here, that the word “Israel” functions as the subject,

21. It may be that the prohibition juxtaposed to that of not having many horses in Deuteronomy 17—“or send people back to Egypt”—may be alluded to within our context. Immediately following is the report of Jeroboam fleeing to Egypt.

22. For a review of opinion concerning the composition of 2 Kings 17, see P. A. Viviano, “A Literary Study of 2 Kings 17: 7–41” (Ph.D. diss., St. Louis University, 1981), 4–33; Jones, *1–2 Kings*, 2.542–44.

and not as the direct object: Israel tore herself from the House of David.<sup>23</sup> There is also a great difference between the two sources regarding the indirect object: in 1 Kings 11 the kingship is torn from (the hand of) Solomon, or, his son,<sup>24</sup> in punishment. In 2 Kings 17, however, the kingship is torn from “the House of David,”<sup>25</sup> whereby the entire dynasty (which is not implicated as a guilty party) suffers from the action. Yet, in one regard, Jeroboam emerges favorably: the guilty party in the division here is “Israel,” while Jeroboam is simply the object, as Israel crowned him only following the split.

This critical view of the Northern Kingdom is further seen through the use of the word “incensed” in the theological review: “The Lord was incensed (וַיִּתְאַנֶּף) at Israel . . . none was left but the tribe of Judah alone” (17:18). The uncommon verb “incensed” (six occurrences in the entire Hebrew Bible, four of which appear in Deuteronomy [1:37; 4:21; 9:8,20], and the remaining two in Kings), appears also in 1 Kings 11, where it refers to the divine response to Solomon’s offense: “And God was [incensed] with Solomon . . .” (11:9). As punishment, the kingship over Israel is taken from his son, to the extent that, “only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the House of David” (1 Kgs. 12:20).

#### 6. *The Oratory of Abijah in 2 Chronicles 13*

Even more caustic is the implication laid by Abijah against Jeroboam in his oratory from atop Mount Zemaraim: “Jeroboam son of Nebat, [a servant] of Solomon son of David, [rose up] and rebelled against his master” (2 Chr. 13:6). According to Abijah, Jeroboam bears personal responsibility for the division,<sup>26</sup> which constituted not only a mutiny against the Davidic king, but indeed against God, for “the Lord God of Israel gave David kingship over Israel forever—to him and his sons—by a covenant of salt” (13:5). The kingship of the Davidic line over Israel is even portrayed here as “the kingdom of the Lord, which is in the charge of the sons of David” (v. 8), in accordance with the overall theology of the Chronicler.<sup>27</sup> Jero-

23. In all other occurrences of the verb קָרַע with reference to the transfer of kingship (1 Sam. 15:28; 28:17; 1 Kgs. 11:11–13; 11:31; 14:8), God figures as the subject, whereas the word “kingship” (in the first reference: “kingship over Israel”), functions as a direct object, where we find אַתָּה before it—all this in contrast to the structure of the verse at hand. Nonetheless, many have understood it similarly, such that here too God figures as the subject. We prefer to render “Israel” as the subject, following the exegetical lead of Abравanel, Malbim, and more recently M. Brettler, “Ideology, History, and Theology in 2 Kings XVII 7–23,” *VT* 39 (1989), 277–79. This understanding is reflected in several *Targums*, and Brettler mentions Targum *Jonathan*, the *Peshitta*, and the Lucianic traditions of the LXX, from among the ancient *Targums*, and NJPSV from among the modern translations. However, Linville has recently criticized this understanding; see J. R. Linville, *Israel in the Book of Kings: The Past as a Project of Social Identity*, *JSOTSupp.* 272 (Sheffield, 1998), 210–11.

24. See vv. 11, 12, 31; with the verb לָקַח : vv. 34, 35.

25. A similar notion, of breaking all ties with the dynasty was sounded by the secessionists in their rallying cry in 12:16. This is also how the narrator describes the situation in v. 19 (“against the House of David”—בְּבֵית דָּוִד) and in v. 20 (“loyal to the House of David”—אֲחֵרֵי בֵּית דָּוִד).

26. This is in contrast with the single formulation in 1 Kings 12 which refers to the rebellion: “Thus Israel revolted against the House of David, as is still the case” (v. 19), where the subject is the collective, and not Jeroboam.

27. See 1 Chr. 17:14; 28:5; 29:23; 2 Chr. 9:8. On this see Japhet, *The Ideology*, 395–411.

boam's deputies are labeled "riffraff and scoundrels" (v. 7).<sup>28</sup> The oratory makes no mention of the prophetic foretelling of Abijah's rise; to the contrary, legitimacy here is the exclusive purview of the Davidic dynasty. Castigation over the establishment of the rival kingdom is joined with condemnation of Jeroboam's cultic innovations (the establishment of the golden calves, and the appointment of officiating priests not of Levite descent).

Four turns of language taken from 1 Kings 11–12 punctuate Abijah's words:

- 1) Jeroboam is termed here a "servant of Solomon," a phrase which in Kings appeared in the context of the punishment of Solomon, the servant who rebelled against his Heavenly Master, and was punished measure for measure, when his own servant rebelled against him (1 Kgs. 11:11–13, 26).<sup>29</sup> Yet in Chronicles, it appears within the context of an admonishment against Jeroboam, who is portrayed as a servant who has been unfaithful to his master. The appellation given the king, "Solomon son of David," is instructive, magnifying the proportions of the offense.
- 2) Jeroboam's rebellion is characterized as a breach of the covenant to David, termed here a "covenant of salt," a term which here underscores the everlasting nature of the Davidic dynasty. 1 Kgs. 11:11 also speaks of a covenant, but there it is the covenant of God which Solomon has breached: "you have not kept My covenant and the laws which I enjoined upon you."
- 3) The root עזב, I would suggest, plays a cardinal role in 1 Kings 11–12, in characterizing the transgression of Solomon and his punishment.<sup>30</sup> In Abijah's oratory, however, it is used to describe the religious fidelity of the tribe in Judah in contrast with the religious infidelity of the Northern tribes: "As for us, the Lord is our God, and we have not forsaken Him (ולא עזבנוהו)" (13:10), while, "you have forsaken it (עזבתם אתו)" (13:11).
- 4) A reversal is likewise seen regarding the call to desist from engaging in battle as a fulfillment of the divine will: in Kings the call to desist is from the prophet Shemaiah to Rehoboam so that the division becomes a reality in accordance with the divine will ("you shall not set out to make war on your kinsmen the Israelites . . . for this thing has been brought about by Me" [1 Kgs. 12:24]). Yet in Abijah's oratory the call to desist from arms is a call by the King of Judah to the Northern tribes to refrain from engaging them in battle ("O children of Israel, do not fight the Lord God of your fathers, because you will not succeed" [13:12]).

28. The conventional understanding of the phrase עליו in v. 7 is that it refers to Jeroboam. An alternative understanding of the syntax of the verse, which casts Jeroboam in a different light, is found in H. G. M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCB (Grand Rapids, 1982), 2.252–53. For the opposing view, see in summary fashion R. B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, WBC 15 (Waco, 1987), 108.

29. Thus, we have posited the conceptual underpinnings for the choice of the word "servant" both in reference to Jeroboam (11:11) and in reference to David (11:13). See above, section 1.

30. Solomon's sin is described in Ahijah's prophecy: "For they have forsaken Me (עזבוני)" (11:33), and I do find it linked to the beginning of Rehoboam's failure, "But he forsook (ויעזב) the counsel which the old men gave him" (RSV, 12:8; cf. v. 13). The three other occurrences of the root עזב in the Solomon narrative (6:13; 8:57; 9:9), are significant too. For fuller discussion see Frisch, "The Narrative of Solomon's Reign," 86–87, 375–76.

Whereas Shemaiah spoke about a war against “your kinsmen,” Abijah characterizes the ensuing battle as a war against God (an idea found in Psalms 2 and 83, concerning the nations that dare fight against the children of Israel).

### 7. *Conclusions*

When determining Jeroboam’s role in the division of the kingdom, we find at one end of the spectrum the two prophecies in 1 Kings 11. These foretell and explain that the division of the kingdom is the fulfillment of the punishment to Solomon, within which context, Jeroboam is portrayed in a guileless, and perhaps even positive fashion. At the other end of the spectrum we find Abijah’s oratory in 2 Chronicles 13, which posits that the division represented no more than Jeroboam’s rebellion against David, the sole legitimate claimant to hegemony in Israel. Between these two poles (in order of ascending criticism against Jeroboam) we have:

- 1) 1 Kings 12:1–24, where the terms of admiration for Jeroboam from chapter 11 are no longer found.
- 2) 2 Chronicles 10, which removes positive attributes concerning Jeroboam found in 1 Kings 12.
- 3) The LXX supplement to 1 Kgs. 12:24, which incorporates several elements suggestive of a critical view of Jeroboam, while omitting favorable material incorporated in 1 Kings 11–12.
- 4) 2 Kings 17 which entirely overlooks the prophetic basis for the division, but which also does not lay the onus for the split at Jeroboam’s feet, but rather portrays him as a beneficiary of the division account, but not as its instigator.

How are we to construe the range of positions evidenced here? It is immediately evident that the most positive end of the spectrum is represented in a text from Kings, while the most pejorative portrayal is found in Chronicles. May there be a correlation between the period of composition and the position taken vis-à-vis Jeroboam? Despite initial impressions, this hypothesis as a *total* theory of explanation cannot be adopted. Recall that we ranked the text from 2 Kings 17 in the fifth position—just before the text most critical of Jeroboam—while the third rank was the text from Chronicles (2 Chronicles 10).

The question is particularly acute regarding contrasting positions found within a single work, first and foremost within the Book of Kings. Here we saw a highly favorable disposition toward Jeroboam (1 Kings 11) and a positive casting (1 Kgs. 12:1–24) alongside a highly critical presentation (2 Kings 17). The same question arises concerning the Book of Chronicles, where a disparity is seen between the position adopted in 2 Chronicles 10, and the disparaging position found in 2 Chronicles 13.

The simplest explanation to account for differences such as these within a single work, would be to ascribe them to multiple sources.<sup>31</sup> Thus, for example, we could

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31. Cf., e.g., B. Becking, “From Apostasy to Destruction: A Josianic View on the Fall of Samaria (2 Kings 17, 21–23),” in M. Vervenne and J. Lust, eds., *Deuteronomistic Literature (Fest. C. H. Brekelmans; Leuven, 1997)*, 286–87. For a review of opinion concerning the composition and editing of the Book of Kings, see, e.g., S. L. McKenzie, “The Books of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History,” in S. L. McKenzie

adopt the positions that view 2 Kgs. 17:21 as a post Deuteronomistic addition<sup>32</sup> and 1 Kgs. 11:29–39 as a Deuteronomistic text, that has incorporated material from earlier sources.<sup>33</sup> In this fashion we may discern, then, within the Book of Chronicles, between 2 Chronicles 10, which is synoptic material, and 2 Chronicles 13, which originated with the Chronicler himself. While this hypothesis seems tenable, it is wanting on two counts, particularly with regard to the Book of Kings: (1) There is no scholarly consensus concerning the sources of the various texts within the Book of Kings, as we find opinions that 2 Kgs. 17:21 stems from the same source as 1 Kgs. 11:29–39.<sup>34</sup> (2) In our opinion, the disposition toward the division and Jeroboam's share in it is an issue of cardinal importance, to the extent that it seems unlikely that the final editor would carelessly leave some contrasting positions in the book with no intention of mediating between them.

It seems to me that the basic position adopted toward the Northern Kingdom within the Book of Kings is essentially critical, while all the while recognizing its legitimacy. Against this backdrop, Jeroboam is portrayed in a positive light at the juncture of the division, because the division is taken to be a punitive measure against Solomon. Moreover, at that stage, it was appropriate to cast Jeroboam as a candidate brimming with potential; God's ultimate rejection of him is the result of his own misdeeds.<sup>35</sup> In contrast, in 2 Kings 17, the theological review of the history of the Kingdom of Israel (and of the Kingdom of Judah as well), the division is judged retroactively in critical tones in light of the offensive conduct of the kings of Israel. The establishment of Jeroboam's kingdom is understood in the Book of Kings as a punishment for Solomon's cultic offenses. Once, however, Jeroboam and his descendants and subsequently all the other Israelite dynasties commit even more grievous cultic offenses, the initial legitimacy for the split in the time of Jeroboam

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& M. P. Graham, eds., *The History of Israel's Traditions: The Heritage of Martin Noth*, JSOTSupp. 182 (Sheffield, 1994), 281–307. According to Evans, there is a great contrast between Jeroboam's favorable portrayal in older traditions, and his description in deuteronomistic traditions, where he is a prototype for subsequent northern sinner kings and is presented as an *Unheilsherrscher*; see C. D. Evans, "Naram-Sin and Jeroboam: The Archetypal *Unheilsherrscher* in Mesopotamian and Biblical Historiography," in W. W. Hallo, J. C. Moyer and L. G. Perdue, eds., *Scripture in Context 2: More Essays on the Comparative Method* (Winona Lake, 1983), 97–125.

32. See, e.g., M. Noth, *The Deuteronomistic History*, trans. J. Doull et al.; JSOTSupp. 15 (Sheffield, 1981), 136–37 n. 60; R. D. Nelson, *The Double Redaction of the Deuteronomistic History*, JSOTSupp. 18 (Sheffield, 1981), 55–63.

33. See Noth, *Deuteronomistic History*, 62; Nelson, *Double Redaction*, 109–16. Noth modified his view to some degree and in his commentary on Kings; he considered 1 Kgs. 11:29–39 as an original Deuteronomistic work; M. Noth, *Könige I, BK 9/1* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), 246–47.

34. Thus, e.g., Burney attributes these texts to his R<sup>D</sup> ("pre-exilic redactor influenced by Deut."); see C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford, 1903), 170–71, 173, 330. Weinfeld attributes them to the Deuteronomist; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford, 1972), 23–24; and so also S. L. McKenzie, *The Trouble with Kings: The Composition of the Book of Kings in the Deuteronomistic History*, VTSupp. 42 (Leiden, 1991), 41–47, 140–42, 151. On the other hand, Dietrich, according to the theory of multiple editions, attributes them to DtrP; see W. Dietrich, *Prophezie und Geschichte*, FRLANT 108 (Göttingen, 1972), 41–46, 54–55, 138.

35. A differing approach is presented by P. S. Ash, "Jeroboam I and the Deuteronomistic Historian's Ideology of the Founder," *CBQ* 60 (1998), 16–24, who thinks that the criticism of Jeroboam in the Deuteronomistic History stems from Jeroboam's status as the first king of the Northern Kingdom.

is erased.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, Jeroboam is implicated here only on account of his cultic innovations, and not on account of political insubordination prior to his ascent to the throne.

The retroactive revocation of legitimacy, which had earlier enjoyed prophetic sanction, is also exhibited explicitly in the Book of Kings regarding the kingship of Baasha. His house “condemned to fare like the House of Jeroboam, which he himself had struck down, because of all the evil he did which was displeasing to the Lord, vexing him with his deeds” (1 Kgs. 16:7).<sup>37</sup> This, in spite of the supportive prophetic interpretation that had accompanied his rebellion against the House of Jeroboam (1 Kgs. 15:29–30).

Within the Book of Chronicles it is difficult to reconcile the position found in Abijah’s oratory with the assertions in 2 Chr. 10:15 (the parallel to 1 Kgs. 12:15) and in 11:1–4 (the parallel to 1 Kgs. 12:21–24) that it was through divine agency that Jeroboam rose to power. The tension here is evident, and in some respects even more taut than it is in the *Vorlage*; in Kings, where Solomon’s offenses are recorded, one can conclude that Jeroboam rises to power not on his own merits, but primarily as a conduit of the punishment to Solomon. Yet, in Chronicles, where Solomon’s offenses are omitted, the reader can conclude that the statements legitimizing Jeroboam’s rise to power are an indication that he is worthy of the task. I do not propose to resolve this tension, but wish only to make two points that mitigate the degree of tension here: (1) The caustic oratory here is not the voice of the narrator, or of a prophet, but of a king who is an interested party in the ensuing conflict. I propose that we do not lose sight of this, even if we suppose that Abijah’s remarks reflect the theology of the Chronicler himself.<sup>38</sup> (2) Abijah’s implication, that Jeroboam “[a servant] of Solomon son of David, [rose up] and rebelled against his master” (13:6), refers to Jeroboam’s actions during the reign of Solomon, and which in no way had been legitimized by Ahijah’s prophecy.<sup>39</sup>

I conclude with a generalization, at the risk of oversimplification and imprecision. We will take the bold step of proposing that chronology plays a role in determining a text’s view of Jeroboam’s role in the splitting of the monarchy, yet in two highly distinct fashions. The first concerns *the period described*: the greater the elapsed time within the work itself from the period of the division, the greater the criticism of Jeroboam. As we saw, the texts that describe the split itself attend to the element of divine choice at work in the election of Jeroboam to be king, and are therefore positive towards Jeroboam. The later narratives, however, standing in retrospect, had to incorporate a judgment of the disastrous consequences engendered

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36. R. L. Cohn, “Literary Technique in Jeroboam Narrative,” *ZAW* 97 (1985), at 31–35, stresses the change in Jeroboam’s conduct which engenders a change in his status, and that this is mirrored in the fate of the man of God in 1 Kings 13.

37. This is emphasized in the commentary of Rashi there: “Since he also followed in his corrupt ways, he had right to kill him, and thus he was punished for having done so. Similarly we find, ‘I will soon punish the House of Jehu for the bloody deeds at Jezreel’ (Hos. 1:4)—Since they continued in the ways of Ahab, they were punished for the killings.”

38. On the notion that Ahijah’s words express the position of the author, see Japhet, *The Ideology*, 404.

39. For more about the portrayals of Jeroboam and Rehoboam in Chronicles (including 2 Chronicles 13), see G. N. Knoppers, “Rehoboam in Chronicles: Villain or Victim?” *JBL* 109 (1990), 423–40.

by Jeroboam's rule. The pejorative tone, therefore, adopted toward Jeroboam's activities in these narratives, is likewise carried over into a derisive view of the division itself. This consideration, of course, would not have to be incorporated into an account of the prophecy heralding Jeroboam for the position, nor in a detailed account of the splitting of the monarchy.

We may add, however, a second fashion in which chronology influences a text's judgment of Jeroboam: the later the *composition* of a work, the more critical it will be seen to be vis-à-vis the division. We offered an additional consideration to account for the particularly harsh criticism leveled in 2 Chronicles 13; this, we said, was the only text of the group said from the perspective of a political personality (Judaic), while all of the other texts were either cast from the vantage point of the narrator, or as the words of God (1 Kgs. 11:11–13), or a prophet of God (1 Kgs. 11:29–39).