

The Chronicler's Code: The Rise and Fall of Judah's Army in the Book of Chronicles

NERIAH KLEIN



THE CHRONICLER'S CODE: THE RISE AND FALL OF JUDAH'S ARMY IN THE BOOK OF CHRONICLES

NERIAH KLEIN
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

One of the book of Chronicles' most striking features is its fascination with detail. The Chronicler did not spare his readers from extensive lists, numbers and names in a plethora of various contexts, and his fondness for this kind of data is evident throughout the work. This article engages with the observation that the Chronicler's penchant for detail was not limited to its mere inclusion within his book; rather, he made creative and literary use of this material according to his needs and objectives. This discussion will focus on numbers; to be precise, upon the numbers given for the royal Judean military throughout the work. I wish to point out the systematic manipulation of these numbers, which has been previously unnoted in scholarship; an arrangement which simultaneously testifies to the fictitious quality of these numbers, and to the sophisticated literary design woven into the narrative as a whole.¹

LARGE NUMBERS IN THE BIBLE

Many of the large numbers that feature in the Bible are famously regarded as exaggerated estimations that cannot reasonably be considered historically accurate. A classic example is the scholarly world's preoccupation with the number of Israelites who left Egypt and lived in the wilderness, as reflected in the figures provided, for example, in Exodus 12:17 and Numbers 1:6–26. The idea that around 600,000 men of military age (around 2,000,000 people in all) left Egypt is considered grossly unrealistic,² and various

¹ This article is an extended version of my lecture in the 'Literary Features: Fact or Fiction' unit in the EABS annual conference, Leuven 2016. Thanks are due to Prof. Michael Avioz, Dr. Karolien Vermeulen, Dr. Noga Ayali-Darshan and Dr. Yitzchak Amar for their helpful, insightful comments that improved this article to no end. Any inaccuracies, of course, are mine and mine alone. This article uses the NRSV translation.

² The reason for this is based on both comparison with other biblical data, and upon various demographic analyses proposed in research. For various surveys of this approach, see: E.W. Davies, "A Mathematical

attempts have been made to justify these figures; one such tactic involves interpreting the expression אלף , which generally denotes the number 1000 in the Bible, as relating to military units, tribal sub-units, or to military officers.³ More often than not, such attempts are subjected to fierce criticism and deemed deficient,⁴ although there are still those who stand by such interpretations.⁵

Alongside scholars who seek to explain that these numbers express actual reality,⁶ others have argued that the numbers are purely fictitious, and that any efforts to justify their historicity are vain. If the latter claim is accepted, however, the question already posed by Segal in 1965 immediately arises: “When a writer of the Old Testament had freedom of choice in his use of numerals, what were the motives that prompted him to employ one particular number rather than another?”⁷ And indeed, various explanations have been proffered for the census figures in the book of Numbers, usually involving complicated mathematical calculations,⁸

Conundrum: The Problem of the Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI,” *VT* 45 (1995), 449–69 (449–52); D.M. Fouts, “A Defence of the Hyperbolic Interpretation of Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” *JETS* 40 (1997), 377–87.

³ Various versions of this have been proposed. See, for example: W.M.F. Petrie, *Researches in Sinai* (London: Murray, 1906), 207–20; G.E. Mendenhall, “The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” *JBL* 77 (1958), 52–76; J.W. Wenham, “Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” *TynBul* 18 (1967), 19–53; R.E.D. Clark, “The Large Numbers of the Old Testament,” *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* 87 (1955), 82–92; J.W. Wenham, “Large Numbers in the Old Testament,” *TB* 18 (1967), 19–53; C.J. Humphreys, “The Number of People in the Exodus from Egypt: Decoding Mathematically the Very Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI,” *VT* 48 (1998), 196–213.

⁴ See, for example: B.A. Levine, *Numbers 1–20* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1993), 139; Davies, “A Mathematical Conundrum,” 460–65; J. Milgrom, “On Decoding Very Large Numbers,” *VT* 49 (1999), 131–32; M. McEntire, “A Response to Colin J. Humphreys’s ‘The Number of People in the Exodus from Egypt: Decoding Mathematically the Very Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI,’” *VT* 49 (1999), 262–64; R. Heinzerling, “On the Interpretation of the Census Lists by C. J. Humphreys and G. E. Mendenhall,” *VT* 50 (2000), 250–252.

⁵ See, for example, Rendsburg’s sympathetic criticism on Humphreys’ article noted in n. 3 above: G. Rendsburg, “An Additional Note to Two Recent Articles on the Number of People in the Exodus from Egypt and the Large Numbers in Numbers I and XXVI,” *VT* 51 (2001), 392–96.

⁶ Besides those who interpret the term אלף in various ways, Albright’s approach is worth noting. He claims that these censuses are based upon the actual reality of the united Israelite kingdom. See: W.F. Albright, “The Administrative Divisions of Israel and Judah,” *JPOS* 5 (1925), 17–54; idem, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1946), 222.

⁷ J.B. Segal, “Numerals in the Old Testament,” *JSS* 10 (1965), 2–20 (2).

⁸ R. Heinzerling, “Bileams Rätsel: Die Zählung der Wehrfähigen in

ancient astronomy,⁹ and even *gematria*.¹⁰ The results—perhaps unsurprisingly—are not usually convincing.¹¹

The most sound and cautious approach, I believe, is represented by Fouts and Davies, who argue that the employment of large, exaggerated numbers should be seen as an accepted, intentional literary convention calculated to achieve a certain effect—for example, in order to glorify the name of some king or god—wherein the actual given numbers lack significance in themselves.¹² In any case, it seems that the debate between the “realistic-historical” approach and the “literary” approach in regard to large numbers in the Bible has yet to be resolved.

There is, however, general consensus that the numbers in the book of Chronicles *are* exaggerated.¹³ To illustrate, Ralph Klein

Numeri 1 und 26,” *ZAW* 111 (1999), 404–15.

⁹ M. Barnouin, “Les recensements du livre des Nombres et l’astronomie babylonienne,” *VT* 27 (1977), 280–303.

¹⁰ H. Holzinger, *Numeri* (Tübingen/Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr, 1903), 5–6, 134; D.M. Fouts, *The Use of Large Numbers in the Old Testament, with Particular Emphasis on the Use of 'elep* (Ph.D. Thesis; Dallas Theological Seminary, 1992), 167–70.

¹¹ See, for example, the survey and criticism of Davies, “A Mathematical Conundrum,” 452–60.

¹² Fouts, *The Use of Large Numbers*; idem, “A Defence of the Hyperbolic Interpretation”; idem, “The Incredible Numbers of the Hebrew Kings,” in D.M. Howard Jr. and M.A. Grisanti (eds.), *Giving the Sense: Understanding and Using Old Testament Historical Texts* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2003), 283–99; Davies, “A Mathematical Conundrum,” 465–69. This approach is supported by Near Eastern material, mainly royal Assyrian inscriptions, which make intentional use of exaggerated numbers in order to glorify certain Assyrian kings; see, among others: Fouts, *The Use of Large Numbers*, 68–124; idem, “Another Look at Large Numbers in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” *JNES* 53 (1994), 205–11. See also: A.R. Millard, “Large Numbers in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions,” in M. Cogan and I. Eph'al (eds.), *Ab, Assyria...: Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography Presented to Haim Tadmor* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 213–22. In contrast, see De Odorico's more cautious conclusion: M. De Odorico, *The Use of Numbers and Quantifications in the Assyrian Royal Inscriptions* (Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, University of Helsinki, 1995), 161–62.

¹³ See, for example: E.L. Curtis and A.A. Madsen, *The Books of Chronicles* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1910), 374–75; W.A.L. Elmslie, *The Books of Chronicles* (The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1916), 239; R.W. Klein, “How Many in a Thousand?” in M. Graham et al. (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997); G. Galil et al. (eds.), *2 Chronicles* (Olam HaTanach; Tel Aviv: Davidson-Atai, 1995), 98, 112, 135 (Hebrew). Rainy comments that the use of exaggerated numbers is consistent with accepted literary conventions of the Chronicler's time. See A.F. Rainy, “The Chronicler and his Sources – Historical and Geographical,” in M. Graham et al. (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 30–72 (55). See also K.G. Hoglund, “The Chronicler as Historian:

notes that the 500,000 warriors who fell in a single day (!) during the battle between Abijah and Jeroboam (2 Chr 13:17) is equivalent to the total number of casualties from both sides during the American Civil War, or the total number of Americans killed during World War Two;¹⁴ while Rudolph has estimated that the 100,000 golden talents David prepared for the construction of the Temple (1 Chr 22:14) is roughly nine times the amount of gold produced all over the world (!) in the year 1900.¹⁵ Some have tried to apply the theory that the term אֲלָפִים is a military expression representing far fewer than a thousand soldiers to the book of Chronicles as well, thus bringing the numbers into the realm of the feasible and the historical,¹⁶ but Klein convincingly argues that this interpretation is not acceptable¹⁷ and concludes, “Now, as before, the high numbers in Chronicles cannot be taken as reflecting historical reality. Rather, the interpreter’s goal should be to see how these numbers are a part of the Chronicler’s message or of his theological agenda.”¹⁸

With this statement, Klein parts ways with Davies and Fouts. Whereas the latter, as mentioned, do not ascribe significance to each and every number, and are satisfied with the general claim that

A Comparativist Perspective,” in M. Graham et al. (eds.), *The Chronicler as Historian* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 19–29 (26–27).

¹⁴ Klein, “How Many in a Thousand?,” 270–82.

¹⁵ W. Rudolph, *Chronikbücher* (HAT; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1955), 151, n. 2.

¹⁶ See, for example: J.M. Myers, *II Chronicles* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1965), 78; J.B. Payne, “The Validity of the Numbers in Chronicles,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136 (1979), 109–28, 206–20.

¹⁷ Beyond the challenges he poses to those who hold by this theory in relation to the censuses in Numbers, he shows that it simply cannot be applied to the book of Chronicles: for example, the Chronicler also amplified numbers of non-human objects, such as chariots (1 Chr 19:7), gold and silver (1 Chr 19:6; 22:14; 29:4,7) and animals (2 Chr 7:5; 30:24; 35:7–9), and the term אֲלָפִים cannot be understood as a military expression in these cases; moreover, a comparison between the terms “officers of hundreds” and “officers of thousands” in Chronicles clearly shows that the Chronicler understood the word אֲלָפִים as a number, just as he used “hundred.” Another example that disproves this theory is the number given for the descendants of Bela, son of Benjamin: 22,034 (1 Chr 7:7); if אֲלָפִים denotes a military unit, then Bela supposedly had thirty-four people divided up into twenty-two military units, which would mean an average of 1.5 soldiers in each unit. Similarly, Uzziah’s army, according to 2 Chr 26:13, numbered 307,500—which, according to the theory in question, would mean that each of the 307 units would consist of fewer than two soldiers. Another challenge is that the 200,000 captives that Pekah son of Remaliah took from Judah (2 Chr 28:8) cannot be interpreted as 200 military units, as this figure included women and children. See Klein, “How Many in a Thousand?”. Dillard also rejected the idea that אֲלָפִים means a military unit. See: R.B. Dillard, *2 Chronicles* (WBC; Waco: Word, 1987), 94–95.

¹⁸ Klein, “How Many in a Thousand?,” 281.

these numbers reflect convention, Klein seeks out the literary significance of these figures as part of the book's narrative design. Nonetheless, his practical conclusions barely differ from those of Fouts and Davies. He posits, for example, that the exaggerated numbers of the enemy forces are calculated to emphasize God's role in victory, as it would have been impossible to defeat the massive enemy forces without God's help.¹⁹ In this vein, it can be added that in Chronicles, a large, strong army is sometimes God's reward for a righteous king.²⁰ Yet Klein admits that in most cases, it is difficult to determine why the Chronicler selected certain numbers. He does propose that the number of soldiers in the war between Abijah and Jeroboam—400,000 and 800,000 respectively—are based upon the figures of David's census in 2 Sam 24: 800,000 Israelites²¹ and 500,000 Judeans (1,100,000 Israelites²² and 470,000 Judeans In 1 Chr 21), whereas the Lucianic version of Samuel, as well as Josephus, cite 400,000 Judeans.²³ The number of

¹⁹ Klein, "How Many in a Thousand?," 281.

²⁰ Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 78, 135, 209; P. Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung in den Chronikbüchern* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 79–114. According to O. Kaiser, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Presentation of its Results and Problems* (ET, J. Sturdy; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 185, the large numbers of troops in Chronicles are an anachronism, under the influence of Hellenistic military sizes. See also Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 111. Recently, Cudworth suggested that military musters may be meant by the Chronicler to reveal the king's temptation to win wars by his own might. See T.D. Cudworth, *War in Chronicles: Temple Faithfulness and Israel's Place in the Land* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 119, 149.

²¹ These are the only two appearances of the number 800,000 in the Bible.

²² S. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993), 377–78, argues that the number 1,100,000 in Chronicles relates to Israel and Judah together, and the Chronicler derived this from addition of the numbers of Judah and Israel in Samuel (500,000 + 800,000), and the subtraction of 200,000 because of the declaration that Levi and Benjamin were not included in this census (1 Chr 21:6). See also: Davies, "A Mathematical Conundrum," 456; G. Galil et al. (eds.), *1 Chronicles* (Olam HaTanak; Tel Aviv: Dibre Hayyamim, 1995), 222 (Hebrew). It is, however, problematic to assume that the Chronicler allotted 100,000 to every tribe, as Judah alone numbered 470,000 in Chronicles (without Levi or Benjamin), and in 2 Samuel—500,000. If this was nonetheless the Chronicler's numerical system, it may be that he subtracted 200,000 Levites and Benjaminites from Judah's share in Samuel's count (500,000), so that the number of Judahites reaches 300,000 (even though Chronicles presents a different number for Judah—470,000), as these two tribes were included in Judah later (1 Chr 11:1, 13–15). If this is so, this may justify the Chronicler's choice of this number in several places later on in the book as the number of a standard Judean military unit (see the discussion below). In any case, this matter is far from being settled.

²³ R.W. Klein, "Abijah's Campaign Against the North (II Chr 13—What Were the Chronicler's Sources?," *ZAW* 95 (1983), 210–217 (217);

Israelites in 2 Sam 24 is indeed identical to that of Jeroboam's army, but it seems unlikely that the Chronicler would base his figures upon those given for David's census in Samuel, rather than upon the data he himself provides in 1 Chr 21.²⁴ If we continue in Klein's direction, then the 400,000 soldiers of Abijah are supposedly parallel to the 470,000 Judeans noted in David's census in 1 Chr 21. Presumably, the 70,000 soldiers omitted from the Chronicler's count can be identified with the 70,000 who died during the plague that followed the census; after 70,000 died, 400,000 were left, and this is the final number the Chronicler gives for Abijah's army. This explanation, however, remains in the realm of speculation;²⁵ and the overwhelming majority of numbers in the book of Chronicles still lack a convincing literary explanation.

JUDEAN MILITARY SIZE IN CHRONICLES

My intention is not to determine between the aforementioned approaches to large numbers in the Bible, although I am inclined to reject alternate interpretations of the word **ףלח**. However, Klein's approach to the book of Chronicles certainly rings true, particularly in regard to the numbers that will serve as the focus of this article; as I will demonstrate, their striking artificiality precludes any pretense of historicity, leaving no choice but to adopt Klein's literary method of analysis.

Klein mentions the 580,000 soldiers of Asa as an example of a figure we cannot determine how the Chronicler reached: "[T]he round number of 1,000,000 Ethiopians is considerably larger than the 580,000 men available to Asa, though how the latter figure was calculated still escapes us." Similarly to the balance of power between Abijah and Jeroboam, this number also seems to aggrandize the million-strong army of Asa's opponent, Zerah the Cushite, and highlight the imbalance between them. But why the number 580,000, which is only a "semi-round" number?²⁶ Why did the

idem, "How Many in a Thousand?" 281. Besides these appearances, the number 400,000 appears in the Bible only in the story of the Concubine at Gibeah, describing the number of Israelites who fought against Benjamin (Judg 20:2, 17).

²⁴ Unless further research proves that these sources in Chronicles come from two different hands.

²⁵ A different argument assumes that the Chronicler wished to present Israel's force as twice the size of Judah's in order to emphasize the great salvation and God's hand in victory. See, for example: Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 689; W. Johnstone, *1 and 2 Chronicles (v. 2: 2 Chronicles 10–36, Guilt and Atonement)* (JSOTS 253; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 51–52.

²⁶ De Odorico distinguished between "round numbers," comprising of a round number of thousands, ten thousands, etc., and "semi-round numbers" such as 1,200. See, for example, De Odorico, *The Use of Numbers*, 161. Some numbers are, therefore, rounder than others. For the sake of convenience, I will refer to any numbers that are not round multiples

Chronicler not choose a round number, like Zerah's perfect million, or like the forces of Abijah (400,000) and Jeroboam (800,000)? Moreover, the Chronicler portrays the enemy's (Jeroboam's) army as precisely twice the size of Abijah's; in this light, why did he not apply the same proportions to this battle and round off Asa's army to half a million, precisely half of Zerah the Cushite's force?²⁷

The same question applies to other "semi-round" numbers in Chronicles, such as Uzziah's 307,500 strong force (2 Chr 26:13); in some cases, there may be no satisfactory answer for the Chronicler's choice.²⁸ Nevertheless, I will now propose that we have the means of determining the logical sequence and significance of at least some of these figures. I wish to focus upon the figures the Chronicler provides for the Judean military forces following the schism.

The book of Chronicles provides information about the army sizes of six Judean kings:²⁹ the first four kings of Judah—Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa and Jehoshaphat; and later on, Amaziah and his son Uzziah.³⁰ I will first analyze the figures given for the first four Judean armies.

Sara Japhet has already noted the striking connection between the Chronicler's figures for the armies of Asa and Jehoshaphat. Asa's 580,000 soldiers are divided into two groups—Judah and Benjamin:

of one hundred thousand as "semi-round"; considering, for example, 500,000 as a "round number" and 580,000 as a "semi-round" number.

²⁷ Alternately, the Chronicler could have attributed 1,160,000 soldiers to Zerah the Ethiopian—twice as many as Asa's force—which would have albeit resulted in a less round number. This figure, we will see below, is in fact ascribed to Jehoshaphat.

²⁸ After a similar debate regarding the significance of these numbers and others, Sara Japhet concludes: "[A]lthough quantitatively probably too high, these numbers seem to reflect some method, the basis of which for the time being we may not be able to clarify" (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 753).

²⁹ I refer only to the kingdom of Judah after the kingdoms split. Other figures describe the number of Israelites who come to elect David (1 Chr 12:24–39), the results of his census (1 Chr 21:5) and the divisions of his army (1 Chr 27:1–15). For approaches that regard the history of Judean royalty following the splitting of the kingdoms (2 Chr 10–36) as a separate section in Chronicles, see, for example, S.J. De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (FOTL; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 96–98, 274–77; Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 13; Galil et al., *1 Chronicles*, 11; W. Johnstone, *1 and 2 Chronicles (v. 1: 1 Chronicles 1–2 Chronicles 9, Israel's Place among the Nations)* (JSOTS 253; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 10, 15.

³⁰ The following debate will be based upon the numbers that appear in the Masoretic text of Chronicles. Fouts's textual analysis asserts that in the case of biblical large numbers, the Masoretic text is the authoritative version (with a few exceptions, none of them the numbers discussed in this article). See Fouts, *The Use of Large Numbers*, 28–46.

Asa had an army of *three hundred thousand* from Judah, armed with large shields and spears, and *two hundred eighty thousand troops* from Benjamin, who carried shields and drew bows; all these were mighty warriors (2 Chr 14:8 [MT 7]).

Jehoshaphat's army is divided into five groups—three from Judah and two from Benjamin:

This was the muster of them by ancestral houses:

Of Judah, the commanders of the thousands:

Adnah the commander, with *three hundred thousand* mighty warriors,

and next to him Jehohanan the commander, with *two hundred eighty thousand*,

and next to him Amasiah son of Zichri. . . with *two hundred thousand* mighty warriors.

Of Benjamin:

Eliada, a mighty warrior, with *two hundred thousand* armed with bow and shield,

and next to him Jehozabad with *one hundred eighty thousand* armed for war (2 Chr 17:14–18).

The first two groups of Jehoshaphat's army (300,000; 280,000) are precisely the same as the two groups comprising Asa's army, 580,000 in total;³¹ and the total of the three remaining groups of Jehoshaphat's army (200,000; 200,000; 180,000) also comes to 580,000. Jehoshaphat's army, therefore, is precisely twice the size of Asa's army.³² Jehoshaphat's army is also the largest Judean army mentioned in Chronicles, which McKenzie reads as an expression of the Chronicler's great regard for Jehoshaphat.³³

³¹ These are the only two appearances of the number 280,000 in the entire Bible.

³² We can point out a parallel phenomenon from the Near East. A report of Shalmaneser I's war against the Hittites claims that he took 14,400 prisoners, while his son, Tukulti-Ninurta I, reports having taken 28,800 prisoners, exactly twice the number his father took. See: A.K. Grayson, *Assyrian Rulers of the Third and Second Millennia BC (to 1115 BC)* (RIMA 1; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987), 184, 272. Fouts notes that both numbers are divisible by 600, which supports the notion that these numbers are fictitious. See Fouts, *The Use of Large Numbers*, 82. Fouts points out a similar incident: a royal inscription describes that the Akkadian king Rimush had ten times the number of people eating at his table than his father, Sargon I, did. See: D. Frayne, *Sargonic and Gutian Periods (2334–2113 BC)* (RIME, 2; Toronto: University of Toronto, 1993), 29, 48; Fouts, *The Use of Large Numbers*, 75–76, and n. 28 there. See also: D.M. Fouts, "Another Look at Large Numbers in Assyrian Royal Inscriptions," *JNES* 53 (1994), 205–11.

³³ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 752–53; Oded, *2 Chronicles*, 135; S.L. McKenzie, "The Trouble with King Jehoshaphat," in R. Rezetko et al. (eds.), *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 303–4. The wondrous, precise doubling

This evaluation, however, paints only a partial picture. A closer look at the information I will shortly present will reveal that the Chronicler's intention was not to present Jehoshaphat's army as twice the size of his father Asa's army, even though this initially seems to be the obvious ratio. As mentioned, Asa is not the first king of Judah whose army is mentioned in Chronicles; he is preceded by Rehoboam and Abijah:

When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled *one hundred eighty thousand* chosen troops of the house of Judah and Benjamin to fight against Israel, to restore the kingdom to Rehoboam (2 Chr 11:1).

Abijah engaged in battle, having an army of valiant warriors, *four hundred thousand* picked men; and Jeroboam drew up his line of battle against him with eight hundred thousand picked mighty warriors (2 Chr 13:3).

The number ascribed to Rehoboam's army is not the Chronicler's original invention, as the same figure appears in the parallel narrative in 1 Kgs 12:21. The size of Abijah's army, as mentioned, seems to stem from the figures of David's census; whereas the size of Jehoshaphat's army is twice that of Asa's. This brings us back to Ralph Klein's question: How did the Chronicler reach the figure 580,000 for Asa's army?

A cursory glance already reveals that the common denominator of all the semi-round numbers presented here is 80,000 (Rehoboam's army: 180,000; the second groups of Asa and Jehoshaphat's army: 280,000; the fifth group of Jehoshaphat's army: 180,000). This can hardly be coincidence; the different numbers are presumably related. In order to reach a convincing explanation for these numbers, logic dictates that the various sizes of the Judean royal armies ought to be *compared*; indeed, most scholars who identified the 2:1 ratio between Jehoshaphat and Asa's armies followed this course of action. It is difficult to fathom an *a priori* conjecture that might inspire *addition* or *subtraction* of the figures given for the royal Judean armies, as these figures essentially reflect the fluctuation of a single army—the Judean army—over the course of the Judean dynasty. This is presumably why the following information has entirely escaped scholarly notice until now: Asa's army *is equal to the sum of* Rehoboam and Abijah's armies. These data can be formulated in the following equation:

$$180,000 + 400,000 = 580,000$$

$$\text{Rehoboam} + \text{Abijah} = \text{Asa}$$

of Judah's army in just a few years is further proof that these figures are not based on any kind of reality, and the analysis that follows will prove this beyond any reasonable doubt.

The size of Asa's army is equal to the combination of the armies of the two kings who preceded him. This information might have been written off as coincidence, were it not for the same phenomenon repeating itself in regard to Jehoshaphat:

$$180,000 + 400,000 + 580,000 = 1,160,000$$

$$\text{Rehoboam} + \text{Abijah} + \text{Asa} = \text{Jehoshaphat}$$

The size of Jehoshaphat's army, therefore, was not reached through the doubling of Asa's army; rather, it reflects the total size of the militaries of all *three* kings who preceded him—Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa—just as the size of his father Asa's army was reached through the addition of his *two* predecessors. This claim is significantly substantiated through a comparison of the five groups comprising Jehoshaphat's force with the figures of the armies of Rehoboam, Abijah and Asa. As noted, the first two groups are identical to the groups that comprise Asa's army. The third and fourth groups each contain 200,000 soldiers, together 400,000—which is the same size as Abijah's force; while the fifth group of 180,000 is identical to the number of Rehoboam's military.³⁴ The following table illustrates the data that have been presented so far:

Rehoboam	Abijah	Asa	Jehoshaphat
		300,000	300,000
		280,000	280,000
			200,000
	400,000		200,000
180,000			180,000

Jehoshaphat's army, if so, contains all the figures of the Judean armies of his predecessors in chiastic sequence: firstly Asa's army, then Abijah's army, and finally—Rehoboam's army.³⁵

The only imperfect parallel in this comparison is that of Abijah's force, which numbers 400,000 men, and the first two groups of 200,000 in Jehoshaphat's force. Based on the premise that these numbers are fictitious and were chosen for literary manipulation, the question arises as to why the Chronicler chose to divide this total into two within Jehoshaphat's force. This may have

³⁴ These are the two only instances of the number 180,000 in the Bible (besides, of course, for the parallel narrative in 1 Kgs 12:21 regarding Rehoboam's army).

³⁵ On the phenomenon of chiasm in the Bible and ancient times see: J.W. Welch (ed.), *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structures, Analyses, Exegesis* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981); M.J. Boda, "Chiasmus in Ubiquity: Symmetrical Mirages in Nehemiah 9," *JOT* 71 (1996), 55–70. On chiasm in Chronicles see: I. Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 215–31; M.K.Y.H. Hom, "Chiasmus in Chronicles: Investigating the Structures of 2 Chronicles 28:16–21; 33:1–20; and 31:20–32:33," *AUSS* 47 (2009), 163–79; Y. Berger, "Chiasm and Meaning in 1 Chronicles," *JHS* 14 (2014), 1–31.

a logical explanation, however. As noted, the Chronicler's guiding principle for the numerical sequence of Jehoshaphat's army was the chiasmic inversion of the military counts of his predecessors, but this was not the *only* guiding principle. Japhet and Klein note that the different units of Jehoshaphat's army are listed in descending order, from the largest to the smallest.³⁶ This principle does not contradict the aforementioned chiasmic structure in regard to the units which are parallel to those of Asa and Rehoboam's army: 300,000, 280,000 (=Asa); 180,000 (=Rehoboam). But Abijah's placement between them compelled the Chronicler to divide the number of Abijah's army into two groups of 200,000 in order to retain the descending numerical order of the units of Jehoshaphat's army, in between the units of 280,000 and 180,000. This division does not weaken its connection to Abijah's army, as the fact that both groups contain the same number of fighters—200,000—invites their connection. If so, the structure and order of Jehoshaphat's army were influenced by two guiding principles: the chiasmic order reflecting the army figures of the preceding kings; and the descending numerical sequence. This hypothesis is compatible with the range of data I have presented so far. In any case, we can conclude that the division of Jehoshaphat's army into groups, as well as the figures and totals of these groups, is entirely fictitious.³⁷

The numerical design and sequence of the military forces of the first four Judean kings was calculated to reflect the rise of Judah's military power after the division of the kingdoms.³⁸ Not only is each king's army larger than that of his predecessor; Asa and Jehoshaphat's armies are explicitly compared to the armies that precede their own, and are dependent upon them. The noted chiasmic structure that guides the division of Jehoshaphat's army

³⁶ Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 752; R.W. Klein, *2 Chronicles* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 253.

³⁷ The artificial quality of these numbers dispels the notion that the Chronicler drew information about Jehoshaphat's army from any historical source, as was claimed by H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Marshall Morgan & Scott, 1982), 261–63; S.S. Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles* (Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 176; S.L. McKenzie, *1 & 2 Chronicles* (AOTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 2004), 289. Those against this notion: Welten, *Geschichte und Geschichtsdarstellung*, 79–114; M.J. Selman, *2 Chronicles* (TOTC; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1994), 407. Regarding the debate around the question of the Chronicler's general historic credibility, see K. Peltonen, *History Debated: The Historical Reliability of Chronicles in Pre-Critical and Critical Research* (2 vols.; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 1996). On the Chronicler's sources, see also H.R. Macy, *The Sources of the Books of Chronicles: A Reassessment* (PhD. Diss.; Cambridge 1975).

³⁸ A number of scholars have also pointed out that this pattern reflects a gradual rise in military power, although no one notes the systematic, fictitious pattern informing this. See: Elmslie, *The Books of Chronicles*, 239; Oded, *2 Chronicles*, 135; Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles*, 176.

shows that the Chronicler considered Jehoshaphat's reign as the culmination of Judah's development. Judah's military intensification, which began with Rehoboam's army of 180,000, reaches a crescendo with Jehoshaphat—whose smallest military unit forms an *inclusio* with the beginning of Judah's military rise. The Chronicler does not provide any specific information about the army size of the next monarchs—Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah and Jehoash (21–23); but the description of their reign implies that Judah deteriorated rapidly from a military, religious and political perspectives (for example: 2 Chr 21:8–10; 16–17; 22:1, 5–10). Jehoshaphat's reign, therefore, marks the climax, as well as the end, of the process of Judah's rise in power during this period.³⁹

³⁹ Other motifs weave the narratives of the Judean kings from Rehoboam until Jehoshaphat together, and some also reflect this gradual rise; in this way, the literary use of army size is part of a larger narrative design. To illustrate this, I will sketch out a (strictly) partial list of some of these motifs:

1. *The outcome of battle as a reflection of religious worthiness:* In Rehoboam's time—the war against Shishak is lost because he strays from God's path, and Judah's humbling only leads to a lesser punishment rather than to victory (2 Chr 12:1–12); in Abijah and Asa's time—their reliance on God leads to victory (13:3–20; 14:9–15 [MT 8–14]); in Jehoshaphat's time—overwhelming victory without lifting a finger, for God fights for Israel's sake (20:1–30). Regarding the connection between the wars, see, for example: R. Kasher, “y^ešū'at y^ehošapāṭ: m^emaddeha, maqbbilotcha ṽmašma'uyyoteha (2 Chr 20:1–30),” *Beit Mikra* 31 (1986), 242–51 (Hebrew); De Vries, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, 294; S.J. Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles* (New York/London: T&T Clark, 2007), 94. On the Chronicler's notions of reward and punishment in his work, see, for example: Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 76–81, and bibliography there; B.E. Kelly, *Retribution and Eschatology in Chronicles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996); idem, “‘Retribution’ Revisited: Covenant, Grace and Restoration,” in M. Graham et al. (eds.), *The Chronicler as Theologian* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 206–27.
2. *The Capture of Territory from Israel:* While Rehoboam lost all the northern territory in the schism, Abijah and Asa capture towns from Israel (“Abijah pursued Jeroboam, and took cities from him (וילכד ממנו ערים)” (13:19); “When Asa heard these words... he took courage, and put away the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns that he had taken (ומן הערים אשר לכד) in the hill country of Ephraim” (15:8). This motif reoccurs in Jehoshaphat's time: “He placed forces in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim that his father Asa had taken (ובערי אפרים) (אשר לכד אסא אביו)” (17:2). This motif also undergoes a process of intensification: in contrast to his father Rehoboam, Abijah captures cities from Israel; Asa captures (additional?) cities, and even clears them of idolatry; Jehoshaphat sets garrisons in them, reinforcing his rule within them even more. This motif does not

The Chronicler's ingenious system is somewhat surprising, as the presentation of Judah's army in Asa's or Jehoshaphat's time as the total sum of their predecessors' armies is neither intuitive nor based upon any kind of historical reality. This phenomenon invites two conclusions. The first is local: the fact that the Chronicler presents Jehoshaphat's army as equal to the sum of all its precursors testifies that the Chronicler kept an extended period of Judah's history in mind—from Rehoboam and on—when composing the narrative of Jehoshaphat. This reflects his conception of this period as a single, continual process culminating with the reign of Jehoshaphat, who is characterized as standing on the shoulders of his ancestors. The second conclusion is methodological: the reader who seeks understanding of the Chronicler's choice of numbers⁴⁰ must be prepared to entertain atypical, diverse theoretical possibilities, given that the Chronicler apparently made creative—and even surprising—use of the numbers suffused throughout the text.

THE ARMIES OF AMAZIAH, UZZIAH, AND AHAZ

The data presented so far show that the figures provided for the royal Judean armies are far from arbitrary; rather, the Chronicler employed them to convey a certain objective. This conclusion prompts exploration of the remaining numbers given for the royal Judean army in the work. The army size of only two other Judean kings is provided in the text—Amaziah and his son, Uzziah. Although the systemization of these numbers is less clear-cut, we can still draw a number of cautious conclusions from them; I do not intend, however, to make unequivocal assertions, and it may be assumed that future research will shed further light on these issues.

As mentioned, the text divides the armies of Asa and Jehoshaphat into groups, wherein the first and largest group of each num-

reappear in Chronicles again.

3. *Fortified cities*: Rehoboam builds fifteen “cities for defense... he made the fortifications strong (ערי מצרות)” (11:5–10), and later sends his sons to rule within them (11:23=ערי המצרות), but Rehoboam's sin leads to Shishak's capture of “the cities for defense (ערי המצרות) belonging to Judah.” The text relates that Asa “built fortified cities (ערי מצורה) in Judah” (14:6 [MT 5]) while Jehoshaphat gives many gifts to his sons, including “fortified cities (ערי מצרות) in Judah” (21:3), similarly to Rehoboam in his day. This motif does not appear again in Chronicles, and it is unique to this specific sequence of kings.
4. *The root בקש + God*: The root (בקש) in relation to seeking God (or the presence of God) appears eight times in Chronicles. Besides for three appearances in relation to David and Solomon (1 Chr 16:10–11; 2 Chr 7:14), the rest appear in conjunction to Rehoboam until Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 11:16; 15:4, 15; 20:4).

⁴⁰ This is true, of course, of numbers that we may assume have no relation to any kind of historical reality.

bers 300,000. It can hardly be coincidence that the first and only group in Amaziah's army also numbers 300,000:

Amaziah assembled the people of Judah, and set them by ancestral houses under commanders of the thousands and of the hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He mustered those twenty years old and upward, and found that they were *three hundred thousand* picked troops fit for war, able to handle spear and shield⁴¹ (25:5).

The salient decline of the Judean army—which at last count in Jehoshaphat's time was 1,160,000 strong—was presumably due to the bleak days of Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah. Japhet points out that Amaziah himself is dissatisfied with the size of his army, which leads to the hiring of an additional 100,000 soldiers from Israel (25:6).⁴² Over the period between the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Amaziah, the Judean army apparently dwindled to the size of the first group of Asa and Jehoshaphat's armies.

Uzziah's army is slightly larger, and is anomalous among the figures of the Judean armies as it is not a round number, although the round figure 300,000 does form part of its total:

The whole number of the heads of ancestral houses of mighty warriors was two thousand six hundred. Under their command was an army of *three hundred seven thousand five hundred*, who could make war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy (26:12–13).

Between father and son, the Judean army increased by 7,500 soldiers. This number is precisely one fortieth of 300,000, though we cannot be sure if this calculation has any significance. The Chronicler's intentions may have been more general, wishing to convey that Uzziah's army was slightly larger than that of his father's in order to express that Uzziah managed to rehabilitate the military after his father's crushing defeat at the hands of King Jehoash of

⁴¹ The unusual phrase “able to handle spear and shield (רמח וצנה)” in regard to Amaziah's army generates a connection with the first group of Asa's army, which also numbers 300,000 and comprises warriors bearing “shield and spear (צנה ורמח)” (14:8 [MT 7]). The inversion of the order of *shield and spear* // *spear and shield* may also hint that the Chronicler drew a deliberate parallel between the two descriptions of these armies. Concerning chiasmic inversion in Chronicles (although the discussion chiefly makes comparison to verses outside of Chronicles) see Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History*, 232–74. The phrase “shield and spear” also appears in various forms in 1 Chr 12:9, 25; 2 Chr 11:12. Only here, however, does the phrase relate directly to the royal Judean army and the number 300,000.

⁴² Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 753. Does the Chronicler, perhaps, present Amaziah's deeds as an attempt to restore the army to its size in Abijah's day?

Israel (25:21–24). At present, we are not able to draw more definite conclusions.⁴³

In any case, given that the number 300,000 constitutes the first groups of Asa and Jehoshaphat's armies, Amaziah's army and (with an arguably insignificant addition) Uzziah's army (see the table below),⁴⁴ we can posit that the Chronicler perceived 300,000 as the size of a basic military unit.⁴⁵ In addition to a basic unit of 300,000, Asa's army contained another unit (280,000) which almost doubled this basic size,⁴⁶ and this total doubled in Jehoshaphat's time. In the book of Chronicles, both Asa and Jehoshaphat are characterized as kings whose reigns marked the heyday of the kingdom of Judah.⁴⁷ The size of Amaziah's army demonstrates the severe decline of the kingdom during the reigns of Jehoram, Ahaziah and Athaliah; Judah's army dwindles to the size of a basic unit of 300,000, and barely improves during Uzziah's reign. This theory justifies the Chronicler's division of Asa's army into two groups of 300,000 and 280,000, when given that it constitutes the sum of Abijah's army (400,000) and Rehoboam's army (180,000), one might expect Asa's army to be divided into groups of 400,000 and 180,000. Asa's army was equal to the sum of the two preceding

⁴³ The Hebrew of v. 13 has **ועל ידם חיל צבא שלש מאות אלף ושבעת** **ליל** **שלש** **מלחמה בכח חיל** **אלפים וחמש מאות עושי** **ושבעת אלפים** **מאות אלף**, which allows division to **שלש** **מאות** and **ושבעת אלפים**. The exact translation may be: "Under their command was an army of *three hundred thousand, and seven thousand and five hundred* who could make war with mighty power."

⁴⁴ Besides the appearances discussed in this article, the number 300,000 appears just once elsewhere in the Bible, as the number of Saul's army (1 Sam 11:8). This multiple also features as a non-round number (337,500) in Numbers 31:36, 43.

⁴⁵ Japhet compares this number to the size of David's army in 1 Chr 27:1–15, which numbered 24,000 for each month of the year, 288,000 in total; it is missing only 12,000 (1000 each month) in order to reach the size in question (Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 753). It may be that the missing 1000 every month stemmed from the prioritization of the number 24,000 per month, similar to the number of singers—288 (25:7)—consisting of 12 singers for each of the 24 shifts (25:8–31), as the number 24 is a key number in the chapters of David's lists (23:4; 24:4–18; 25:7–31; 26:17–18; 27:1–15). See also M. Lynch, *Monotbeism and Institutions in the Book of Chronicles: Temple, Priesthood, and Kingship in Post-Exilic Perspective* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 145–48. On the other hand, this might be purely coincidental.

⁴⁶ The reason that the number was not fully doubled to 600,000 is presumably due to the system presented in the first section of the article, which argues that the Chronicler chose to present Asa's army as the totals of the armies of Rehoboam and Abijah.

⁴⁷ See, for example: C. Mitchell, *The Ideal Ruler as Intertext in 1–2 Chronicles and the Cyropaedia* (Ph.D. Thesis; Ottawa 2001), 252–56; Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 110; Klein, *2 Chronicles*, 212–13.

armies, but its inner division reflects the Chronicler's notions of a "standard" military unit.⁴⁸

If what we have asserted so far is correct, and the Chronicler perceives that the army remains roughly 300,000 strong throughout the reigns of Amaziah and Uzziah, this serves to illuminate the Chronicler's characterization of the reign of Ahaz. The size of Ahaz's army is not related in the text, but the heavy losses his army suffers at the hand of the king of Israel, Pekah son of Remaliah, are noted:

Pekah son of Remaliah killed *one hundred twenty thousand* in Judah in one day, all of them valiant warriors, because they had abandoned the LORD, the God of their ancestors. (28:6)

This number initially seems to differ from the rest of the figures that characterize the royal Judean army in Chronicles—it is a semi-round number that contains the component 20,000, which seems to deviate from the semi-round numbers associated with all other Judean kings, which contains the component 80,000. However, given that the number in this episode concerns the *loss* of fighters, *subtraction* seems appropriate in this context; and 20,000 indeed emerges as an integral part of the Chronicler's mathematical manipulation of the royal Judean military. Moreover, if my hypothesis is correct, and the Chronicler indeed perceives the standard size of a Judean military unit during this period⁴⁹ as 300,000, then the death of 120,000 soldiers would leave Ahaz with 180,000 men. Through this the Chronicler closes another circle: during the dismal days of Ahaz, Judah's army reverts to its initial size—to the 180,000 strong army once commanded by Rehoboam.

⁴⁸ It may be that the prophet's words to Amaziah, forbidding him to hire another 100,000 Israelite fighters, are not only due to the explicit reservation from the northern kingdom (2 Chr 25:7–8) but also from the notion that 300,000 is a sufficient military unit, but this is not obliging.

⁴⁹ From the plain meaning of the text, it seems that Jotham, Uzziah's son, reigned for 16 years, which is the time gap between Uzziah and his grandson Ahaz. However, various historical reconstructions have resulted in a consensus that at least some years of Jotham's reign (and according to Galil—his entire reign) were in fact considered part of Uzziah's reign when he suffered from leprosy. See, among others: E.R. Thiele, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings: A Reconstruction of the Chronology of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), 99–135; G. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 46–82. In this light, Ahaz's reign can be effectively be considered the direct continuation of Amaziah and Uzziah's rule, so that the consistence of their army size is likely. Moreover, it is worth emphasizing that these numbers are fictitious and designed to play a literary role, so actual historic logic is less of a concern; just as the historical justification of Jehoshaphat's army being double the size of Asa's, for example, is not necessary.

In light of this exposed process, we can conclude that the Chronicler arranged the numbers of the royal Judean armies—most of them, presumably, of his own invention—in an ingenious logical sequence. The period from Rehoboam until Jehoshaphat is marked by gradual growth; sharp decline during the reigns of Jehoram to Jehoash leaves Amaziah and Uzziah with a limited military; and finally, during the miserable regime of Ahaz, who is characterized as one of the greatest sinners in the book,⁵⁰ Judean's once powerful military shrinks to its minimal state of Rehoboam's time.

The following table summarizes the data provided about Judah's royal military throughout Chronicles:

Rehoboam	Abijah	Asa	Jehoshaphat	Amaziah	Uzziah	Ahaz
		300,000	300,000	300,000	307,500 (300,000 + 300,000/40?)	
		280,000	280,000			
			200,000			
	400,000		200,000			
180,000			180,000			180,000? (300,000 – 120,000)

⁵⁰ K.A.D. Smelik, "The Representation of King Ahaz in 2 Kings 16 and 2 Chronicles 28," in J.C. de Moor (ed.), *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 171–72, 179; R. Ackroyd, "The Biblical Interpretation of the Reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah," in W.B. Barrick and J.R. Spencer (eds.), *In the Shelter of Elyon: Essays on Ancient Palestinian Life and Literature in Honor of G.W. Ahlström* (JSOTS, 31; Sheffield: JSOT, 1984), 248; I. Amar, "Chaotic Writing as a Literary Element in the Story of Ahaz in 2 Chronicles 28," *VT* 66 (2016), 349-64.

CONCLUSION

The numbers the Chronicler provides for the royal Judean militaries are exaggerated, and there is every indication that most of these figures are of the Chronicler's own invention. This does not mean that these numbers are arbitrary, however. The size of Rehoboam's army (180,000) seems to be taken from the source in Kings, as this number, and the verse it features in, also appear in the parallel narrative about the splitting of the kingdoms in the book of Kings (1 Kgs 12:21); the size of Abijah's army (400,000) seems to be derived from the story of David's census, and reflects the Judean military's significant growth; the Chronicler presents Asa's army (580,000) as the sum of the armies of his father and grandfather; while the astronomical size of Jehoshaphat's military (1,160,000) represents the combined forces of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. This exponential growth conveys a clear message; a sense of sweeping continuity between these kings as Judah's military power soars and Judah reaches its heyday.

Finally, I cautiously proposed that the figures relating to the militaries of Amaziah, Uzziah and Ahaz continue this historical sequence, this time marking its decline. The number 300,000 that comprised the first groups of Asa and Jehoshaphat's military constitutes Amaziah and Uzziah's entire forces, while the death of 120,000 soldiers in Ahaz's time reduces Judah's military to the size of the kingdom's army in the days of Rehoboam—just 180,000.

It is worth adding that Ahaz's lowly reign is rectified by the figure of Hezekiah, whom the Chronicler characterizes as a righteous king who restores the greatness of David and Solomon's golden age to Judah, and even, in a certain sense, eclipses the greatness of Jehoshaphat.⁵¹ It may well be that preceding this return to the age of David and Solomon, the Chronicler created a literary framework around the narratives of the kingdom of Judah following the division (2 Chr 10–28).⁵² If so, the numerical sequence presented in this article is certainly woven throughout this unit, from Rehoboam until Ahaz.

This analysis has various implications for further study of the book of Chronicles. From a historical perspective, this lends greater weight to the claim that the numbers in Chronicles—at least the exaggerated figures among them—are fictitious. In truth, there is no evident difference between numbers that seem inflated and numbers that do not; did the Chronicler necessarily inflate every number of which he made literary use? Once the Chronicler's (very) creative use of numbers is recognized, there is no reason to

⁵¹ See, for example, Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 912; M.A. Throntveit, "The Relationship of Hezekiah to David and Solomon in the Books of Chronicles," in M. Graham et al. (eds.), *The Chronicler as Theologian* (London: T&T Clark, 2003), 105–21, and literature there.

⁵² H.G.M. Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 119–25.

assume that he limited himself to the manipulation of exaggerated, unrealistic numbers alone.

From a literary perspective, the information presented in this article testifies to the Chronicler's extremely liberal hand with the details that permeate his work. This, in turn, reveals that the supposedly dry, technical details that characterize the book of Chronicles are in fact anything but dry; the reader or scholar must not mistake them for such, and are required to consider each detail anew to discover whether it, too, conceals a subtle literary revelation.

The numbers discussed here are but a minute sample of the numbers that liberally festoon the Chronicler's text; in this respect, this study is but an invitation for further exploration of the codes and logic concealed in the numbers and details of this work. Despite the extensive research focused on Chronicles in recent decades, the text undoubtedly harbors many treasures that are waiting to be unearthed.