

Josephus' Portrait of Jehoshaphat Compared with the Biblical and Rabbinic Portrayals

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INTRODUCTION

For some reason, Jehoshaphat, Judah's fourth king, has aroused the special interest of 90's Biblical scholarship¹. All these recent publications naturally devote considerable attention to the question of the relationship between the quite minimalistic account concerning Jehoshaphat in 1 and 2 Kings and the Chronicler's much more extensive treatment of him in 2 Chronicles 17-20. In this presentation, I purpose to extend this intra-biblical comparison to encompass a third portrayal of the king, i. e. the one offered by Josephus in *Antiquitates Judaicae* (henceforth AJ) 8,315-9,45² which combines the data of both Scriptural accounts³. I begin with a consideration of how Josephus goes about arranging and integrating the material on Jehoshaphat provided him by Kings and Chronicles. Thereafter, I shall call attention to some noteworthy instances of Josephus' "rewriting" of his sources (additions, deletions, adaptations) as well as the (possible) reasons for and effects of these on his portrait of Jehoshaphat.

ARRANGEMENT AND INTEGRATION

In order to appreciate how Josephus arranges and integrates the sources' data concerning Jehoshaphat, it is necessary to begin by briefly recalling the (quite divergent) way in which Kings and Chronicles present him. In Kings, Jehoshaphat surfaces, intermittently, over the course of the lengthy segment 1Kgs 15,24b-2Kgs 3,27 (MT). Following mention of his accession in 1Kgs 15,24b, Jehoshaphat disappears completely throughout 1Kgs 15,25-21,29, a unit devoted to the succession of Northern kings Nadab through Ahab. He then returns to the scene in 22,1-40 as the associate of Ahab in the latter's ill-starred campaign against Syria.

¹See: G. N. KNOPPERS, Reform and Regression: The Chronicler's Presentation of Jehoshaphat, *Bib* 72 (1991) 500-542; K. STRÜBIND, Tradition als Interpretation in der Chronik. König Josaphat als Paradigma chronistischer Hermeneutik und Theologie (BZAW 201), Berlin, 1991; T. SUGIMOTO, Chronicles as Independent Literature, *SJOT* 55 (1992) 61-74, pp. 71-73; A. RUFFING, *Jahwekrieg als Weltmetapher. Studien zu Jahwekriegstexten des chronistischen Sondergutes* (SBB 24), Stuttgart, 1992, 150-330; P. R. DAVIES, Defending the Boundaries of Israel in the Second Temple Period: 2 Chronicles 20 and the "Salvation Army", in: *Priests, Prophets and Scribes: Essays on the Formation and Heritage of Second Temple Judaism in Honour of Joseph Blenkinsopp* (JSOTSup 149), Sheffield 1992, 43-54; P. C. BEENTJES, Tradition and Transformation of Innerbiblical Interpretation in 2 Chronicles 20, *Bib* 74 (1993) 258-263; idem, King Jehoshaphat's Prayer: Some Remarks on 2 Chronicles 20,6-13, *BZ* 38 (1994) 264-70; G. N. KNOPPERS, Jehoshaphat's Judiciary and "the Scroll of YHWH's Torah", *JBL* 113 (1994) 59-80.

²For the text and translation of Josephus' writings, I base myself on H. St. John THACKERAY, R. MARCUS, A. WIKGREN, and L. H. FELDMAN, *Josephus*, Cambridge, MA-London, 1926-1965 (AJ 8.315-420 is found in Vol. V, pp. 740-797, 9.1-45 in Vol. VI, pp. 2-27; in both segments the translation and notes are by Marcus).

³This study builds on may previous, detailed treatments of various Josephan passages dealing with the figure of Jehoshaphat, see: C. T. BEGG, Josephus' Account of the Early Divided Monarchy (AJ 8,212-420) (BETL 108), Leuven, 1993, 148-269 (on AJ 8,315-420); Filling in the Blanks: Josephus' Version of the Campaign of the Three Kings, 2 Kings 3, *HUCA* 64 (1994) 89-109 [on AJ 9,29-43]; Jehoshaphat at Mid-Career According to AJ 9,1-17 (forthcoming in RB).

Immediately thereafter, Kings presents its standard royal "framework notices" for Jehoshaphat (22,41-51)⁴; these incorporate, inter alia, reference to the king's failed maritime venture and his subsequent refusal of cooperation with Ahaziah of Judah (22,48-49). Jehoshaphat is once again "out of the picture" in 1Kgs 22,51-2Kgs 2,25, another Northern-centered section. The Judean (whose death has already been recorded in 1Kgs 22,50) then makes his final appearance in 2Kgs 3, now as confederate of Jehoram of Israel in the latter's invasion of rebel Moab.

The Chronicler- who, it will be recalled, systematically leaves aside Kings' material concerned solely with the Northern contemporaries of Jehoshaphat, i. e. 1Kgs 15,25-21,29; 2Kgs 1-2- develops his treatment of the king in quite different fashion. In particular, rather than scattering references to him over an extended segment, he brings together everything he has to relate concerning Jehoshaphat in a continuous sequence comprising four chapters, 2Chr 17-20 (+ 21,1). In addition, whereas in Kings Jehoshaphat has only a supporting, rather passive role in the two longer narratives in which he figures (1Kgs 22; 2Kgs 3), the Chronicler introduces as mass of Sondergut material wherein the Judean appears as the central character who, as such, undertakes a variety of initiatives. More specifically, the Chronicler's Jehoshaphat narrative unfolds as follows: To his parallel to the accession notice of 1Kgs 15,24b in 17,1a he appends a lengthy review of Jehoshaphat's successful, God-pleasing early reign, 17,1b-19, that is peculiar to himself. Thereupon, he relates, in parallel to 1Kgs 22, Jehoshaphat's participation in Ahab's attack on Syria, 2Chr 18,1-34. In Kings, as noted above, the framework notices for Jehoshaphat follow directly on the account of his alliance with Ahab. The Chronicler disrupts this sequence by inserting between its two components a extended segment (19,1-20,30), again without parallel in Kings, dealing with Jehoshaphat's rebuke by the prophet Jehu for his involvement with Ahab (19,1-3), the king's judicial initiatives (19,4-11) and triumph over an enemy host (20,1-30). Only then does he present his own framework notices for Jehoshaphat (20,31-21,1) with which his treatment of the king concludes⁵.

Turning now to Josephus' account of Jehoshaphat, one notes first of all that, as is his wont also elsewhere, the historian does not elect to follow one of the available Biblical sources to the exclusion of the other. Rather, he finds a place for (virtually) all of the material proper to both Kings (i. e. 2Kgs 3) and Chronicles (i. e. 2Chr 17,19-20) in his own presentation. How though does he do this? In general, it may be said that Josephus takes the Northern-centered account of Kings as a basis, incorporating the Chronicler's special material on Jehoshaphat into this at appropriate junctures. This will become clearer from a review of the sequence of the Josephan Jehoshaphat narrative to which I now turn.

Josephus notes the accession of Jehoshaphat in 8,315 in parallel to 1Kgs 15,24b and 2Chr 17,1a. He proceeds immediately to expand this reference with several items drawn from the concluding framework notices of 1Kgs 22,41-51 and 2Chr 20,31-21,1 for Jehoshaphat, i. e. the name of his mother (see 1Kgs 22,42b//2Chr 20,31) and a preliminary evaluation of him as a "good" king (see 1Kgs 22,43//2Chr 20,2, cf.

⁴In LXX the content of these notices occurs after 1Kgs 16,28 as 16,28^{a-h} (in B they recur in their MT position as well), see J. D. SHENKEL, *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Texts of Kings* (HSM 1), Cambridge, MA, 1968, 43-60.

⁵Recall that Chronicles has no parallel to the "displaced" narrative of 2Kgs 3 which centers on the Northern king J(eh)oram.

17,3-4). In thus "anticipating" elements that his sources cite only at the end of their respective treatments of Jehoshaphat, Josephus is, it might be noted, giving those elements their standard placement in both Biblical books, i. e. at the start of a king's reign rather than at its conclusion.

Having thus briefly "introduced" Jehoshaphat in 8,315, Josephus, in line with the sequence of Kings, straightaway drops him in order to relate the events of Ahab's reign in 8,316-392, his parallel to 1Kgs 16,29-21,29 (he has already rehearsed the reigns of the Northern kings Nadab-Omri, as recounted in 1Kgs 15,25-16,28 directly after his mention of Jehoshaphat's accession [15,24b], in 8,287-289, 298-313). In Kings the "Ahab bloc", 1Kgs 16,29-21,29⁶, is followed immediately by the account of the monarch's death in 22,1-40. Josephus interrupts this sequence in order to reintroduce Jehoshaphat who will figure in the events leading up to Ahab's demise at the opening of 8,393 with the words: "Such, then, was the condition of Achab. But I shall now return to Josaphat..." (compare the notice with which he [provisionally] takes leave of him at the end of 8,315 "But there is no great necessity to speak of this king just now")⁷. This "reintroduction" of Jehoshaphat in view of his role in the story of Ahab's death provides Josephus with an opening for adducing the Chronicler's Sondergut material on Jehoshaphat's auspicious beginnings (2Chr 17,1b-19) his version of which he presents in 8,393-397. This, in turn, is followed, in 8,398-420, by the narrative of Jehoshaphat's and Ahab's Syrian campaign with its fatal outcome for the latter which Josephus draws from 1Kgs 22,1-40//2Chr 18,1-34. As was noted above, Kings and Chronicles offer differing sequels to their stories of Ahab's end. In the former, the immediate continuation of 22,1-40 is the concluding notices for Jehoshaphat of 22,41-50, whereas the Chronicler precedes his version of these notices in 20,31-21,1 with an extended Sondergut segment featuring events of Jehoshaphat's later reign (19,1-20,30). In this instance, Josephus, with an eye to making maximal use of the data of both his sources, alings himself with the Chronicler's sequence, giving his version of 2Chr 19,1-20,30 in 9,1-17 directly after his narration of Ahab's death, 8,398-420. He rounds off the account of Jehoshaphat's later years he draws from Chronicles by appending, in 9,17, a reference to the Judean's dealing with Ahaziah of Israel and his unlucky maritime venture which he found- though with rather marked differences of content- among the concluding notices of both Kings (see 1Kgs 22,48-49) and Chronicles (2Chr 20,35-37). Here too then, one sees Josephus "anticipating" items from the sources' summation on Jehoshaphat. Throughout the segment 9,1-17 the focus is thus consistently on the Judean monarch. In what follows, Josephus will revert to the Northern-centered story line of Kings. Accordingly, at the end of 9,17 he once again (see the conclusion of 8,315) temporarily "sidelines" Jehoshaphat with his notice "Such, then was the state of affairs under Josaphat...". AJ 9,18-28 is the historian's parallel to 1Kgs 22,51-2Kgs 3,3 dealing with the reign of Ahaziah of Israel and the beginning of that of Jehoram. Here, as in 8,316-392, Jehoshaphat is nowhere mentioned. Continuing thereafter to follow the sequence of Kings, Josephus comes in 9,29-43 to retail the story of 2Kgs 3,4-27 concerning the joint expedition of Jehoram of Israel and Jehoshaphat against Moab (recall that Chronicles has no parallel to this account). That story ends

⁶As is well known, the MT sequence of 1Kgs 20 (Ahab's Syrian wars) and 21 (the incident of Naboth's vineyard) occurs in reverse order in LXX which Josephus (AJ 8,355-392) follows, see BEGG, Josephus' Account, 199.

⁷MARCUS, Josephus, V, 741, ad loc. takes the "this king" in the above expression at the end of 8,315 as referring to Jehoshaphat's father Asa. It seems, however, that the reference is rather to Jehoshaphat himself whose accession following his father's death was cited just previously at the start of 8,315. See further BEGG, Josephus' Account, 148-149, n. 968.

in 3,27 with mention of the allied kings returning "to their own land". Josephus cites this "return" as the "point of attachment" for his concluding remarks on Jehoshaphat who, he informs us in 9,44a, shortly after his arrival back in Jerusalem, died there after a twenty-five year reign. The historian derives the content of this item by combining elements of his sources' concluding notices for Jehoshaphat, i. e. the chronological indication from 1Kgs 22,42a//2Chr 29,31a about his length of reign and the reference to his death from 1Kgs 22,50a α //2Chr 21,1a α . In the sources, the latter item is followed by mention of Jehoshaphat's burial (22,50a β //21,1a β) and the accession of his son Jehoram (22,50b//21,1b). Josephus reproduces this sequence in 9,44b-45 at which point Jehoshaphat makes a definitive exit from his narration.

In looking back over Josephus' arrangement and integration of the "Jehoshaphat material" provided by the sources, one notes in particular how he freely oscillates between the sequence of Kings and that of Chronicles so as to incorporate all the available biblical data on this ruler. Also worthy of note is the way in which Josephus "redistributes" elements from the sources' bloc of concluding notices on Jehoshaphat over the course of his presentation. The following chart provides a summary overview of our survey of Josephus' treatment of his Biblical sources on Jehoshaphat.

A PORTRAIT RETOUCHE

In what precedes I examined how Josephus arranges the materials on Jehoshaphat he takes over from his sources. I now turn to a consideration of the contentual modifications introduced by the historian in his utilization of these materials. I limit myself to such modifications as bear directly on the Josephan portrayal of Jehoshaphat. In beginning this discussion I would note that both Kings and Chronicles depict Jehoshaphat as a basically good king who effects a (partial) reformation of Judah's cult. At the same time, they also portray him as engaging in dubious alliances with reprobate kings of the north and experiencing failure in a maritime enterprise, Chronicles making this "shadow side" of Jehoshaphat's reign more explicit. As might have been expected, Josephus presents a portrayal of Jehoshaphat which largely coheres with the Biblical one(s). On the other hand, his account does evidence a number of distinctive features to which I wish to call attention here. On such feature emerges already in Josephus's opening positive evaluation of the king in 8,315. Josephus found inspiration for this evaluation in the notices of 1Kgs 22,43//2Chr 20,32, see also 17,3-4. Whereas, however, the Bible speaks of righteous Jehoshaphat "walking in the ways of his father Asa", Josephus accentuates the former's status by calling him⁸ an "imitator" ($\mu\mu\eta\tau\eta\nu$) of the Bible's pre-eminent royal model, i. e. David himself, in his "courage and piety ($\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu$)". Elements of this opening formulation recur in several small-scale additions made by Josephus to the Biblical accounts. Thus, the Jehoshaphat-David parallelism introduced here is echoed in the historian's comment in 9,44 that Jehosha-

⁸ I am presuming here that the king of which Josephus is speaking in the second half of AJ 8,315 is Jehoshaphat, not his father Asa, see n. 7.

phat received a "magnificent" burial⁹ for he had, indeed been emulous (μμητης, same term as in 8,315) of the acts of David". Similarly, that "piety" which according to 8,315 Jehoshaphat shared with David is subsequently exemplified in the sacrifices which Josephus has the king offer on two crucial occasions where Chronicles, his source, does not mention this activity on his part as such, i. e. after Jehu's rebuke of him for his involvement with Ahab in 9,2 and upon his return to Jerusalem following the overthrow of the enemy coalition in 9,16¹⁰.

I noted above that, in both Kings and Chronicles, Jehoshaphat appears as one who purifies his nation's worship, albeit incompletely in that the "high places" continue to function during his reign (see 1Kgs 22,43b//2Chr 20,33, note, however, in 17,6 he is credited with removing the high places as well). Specifically, in 1Kgs 22,46 (no parallel in Chronicles) Jehoshaphat is said to "exterminate" the "remnant of the male cult prostitutes" who survived his father's purge of them (on this, see 1Kgs 15,12). Chronicles, for its part, credits Jehoshaphat with "not seeking the Baals" (17,4) and "taking away the Asherim" (as also the high places, 17,6), this last achievement being acknowledged by the prophet Jehu in the course of his rebuke to the king in 19,3b. All these "cultic particulars" disappear in Josephus' account which makes no mention of any of the above reprobate cultic entities enumerated by Kings and/or Chronicles. In place of such specifics, he substitutes highly generalized commendations of Jehoshaphat. In particular, whereas in 2Chr 17,3-6 the Lord's "favoring" of Jehoshaphat is motivated by the king's not consorting with the Baals (v. 4) and his removal of high places and Asherim (v. 6), Josephus (8,393) ascribes the divine support enjoyed by the king to his being "upright (δικαιος) and pious (εὐσεβης, i. e. the adjectival form of the noun used of Jehoshaphat in 8,315), and daily seeking to do something pleasing and acceptable to God". Again, in the historian's parallel to 19,3 (Jehu's qualification of his previous censure of the king in 9,1), mention of his elimination of the "Asherahs" gives way to the announcement that God will relent in view of Jehoshaphat's "good character" (φουσιν... ἀγαθην). This generalizing tendency with respect to the sources' cultic details accords with the historian's procedure also elsewhere. That procedure is, in turn, readily explicable in terms of Josephus' concern not to put off Gentile readers by subjecting them to the arcana of an alien religious system. Rather than have Jehoshaphat combatting cultic abuses whose import would elude non-Jews, Josephus credits the king with the standard Hellenistic virtues of "righteousness" and "piety"¹¹. In this connection I would note that the term "righteous" used of Jehoshaphat in 8,393 is twice more applied to him, i. e. in 9,33 and 35 (here in conjunction with the adjective δειος) while the binomial "righteousness and piety" (see 8,315) is employed of him again in 9,16.

Josephus likewise goes beyond the Bible in accentuating the efficacy of Jehoshaphat's initiatives among

⁹This qualification of Jehoshaphat's burial is itself a (positive) embellishment of the sources' simple notation (see 1Kgs 22,50aβ//2Chr 21,1aβ) about the king's being buried.

¹⁰Compare 2Chr 20,28 which speaks only of the victorious Judeans proceeding to the Temple with musical instruments in hand.

¹¹The same tendency can be observed in Josephus' treatment of the details of Asa's cultic reform as related in 2Chr 14,2-4a in AJ 8,290, see BEGG, Josephus' Account, 118, 127-128. On Josephus' "Hellenizing" of the Biblical heroes by attributing to them the key Greek virtues of "righteousness" and "piety", see L. H. FELDMAN, Use, Authority and Exegesis of Mikra in the Writings of Flavius Josephus, Mikra (CRINT 2,1; ed. M. J. MULDER - H. SYSLING), Assen-Philadelphia, 1988, 455-518, pp. 492-494.

his own people, as may be noted in two distinct contexts. 2Chr 17,7-9 recounts a "mission" charged with teaching the law dispatched by Jehoshaphat throughout his domains in his third regnal year, but says nothing about any popular response. Josephus fills this lacuna with the fulsome claim (8,385): "so much were all the people pleased with this that there was nothing for which they were so ambitious or so much loved as the observance of the laws"¹². A comparable case occurs in connection with Jehoshaphat's triumph over the invading coalition. 2Chr 20,20-21 records various directives issued by the king as his people advance towards the enemy, but makes no mention as such of how these were received. Once again, Josephus (9,13) takes care to note that Jehoshaphat's proposition elicited a positive response: "the king's plan met with their approval, and they did just as he counseled them". Jehoshaphat is not, however, only successful in bringing his own people to follow some course of action proposed by him. Somewhat in the same line, he is likewise represented by Josephus as evoking friendly feelings from foreign nations as well. Under this heading, I would point particularly to the contrast between 2Chr 17,10 and its parallel in 8,396. In the former text, the nations' remaining at peace with Jehoshaphat is attributed to the "fear of the Lord falling upon them", whereas in the latter it is linked rather with their "continuing to cherish" the king. Josephus' reformulation in this instance might be taken as reflective of his overarching concern to defuse Jewish-Gentile hostilities of which AJ gives much evidence also elsewhere¹³. Ultimately, however, too much should not be made of this modification given that in 9,16 Josephus does cite, in line with 2Chr 20,29 ("the fear of God came on all the kingdoms of the countries..."), the "terror" of Jehoshaphat which befell the nations when they heard of how God had overthrown the enemy coalition¹⁴.

So far, we have been considering instances where Jehoshaphat figures positively in both the Bible and Josephus, with the historian several times accentuating the favorable Biblical portrayal of him. There remains to consider, however, the matter of Jehoshaphat's questionable (and recurrent) associations with the reprobate Northern kings. How does Josephus deal with this element of his source accounts? Does his depiction of these involvements differ from the Biblical ones, and if so how?

In answering these questions, I would call attention to several features of the Josephan version of the relevant material. First of all, in portraying Jehoshaphat's interactions with his various Northern counterparts, Josephus appears to highlight the cordiality of the relationship. So, e. g., while 2Chr 18,3 states that Ahab "killed an abundance of sheep and oxen" for his Judean visitor and his entourage, Josephus (8,398) embellishes: "Achab gave him a friendly welcome... splendidly entertaining the army which had accompanied him, with an abundance of grain, wine and meat...". Similarly, in his parallel (8,399) to 1 Kgs 22,4//2Chr

¹²By means of this addition Josephus links Jehoshaphat with another of Judah's "good" rulers, i. e. Josiah of whom he states (AJ 10,64)- here too in an expansion of the Biblical record- that the people "eagerly assented" to the king's urging them to commit themselves to observing the Mosaic law. On the Josephan Josiah, see L. H. FELDMAN, *Josephus' Portrait of Josiah*, *Louvain Studies* 18 (1993) 110-130.

¹³On Josephus' concern to downplay Biblical portrayals of animosity between Jews and Gentiles and conversely to accentuate positive interactions between the two groups in AJ, see FELDMAN, *Mikra*, 495-496.

¹⁴Note that in 2Chr 20,29 it is "fear of God" which befalls the nations whereas Josephus represents them rather as "in terror" of Jehoshaphat himself. Josephus' avoidance of the above Biblical phrase is in line with his consistent tendency to reformulate or eliminate Scriptural references to "fear of God/the Lord", see A. SCHLATTER, *Die Theologie des Judentums nach dem Bericht des Josefus* (BFCT 2,26), Gütersloh, 1932, 155.

18,3 he interjects the note that Jehoshaphat responded to Ahab's proposition about joining his campaign against Syria by "willingly offering his aid". Subsequently (9,16), he states that Jehoshaphat "was also friendly (φίλος) with Achab's son " Ahaziah with whom he cooperates in a maritime venture (compare 2Chr 20,35 "...Jehoshaphat... joined with Ahaziah... who did wickedly").

Again, in 2Kgs 3,5 no reason is given as to why Jehoram approaches Jehoshaphat in particular as a potential ally in his projected war against Moab. Josephus (9,30) supplies such a motive, noting that the Israelite contacted Jehoshaphat "since from the first he had been his father's [i. e. Ahab's] friend" (φίλος, see 9,16). In this same context, he introduces (9,31) the "unbiblical" notice that Jehoshaphat, reciprocating Ahab's earlier reception of him in Samaria, "splendidly entertained" Jehoram in Jerusalem. Later, he prefaces the Judean's response to Jehoram's despairing exclamation over the expedition's lack of water (2Kgs 3,11) with reference to the former's "comforting" the latter (9,33), thereby underscoring the emotional bond between the two kings.

At the same time, Josephus also accentuates the status and initiative of Jehoshaphat in his dealings with the Northern rulers. Specifically, in his rewriting of both 1Kgs 22 (//2Chr 18) and 2Kgs 3, Jehoshaphat is shown functioning as an equal partner in the advance planning for upcoming campaigns rather than being merely dictated to by his Israelite counterpart. In 1Kgs 22,30//2Chr 18,29, e. g., Ahab simply "tells" Jehoshaphat what the two are to wear into battle. Josephus formulates his parallel (8,412) to this item: "Now Achab and Josaphat had agreed that...". Again, in 2Kgs 3,8b Jehoram, on his own, determines the Moab invasion route in response to Jehoshaphat's query on the subject. In Josephus (9,31) the matter is rather "decided by them" (Jehoshaphat and Jehoram) jointly. To be noted here too is the contrast between the soothing interjection with which the biblical Jehoshaphat (see 1Kgs 22,8b//2Chr 18,7b), i. e. "Let not the king say so" reacts to Ahab's complaint about Micaiah, and the more assertive Josephan figure who, knowing Ahab's feelings about the prophet, nevertheless "asked that he be produced" (8,403). Two other features to Josephus' retelling of the Biblical story of Jehoshaphat's involvement with Ahab might be noted here as well. First, the historian's version of the episode underscores the perceptiveness of the Judean king who "sees through" the assertions of Ahab's 400 prophets. In 1Kgs 22,7//2Chr 18,6 Jehoshaphat reacts to the 400 prophets' favorable predictions simply by asking for a second opinion. Josephus (8,402) informs us what prompted him to do this, i. e. "his seeing by their words that they were false prophets". Secondly, Josephus eliminates from 2Chr 18's battle scene an item which might convey an "unkingly" impression of Jehoshaphat, naming his "crying out" (v. 31aβ, no parallel in 1Kgs 22) in the face of the Syrian assault upon him¹⁵.

It may be said then that Josephus highlights Jehoshaphat's cordiality, equality, assertiveness, penetration and kingly standing vis-à-vis his Northern counterparts. On the other hand, it is not the case that Josephus correspondingly accentuates the wrongfulness of the king's entanglement with Israel. Rather, he seems to play down the censure which the Chronicler, in particular, attaches to Jehoshaphat's cooperation with the North. For one thing, he softens Jehu's statement to Jehoshaphat in 2Chr 19,2bβ "therefore wrath has gone out against you from the Lord". In his version (9,1) Jehu alludes merely to God's "being displeased at"

¹⁵ Having passed over this source element, Josephus also dispenses with the Chronicler's (double) appended notice on God's positive response to the king's cry (18,31b).

Jehoshaphat's alliance with Ahab, and then goes on to promise, as his Biblical counterpart does not, that God "would nevertheless... deliver him from his enemies"¹⁶. Even more striking is Josephus' handling of the incident of Jehoshaphat's failed maritime venture. Kings and Chronicles give a rather different account of this incident with Josephus (9,17) clearly aligning himself with the latter's version. Whereas, however, Chronicles already intimates the reprobate nature of Jehoshaphat's joining Ahaziah in a ship-building enterprise by qualifying the latter as "one who did wickedly" (2Chr 20,35), Josephus eliminates the negative characterization of Ahaziah with his "neutral" formulation ("Jehoshaphat) was also friendly with Achab's son" (see above). Thereafter, he drastically recasts the sequence of 2Chr 20,36-37 where the word of the prophet Eliezer about God's destroying the kings' ships is fulfilled. In Josephus, all reference to the prophet and his word disappears; the Judean vessels are destroyed simply "because of their great size", an event which renders Jehoshaphat "no longer keen about ships". Thus, in Josephus no blame as such attaches to Jehoshaphat for consorting with Ahaziah. Finally, in his version of 2Kgs 3, Josephus follows the Bible in dispensing with any explicit evaluation of Jehoshaphat's alliance with the wicked Jehoram of Israel¹⁷. On the contrary, he twice introduces the qualification of Jehoram's partner as "righteous" (9, 33, 35), the second time placing this accolade on the lips of Elisha who cites Jehoshaphat's being "a holy and righteous man" as the reason why he deigns to answer reprobate Jehoram¹⁸. In this instance, Josephus might readily have made Elisha the mouthpiece for a censure of Jehoshaphat's Northern associations comparable to that pronounced by Jehu in 2Chr 19,1-3 (// AJ 9,1). Not only, however, does he fail to make use of this opportunity, he actually has Elisha acknowledge the "righteousness" of Jehoshaphat who appears before him side by side with the evildoer Jehoram. Consistently then, Josephus seems to tone down the Chronicler's emphatically expressed disapproval of Jehoshaphat's involvement with Israel's kings.

In summary, while Josephus' portrait of Jehoshaphat remains basically faithful to the Biblical portrayals, he does introduce some noteworthy modifications of these. Jehoshaphat's cult reform activity, e. g., gives way to an image of him as a general paragon of such standard Hellenistic (kingly) virtues as "piety" and "righteousness". In the interests of maintaining that image, moreover, Josephus repeatedly glosses over the problem of Jehoshaphat's Israelite connection¹⁹, even while accentuating the king's status as the North's willing and equal partner in both military and commercial enterprises. His Jehoshaphat thus ends up then as far more a model king- if less a believable one- than the Bible's highly ambiguous figure.

¹⁶With this interjected promise Josephus looks ahead to God's overthrow of the enemy coalition as narrated in 2Chr 20.

¹⁷Jehoram himself is explicitly qualified as a "bad" king both by 2Kgs 3,2 and by Josephus, see AJ 9,27. On this king in Josephus, see L. H. FELDMAN, Josephus' Portrait of Jehoram, King of Israel, BJRL 76 (1994) 3-20.

¹⁸Compare 2Kgs 3,14 where the reason for Elisha's "regard" for Jehoshaphat is left unexplained.

¹⁹Josephus' presentation of the end of Jehoshaphat's father Asa represents a similar case. In both Kings (see 1Kgs 15,23b) and Chronicles (2Chr 16,7-12) Asa's reign winds up on a negative note with the king falling victim to a foot disease, Chronicles embellishing this item with mention of the aged king's mistreatment of the prophet Hanani and other persons. In AJ 8,314 this material is simply passed over in favor of the following statement: (Asa) "because of his piety and righteousness was brought by God to a long and blessed old age and, after a reign of forty-one years, died in a happy state". Josephus' "suppression" of the above Biblical notices seems motivated by his interest in developing a sharp contrast between the behaviors and respective fates of the contemporary Northern and Southern kings, see further BEGG, Josephus' Account, 149-150.

APPENDIX

By way of appendix to the foregoing, a brief comment on the Rabbinic traditions concerning Jehoshaphat is in order. Overall, it may be said that the Rabbis do not give sustained attention to this king (his reprobate contemporary Ahab receives much more comment). The scattered Rabbinic dicta concerning him do however, for the most part, evidence the same tendency towards a positive accentuation of the figure we have observed in Josephus' portrait of him²⁰. It is, first of all, of interest to note that the Rabbis apply the same accolade, i. e. "righteous" to Jehoshaphat as does Josephus, see Gen. Rab. 97²¹; Lev. Rab 30.3 (Jehoshaphat was among the "righteous" kings whom David foresaw would descend from him); Seder Elijah Rabbah # 3 (14) (the "strength and glory" given "righteous" Jehoshaphat by God foreshadow conditions of the Messianic age). One key component of Jehoshaphat's "righteousness" in Rabbinic tradition is his humility. That humility was displayed, e. g., in the king's rising from his seat in the presence of scholars whom he would then embrace and address as "teacher" and "master". Such behavior rendered Jehoshaphat worthy of having the words of Ps 15,4 ("he who honors those who fear the Lord") applied to him, see Midr. Teh. 15.6²². The king showed a like humility in leaving aside his royal vesture when approaching Elisha during the advance against Moab (see 2Kgs 3,12) as Num. Rab. 19.6 states²³. Josephus' righteousness is also evident in his concern to provide his people with just judges. Inspired by the account of 2Chr 19,5-11 on the matter, the Rabbis represent Jehoshaphat as the one envisaged by the saying of Prov 29,14 ("the king by justice establishes the land"), see Exod. Rab. 30.13. Similarly, Exod. Rab. 30.24 evoking Ps 3,9 ("deliverance belongs to the Lord") states that the Lord activates his deliverance for those who "do justice". It then goes on to apply this axiom to the case of Jehoshaphat who "appointed judges" (2Chr 19,5) and was rewarded with divine assistance against the enemy coalition (see 2Chr 19,15)²⁴. Another indication of Jehoshaphat's righteousness highlighted by Rabbinic tradition (see Midr. Teh. 4.3; y. Ber. 9.13b) is the fact that even in seemingly hopeless circumstances, i. e. during the assault of the Syrian forces upon him, he did not fail to invoke God (see 2Chr 18,31; recall that Josephus leaves this item aside). Also suggestive of Jehoshaphat's status as a righteous king is the Rabbinic affirmation that the food brought Elijah by the ravens at God's command came from his table (rather than from Ahab's), see Gen. Rab. 23.5; Lev. Rab.

²⁰For an overview of post-Biblical Jewish traditions concerning Jehoshaphat, see L. GINZBERG, *Legends of the Jews* IV, Philadelphia 1928, 185-186; VI, 309-310, nn. 25-30.

²¹This text adduces 1Kgs 22,43 ("Jehoshaphat did what was right in the sight of the Lord") in support of its designation of Jehoshaphat as a "righteous" man.

²²The same tradition about Jehoshaphat's treatment of scholars is cited in b. Mak. 24a and b. Ketub. 103b. This Rabbinic emphasis on Jehoshaphat's humility lacks a counterpart as such in either the Biblical or the Josephan portrayals of the king.

²³The above statement of Num. Rab. is made in the context of its discussion as to why whereas 2Kgs 3,12 speaks of the kings of Israel and Edom it does not use Jehoshaphat's title but simply calls him by name. The Midrash's response is that the wording of the Biblical verse intends to point up the humility of the Judean who doffed his royal robes to appear before the prophet.

²⁴On Jehoshaphat's concern with providing Judah with just judges, see further Tanh. (B) on Deut 16,8 (Šophetim 2).

19.1; Num. Rab. 23,9²⁵.

On the other hand, the Rabbis do not downplay the problem of Jehoshaphat's involvement with wicked Northern kings as we have seen Josephus do. In Num. Rab. 19.6, e. g., an alternative explanation is given as to why Jehoshaphat is not designated as "king of Judah" in 2Kgs 3,12 (see n. 23). According to this latter explanation, the original divine decree had been that Jehoshaphat would perish along with his reprobate Northern confederate Ahab. In view of that decree Scripture (in 2Kgs 3,12) avoids use the title "king" of Jehoshaphat, reckoning the years of his reign from the time of the Ramoth-Gilead battle as pertaining to that of his son (Joram). Even more emphatic in its negative stance towards Jehoshaphat is 'Abot R. Nat. 9.4. Here, the king's alliance with Ahab and Ahaziah and their unhappy results for himself are held up as a warning against associating with evil, wicked men. Similarly, Seder Elijah Zuta # 3 (177) cites Jehoshaphat's marrying of his son Joram to Athaliah who subsequently would virtually exterminate the Judean royal house to illustrate the dangers of marrying for the sake of social status (the text avers that Jehoshaphat was so impressed by the seventy sons 2Kgs 10,1 ascribes to Ahab that he imagined the latter would inherit the world and so became desirous of uniting his dynasty with the Israelite one through marriage). Likewise to be noted in this connection is Seder Elijah Rabbah # (15) 16 (77) which adduces the disastrous end of the joint Israelite-Judean maritime venture in exemplifying the principle that when a sinner's (in casu Ahaziah) house collapses so do the walls it happens to share with the houses of non-sinners (in casu Jehoshaphat). As a final indication of the Rabbis' unease regarding Jehoshaphat's entanglements with the Northern kings, one might also note the extended discussion in b. Hul. 4b-5a about Jehoshaphat's eating of the meat slaughtered by the idolator Ahab (see 2Chr 18,2) in the course of which a variety of hypothetical suggestions are advanced that would serve to exculpate the king's problematic action (e. g., the beasts could have been slaughtered by the god-fearing Northerner, Obadiah, see 1Kgs 18,4)²⁶.

In sum, Rabbinic tradition shows itself alert to both the positive and negative midrashic potential of the figure of Jehoshaphat, though giving more currency to the latter than does Josephus.

²⁵Also suggestive of the Rabbis' positive view of Jehoshaphat is their attributing to him one of the nine songs sung by Israel to God over the course of its history, i. e. that cited in 2Chr 20,21 (see Mek. on Exod 15,1 [Shirata 1.63ff.]) and a measure regulating access to the Temple by unclean persons (see b. Yeb. 7b).

²⁶Compare Pesiq. Rab. Kah. 26.1 where the term *zhh* of 2Chr 18,2 is understood as designating the "sacrifice" which Ahab (who had previously done away with sacrificing to the Lord) offered "for the sake of" Jehoshaphat, albeit without the requisite internal dispositions.