

THE FORMS OF PROPHETIC ADDRESS IN CHRONICLES

by

SIMON J. DE VRIES

Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio 43015

Recent studies have shown a striking shift from the setting, stance and ideology of classical prophecy—that of the pre-exilic and exilic periods—to that of 1–2 Chronicles, which we date after the exile. This impression will be reinforced in the present paper, which undertakes to identify and describe four distinct narrative prophetic genres appearing in this late book, analyzing each passage exhibiting each of them with special attention to its narrative and discursive subgenres. The ambitious publishing project, “The Forms of the Old Testament Literature,” for which the present writer has prepared the volume on 1–2 Chronicles and which has achieved increasing recognition as a model for standardized definitions, will be our guide in discussing these various genres. As we identify the four narrative prophetic genres and examine the discursive forms belonging to each of them, it will be possible to get a clearer grasp of how differently 1–2 Chronicles conceives the structure and purpose of prophetic speech in comparison with the classical forms it pretends to emulate. Of the four narrative genres, the first three will be seen to belong to narrative materials drawn directly from synoptic parallels in Samuel and Kings; only the fourth, which is found elsewhere in late documents, is found in the work of the Chronicler (the Chr) himself, i.e., is his own original, highly ideological, compositions.

I

First, let us survey the present state of the question. Until fairly recently, scholars skeptical of the Chr’s historical reliability have tended to assume that his prophetic speeches were without historical foundation, while traditional scholarship tended to assume that they reported—or at least drew upon—reliable traditions of actual events.

An erudite treatment of the question by Weinberg (1978) has argued that an authentic “extracanonical prophetic movement” lies behind the prophet accounts in 1–2 Chronicles, being closely associated with Levitical

and priestly circles as early as the premonarchical and early monarchical periods. This attempt to bolster the historical reliability of this group of passages falls short because it ignores the strong archaizing tendency characterizing the entire work of the Chr, which seeks to provide the color of historical actuality throughout.

In any event, Weinberg's willingness to associate the Chr's prophetic spokesmen with the Levites seems to have found some confirmation in von Rad's earlier study (1934) on Chronicles' "Levitical sermons" which claims a number of speeches ascribed to prophets (2 Chr 15:2-7, 16:7-9, 25:7-8) for representatives of the Levitical order, along with the speech of Jahaziel the Levite in 2 Chr 20:15-17 and the speeches of David (1 Chr 28:2-10), Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 19:6-7, 20:20), and Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:7-8). Von Rad's influential study, whose main purpose was to show how this group of passages tends to reach back to ancient words of Scripture, developing a three-part sermon form (*Doctrina, Applicatio, Exhortatio*), disagrees with the results of Weinberg's study in dating these materials to the postexilic period and interpreting them as highly schematic and artificial compositions, the purpose of which was to keep alive old concepts and aspirations, contemporizing them for the time and situation of the Chr himself. We will find ourselves able to agree that this sermonizing tendency is present in the speeches ascribed to some of Chronicles' prophets, but the standards of a precise form-critical description must insist on a more apt characterization because a "sermon" demands a liturgical setting, and most of the passages mentioned lack this specification. Von Rad admits that the Chr only weakly employs the proper sermon form, but he is probably right in arguing that at least the speeches mentioned reflect a custom of the postexilic period, one involving the practice of Levites traversing the land, preaching on ancient authoritative texts.

The address given by Seeligmann (1978) at the Göttingen meeting of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament on the deuteronomistic and chroniclistic concepts of prophecy has brought the problem into clearer focus. Seeligmann showed first that up to the time of Isaiah, Israelite prophecy had been concerned with politics and was addressed to kings. A refocusing on the national destiny came in the imperial period that culminated in the exile. In sharp contrast, according to Seeligmann, prophecy in the Chr's own compositions is little concerned with politics. It is "ganz Theologie."¹ The Chr's accounts have their locus

1. P. 271. Cf. p. 278: "Für den Propheten und wieder namentlich für Jesaja handelt in der Geschichte nur Gott. . . Für den Chronisten sind Kraft und Macht keine menschliche Eigenschaften, sonder ausschliesslich Gott vorbehalten."

in the reigns of the Judahite kings, but are actually addressed to the postexilic heirs of the Davidic dynasty, with their theocratic community. According to the Chr, even the kings speak as prophets (*pace* von Rad), while the “prophetic” source material to which the Chr refers is pure fiction. When words are cited from the canonical books of the prophets, they are cast into an entirely different meaning and context (cf. Isa 7:9b in 2 Chr 20:20b; Hos 3:4 in 2 Chr 15:3).² The Chr’s prophets are exhorters and warners, as in Jonah and the deuteronomic redaction of Jeremiah. Their words give glory only to God, emphasizing that no earthly king—David himself being no exception—has personal power, but receives all power and greatness from God.

Petersen’s recent monograph (1977) on the decline of traditional prophecy in the “deutero-prophetic literature” and its reincarnation under Levitical auspices in 1–2 Chronicles has added little to the analysis of prophetic speech in the Chr’s private compositions. It has been mainly concerned with showing how the Levitical movement completely usurped the place of prophecy, repudiating lay prophecy in favor of the official, sacral interests of the theocracy. The main impact of this study is to confirm the conclusions of von Rad that a form of Levitical sermonizing took the place of traditional prophecy.³

The important insights of Seeligmann have found their proper development in a recent dissertation by Micheel (1983). It is this scholar’s work that provides the proper introduction to the present study. Her interest has been in contrasting the content and ideology of the Chr’s synoptic passages with that of their counterpart in his private compositions. She shows that, while the former group of passages has been copied with only minor variations expressing the attitudes and intention of the Chr, his own speeches have been expressly composed to comment on and interpret the narrative contexts into which they have been placed. The most important contrasts between these two groups of passages are the following: whereas prophets in the synoptic material have titles, many of those in Chr’s private material are without title or are anonymous, exceptions being Jehu, who is called a *hōzeh*, “visionary”, Chanani, called *rō’eh*,

2. Seeligmann’s term for this method is “midraschartige Aktualisierung” (1978, p. 273).

3. Cf. also the remarks of Booiij (1978, pp. 63–77) concerning 1 Chr 25:1ff., 2 Chr 20:14ff. We should note here the attempt of Newsome (1975, pp. 203–4) to extend von Rad’s and Petersen’s analysis to include the speeches by Davidide kings in the category of prophecy (1 Chr 21:26, 22:8, 28:19; 2 Chr 1:7–13, 7:1, 7–13, 13:4–12, 29:25, 32:20–23, 24). But in these passages the king does not bring an oracle; rather, he is the recipient of an epiphanous experience or—as in the case of Abijah, 2 Chr 13—he delivers a sermon in the style that von Rad calls Levitical (cf. 1934, pp. 212–13). Nothing commends Newsome’s dating of Chr *ca.* 529–515.

“seer”, and Shemaiah and Obed, who are named *nābī*², “prophet”.⁴ In the second group several persons suffer because of their direct opposition to the kings,⁵ who in two cases (2 Chr 24:25–26; 25:27) are punished by God with political calamities. Except for Azariah (2 Chr 15:1–7) and Jahaziel (2 Chr 20:15–17), who offer encouragement, the message is always condemnation for trusting in foreign alliances, co-operation with Northern kings, or apostasy. Throughout there is an appeal to repentance, except near the end of the kingdom, when the people share in the condemnation (Micheel, 1983, p. 81: cf. 33:10, 36:15).

Although this work has been well done, Micheel did not extend her analysis to the structure of these two groups of speeches. Once this is carried out, the impression of the Chr’s peculiar ideology concerning prophecy will be firmly nailed down.

II

As has been stated, our intent is to identify the distinct narrative genres and to test how genre elements and specific discursive genres are employed within each narrative structure. There are four narrative prophetic genres, and the first three belong exclusively to the Chr’s synoptic borrowings. It is to these that we first direct our attention.

A. *Prophetic commission report.* This is a type of report which tells of a prophet’s being commissioned by God to speak or act. It typically contains (1) the word formula, “The word of Yahweh came to . . .,” (2) a commissioning formula, “Go, speak,” or the like, (3) the messenger formula, “Thus says Yahweh,” and (4) the oracular message. Examples are in Isa 7:3–9; Jer 2:1–3, 7:1–7, 26:1–6; 1 Kgs 19:15–18, 21:17–19. There are three examples of this genre in 1–2 Chronicles (prophetic genres and formulas are in caps):

1 Chr 17:1–15 par 2 Sam 7:1–17
 Narrative framework, 1–2, 16ff.
 Commission (1), 3–6
 WORD FORMULA, 3
 Commissioning formula, 4aα

4. 2 Chr 19:2, 16:7, 12:5, 28:9, respectively. In addition, Azariah, Jahaziel and Zechariah are said to receive God’s spirit (2 Chr 15:1, 20:14, and 24:20, respectively), and Eliezer performs the function of *NB*³ *hithp.* (1 Chr 10:37).

5. I.e., Hanani, (2 Chr 16:10), Zechariah (2 Chr 24:21–22), the anonymous prophet of chap 25. This tradition is reflected in references to Zechariah in Matt 23:35, Luke 11:51.

- PROPHETIC SPEECH, 4aβ-6
- MESSENGER FORMULA, 4a
- Prohibition, 4b
- Historical review, 5
- Rhetorical question, 6
- Complaint, 6b
- Commission (2), 7-14
- Commissioning formula, 7αακ
- PROPHETIC SPEECH, 7ααλ-14
- MESSENGER FORMULA, 7ααλ
- Historical review, 7aβ-8⁶
- Promises, 9-14
- For Israel, 9-10a⁷
- For David, 10b-14⁸
- Report of compliance, 15

The literature on this passage, particularly in the Samuel text, is extensive.⁹ The preceding analysis differs somewhat from that found in the writer's book on the prophet legends (De Vries, 1978, p. 58), where it is claimed for the subgenre, "succession oracle narrative."¹⁰ The latter designation is more functional than structural and, strictly from the viewpoint of structure, it does belong under the category, "prophetic commission report," as defined above. The doubling of the genre element,

6. The problem of rendering the verbs is crucial. These are mainly copied faithfully, but Chr's imperfect consecutive in v. 8, *wā'akrūt*, fits the syntax better than Samuel's cohortative, *wā'akritāh*. In Chronicles 8, *wā'ehyeh* and *wā'akrūt* should be rendered in the past tense in succession from *lēqahtūkā*; *wē'āsūtū*, perfect conjunctive, continues the past reference. The most extensive study of the text is van den Bussche (1948).

7. Four verbs, *wēsamtū*, *ūnēta'tihū*, *wēsākan*, and *wēhikna'tī* are to be read as futuristic perfect consecutives, not only because of the imperfects, *yirgaz* and *yōsipū*, but also on account of the intended contrast with the past in the comparative clause, *ka'āšer bāri'sōnā* ("as at first"), with its sequel. The Chr substitutes *wēhikna'tī 'et kol-ōyēbēkā*, "and I will subdue all your enemies," for Sam, *wahānīhōtī lēkā mikkol-ōyēbēkā*, "and I will give you rest from all your enemies," for the reason that the Chr assigns the bringing of *sālōm wāšequet* to Solomon (I Chr 22:9).

8. The imperfect conjunctive, *wā'aggid*, refers to the present act of divine promise to David.

9. Cf. Braun, 1973; Driver, 1895; Gese, 1974; Ishida, 1977; Japhet, 1977; Kruse, 1985; Mettinger, 1976; von Nordheim, 1977; Williamson, 1977.

10. As there defined, the "succession oracle narrative" has the purpose of maintaining Yahweh's prerogative for setting the terms of regal succession (see also I Kgs 11:29ff., 14:1ff.).

“prophetic speech,” is especially remarkable. The connecting word, *wē^cattā*, “so now,” marks the transition at v. 7 from the situation of prohibiting David’s intention as approved by Nathan to the new situation of divine promise. This is an early passage, having been enlarged in 2 Sam 7:18–29 as what appears to be a propaganda tract for David’s court before receiving the deuteronomistic expansions in vv. 14–16 and 22–24.

I Chr 21:9–13 par 2 Sam 24:11–14

Narrative framework, 1–8, 14ff.

Report of commissioning, 9–10

WORD FORMULA, 9

Commission, 10

Commissioning formula, 10αακ

MESSENGER FORMULA, 10ααכ

PROPHETIC SPEECH (command), 10אβb

Report of an oracle, 11–14

Narrative of compliance, 11אבא

PROPHETIC SPEECH, 11בβ–12א

MESSENGER FORMULA, 11בβκ (2 Samuel omits)

Negotiation (offer of choices), 11בβכ–12א

Command for decision, 12ב

Report of decision, 13

Because the Samuel text lacks the messenger formula in v. 13 par Chronicles 11, the specification of the three choices offered to David loses the structuring of a second prophetic speech and becomes instead God’s own explication of the first prophetic speech. Probably the Samuel version is textually the more original;¹¹ hence it is especially noteworthy that the Chr has the same pattern of two prophetic speeches found in 1 Chronicles 17 par 2 Samuel 7, the important difference being that there the second speech was a true counterpart to the first, substituting Yahweh’s promise for David’s unacceptable proposal, whereas here the second speech simply explicates the first. It is noteworthy that the “prophetic commission report” in both texts is no more than a subordinate episode in the narrative of purchasing the threshing floor (1 Chr 21:1–27 par 2 Sam 24:1–25), whose climax is reached in Chronicles in the dedication of David’s altar, vv. 26–27.

11. Cross has shown (1958, p. 294) that the Chr text has affinities with an old Palestinian text uncovered in fragments from Qumran, and may in some readings in this chapter be superior to the Samuel text (cf. also Lemke, 1965, pp. 62–74).

- 2 Chr 11:1–4 par 1 Kgs 12:21–24
 Statement of the situation, 1
 Report of commissioning, 2–4a
 WORD FORMULA, 2
 Commission, 3–4a
 Commissioning formula, 3
 PROPHETIC SPEECH, 4a
 MESSENGER FORMULA
 Prohibition
 Command with grounding clause
 Report of compliance, 4b

Although there is good reason to believe that this short pericope, which is virtually identical in the two biblical texts, developed separately from the foregoing story of Rehoboam's folly (cf. De Vries, 1985, pp. 56–59), as it now stands it functions as an anticlimactic epilogue to that story.

B. *Prophetic battle story.* This is a type of historical story focusing on a military situation, in which one or more prophets assume important dramatic roles, enunciating interpretive perspectives on the author's behalf. It appears in 1 Kgs 20:1–34¹² and 2 Kgs 19:1–38,¹³ as well as in the following example, modified by the Chr from Kings for his own purposes.

- 2 Chr 18:1–19:3 par 1 Kgs 22:1–37
 REPORT OF AN ORACULAR INQUIRY, 18:1–27
 Proposal of alliance, 18:1–4
 Oracular inquiry, 5
 ORACLE, 5b
 Demand for confirmation, 6–15
 Setting, 6–9
 SYMBOLIC ACTION with confirmation, 10–11
 Refusal of advice to conform, 12–13
 Oracular inquiry, 14–15
 ORACLE, 14b
 Reproach, 15

12. De Vries (1978, pp. 54, 57–58, 83–84) identifies this as a subgenre of prophet legend, “historical demonstration narrative.”

13. De Vries (1978, pp. 56, 69–71) identifies 2 Kgs 18:17–19:38 as a subgenre of prophet legend, “word-controversy narrative.”

- VISION REPORT (1), 16–17
 - VISION, 16a
 - Interpretive ORACLE, 16b
 - Identification, 17
- VISION REPORT (2), 18–20
 - Call to attention, 18a
 - VISION, 18b–21
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH (threat), 22
- Efforts to suppress, 23–27
 - Zedekiah, 23–24
 - Rebuke, 23
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH (threat), 24
- The king, 25–27
 - Command, 25–26
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH, 27a
 - Call to attention, 27b
- Battle at Ramoth-Gilead, 28–34
- REPORT OF A PROPHETIC WORD, 19:1–3
 - Narrative of confrontation, 1–2a α
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH, 2a β –3
 - Accusatory question, 2a β
 - Threat, 2b
 - Mitigation, 3

The present writer has found compelling grounds for analyzing the Kings text into two interwoven, originally separate prophet legends.¹⁴ It can be seen, in any case, that prophetic genre-elements and formulas occupy a natural place in the structure of the pericope of 2 Chr. Whereas in the Kings account the climax comes in Micaiah's repartee of v. 28a, "If you return in peace, Yahweh has not spoken by me," the Chr has shifted the climax to the concluding "report of a prophetic word", namely, Jehu ben Hanani's speech to Jehoshaphat in 19:1–3, where he uses this as a hinge to his subsequent narration about the apostasy and annihilation of this king's immediate family.

C. Report of an oracular inquiry. This is a short account, usually in a longer narrative, of a particular way of seeking an oracle from God. There

14. De Vries, 1978, pp. 33–51. A superseding oracle narrative, ca. 800 B.C.E., is in vv. 2b–9, 15–18, 26–37; a word controversy narrative, ca. 700 B.C.E., is in vv. 10–12a, 14, 19–25.

is a priestly type consisting of a direct inquiry followed by an immediate answer (e.g., 1 Sam 23:2, 4, 14:37; 2 Sam 2:1). The prophetic type tends to include (1) a description of a problem or situation of distress, (2) narrative of an audience with a prophet, (3) the oracle, and (4) fulfillment (cf. 1 Kgs 14:1–18; 2 Kgs 3:4–20, 8:7–15).¹⁵ Features of both types are found in 1 Kgs 20:13–14, 22:5–28 (par 2 Chronicles 1–27). In the Micaiah story (above), the “report of an oracular inquiry” is a genre element subordinate to the narrative climax. In the Chr’s only other example of this genre, the Huldah story (below), it is itself the narrative climax, with the preceding and succeeding narration as framework (so also in Kings).

2 Chr 34:20–28 par 2 Kgs 22:12–20

Narrative framework, 8–19, 29ff.

Report of commissioning, 20–21

REPORT OF A PROPHETIC WORD, 22–28a

Narrative of inquiry, 22

PROPHETIC SPEECH, 23–28a

MESSANGER FORMULA, 23a

Commission (1), 23b–25

Commissioning formula, 23b

PROPHECY OF PUNISHMENT OVER THE PEOPLE, 24–25

MESSANGER FORMULA, 24aα

Announcement (1), 24aβb

Accusation and announcement (2), 25

Commission (2), 26–28a

Commissioning formula, 26a

PROPHECY OF SALVATION, 26b–28a

MESSANGER FORMULA, 26bα

Assurance of divine attention, 26bβ–27

Announcement, 28a

Report of return, 28b

Here the doubling of the commissioning element recalls the tendency to doubling seen in the prophetic commission report of 1 Chr 17:1–5 and 1 Chr 21:9–13. In this passage the separate commissions are for reporting different genres of prophetic proclamation, both of which are exceedingly

15. In De Vries (1978, pp. 53ff.) these are designated as a succession oracle narrative, a prophet-legitimation narrative, and a superseding oracle narrative, respectively. In structure, however, all three conform to the “report of an oracular inquiry” pattern.

common in the prophetic collection. In the “prophecy of punishment over the people” the accusation almost always precedes the announcement of judgment. Like Isa 3:1–11, Jer 2:26–28, Amos 9:8–10, vv. 24–25 in our Chronicles/Kings passage reverses their sequence, in this case adding a modification of the announcement. Usually the “prophecy of salvation”, which is here intended for Josiah, has three elements: (1) a statement of Yahweh’s intervention to save; (2) specifications or statement of effects; and (3) final affirmation. The Huldah prophecy has the first two.

III

It will have been noted that in all of the preceding passages the genre element, “prophetic speech”, has been identified (I Chr 17:4–6, 7–14, 21:10, 11–12, 2 Chr 11:4, 18:22, 24, 19:2–3, 34:23–28, with parallels). A rather loose genre definition applies to it: a speech by a prophet. It refers to prophetic messages that are either too atypical or too vaguely structured to allow a more specific genre-name, such as “prophecy of punishment over the people” or “prophecy of salvation” (2 Chr 34:24–25, 26–28, respectively). Whenever this appears as a genre element within one of the broader narrative prophetic genres described above, it is a subordinate element in the over-all structural development, and its meaning or function is clarified by its place within the pericope to which it belongs.

As we turn now to an examination of a fourth narrative prophetic genre, the only one employed in original compositions of the Chr, we shall discover that the genre-name, “prophetic speech” is no sub-element, but the central and essential element of the narrative. It does not receive its meaning and function from the narrative context, but rather is composed for the express purpose of giving meaning to its narrative context. We shall see that the Chr’s prophetic speeches are variously ordered, in some instances displaying the structure of what von Rad calls “the Levitical sermon,” but otherwise offering whatever structure is best suited to making these speeches an effective commentary on the narrative context.

D. Report of a prophetic word. Among the passages already examined, only the Chr’s eccentric conclusion to the “prophetic battle story” about Micaiah in 2 Chr 19:1–3 has been designated as belonging to this narrative prophetic genre. Because it is an addition, it assumes the place of a genre element; but in every instance in which Chr creates this as the main genre in his private prophetic speeches, it has independent status. This is defined as a narrating genre developed in the exilic period and found frequently in the prose tradition of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, examples

being Jer. 21:1–10, 32:1–44, 34:8–22, 35:1–19; Ezek 14:1–11, 20:1–44. Usually the pericopes begin with the word formula in the form of a superscription, but they report not what a prophet has done but what he has said. The climax is the citation of a divine word delivered by the prophet. This genre reflects the belief that the word of a prophet must be understood as growing out of a particular historical situation. This is true of the examples from Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but it is equally true of those appearing in Chronicles.

2 Chr 12:1–8

- Situation of impending judgment, 1–4
 - Rehoboam's and Israel's sin, 1
 - Shishak's attack, 2–4
- Shemaiah's message, 5–6
 - Narrative of approach, 5a
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH, 5b
 - MESSENGER FORMULA
 - Announcement
 - Accusation
 - Threat
- Narrative of response, 6
- Oracle to Shemaiah, 7–8
 - Situation and WORD FORMULA, 7a α
 - ORACLE, 7a β –8

It is noteworthy that here Shemaiah is no longer “a man of God,” as in synoptic material in 11:2, but a “prophet.” The narrative of approach is standard in these speeches composed by the Chr. Shemaiah's first message offers Yahweh's declaration that his abandoning corresponds to the addressees' abandoning. A report of their self-humbling and confession of Yahweh's righteousness follows. This provides the situation for a private oracle, spoken by Yahweh to Shemaiah, but apparently never delivered, confiding to the prophet the divine intent to substitute the discipline of foreign aggression for complete destruction. This is, of course, programmatic material in which the Chr sets forth a basic tenet of his own theology of history (cf. von Rad, 1930, pp. 132–36; Welten, 1923, pp. 166–72).

2 Chr 15:1–7

- Narrative of approach, 1–2a α
- PROPHETIC SPEECH, 2a β –7

- Call to attention, 2ab
- Aphorism, 2b
- Application, 3–6
 - Forsaken Israel find Yahweh in distress, 3–4
 - Israel's former time of trouble, 5–6
- Admonition and assurance, 7

This is the report of Azariah ben Obed's word to Asa just as this king is returning from his victory over Zerah, 14:8–13 [E 9–14]. We find it necessary to adopt Rudolph's suggestions (1952, pp. 369–70) that 15:1–15 is a literary doublet which has the effect of placing the victory celebration on the same date, the fifteenth day of the third month, as the festival of covenant renewal (= *šābû'ôt*, "Weeks").¹⁶ The two have been redactionally combined by the Chr, who has inserted v. 11, referring back to the victory, into the account of the festival. The syntactical inversion in v. 1 (*wa'āzaryāhū ben-ōdēd hāyētā 'ālāw rūāḥ 'ēlōhīm*, "Now as for Azariah son of Obed, the spirit of God came upon him,") underscores this as a new narrative beginning. What von Rad would call *Doctrina* in v. 2b is in fact an aphorism on finding and forsaking God. Verses 3–6 do intend to apply it to, or interpret it by, references to Israel's forlorn past. Time designatives in vv. 3 and 5, *wēyāmīm rabbīm*, "and for a long time," and *ūbā'itīm hāhēm*, "and in those times," place vv. 3–4 and vv. 5–6 in parallelism. The foremost *wē'attem*, "but as for you," makes a dramatic contrast between the evil times of the past and this new moment of courageous commitment. This again reflects the Chr's basic stance of using the past (the history of Judah's kings) as a new exhortation to commitment.¹⁷

2 Chr 16:7–10

- Narrative of approach, 7abα
- PROPHETIC SPEECH, 7bβ–9
 - Accusation, 7bβ
 - Appeal to past experience, 8
 - Aphorism, 9αα
 - Announcement, 9αβb
- Narrative of response, 10

16. Note the pun on *šāba'*, "swear", and *šēbū'ā*, "oath", in vv. 14–15. Cf. Weinfeld, 1978, p. 11.

17. On the structure of the Asa chronicle, see Rudolph 1952.

The time designative, *ûbā^cēt hahî?*, “and at that time,” makes a temporal correlation with Asa’s alliance with Ben-Hadad reported in 16:1–6 (cf. 1 Kgs 15:16–22). Like the Chr’s addition of a report of Jehu’s speech in 19:1–3, appended to the synoptic prophetic battle report in chapter 18, this “report of a prophetic word” intends to censure a regal sin of foreign alliance. Verses 7b–8 contrast reliance on the king of Syria with the reliance on Yahweh that had given Asa victory over Zerah. For the aphorism in v. 9a, cf. Zech 4:10. The announcement of wars *mē^cattā*, “from now on,” in v. 9b correlates with *bā^cēt hahî?*, “at that time,” in v. 10—the sequel in which Asa adds cruelties on the general populace in connection with his persecution of Hanani.¹⁸

2 Chr 19:1–3 (see above)

2 Chr 20:13–19

- Narrative of empowerment, 13–14
 - Liturgical preparation, 13
 - Expanded WORD FORMULA, 14
- PROPHETIC SPEECH, 15–17
 - Call to attention, 15a
 - MESSENGER FORMULA, 15bα
 - Reassurance, 15bβ
 - Command and instruction, 16–17a
 - Admonition, 17bβα
 - Assistance formula, 17bββ
- Liturgical response, 18–19

There can be no question but that this report has been expressly composed as the interpretive climax to a baroque holy-war narrative, vv. 1–30. Jehoshaphat behaves more as a pontiff than as a monarch. Everything that follows his prayer in vv. 5–12 and Jahaziel’s speech in vv. 13–19 is foregone and anticlimatic. The prophetic spokesman in this instance is an Asaphite Levite, hence it is altogether appropriate that his speech should have a liturgical context, vv. 13, 18–19. It is interesting that a word formula virtually identical to that of 15:1 (proper name with pedigree foremost, then the formula, *hāyētā ^cālāw rūāḥ YHWH*) should be used. The speech recalls the language of Deuteronomy, but especially that of

18. The concern for chronology in the Asa narratives reflects the concern for dating seen in the reports of a prophetic word in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, and Zechariah (see above).

the narrative of Israel's deliverance at the sea, Exodus 14. Verse 17a, "You will not need to fight in this battle; take your position, stand still, and see the victory of Yahweh on your behalf," is a striking paraphrase of Exodus 14:13-14. The repetition of time-words associated with the holy-war tradition makes clear that this is the narrative climax and that Jahaziel acts as the Chr's own spokesman (cf. De Vries, 1975, pp. 103-5).

2 Chr 20:35-27

Compromising situation, 35-36

Eliezer's message, 37

Narrative of approach, 37a

PROPHECY OF PUNISHMENT OVER AN INDIVIDUAL, 37ba

Accusation

Announcement

Report of fulfillment, 37bβ

The Chr has turned the noncommittal report of I Kings 22:48-49 into a report of prophetic denunciation. Following a final regnal résumé for Jehoshaphat in vv. 31-34, a weak transition formula, *wē'ahārê-kēn*, "and after this," adds this on as an afterthought. In this instance the Chr is able to recall the traditional genre of prophetic speech, "prophecy of punishment over an individual" with accusation and announcement in succinct form.

2 Chr 21:11-19

Situation: Jehoram's offense, 11

Elijah's letter, 12-15

Narrative of arrival, 12a

PROPHECY OF PUNISHMENT OVER AN INDIVIDUAL, 12b-15

Expanded MESSENGER FORMULA, 12ba

Accusation, 12bβ-13

Negative, 12bβ

Positive, 13

Announcement, 14-15

Plague on family and goods, 14

Disease on self, 15

Narrative of fulfillment, 16-19

Invasion, 16-17

Disease and death, 18-19

The Chr is still in the mood to work with the traditional genre, “prophecy of punishment over an individual”. Two things in particular mark this pericope as the Chr’s most opportune moment for denouncing the apostasy of Judah’s kings: (1) the naming of Elijah, Northern Israel’s champion against Baalism, as spokesman, and his employment of a letter to convey his message;¹⁹ and (2) the detail with which Jehoram’s sins are described in the accusation, with which his punishment is specified in the announcement, and with which the narrative of fulfillment describes its effects. Synoptic material in vv. 8–10 is expanded in this loosely attached supplement beginning with the emphatic *gam hûʔ*, “Indeed he. . . .” The announcement in vv. 14–15 is introduced in classic style with *hinnēh* and the participle of imminent action: “Behold, Yahweh is at the point of bringing (etc.).” A sharp separation between the narrative of the Philistine-Arab invasion and that of Jehoram’s disease is created through the temporal transition formula, *wēʔahārē kol-zōʔt*, “And after all this,” in v. 18.

2 Chr 24:20–22

WORD FORMULA, 20aα

Narrative of approach, 20aβ

PROPHETIC SPEECH, 20b

MESSSENGER FORMULA, 20bακ

Complaint, 20bαζ

Accusation and announcement, 20bβ

Narrative of response, 21–22a

The people’s conspiracy, 21

Joash’s ingratitude, 22a

Appeal for retribution, 22b

This report is created as an expansion to vv. 17–19, a statement of the princes’ and Joash’s apostasy, the *qešep*, “wrath”, that resulted (cf. 19:2) and the total disregard to prophecy on the part of the evil-doers. This mention of the rejection of prophecy may account for the fact that in this instance the revelatory spokesman is the son of Jehoiada and himself a

19. Cf. 2 Chr 2:12 [E 11], where Hiram writes to Solomon because he cannot appear in person, suggesting the same restriction for Elijah. But in view of the special weight placed in this pericope on fulfillment, the letter motif may also reflect a concern to bear witness to further generations (cf. Isa 8:1, Jer. 45:1).

priest. The word formula is unusual: *wērûaḥ ʿēlōhîm lābēšā ʿet-zēkaryā*, “and the spirit of God clothed Zechariah” (cf. I Chr 12:19 [E 18]). The message is now cast in the form of a “prophetic speech”, the Chr’s usual styling. The complaint with *lāmā* (“Why?”) and the accusation in the form of a grounding clause beginning with *kî*, “because”, are unusual; so is the severity of measures against Zechariah’s person, with his unique appeal for retribution, “May Yahweh see and avenge!”. In the Chr’s intention, a turning point has been reached; no more Judahite prophets identified by name will speak, wrath has come on Judah and Jerusalem, and Yahweh has been called upon to act.

2 Chr 25:5–13

- Narrative of mustering, 5
- Message of a “man of God,” 6–10
 - Hiring of Ephraimites, 6
 - Narrative of approach, 7 α
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH, 7 $\alpha\beta$ –8
 - Prohibition, 7 $\alpha\beta\beta$
 - Warning, 8
 - Oracular inquiry, 9
 - Query, 9 α
 - ORACLE of assurance, 9 β
 - Narrative of response, 10
- Battle report, 11–13

The warning of defeat in v. 8 includes a brief aphorism in the typical style of the Chr: “For God has power to help or to cast down.” The prophetic speech leads in this instance to an oracular inquiry (v. 9) offering another typically theological statement, to the effect that Yahweh is able to more than recompense Amaziah for money lost in dismissing the Ephraimites.

2 Chr 25:14–16

- Situation of apostasy, 14
- Message of “prophet” (1), 15
 - Narrative of approach, 15 $\alpha\beta\alpha$
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH (accusatory question), 15 $\beta\beta$
- Narrative of reproach, 16 α
- Message of “prophet” (2), 16 β
 - Report of compliance, 16 $\beta\alpha$
 - PROPHETIC SPEECH (threat), 16 $\beta\beta$

The transition formula, *wayhî ʔahārê bôʔ*, “And it happened after . . . came,” awkwardly introduces an astonishing report of regal apostasy (who would ever sacrifice to defeated gods?), which becomes the occasion for another anonymous prophetic confrontation. The theme of resistance is carried forward from 24:20–22, as Amaziah interrupts the prophet’s accusatory question by rejecting his right to act as his counselor, to which a second prophetic speech is added, containing a threat in the form of the theological statement that “I know that God has determined to destroy you because you . . . have not listened to my counsel.”

2 Chr 28:5–15

Narrative framework, 5b–7, 16ff.

Anecdotal introduction, 8

Oded’s message, 9–11

Narrative of approach, 9aα

PROPHETIC SPEECH, 9aβ–11

Accusation, 9aβ–10a

Reproach, 10b

Command and instruction, 11

Speech of the chieftains, 12–13

Anecdotal conclusion, 14–15

In the Chr’s final report of a prophetic word, it is a man named Oded, who has no patronym, who speaks, but this time it is against Ephraim and in defense of captives from Judah. It is the climactic point in a striking anecdote, which may have existed independently before the Chr made use of it for explicating his concept that the North was as guilty as Judah. The narrative of approach uses an emphatic word-order: *wěšām hāyā nābîʔ laYHWH ʕôdēd šēmô*, “And at that place there was a prophet named Oded.” The Ephraimite army is accused of exceeding Yahweh’s anger by slaying the Judahites in a rage reaching up to heaven, intending to enslave those that remain (9a–10a). This leads to a reproach introduced emphatically by *raq-ʔattem*, “indeed you yourselves”—equal to the Judahites in sinning against Yahweh the ancestral God. *Wēʕattā*, “So now,” introduces the command of restoration; *kî* with a grounding clause instructs the hearers that “Yahweh’s fierce wrath” (*hārôn ʔap-YHWH*) is upon them.²⁰

20. Williamson, 1982, p. 346, correctly interprets Oded’s speech as having a reconciling effect, counteracting Abijah’s repudiation of the North in 2 Chr 13.

IV

Our next task is to identify the function of these speeches. It seems now clear that we have been right in stating that the prophetic speeches taken from Samuel and Kings receive their meaning from their narrative context, whereas those belonging to the Chr's private compositions impart a meaning to the narrative to which they belong. Let us review briefly the first group.

1 Chr 17:1–15 par 2 Sam 7:1–17: Even though the prophetic speeches of vv. 4–6 and vv. 7–14 have become highly programmatic for the overall deuteronomistic redaction, the structure of the underlying prophet legend, in which Yahweh promises a dynasty (“house”) as a substitute for the temple (“house”) that David proposes, makes these prophetic speeches dependent on the narrative introduction, vv. 1–2.

1 Chr 21:9–13 par 2 Sam 24:11–14: The divine directive through Gad leads naturally from the episode of David's sin and contrition to the episodes of the threatening angel and the negotiation for the threshing floor, a narrative context without which the revelation would have no meaning.

2 Chr 11:1–4 par 1 Kgs 12:21–24: The prophetic speech through Shemaiah has no meaning apart from the narrative of Rehoboam's plan for invasion and the entire preceding pericope about Rehoboam's folly and Israel's revolt.

2 Chr 18:1–19:3 par 1 Kgs 22:1–37: The individual speeches and vision reports in chapter 18 have no meaning apart from the ongoing narrative. 19:1–3, the Chr's own special conclusion, a “report of a prophetic word,” reverses this relationship by commenting on and interpreting the Micaiah story from the perspective of the Chr's program for Jehoshaphat. From this point of view, the aphoristic question of v. 2, “Should you help the wicked and love those who hate Yahweh,” delivers the Chr's ultimate verdict on the entire event.

2 Chr 34:20–28 par 2 Kgs 22:12–20: Climactic prophecies from Huldah receive their meaning from the narrative of restoration and reform.

Next we review prophetic discourse composed by the Chr, in which an aphorism with application and admonition often brings the Chr's ideology to expression as an interpretation of the narrative context, reversing the relationship between narrative and discourse within the synoptic materials.

2 Chr 12:1–8: The narrative of Shishak's attack would not in itself require a word of prophetic interpretation (cf. 1 Kgs 14:25–26). It is mentioned here as a punishment upon apostasy, whose immediate effect Chr explains in

Shemaiah's report of Yahweh's reproach, "You have abandoned me, so I have abandoned you to the hand of Shishak," v. 5. The private oracle from Yahweh that follows in vv. 7–8—actually a statement of Chr's own ideology—offers the divine rationale for employing Shishak as an agent for teaching Israel obedience through affliction.

2 Chr 15:1–7: The aphorism, "Yahweh is with you while you are with him," followed by the admonition, "Do not let your hands be weak" (vv. 2, 7), interprets the foregoing account of victory and the succeeding narrative of a covenant festival as depending on Israel's fidelity to Yahweh.

2 Chr 16:7–10: The aphorism, "The eyes of Yahweh run to and fro throughout the whole earth," leading to the charge and announcement, "You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars" (v. 9), offers a theological response to the foregoing account of Asa's foreign alliance.

2 Chr 20:13–19: Another aphoristic statement, "The battle is not yours but God's" (v. 15), followed by the instruction, "see the victory of Yahweh on your behalf," and the assistance formula, "Yahweh will be with you" (v. 17), summarizes and interprets the entire artificial holy-war narrative.

2 Chr 20:35–37: On first sight it might seem that the narrative context, vv. 35–37a, 37b β , explains the revelatory word, "Because you have joined with Ahaziah, Yahweh will destroy what you have made" (v. 37b α). (It is of course perfectly clear that the Chr borrows his data from 1 Kgs 22:48–49, which he has reshaped, adding the interpretive statement, *hû³ hiršîa^c la^casôt*, "he did wickedly" [v. 36].) This provides an artificial narrative introduction and conclusion for the "prophecy of punishment over an individual," which he intends as an interpretive comment on the report of a foreign alliance, forgiven in the Kings source, which this prophecy reproves in the manner of Hanani's reprimand to Asa (16:7–9) and of Jehu's reprimand to Jehoshaphat (19:1–3). Thus, here too, it is the prophetic discourse that accounts for, and interprets, the narrative context.

2 Chr 21:11–19: Here it is clear the Elijah's "prophecy of punishment over an individual," vv. 12b–15, expresses the Chr's programmatic concern respecting the apostasy of the entire Davidic house to Baalism. It should be noted that the narrative introduction, specifying the sin of tolerating the *bāmôt*, "high places", does not perfectly correspond to the negative and positive accusation in vv. 12–13; further, that the report of invasion and plunder in the narrative conclusion (vv. 16–17) does not perfectly correspond to the threat of a *maggēpā gēdōlā*, "severe plague." Thus the narrative framework is an expansive, artificial, and not altogether appropriate setting for Elijah's prophecy. Again, it is the prophetic discourse that explains the narrative context.

2 Chr 24:20–22: The accusation and announcement, “Because you have forsaken Yahweh he has forsaken you” (cf. 12:5), expresses the Chr’s theological interpretation of the apostacy under Joash. Both the introductory (vv. 17–19) and concluding (vv. 21–22) narrative have been composed to support this prophetic saying. This prophecy, along with Zechariah’s appeal for retribution, (“May Yahweh see and avenge!”) interprets this narrative context.

2 Chr 25:5–13: The aphorism, “God has power to help or to cast down” (v. 8), together with the oracular assurance, “Yahweh is able to give you much more than this” (v. 9), explains the entire episode of dismissing the Ephraimites, which has no other function in the ongoing narrative than to support these revelatory affirmations.

2 Chr 25:14–16: The threat and accusation of v. 16 clearly express the Chr’s own judgment that Amaziah was a king who would not listen to prophetic counsel and hence was ordained for destruction. The narrative of apostasy is notoriously contrived; with the succeeding narrative of Amaziah’s refusal to accept the anonymous prophet as “a royal counselor,” it receives its meaning and function from the prophetic speech, which in turn interprets the narrative sequel about Amaziah’s folly and destruction, taken from synoptic material (vv. 17–28).

2 Chr 28:5–15: It is again the speech of a prophet, vv. 9–11, that interprets the entire narrative context. The Chr is less interested in the fate of Judahite captives than in the assessment of equal blame upon the Northerners.

Our conclusion regarding the nature of the Chr’s private oracles has been fully supported. First, we have shown how they differ in structure from prophetic discourse in synoptic material; next, we have shown how they differ from them in function. We see now that, even though the Chr leaves the form of prophetic discourse intact in materials borrowed from Samuel and Kings, he is unwilling or unable to reproduce this in most speeches of his own composition, probably because the traditional form was no longer encountered in his own social setting. He invents his own prophets—or men of other professions who speak as prophets—for the purpose of delivering a transcendental interpretation of the succession of good and bad kings that he has reviewed. It is here that the Chr most clearly undertakes to speak for God to the “ideal Israel” that is not yet what it has been called to be.

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