

Jotham and Amon: Two Minor Kings of Judah According to Josephus

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In the Bible the good king Jotham (see 2 Kgs 15:32-38//2 Chr 27:1-9) and his wicked descendant Amon (see 2 Kgs 21:19-26//2 Chr 33:21-25) are both quite minor figures. This essay explores the treatment of the two kings by Josephus in his Antiquities of the Jews (9.236-43, Jotham; 10.46-48, Amon) in relation to the biblical sources (as represented by MT, LXX and the Targums). From the comparison it emerges that Josephus does not drastically modify the source accounts of Jotham and Amon; also in his version they remain minor kings. On the other hand, his presentation of the royal pair is of interest as exemplifying many of the "rewriting techniques" employed by the historian throughout the biblical segment of the Antiquities.

Key Words: Jotham, Amon, Josephus, rewritten Bible

The Bible gives very different evaluations of King Jotham of Judah and his great-great grandson Amon: the former "did what was right in the eyes of the Lord" (2 Kgs 15:34 // 2 Chr 27:2), whereas the latter did "evil" (2 Kgs 21:20 / 2 Chr 33:22). The two rulers do, however, share a common trait; both appear as quite minor figures—at least as far as the biblical record goes. Thus 2 Kgs 15:32-38 devotes all of seven verses to the sixteen-year reign of Jotham, while Amon's two-year rule gets five verses in Kgs 21:19-26. Significantly, the Chronicler, who elsewhere notably expands on Kings' accounts of various Judean monarchs, whether "good" (e.g., Jehoshaphat)¹ or "bad" (e.g., Jehoram),² does not markedly elaborate the source's treatment of either Jotham or Amon. To the former king he allots nine verses (2 Chr 27:1-9),

1. MT 1 Kgs 22:41-50 disposes of Jehoshaphat's twenty-five year reign in ten verses; in 2 Chronicles 17-20 Jehoshaphat becomes the focus of a four-chapter segment.

2. 2 Kgs 8:16-24 allots J(eh)oram's eight-year reign nine verses, whereas 2 Chronicles 21 expands this to twenty.

while his Amon receives only five (2 Chr 33:21-25), three less than in Kings itself.

My purpose in this essay is to examine Josephus' treatment of the biblically insignificant kings Jotham and Amon in *Antiquities* 9.236-38 (239-42)243a and 10.46b-48a, respectively.³ More specifically, I shall compare Josephus' account of these two kings with the presentations of Kings and Chronicles as represented by the following major witnesses: MT (*BHS*), Codex Vaticanus (hereafter B)⁴ and the Lucianic (or Antiochene) MSS (hereafter L)⁵ of the LXX, plus Targum Jonathan on the Former Prophets and the Targum on Chronicles.⁶ I undertake this comparison with the following questions in mind: Does Josephus consistently follow one of the biblical sources for Jotham and Amon in preference to the other? What text form(s) of Kings and Chronicles were available to him in composing his accounts of the two rulers? Are there features peculiar to Josephus' treatment of Jotham and Amon, and if so how are these to be accounted for? Finally, what can be said overall as to the relationship between the Josephan portraits of these kings and their biblical prototypes?

JOTHAM

I begin my discussion of the biblical and Josephan accounts of Jotham with a word about their respective contexts. In 2 Kings Jotham is introduced as regent for his leprous father Azariah (Uzziah) in 15:5b and succeeds the latter in 15:7b. There follows a segment devoted to the last six Northern kings: Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea (15:8-31). Kings then continues with its narrations concerning Jotham (15:32-38) and his son Ahaz (16:1-20). The Chronicler's sequence is simpler, given his non-reproduction of Kings' material dealing with the Northern monarchs. In his presen-

3. For the writings of Josephus I use the Loeb Classical Library text and translation.

4. I use the edition of Alan E. Brooke and Norman Maclean, *The Old Testament in Greek according to the Text of Codex Vaticanus, II:II I and II Kings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930); *II:III I and II Chronicles* (1932).

5. For the L text of Kings I use the edition of Natalio Fernández Marcos and José Ramón Busto Saiz, *El texto antioqueno de la Biblia Griega, II 1-2 Reyes* (Madrid: CSIC, 1991). For the L text of Chronicles I use the critical apparatus of the Cambridge edition of the LXX cited in the previous note.

6. For Targum Jonathan I use the edition of Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, Vol. II (Leiden: Brill, 1959) and the translation of Daniel J. Harrington and Anthony J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets* (The Aramaic Bible 10; Wilmington: Glazier, 1987). For the Targum on Chronicles I use the text of Roger Le Déaut and J. Robert, *Targum des Chroniques* (vol. 2; AnBib 51; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1971) and the translation of this by J. Stanley McIvor, *The Targum of Chronicles* (The Aramaic Bible 19; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1994).

tation accounts of Uzziah/Azariah (2 Chr 26:1-22 with notices on Jotham's regency and succession in vv. 21b // 2 Kgs 15:5b] and 23b [1/ 2 Kgs 15:7b] respectively), Jotham (2 Chr 27:1-9), and Ahaz (2 Chr 28:1-17) follow one another without interruption. As for Josephus, his placing of his account of "Jothamos" (Ἰωθάμος, see 9.236)⁷ aligns itself with that of Kings. In particular, after citing Jotham's regency during his father Uzziah's later reign (9.277 // 2 Kgs 15:5b)⁸ and the latter's death (2 Kgs 15:7a),⁹ he presents the succession of Northern kings Zechariah through Pekah in dependence on 2 Kgs 15:8-29 (9.228-35). In Kings itself the "Northern interlude" continues in 15:30-31 (Pekah's assassination by Hoshea,¹⁰ source notice for Pekah), this being followed by a segment treating the Southern kings Jotham and Ahaz (15:32-16:20). Josephus, for his part, departs from Kings' sequence following his parallel to 15:29 (Assyrian annexation of Israelite territory) in 9.235 by giving first his account of Jotham and Ahaz (9.236-57 // 2 Kgs 15:32-16:20) and only then his version of 15:30 (Hoshea's overthrow of Pekah)¹¹ in 9.258.

Having noted its biblical and Josephan contexts, I now turn to a consideration of Josephus' account of Jotham in 9.236-43a itself. 2 Kgs 15:33 and 2 Chr 27:1 have in common two chronological indications concerning Jotham: acceding at age twenty-five, he reigned sixteen years.¹² 2 Kgs 15:32 precedes these data with an additional note that synchronizes Jotham's accession with the second year of Pekah of Israel. Like Chronicles, with its consistently Judean perspective, Josephus makes no use of this last item.¹³ In addition, however, he

7. This is the inflected form of the king's Hebrew name יוֹתָם. Compare B 4 Rgns Ἰωθαθάμ, L 4 Rgns/2 Par Ἰωθαθάμ.

8. On the Josephan treatment of Uzziah, see C. T Begg, "Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah according to Josephus," *Estudios Biblicos* 53 (1995) 5-24.

9. Unlike both 2 Kgs 15:7b and 2 Chr 26:23b, Josephus mentions Jotham's accession, not as the conclusion of his account of Uzziah/Azariah in 9.227, but only at the opening of his account of the former monarch in 9.236. Thereby, he avoids the "duplication" of 2 Kgs 15:7b (// 2 Chr 26:23b) in 15:32 (// 27:1a) both of which verses speak of Jotham commencing his reign.

10. MT and B 2 Kgs 15:30 date Hoshea's deed to "the twentieth year of Jotham." Like L, Josephus has no equivalent to this indication in his version of 15:30 in 9.258. Thereby, he avoids the problem of the apparent discrepancy regarding the length of Jotham's reign between 2 Kgs 15:30 (at least twenty years) and 15:33 (sixteen years). Rabbinic tradition as represented by *S. Olam* 22 resolves the problem in a different way, positing that in recognition of Jotham's righteousness, 2 Kgs 15:30 deducts four years from the reign of his wicked son Ahaz and attributes these to Jotham, in this way generating the figure of twenty years for his length of reign.

11. Josephus dispenses with the "source notion" for Pekah of 2 Kgs 15:31.

12. These same data are repeated in 2 Chr 27:8.

13. His non-utilization of the datum of 2 Kgs 15:32 is in line with Josephus' general tendency to omit such synchronisms for the latter rulers of both Israel and Judah

reserves, in line with his usual practice, his version of the sources' two shared chronological data until the end of his account of Jotham in 9.243a, see below. From 2 Kgs 15:33 // 2 Chr 27:1 he does, on the other hand, take over at this point the specification that Jotham's reign transpired "in Jerusalem" (9.236).¹⁴ To this notice he appends mention of Jotham's mother "Jerasē" (Ἰεράσης), whose name he draws from 2 Kgs 15:33b // 2 Chr 27:1b (MT יְרָשָׁה, B 4 Rgns Ἰερούς, L 4 Rgns Ἰεροῦσα, 2 Par Ἰερουσσά). The sources further record the name of Jerusha's father "Zadok" (so MT). In place thereof Josephus qualifies Jotham's mother as "a native of Jerusalem."¹⁵

2 Kgs 15:34 // 2 Chr 27:2a begin their respective evaluations of Jotham with the notice that he did "what was right in the eyes of the Lord according to all that his father Uzziah had done" (Chronicles + "only he did not invade the temple of the Lord").¹⁶ Josephus' parallel (9.236b) varies the wording of this stereotyped formula (also leaving aside its evocation of Uzziah¹⁷): "(Jotham) lacked no single virtue (οὐδεμιᾶς ἀρετῆς ἀπελείπετο), but was pious towards God (εὐσεβῆς . . . τὰ

(for the most part he does reproduce Kings' earlier synchronisms). In fact, for the period following the reigns of Jeroboam II of Israel and Uzziah (Azariah) of Judah respectively Josephus cites only one biblical synchronism, Hezekiah's accession in the fourth year of Hoshea of Israel (9.260, compare 2 Kgs 18:1 third). Such a systematic omission of Kings' synchronisms serves to signal the approaching end of Israel, when it will no longer be possible to correlate the royal lines of North and South. On Josephus' "monarchical chronology" in comparison with that of the Bible, see E. R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951) 204-27.

14. Josephus adds the further specification that Jotham ruled "over the tribe of Judah." With this designation of Jotham's domain Josephus leaves out of account the other tribe over which he ruled, i.e., Benjamin. Elsewhere, by contrast, Josephus does employ the title "king of the two tribes" for Judah's rulers, see *Ant.* 8.224, 246, 298, 3a4, 398; 10:1, cf. 8.274; 9.142, 216.

15. Twice elsewhere, Josephus interjects a comparable "unbiblical" notice about a queen mother being a native of Jerusalem, i.e., 9.260 (compare 2 Kgs 18:1, the mother of Hezekiah; as in 9.236 this notice replaces mention of the royal mother's patronym); 10.37 (compare 2 Kgs 21:1, the mother of Manasseh). In specifying Jerusalem as the place of the queen mother's birth, Josephus was perhaps inspired by the consideration that the rulers of the small kingdom of Judah would likely have drawn their wives from families resident in the capital.

16. The reference here is to the Chronicler's *Sondergut* episode of Uzziah's attempted offering of incense in the Temple, which leads to his being stricken with leprosy in 2 Chr 26:16-20 (compare 2 Kgs 15:5). Josephus gives his version of the episode in *Ant.* 9.222-26.

17. Josephus' dispensing with the sources' paralleling of righteous Jotham with Uzziah is understandable given the serious offense into which the latter falls according to 2 Chr 26:16-20 (see n. 16), this necessitating the Chronicler's qualification of the statement about Jotham doing as Uzziah had done, which he takes over from 2 Kgs 15:34 in 27:2a, see above in the text.

πρὸς τὸν θεόν) and righteous towards men (δίκαιος . . . τὰ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους)."¹⁸ Both biblical presentations go on to "qualify" their initial commendation of Jotham. 2 Kgs 15:35a notes that under him worship on the high places continued to flourish, while 2 Chr 27:2b speaks in more general terms of the people still following "corrupt practices" (RSV). By contrast, Josephus leaves his praise of Jotham unqualified, directly continuing his encomium of the king's virtues with an elaborate transitional notice leading into the account of the royal building measures that he adapts from 2 Kgs 15:35b // 2 Chr 27:3- 4. This reads, "he also took care (ἐπιμελήσ) of the needs of the city,¹⁹ for all places that were in need of repair or adornment he completely reconstructed at great expense."

As noted, both biblical sources follow their evaluation of Jotham with reference to his building activity. Specifically, 2 Kgs 15:35b // 2 Chr 27:3a credit him with "building the upper gate (LXX πύλην) of the house of the Lord." Josephus represents Jotham as undertaking more comprehensive construction activities at the Temple site: "he erected porticos (στοάς) and gateways (προπύλαια) in the temple area (ἐν τῷ ναῶ)." ²⁰ The author of Kings confines himself to the single building notice cited above. The Chronicler, on the contrary, expands this with a number of additional items (27:3b- 4). Of these, the first concerns Jotham "doing much building on the wall (LXX τείχει) of Ophel." Josephus, in reproducing this notice peculiar to the Chronicler, once again generalizes: "he set up those parts of the walls (τειχῶν) that had fallen down."²¹

In 2 Chr 27:4 the Chronicler widens the perspective beyond Jerusalem itself in speaking of Jotham's building of cities in the Judean hill country and "forts and towers (LXX πύργους) on the wooded hills." In Josephus the "very large and impregnable towers (πύργους)" that Jotham constructs would, like the "walls" mentioned just

18. With the above collocation "pious towards God and just towards men" compare 7.384 where David exhorts Solomon "to be just towards your subjects (δικαίῳ . . . πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχομένους) and pious towards God (εὐσεβεῖ . . . πρὸς τὸν . . . θεόν)."

19. The above formulation is a verbal echo of that used by Josephus of Jotham's father Uzziah: "he began to take thought (τὴν ἐποιμέλειαν) thereafter for Jerusalem" (9.218). Implicitly then, Josephus does link Jotham and his father as his sources do explicitly in 2 Kgs 15:34 // 2 Chr 27:2a (see above in the text).

20. Josephus' reference to "porticos" here doubtless has in view Herod's Hellenized Temple.

21. Josephus' avoidance of the proper name "Ophel" of 2 Chr 27:3b in the above formulation is in line with his tendency to leave aside such topographical particulars that would be unfamiliar (and uninteresting) to Gentile readers. See the comparable case of *Ant.* 9.218 where he passes over the various specific sites (the Corner Gate, the Valley Gates, and "the Angle") where Uzziah is said to have erected his towers in the source text (2 Chr 26:9).

previously by him, seem rather to be part of the king's Jerusalem building initiatives.²² Thereafter, however, Josephus rounds off his account of Jotham the builder with a notice that does seem inspired by 27:4's reference to his extra-Jerusalem activities: "and to any other matters which had been neglected *throughout his entire kingdom* he gave his entire attention."

The Chronicler's Jotham *Sondergut* continues in 27:5 with notices on the king's subjection of the Ammonites and the tribute paid by them. Josephus' parallel (9.238a) highlights Jotham's initiative: "he also marched against (Chr fought with) the Ammanites (Chr the king of the sons of Ammon), and having defeated (κρατήσας, 2 Par κατίσχυσε) them²³ in battle, he imposed upon them (Chr they [the Ammonites] gave him) a yearly tribute²⁴ of a hundred talents (Chr + of silver) and ten thousand *kors* (κόρους)²⁵ of wheat and as many of barley."²⁶ Chronicles rounds off its *Sondergut* segment (27:3b-6) with the following reflection on Jotham's achievements: "So Jotham became mighty (2 Par κατίσχυσε), because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God." Josephus rewords it, eliminating the source's theological component (9.238b).²⁷ His version, highlighting the stature of Jotham himself, reads, "So greatly did he strengthen his kingdom,

22. In thus representing Jotham as (re-)building both "walls" and "towers" specifically in Jerusalem, Josephus aligns his activities with those of his father Uzziah: "he began to take thought for Jerusalem . . . whatever parts of the walls that had fallen . . . he rebuilt and repaired. . . . In addition he built many towers (πύργους), each fifty cubits high (9.218, cf. 2 Chr 26:9 which speaks only of Uzziah's building "fortified towers" in Jerusalem).

23. Josephus agrees with MT 2 Chr 27:5a in having Jotham defeat the Ammonites as a whole; in 2 Par Jotham vanquishes "him," i.e., the king of the Ammonites cited at the start of the verse. MT and LXX likewise diverge at the end of 27:5. In the former it is the Ammonites who pay Jotham "the same amount in the second and third years," while in the latter the Ammonite king does so. In contrast to both MT and LXX Josephus makes no mention of the Ammonite king in his version of 2 Chr 27:5.

24. Josephus' reference to the Ammonites' "yearly tribute" represents a simplification of the circumstantial indications of 2 Chr 27:5 (MT): "they gave him that year a hundred talents of silver . . . they paid him the same amount in the second and third years."

25. Like 2 Par (κόρων) Josephus transliterates the Hebrew כֶּרֶם.

26. In its divergences from 2 Chr 27:5 the above formulation serves to reinforce the parallelism between Jotham and his father Uzziah, compare 9.218, itself a rewording/expansion of 2 Chr 26:8 ("the Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah"): "*Next he subdued the Ammanites* and, having imposed a tribute upon them. . . ." Note in particular that Josephus mentions explicitly a subjugation of the Ammonites by both ruler, whereas Chronicles cites this only of Jotham, just as he has both rulers take the initiative in "imposing" tribute on the Ammonites in contrast to 2 Chr 26:8 and 27:5, which speak of that people "giving" their tribute to Uzziah or Jotham respectively. Finally, whereas 2 Chr 26:8 has Uzziah dealing with the Ammonites but 27:5 with their king, Josephus refers in both instances simply to the "Ammanites."

27. On Josephus' tendency to "detheologize" in his rewriting of the Bible in his *Antiquities*, see L. H. Feldman, "Use, Authority, and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings

that it was not lightly regarded (ἀκαταφρόνητον)²⁸ by his enemies, while to his own people it brought happiness (εὐδαίμονα)."²⁹

At this point (9.239-42) Josephus deviates from the sequence of both his narrative sources to cite a passage from the Book of Nahum (2:9-12), whose activity he vaguely dates with the formula "there was at that time" i.e., in the reign of Jotham [9:239]). Jotham himself nowhere figures in this "prophetic interlude," so I leave it out of account here.³⁰ However, I would at least like to address the question of the reason for and effect of Josephus' dating Nahum's word against Assyria in Jotham's time. This question arises because the Book of Nahum itself provides no indication as such regarding the period of the prophet's ministry, whereas *S. 'Olam* 20 situates this during the reign of Manasseh, Jotham's great-grandson. In responding to the question I would begin by noting that Josephus' citation of the Nahum passage (9.239-42) stands in fairly close proximity to his version of the story of Jonah, another "anti-Assyrian" prophet (9.208-14),³¹ which, inspired by the mention of Jonah in 2 Kgs 14:25, he interjects into his account of Jeroboam II (9.205-7, 215). Perhaps Josephus' procedure here reflects his knowledge of a tradition, attested in *Tg. J.* on Nah 1:1 and *Lives of the Prophets* 11:2, which explicitly associated the two prophets and represented Nahum as arising after Jonah.³² In any case, by positioning his quotation of Nahum's word of doom for Assyria where he does, soon after his citation of Jonah's similar message, Josephus underscores the certainty of Assyria's demise as something announced by two different prophets.³³

of Josephus," *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Martin J. Mulder and Harry Sysling, eds.; CRINT 2/1; Assen: van Gorcum, 1988) 455-518, 503-7.

28. The term ἀκαταφρόνητος is hapax in Josephus.

29. On Josephus' use of this key term of Greek ethics, see H.-F. Weiss, "Pharisäismus und Hellenismus. Zur Darstellung des Judentums im Geschichtswerk des jüdischen Historikers Flavius Josephus," *OLZ* 74 (1979) 421-31, c. 427; S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus and the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (SPB 39; Leiden: Brill, 1991) 185.

30. On Josephus' quotation of Nah 2:9-12 in *Ant.* 9.239-42 see C. T. Begg, "Josephus and Nahum Revisited," *REJ* 154 (1995) 5-22; cf. J. Weill, "Nahoum II, 9-12 et Josèphe (*Ant.* IX, XI, #239-41)," *REJ* 76 (1923) 96-98; P. Humbert, "Nahoum II, 9," *REJ* 83 (1927) 74-76.

31. On this passage, see L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Interpretation of Jonah," *AJS Review* 17 (1992) 1-29.

32. In this connection recall that in the Book of the Twelve Prophets, Nahum comes after Jonah (with Micah supervening). On Josephus' familiarity with extrabiblical traditions, many of which are literarily attested only in Jewish writings postdating his own, see L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Asa," *BBR* 4 (1994) 41-60, esp. 43-44, n. 5.

33. Nahum's message of doom as cited by Josephus can function all the more effectively as a confirmation of Jonah's message in that in his version of the Book of Jonah Josephus omits all mention of Nineveh's positive response to Jonah's preaching and of God's corresponding decision to spare the city (see Jonah 3:5-10).

Josephus rounds off his digression concerning Nahum with the formula "And now, concerning these matters, what we have written may suffice" at the end of 9.242. Thereafter he reverts to his narrative sources for their indications (2 Kgs 15:38 // 2 Chr 27:9) on Jotham's death and burial and the accession of his son Ahaz (9.243a). In so doing, he passes over, as he does consistently elsewhere, the respective "source references" of 2 Kgs 15:36 ("the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel") and 2 Chr 27:7 ("the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah").³⁴ In common with 2 Chronicles 27 Josephus likewise has no equivalent to the afterthought notice of 2 Kgs 15:37, according to which during Jotham's reign "the Lord began to send Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah." The non-utilization of this item by both the Chronicler and Josephus is understandable in that it raises the theodicy question of why God would have so afflicted a pious king like Jotham.³⁵

2 Kgs 15:38 // 2 Chr 27:9 both use the euphemism "he slept (LXX ἔκοιμήθη) with his fathers" in reporting the death of Jotham. Josephus, who never employs this familiar biblical phrase, substitutes the verb μετήλλαξεν, an abbreviation of the expression τὸν βίον μετελλάσσειν found in 10.221. To this mention of Jotham's demise, he appends a double chronological indication inspired by 2 Kgs 15:33 // 2 Chr 27:1a (= 27:8): (Jotham died) "at the age of forty-one years,³⁶ of which he reigned sixteen." The sources differ somewhat in their respective burial notices for Jotham: according to 2 Kgs 15:38 he "was buried (LXX ἔτάφη) with his fathers"³⁷ in the city of David his father," which 2 Chr 27:9 condenses into "they buried (MT וְקָבְרוּ] LXX ἔτάφη) him in the city of David." Once again, Josephus varies: "he was buried (θάπτεται)³⁸ in the royal sepulchres (ἐν ταῖς βασιλικαῖς θήκαις)."³⁹ Finally, to his mention of the accession of Jotham's son Ahaz, the concluding element in 2 Kgs 15:38 // 2 Chr 27:9, Josephus directly appends a nega-

34. Presumably, Josephus' reason for omitting the "source notices" of Kings and Chronicles is that he is basing himself directly on the "Bible" rather than its sources.

35. The notice of 2 Kgs 15:37 is "duplicated" in 16:5 (// Isa 7:1), where the same two foes (unsuccessfully) assault Jerusalem in the reign of Jotham's son Ahaz. Given Ahaz's reprobate status (see 2 Kgs 16:2b-4), both the Chronicler (see 2 Chr 28:5-7) and Josephus (9.244) find no difficulty in reproducing the latter notice—likewise reformulating this into a statement that the allied kings defeated Ahaz.

36. In the sources the first figure given is for Jotham's age at accession. In accord with his regular practice, Josephus substitutes the king's age at death (41), calculating this figure by adding the biblical indications on his age at accession (25) and length of reign (16).

37. L 2 Kgs 15:38 (like 2 Chr 27:9) lacks the MT and B phrase "with his fathers" here.

38. Frequently elsewhere as well, Josephus utilizes the historic present where LXX has some past form, see C. T. Begg, *Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy* (AJ 8, 212-42D) (BETL 108; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1993) 10-11, n. 32.

39. Elsewhere Josephus uses the above expression "in the royal sepulchres" in 9.166 (of the priest Jehoaida) and 14.124 (Aristobulus II), cf. 8.264.

tine evaluation of the latter, drawn from 2 Kgs 16:2-4 // 2 Chr 28:2-4 whereas in the sources the chronological data for Ahaz's reign of 16:1 // 28:1 supervene.

The foregoing detailed comparison of Josephus' treatment of Jotham with that of the sources makes it clear that Josephus, as he does regularly in like circumstances, has opted to follow the more detailed presentation of Chronicles rather than the summary account of Kings. Specifically, he reproduces the former's *Sondergut* items (2 Chr 27:3b-6) concerning Jotham's additional building activities and subjugation of the Ammonites (9.237-38). Conversely, he has no equivalent to those notices peculiar to Kings' Jotham segment, the synchronization of 15:32 and the reference to the Syrian-Israelite attack of 15:37. Given the lack of noteworthy divergences among them it does not seem possible, on the other hand, to determine with any assurance which text-form(s) of Chronicles he had available in composing his Jotham narrative. In any case, Josephus goes beyond both his sources in introducing into the body of his account of Jotham a "digression" concerning the preaching of the prophet Nahum who (purportedly) functioned under this king (9.239-42).

The image of Jotham presented by Josephus is still more positive than that found in the Bible. Whereas 2 Kgs 15:35 and 2 Chr 27:2 both indicate that cultic abuses continued among Jotham's people throughout his reign, Josephus suppresses this item, even affirming that Jotham "lacked no single virtue" (9.236).⁴⁰ Also noteworthy in Josephus' version of Jotham are the various verbal echoes of his account of Jotham's father Uzziah,⁴¹ these being his replacement for the explicit paralleling of the two monarchs as found in 2 Kgs 15:34 // 2 Chr 27:2a. Such affinities themselves, however, serve to heighten the Josephan Jotham's perfection of character in that his achievements did not lead him into a prideful offense against God as did Uzziah's similar accomplishments (see 9.222-24). In his imperviousness to the hubris that took hold of Uzziah--as well as of many other characters in *Antiquities*,⁴² Jotham indeed shows himself to "lack no single virtue."

40. Such a magnification of Jotham's rectitude is in line with scattered comments in rabbinic tradition. See *Gen. Rab.* 63:1, where God responds to the angels' lament at the accession of the wicked Ahaz by stating that, given the righteousness of his father Jotham, he (God) "can do nothing" to the reprobate. Even more strikingly, in *Sukk.* 45b the first-century AD Rabbi Simeon b. Yohai is quoted as affirming that the combined merits of himself, his son Eliezer, and king Jotham would suffice to exempt the world from judgment from the creation until its final disappearance.

41. These concern especially the two kings' building measures in Jerusalem (compare 9.237 and 9.218b) and subjugation of the Ammonites (compare 9.238 and 9.218a).

42. On Josephus' highlighting of the sequence prosperity-pride-offense-punishment so familiar from Greek tragedy in his retelling of the Bible's history, see Feldman, "Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Josephus," 500.

AMON

The short-reigned Amon appears *en passant* in 2 Kgs 21:19-26 // 2 Chr 33:21-25 between more extensive accounts of his father Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:1-18 // 2 Chr 33:1-20) and son Josiah (2 Kgs 22 1-23:30 // 2 Chr 34:1-35:27). Josephus' equally brief treatment of Amon (10.46b-48a) is likewise "sandwiched" between his presentations of Manasseh (10.37– 46a)⁴³ and Josiah (10.48b-80).⁴⁴

In the sources, mention of Amon's accession (2 Kgs 21:18 // 2 Chr 33 20) rounds off their respective narratives concerning Manasseh. There then follows a double chronological indication: acceding at age twenty-two Amon ruled two years in Jerusalem. Josephus reserves the latter items for a subsequent point in his account (see below). Accordingly, his notice on the succession of "Ammon" (Ἀμμών 10.46b)⁴⁵ is followed immediately by the data concerning Amon's mother, which he draws from 2 Kgs 21:19b (no parallel in Chronicles). MT designates this figure as "Meshullemeth (מְשֻׁלֶּמֶת) daughter of Hazur from Jotbah (יֹתְבָה)," while B 4 Rgns calls her Μεσολλάμ, daughter of Ἀρούς from Ἰεσεβάλ (L Ἐτεβαθά). As is his wont, Josephus passes over the name of the queen mother's father. The woman herself he names "Emaselmē" (Ἐμασέλμης)⁴⁶ and her hometown "Jatabatē" (Ἰαταβάτης).⁴⁷

2 Kgs 21:20 // 2 Chr 33:22a both state that Amon "did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, as Manasseh his father had done." Thereafter, however, the biblical evaluations of Amon diverge, this reflecting their differing overall treatments of Manasseh. According to 2 Kgs 21:21-22 Amon "walked in all the way his father walked, and served the idols (MT הַנִּלְוִיִּם, LXX εἰδώλοις) that his father served, and worshiped. He foresook the Lord . . . and did not walk in the way of the Lord." By contrast, 2 Chr 33:22b-23 affirms that Amon "sacrificed to all the images (MT הַפְּסִילִים, LXX εἰδώλοις) that his father Manasseh had made, and served them. *And he did not humble himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself*, but this Amon incurred guilt more and more." Josephus' evaluation of Amon is shorter than that of either of his sources, leaving aside in particular their

43. On the Josephan Manasseh, see L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Manasseh," *JSP* 9 (1991) 3-20.

44. On this see L. H. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Josiah," *LS* 18 (1993) 110-30.

45. This form of the name with duplication of the occurs in some mss of 4 Rgns Compare Ἀμώς in B 4 Rgns / 2 Par and Ἀμών (= MT) in L 4 Rgns.

46. Compare the variants Ἐμαλοσέμης (M), Ἐμασέμης (SP) and "Maselmis" (Lat). According to A. Schalit the form of the name printed by Marcus represents a "contamination" of the two Hebrew words that stand back-to-back in 2 Kgs 21:19, i.e., מְשֻׁלֶּמֶת אָמוֹ (Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus [Leiden: Brill, 1968] s.v. Ἐμασέλμη).

47. Compare the variants: Ἰαζαβάτης (R), Ἰαβάτης (MSP) and "Iecabath" (Lat.).

common reference to the king's worship of idols/images.⁴⁸ At the same time, having reproduced the Chronicler's *Sondergut* account of Manasseh's repentance (see 10.41-42 // 2 Chr 33:12-13), Josephus also follows Chronicles in drawing a contrast—albeit a more allusive one—between Amon's ways and those of his father (see 33:23a, compare 2 Kgs 21:21). His summary evaluation of Amon thus reads, "he imitated (μιμησάμενος)⁴⁹ those deeds of his father which he had recklessly committed (ἐτόλμησεν) in his youth [i.e., before his later conversion]" (10.47a).

2 Kgs 21:23 // 2 Chr 33:24 relate the assassination of Amon by his "servants" (LXX παίδες) who "conspired" (4 Rgns B συνεστράφησαν [+ καὶ ἐπεβούλευσαν, L] / 2 Par ἐπέθεντο) against him and "killed" (4 Rgns ἐθανάτωσαν 2 Par ἐπάταξαν) him "in his house" (ἐν [τῷ] οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ). Josephus translates it equivalently: "after a plot was formed (ἐπιβουλεύθεις) see the L plus in 4 Rgns 21:23 above) against him by his own servants (οἴκετῶν), he was put to death (ἀπέθανεν)⁵⁰ in his house (ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας⁵¹ τῆς αὐτοῦ)" (10.47b). To this notice Josephus then appends a version of the chronological data of 2 Kgs 21:19a // 2 Chr 33:21: "(Amon died) at the age of twenty-four years, of which he had reigned for two."⁵²

2 Kgs 21:24a // 2 Chr 33:25a narrate the sequel to Amon's assassination: "the people of the land" (MT יְרֻשָׁתִּי־בְנֵי־הָאָרֶץ, LXX [πᾶς, L 4 Rgns] ὁ λαὸς τῆς γῆς) "slew" (B 4 Rgns / 2 Par ἐπάταξαν, L 4 Rgns ἀπέκτειναν) the conspirators. Josephus' version runs, "But the people (τὸ πλῆθος)⁵³

48. Elsewhere as well Josephus regularly avoids or minimalizes such "cultic particulars" in his rewriting of biblical narratives, likely for the sake of Gentile readers who would not have found these of interest. See, e.g., *Ant.* 8.290 where he replaces the notices on Asa's specific cultic reform measures of 1 Kgs 15:12-14 // 2 Chr 14:2-4 with the generalizing statement "he (Asa) put his kingdom in order by cutting away whatever evil growths were found in it and cleansing it from every impurity."

49. The terminology of "imitation" figures prominently in Josephus' versions of the royal judgment notices of Kings and Chronicles, e.g., he refers to the (early) Manasseh "imitating (μιμούμενος) the lawless deeds of the Israelites" (10.37).

50. With the above construction compare Josephus' notice on the assassination of Ishbosheth in *Ant.* 7.46: ἐπιβουλεύθεις ἀπέθενεν.

51. Note the word play between οἴκετῶν and οἰκίας in Josephus' notice of Amon's death.

52. Once again Josephus substitutes a king's age at death for the biblical age at accession, obtaining the former by combining the sources' statement that Amon acceded at age twenty-two, and ruled two years (see n. 36).

53. Also elsewhere Josephus avoids the biblical phrase "the people of the land"; see *Ant.* 10.150 where the reference in 2 Kgs 25:19 to "sixty men of the people of the land" becomes "sixty other officers (ἡγεμόνας)." His doing so might be influenced by the terminological evolution, which led to the phrase יְרֻשָׁתִּי־בְנֵי־הָאָרֶץ becoming a derogatory designation for the ignorant, nonobservant population of Palestine. On this development, see *EncJud* 2, s.v. Am Ha-arez.

punished his murderers" (10.48a). Both sources directly juxtapose the avenging of Amon's death by the people of the land (21:24a // 33:25a) with that group's subsequent initiative in making his son Josiah king in his place (21:24b // 33:25b). Josephus interrupts this sequence to mention that the people "buried Ammon with (συνθάπτουσι)⁵⁴ his father." Josephus' inspiration for this inserted notice is 2 Kgs 21:26a ("they buried [LXX ἔθαψαν] him in his tomb in the garden of Uzziah," no parallel in 2 Chronicles 33) which stands after the source notice of 21:25⁵⁵ and before the "resumption" of 21:24b in 21:26b. The historian's anticipation of the item positions it at what seems to be a more appropriate point in the sequence of events—the people would surely have first buried Amon before resolving the succession question. Only thereafter does Josephus come to give his parallel to 2 Kgs 21:24b // 2 Chr 33:25b: "they gave the royal power (παραδιδούσιν⁵⁶ τὴν βασιλείαν, compare 4 Rgns / 2 Par ἐβασίλευσεν) to his son Josiah."

Faced with the divergences of detail between his sources for Amon, Josephus opted to make selective use of both. From Kings' *Sondergut* he draws the data concerning the queen mother (2 Kgs 21:19b) and Amon's burial (2 Kgs 21:26a). In his reminiscence of Manasseh's ultimate repentance, on the other hand, he follows 2 Chr 33:23a against 2 Kgs 21:21 (10.47a). Josephus' use of both Kings and Chronicles in developing his Amon account is clear; however, there are no definite indications as to which text-form(s) of the two sources he had available in this instance.

Overall, it might be said that Josephus' portrait of Amon lacks distinctiveness vis-à-vis its biblical counterparts. In view, perhaps, *inter alia*, of the shortness of the king's reign, he compresses (and generalizes) the relatively extensive source judgment notices on Amon.⁵⁷ As a result, the account of Amon's assassination and its sequels looms larger in the Josephan presentation. Still, the historian does not go be-

54. Note the historic present, see n. 38.

55. The Chronicler has no equivalent to this item; neither does Josephus, who, as we noted in connection with Jotham, invariably leaves aside such notices in his retelling of the monarchical period.

56. Again, note the historic present.

57. Contrast the embellishment of the biblical record in *Sanh.* 103b (see also the parallel tradition in *S. °Olam* 24), where Amon is portrayed as surpassing his father Manasseh in evil-doing, being charged with burning the Torah, so neglecting the altar that spider webs covered it, and violating his mother for the sole purpose of provoking God. Nevertheless, because of the merits of his son Josiah, *Sanh.* 104b affirms that Amon was not denied a place in the world to come. Christian tradition also elaborates the figure of Amon, see *The Apostolic Constitutions* 2.23.2, which states that, inspired by the life of his father Manasseh, Amon resolved to sin in his youth and then repent when he got older, only to have God deny him the opportunity for such repentance because of his early death.

yond the sources either to supply a motivation for Amon's murder or to represent it explicitly as divine retribution for the king's misdeeds.

CONCLUSIONS

In Josephus' version Jotham and Amon remain basically as they are in the Bible, two minor kings, one markedly good, the other among Judah's worst rulers. With both, Josephus was content to leave the biblical record largely as he found it, neither notably modifying or amplifying this as he does in the case of many other scriptural figures.⁵⁸ On the other hand, the Josephan treatments of Jotham and Amon are of interest as exemplifying many of his characteristic ways of dealing with the data of his sources and the problems posed by these.

More generally, in his oscillation between close adherence to the details of his scriptural source and free modification of the same, Josephus, in the passages studied here, as well as throughout the biblical segment of the *Antiquities*, stands as a noteworthy witness to a much wider tendency within Judaism and Christianity both before and after him. A like approach to an already normative text surfaces within the OT itself in the Chronicler's handling of the Deuteronomistic History. Josephus' bifurcated treatment of the authoritative biblical text has its counterpart as well in the retelling of Israel's sacred history from creation through the death of Saul by his near contemporary Pseudo-Philo, the author of the *Biblical Antiquities*. Comparable too, from the Christian sphere, is the redoing of Mark by Matthew and Luke. In sum, then, in attempting to appreciate Josephus' handling of his biblical source, one needs to see him as one among many figures around the turn of the era who felt themselves called, not simply to preserve treasured tradition, but also to recast, add to, and improve on that tradition.

58. The one exception is the "Nahum interlude," which Josephus introduces within his account of Jotham in 9.239-42. Recall, however, that this is only very loosely associated with his treatment of Jotham himself, which does not significantly deviate from the source accounts.