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ON THE HEBREW OF DANIEL

In his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*,¹ Dr. Driver gives a list of twenty-five words and usages to show that the Hebrew of Daniel is "of the age subsequent to Nehemiah." As No. 16 in this list he cites the use of the verb *'āmadh* "to stand up" and its derivatives and forms. The statement reads as follows:

עמד *to stand up* [is used by Daniel], where the earlier languages would use קום, viii. 22, 23, xi. 2-4, 20f., 31, xii. 1a, (probably also xii. 13), as Ezra ii. 63, Eccl. iv. 15 (contrast Ex. i. 8), 1 Chron. xx. 4 (contrast Ps. xxvii. 3): with על *against* viii. 25, xi. 14, as 1 Chron. xxi. 1, 2 Chron. xx. 23, xxvi. 18 (contrast Dt. xxii. 26): in the sense of *to be established* xi. 17b (contrast Is. vii. 7). Cf. Sir. xlvi. 1, 12.

No. 14 refers to the use of *'ōmedh*, "place" or "standing." It reads thus:

(עמדי) על עמדי lit. *on my (thy) standing* viii. 18 (cf. vs. 17) x. 11, Neh. viii. 7, ix. 3, xiii. 11, 2 Chron. xxx. 16, xxxiv. 31, xxxv. 10.

No. 21 deals with the use of this verb in the Hiphil stem:

יעמיד xi. 11, 13, 14, not literally *to station*, as in the earlier books, but in the weakened sense, *appoint, establish*: see p. 535, No. 4.

Turning to the treatment of Chronicles, referred to at the end of No. 21, we find this additional statement:

יעמיד metaph. *to establish, appoint* (a weakened sense: in earlier books lit. *to station*): 1 [Chron.] vi. 16 [A.V. 31], xv. 16, 17, xvi. 17 (= Ps. cv. 10), xvii. 14, xxii. 2, 2 [Chron.] viii. 14, ix. 8, xi. 15, 22, xix. 5, 8, xx. 21, xxiv. 13 (cf. Ezr. ii. 68), xxv. 5, 14, xxx. 5, xxxi. 2, xxxiii. 8, [2 Ki. נתתי], xxxv. 2, Ezr. iii. 8, Neh. iv. 3, vi. 7, vii. 3, x. 33, xii. 31, xiii. 11, 30, Dan. xi. 11, 13, 14. Cf. Ps. cvii. 25 (Also 2 [Chron.] xxxiv. 32 used specially. In 2 [Chron.] xxiii. 10, 19, xxix. 25, xxxiii. 19, Ezr. iii. 10, Neh. iv. 7, xiii. 19 the lit. sense is more prominent: in Neh. iii. iff., vi. 1, vii. 1,

¹ Pp. 506f. This volume will be referred to by the familiar abbreviation LOT.

THE DAVIDIC DYNASTY*

That sense of solidarity which all families have to some degree is nowhere else so strong as in families which possess hereditary sovereignty. In them from generation to generation runs the current of a common heritage, a common pride, a common interest. They are bound together into a unity which is symbolized by their family name, or by their geographical designation, or by their patronymic—the name of their real or fancied founder. So we speak of the House of Stuart, the House of Savoy, the Merovingians, the Achæmenidae.

The House of David is such a unit. To call this unit a *house* is peculiarly agreeable with the Semitic manner of speech and with the social organization of the Hebrew people. The largest unit in Israel was of course the *tribe*—one of those twelve groups which traced their descent from the twelve sons of Jacob. Next in order of size came the unit called in Hebrew by terms for which our English Version has no more satisfactory rendering than *family*, but which correspond more nearly to *clan* or *sept*. Finally there was the *house*, or, more fully and properly, *father's house* or *household*. The lines between these various sorts of units were not hard and fast, but were drawn according as social and genealogical circumstances indicated. Some *families* held together and others dissolved. Some *houses* died out, while others increased to a great size because for many generations all who were sprung from some eminent man continued to call themselves, individually his *sons*, collectively his *house*.

It is only natural that such cohesion and expansion should be notably true of the house of so eminent a person as David. David's house is first referred to, by anticipation—that is, before it began to exist—when Jonathan in his covenant of

* The substance of this article was delivered in Miller Chapel, October 10, 1921, as the first of five lectures on "The House of David," constituting the Stone Lectures for the year 1921-2.

friendship with David expressly extended it to include their respective *houses*.¹ And a thousand years later we find it still a living phrase, when we read from the careful pen of Luke that for the enrollment under Augustus Joseph of Nazareth betook himself to Bethlehem "because he was of the house and family of David."² All through the millennium that intervened, so far as we have documents preserved to us, this House of David is spoken of and addressed as a real unit and entity in Israel.

David himself was of course reckoned as belonging to the *house* of Jesse, his father. And for one reason or another this old designation was occasionally revived in later times as a name for the descendants of David, though we find it used only in figurative form.³

David alludes to the *family* to which he belongs, and when his absence from the royal table occasions remark, Jonathan tells Saul that David's family have a sacrifice at Bethlehem to which he has been summoned to meet with his "brethren."⁴ It is possible that this entire family, out of which, though comparatively small,⁵ sprang the ruling dynasty of Israel, came in time to call itself the House of David, although many of its ancestors were only cousins or more distant kinsmen of the famous king.

Had the House of David no other claim to fame than that Jesus Christ belonged to it, this alone would render it interesting and important, not only to every Christian but to every student of history. For, blazoned on the front page of the Gospel of Matthew—the first verse of the first chapter of the New Testament—is Christ's lineage from King David: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David."⁶ Then when we turn from the first of the Gospels to the first

¹ 1 Sam. xx. 16.

² Luke ii. 4.

³ See Is. xi. 1, 10, Rom. xv. 12.

⁴ 1 Sam. xx. 6, 29.

⁵ Mic. v. 2, where "thousands" should be rendered "families" as in the margin, and as in Judg. vi. 15, an instructive parallel.

⁶ Matt. i. 1.

of the Epistles, we discover that Romans—that orderly doctrinal and practical exposition of the Christian religion—begins with the declaration that the personal Subject of Paul's system was One “born of the seed of David according to the flesh.”⁷ And in the Book of Acts likewise, the first Christian sermon it records—that preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost—declares the risen, saving Christ to be One whose recent triumph over death David had foreseen, when he believed God's promise that “of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne.”⁸

Thus the Davidic origin of Jesus Christ is the starting-point alike of Gospels, Acts and Epistles. But it also remains the theme of the New Testament down to its close. In Paul's farewell word, when he is about to leave his leadership in the Church to others, he charges Timothy thus: “Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel.”⁹ And the final message to the Church from the exalted Christ in John's Apocalypse seems consciously intended to link the end of the New Testament to its beginning, for we hear this Christ saying “I am the root and the offspring of David.”¹⁰

It is true, the House of David cannot be justly estimated in history otherwise than as a unit. Its goal and culmination in Christ ought to be borne in mind throughout its career from David onwards. Nevertheless, apart from the Person of Jesus of Nazareth, it has a history of its own which is worthy of all attention. And for purposes of study it is convenient to analyze its history into successive phases. Each of these phases has an importance and interest of its own.

For our major divisions of this long story we may draw the lines at the Exile and the Birth of Christ. From David to Jehoiachin is the dynastic phase: twenty-one kings reign in succession for about four and a half centuries. From Je-

⁷ Rom. i. 3.

⁸ Acts ii. 30.

⁹ 2 Tim. ii. 8.

¹⁰ Rev. xxii. 16.

hoiachin's death till the birth of Jesus is the phase of obscurity: through more than five and a half centuries the members of the House of David, themselves in private and even humble station, wait for the fulfilment of God's promise, cherishing the assurance of an eternal and universal dominion for their house. And finally, with the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, "the city of David," begins the third and final phase of the story, for as the New Testament points out, it is in Him that all the hopes of His fathers and the promises through the prophets are fulfilled.

Our acquaintance with these three phases of the history of the House of David is of course very unequal. The second of them is veiled for the most part in obscurity: save for Zerubbabel at the beginning and Joseph and Mary at the end, we have only a list of names. The first and third phases, on the other hand, lie in the full light of history. And as these correspond roughly to the Old Testament and the New Testament respectively, we may think of them as the Old Testament phase and the New Testament phase of the House of David. The historian's first concern therefore is naturally with the career of David's dynasty as it is told in the Old Testament books.

Of this dynastic phase the divisions may best be marked as follows: (1) a period of dominion over all Israel, lasting about 73 years;¹¹ (2) a period of dominion over the southern or minority group of tribes—consisting chiefly of Judah—lasting about three and a half centuries; and (3) a period of royal status without actual dominion, lasting a little over 25 years.¹² Inasmuch as the second of these periods is dis-

¹¹ Or, if the accession of David be dated from his coronation at Hebron, 2 Sam. v. 3-5 (comp. 1 Kings ii. 11), this period will number 80 years, unless (1) either of these 40-year reigns, or both of them, be regarded as given in round numbers, or (2) the time between Solomon's coronation and David's death, 1 Kings i. 39, ii. 10, be reckoned at a year or more and be counted as a part of both reigns.

¹² How much more there is no means of determining. The 25 years are from 587 B.C., when Zedekiah lost his throne, till 562 B.C., when Evil-Merodach succeeded Nebuchadnezzar. The phrase "all the days of

proportionately long, it may conveniently be further subdivided into three sections: (a) from the revolt of Jeroboam to the assassination of Ahaziah by Jehu—about 88 years;¹³ (b) from the death of Ahaziah to the fall of Samaria—120 years; and (c) from the fall of Samaria to the fall of Jerusalem—135 years.¹⁴ Apart from the intrinsic importance of the events which mark the beginning and end of these subdivisions, there is an advantage in thus analyzing the course of Hebrew dynastic history arising from our certainty as to the dates of these particular events. By comparison of the Biblical data with extra-Biblical data chronology has been able to establish the year of these cardinal points in the story. There remains uncertainty only as to the beginning of the first sub-period and as to the relative adjustment of some of the reigns within the sub-period to which they respectively belong.

Viewed as an historical unit, the dynasty of David presents some remarkable features, which have hardly been sufficiently remarked by most historians. Comparison between such Biblical facts and facts of a similar sort which furnish the substance of "profane history" was long hindered by the prevailing distinction between "sacred" and "profane" historiography. For a variety of reasons the general historian of antiquity has often passed over the history of Judah with brief and rather casual notice. The Old Testament specialist, on the other hand, has paid too little attention to parallel phenomena in the careers of other states for purposes of comparison. Unfortunately recent efforts of historical criti-

his life," in which the antecedent of "his" is not clear, might mean a considerable period if the reference is to Jehoiachin's life, for he was barely 55 years of age at the time; if the reference is to the King of Babylon, on the other hand, the period must be short, as he was dethroned and killed after two years only. In any case it is hard to believe that the usurper did not reverse his predecessor's acts in this matter as well as in others, so that it remains unlikely that this last shadow of recognized Jewish kingship outlasted the year 560 B.C.

¹³ The latter date must be 842 B.C., the former may be fixed only approximately at 930 or a year or two earlier.

¹⁴ That is, from 722 to 587 B.C.

cism to remedy this error have led to the opposite extreme. In the name of scientific method it has not hesitated to alter or reject many of the Biblical data on which alone a sound comparison can be based, although the amazing progress of archaeology has of late tended to check this skeptical tendency and to rehabilitate the Old Testament as a source-book of ancient history. It is at the present time by no means a work of supererogation to devote to the dynasty of the Davidic kings such attention as we should give to the Stuarts, for example, or to the Bourbons, regarded simply as a series of sovereigns differing in certain definite ways from any other such series. And of course the most instructive comparison for these Davidides is afforded us within the Old Testament itself, by the character and career of those kings who were their contemporaries, the rulers of Northern Israel during two centuries of the time when David's line was ruling at Jerusalem.

In the first place, few historians seem to have remarked the fact that the descendants of David occupied the throne of Judah for a longer term than any other dynasty has uninterruptedly held any throne, ancient or modern, with few exceptions. While there is uncertainty as to the precise year when David became a king,¹⁵ it was certainly much more than four centuries earlier than the date when Zedekiah, the last of his sons to reign in Jerusalem, abandoned his capital in flight from the army of Nebuchadnezzar. And if we include the lifetime of that unfortunate predecessor of Zedekiah, Jehoiachin, whom Nebuchadnezzar's successor publicly recognized as king of the Jews even while a captive at Babylon, we have a span of about four hundred and fifty years between David's coronation at Hebron and that ultimate date for recognized Jewish royalty with which the Second Book of Kings closes.

Now what other royal houses have reigned as long?¹⁶ The

¹⁵ Not later than 1000 B.C., and probably ten or twelve years before the close of the eleventh century.

¹⁶ The Far East has been disregarded in this comparison.

average term of an Egyptian dynasty was little more than a century. That of a Babylonian or Assyrian dynasty was often still less. In Israel, Judah's sister state, only two families succeeded in seating more than two of their members on the throne. These two were the houses of Omri and Jehu. But the Northern Kingdom was ruled less than a century and a half by these two houses taken together. It is notorious how brief has been the career of those dynasties which the world's greatest conquerors have set up—the Alexanders, the Caesars, and the Napoleons. And even among the houses which began more modestly and held longer the gains that came to them more gradually, where is there a record of persistence to equal that of David's house? Perhaps the Hapsburgs, whose fall was but yesterday? Hapsburgs were elected Emperors before there were kings of their line,¹⁷ but this imperial crown did not remain theirs uninterruptedly, and when they fell they had been of regal rank less than four centuries. The Hohenzollerns of Prussia, who boasted of their ancient lineage, reached kingly grade only in 1701. The royal house of Italy did not become royal till 1713, and the Romanoffs obtained the crown but a century earlier. Among English dynasties the Plantagenets, with 331 years to their credit, were by far the most enduring. In France the Capetians lasted just ten years longer than the Plantagenets, while none of the other French houses reached even to three centuries.

With these comparisons in mind it is not too much to say of the dynasty of David that it would deserve eminence in history simply for its persistence, even if it had been otherwise undistinguished. But the same incomparable prestige which secured its long lease of continuous sovereignty gave it also a singularly undisputed sway. Save for the attempt by Athaliah—herself an alien, a daughter of Phoenician Jezebel—to exterminate every vestige of her own offspring,¹⁸

¹⁷ Rudolf of Hapsburg was a simple Count.

¹⁸ 2 Kings viii. 18, 26; xi. 1.

so that she might hold the throne alone, there was never a move from within Judah to put an end to David's line. Even when foreign conquerors, like Necho and Nebuchadnezzar, found it expedient to make a change of rulers in Jerusalem, they simply substituted one scion of David's stock for another.¹⁹ Whenever a king was violently removed by domestic conspiracy, it was his son, the heir-apparent, whom the people chose to succeed him.²⁰

The only time when anyone seems seriously to have contemplated setting on the Jewish throne one who was not a Davidic prince, was the occasion when the confederate kings, Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Syria, in the days of Ahaz and Isaiah, planned to put a certain "Ben-Tabeel" in Ahaz' place.²¹ "The son of Tabeel"—does it not seem probable that this person, not otherwise designated than thus by his father's name, is so termed ironically, because the one thing most astonishing and incredible to everyone's mind was that *the son* of anybody but David should even be proposed as king in Jerusalem?²² This one futile challenge of David's permanent tenure, in the course of those long centuries, simply tends therefore to emphasize the unique quality of David's hold upon the throne through the house that sprang from him.

There were twenty-one kings in the long line. And it is hardly less remarkable that, with but a single exception, the crown passed from father to son, in regular order and seemingly without question as to preferences among the royal princes. The confused political conditions after the tragic death of Josiah are solely responsible for the successive elevation to the throne, first, of one of his sons, next, of a second son, then, of a grandson (son of the man he succeeded),

¹⁹ 2 Kings xxiii. 34; xxiv. 17.

²⁰ 2 Kings xi. 12; xii. 20, 21; xiv. 21; xxi. 24; perhaps xxiv. 6 (see Jer. xxii. 19; xxxvi. 30).

²¹ 2 Kings xvi. 5; Is. vii. 6.

²² One feels the same irony in the expression "son of Jesse" so often used of David by Saul and others who had occasion to treat him as an upstart, *e.g.*, 1 Sam. xx. 27, 30, 31; 2 Sam. xx. 1; and even 1 Kings xii. 16.

and finally, of a third son of Josiah.²³ All these four accessions occurred within twelve years, and the only two of them that represent a departure from the father-to-son principle were at the dictation of foreign conquerors.

A kindred fact in the history of the Davidic dynasty is the frequent—it is not too much to say, the habitual—association of the heir-apparent with the reigning king as his co-regent during his later years. Expressly stated in the historical texts in several cases, it has become known to us in other cases through the comparison of chronological data, and now and then it has served to explain things otherwise obscure or has fitted well with facts recently revealed by archaeology. There were in all twenty transfers of the sceptre from one hand to another. The circumstances attending the first of these transfers are better known than those of any later time.²⁴ Solomon was not merely publicly designated as David's successor, but actually anointed, proclaimed, and enthroned as King of Israel, at the command of his aged father at a time when he was enfeebled and incapacitated for royal duties. Although this coronation was brought about by the ambition of Adonijah and his party at court, nevertheless it actually set a precedent for the family and it need occasion no surprise to see how often it was followed later.

The Books of Kings as well as of Chronicles preserve the tradition of Asa's severe illness through some disease of the feet in his last years,²⁵ but only in the Greek text of Kings is found this synchronism: first year of Jehoshaphat equals eleventh of Omri, which proves that Jehoshaphat became co-regent with Asa his father during those years of his incapacitation.²⁶ Jehoshaphat's son Joram suffered from a loathsome sickness for the last two years of his reign,²⁷ and Ahaziah, the only son remaining alive to him after a disas-

²³ 2 Kings xxiii. 30, 34; xxiv. 6, 17.

²⁴ 1 Kings i. 5-53.

²⁵ 1 Kings xv. 23; 2 Chr. xvi. 12.

²⁶ 1 Kings xvi. 28, 29.

²⁷ 2 Chr. xxi. 18, 19.

trous raid by Philistines and Arabians,²⁸ was associated in the sovereignty during at least a part of that time.²⁹ But even without the element of illness entering into the case, so far as we are informed, Joram himself had shared the throne with his father Jehoshaphat for five years.³⁰ So much for the first sub-period.

In the second sub-period, illness³¹ accounts for the joint reign of Joash and Amaziah his son.³² On the other hand, it may have been the military disasters of Amaziah, and that domestic opposition which culminated in his flight to Lachish and assassination there, that occasioned the association of his son Uzziah (Azariah) with him.³³ But it is sickness again that explains the joint reign of Uzziah and Jotham.³⁴ Not only does all, or nearly all, of Jotham's sixteen-year reign belong within the term of Uzziah's fifty-two-year reign, but, on account of the absolute removal of the old leprous king from all exercise of sovereignty, Jotham himself apparently felt the need of introducing his son Ahaz to the kingship after the prevailing fashion. Thus Judah may actually have had three kings alive at the same time, father, son, and grandson. Some think that there is ground for the belief that Ahaz and Hezekiah also reigned jointly during a brief period before the death of Ahaz, though the figures connected with the ages and accessions of these two kings are not wholly reconcilable in the form in which they have been transmitted to us in the manuscripts.

During the third sub-period it does not appear that the same custom prevailed, although it should be observed that Manasseh is the only king thenceforward whose reign did

²⁸ 2 Chr. xxi. 16, 17.

²⁹ 2 Kings ix. 29, compared with viii. 25.

³⁰ Evident from a comparison of 2 Kings viii. 16 with i. 17 and iii. 1. The peculiar language of viii. 16 should be noted also.

³¹ 2 Chr. xxiv. 25.

³² 2 Kings xiv. 1, compared with xii. 1 and xiii. 10.

³³ 2 Kings xiv. 19, which probably covers some time; comp. the peculiar expression "the king" in ver. 22.

³⁴ 2 Kings xv. 5.

not come to a violent, early and unexpected end.³⁵ Amon died by a conspiracy, at the age of twenty-four, after but two years' reign.³⁶ Josiah was killed in battle, still a comparatively young man.³⁷ Jehoahaz, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah were all deposed and deported.³⁸ Jehoiakim's end is obscure, but he seems to have perished in some commotion and certainly untimely.³⁹ Not one of these kings lived to reach the age of forty. It is not surprising, therefore, that we read of no co-reigns in this sub-period.

Another significant fact seldom noted by historians is the care with which this royal house maintained the purity of its Jewish blood; and alongside of this should be mentioned the pains taken by the national recorders to emphasize that fact. The prophetic author of the Books of Kings reproaches Solomon for his marriages with foreign women, the princesses of neighboring courts.⁴⁰ Those reproaches take on new meaning when we observe that Solomon was the only king of all the Davidic line—so far as we know—who married outside of Israel. And Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, king of Israel, who became the wife of Joram and the mother of Ahaziah, kings of Judah, is apparently the sole exception, after Solomon's time, to the rule that the queen, the mother of future kings of David's line, must be, not merely a Hebrew woman, but a member of the tribe of Judah. The unhappy outcome of Joram's (or rather, his father Jehoshaphat's) experiment seems to have sufficed to impress for all time, even upon royal caprice and political match-making, the lesson of the Law's commands⁴¹ and of the prophets' warnings. There were no more foreign marriages, even with Northern Israel. We are expressly told the names of the queen-mothers in each reign, with but two exceptions, viz.,

³⁵ 2 Kings xxi. 18.

³⁶ 2 Kings xxi. 19, 23.

³⁷ 2 Kings xxii. 1; xxiii. 29.

³⁸ 2 Kings xxiii. 33, 34; xxiv. 15; xxv. 7.

³⁹ See Jer. xxii. 19; xxxvi. 30.

⁴⁰ 1 Kings xi. 1-11.

⁴¹ Ex. xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3.

Joram and Ahaz. Even when the name of her father and her native town is not given—and such omission is the exception—the queen's own name of itself testifies to her Hebrew origin.

In this matter we cannot but be impressed by the contrast between the kings of Judah and the kings of Israel. To be sure we do not know certainly that any of these latter contracted marriage alliances outside of Israel, save in the case of Ahab, who married Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Sidonians.⁴² But the fact is, we do not know the identity of any other queens in Israel than Jezebel. It is surely no mere chance that this item of information, so conspicuous and regular in the record of each Davidic reign, is uniformly omitted in the record of the Northern kings.

Again, a variety of facts bears witness to the special care taken to perpetuate the line of David. The heroic defiance by Jehosheba of her murderous mother (step-mother?) Athaliah, in order to rescue one infant son of her brother Ahaziah that the line of David might not be totally exterminated, is one such fact.⁴³ With that infant Joash, sole survivor of his grandmother's massacre, the dynasty reached its narrowest escape from extinction. And the statement that "Jehoiada took for him (i.e., Joash) two wives"⁴⁴ suggests anxiety to replenish the seed of this menaced house as quickly as possible; and in fact, if the figures transmitted to us are correct, Amaziah, the son and successor of Joash, was born in the fourteenth or fifteenth year of Joash's age,—an extraordinary but not an unparalleled occurrence.

Another indication is the excessive grief of Hezekiah at his sickness.⁴⁵ Can it not be understood better—as also the prophetic message and sign connected with it—if we suppose that it was enhanced by the failure of royal issue up to that time, even though there were collateral branches of the

⁴² 1 Kings xvi. 31.

⁴³ 2 Kings xi. 2.

⁴⁴ 2 Chr. xxiv. 3.

⁴⁵ 2 Kings xx. 2, 3; Is. xxxviii. 2, 3.

Davidic house? Manasseh's birth seems to have been subsequent to Hezekiah's recovery from that sickness.⁴⁶

A still later crisis in the dynasty seems to be sufficient to account for the mention of "wives" of King Jehoiachin when he was but eighteen years of age,⁴⁷ and Jeremiah speaks of his "seed" in a prophecy uttered at that time.⁴⁸

Furthermore, the cruel and barbarous custom, prevalent in some lands of antiquity, of killing off all the sons of the late king as soon as the new king has seized the power—or even before his accession, in order to assure but a single claimant—was never practised in Judah, so far as we know, save once. And this one exception, when Joram murdered all his brothers,⁴⁹ may doubtless be traced to the influence of Athaliah, his alien queen—the very one who as queen-mother was later to exterminate all Joram's offspring in order to maintain her own regency.⁵⁰ The abhorrence with which this fratricide was regarded in the land is reflected in the narrative, in which those six younger brothers of Joram are named and are declared to have been "better men than the king."⁵¹ The same horror shows itself in the allusions to that other barbarous custom which menaced the royal dynasty whenever it fell into Canaanitish idolatry—the custom of "making one's sons to pass through the fire." Of all the kings of David's line the only two who were guilty of this crime in the name of religion were Ahaz and Manasseh,⁵² and these were just the two men most alien to the national spirit.

There now remains one more phenomenon exhibiting the uniqueness of this dynasty and deserving to be put beside the other considerations already noted. It is, the unchangeableness of the Davidic capital. As long as Jerusalem stood, so long it remained the seat of this line of kings.

⁴⁶ 2 Kings xxi. 1, compared with xx. 6; see also Is. xxxviii. 19.

⁴⁷ 2 Kings xxiv. 15; comp. ver. 8.

⁴⁸ Jer. xxii. 28.

⁵¹ 2 Chr. xxi. 13.

⁴⁹ 2 Chr. xxi. 4.

⁵² 2 Kings xvi. 3; xxi. 6.

⁵⁰ 2 Kings xi. 1.

If Jerusalem had been notably associated with the nation's early history, or with the origin of this royal family, or with some outstanding victory by its founder over the nation's secular foes, then that circumstance would serve to place its choice on a par with the choice of other permanent royal residences. But Hebron, David's earliest capital, far excelled Jerusalem in sacred associations and traditions of the race. Bethlehem was the old home of David himself. Half a dozen other places were the scenes of as many battles where tribal or national independence had been won or held. Yet as soon as David was crowned king of all Israel, he deliberately set out to take for himself the citadel of the Jebusites, the old Canaanitish city of Jerusalem, and to make of it the political center of the united nation.⁵³ As long as the twelve tribes held together under him and his immediate successor, it was only natural that Jerusalem should continue to be the seat of king and court. But after the secession of the ten tribes under Jeroboam Jerusalem was too far to the north to remain the natural capital of the kingdom of Judah. Hebron, where David had first reigned as Judah's king, was a more central spot, and likewise safer. Jerusalem was recurrently exposed to assaults from the north, or actually fell before a northern invader, when a capital further south might have escaped.

Moreover, Jerusalem proved itself a weak spot to defend, at least after its choice as a capital and consequent growth had transformed it from a mere hill-top stronghold into a broad-lying aggregation of hills and vales, inadequately bound together by even the best-planned walls. It was meagrely supplied with water for a long siege, when the usual inhabitants must share their barely sufficient supply with the garrison and the refugees from the country about. We know that during the period of the monarchy it fell at least six times before a hostile army.⁵⁴ Nevertheless

⁵³ 2 Sam. v. 6-9.

⁵⁴ 1 Kings xiv. 25; 2 Chr. xxi. 17; 2 Kings xiv. 13; xxiv. 1 (comp. 2 Chr. xxxvi. 6, 7 and Dan. i. 1, 2); ver. 10-16; xxv. 4-10.

not only was the royal residence never removed from Jerusalem to any other city throughout all those centuries of change, but there is not even a hint that any king so much as thought of making such a removal.⁵⁵ Just as the religious capital of the nation was fixed once for all at Jerusalem when David brought up the Ark thither and Solomon built and dedicated the Temple there, so the political capital for the dynasty of David was unalterably settled through the initiative of its founder, and, as we may see more and more clearly, by that religious basis which underlay the Davidic kingship. Here, on "Zion," alongside the House of Jehovah, must of necessity always stand the residence of Jehovah's representative, His "anointed," His vicegerent in Israel—the son of David.

Once more the contrast to this afforded by the Northern Kingdom is most instructive. Shechem in the territory of Joseph was the scene of the secession under Jeroboam the Ephraimite.⁵⁶ He seems to have strengthened its fortifications with a view to making it his capital.⁵⁷ Yet even before the death of Jeroboam Tirzah appears to be the royal residence, as it continues to be for a considerable time.⁵⁸ Omri, the founder of a new dynasty, selects a new site for his royal residence,⁵⁹ and the city of Samaria which he founds continues the official capital from that time till the fall of the Northern Kingdom. However, we can see that the position which Samaria occupied in the North was not the same as that of Jerusalem in the South, for even Ahab and Joram, the son and grandson of Samaria's founder, preferred to reside in Jezreel.⁶⁰

Now that we have considered successively these various evidences of uniqueness in the career of Judah's sovereigns,

⁵⁵ Not even in 2 Kings xiv. 19.

⁵⁶ 1 Kings xii. 1; comp. xi. 26.

⁵⁷ 1 Kings xii. 25.

⁵⁸ 1 Kings xiv. 17; xv. 21, 33; xvi. 6, 8, 9, 15, 23. Perhaps Penuel also had a short career as the northern capital; see xii. 25.

⁵⁹ 1 Kings xvi. 24.

⁶⁰ 1 Kings xviii. 45; chap. xxi; 2 Kings viii. 29-x. 11.

we shall not be surprised to find that the dynasty of David enjoyed a prestige in the Northern Kingdom, which not only was entirely incommensurate with the size and resources of Judah, but which was unmatched by any like prestige of the kings of Israel among those who held to David's line. When Jeroboam first launched his successful revolt against Rehoboam, all his measures were of course taken with a view to diminishing the prestige of the son of Solomon among the northern tribes. He would, if he could, have erected a Chinese Wall along his southern border to keep his people from all contact with Jerusalem. That was the significance of the sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan, of the new non-Levitical priesthood, and of the new national feast in the eighth month.⁶¹ That doubtless explains also the very early removal of the capital from Shechem to Tirzah, which, wherever it may have lain, was certainly farther north than Shechem.

All this was natural under the circumstances and proves little. Compared with the upstart Jeroboam⁶² the House of David was already old and famous. But the matter of Davidic prestige was not so quickly settled. In the course of a few years we find Baasha—practically the successor of Jeroboam—already fortifying Ramah on his southern border; and we are told in the Book of Kings that he did this "that he might not suffer any one to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah,"⁶³ and in the Book of Chronicles, which contains the same phrase, we find in a different connection in the previous chapter this further remark which throws light on that motive: "For they fell to him (Asa) out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that Jehovah his God was with him."⁶⁴ In other words, precisely that was happening which Jeroboam had feared might happen and against which he had directed the whole policy of his reign.

With the coming of still another dynasty to the throne of

⁶¹ I Kings xii. 26-33.

⁶² I Kings xi. 26; xiv. 7.

⁶³ I Kings xv. 17.

⁶⁴ 2 Chr. xv. 9; xvi. 1.

the North—that of Omri—a new policy towards Judah was inaugurated. And Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, was quite willing to benefit, as he supposed he would benefit, by this new and welcome peace-policy of his stronger neighbor. Ahab, son of Omri, already allied to the Phoenicians on his northern flank through his own marriage with Jezebel, princess of Sidon, was anxious to end the old hostility between Israel and Judah by a similar alliance with his neighbor on the south. He accordingly gave Athaliah, his daughter, in marriage to the heir-apparent of Judah, Joram, son of Jehoshaphat, and thenceforth we find the kings of the sister kingdoms associated in camp and palace⁶⁵ until Jehu arises, to wipe out the entire race of Jezebel, both the northern branch and the southern branch.

Thus another change of relations comes with the ascendancy of Jehu's house. At first this enmity of the North was without power to do Judah harm. But after Israel's status began to mend under King Jehoash, it was possible for him to assume a lofty tone of condescension toward Amaziah of Judah, and when Amaziah insisted on a trial of strength Jehoash inflicted on Judah the worst defeat that it ever experienced at the hands of its stronger sister-state. Jerusalem was taken, both the sacred and the royal treasures were plundered, and the north wall of the city was broken down. Nevertheless—and this fact is as significant as any in the whole list of these relations—Amaziah was suffered to continue his reign as before. It can hardly be supposed that Jehoash, flushed with victory over a particularly exasperating rival, would have permitted him to remain his nearest royal neighbor, if this Amaziah had been a king whose family enjoyed a lesser prestige than that of the house of David.⁶⁶ Evidently at that time it was outside the realm of practical politics to attempt to dethrone a son of David in Jerusalem.

However, what these kings of Israel at its best were not

⁶⁵ 1 Kings xxii. 4, 44; 2 Kings iii. 7; viii. 18, 27; ix. 16; x. 13.

⁶⁶ 2 Kings xiv. 8-14.

rash enough to attempt, a mere upstart attempted half a century later, in the times of Israel's final anarchy. As we have already seen, "Ben-Tabeel" (whoever he was), Pekah's candidate for the Davidic throne in the place of Ahaz, never even saw the inside of Jerusalem. And it is highly significant that the loftiest promises to the house of David in all the course of Hebrew prophecy (namely, Isaiah chaps. 7, 8, and 9) are dated from precisely this time, when Pekah and Rezin were proposing to dethrone a descendant of David—even so faithless and worthless a representative of it as Ahaz—from the throne of his fathers.

Soon after the fall of Samaria Hezekiah extended to the remnant of Israel his summons to return to Jerusalem and Jehovah and observe the Passover in the Temple on the Hill of Zion. We are told that many from the northern tribes obeyed and attended.⁶⁷ Again a century later Josiah, apparently unopposed, reached out into this territory to the north with his reformation of worship, destroying the altar at Bethel and "all the houses of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria."⁶⁸ Such measures, feeble as they may appear, rest nevertheless upon a clear presupposition: they presuppose, not only in the Kings of Judah themselves, but also in the people of the North, a remarkable persistence of the theoretical Davidic sovereignty over Israel, to which we find the prophets of the North, Hosea and Amos, bearing their testimony in the eighth century.

What remains to be added, by way of conclusion, to this brief study of the career of David's line, is a general estimate of the policies adopted by these kings and of their skill in kingcraft. Such an estimate is not easy to reach, with the limited information now at our disposal. It is to be hoped that archaeology may yet add important contributions to the existing

⁶⁷ 2 Chr. xxx. See also art. "An Undesigned Coincidence" in this REVIEW for April, 1905.

⁶⁸ 2 Kings xxiii. 15-20.

data. When all the facts are not known, a reign which appears successful may in fact have been merely fortunate; and, conversely, an unfortunate reign may be quite unjustly attributed by us to the failure or folly of the king himself.

Three men of the Davidic house ruled over the entire twelve-tribe nation: David, Solomon, and Rehoboam—the last of these for but a short time. Of the other two, whereas Solomon enjoyed the greater prestige, wealth, fame, and dominion, David was a far greater master of men. His eminence was achieved in the face of every difficulty and maintained often against great odds. Solomon, on the other hand, born to the purple, enjoyed the good fortune of his father's great name, and profited alike by the failure of both Absalom and Sheba in their revolts, by a singularly favorable juncture in Asiatic politics, and by a regal state and magnificence still novel enough in Israel to be imposing. But Solomon left to his son a heritage of exasperation and revolt, due to heavy taxation, bureaucratic oppression, and tribal jealousy.

Thus while Rehoboam appears in a particularly foolish light in accepting the harsh counsels of the young courtiers rather than the mild counsels of his father's elder statesmen,⁶⁹ it is a question whether the schism between North and South could have been averted by even the wisest policy, or postponed for more than a short time. The differences between Judah and Joseph were too fundamental and of too long standing to be obliterated by the short-lived unity of the first two reigns. At any rate Rehoboam showed that he was sensible enough to face facts. As soon as his administrator of the royal *corvée* in the North was murdered, he accepted the revolt of the ten tribes as a *fait accompli*.⁷⁰

Two theories of international alliance contended for adoption by the kings of the ancient East. One theory groups contiguous states, having identical interests and menaced by the same dangers, binding them together into a league at

⁶⁹ 1 Kings xii. 1-15.

⁷⁰ 1 Kings xii. 18, 21-24; 2 Chr. xi. 1-4.

least for defense, if not for offense also. When a single state by means of its extraordinary resources or aggressiveness loomed on the political horizon as a world-power, other states, sensing a common danger, were drawn into such an alliance for their mutual protection. The other theory was what may be termed the alternating or concentric theory. The states lying next but one to any given state were by this geographical location likely to be regarded as its natural allies, just because the ring of states lying next to its own border constituted its natural enemies. Just as in a university each class considers the classes next above or next below it in academic standing its inevitable rivals, while the classes two years removed are deemed its allies, so kings who shared the enmity of a neighbor lying between them joined forces to hold him in check if he grew aggressive, or to divide his realm between them if he became too weak to defend his territory. It was of course his rôle to make common cause with the kings at the rear of his confederate neighbors. So in Central Europe since the post-war settlement, while there are various tendencies and groupings in the game of international politics, there has stood fixed thus far the so-called Little Entente, consisting of Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia and Roumania. Their territories join scarcely at all, but their common interest is thought to consist in keeping Hungary in check—that state which lies in the midst of them—and in jealously watching those states of an outer ring which by geographical location are Hungary's natural allies, such as Germany, Austria, Italy, Bulgaria.

Of these two theories it was the second that was adopted by Asa, Rehoboam's grandson. By means of a huge present from his own treasures and those of the Temple he bought the alliance of the King of Damascus, and thus forced Baasha of Israel to face north instead of south with his armies, to give over the building of Ramah as a great border-fortress, and to surrender a strip of Benjamite territory as far north as Geba and Mizpah which thereafter remained

Jewish land.⁷¹ For the time, therefore, this policy proved effective.

Asa's son, Jehoshaphat, as we have already seen in another connection, reversed his father's policy. He contracted an alliance with Ahab of Israel, cementing it by the marriage of his son Joram with Athaliah. The ultimate meaning of this alliance was simply that more was to be gained by these two kings through acting in unison at the expense of their eastern neighbors, than either could gain at the other's expense. Moab and Syria were the immediately threatening forces on their flank, but Ammonites and Arabians also attempted to make common cause against Judah. Their confederacy proved short-lived, however, and Judah received no help from Israel in breaking the force of this menace in return for the help she had given Israel against both Syria and Moab. Moreover there were at least individuals and perhaps a party in Judah bold enough to speak out against this pro-Israel policy of their king, which successive prophetic spokesmen denounced publicly as "helping the wicked and loving them that hate Jehovah."⁷² Even apart from its tragic consequences in the next two generations, Jehoshaphat's policy cannot be regarded as good for Judah.

With the change of dynasty in the North from the house of Omri to the house of Jehu there came of course an overturn of its policy towards the Southern Kingdom. No matter who was on the throne the rule worked: the weaker Israel was, the more likely to make friends with Judah, her normally weaker sister. But when Assyrian power, long quiescent in Western Asia, grew again in Syria's rear, and Israel, thus relieved of the perpetual Syrian menace, gradually recovered strength, Jehu's descendants, Jehoash, and still more Jeroboam II, completely overshadowed the Kings of Judah. We have seen, however, that it was Judah that actually forced the only war between them, while the attitude of

⁷¹ 1 Kings xv. 18-22.

⁷² 2 Chr. xix. 2.

Jehoash toward the ambitious Amaziah was rather contemptuous than hostile. Amaziah was either very foolish or very unfortunate. At this distance and with our meagre light, he seems to us to have been foolish, with the folly bred of a moderate success which turned his head.⁷³

Half a century later, when those ancient rivals, Damascus and Samaria, now ruled by Rezin and Pekah, men with more of ambition than of real power, joined forces to master Judah and unite her power to their own, King Ahaz of Judah, thinking more of the present crisis than of the future consequences, summoned the great Assyrian king to his aid.⁷⁴ Thus began that long series of reactions between Nineveh and Jerusalem, subsequently between Babylon and Jerusalem, which ended with the tragedy of 587 B.C. Ahaz indeed escaped at the price of tribute and obeisance. But in his son Hezekiah's reign the land of Judah lost over 200,000 of its inhabitants deported to Assyria, if we may take at their face value the boasts of Sennacherib's scribes.⁷⁵ The little country lost also much treasure and many fenced cities. But it saved its capital, its Temple, and its king, thanks to the strictly nationalistic attitude adopted at the advice of the prophet Isaiah. Judah even acquired a remarkable prestige through its deliverance from the very jaws of destruction by a mysterious blow to the Assyrian army.⁷⁶

Alliances of what we have called the first type, between the powers, petty powers for the most part, which had in common the dread and hatred, first of Nineveh, later of Babylon, found at times a willing partner in the Judean King. Manasseh, successor to Hezekiah, appears twice in lists of kings who are compelled to pay tribute and do obeisance to the Assyrian Kings.⁷⁷ The pro-Egyptian party in Judah was probably at

⁷³ 2 Kings xiv. 7, 8, 11.

⁷⁴ 2 Kings xvi. 5-9.

⁷⁵ Abel und Winckler, *Keilschrifttexte*, p. 18, col. ii, 34ff.

⁷⁶ 2 Kings xix. 35; Is. xxxvii. 36. Comp. Herodotus, Book II, 141.

⁷⁷ Schrader, *Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament*, Eng. tr. Vol. II, pp. 40-43.

heart more anti-Assyrian than pro-Egyptian. Egypt had never proved more than a "broken reed" to those who leaned on her for support; yet seemingly Judah never learned her lesson, though she had over a century longer to learn it than Samaria had.

King Josiah, it is true, had that distrust of Egypt which most of his nation seemed unable to acquire. He felt that Judah had everything to gain and nothing to lose by attacking boldly the Pharaoh's (Necho's) army. Assyria was then moribund and Nabopolassar had not yet shown what Babylon was destined to become under his mighty son Nebuchadnezzar. Necho was on the way north to make good Egypt's claim to her share of Assyria's inheritance west of the Euphrates. If he could revive the Asiatic empire of a Thothmes or a Rameses, the days of Jerusalem's independence were unquestionably gone. But could not Necho be turned back at the very outset, by a determined flank attack from the central highlands, as he crossed the passes leading toward Syria? So Josiah asked himself and then put his own affirmative answer to the test of battle. When he fell at Megiddo, it was the weakness of the force at his disposal rather than the fault of his strategy or the error of his policy that was exposed.⁷⁸

Of course Jehoiakim, who in spite of the fact that he was the eldest son of Josiah, owed his elevation to the throne to Pharaoh Necho, was and remained pro-Egyptian; the Jewish national leaders, supporters of Josiah's policy, had passed over Jehoiakim and given the crown to his younger half-brother Jehoahaz, doubtless because the sentiments of the heir-apparent were as well known to them as to Necho.⁷⁹ Nevertheless it was poor political judgment, when Jehoiakim, spared once by Nebuchadnezzar in spite of his Egyptian leanings, turned against his new Babylonian suzerain the second time.⁸⁰ Zedekiah showed the same perfidy later

⁷⁸ 2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30.

⁷⁹ 2 Kings xxiii. 31, 34, 36.

⁸⁰ 2 Kings xxiv. 1, 7.

towards the same great king. That perfidy is too prominent a feature of the arraignment of Zedekiah by both Jeremiah and Ezekiel to need any further comment. The policy of this last king who sat on David's throne in Jerusalem was in fact as foolish as it was faithless, when he turned to Pharaoh Hophra even after he had paid a personal visit to Babylon to reassure Nebuchadnezzar of his fidelity.⁸¹

In conclusion it is perhaps well to remind ourselves that this effort to interpret Jewish policies and parties from an international point of view can easily be overdone. Most of the momentous decisions were probably reached under strong compulsion of circumstances, and even when there was opportunity for a free choice of opposite policies, it is unlikely that anything beyond the immediate future was habitually considered in the royal council chamber. Hosea's apt illustration compared the decadent Northern Kingdom to a "silly dove without understanding,"⁸² because it fluttered between Egypt and Assyria—now this way and now that. The prophets of Judah could reproach the sons of David with much the same fatuous temporizing through almost all the reigns that close the dynasty's career. "Pro-Egyptian" and "pro-Assyrian" or "pro-Babylonian" are expressions that should be used with caution when speaking of Jewish parties from Ahaz to Zedekiah. Jeremiah's experiences are illuminating, but they belong to the final catastrophe. The voluntary surrender of young Jehoiachin to the King of Babylon has been lauded as a self-sacrifice for the salvation of the nation and the besieged capital.⁸³ Jehoiachin has even been soberly proposed as the original of that portrait of the suffering "Servant of Jehovah" in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. But in fact it is quite impossible for us now to know what duress lies behind the simple words of the narrative: "and he went out unto the king of Babylon." Something determined

⁸¹ Jer. li. 59; Ezek. xvii. 13-21; 2 Kings xxiv. 20.

⁸² Hos. vii. 11.

⁸³ 2 Kings xxiv. 12.

Nebuchadnezzar to spare the city of Jerusalem in 598 and to destroy it in 587, but it is too much to say that it was only because Jehoiachin surrendered in the former siege and Zedekiah fled in the latter.⁸⁴ Jehoiachin in any case deserves this negative praise, that during his long years as a prisoner in Babylon he must have done nothing to render the lot of his conquered people more hopeless, and the recognition that came to him finally from Nebuchadnezzar's successor⁸⁵ may have played a larger part than we are anywhere explicitly told, in binding the scattered, disheartened nation together and pointing their minds forward to a restoration.

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⁸⁴ In spite of Jer. xxxviii. 17, 18.

⁸⁵ 2 Kings xxv. 27-30.