

UDK: 27-242-277
Prethodno priopćenje
Primljeno: kolovoz 2015.

Dubravko TURALIJA
Katolički bogoslovni fakultet u Sarajevu
J. Stadlera 5, BiH - 71000 Sarajevo
dubravkoturalija@hotmail.it

KING REHOBOAM ACCORDING TO THE CHRONICLER (2 CHRONICLES 11 - 12)

Summary

As portrayed in Chronicles 11 – 12, King Rehoboam was both a good king and a bad one; wise and foolish, a strong leader of a prosperous country as well as a weak leader of a declining one. Although he was a skilled diplomat, his arrogance brought the wrath of God upon himself and his nation. The Chronicler clearly attempts to depict King Rehoboam within his own context, while acknowledging his temperament and proclivities. This paper provides a detailed examination and analysis of the Chronicler's presentation of King Rehoboam and the Kingdom of Judah.

Key words: *Chronicler, Chronicles, Deuteronomistic, humiliation, Jeroboam, Jerusalem, Levites, Kings, pride, Priests, Rehoboam, royal, Samaria, Shishak, structure.*

Introduction

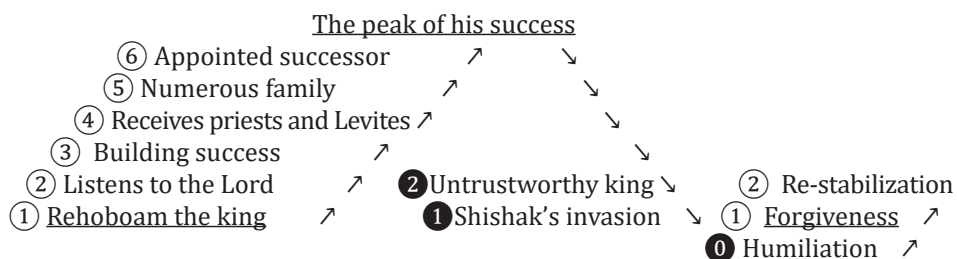
The King David (*Melech David*) and King Solomon (*Melech Shlomo*) in Jerusalem are two of the largest and most famous hotels in modern Israel. Moreover, the largest auditorium at the Hebrew University is known as the Auditorium of the Kings. Although Tel Aviv is the capital city, the seat of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) is nevertheless in Jerusalem. This all indicates that the idealized story of the kings was not defined long ago by the Chronicler or by the Israeli nation after Babylonian captivity. Instead, the continuous representation of the first kings of Israel as symbols of the nation, religion and public life had such a great influence upon the people that everything reflected their personalities. Even the people's attitude toward the Lord was interpreted through the public, moral and religious life of the Israelite kings who lived in Jerusalem. Jerusalem has been the royal capital and main gathering place of the people, even

up to the present. Therefore, the idealization of the first kings of Israel has not only had an impact upon the Jewish people but also upon the Christian world, who sees the beginning of the Messianic reign in David, and the dwelling place of God's wisdom, harmony and peace in Solomon. Furthermore, the link between the peace of Solomon and the peace of Augustus Caesar reinforced the meaning of the Old Testament influence upon Christ's work of human salvation. In the body of the text, we shall see this diagonal or traditional heritage, i.e., the real king of Israel (Judah) through the Chronicler, early Hebrew literature and the early Fathers of the Church.

The Chronicler mainly follows the Deuteronomic editorial work of the Book of 1 Kings but with its own structure. Our pericope, 2 Chronicles 11-12, is in the second part of the great royal corpus, immediately after the reign of Solomon, 2 Chronicles 1-10, followed by the reigns of the following 15 kings of Judah: Rehoboam (11-12), Abijah (13), Asa (14-16), Jehoshaphat (17-20), Jehoram (21), Ahaziah (22-23), Joash (24), Amaziah (25), Uzziah (26), Jotham (27), Ahaz (28), Hezekiah (29-32), Manasseh and Amon (33) and finally Josiah (34-36).

This paper is an attempt to present Rehoboam's kingdom, which was depicted in a positive light as a worthy successor to that of Solomon the Great. Although some parts of Chapter 12 are critical of Rehoboam's behavior, the leitmotif of the entire chapter is humility (cf. 2 Chr 12:6,7,12): the king and Judah ultimately humbled themselves before God, as concluded by the Chronicler. In contrast to 12:5-8, where the blame for abandoning the Lord is collective and there is humiliation of the entire nation, in 2 Chr 12:14 the Chronicler solely blames the king, not the people. In any case, a positive impression of King Rehoboam is still left, who after his death was deemed worthy of lying with his ancestors in the royal city of Jerusalem.

We could characterize Rehoboam's rule graphically as follows:



The black numbers stand for Rehoboam's bankruptcy. At one point, Rehoboam went into debt toward the Lord but his humility and that of the entire nation successfully restored the balance to positive. However, the level that he enjoyed at the beginning never returned, and thus, he is remembered as a good king with the grade average of C.

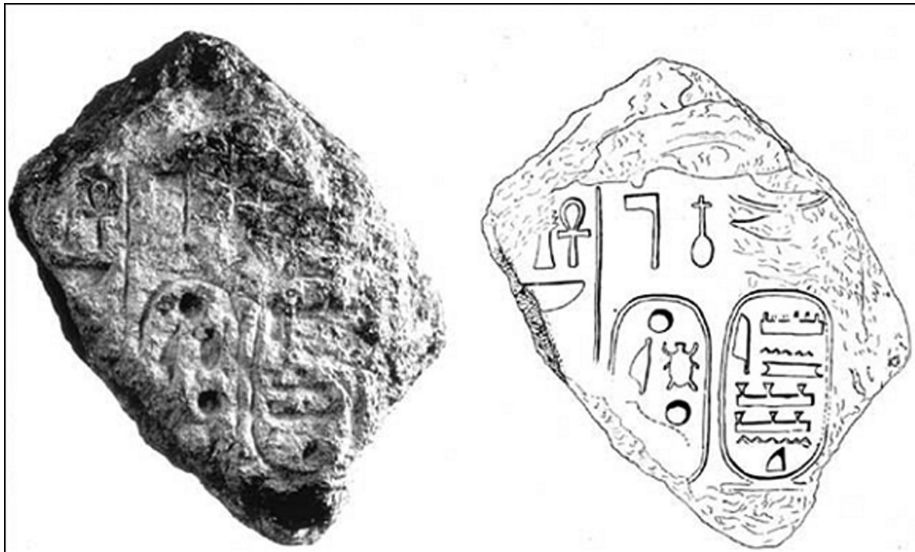
1. General Information

1.1. Historical data about Rehoboam

For 17 years, ca. 928–911, the king of Judah was Rehoboam, son of Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs 14:21; 2 Chr 12:13). During his kingship, the united Davidic kingdom was split. „On Solomon's death, Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel¹ had come to Shechem to acclaim him as king“ (1 Kgs 12:1; 2 Chr 10:1). Instead, the Northern Kingdom chose Jeroboam Nebat for its king. The reunification of Judah and Israel was a perpetually desirable to the Chronicler but, in reality, was merely a utopia, which day by day presented itself in a more convincing and radical way. In addition, the exaggeration of Rehoboam's efforts to reunite Israel with Judah (cf. 1 Kgs 12:21; 15:6; 1 Chr 11:1; 12:15) reveals the Chronicler's antipathy toward disunity and the division of Israel into two kingdoms. „The split in the kingdom and the prolonged fighting between Rehoboam and Jeroboam weakened the Israelites, and at the same time encouraged their neighbors not only to throw off Israelite rule and proclaim their absolute independence (Aram, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistines) but even to attempt to enlarge their own territories at the expense of Israel and Judah.“² Jeroboam's previous good relationship with Pharaoh Shishak (cf. 1 Kgs 11:40) and the coalition with the surrounding kingdoms were the real threats to Rehoboam of Judah. Aware of the constant risk of possible attacks, Rehoboam „ringed his kingdom with a system of forts (cf. 2 Chr 11:5-12). On the west, he fortified Aijalon, Zorah, Azekah, Soco, Gath, Mareshah and Lachish; on the south, Lachish, Adoraim and Ziph. On the east, Ziph, Hebron, Beth-Zur, Tekoa, Etam and Beth-Lehem. Possibly

¹ Here Israel refers to the northern tribes, since Rehoboam seems to have been accepted by Judah as a matter of regular royal succession (cf. 1 Kgs 11:43; 2 Chr 9:31; *Encyclopedia Judaica* 14 [ed. C. Roth – G. Wigoder; Jerusalem: Encyclopedia Judaica, 1970.], 42).

² Volkmar FRITZ, „The 'List of Rehoboam's Fortresses' in 2 Chr 11:5-12 – A Document from the time of Josiah“, *El* 15 (1981.), 46.



<http://apxaioc.com/media-gallery/detail/40/377>

This stele fragment was discovered during excavations at Megiddo in the 1930s and it preserves a cartouche with Shoshenq's name: *Hedj-kheper-Re* „Bright is the form of (the sun-god) Re“; „Amun's beloved, Shoshenq.“⁸

1.3. Chronicles and Kings

B. E. Kelly writes the following:

„A synoptic comparison of the section with 1 Kings 12–2 Kings 25 indicates that the Chronicler's account of the post-Solomonic kingdom is largely self-contained possessing its own structure and theological concerns over against the *Vorlage*. This result is due largely to the Chronicler's compositional methods, of which the most important are:

1. The *omission* of materials dealing exclusively with the northern kingdom;
2. The *insertion* into the *Vorlage* of periodizing chronological notices, theological rationales, stereotypical motifs of blessing and punishment, and prophetic speeches;

⁸ Cf. Kenneth A. KITCHEN, „Egypt and East Africa.“ *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millenium*, Lowell K. HANDY (ed.) (Leiden: Brill, 1997.), 124-126.

3. The *addition* of entire pericopae or the wholesale rewriting of passages.⁹

The Chronicler ignores the material that deals exclusively with the Northern Kingdom. Nevertheless, he notes the dependence of all of Israel on the Kingdom of Judah. Regarding the Book of Kings, the Chronicler's narrative is marked by episodes of faithfulness and success contrasting with those of disobedience and judgment. It is necessary to state that 2 Chronicles 11–12 mostly follows Deuteronomistic theology but in details of Rehoboam's reign it uses its own Chronistic account. R. H. Lowery rightly suggests that „the Chronicler's account of the kingdom's division (10:1-11:4) repeats the *Vorlage* in Kings nearly verbatim (1 Kgs 12:1-24)... the literary impact of the kingdom's division is different in Chronicles than in Kings because, unlike the Deuteronomist, the Chronicler puts none of the blame on Solomon. The Chronicler keeps the Deuteronomist's basic outline of significant events in Rehoboam's rule, but shifts the chronology to fit the Chronicler's theology of retribution.“¹⁰

1.4. The parallel texts of 2 Chronicles 11–12 with 1 Kings 12 and 14

The parallelism between 2 Chronicles 11–12 with 1 Kings 12 and 14 can be presented graphically as follows:

2 Chr 11:1 ↔ 1 Kgs 12:21	2 Chr 12:2 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:25
2 Chr 11:2 ↔ 1 Kgs 12:22	2 Chr 12:9 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:26
2 Chr 11:3 ↔ 1 Kgs 12:23	2 Chr 12:10 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:27
2 Chr 11:4 ↔ 1 Kgs 12:24	2 Chr 12:11 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:28
	2 Chr 12:13 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:21
	2 Chr 12:14 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:22
	2 Chr 12:15 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:29
	2 Chr 12:16 ↔ 1 Kgs 14:31

⁹ Cf. Brian E. KELLY, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles*, JSOTSup 211 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996.), 94 n. 58.

¹⁰ Richard H. LOWERY, *The Reforming Kings. Cults and Society in First Temple Judah*, JSOT ss 120 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991.), 71-72; Cf. John C. ENDRES, et al., (eds.), *Chronicles and its Synoptic Parallels, in Samuel, Kings and Related Texts* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998.), 14; Natalio Marcos FERNÁNDEZ - José Ramón BUSTO SAIZ, *1–2 Crónicas*, TECC 60 (Madrid: Instituto de Filología, C.S.I.C., Departamento de Filología Bíblica y de Oriente Antiguo, ²1996.) 21-22; David Noel FREEDMAN, „The Chronicler's Purpose, *CBQ* 23 (1961.), 436.

The majority of scholars follow the Deuteronomist's composition, putting the first four verses together with the previous Chapter 10 of 2 Chronicles as a part of Israel's revolt in 1 Kgs 12:1-14.¹¹ The differences between the interpretations will be compared in the footnotes to the translation.¹²

1.5. Rehoboam and Jeroboam

The prophet Ahijah prophesied that upon Solomon's death, Jeroboam would become king over ten tribes (cf. 1 Kgs 11:29-31).¹³ When Solomon had heard of the prophecy, he ordered Jeroboam killed but he fled to Pharaoh Shishak in Egypt (cf. 1 Kgs 11:40). After Solomon's death, Jeroboam returned from Egypt and was crowned king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, which was home to ten of the tribes of Israel. Wars were continuous between Israel and Judah during Jeroboam's reign (cf. 1 Kgs 11-14). The consequences immediately after the division of the Davidic kingdom included violent war between the north and south for 15 years. The accepted scholarly claim is that the Rehoboam kingship lasted from 932 to 915 BC. After him, Abia reigned ca. from 915 to 913 BC and his son Asa from 913 to 873 BC. On the basis of the political influence of Jeroboam (932–910 BC), who caused a schism in the Kingdom and opening of the sanctuaries in Bethel and Dan, he worshiped the golden calf instead of making sacrifices to Yhwh. His son Nabad (910–909 BC) continued the same line of his father for two years. Baasa (909–886 BC) and his son Elah (886–885 BC) were the kings before a new conspiratorial provocation by Zimri, the chief of the army of Omri.¹⁴

¹¹ *Chronicles and Its Synoptic Parallels*, 195; 205-206.

¹² M. Eisemann summarizes differences between the King's and Chronicle's account of Rehoboam in three significant points: „1. Kings gives a detailed listing of the sins which were committed, while Chronicles satisfies itself with a general statement that evil was done. 2. In Kings, the blame is laid upon Judah the people, while in Chronicles it is the king who does evil - the people just follow along. 3. There is striking imbalance between the two accounts in the relative space devoted to the national backsliding on the one hand and the subsequent campaign of Shishak on the other. In Kings, the description of Judah's evil ways takes three full verses and Shishak's campaign is described in two. By contrast, Chronicles deals with the regression in one short phrase but lavishes eight verses on the Egyptian campaign.“ *Divrei hayamim II* (New York: Mesorah Publications, 2013.), 366.

¹³ Karlo VIŠATICKI, „Ujedinjena monarhija i Jeroboamova šizma“, *Diacovensia* 20 (2012.), 221-255.

¹⁴ *Initiation Biblique introduction à l'étude des Saints Écritures* (publ. A. Robert - A. Tricot) (Paris: Desclée et Cie, 1970.), 705-706.

The focus in 2 Chronicles is on Rehoboam, unlike 1 Kings where the emphasis is on Jeroboam, with giving only 10 verses about Rehoboam (cf. 1 Kgs 14:21-31).¹⁵ Distressed about the divided Kingdom, when the Chronicler refers to all of Israel (cf. 2 Chr 10:1,3,16), he only means to the northern tribes. „The Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah (cf. Chr 10:17) and all Israel in Judah and Benjamin (cf. Chr 11:3) underline the Chronicler’s view that only those elements of Israel that remained loyal to the Davidic line were the true Israel.“¹⁶ Rehoboam’s kingship is judged negatively by Kings as a time of apostasy (1 Kgs 14:22-24). Wellhausen, Curtis and Madsen, Welten and, especially, Dillard claim that the Chronicler took the opposite view of Rehoboam in 1 Kings because of the text on the building, blessing and support by the Levites and the multiplication of the royal family (cf. 1 Kings 11).¹⁷ However, in 2 Chr 12:14, the narrator depicts King Rehoboam as unworthy to lead Israel, in comparison to his ancestors. The Chronicler’s theological play between positive and negative accounts of Rehoboam is a compilation between the historical source, which presents Rehoboam in a negative way, and *Chronistic theology*, which attempts to portray Rehoboam as a regular and worthy successor of Solomon, while denouncing Jeroboam as an unworthy heir to the throne of Israel.

2. 2 Chronicles 11–12: Translation

2 Chronicles 11–12 are devoted to the Israelite kinship of the Davidic dynasty as a legitimate and unique royal dynasty over Israel. Thus, many passages that contradict this argument are excluded from the Book of Chronicles. Nevertheless, sometimes an allusion, sentence or entire passage from 1 Kings shows that the writer of Chronicles highly recommended familiarity with the Book of Kings, which provides a very good overview of Israel at the time. 2 Chr 11:1 „omits Jeroboam’s election by the north (cf. 1 Kgs 12.20), a point which typifies Chronicles’ reticence on matters concerning the northern monarchy.“¹⁸

¹⁵ Joseph BLENKINSOPP, *Sapiente, sacerdote, profeta* (Brescia: Paideia, 2005.), 145.

¹⁶ Jacob M. MYERS, *II Chronicles*, AB 13 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965.), 65.

¹⁷ Julius WELLHAUSEN, *Prolegomena to the History of Israel* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1885.), 209; Edward Lewis CURTIS - Albert Alonzo MADSEN, *The Book of Chronicles*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1910.), 362; Peter WELTEN, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Vrlg. 1973.), 127; R. B. DILLARD, *2 Chronicles*, 94-95.

¹⁸ *Jewish Study Bible* 14, 1783.

2.1. 2 Chronicles 11

1. And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin¹⁹ a hundred and eighty²⁰ thousand chosen²¹ to fight²² against Israel,²³ that he might bring the kingdom²⁴ again to Rehoboam.²⁵

2. However, there was a word from Jhwh²⁶ to Shemaiahu,²⁷ the

¹⁹ The usage typical for 2 Chronicles is יהודה ובנימן (cf. 2 Chr 11:1,3,12,23; 15:2,8,9; 25:5; 31:1;34:9). In 34:32, instead of Judah we find Jerusalem בירושלם ובנימן. We do not find a similar construction in 1 Chronicles. In Ezra, the same wording is only found in 1:5; 4:1; 10:9. In the parallel text of 1 Kgs 12:21, we find בְּלִיַּיתִי הַיְהוּדָה, omitting the term בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל.

²⁰ The *numeralia* varied שְׁמֹנִים or שְׁמֹנִים. The shorter form is found in 2 Chr 11:1 and the longer in a parallel text in 1 Kgs 12:21. Nevertheless, both of the forms are mentioned in 2 Chronicles. We find the form with wāw in Gen 5:25,28; 35:28; Exod 7:7; Num 2:9; 4:48; 1 Kgs 5:29; 12:21; 2 Chr 2:17; Is 37:36. The shorter form is presented in Gen 5:26; Josh 14:10; 2 Chr 2:1; 14:7; 17:15,18.

²¹ The Talmud reads here *gbr* - *mighty men* and LXX reads νεανίσκων - *young men* while the Vg has *milibus* - *solders*. Cf. Alexander SPERBER, *The Bible in Aramaic: The Hagiographa IVa* (Leiden: Brill, 1992.), 42.

²² The Targum reads here *to organize lines of the battle*.

²³ It seems that 2 Chronicles tends to use the term Israel without any attributes. In addition, the construction בְּלִיַּיתִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל seems very Deuteronomistic. In the books of the OT, such as Exodus and Leviticus, we can find וְכָל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (cf. Exod 34:30; Lev 23), בְּלִיַּיתִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (cf. Lev 4:13), בְּלִיַּיתִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (cf. Lev 10:6), בְּלִיַּיתִי־יִשְׂרָאֵל (cf. Lev 16:17). In Num 16:34, we only find the construction וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל, correlating with the relative particle אֲשֶׁר, which is related to a particular group of Israelites but not the entire people. In Deuteronomy, this construction began to be used to designate the entire people וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל (cf. Deut 13:12; 21:21; 31:1,11; 32:45). In 2 Chronicles, this structure is already used to mean all the people of Israel (cf. 2 Chr 7:6; 9:30; 10:3; 11:3,13; 12:1,6,13).

²⁴ The word מַמְלָכָה - *kingdom, dominion, reign, sovereignty or realm* that we find in 2 Chronicles is defined in 1 Kings as מְלוּכָה - *kingship, royalty, kingly office*.

²⁵ In addition to 1 Kgs 12:21, we find בְּיַד־שְׁלֹמֹה. The Targum tries to make the message clearer about the temptation to restore Rehoboam's role. „1 Kgs 12:21b passages about the Rehoboam war pale against the Northern Kingdom. In the God's speech 23–24e, the war will be forgotten. Therefore, this means that there are no serious reasons to divide the House of Israel.“ Gottfried VANONI, (Heraus. W. Richter) *Literaturkritik und Grammatik. Untersuchungen der Wiederholungen and Spannungen in 1 Kön 11–12*, Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament 21. Band (München: Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, 1984.), 80.

²⁶ The parallel text in 1 Kgs 12:22 has דְּבַר־הַאֱלֹהִים instead of דְּבַר־יְהוָה. In 2 Chronicles 11–12, the domination of the Tetragram for God is obvious.

²⁷ Two forms of the name שְׁמַעְיָהוּ are used in the OT. The shorter form is that found in 1 Kings and also present in 2 Chr 12:7,15; 29:14. The longer form, שְׁמַעְיָהוּ, is present here and in 17:8. The Targum reads the name according to the text in 1 Kings. Instead of a man of God, the Aramaic reads *nby' dYhwh* - *prophet of Yhwh*.

man of God:

3. - Say to Rehoboam, son of Solomon, king of Judah,²⁸ and to²⁹ all Israel³⁰ in Judah and Benjamin³¹ declaring:

4. Thus says the Lord: „You shall not go up³² nor fight³³ against your brethren.³⁴ Return every man to his house for this thing is done of me!“ And they accepted the words of the Lord, and returned from going³⁵ against Jeroboam.

5. Now Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem and he built cities for defense in Judah³⁶.

6. He built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoe,

7. Beth-Zur, Soco, Adullam,

8. Gath, Mareshah, Ziph,

9. Adoraim,³⁷ Lachish, Azekah,

10. Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, as fortified cities³⁸.

²⁸ The Targum reads here: *king of the tribe of the house of Judah*. Vanoni claims „dass diese Appositionsverbindung entstammt einer späteren erklärenden Glosse“ (G. VANONI, *Literaturkritik und Grammatik*, 81).

²⁹ The Targum switches here from the particle לָךְ to *with w'm kl byt...*

³⁰ The Targum reads here ...*all the house of Israel*. This phrase was omitted in the LXX (cf. the BHS apparatus).

³¹ Vanoni claims that here „the information about the tribes which belong to Reehoboam is contradictory. In 1 Kgs 12:20f, we read that David belonged to the Judean Dynasty and in 21b and 23 Benjamin is also included. It is difficult to accept joint authorship for the various types of information. The different approaches in the verses confirm the tension. The contradictions in the texts are explained by differences in political information around the time of their composition. The Chronicles here have clearly integrated Benjamin into the Southern Kingdom“ (G. VANONI, *Literaturkritik und Grammatik*, 132).

³² „In 1 Kings 24b, the same verb is used for the road from Jerusalem to the Northern Kingdom as in 27a. 28d for the path from the Northern Kingdom to Jerusalem. However, this verb עָלָה is not contradictory but probably implies a special meaning in the struggle“ (G. VANONI, *Literaturkritik und Grammatik*, 131).

³³ The form in 2 Chronicles תִּלְחָמוּ is *Niphal* impf. 2. masc. pl (cf. 2 Chr 13:12; 18:30). The same form with the paragogic *nun*, תִּלְחָמוּן, is noted only in 1 Kgs 12:24. The Targum reads *wl' tgyhwn qrb'* - *do not make the war...* In Chronicles, *nun sufit* is often omitted when it is found in the parallel text in the Book of Kings (cf. 1 Kgs 8:33,43 and 2 Chr 6:29,33 *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, GKC 129 n.1).

³⁴ The MT of 1 Kgs 12:24 has בְּגִיּוֹשְׁרָאֵל here.

³⁵ Here מִלְּקַת as the *qal* inf. construct of לָךְ with the prepositional particle מִן is used as a particle of separation (cf. 1 Sam 30:21; 2 Chr 25:13; Ecc 7:2; Is 8:11). Here in 1 Kings, instead of the preposition מִן there is the preposition לָּ.

³⁶ The Targum reads *in the land of the tribe of the House of Judah*.

³⁷ The Targum reads *'dwrym Adorim*.

³⁸ The Targum has here *qrwyn krykn - fortified towers*.

11. He strengthened³⁹ the fortresses and put in them commanders and stores of food, oil and wine,

12. And in every⁴⁰ city, shields and spears. So he made them very strong and Judah and Benjamin were his.⁴¹

13. Now, the priests and Levites who were in all Israel presented themselves to him from all their territory.

14. The Levites had left their common lands⁴² and their possessions⁴³ and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the Lord;⁴⁴

15. For he appointed for himself priests⁴⁵ for high places, and for goats,⁴⁶ and for calves, that he made.

16. After them, those from all the tribes of Israel, those who set their heart to seek the Lord the God of Israel,⁴⁷ came to Jerusalem to

39 The Targum reads *wtqyp* - *repaired*.

40 The pleonastic כָּל expresses entirety (cf. GKC 123c).

41 David Rothstein rightly suggests that „building projects are a sign of a king's success and divine favor. This favorable evaluation of Rehoboam suggests that he is not the cause of the secession but, rather, its victim. In addition, the juxtaposition of Rehoboam's acceptance of the prophetic directive to refrain from warfare and his successful building ventures also expresses another Chronicles theme, viz., the importance of heeding the prophetic word“ (*Jewish Study Bible*, 1783).

42 The LXX read σκηνώματα - *tents*; the Vg: *suburban* - *town's periphery*.

43 The noun „Possessions“ refers here to the northern land where the Levites were living. The northern cities were „their only patrimony since, as Levites, they were denied a portion in the Land. By leaving their cities they left their only anchorage in the Land.“ (*Divrey hayamim II*, 84).

44 The Targum tries to provide an explanation reading here: *because Jeroboam and his son hindered the Levites and have not allowed them to offer service before the Lord*.

45 The word כֹּהֵן is used in the OT exclusively for the regular Israeli priests. „In the OT *kmr* is used only for idol priests, though not all idol priests are given that title“ (*The Aramaic Bible, The Targums 2 Chr 11:15 n.13*). The Targumim changed the word *khn* into *kmr* when idol priests are referred to in the TM. Modern Hebrew today uses the word *kōmer* for a Catholic or Orthodox priest.

46 As Scott W. Hahn explains, „the Hebrew word *š'yr*m usually means *goats* but it can also mean *goat idol*. A major motivation for legislation in Lev 17:1-9 is to prevent the Israelites from sacrificing to demons. Demons are referred to by the term *š'yr*m - *he-goats*, demons who were thought to appear in the form of goats (cf. Isa 13:21). The practice of this kind of worship is also attested at the time of Josiah, for in his reform he had the high place to goat demons smashed (cf. 2 Kgs 23:8)“ (*Kingship by Covenant*. New Haven – London: Yale University Press, 2009., 418 n79; cf. Ludwig H. KOEHLER - Walter BAUMGARTNER, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon* (Leiden: Brill, 1990.), 4:1250).

47 The Targum reads: *to seek instruction from before the Lord*.

sacrifice to the Lord the God of their ancestors.⁴⁸

17. And they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam the son of Solomon for three years, for they⁴⁹ walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

18. Then Rehoboam took as a wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David (*and of*)⁵⁰ Abihail the daughter of Eliab⁵¹ the son of Jesse,

19. And she bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham.

20. And after her he took Maacah⁵² the daughter of Absalom,⁵³ and she bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith⁵⁴.

21. And Rehoboam loved Maacah the daughter of Absalom more than all his other wives and concubines. For he had taken eighteen wives and sixty concubines and fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

22. And Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maachah, as the leader among his brethren, for to cause him to reign⁵⁵.

23. And he acted⁵⁶ wisely and distributed⁵⁷ some of his sons through all the territories of Judah and Benjamin to all the fortified

48 The LXX reads differently here: *καὶ ἐξέβαλεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ φυλῶν Ἰσραὴλ οἱ ἔδωκαν καρδίαν αὐτῶν τοῦ ζητῆσαι κύριον θεὸν Ἰσραὴλ...* *he cast out from the tribes of Israel them who set their heart to seek the Lord God of Israel.* The Vg follows the TM.

49 The LXX reads here in sg. *ἔπορεύθη* - *he (the king of Judah) has walked.* The plural in the TM is a general plural including all of Israel; the Vg: *ambulaverunt* 3. pl.

50 Though „and“ is missing in the TM, most English versions supply it, „the daughter of Jerimoth... and of Abihail,“ thus making Abihail the mother of Mahalath. The Targum inserts ‘and’ but also inserts the object marker before ‘Abihail,’ thus making Abihail the second wife of Rehoboam, which raises the question as to the identity of ‘she’ in verse 19 and ‘her’ in verse 20“ (cf. *The Aramaic Bible, The Targums* 2 Chr 11:18 n.17).

51 Cf. 1 Sam 16:6.

52 Cf. 1 Kgs 15:2; 2 Chr 13:2.

53 Cf. 1 Kgs 15:2

54 The LXX reads here *Εμμωθ*; Vg: *Salumith.*

55 The infinitive construct here serves as a secondary idea of continuous action in an assertive statement. The same case occurs in 2 Chr 12:12 (GKC 114i).

56 The BHS Apparatus suggests reading this here as *כִּוְנָה* - *he was established* because it fits with v. 22 (in v. 22 *διανοέομαι* is the strong verb and means *strike, smite*, but in the allegoristic meaning to *establish*. Cf. LIDDELL - SCOTT, *Greek English Lexicon*, 405); here the LXX reads *ἠὺξήθη* - *he was exalted.*

57 The TM suggests the emendation *וַיִּפְרְדּוּ* - *he broke down* with *וַיִּפְרְדּוּ* - *divided.*

cities, and he gave⁵⁸ them food in abundance.⁵⁹ And he sought a multitude of wives [for them].

2.2. 2 Chronicles 12

1. And it came to pass, in the establishing⁶⁰ of the kingdom of Rehoboam, and in his strengthening of himself, that he had forsaken the law of the Lord, and all Israel with him.

2. And it came to pass, in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak, king of Egypt, rose up against Jerusalem, because they had been unfaithful to the Lord.⁶¹

3. With a thousand and two hundred chariots, and with sixty thousand horsemen, and there is no number to the people who had come with him out of Egypt: Lubim,⁶² Sukkiim,⁶³ and Cushim.⁶⁴

4. And he captured the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.

5. Then Shemaiah, the prophet, came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them: - Thus says the Lord: „You have forsaken⁶⁵ me, so I have also forsaken you into the hand of Shishak.“

6. So the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said: - The Lord is righteous.

7. And when the Lord saw⁶⁶ that they humbled themselves,

⁵⁸ The BHS *Apparatus* gives an alternative with וַיִּשָּׂא לָהֶם - *lifted them up*.

⁵⁹ The Targum tried here to clarify the situation, reading: *He built and repaired towers and put some of his sons in charge of all the districts of the house of Judah and Benjamin...* „MT reads: ‘and he distributed some of his sons..’ and the verb *prs, to break*, reads as *distribute* according to the suggestion of BDB“ (*The Aramaic Bible, The Targums 2 Chr 11:23 n.22*).

⁶⁰ The Targum presupposes *khkwn* for the *khkyn* in the MT and reads: *when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established* (*The Aramaic Bible, The Targums 2 Chr 12:1 n.1*).

⁶¹ This text is longer than the parallel one in 1 Kgs 14:25. The cause of the attack by Shishak was the unfaithfulness of Judah. We find a clearer explanation in 1 Kgs 14:22, where the narrator tries to explain the unfaithfulness and evil of the people of Judah. The Targum follows here the Chronicle narration here.

⁶² A tribe that was probably on the territory of present-day Libya.

⁶³ The identification of *suk'-i-im* or *cukkiyim* is uncertain. Probably it is about a tribe from present-day Sudan and Eritrea.

⁶⁴ The tribe Cushim refers to present-day Ethiopia and Somalia.

⁶⁵ The Targum reads *ʿtwn šbaṭwn yt dhlti* - *you have forsaken fear of Me*.

⁶⁶ We would expect the imperfect with *wāw consecutive* here, although in the late books we can find the simple perfect in a clause following an expression of time (cf. 2 Chr 7:1; 15:8: GKC 111b)

the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying: „They have humbled themselves so I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some measure of deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by means of Shishak.

8. Nevertheless they have become servants to him, and they know my service,⁶⁷ and the service of the kingdoms of the lands.“

9. So Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem and took the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king's palace. He took everything; he took the golden shields⁶⁸ which Solomon had made.⁶⁹

10. And King Rehoboam made in their stead shields of bronze, which he entrusted to the officers⁷⁰ of the guards on duty at the entrance to the house of the king.⁷¹

11. And it came to pass, from the time⁷² that the king went into the house of the Lord, that the guards went⁷³ in and lifted them up, and brought them back into the chamber of the guards.⁷⁴

12. And when he humbled himself,⁷⁵ the anger of the Lord turned away from him, so as not to destroy (him) completely; and also

⁶⁷ „MT uses *'bwdh* - *service* twice. Targum, by using *pwlhñ* - *service, worship* for the first occurrence of the word and *šy'bwd'* - *servitude* for the second, brings out more strongly the contrast between the service requested by the Lord and the servitude imposed by other regimes.“ (*The Aramaic Bible, The Targums 2 Chr 12:8 n.12*).

⁶⁸ 1 Kgs 14:26 reads: *...all shields* and so emphasizes Solomon's treasure. The Targum reads: *...he carried off the treasures of the sanctuary house of the Lord along with the treasures of the king's house; he took all the most desirable things; he even carried off the shields of gold which Solomon had made*. This explains that the golden shields were not the part of the Temple but of the royal house, which will be explicitly stated in v. 10.

⁶⁹ The Chronicler is very concerned about the destiny of Jerusalem. The repetition of the word *coming against* in 2 Chr 12:2,9 explains something that is not as emphatic in 1 Kgs 14.

⁷⁰ The LXX reads differently here than the TM: καὶ ἐποίησεν Ροβοαμ θυρεοὺς χαλκοῦς ἀντὶ αὐτῶν καὶ κατέστησεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν Σουσακιμ ἄρχοντας παρατρεχόντων τοὺς φυλάσσοντας τὸν πυλῶνα τοῦ βασιλείως - *And King Rehoboam made shields of bronze instead of them. And Susakim set over him captains of footmen, as keepers of the gate of the king*. The Vg follows the TM.

⁷¹ The unique verse in this section is absolutely the same as the text of 1 Kgs 14:27

⁷² Here is the shorter form of the infinitive of the verb קָיַם in 1 Kgs 14:28.

⁷³ In 1 Kgs 14:28, there is a different verb, קָנָה - *to carry*.

⁷⁴ The last sentence of the LXX reads differently: καὶ οἱ ἐπιστρέφοντες εἰς ἀπάντησιν τῶν παρατρεχόντων - *and they that returned to meet the footmen*.

⁷⁵ The Targum has here: *wkd tbr lbyh* - *when he broke his heart...*

in Judah were good things.⁷⁶

13. So King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city⁷⁷ that the Lord had chosen from all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. And his mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess.⁷⁸

14. And he did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the Lord.⁷⁹

15. Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer, to enroll oneself by genealogy.⁸⁰ And [there were] wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam constantly.

16. And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David; and his son Abijah became king in his stead.

76 „MT's statement is rather ambiguous: 'and also in Judah were good things.' It seems to imply that despite Rehoboam's unfaithfulness and despite the devastation brought by the invasion, there was still something worthwhile left in Judah. The Targum makes it slightly less ambiguous by promising blessings (good things) from the Lord: *indeed to those of the house of Judah he decided to bring good fortune*" (*The Aramaic Bible, The Targums 2 Chr 12:12 n. 16*).

77 A noun in apposition is made determinate, even after a prefix, in the ordinary way. So we translate: *In Jerusalem, the city that the Lord had chosen...* (cf. GKC 131h).

78 We find a parallel text with a slightly different introduction in 1 Kgs 14:21. Instead of the nominal clause in 1 Kings: מֶלֶךְ בְּיַהוּדָה וַיִּרְחַבְעָם בֶּן־שְׁלֹמֹה מֶלֶךְ בְּיַהוּדָה, Second Chronicles implements the narrative *wayqtol*, which introduces a dependent clause with *ky*. The Targum follows the Chronicler's version here.

79 This verse is very short in comparison to the parallel text in 1 Kgs 14:22, where Judah's transgression is specified: *...they provoked him to jealous anger more than all that their ancestors had done by their sins that they had committed*. That something is missing in 2 Chr 12:14 is also shown by the Targum, which concisely tries to explain the problem in Judah: *He did what was evil, for he did not set his heart to seek instruction from the Lord*.

80 MT: *to enroll oneself by genealogy*. Commentators are not sure what to do with this word. Williamson (p. 249) suggests the following: „...it could preserve an indication of a further source referred to by the Chronicler.“ The Targum tells us exactly which source is being referred to: *„in the book of the Genealogy of the House of David.“* (*The Aramaic Bible, The Targums 2 Chr 12:15 n.20*).

3. The Early Interpretation of Rehoboam's Realm

3.1. The Early Jewish Interpretation: The Targum and Aggadah

As we saw in the previous chapter, the Aramaic Targum very faithfully follows the Chronicler's matrix and, unlike in the Targum Onkelos and Jonathan, there are no major interpretations of the TM to be found. The theology of retribution and the ideology of the united Israel in the Second Temple period and later are still basic Jewish themes and teachings.⁸¹

In the Rabbinic literature, Rehoboam is presented as a son of an Ammonite woman. In the Aggadah, Pes. 119a we read: „And when David praised God because it was permissible to marry Ammonites and Moabites, he held the child upon his knees, giving thanks for himself as well as for the curse which David had invoked upon Joab (2 Sam 3:29) when he prayed that Joab's house might forever be afflicted with leprosy and running sores (Sanh 48b). All the treasures which Israel had brought from Egypt were kept until the Egyptian king Shishak took them from Rehoboam.“⁸² Rehoboam, being afflicted with a gonorrhoeal flux (Sanhedrin, Talmudic tractate. 48b), some later rabbinical interpreters link the curses with which David cursed Joab as a fulfillment in David's own descendants. „The rabbis, emphasizing the message to be derived from Rehoboam's failure, declared that the king is the servant of the people and not their ruler (Horayot, Talmudic tractate. 10a-b).“⁸³

3.2. Josephus Flavius

Josephus Flavius wrote about Rehoboam in the following chapters of his work *Antiquitates* (Harvard University Press, 1928ff.): 7.105,190, 244; 8.212, 221, 222-224, 246-248, 253-258, 261-263, 274, 278, 280, 282, Comparing the stories about Rehoboam in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, it seems, that Josephus preferred the second one. Rehoboam was of major interest to Josephus. Josephus has a very negative

⁸¹ Herbert DONNER, „The Separate States of Israel and Judah,“ *Israelite and Judean History*. Old Testament Library, J. M. MILLER - J. H. HAYES (ed.) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977.), 2-3.

⁸² Jacob Zallel LAUTERBACH, *The Jewish Encyclopedia X* (New York - London: Funk and Wagnalls Comp., 1905.), 362.

⁸³ Bustanay ODED, *Encyclopedia Judaica 14* (Jerusalem: Encyclopedia Judaica Jerusalem, 1970.), 42-43

attitude toward Jeroboam, claiming that it was he who urged the elders to complain to Rehoboam about the „heavy yoke“ (2 Chr 10:3), though Josephus places much greater emphasis on Rehoboam’s failure to listen to the advice of the leaders who suggest that Rehoboam speak to the people in a friendly spirit and more popular manner than was customary in keeping with royal dignity, because in this way he would secure their good will, since subjects naturally like affability. Josephus explicitly states that this advice was good and beneficial (*Ant.* 8.216). In any case, Josephus describes Rehoboam as mild and kind to those in trouble, just and humane. L. H. Feldman wrote: „Josephus’ account is intended to teach the reader how a ruler should and should not rule, and, in particular, how he should deal with the masses, for whom he has considerable contempt. In particular, he stresses the importance of the qualities of mildness, kindness, and friendliness. ... [The] contrast between Rehoboam and Jeroboam [is in fact that] whereas Jeroboam promoted civil strife, Rehoboam is depicted as avoiding attacks upon fellow-Jews. To the extent that Rehoboam is guilty of degenerating into lawlessness and impiety, Josephus ‘psychologizes’ by explaining that this resulted naturally from the very considerable power and success that Rehoboam achieved. Rehoboam is rehabilitated by Josephus to a great degree by depicting the people who came to him at the beginning of his reign as impatient. In summarizing his reign, Josephus focuses not on his religious but on his military and diplomatic deficiencies.“⁸⁴

Jewish interpretation of the importance of the servitude, mildness, kindness and friendliness of the kings would be developed further by Christian theologians, such as Tertulian in *De civitate Dei* and especially by Augustine.⁸⁵

3.3. Rehoboam in the New Testament and Early Christian Tradition

In *Apparatus* by Nestle-Aland, there is no reference or allusion to 1 Kings 12–14 or 2 Chronicles 11–12 concerning King Rehoboam.⁸⁶

The Fathers of the second century have some references and

⁸⁴ Louis H. FELDMAN, *Studies in Josephus’ Rewritten Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 1998.), 262, (about Rehoboam pp. 245-262).

⁸⁵ Cf. *1–2 Kings, 1–2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Ester* in: *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture OT 5* (ed. M. Conti – T. C. Oden; Inter Varsity Press, Downers Grove [IL], 2008.), 78-79.

⁸⁶ NESTLE-ALAND, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, [1898.] 1993.), *Apparatus* p. 784.

indications about 2 Chronicles 11–12. The most significant among them is a work by Augustine and his interpretation of Rehoboam's actions in *A Treatise on Grace and Free Will*. In Chapter 42, entitled „God Does Whatsoever He Wills in the Hearts of Even Wicked Men,“ he wrote: „Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, rejected the salutary counsel of the old men, not to deal harshly with the people, and preferred listening to the words of the young men of his own age, by returning a rough answer to those to whom he should have spoken gently. Now where does it come from such conduct, expect from his own will? Upon this, however, the ten tribes of Israel revolted from Him, and chose for themselves another king, even Jeroboam, that the will of God in His anger might be accomplished, which He had predicted would come to pass. For what does the scripture say? ‘The king hearkened not unto the people; for the turning was from the Lord, that he might perform His saying, which the Lord spoke to Elijah the Shilonite concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat (1 Kgs 12:15). All this, indeed, was done by the will of man, although the turning was from the Lord.’“⁸⁷

In *Instructor, Book III*, Clement of Alexandria made reference to 2 Chr 11:4 and 2 Chr 11:15, finding in the latter a symbol of Esau and in the hairy goat a symbol of demonic sin.⁸⁸ Jerome in *The Letters LXXXII* wrote about human freedom: „Freedom is roused if attempts are made to crush it. No one gets more from a free man than he who does not force him to be a slave. I know the canons of the Church; I know what rank her ministers hold; and from men and books I have daily up to the present learned... The kingdom of the mild David was quickly dismembered by one who chastised his people with scorpions and fancied that his fingers were thicker than his father's loins (1 Kgs 12:10).“⁸⁹

What we can already see from the redaction of the Chronicler, the interpretation of the early Jewish rabbis and the historian Josephus, as well as the early Church Fathers is that they were very upset by Rehoboam's decision in 2 Chr 10:11 to choose rigidity instead of mildness and that he showed himself to be very obstinate and difficult instead of humble.

⁸⁷ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 5*, P. SCHAFF (ed.), (Peabody; Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publ., 1995.), 462.

⁸⁸ *Ante-Nicene Fathers 2*, A. ROBERTS - J. DONALDSON (ed.), (Peabody; Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publ., 1995.), 276.

⁸⁹ *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers 5*, 171.

3.4. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*

In 4QKgs, we do not have any reference to 1 Kings 12–14 (2 Chronicles 11–12). The only fragments preserved from the Dead Sea Scrolls are 1 Kgs 7:20–21, 25–27, 29–42, 50; 7:51–8:9, 16–18.⁹⁰

4. The Structure of the Text of 2 Chronicles 11–12

While Goldingay suggests that the Chronicler's account of Rehoboam in 2 Chronicles 11–12 „was structured around the narratives concerning Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 12:25–14:20,⁹¹ our structure of 2 Chronicles 11–12 is independent of deuteronomistic structure in 1 Kings 12–14 and can be divided into three parts. The first part in 11:1–17 seems chiasmic, where the two arrivals are presented as a frame. At the beginning (A), the arrival of Rehoboam in Jerusalem (11:1–4) and at the end the arrival of the refugees from the Northern Kingdom in 11:16–17 (A'). The main point of the chiasmic structure is Rehoboam's settling in Jerusalem in 11:5–12 (B) and the settling of the Levites and priests in Rehoboam's kingdom in 11:13–15 (B').

The second part is central and marked by three coherent pieces of information. The first is the presentation of the multiplication of Rehoboam's family in 11:18–21 (A). The second is deducted from the first and deals with Rehoboam's successor in 11:22–23 (B). This is the peak of the entire structure and includes Rehoboam's successor; his other sons and cities; his stores of food and many wives. At the end, the third piece of information is Rehoboam's sin in 12:1 (C), which leads him and his kingdom into oppression by their enemies.

The structure of the third part is conclusive in the form of AA'BB' and presents, on the one hand, Shishak's invasion in 12:2–4 (A) and Shemaiah's intervention in 12:5 (A'), while, on the other hand, God's forgiveness in 12:6–8 (B') and God's retribution in 12:9–12 (B').

At the end of Chapter 12, a summary is presented in four verses. The summary may be called *Memento* and includes the laud to Rehoboam in 12:13 (A); the vilification of Rehoboam in 12:14 (B); the real kingship of Rehoboam in 12:15 (C) and the death of Rehoboam in 12:16 (D).

⁹⁰ *Discoveries in the Judean Desert XIV. Qumran Cave 4* (Clarendon Press: Oxford 1995.), 171.

⁹¹ John GOLDINGAY, „The Chronicler as Theologian.“ *BTB* 5 (1975.), 99–126, here 102–104; See also R. B. DILLARD, *2 Chronicles*, 91–93.

The structure can be presented graphically as follows:

PART I

- A. Rehoboam's **arrival** (בוא) in Jerusalem (the temptation)
 - 11:1 Rehoboam (subject) → 180,000 soldiers (mediator) → United Monarchy (goal)
 - 11:2–4 The Lord's intervention(s) → Shemaiah prophecy → peace over Israel and Judah
- B. Rehoboam **settling** (ישב) in Jerusalem (prosperity)
 - 11:5–12 building of the cities and their restoration, fortification
- B'. Levites **settling** (יצב) in Rehoboam's kingdom (prosperity)
 - 11:13a Gathering of the Levites and priests
 - → → 11:13b–15 Jeroboam prevented them from serving the Lord
- A. **Arrival** (בוא) of refugees from the Northern Kingdom in Jerusalem (migration-prosperity)
 - 11:16–17 strengthening of Rehoboam's kingdom

PART II

- A. Rehoboam's **family** (ילד multiplication-prosperity)
 - 11:18–21 wives, concubines, sons, daughters
- B'. Rehoboam's **successor** (מלך new king-prosperity)
 - 11:22–23 successor, sons, cities, abundant food, many wives (peak of prosperity)
- C. Rehoboam's **sin** (כון → עזב)
 - 12:1 peak of prosperity and its decline

PART III

- A. Shishak's **invasion** (עלה rising of God's wrath)
 - 12:2–4 Israel trespassed against the Lord
- A. Shemaiah's **intervention** (בוא → עזב the problem: forsake the Lord)
 - 12:5 אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־יְהוָה וְאֶת־אֲנִי עֹבְרֵי אֶתְכֶם
- B. The Lord's forgiveness (כנע collective humiliation)
 - 12:6–8 The Lord pronounces forgiveness
- B'. The Lord's retribution (עלה rising of Shishak of Egypt)
 - 12:9–12 plunder of the treasure of Jerusalem

Memento:

- A. 12:13 The laud to Rehoboam
- B. 12:14 The vilification of Rehoboam
- C. 12:15 The real king
- D. 12:16 The dead king

Rehoboam's settling in Jerusalem and welcoming the Levites from the north is the first highlight on which the Chronicler places emphasis. The location where the entire story is developed is Jerusalem. The central part of Chronicles 11–12 is Rehoboam's growing realm. He is presented as a king with a future. Shishak's invasion of Judah is a visible sign of Rehoboam's decline. The occupation was global and probably few fortresses were not destroyed, among which was Jerusalem. Finally, the *Memento* offers a general view of King Rehoboam, noting his positive qualities and respected kingship, which

is indicated by his burial place among the respected founders and builders of the United Monarchy of Israel.

5. The Exegesis of 2 Chronicles 11-12

5.1. *Coming up to Jerusalem (2 Chr 11:1-17)*

Rehoboam's coming up to Jerusalem as well as building of new cities and welcoming of priests and Levites from the Northern Kingdom belong to the main interest of the Chronicler in Chapters 11 and 12.

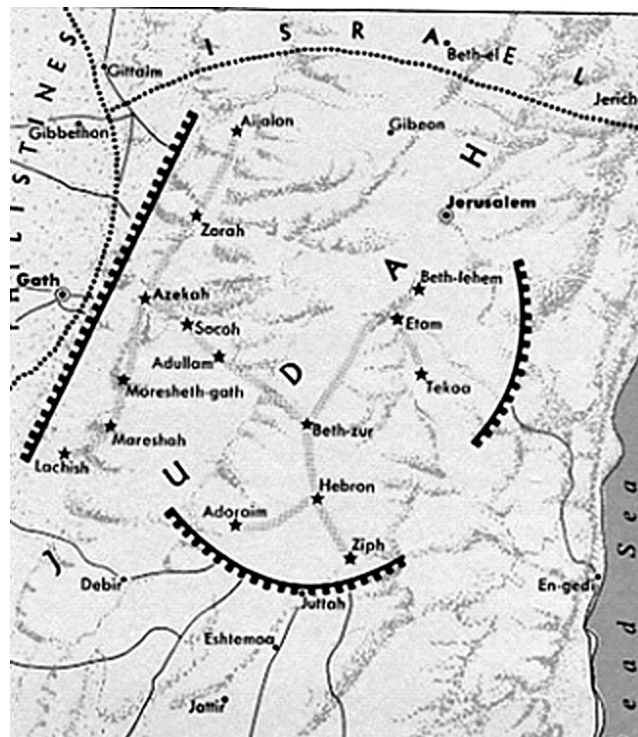
5.1.1. Rehoboam in Jerusalem

At the very beginning of Chapter 11, it is possible to detect the highly positive attitude of the narrator toward King Rehoboam. The verb used for the introduction of the kingship is *to come* בוא, not *to arise* עלה, which has a negative connotation in the pericope. The verb *come* designates the expected enthronization of the new king (cf. 11:22). The problem for Rehoboam is with the northern tribes, who chose independence from Jerusalem. The *numeralia* of the soldiers in 11:1 invokes that of Pharaoh Shishak in 12:2 (cf. 1 Kgs 11:40), whereas the intention of the former was not to devastate Israel but to unite the kingdom by force. The intervention by the Lord in 12:6 also invokes the intention of God, which is peace over Israel and obedience to Him. The Law is not mentioned here but instead God's commandment, which includes acceptance of prophetic council and availability to obey God's law as expressed in 12:1.

5.1.2. Rehoboam, the Builder of New Cities

The cities of Judah and Benjamin are all attested in the OT: Bethlehem (Gen 35:19; 48:7; Josh 19:15; 2 Sam 2:32; 1 Chr 4:4...), Etam (Jdg 15:8,11; 1 Chr 4:3,32), Tekoa (1 Chr 2:24; 4:5; 2 Chr 20:20; Jer 6:1; Am 1:1), Beth-zur (Josh 15:58; 1Chr 2:45; Neh 3:16), Soco (1 Chr 4:18; 2 Chr 28:18), Adullam (Josh 12:15; 1 Sam 22:1; 2 Sam 23:13; 1 Chr 11:15; Neh 13:30; Mic 1:15), Gath (Josh 11:22; 1 Sam 5:8; 6:17; 7:14; 1 Kgs 2:40,41...), Mareshah (1 Ch 2:42; 4:21; 2 Chr 14:8; Mic 1:15), Ziph (Josh 11:22; 1 Sam 23:14,15; 26:2; 1 Chr 2:42; 4:16). Aduram is

mentioned only here and Lachish (Josh 10:3,5,31,31,33,34,35...) and Azekah (Josh 10:10,11; 1 Sam 17:1; Neh 11:30; Jer 34:7), Zorah (Josh 19:41; Jdg 13:2,25; 16:31;18:2,8,11), Aijalon (Josh 21:24; Jdg 1:35; 12:12; 1 Sam 14:31; 1 Chr 6:69; 8:13), Hebron (Gen 13:18; 23:2,19; Exod 6:18; Num 3:19; Josh 10:3,5,23).



<http://fontes.lstc.edu/~rklein/Documents/rehoboam.htm>

Rehoboam's fortifications and, later, Jehoshaphat's fortified cities were not only alongside the boundary of Judah but were also spread across Judah. According to De Vaux, „these fortresses were built along routes where resistance was practicable, and at the most favorable strategic points.”⁹² Therefore, these fortified cities would be the strategically coherent centers for the administration of the various districts of Judah. This would make them the natural bases of fiscal and judicial administration. In addition, the list of the cities is probably incomplete, referring only to the fortifications built by Rehoboam, without counting those built by David and Solomon that were still

⁹² Roland de VAUX, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions*, The Biblical Resource Series (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.), 96.

in existence.⁹³ However, the legal cases of any particular area could be brought to one of these well-known centers for adjudication. Only Adoraim or Adorim is unknown as a site and probably refers to Dura, southwest of Hebron.⁹⁴ It seems that Welten rightly points out that the list of Rehoboam's fortresses (11:5b-10a), the mention of Uzziah's war against the Philistines and his agricultural works (26:6,10), the description of Hezekiah's tunnel (32:30) and the family details in 11:22-23 and 12:1-4 are evidence of an earlier source, while the report of Josiah's death (35:20-25) could reflect a pre-exilic source.⁹⁵

5.1.3. Levites and Priests from the North in Jerusalem

The arrival of the priests and Levites in Jerusalem shows the taking of sides or the alternatives between that offered by the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. According to the Chronicler, the legal, state and priestly authorities were in Jerusalem or in the Southern Kingdom. Here, the difference is most clearly emphasized between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. The latter is depicted as a genuine apostate who, on the one hand, does not accept legal authority or the legal priesthood in Israel. On the other hand, great favoritism toward Rehoboam is evidenced by the Chronicler concerning the prosperity of the Kingdom of Judah, which had its legal organization and official religion. The text of 2 Chronicles 11 is entirely focused on a positive outlook and encourages the reader to consider the Southern Kingdom as a continuation of Solomon's and David's kingdom.⁹⁶

Ambiguity regarding priests and Levites is evident in the Chronicles, as in a few passages of the priestly legislation itself, where priests are sometimes included under the general designation of

⁹³ Cf. De VAUX, *Ancient Israel*, 96-98; Keith W. WHITELAM, *The Just King. Monarchical Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Sup. Ser. 12 (Sheffield: Sheffield Acad. Press, 1979.), 195. *La Sacra Bibbia* notes here that to build a city in Hebrew often means to rebuild or repair its fortifications. It is obvious that after the various rebellions of the House of Israel, repair was needed to enable the citizens to continue to live in a given city. (*LSB, Tradotta dai testi originali con note a cura del Pontificio Istituto Biblico*. Roma: Salani, 1957.), 110 n. 16-10.

⁹⁴ *La Sacra Bibbia*, 110 n. 10

⁹⁵ P. WELTEN, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern*, 191-194.

⁹⁶ Christian FREVEL, „Die Elimination der Göttin aus dem Weltbild des Chronisten,“ *ZAW* 103 (1991.), 265-66; Patrick M. GRAHAM - Kenneth G. HOGLUND - Steven L. MCKENZIE, eds., *The Chronicler as Historian*, JSOTSup 238 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.), 44.

Levites. This usage in itself would not need to be explained or justified, although priests are included under the name of Levites in a context that at the same time offers us the latter term in the narrow sense. No doubt, there is a problem regarding this terminology in the Chronicles. In 2 Chr 11:13, it is reported that the priests and Levites flocked from all the parts of Judah after the schism of the ten tribes because Jeroboam had rescinded their right to exercise priestly functions. In 2 Chr 13:9-11, the same designation for priests is applied to the Levites and to the sons of Aaron who, during the reign of Jeroboam, were deprived of the right to exercise the priestly ministry as a part of Israel's history to serve the only the Lord.⁹⁷ The mention of the Levites' property and land in 11:13 may refer to the confiscation not of their property but rather of their service by Jeroboam in their fatherland, while the priests were replaced by an unauthorized agglomerate under the protection of Jeroboam himself. Thus, the Levites seem to be the real problem for Jeroboam, not the priests. Their legislative correlation with the House of David and the Temple in Jerusalem forced Jeroboam to deprive them of all their rights and privileges. Getting the Levites out of the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam approved the Southern Kingdom as the legal herald of the Davidic Monarchy. Receiving the Levites from the north, Rehoboam presented himself not only as the legal successor of David's throne but also as the sole supporter of Mosaic tradition.

5.2. Rehoboam's Growing Realm and Decadence (2 Chr 11:18-12:1)

The multiplication of Rehoboam's Family matches with his success in royal ruling and politic. However, his pride lead him to humiliation, which characterized not only his personality but also his royalty.

5.2.1. Multiplication of Rehoboam's Family

Rehoboam's family contains names unknown from elsewhere and is in some conflict with other biblical passages, suggesting that an inherited source has been used here. Rudolph and Noth assert that this passage belongs to a later redaction and does not illuminate Rehoboam's whole consolidation of rule, although naturally such a large family belongs to the whole of Rehoboam's reign, not only the

⁹⁷ Albin van HOONACKER, *Le sacerdoce lévitique dans la loi et dans l'histoire des Hébreux* (Londres: Williams & Norgate; Louvain: J.-B. Istas, 1899.), 28.

first three years.⁹⁸ The multiplication of sons is the key to prosperity in the ancient world. This is the peak of Rehoboam's success. The augmentation of Rehoboam's family by the Chronicler is an *argumentum ad hominem* against Jeroboam and the Northern Kingdom. In addition, while Rehoboam's kingdom, with its princes and heirs to the throne, seems to be perpetual, the kingdom of Jeroboam is condemned to infertility and extinction.

The arrival of Rehoboam in Jerusalem signifies the legal selection of the king and his struggle for unification, religious organization, population growth and, finally, the selection of the new king. Rehoboam's heir is not his firstborn son, Jeush, (cf. 2 Chr 11:19) but his first son by Abshalom's daughter Maachah. Rehoboam broke the tradition of David and Salomon regarding the firstborn privilege of the heir on Judah's throne. The distribution of Rehoboam's sons as princes throughout Judah and Benjamin demonstrates a stable monarchy under one head or the king enthroned in Jerusalem.

5.2.2. Rehoboam's Pride and Humiliation

Chapter 12 reveals another aspect of Rehoboam's kingdom. The key import of these lines is the attitude of the king, and then the entire community of Judah, toward the Lord. The first verb, כּוּן, *to establish*, which sounds the same as the verb כּנַע, *to humble oneself*, introduces the narration of Chapter 12. The leitmotif of this chapter is certainly the verb כּנַע (cf. 6, 7, 12), which leads to the solution of Israel's main problem: the people were stiff-necked and negligent toward God. The verb כּנַע (kn') in „niph'al and related terms are more likely the language of religious parenthesis rather than specific cultic terminology. The first occurrence of *kn'* niph'al in the narrative is mentioned here and corresponds to the first act of repentance in the face of divine judgment, while its fourfold repetition in 12:6,7,12 makes it a leitmotif of that pericope. It may also serve the rhetorical intent of echoing 2 Chr 7:14, where this verb is the first term of the protasis. In each of its occurrences, it is stated or implied that those who humble themselves may avert the Lord's wrath (cf. 2 Chr 30:8,10; 32:25,26; 34:25,27).“⁹⁹ In addition, according to O. H. Steck, „in these particular verses, the humiliation results not from a conscious and freely chosen conversion

⁹⁸ Hugh G. M. WILLIAMSON, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1982.), 244.

⁹⁹ KELLY, *Retribution*, 56.

or a 'turning back' on the part of the individual, but rather, it occurs because of prophetic announcement of judgment or doom. In these cases, the act of humiliation has the effect of causing Yhwh to delay the immediate fulfillment of the judgment."¹⁰⁰

5.3. Shishak's invasion and God's action (2 Chr 12:2-12)

God's retribution is closely related to Judah's enemy. This is the first time after the Exodus that the biblical narrative returned to Egyptian power, which threatens God's people. The oppression led by the Egyptians is God's proclaimed punishment, which is mitigated by the repentant verb *kn'* in niph'al as a response to the Lord's prophet. Disobedience to God is equated here with disobedience to the Law. The attacks all occur following reform according to Mosaic Law or a statement affirming the legitimacy of Judah's institutions (cf. 13:10-12; 14:2-4; 19:4-11; 32:1). The Chronicler persistently insists upon retribution that should be fulfilled, first of all according to the deeds of the king as the representative of the entire people and secondly by the deeds of people who follow the acts of their king.

The repeated reference to the prophet Shemaiah (cf. 2 Chr 12:5) indicates his role in Israel as a mediator between God and the chosen people. Restoration of the penitent is described following Shishak's invasion. The text does not speak about the destruction or devastation of Jerusalem but it does mention the confiscation of the Temple and royal treasures as well as the subordinate position of Judah's king to the Egyptian pharaoh (cf. 2 Chr 12:8). We found a similar connotation in Hezekiah's appeal to the North after the Assyrian destruction (cf. 2 Chr 30:6-9). Both passages use the term *pl'th, escapee*, which took on a more specialized meaning in the post-exilic period for the returnees to Babylon (cf. Ezra 9:8, 13-15; Neh 1:2). On the Karnak list are nearly 150 fortresses along the Phoenician coast occupied by Shishak. Among the towns, there are Aijalon, Bet-horon, Bet-an, Gibeon, Megiddo and Taanach. The towns occupied by Shishak do not show an overall Egyptian strategic war plan but rather a multiplication of attacks on different sites throughout Judah. The treatment of Judah's fortresses is not the same as the treatment of its capital. No defense of the Jerusalemites is mentioned in 2 Chronicles 12. Moreover, there is

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Patrick T. CRONAUER, *The Stories about Naboth the Jezreelite (1 Kings 21-2 Kings 9)*, LHB OTS 424 (New York: Clark, 2005.), 101.

no mention of the defense of any Judean town. In fact, it is noted that Judean princes fled to Jerusalem from occupied Judean fortresses (cf. 2 Chr 12:5). The war strategy may lead to the conclusion that while the Egyptian army was occupying Judah's fortresses, there was a kind of accord between Rehoboam and Shishak. Since the confiscation of the precious treasure of the entire city is mentioned in Chapter 12, it is possible to suggest that heavy tribute was paid by Rehoboam to King Shishak.¹⁰¹ The shields fashioned by Solomon were symbols of Israel's power and influence in the region, as well as the security and protection of the kingdom (cf. Dt 33:29; 2 Kgs 19:32).¹⁰² The golden shields were portable (cf. 2 Chr 12:11) and probably the main requisites of the royal honor guard. The replacement of the golden shields with shields of bronze (cf. 2 Chr 12:10) presents the continuation of the king's power and protection in Jerusalem but this time not because of Judah's power, riches or interstate influence but because of its tradition as the once great and powerful Kingdom of Salomon.

5.4. *The Memento (2 Chr 12:13)*

The last part is called *Memento* here because it summarizes the entire message of the pericope. For the Chronicler, Rehoboam was a great king who governed the kingdom for a long time, a king who lived to old age. He was the king residing in Jerusalem, in the city which „the Lord had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there“ (cf. 2 Chr 12:13). The next line, in 2 Chr 12:14, almost negates the aforementioned. In fact, it recalls that the king, nevertheless, committed acts that were not pleasing to God, which contributed to his negative image among the people. The conclusion is that neither the king nor the people sought the Lord. They, all together, did not follow the Lord's path but acted according to their own will. The people simply followed the king's example. The real threat to King Rehoboam was not Egypt but Jeroboam himself (cf. Chr 12:15). The constant incidents between Rehoboam from Judah and Jeroboam from Israel reflected the perpetual intolerance between the South and North of Israel, the permanent weakening of the power of both kingdoms and, in the end,

¹⁰¹ J. F. DRINKARD, „Shishak“, 821.

¹⁰² William JOHNSTONE, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, JSOTSup 253 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.), 371.

the neglect of God's commandments.¹⁰³ In death, Rehoboam lay among his ancestors, the true Kings of Israel, next to his grandfather David and father Solomon (cf. 2 Chr 12:15). And where is Jeroboam? The Chronicler seems to want to forget about him.

Conclusion

What is the main effect of the presentation of Rehoboam? He was initially a good king but faltered and became a bad one. Eventually, he humbled himself and improved but never entirely resisted the temptations of his own will and disobedience to the Lord. His rule is closely related to the nation he led. Jerusalem flourished during his reign but was also looted on his account. Nonetheless, the Chronicler's final word is a positive assessment of his reign, in terms of the nation. Together, they extricated themselves from the wrath of God and the nation was saved, although the king continued along his former path. The conclusion is positive because he was still deemed worthy to lie with his ancestors. Moreover, „the whole effect of this presentation is not to depict Rehoboam in a manner contrary to that of the *Vorlage* but to highlight the Lord's mercy and faithfulness to the covenant promises of 2 Chr 7:14. It depicts blessing on the undeserving and effectual repentance in the face of just chastisement.“¹⁰⁴ The Chronicler's *apologia* for King Rehoboam is also mentioned in 2 Chr 13:7, in contrast to the Deuteronomist who simply concealed that Rehoboam and his nation were converted from their idolatrous path (cf. 1 Kings 14). It seems that for the Chronicler, despite the split of the Monarchy and constant war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam, there is still only one king and only one kingdom under only one ruler, who should be served not only by kings and princes but also by the entire people.

¹⁰³ There is a reference to the sources used by the Chronicler, „the book of Sheemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies“ (2 Chr 12:15), which are part of the so-called *lost books of the Old Testament* and only fragmentally presented in the Bible. Cf. Josip VOLOVIĆ, *Historijska i kritička introdukcija u svete knjige Staroga Zavjeta* (Zagreb: Granitz, 1903.), 29-57.

¹⁰⁴ KELLY, *Retribution*, 96.

Sažetak

Što je to što karakterizira Roboama ili Rehoboama? Kroničar otvara dvosmjerni pristup ovomu kralju Jude, odnosno vladaru Južnog Kraljevstva. Roboam je u početku bio dobar kralj, ali se kasnije prometnuo u okrutna monarha. Istina, on se ponizio pred Gospodinom i pred narodom, ali to pognuće pred Bogom i narodom više je ličilo flertu nego li iskonskoj preobrazbi srca. Jeruzalem je cvjetao tijekom njegova kraljevanja, ali je bio i nemilosrdno ogoljen od egipatskoga faraona. Ipak, kroničarev zadnji osvrt na kralja Roboama vrlo je pozitivan. On se, prema kroničaru, zajedno s narodom pomirio s Bogom i kao rezultat toga čina dostojno je pokopan uz svojega oca Salomona. Efektnost kroničareve prezentacije nije u želji kompromitirati Vorlage iz knjige o Kraljevima svojim subjektivnim i pristranim stavovima, nego apostrofirati Božje milosrđe i lojalnost Zakonu naspram kraljevih i narodnih vjersko-ideoloških stranputica. Kroničareva apologetska usredotočenost na kralja Roboama nije u velikom kontrastu s deuteronomistom u 1 Kr 14, ali se čini da za kroničara, bez obzira na podijeljeno kraljevstvo i neprestane borbe između Roboama i Jeroboama, još uvijek postoji samo jedno Izraelsko Kraljevstvo i samo jedan izraelski kralj. Južno Kraljevstvo koje, premda svedeno na jednu četvrtinu negdašnjeg Salomonova teritorija, u kroničarevu mentalitetu ostalo je i dalje u ideji cjelovito, nepatvoreno, homogeno i religiozno. Ovaj subjektivni kroničarev tretman itekako je važan u usporedbi dvaju autentičnih izvora 1 Kr 12 – 14 i 2 Ljet 11 – 12.

Key words: *Kroničar, knjige Ljetopisa, deuteronomijski, poniženje, Jeroboam, Jeruzalem, leviti, kraljevi, ponos, svećenici, Roboam, kraljevski, Samarija, Šiškak, struktura.*