

COUNTERFEIT DAVIDS

DAVIDIC RESTORATION AND THE ARCHITECTURE OF 1–2 KINGS¹

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Summary

1–2 Kings makes extensive use of what Moshe Garsiel has called ‘comparative structures’ in that the biographies of Jeroboam and Omri are analogous to David’s biography. Kings thus presents these kings as ‘counterfeit Davids’, and their dynasties as ‘counterfeit Davidic dynasties’. Further, the end of each of these counterfeit dynasties – the northern kingdom and the Omride dynasty – foreshadows the end of the Davidic dynasty in a number of particulars. Each dynasty’s end is, moreover, followed by a revival of the Davidic dynasty: the Omride dynasty is followed by the restoration under Joash, and the fall of the northern kingdom is followed by the reign of the reforming Hezekiah. In this, too, these dynasties foreshadow the end of the Davidic dynasty in 2 Kings 25, which is followed by the exaltation of Jehoiachin. Hence, 1–2 Kings consists of three embedded narratives – the story of the Davidic dynasty, the story of the northern kingdom, and the story of the Omride dynasty – and each of these has a similar shape. Each dynasty begins with a David-like figure; each ends in a similar fashion; and each is followed by a restoration of hope for the Davidic dynasty.

1. Introduction

In his study of ‘comparative structures’ in 1 Samuel, Moshe Garsiel points out that the writer draws out a number of analogies between the

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judges on the one hand, and Samuel and Saul on the other.² Samuel functioned as a judge (1 Sam. 7:15-17), and placed himself among the judges of Israel (1 Sam. 12:11). Alongside these explicit statements are numerous analogies that are left to the discernment of the scripturally-aware reader. Like Deborah, Samuel held court, judging Israel (1 Sam. 7:15-17; Judg. 4:4-5). Just as Deborah commanded Barak to fight Sisera, so Samuel ordered Saul to fight Amalek. In both stories the phrase ‘ten thousand men’ appears (1 Sam. 15:1-4; Judg. 4:6), and Kenites are mentioned in both narratives as well (1 Sam. 15:6; Judg. 4:17-22). These analogies between two judges and two battles serve to highlight a crucial discontinuity: ‘Barak follows [Deborah’s] instructions and steadily pursues Sisera ..., while Saul takes pity on Agag, King of Amalek.’³ Indeed, any comparison of Saul with the timid Barak implies some degree of criticism. Early in the account of Saul’s life, by contrast, comparisons of Saul to the judges were used to more favourable effect. As Garsiel points out, Samuel’s speech informing the people that Saul had been chosen king recalls the prophet’s speech announcing the coming of Gideon (1 Sam. 10:17-19; Judg. 6:8-10), and Saul’s initial battle with the Ammonites is described in a way that makes comparisons with Gideon’s battle with the Midianites virtually unavoidable (cf. Judg. 6:12, 15, 34-35; 7:16, 19 with 1 Sam. 9:1-2, 21; 11:6, 11).

The ‘Deuteronomist’ writer of Kings employed similar ‘comparative structures’ in recounting the history of Israel’s divided monarchy but, given his place in Israel’s history, he drew not only on the exodus traditions and the history of the judges but also on the histories of Samuel, Saul and David.⁴ He does this to good effect, for example, in

² Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1990): 54-56, 78-81, 87-93.

³ Garsiel, *Samuel*: 55.

⁴ This has been emphasized in a number of recent monographs, especially Erik Eynikel, *The Reform of King Josiah and the Composition of the Deuteronomistic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); R. H. Lowery, *The Reforming Kings: Cult and Society in First Temple Judah* (JSOTSup, 120; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Percy S. F. Van Keulen, *Manasseh Through the Eyes of the Deuteronomists: The Manasseh Account (2 Kings 21:1-18) and the Final Chapters of the Deuteronomistic History* (Leiden: Brill, 1996). To a somewhat lesser extent, this is noted by Hans-Detlef Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (ATANT, 66; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1980) and is worked into the commentaries of Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings* (NIBC; Peabody,

depicting the demise of Ahab as a reminiscence of the fall of Saul. Like Saul, Ahab had a troubled love-hate relation with YHWH's prophet[s] (1 Sam. 13; 15; 28; cf. 1 Kgs 18:16-19, 41-46; 20:35-43; 21:17-28; 22:13-28). Like Saul, Ahab wrongly spared the king of a Gentile enemy (1 Sam. 15:1-23; 1 Kgs 20:31-34) and, like Saul, he was killed after being wounded by an archer (1 Sam. 31:3; 1 Kgs 22:34-36). Many commentators have recognized these similarities.⁵

Fewer have noted the comparative structures used to describe Ahab's father, Omri. The Omride dynasty is acknowledged on all hands to have been central in the history of Israel. Following the pseudo-dynasties of Jeroboam and Baasha, Omri established the northern kingdom's first real dynasty, and his name was so strongly associated with Israel that even after Jehu destroyed the remnants of Omri's house, Assyrian records described Israel as the 'land of Omri' and Jehu himself was identified as a 'son of Omri'.⁶ Stefan Timm⁷ has provided a detailed historical analysis of the Omrides, but the literary and theological importance of the dynasty has not been appreciated, largely because scholars had underestimated the extent to which the author of Kings describes the initiation of the dynasty in terms that recall the reign of David. To be sure, many recognize parallels between

Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1995) and Jerome Walsh, *1 Kings* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical/Glazier, 1996).

⁵ Iain Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*: 151 puts the point sharply: 'Ahab is the "troubler of Israel", the Achan and the Saul of the northern monarchy'. Many commentators also point to analogies between Ahab's self-condemnation before the unnamed prophet and David's self-condemnation before Nathan (1 Kgs 20:35-43; 2 Sam. 12:1-13) though, of course, the two confrontations have very different ultimate results. On this point, see Paul R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1995): 230 and Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings* (AB; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 2001): 472. Burke O. Long, *1 Kings with an Introduction to Historical Literature* (FOTL, 9; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1984): 222 compares Ahab's sin here to Saul's 'desperate sacrifice on the eve of a military engagement' rather than to Saul's failure to carry out $\square\text{ } \square\text{ } \square$ ('destruction') against Agag, but mistakenly cites 1 Sam. 15. Simon DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC, 12; Waco, Texas: Word, 1985): 251 notes the similarities between 1 Kgs 20 and 1 Sam. 15, but claims that the Israelite king in view is Joram rather than Ahab. Cogan, *1 Kings*: 471-72 cogently argues that the king in 1 Kgs 20 must be Ahab. Philip D. Stern (1990), 'The herem in 1 Kgs 20, 42 as an Exegetical Problem,' *Biblica* 71: 43-47, esp. 46 argues that $\square\text{ } \square\text{ } \square$ is used in 1 Kgs 20:42 partly to bring out the Ahab-Saul connection.

⁶ *ANET*: 280-81, 284-85. Nadav Na'aman, 'Jehu Son of Omri: Legitimizing a Loyal Vassal by his Overlord', *IEJ* 48 (1998): 236-38 makes the plausible suggestion that the Assyrians gave Jehu the title 'son of Omri' to help legitimate his reign, in reward for Jehu's support for Assyria.

⁷ Stefan Timm, *Die Dynastie Omri: Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Israels im 9. Jahrhundert vor Christus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).

David's establishment of Jerusalem as capital and Omri's founding of Samaria.⁸ Yet, the full scope of the Davidic shape of Omri's reign, and the crucial theological points that Omri is a counterfeit David and that his dynasty is a parody of the Davidic dynasty of the South, have been ignored.

The purpose of this article is to lay out the analogies between David and Omri and, from there, to explore further analogies between Jeroboam and David on the one hand, and Omri and Jeroboam on the other. It is commonly recognized that 1–2 Kings is written as a series of embedded narratives: Within the overarching story of the united kingdom (beginning at 1 Kings 1–11) is the story of the divided kingdom with the focus on Israel in the North (initiated by Jeroboam, 1 Kings 11–12), and within this story-line is the history of the Omride dynasty (beginning in 1 Kings 16). I will show below that these three large-scale narratives have a common shape. Not only do they all begin in the same way (with a 'David'), but they all end in the same way (with a bloodbath and the destruction of a shrine). Thus, the narrative shape of the account of the Omride dynasty provides a key clue to the architecture of 1–2 Kings.

2. Omri, a Counterfeit David

Parallels between Omri and David begin with their predecessors. Zimri's reign lasted only a week, far shorter than Saul's reign by any reckoning, but Zimri's end is comparable to the final moments of Saul's life. After being wounded by Philistine archers, Saul asked his armour bearer to kill him. When the armour bearer refused, Saul fell on his own sword (1 Sam. 31:3–4) and his body was later rescued from the

⁸ Walsh, *1 Kings*: 217 calls attention to the parallel of David's establishment of Jerusalem as a tribally neutral capital and Omri's establishment of Samaria, and Cogan and Gray offer similar comments. Similarly, Cogan, *1 Kings*: 419: 'Omri resembles many other ambitious New Eastern monarchs who left their mark in stone and mortar as signs of valor and dynastic stability. The example of the Davidic capture and establishment of Jerusalem was near at hand.' John Gray, *I & II Kings* (2nd edn; OTL; London: SCM, 1970): 366: 'Omri acquired a personal possession, as David acquired Jerusalem, in which he was free to develop a city-state within a state, and bequeath it to his descendants, so founding a dynasty.' Similar comments are found in Donald J. Wiseman, *1 & 2 Kings* (TOTC; Downers Grove: IVP, 1993): 162; Gene Rice, *1 Kings: Nations under God* (ITC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990): 129; J. Robinson, *The First Book of Kings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972): 186; and Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon, Georgia: Smyth & Helwys, 2000): 200.

Philistines and burned (31:11-13). Zimri died when, despairing of victory, he set fire to the king's house in Tirzah and let it burn down over him (1 Kgs 16:18).⁹ Suicide is relatively rare in the Hebrew Bible, and the fact that both David and Omri succeeded suicidal kings is a striking similarity.¹⁰

Prior to becoming king, Omri served as 'commander of the host' (שָׂר־צָבָא, 1 Kgs 16:16), a position similar to David's under Saul (שָׂר־אֶלֶף, 'commander of a thousand', 1 Sam. 18:13). In this position, Omri was fighting Philistines when he heard the news of Zimri's rise to power (1 Kgs 16:15-16), while David made his reputation as a warrior by fighting the Philistine giant Goliath and by killing his 'ten thousands' of Philistines (1 Sam. 17; 18:6-7, 20-30). It is striking that Israel was threatened by Philistines during the reign of Baasha (1 Kgs 15:27), since the writer of Samuel informs us that David had substantially eliminated the Philistine threat (2 Sam. 8:1), and they posed no threat during the reign of Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs 4:25). Thematically, reference to a Philistine threat evokes the youthful exploits and the reign of David, and in Kings a warrior fighting the Philistines is implicitly being compared to David.¹¹

Even after Zimri was eliminated, Omri did not immediately ascend to the throne of Israel. Rather, the people were divided between followers of Tibni ben-Ginath and followers of Omri, until Omri eventually prevailed (1 Kgs 16:21-22). Generally, this parallels the 'long war' that followed the death of Saul, between David and Ishbosheth of the house of Saul (2 Sam. 3:1). More specifically, in both cases, the eventual winner 'grew strong' at the expense of the eventual loser: 2 Samuel 3:1 states, וַיֵּדֶד דָּוִד וַיִּחַזַּק ('and David went and became stronger'), which 1 Kings 16:22 echoes with:

⁹ The Hebrew of 16:18 is somewhat ambiguous. It could be read, 'when Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the king's house and [Omri] burned the king's house over him with fire, and he [i.e. Zimri] died'. Yet, Zimri alone is named, and the verse consists of a series of imperfects connected by *waw*. It is clear that 'Zimri' is the subject of בָּרְאוּת ('as he saw') and there is every reason to believe that it is the subject of וַיֵּבֹא ('and he went') as well.

¹⁰ With many commentators, Johannes Fichtner, *Das Erste Buch von den Koenigen* (BAT; Stuttgart: Calwer, 1964): 237 notes the similarity of Saul and Zimri, but makes nothing of it.

¹¹ This thematic use of the Philistine threat reappears in the reign of Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18:8), who is consistently presented as a 'new David'. See Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*: 252-65. Hezekiah's similarity to David is developed extensively by the Chronicler; see Raymond B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (WBC, 15; Waco, Texas: Word, 1987): 228-29.

וַיִּחַזֶּק הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרַי עֹמְרִי אֶת־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אַחֲרַי תִּבְנִי

And the people who went after Omri became stronger than the people who went after Tibni

For both David and Omri, the pathway to the throne led through civil war. Both David and Omri divided their reigns between two capitals. After defeating Ish-bosheth, David remained in Hebron for seven and a half years (2 Sam. 5:5) before conquering Jerusalem and making it his capital (2 Sam. 5:6-16). Likewise, after conquering Tibni, Omri retained the capital at Tirzah for six years (1 Kgs 16:23) before purchasing Samaria and making his base (v. 24). David conquered his capital while Omri bought his, but even Omri's purchase of the hill of Shemer has Davidic overtones, since it is reminiscent of David's purchase of the threshing floor of Araunah in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 24:18-25).

Considering his international importance, Omri is given little attention in Kings, and virtually everything said about Omri in 1 Kings has a single focus, namely, to draw out parallels with David: his military background, his contest with Tibni early in his reign, his two capitals, and his purchase of the hill of Samaria. Omri is a new David.

Yet, he was a very different David. As Garsiel points out with respect to the parallels between Saul and the judges, the parallels between David and Omri serve to highlight what are even more crucial differences. For starters, when Omri heard of Zimri's coup, he immediately left Gibbethon to attack Tirzah in order to seize the throne. Though Zimri committed suicide, he did so under pressure of an attack from Omri. As 1–2 Samuel make clear, this is a step that David resolutely refused to take (cf. esp. 1 Sam. 24; 26). Though persecuted by Saul, David never mounted an attack on YHWH's anointed. More importantly, Omri did not cling to YHWH as David did, but used his political strength not only to walk 'in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat' but to act 'more wickedly than all who were before him' (1 Kgs 16:25-26). New David though Omri was, he was a counterfeit David, a photo negative of his famed predecessor.

This contrast-within-comparison between the Omri and David continues into Kings' account of the Omride dynasty. If Omri is a new David, Ahab is a new Solomon.¹² Ahab's marriage alliance with the

¹² Noted already by I. Benzinger, *Die Buecher de Koenige* (KHC; Freiburg: Mohr, 1899): 105. See also Cogan, *1 Kings*: 421-23; Ernst Wuerthwein, *Das Erste Buch der Koenige: Kapitel 1-16* (ATD; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977): 203; and

king of Sidon parallels Solomon's relations with Hiram of Tyre (1 Kgs 16:31; cf. 5:1-12);¹³ like Solomon, Ahab married a foreign woman who seduced him to idols (16:31; cf. 11:1-8); like Solomon, Ahab was a builder who constructed a temple for his wife's gods (16:32) and probably¹⁴ sponsored the rebuilding of the border town of Jericho, just as Solomon refortified towns throughout the land (16:34; cf. 9:15-22). The parallels of Solomon and Ahab are stronger than those between Omri and David, since Solomon did apostatise from YHWH late in life. Ahab is a Solomon who fell into idolatry as soon as he assumed the throne. Still, the overall thrust of the parallels is to highlight the contrast: Ahab was the great sponsor of Baalism and the temple of Baal, while Solomon was the builder of the temple and the sponsor of the worship of YHWH.

The counter-Davidic character of the Omride dynasty underscores another implicit theme in the narratives of the Omride dynasty in Kings. Though never stated explicitly, the Omride programme seems to have been to reunite the northern and southern kingdoms under a new dynasty and around a new cult. Relatives of Ahab intermarried with the house of David (2 Kgs 8:26), and the relations between the two royal houses became so intimate that Jehu's 'holy' war against the house of Ahab engulfed the Davidic royal house as well (2 Kgs 9:14-28). Even the names of the kings of Israel and Judah bespeak a confusion of the two houses: an Omride Ahaziah and a Davidic Ahaziah, an Omride Joram and a Davidic Jehoram. The Omrides' grand strategy nearly

Timm, *Dynastie*: 35-36. Robinson, *Kings*: 189-90 offers an extended comparison of Ahab and Solomon, though more politically oriented than my own discussion. Herbert Rand, 'David and Ahab: A Study of Crime and Punishment', *JBQ* 24 (1996): 90-97 compares David's affair with Bathsheba to Ahab's seizure of Naboth's vineyard. The parallels are evident, but Rand's treatment of the disparity in YHWH's punishment of David and Ahab is unpersuasive.

¹³ Hoffmann, *Reform*: 79 points out that Ahab's marriage to Jezebel was an 'Ouverture' to the catalogue of sins in 1 Kgs 16:29-34, and points to the analogy with Solomon. Elsewhere, Hoffmann describes Solomon as the first 'Kultreformer' (47-58), and claims that 'Ahab [ist] der erste (negative) *Kultreformer* des Nordes' (82; 'Ahab is the first reformer of the cult in the Northern Kingdom').

¹⁴ As Walsh points out, 'reoccupation of such an important site (a rich oasis in the arid Jordan valley) could only occur under royal patronage. Thus the narrator's "in his days" is an oblique way of suggesting "under his aegis"' (1 Kings: 219). Charles Conroy, 'Hiel between Ahab and Elijah-Elisha: 1 Kgs 16, 34 in Its Immediate Literary Context', *Biblica* 77 (1996): 210-18 points out how 1 Kgs 16:34, especially in the context of the following chapters, brings out the similarities between Hiel's building projects and Ahab's.

worked, for Athaliah ascended the throne of David for seven years (2 Kgs 11).

Above, I have suggested that the Omride dynasty was a photo negative of the Davidic, but in the light of the later history of the Omride kings, Israel functions more like a mirror. In the apostasy of the Omrides, the Davidic kings and the people of Judah were supposed to see the reflection of their own apostasy, and in the catastrophic destruction of Ahab's house a foreshadowing of their own eventual fate. Israel's story as a whole was a cautionary tale for Judah (2 Kgs 17; cf. Ezek. 23), one that Hezekiah took to heart. Within that larger story, the history of the counterfeit David offered an especially precise parable. After all, the story of the Omrides that began in glory ended with the destruction of Ahab's temple of Baal in Samaria (2 Kgs 10:18-27), and there was, for discerning inhabitants of Judah, a lesson in that: it was the burden of the author of Kings to caution that if Judah should turn the house of YHWH into a house of Baal, then that house too would be utterly destroyed.

3. Jeroboam as New David

Omri is not the first counterfeit David in Kings. Earlier, the united kingdom of David and Solomon split apart in a rebellion led by Jeroboam, whose life-story is told in 1 Kings 11.¹⁵ Because Solomon had violated the laws of kingship (Deut. 17:14-17; cf. 1 Kgs 10:14, 26-29; 11:1-3), YHWH raised up three 'adversaries' (1 Kgs 11:14, 23): Hadad the Edomite; Rezon who became king of Aram; and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. 1 Kings provides brief biographical portraits of each of these 'satans', and each biography is more than vaguely familiar. Hadad was driven into Egypt during David's conquest of Edom, where he gained the favour of Pharaoh, who gave him land and a bride. As soon as he learned that David was dead, Hadad (rather brusquely) demanded that Pharaoh let him go, and (presumably) returned to Edom,

¹⁵ Jeroboam's exact role in this rebellion has been debated, a debate which is partly text-critical in character. See D. W. Gooding, 'Jeroboam's Rise to Power: A Rejoinder', *JBL* 91 (1972): 529-33; Ralph W. Klein, 'Once More: "Jeroboam's Rise to Power"', *JBL* 92 (1973): 582-84; and Steven L. McKenzie, 'The Source for Jeroboam's Role at Shechem (1 Kgs 11:43-12:3, 12, 20)', *JBL* 106/2 (1987): 297-300 for some aspects of that debate. My argument does not depend on the precise historical role of Jeroboam, but on the literary presentation of his role.

where he was an adversary to Solomon (11:14-22). Jeroboam's story runs along similar lines: driven out of the land because of Solomon's hostility, Jeroboam fled to Egypt, where he remained until Solomon's death. Upon his return, he was part of a delegation that asked Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, to lighten the burden of labour on the population of Israel. When Rehoboam refused, ten tribes seceded from the house of David and made Jeroboam their first king. He quickly built shrines at Dan and Bethel, where YHWH was worshipped through golden calves (11:26-12:33). In both of these cases, the story of the 'satan' repeats the story of Israel. Hadad and Jeroboam both fled to Egypt, both were welcomed by Pharaoh, both eventually made an 'exodus' from Egypt, and Jeroboam eventually became a king and even built a temple.¹⁶

Hovering behind the biographies of Rezon and Jeroboam is another narrative familiar to the original readers of 1 Kings. Opposed by his master, Hadadezer of Zobah, Rezon fled his homeland. While in exile, he gathered a band of marauders and eventually marched into Damascus, where he began to rule over the Arameans (1 Kgs 11:23-25). Rezon's story, clearly, is a replication of the story of David, who fled from Saul into the wilderness, gathered the disaffected of the land to him,¹⁷ and eventually established a capital city in Jerusalem.¹⁸ Jeroboam's story is similar: his promising career was cut short when Solomon learned about Ahijah's prophecy and sought to put Jeroboam to death (11:26-28, 40; cf. 1 Sam. 18:1-16), and Jeroboam's scene with Ahijah is reminiscent of Samuel's prediction that Saul would yield his place to 'your neighbour who is better than you' (1 Kgs 11:29-39; cf. 1 Sam. 15:24-33). YHWH's promise that Jeroboam's house would 'endure' is an even clearer link with David (1 Kgs 11:38; cf. 2 Sam. 7:16).¹⁹

¹⁶ In addition, there are some ironic twists on the exodus story. In 1 Kgs 12, Rehoboam fills the role of Pharaoh, a king who burdens the people without relief, and Jeroboam is a new Moses, who leads ten tribes out of the 'Egypt' of Solomon's kingdom. See Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*: 103-08.

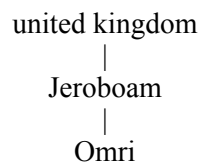
¹⁷ David's followers, however, are never identified as a 'marauding band' (Heb. מַרְדִּיכָיִם), which has too pejorative a flavour.

¹⁸ David's story is also a retelling of the story of Israel; see Peter J. Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow, Idaho: Canon, 2003).

¹⁹ Both passages employ נָחַם ('sustain, prove faithful'), full of covenant associations, to emphasize the permanence of the house. Gary N. Knoppers, *Two Nations Under God: The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the Dual Monarchies, Volume 1: The Reign of Solomon and the Rise of Jeroboam* (Harvard Semitic Museum

In part, the point of these parallels is to pass implicit judgement on the sins of Solomon and Rehoboam. If Jeroboam's move from Egypt to Israel was an exodus and conquest, that casts Solomon and Rehoboam in the role of Canaanite kings – not surprisingly, since they had begun to worship like Canaanites (1 Kgs 11:1-8; 14:21-24). But the text also gives some insight into the ironic justice of God's judgements. When the house of David fell into idolatry, YHWH raised up another 'David' and promised to establish his house without, of course, abandoning his earlier promises to David.²⁰ Jeroboam proved himself a false David. He was not 'complete with YHWH' as David had been, but instead established an unauthorized system of worship, an unauthorized priesthood, and an unauthorized festival calendar (1 Kgs 12:25-33).

Thus, at each of the major junctures in 1–2 Kings, a Davidic figure initiates a new thing within the kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam initiated the northern kingdom, and Omri, another Davidic figure, initiated the dynasty that most flagrantly departed from the covenant YHWH had made with Israel. The first half of 1–2 Kings could be diagrammed as:



The stories of the dynasties of Jeroboam and Omri are embedded in the larger story of Israel. Further, the narratives that describe the foundation of the dynasties share themes with the story of David and the united kingdom. It remains to show that these comparative structures also appear at the end of the respective story-lines of 1–2 Kings.

Monograph, 52; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993): 201 notes the similarities between YHWH's promises to Jeroboam and earlier promises to David: 'That this is a covenant of kingship similar to the covenant offered to David is made rather explicit' by a comparison of 1 Kgs 11:37 and 2 Sam. 3:21. Thus, 'just as David was given the chance to rule Judah ... and Israel ... and was later rewarded with an "enduring dynasty", so Jeroboam is given the chance to rule Israel and attain an "enduring dynasty"'.

²⁰ Solomon's adversaries are not the only biblical examples of this pattern. David's sins were punished when YHWH raised up Absalom, whose rise to the throne was a parody of David's own (for details, see again, Leithart, *Son*: ch. 10). Similarly, when Israel rejected the word of the prophets, YHWH turned to Nineveh, which repented at the preaching of Jonah (Jon. 3), and when Nineveh later turned from YHWH, the city is described as an unfaithful bride, language normally reserved for Jerusalem or Samaria (Nah. 3:1-7).

4. Death and Resurrection of David's House

The parallels at the ends of the major narrative sections are most obvious from a comparison of the fall of the house of Ahab and the fall of the southern kingdom of Judah, that is, by comparison of the outermost and innermost of the triple narrative structure. I begin with a detail of the narrative of Ahaziah's flight from Jehu. 2 Kings 9:27 informs us that 'When Ahaziah king of Judah saw, he fled by the way of the garden house' (Heb. בֵּית הַגֶּן). A very similar description appears in the account of Zedekiah's flight from the encroaching armies of Nebuchadnezzar: 'all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls beside the king's garden' (2 Kgs 25:4; Heb. עַל-גֶּן הַמֶּלֶךְ).²¹ Reference to a 'garden' along a way of escape is one of several similarities between the two incidents. In both cases, a king of Judah is fleeing an enemy – Ahaziah from Jehu, and Zedekiah from Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans. In neither case, however, does the king of Judah escape. Ahaziah is killed and Zedekiah is captured, blinded, and led away to exile. In both cases, the death or capture of the king is followed by an interruption of the Davidic line of kings. After Ahaziah is killed, Athaliah takes the throne in Jerusalem, the only non-Davidic ruler in Judah through the whole of the monarchy, and after Zedekiah is killed no Davidic ruler rises to take his place.²²

The ramifications of these parallels become more evident when we examine the context more fully. Ahaziah was a descendant of David

²¹ Though 2 Kgs 25 does not explicitly say that the king was in the company of those who fled, this may be inferred from (a) vv. 4-5 which record the flight of the 'men of war' through the 'Arabah' and the subsequent capture of the king in 'the plains of Jericho', which is part of the Arabah; and (b) the fact that the text describes the pursuit and capture of the king immediately after describing the flight of the 'men of war', leaving the suggestion that the parties being pursued in vv. 5-6 are the same ones who escaped in v. 4.

²² Though garden motifs are common in the Bible, the word 'garden' does not occur often, particularly in the historical books of the OT. Between Gen. 3 and 1 Kgs, in fact, the word is used only once, in Deut. 11:10, and the first time it is used in Kings, it refers to Naboth's vineyard, which Ahab wants to turn into a 'vegetable garden' (1 Kgs 21:2, the same phrase used in Deut. 11:10's description of Egypt). Naboth's vineyard is clearly in view in 2 Kgs 9:21, when Jehu throws the body of Joram, the grandson of Ahab, on the field of Naboth (v. 25). An allusion to the Edenic garden is part of the deep background here, however. The kings of Judah, as descendants of David, were Adamic kings, ruling over a garden-land. Because of persistent idolatry, however, they have been driven from the garden. The example of Zedekiah, who comes at the close of Judah's history, especially shows that Israel's entire history is an Adamic history, a story of creation, blessing, fall, and judgement of exile.

and Solomon through Rehoboam, but also a descendant of Ahab, whose mother was Athaliah (2 Kgs 11:1), ‘granddaughter’ of Omri and possibly the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel (8:26).²³ Though Ahaziah was king of Judah, his death is part of the destruction of the house of Ahab. The location of this event is also important. Ahaziah is in Jezreel (9:17, 21, 25), a ‘second capital’ for the Omride dynasty, in order to visit King Joram of Israel, who was recovering from battle wounds inflicted in a war with the Arameans (9:15-16). Ahaziah, as the person in which the Davidic and the counterfeit Davidic dynasties meet, is both a target for Jehu and a warning to future generations of Davidic kings. The warning is obvious: should Judah get too cosy with the house of Ahab (or with their idolatrous practices), the judgement that falls on the house of Ahab will spill over to the house of David. Even before we get to chapter 25 then, we see that the judgement of Judah is parallel to, and even bound up with, the judgement on the house of Ahab. And when we learn later that Manasseh is little more than a southern Ahab (21:3, 13), we know that judgement will fall on the Davidic house as it did on the Omride house.²⁴ Judah’s dynasty, founded by David, eventually suffers a fate similar to the Omride dynasty, founded by a counterfeit David. Examined in this larger frame, the destruction brought by Jehu anticipates the later destruction brought by Nebuchadnezzar. Not only does Jehu eliminate the Davidic king along with the Omrides, but he immediately moves from the destruction of a royal house to the destruction of a house of worship, the house of Baal in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 10:18-36). Likewise, 2 Kings 25 records that the Chaldeans slaughter the sons of Zedekiah and take him into exile (vv. 1-7), and then describes the destruction of the house of

²³ Athaliah’s precise relation to Omri is left ambiguous in the Hebrew Bible. On this question, see J. Begrich, ‘Athalia, die Tochter Omris’, *ZAW* 53 (1935): 78-79; H. J. Katzenstein, ‘Who Were the Parents of Athaliah?’ *IEJ* 5 (1955):194-97; and T. Ishida, “‘The House of Ahab’”, *IEJ* 25 (1975): 135-37.

²⁴ Commentators frequently point out that, in addition to the writer’s explicit comparisons of Manasseh and Ahab, 2 Kgs 21 is full of implicit references to Ahab and his sins. Lowery (1991:177) explains the connections of Manasseh and Ahab: Though ‘Ahab is portrayed as the Northern heretic par excellence,’ Ahab ‘never shoulders sole responsibility for the fall of the North.’ Similarly, the narrator’s treatment of Manasseh’s ‘as a Judean version of Ahab assigns him a place of special notoriety in the history of Judah but stops short of pinning the exile on him alone.’ Van Keulen, *Manasseh*: 4 also recognizes that the Ahab-Manasseh typology shapes the ‘Deuteronomist’s’ presentation of Manasseh more completely than the Jeroboam-Manasseh analogy, but weakens his case by ignoring how the judgement on Ahab’s house foreshadowed the judgement on post-Manasseh Judah.

YHWH in Jerusalem (vv. 8-17). Though the Jerusalem temple is dedicated to YHWH, the writer of Kings indicates that it has become no better than a temple of Baal.²⁵

Above I pointed out that Jeroboam's reign, like Omri's, is patterned on the life of David, and we have just seen that the fall of the Omride dynasty foreshadows the fall of Judah. Are there parallels as well between the fall of Jeroboam's northern kingdom and the other two? Does the middle narrative of 1-2 Kings have the same shape as the two parts of the narrative frame? Here, my focus will not be on the fall of Jeroboam's dynasty *per se*, but on the fall of the northern kingdom that Jeroboam founded.²⁶ Though some of the analogies are not as obvious, several things can be noted. First, it is commonly recognized that the fall of Israel foreshadows the fall of Judah, and the similarities are quite detailed. Hoshea, the last king of Israel, rebelled against the Assyrian king (2 Kgs 17:1-4a), leading the Assyrians to invade Israel, besiege Samaria, and take Israel into exile (17:5-6). The very same pattern is evident in the final years of the southern kingdom: Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon (2 Kgs 24:1), leading the Babylonians to invade Judah, besiege Jerusalem, and take Judah into exile (24:10-17). These similarities help to explain the odd fact that Kings provides no extended theological evaluation of the fall of Judah, only of the fall of Israel (2 Kgs 17:7-23). Clearly, the evaluation of Israel applies to the parallel case of Judah.

Second, as with the fall of the Omrides and the fall of Jerusalem, the collapse of the northern kingdom is accompanied by the destruction of a temple shrine. In the case of Samaria, however, the shrine of Bethel is not destroyed until the reign of Josiah, several generations after the fall of the kingdom itself (2 Kgs 23:15-20).²⁷ Finally, the fall of the North

²⁵ Eduard Haller, *Charisma und Ekstasis: Der Erzählung von dem Propheten Micha ben Jimla* (Theologische Existenz Heute, 82; Munich: Kaiser, 1960): 20-22 points to the similarities between the 'apocalyptic' prophecy of Micaiah (1 Kgs 22:13-23) and the later prophecies of Jeremiah, both of whom opposed court prophets.

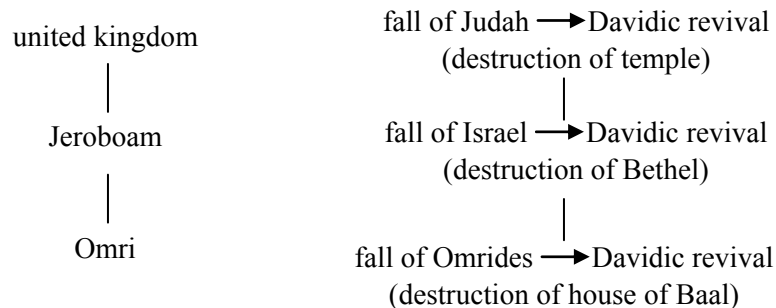
²⁶ Treating the northern kingdom's history as a single narrative is legitimated by the text, which persistently condemns northern kings for the 'sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat'. See E. Theodore Mullen, 'The Sins of Jeroboam: A Redactional Assessment', *CBQ* 49 (1987): 212-32; and Paul S. Ash, 'Jeroboam I and the Deuteronomistic Historian's Ideology of the Founder', *CBQ* 60 (1998): 16-24.

²⁷ In an important sense, the northern kingdom does not fall until Josiah destroys its central shrine and reunites the kingdom in the worship of YHWH and at the Passover (2 Kgs 23:19, 21-23). Literary details support this conclusion. Hoffmann, *Reform*: 51-52 discusses the echoes between the account of Josiah's destruction of Bethel and the fall of Solomon, indicating that 1 Kgs 11 and 2 Kgs 23 function as bookends around

is immediately followed by the reign of Hezekiah, who leads a revival of Judah and is, in important ways, a new David,²⁸ the reviver of the Davidic dynasty (2 Kgs 18:1-8). Here there is no interruption of the Davidic line, as in the other narrative threads, but there is renewal.

5. The Architecture of Kings

Structurally, 1–2 Kings is constructed as a series of embedded narratives, but the above study indicates that the various narratives within the Chinese box of the book all have the same shape. David-Solomon form an analogous pair to Omri-Ahab, and Jeroboam shares certain biographical details with David and Omri. 1–2 Kings also depicts the falls of the Omride dynasty, Samaria, and Jerusalem as a triad of parallel events. To complete the diagram offered partially above, the following might be seen as a blueprint for the architecture of the book as a whole:



The theological implications of this structure are, no doubt, vast but I will offer reflections along only one line. Above I noted that both the fall of the Omrides at Jezreel and the fall of the Davidic dynasty at Jerusalem were followed by interruptions of the Davidic line, but that parallel requires further exploration. After Jehu has killed all the house of Ahab, including the Omride-Davidic king Ahaziah, Athaliah, also of the house of Ahab, ‘rose and destroyed all the royal seed’ (2 Kgs 11:1). Through the heroics of Jehosheba and Jehoiada, YHWH preserves a single Davidic prince alive, Joash, who is restored to the throne,

the history of the northern kingdom. See also Eynikel, *Reform*: 330, who notes literary connections between Josiah’s cleansing of the land and Jehu’s destruction of the house of Baal (2 Kgs 10 and 23).

²⁸ Provan, *1 and 2 Kings*: 252-53.

fittingly enough, in the seventh year. Though it seemed as if Jehu had brought complete destruction to both Omrides and Davidides, the Davidic dynasty was reborn in Joash. There is a similar pattern following the fall of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 25; though it appears that the Davidic seed is dead, YHWH preserves Jehoiachin alive and in the last scene of 2 Kings, he is raised up from prison, given new clothes, and placed at the Babylonian king's table. In the case of the central narrative of 1–2 Kings, the story by-passes the interruption, for the death of Israel is immediately followed not by the death of Judah but by Judah's deliverance and revival. For all the parallels between the Omride and Davidic dynasties, and for all the similarities between the history of northern and southern kingdoms, the narrative structure of 1–2 Kings highlights their differences: while counterfeit Davids fall, never to rise, YHWH takes the true David from the ash heap and sets him in a place of honour, heir to an everlasting kingdom.²⁹

²⁹ My structural analysis, thus, has significant import for the debate about whether Kings presents a theology of grace. The repeated pattern of Davidic revival after the death of another dynasty or kingdom, indicates that the writer of Kings does offer hope for the future, and more emphatically than, say, J. G. McConville, 'Narrative and Meaning in the Books of Kings', *Biblica* 70 (1989): 31-49, esp. 47-48 suggests. I also used J. M. Miller (1967), 'The Fall of the House of Ahab', *VT* 17: 307-33 in preparing this article, though it is not cited specifically.