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1 Introduction

The events narrated in the books of Kings contribute with different concepts, which create an understanding of the history of Israel. Some of these events relate themselves to David, the key figure in the construction of this history and to the promise unto him for a long dynasty. 2 Kings 11 presents itself as such an example. At the surface level, the biblical text reports that Athaliah occupied the throne of Judah by murdering the royal offspring on the demise of her son Ahaziah from the Davidic dynasty and that she was overthrown through a coup led by Jehoiada. The narrative concludes with the eventual enthronement of Joash, a son of Ahaziah. Thus, the pericope begins with a cruel act of merciless infanticide and ends with jubilation and quietness. Between these two emotions of grief and gladness, there are events describing secrecy, planning, execution, covenant between YHWH, the king and the people, restoration of tradition and cultic reforms.

The inconsistency within the text of 2 Kings 11 suggests that the biblical image of Athaliah and the information about Jehoiada and Joash are not just a report of well established facts but show evidence of purposeful design. It propels the readers to look for the thrust of this narrative. Is it concerning the reign of Athaliah? Or is it a succession narrative which highlights the enthronement of Joash? Or does the text want to underline the triumph of Yahwism over Baalism? The first part of the narrative tells the readers how Athaliah occupied the throne. In fact, she occupies the entire narrative as it revolves around her till the last verse. On the other hand, the whole narrative is heading towards the coronation of Joash with which the episode ends. There is no single answer to the above mentioned question, as the purpose of the text is intriguing.

The text does not directly speak anything negative about the reign of Athaliah, although she is shown as a murderer. As per the final version, it took six years to dethrone her. And no explicit reason is cited for her dethronement. But the religious elements interwoven within the text seem to suggest that there was a conflict between the cult of YHWH and that of Baal. Could that be a ground for the upheaval in Judah in the 9th century or is this element due to later reflections? At the same time, there are also indications of political conflicts between Athaliah and Jehoiada, for the enthronement of Joash puts the city in silence. It leads to the question, whether the text is an attempt to establish the legitimacy of Joash. The view is strengthened by the reference to David's spear and shields.

There are several priestly elements interlaced with the court history. The text also adorns Jehoiada with a commanding power over the military. What was the role of the priests at the time of the events and 8:26 at the time, when the narration came into existence? This question would in turn interrogate the reliability of the reported events in its entirety, which should have taken place in the 9th C.

It is generally believed that the books of Kings have gone through the hands of the Deuteronomists. The text in our focus, too, exhibits dtr traits. It is, therefore, important to study the deuteronomistic elements found in 2 Kings 11. It leads us to the question, what is the contribution of the Deuteronomists in the formation of this text. The goal of the study is to explore the above mentioned elements in the text critically and arrive at conclusions which would unfold the text for further study. It also aims at reconstructing the textual history of 2 Kings 11. In this process, the narrative structure of the final text and its intertextual relationship to other texts in the Hebrew Bible play equally important roles in the questions concerning the formation of the text. It is built upon the findings and proposals of the biblical research of the past, carried on by several scholars.

1.1   History of Research

The history of research revolves around the sources of the text, history of formation of the text and the themes which flow from the text. It also studies the reception of the text in the context of the book of Kings. The models of literary criticism on 2 Kings 11 have produced contrasting results, varying from a single source theory to double source theory and to several redactions including insertion of some words alone at different points of time.

1.1.1   Double Source Theory

The double source theory of Stade claims that this pericope is an amalgamation of two different sources. Stade notes the disturbing order of events in the text: the royal anointing (v. 12) – the murder of Athaliah (vv. 13–16) – covenant making (v. 17) – destruction of the temple of Baal (v. 18) – appointing guards in the temple (v. 18b) – and enthronement of Joash (v. 19). According to the final version, the destruction of Baal's temple seems to have taken place between the royal anointing and the enthronement. Moreover, appointing guards in the temple after the death of Athaliah, too, raises questions. He concludes that v. 18b could directly follow v. 12 and the report of the murder of Athaliah and the

destruction of Baal's temple could be from another source.[1] This theory has been followed by several scholars after Stade. The two sources are: (i) the block consisting of vv. 1–12, 18b–20 is a secular narrative, which is politically oriented. It is a carefully designed account of the plot from the part of Jehoiada. (ii) the block consisting of vv. 13–18a inserts a religious motivation in the revolt.[2] This theory gains support from two internal reasons: (i) The death of Athaliah is reported twice with differing locations. In v. 16 it is reported that she was killed on the way to the palace, whereas v. 20 reports that it took place within the palace itself.[3] (ii) In v. 13 the appearance of the people is abrupt. The people were neither involved in making the plan nor had any role to play in the coup against Athaliah, but they appear all of a sudden as participants of the ceremony. Noth suggested that the Deuteronomist who used "the Books of the Chronicles" for his writing about the Judaean kings also used it for necessary information contained in 2 Kings 11, like the usurpation of Athaliah, her fall and the installation of Joash.[4] The observation that the death of Athaliah is reported twice is not without contention, as it could be argued that her death is not reported a second time, but only referred to.

Invariably most of the scholars after Noth expounded his theory posit a Deuteronomistic shaping of 2 Kings 11–12. Gray opines that the compilation of both priestly and popular sources was brought together by the Deuteronomistic redaction, and both the sources, however, are complimentary and not exclusive to each

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[1] Cf. Bernhard Stade. ZAW 5 (1885) 279–88. The view of Stade is commonly accepted except for the difference on historicity of the sources. Cf. Charles Fox Burney 1903: 308. Cf. John Gray 1964: 511.

[2] Cf. Nolan B. Harmon 1954: 246.

[3] Rudolph considers it erroneous to hold that the places of death mentioned in v. 16 and v. 20 are different. He translates v. 16 as follows: after she came to the palace through the horse gate, she was murdered. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 476. V. 20 is not a repetition of v. 16, but only mentioned in order to contrast the jubilation of the people. Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 131.

[4] "The Books of the Chronicles," both of Judah and of Israel, are derived from the official annals of the Judaean and Israelite kings. These Books of the Chronicles are unofficial histories adapted from the official materials. Cf. Martin Noth 1981: 63–67. The theory of Noth gave impetus to further biblical studies in similar vein. But today we understand the formation and redaction of the text differently, which will be dealt under the redaction criticism.

other. They are combined probably at the time of the Josianic reformation which was both a constitutional and religious reformation.[5]

1.1.2 Single Source Theory

In spite of the observation of double sources, 2 Kings 11 is often treated as a single source. Skinner finds a lack of religious motifs in the so-called priestly section. It is rather a paradox that in the "official" account, the key characters are the people. And in the "popular" account, it is the military officials and priests, who play a prominent role.[6] B.O. Long argues that vv. 13–16, part of the so-called second source, could hardly stand alone and should depend on vv. 4–12 for intelligibility, and proposes a single source.[7]

The biblical researches of recent times postulate a single source and one or more redactions which followed it. Cogen and Tadmor believe in the single source theory and add that it underwent dtr redaction.[8] Barré proposes that the basic unity of a reconstructed original text of 2 Kings 9–11 has gone through a dtr and post-dtr redaction, which resulted in expansion of the original narrative in several places and consequently in overlapping narrative.[9] Mullen is of the opinion that the author of the biblical text probably relied on several sources for his history writing, such as written or oral, official or popular.[10] Levin sees 4 layers of redaction in 2 Kings 11. They are: one basic text of Judah which is pre-exilic (vv. 1–2, 3b, 4a–b.d.f, 5a.b.d, 6a, 8a–b, 11a.c, 12b, 13a, 14a.c, 16, 17a.c, 19c–20a), an early chronicler edition (vv. 10, 15b, 18b), an extensive priestly edition (vv. 3a, 4c.e, 5c, 7, 8c, 9, 11b, 12a, 13b, 15a, 19a–b, 20b), and a covenant theology

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[5]   Cf. John Gray 1964: 511–13. The priestly source does include the involvement of the people and likewise the popular source does include the role of the priests in the coup. The latter source makes the popular support visible which is implicit in the former.
[6]   Cf. John Skinner 1904: 337.
[7]   Cf. Burke O. Long 1991: 147.
[8]   Cf. M. Cogen and H. Tadmor 1988: 126. Rudolph sees it slightly different, as he considers 2 Kings 11:1 pointing out that the whole chapter had been a part of a larger portion whose materials are scattered in the previous two chapters, especially the reports on the death of Ahaziah. Cf. Wilhelm Rudolph 1950: 475–76. Garbini finds it difficult to accept that stories about coups and conspiracies would come from the archives of royal court. He opines that such materials could be an outcome of the fiction of Dtr, who attempted to give a sense of unity to the events of the kings. Cf. G. Garbini. Henoch 3 (1981) 26–46. Cited in: Mark A. O'Brien 1989: 183.
[9]   Barré asserts that the strong negative attitude towards Ahab in 2 Kings 9–10 are dtr additions, and that 2 Kings 11 forms a continuity of the preceding chapters. Cf. Lloyd M. Barré 1988: 29.
[10] Cf. Theodore Mullen Jr. 1993: 24.

edition (14b, 17b, 18a) which belongs to late dtr times.[11] The thesis of Levin is partly convincing and partly isn't. For instance, the differentiation between the priestly edition and that of the early chronicler is very thin. At the same time there is a definite unity within what Levin calls covenant theology edition.

The text exhibits interests of the Southern kingdom and its internal affairs, such as, fall of one ruler and the coronation of another. There is no mention of foreign hands in the affairs which might eventually link it to external sources. 2 Kings 8:26 which categorically links Athaliah to the Omride dynasty belongs to the dtr work. In the older layers of the text, Athaliah is nowhere linked to the Omrides. Robker rightly notes that Athaliah's ascent to the throne in 2 Kings 11 presupposes the death of her son Ahaziah in 2 Kings 9:28–29. And 2 Kings 9–11 does not identify Athaliah as coming from the Omride dynasty.[12] Moreover, 2 Kings 11 does not focus on the destruction of the Omride dynasty, but on the murder of Athaliah and the coronation of Joash of Judah. Thus 2 Kings 11 contains concerns of the Southern kingdom alone.

The research on 2 King 11 leaves some questions still open, such as the delimitation of the basic text, the impact of several traditions in the text in its present form, the similarity of the Jehu narration and 2 Kings 11 and the relation between our text and the northern sources. This necessitates further study on this subject.

1.1.3 Narratological Studies

On the levels of narratology, the study on the narrative voice was developed by formalist critics, like the Russian formalists, students of stylistic and structuralists. Henry James coined the concept of a reflector. Booth developed the concept of a reliable and unreliable narrator. Genette worked on focalization and narrative levels. Bal developed the concept of focalizer and levels of focalization.[13] An application of the narratological method also in the sphere of biblical research begins to appear in recent times. Alter analysed the narrative elements in the biblical writings. Bar-Efrat made a detailed narrative analysis of the story of the rape of Tamar. Schmitz's work on 1 Kings 13 and 22 and the analysis of Dutcher-

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[11]   Cf. Christoph Levin 1982: 18. Benzinger considers that v. 10 might have been adopted from 2 Chr 23:9. According to the Chronicler, the Levites took the place of the temple guards and so they needed to be supplied with weapons. And so supplying the Levites with weapons fits into the narration of 2 Chronicles. Cf. Immanuel Benzinger 1899: 157.

[12]   Cf. Jonathan Robker 2012: 69.

[13]   Cf. Susana Onega and José Angel García Landa 1996: 28–29. See the particular works of the authors in the bibliography.

Walls on 2 Kings 11–12 are further examples of the narratological approach. Our text in study, 2 Kings 11 displays an artistry and flair in its narrative style. Dutcher-Walls uses literary and rhetoric methods in tandem with ideological and sociological methods in her interpretation of 2 Kings 11–12. She also explores the deuteronomistic worldview expressed in the text. I intend to add another dimension to the study on 2 Kings 11 by way of a diachronic analysis and an intertextual study. An analysis of hermeneutics, history and intention of the author under the light of narratology would bring interesting results which might enhance our understanding on the text, alongside the diachronic analysis of the pericope.

1.2   Methodology

Recent times have witnessed a broader application of methodologies in biblical studies. The present study on 2 Kings 11 stands in the tradition of a diachronically reflected synchronic exegesis. The synchronic study reads the text as it is presented in the final form. The diachronic analysis, on the contrary, studies the formation of the text, its historical and cultural background and the components of the final text. As Berges advocates, a diachronically reflected synchronic approach[14], in which both the methods complement each other, would make the biblical research richer. This methodological discussion in the last decade has enriched the biblical studies. And so, the study at hand, aims at deriving a fair understanding of 2 King 11, making use of some of the current methods of biblical research, both on the levels of synchronic and diachronic analyses.

From the level of the narratological approach, I aim to present a synthesis of various models and approaches and to offer explanations on essential concepts related to narratology. This presentation is imperative, in order to apply the method on our text more effectively. The study at hand then applies the narratological concepts on 2 Kings 11 and views this biblical text both from a narratological perspective and from a semantic perspective. The narratological application is not confined within any single method, but rather is a comprehensive approach whereby several narratological tools are used in reading the text in a narratological perspective. The narrative elements combined with those of the semantic enriches the synchronic analysis exposing the nuances of narrative ele-

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[14]   Cf. Ulrich Berges. BiKi 62 (2007) 250–51.

ments in the text in focus. The study also includes the discussion of some interpretative problems in the text.

The diachronic analysis of 2 Kings 11 also contains a new hypothesis concerning sources and redactions of the text, and tries to unfold answers to some of the complications revolving around the text. And it proposes as to how this pericope could have come into existence and arrives at new dimensions in the understanding of the text. It also seeks to study the role of the text in the larger context of the book of Kings, for 2 Kings 11 offers a highly significant theme to the entire book of Kings, as it deals with the theme of continuity of the Davidic dynasty. The word study also reveals several layers in relations to some known circles like deuteronomistic and priestly traditions. These concerns are to be treated in the history of the formation of the book and the text. It necessitates an analysis of formation history and readdresses the challenges which it poses. Thereby, a proposal is made with regard to the time of the above mentioned layers.

Our diachronic analysis shows that 2 Kings 11 is to be understood in relation to some other biblical texts. It necessitates an intertextual analysis. Intertextuality in general reads one text against another intertext and seeks clarity on the text in study. The concept of intertextuality was introduced by J. Kristeva in the context of linguistic, literary and cultural theory of Bachtin. Kristeva argued that every text consists of citations and is an absorption and transformation of another text.[15]

In the application of the intertextual method in biblical theology, diverse methodologies have emerged. It, in fact, mirrors the diversity of attempts to address a variety of questions.[16] The approach introduced by Steins, viz., "kanonisch-intertextuelle Lektüre" – "a canonical intertextual reading" is fascinating in this regard. This concept stresses the inexhaustible richness of meanings in the biblical texts and the role of the reader in discovering these meanings.[17] Steins bases his theory on Bachtin's concept that words are dialogical and on Kristeva's concept that texts stand in relation to one another and he integrates them with the

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[15] Cf. Julia Kristeva 1972: 345–75. See also Georg Steins 1999: 48–49.
[16] Boda and Floyd caution not to jump into conclusions of dependence of texts, when one identifies common vocabulary or phraseology. It is sometimes possible both the identified texts have had a common origin or the language might be the result of common everyday usage and they could be only indirectly related. Cf. M. Boda and M. Floyd 2003: 5.
[17] Georg Steins 1999: 2–3. As a canonical approach, it pays attention to the three dimensions of canon, namely, the context, the specific structure and the medium of reception. Ibid. 26.

literary features of biblical canons in order to formulate semantic constructions. It means, when we place a text in the canonical context, one voice from the text stands in close relation to other voices from the text and enables the possibility of dialogue which should be actualized through the reader. Steins agrees that not every text stands in text-to-text relation to other texts, but only a text which evokes other text or texts can enrich itself. These texts contribute to the construction of meanings.[18]

Stead's method of "thematic allusions" seeks attention in this context. It holds that the same theme could be expressed in more than one text, using different vocabulary. In successive reading of the Bible, one has to note the echoes of the text in study and look for thematic allusions. The texts which share common themes won't be remarkable, if the theme is very common in the Hebrew Bible. Then the particular passage is read against the background of the identified intertext in order to explore additional depth of meaning.[19] Since there exists a great difficulty in determining the time of composition of early biblical texts, more concentration will be given to the thematic analysis. Echo and allusions are two important aspects in an intertextual analysis and they are closely interconnected. An echo is a subconscious evocation of an earlier text without any rhetorical end in mind, whereas, allusion means conscious reference by one text to another.[20]

Scheetz developed "the Concept of Canonical Intertextuality" which integrates concepts of Kristevian influenced intertextuality with canon criticism. It insists on the dialogue inherent in the canonical texts. "This dialogue reflects point of continuity, where there are similar terms, phrases, and values, and points of discontinuity where these terms, phrases, and values have shifted in meaning."[21] It means, even if a term or phrase could be used in different ways in different contexts, they do not reflect static textual units, but stand in dialogue with each other. Thus the approach of Scheetz can be seen as an extended version of the theory of Steins.

Steins' "kanonisch-intertextuelle Lektüre" is helpful for this study on 2 Kings 11, as the biblical canon stands at the centre of this approach as a dialogically and intertextually structured literary work. This intertextual study consists in two

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[18]   Ibid. 70–83.
[19]   Michael R. Stead 2009: 37–39.
[20]   Todd Hibbard 2006: 14.
[21]   Jordan M. Scheetz 2011: 33.

steps. The first step is to look for the presence of other texts in 2 Kings 11, based on the similarities and congruencies. It also includes the search for reference signals within the text and study of the relationship between the texts. The second step consists in unfolding new meanings in the light of the new text and drawing inspirations from it.

The act of murdering the children brings the texts concerning the births of Moses and Joash together. The same act of murdering relates itself to the promise of a long lasting Davidic kingdom (2 Sam 7). The coronation of Joash reminds the reader of the accession of Solomon (1 Kings 1:28–40). The removal of Athaliah from the throne and the consequent destruction of the Baal cult stands in close relation to the removal of the Omride dynasty in the Northern kingdom and the subsequent eradication of Baal cult (2 Kings 9–10). The covenant mentioned in 2 Kings 11:17 is to be read in relation to the covenant cut by Josiah (2 King 23:3). Besides these instances of relatedness, 2 Kings 11 has its parallel in 2 Chronicles. The themes of dethronement and revolt bring 2 Kings 11 closer to the book of Esther. The connectivity of 2 Kings 11 with these texts and their interdependence are to be analysed concisely. Besides these texts, shorter comparative analysis is done with a few other texts in the course of the study in appropriate contexts.

1.3   Structure of the Study

As the title would suggest it, the study makes use of both synchronic and diachronic analysis. After the presentation of my own translation of 2 Kings 11, the synchronic analysis of the text in 2 Kings 11 is elaborately dealt with. It consists of a description of the significant concepts of narratology and a narratological approach to our text. It is followed by the study of the diachronic aspects of the text. Thereafter the intertexual analysis studies the relationship between the text at hand with relevant biblical texts.

In the appendix, my translation of the text with classified layers is attached. For biblical citations other than the text in study, the English version of NRSV is followed. Hebrew references are made according to the Masoretic Text.