Jechoniah and His Brothers (Matthew 1:11)

John Nolland
Trinity College, Bristol

[p.169]

Matthew directs his reader's engagement with the genealogy he provides by means of framing materials and the use of internal annotation. The omission of three generations of kings from the genealogical list (1:8) and the confusions involved in identifying Josiah as father of Jechoniah and his brothers (v. 11) can be shown to have a similar annotative role: by careful manipulation of the traditions available to him Matthew is able to use these apparent abberations not only to achieve his fourteen generations schema, but also to evoke significant elements in the history of the period covered by his genealogy.

Key words: Matthew, genealogy, intertextuality

The Matthean genealogy in 1:(1)2-16(17) makes use of a number of techniques to direct the reader's engagement with the offered listing of the ancestors of Jesus. First there are the framing materials provided in vv. 1 and 17 which bring into prominence the identity of Jesus as Christ and the links with David and Abraham, and draw attention to the role of fourteens in the construction of the genealogy. Then there is a series of annotations[1] which cumulatively encourage the reading of the genealogy as a compressed narrative of an unfolding history: in brief compass Matthew evokes the glories and tragedies of that story in which the purposes of God unfold; Jesus is located firmly within, but at the climax of, the history of God's dealings with his people. Beyond annotations there is also the breach of pattern in v. 16 through which the difference in the circumstances of Jesus' birth to that of all others in the genealogy are hinted at without being explicated.[2]

---

[1] See vv. 2, 3, 5, 6, 11, 16.

[2] The Matthean genealogy has generated an extensive bibliography. Beyond the commentaries and broader studies see: R. Alter, *The World of Biblical Literature* (New York: Basic Books, 1992) 51-52; H. A. Blair, "Matthew 1, 16 and the Matthean Genealogy," *SE* 2 [= TU 87] (1964) 149-54; R. Bloch, "'Juda engendra Pharès et Zara, de Thamar' (Matt 1,3);' in *Mélanges bibliques rédigés en 1'honneur de André Robert* (Paris: Blond et Gay, 1957) 381-89; C. L. Blomberg, "The Liberation of Illegitimacy: Women and Rulers in Matthew 1-2," *BTB* 21 (1991) 145-50; K. Bornhäuser, *Die Geburts- und Kindheitsgeschichte Jesu* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1930) 6-20; M. Bourke, "The Literary Genus of Matthew 1-2," *CBQ* 22 (1960) 160-75; R. E. Brown, "Gospel Infancy Narrative Research from 1976 to 1986: Part I (Matthew)," *CBQ* 48 (1986) 468-83; idem, *The Birth of the Messiah* (New York: Doubleday, 1993) 57-92; idem, "*Rachab* in Mt 1, 5 Probably is Rahab of Jericho," *Bib* 63 (1982) 79-80; C. Burger, *Jesus als Davidssohn. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (FRLANT 98; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970) 91-102; J. Chopineau, "Un notarikon en Matthieu 1/1. Note sur la généalogie de 1'évangile de Matthieu," *ETR* 53 (1978) 269-70; W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) 67-70; C. T. Davis, "The Fulfilment of Creation. A Study of Matthew's Genealogy," *JAAR* 41 (1973) 520-53; O. Eissfeldt, "Biblos Geneseos," in *Kleine Schriften III* (Tübingen, 1966) 458-70; A. Feuillet, "Observations sur les deux généalogies de Jésus-Christ de saint Matthieu (1, 1-17) et de saint Luc (3,23-28)," *EV* 98 (1988) 605-8; H. Frankemblle, *Jahwebund and Kirche Christi: Studien zur Form- and Traditionsgeschichte des "Evangeliums" nach Matthdus* (NTAbh 10; Münster: Aschendorf, 1984[2]) 311-18, 360-65; E. D. Freed, "The Women in Matthew's Genealogy," *JSNT* 29 (1987) 3-19; W Hammer, "L'intention de to généalogie de Matthieu," *ETR* 55 (1980) 305-6; A. D. Heffern, "The Four Women in St. Matthew's Genealogy of Christ," *JBL* 31 (1912) 68-81; J. P Heil, "The Narrative Roles of Women in Matthew's Genealogy," *Bib* 72 (1991) 538-45; H. Hempelmann, "Das 'Dürre Blatt im Heiligen Buch.' Mt 1,1-17 under der Kampf wider die Erniedrigung Gottes," *TB* 21 (1990) 6-23; J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (trans. F. H. and C. H. Cave; London: SCM, 1969) 275-302; M. D. Johnson, *The Purpose of the Biblical Genealogies: With Special Reference to the Setting of the Genealogies of Jesus* (SNTSMS 8; 2d ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); M. Lambertz, "Die Toledoth in Mt 1,1-17 and Lc 3,23bff," in *Festschrift für*

[p.170]

The present article is concerned with yet another technique that Matthew makes use of in presenting the genealogy. It occurs twice in the genealogy; one of the occurrences has been successfully explored in the literature and the other, so far as I have been able to discover, has not. The technique involved here is not one which is visible to the casual reader, but is nonetheless an effective means of commu-

[p.171]

nication to readers sufficiently initiated into biblical genealogy. The features of the Matthean account which I have in mind are (1) the placing of Uzziah (Ὀζίαν) immediately after Joram in the generational sequence and (2) the identification of Jechoniah as son of Josiah (along with the mention of Jechoniah's brothers). In the former, three generations of kings have been dropped. In the latter case also there is apparently a mis-sequencing of kings, and brothers attributed to Jechoniah which do not seem to exist in the Old Testament sources. What is Matthew doing in these two cases? Is he confused or misinformed? Are our texts of Matthew

Franz Dornseiff (ed. H. Kusch; Leipzig: VEB Bibliographisches Institut, 1953) 201-25; X. Léon-Dufour, "Livre de la genèse de Jésus-Christ," in *Études d'évangile* (Paris: Seuil, 1965) 50-63; J.-L. Leuba, "Note exégétique sur Matthieu 1,1a," *RHPR* 22 (1942) 56-61; J. Masson, *Jésus fils de David dans les généalogies de saint Matthieu et de saint Luc* (Paris: Téqui, 1982); R. D. Mattison, "God/Father: Tradition and Interpretation," *RefRev* 42 (1989) 189-206; F J. Moloney, "Beginning the Gospel of Matthew. Reading Matthew 1:1-2:23," *Salesianum* 54 (1992) 341-59; G. F. Moore, "Fourteen Generations—490 Years," *HTR* 14 (1921) 97-103; M. J. Moreton, "The Genealogy of Jesus," *SE* 2 [= TU 87] (1964) 219-24; G. Mussies, "Parallels to Matthew's Version of the Pedigree of Jesus," *NovT* 28 (1986) 32-47; E. Nellessen, *Das Kind and seine Mütter* (SBS 39; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1969); R. P Nettelhorst, "The Genealogy of Jesus," *JETS* 31 (1988) 169-72; B. M. Newman, Jr., "Matthew 1.118: Some Comments and a Suggested Restructuring," *BT* 27 (1976) 209-12; D. E. Nineham, "The Genealogy in St. Matthew's Gospel and Its Significance for the Study of the Gospel," *BJRL* 58 (1976) 421-44; B. Nolan, *The Royal Son of God: The Christology of Matthew 1-2* (OBO 23; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979); M. Oberweiss, "Beobachtungen zum AT-Gebrauch in der matthäischen Kindheitgeschichte," *NTS* 35 (1989) 131-49; L. Overstreet, "Difficulties of New Testament Genealogies," *GTJ* 2 (1981) 303-26; A. Paul, *L'Évangile de 1'enfance selon saint Matthieu* (Paris: Cerf, 1968) 944; idem, "Matthieu 1 comme ecriture apocalyptique. Le récit véritable de la 'crucifixion de ἔρως," *ANRW* 1125.3 (1984) 1952-68; K. F. Plum, "Genealogy as Theology," *ScandTJOT* 3 (1989) 66-92; J. D. Quinn, "Is ῬΑΞΑΒ in Mt 1.5 Rahab of Jericho?" *Bib* 62 (1981) 225-28; J. Schaberg, "The Foremothers and the Mother of Jesus," *Concil* 206 (1989) 112-19; F. Schnider and W Stenger, "Die Frauen im Stammbaum Jesu nach Matthäus: Strukturale Beobachtungen zu Mt 1,1-17," *BZ* 23 (1979) 187-96; H. Schollig, "Die Zahlung der Generationen im matthaischen Stammbaum;" *ZNW* 59 (1968) 26168; B. B. Scott, "The Birth of the Reader," *Semeia* 52 (1990) 83-102; idem, "The Birth of the Reader in Matthew: Matthew 1:1-4:16;" in *Faith and History* (FS P W Meyer; Scholars Press Homage Series; ed. J. T. Carroll et al.; Atlanta: Scholars, 1990) 35-54; P. Seethaler, "Eine kleine Bemerkung zu den Stammbäumen Jesu nach Matthäus and Lukas," *BZ* 16 (1972) 256-57; F. Spitta, "Die Frauen in der Genealogie des Matthäus;" *ZWT* 54 (1912) 1-8; H. Stegemann, "'Die des Uria : Zur Bedeutung der Frauennamen in der Genealogie von Matthaus, 1,1-17," in *Tradition and Glaube* (ed. G. Jeremias et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971) 246-76; K. Stendahl, "Quis et Unde? An Analysis of Matthew 1-2;" in *The Interpretation of Matthew* (Issues in Religion and Theology 3; ed. G. Stanton; Philadelphia/ London: Fortress/SPCK, 1983) 56-66; W. B. Tatum, "'The Origin of Jesus Messiah' (Matt 1:1, 18a): Matthew's Use of the Infancy Traditions," *JBL* 96 (1977) 523-35; A. Vögtle, "Die Genealogie Mt 1,2-16 and die matthäische Kindheitsgeschichte;" in *Das Evangelium and die Evangelien: Beträge zur Evangelienforschung* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1971) 57-102; idem, "'Josias zeugte den Jechonias und seine Brüder' (Mt 1,11),' in *Lex tua Veritas: Festschrift für H. Junker* (ed. H. Gross; Trier: Paulinus, 1961) 307-13; H. C. Waetjen, "The Genealogy as the Key to the Gospel according to Matthew," *JBL* 95 (1976) 205-30; E. M. Wainwright, Towards a Feminist Critical Reading of the Gospel according to Matthew (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1991) 61-69, 156-76; Y. Zakowitch, "Rahab als Mutter des Boas in der Jesus-Genealogie (Match. 15)," *NovT* 17 (1975) 1-5.

defective (in the latter case)? Or is Matthew subtly offering yet another kind of annotation to his genealogy? Since the loss of the three generations of kings has been significantly explored in the literature Matthew's technique in this case will be presented fairly briefly, partly by way of introduction to the investigation of "Jechoniah and his brothers," which will in turn provide the main focus of attention.

[p.172]

What is involved, then, in Matthew's loss of three generations of kings? Matthew's Ὀζίας seems to be based on a confusion of Ahaziah (see 2 Kgs 8:25-29; 9:16, 21-29; 2 Chr 22:1-9) and Uzziah-also called Azariah (see 2 Kgs 15:1-32; 2 Chronicles 26). Ahaziah is normally rendered in the LXX as Ὀχοζ(ε)ία(ς), but in 1 Chr 3:11 the B text has Ὀζεία, and A V and Lucian have Ὀζίας. For Uzziah = Azariah the LXX normally has Ὀζ(ε)ίας or Ἀζαρία(ς). In 1 Chr 3:12 the B text has Ἀζαρία, the A text Ἀζαρίας, and Lucian has Ὀζίας. Is the genealogy here, then, based on a Greek text which in v. 12 had the Lucianic reading? This seems likely. The suggestion is often made that this (near) identity of names led to a visual slip, but it might be better to agree with those who see it as offering a deliberately taken opportunity.

The loss of three generations of kings is necessary to achieve the required fourteen generations from David to the Exile. For a student of the OT accounts of the period of the monarchy, the jump might become almost a moral necessity once it was realized that the loss of the three kings involved would have the effect of (symbolically) implementing in Judah (implicated by the marriage of his daughter to Jehoram) for three generations the curse on the house of Ahab.

> 1 Kgs 21:21-24 places a curse on the house of Ahab, which is deferred a generation in v. 29. Ahab's daughter Athaliah married Jehoram (2 Kgs 8:18, 26) and their son, Ahaziah, succeeds Jehoram. On the death of Ahaziah, Athaliah assumed the throne herself (2 Kgs 11:3; 2 Chr 22:12), having attempted to wipe out all her son's progeny (2 Kgs 11:1-3). A curse to the third generation (Exod 21:5) would cover Ahaziah, Joash and Amaziah, the missing kings. It might not be fortuitous (at least not in the mind of the genealogist) that only these three kings meet a violent end which is said to be by the will of God (2 Chr 22:7; 24:24; 25:20—admittedly other kings are said to be struck down with illness by the will of God).[3]

By taking advantage of the near identity of the names "Uzziah" and "Ahaziah" in parts of the Greek Old Testament textual tradition,[4] Matthew has, by his placing of Uzziah immediately after Joram, been able not only to ensure the symmetry of his fourteen generation pattern (implying the unfolding of the well ordered purposes of God), but also to evoke the curse on the household of Ahab to the third generation which engulfed, as well, these three generations of the kings of Judah.

We turn our attention now to "Jechoniah and his brothers." It seems a simple enough statement, but it becomes difficult once we try to read it intelligently in relation to the text of the OT. For our dis-

---

[3] See Masson, *Fils de David*, 116-24, for a recent defense of the view that the omission is based in part on the curse.

[4] Similarity of names also seems to be made productive by Matthew with "Asaph" in v. 7 and possibly with "Amos" in v. 10.

[p.173]

cussion we need first to sketch the biblical information. It will emerge that not only "and his brothers" but also the use of the name "Jechoniah" itself has in an important sense the role of annotation.

1 Chr 3:15 attributes four sons to Josiah: Johanan, Jehoiakim, Zedekiah and Shallum. The first is otherwise unknown. The fourth (Shallum) succeeded Josiah as king (Jer 22:11; 2 Kgs 23:31 [called Jehoahaz in the latter]). The second (Jehoiakim) succeeded Shallum to the throne (2 Kgs 23:34; 2 Chr 36:4 [these indicate that his name had originally been Eliakim]), and was himself succeeded on the throne by his son Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24:6; 2 Chr 36:8), also known as Coniah (Jer 22:24, 28) and as Jechoniah (1 Chr 3:16-17; Jer 24:1; 27:20; etc.). Finally Jehoiachin is taken off into captivity (but with a continuing significance: 2 Kgs 25:27-30; Jer 52:31-34) and is replaced by his uncle, the third son of Josiah (Zedekiah: 2 Kgs 24:17; 2 Chr 36:10),[5] who was to be the last reigning king of the Davidic line. Matthew seems, then, to have Jechoniah = Jehoiachin = Coniah wrongly located, both in terms of descent and of reign.

What about brothers for Jechoniah? 2 Chr 36:10 has the Zedekiah who became king after him identified as a brother. But this is either an error, or a use of "brother" to mean "kinsman." 1 Chr 3:16 might identify Zedekiah as a brother of Jechoniah,[6] but it is rather more likely that the reference is to the uncle who succeeded him upon the throne.[7] So these texts offer us no help in identifying literal brothers for Matt 1:11.

Is it possible that we should consider a non-literal sense for "brothers" in v. 11? Ἀδελφοί can certainly take a range of non-literal meanings, most of which, however, can be immediately ruled out in the present context.[8] Only "kin" could be considered, with the emphasis in the context on genealogical descent, and only then if the

[p.174]

kin in view were descendants (brothers with descendants could also be included, and even sisters). By virtue of vagueness this proposal would ease the tension with the OT texts, but, without drawing in Zedekiah from less likely readings of 2 Chr 36:10 and/or 1 Chr 3:16 (as

---

[5] The former of these texts indicates that his name had originally been Matthaniah.

[6] This requires the two consecutive statements "Jechoniah his son" and "Zedekiah his son" to be taken in parallel. This takes literally the plural "sons" at the beginning of the verse: "the sons of Jehoiakim," but the parallel statement in v. 10: "sons of Solomon" which is followed by a list of the kings in sequence with "his son" between each, suggests rather that the sense is "the descendants of " in each case (as NRSV, etc., but contrast v. 1).

[7] With בֵּן used in the sense of succession to the throne. Cf. 2 Kgs 24:17; 2 Chr 36:10. Another possibility is to take Zedekiah, literally, as son of Jechoniah.

[8] All the non-literal senses for ἀδελφός appeal to some form of intimate link. This is generally a blood link, even if this must be traced back to the primal shared ancestry of the whole human race, or to the shared national ancestry of Israel. When a blood link is not involved the link can be variously the bond of a community of faith, the family connection created by marriage (so: "brother-in-law"), or the link of shared membership of the highest echelons of society (e.g., Herod addressing Pilate). For completeness I mention the use of the plural for "brothers and sisters." For references see BAGD, 15-16.

mentioned above), we still have no specific kin who could be in view.[9] There does not, then, seem to be any better OT basis for introducing a mention at this point of Jechoniah's kin than there was for his brothers. Nothing has been gained by moving from literal to non-literal brothers. Given the unsatisfying outcome of the search for non-literal brothers, and the use of the identical phrase "and his brothers" in Matt 1:2, where the "brothers" are quite literal brothers, it would seem best to proceed at this point on the basis of a puzzle about unexplained literal brothers.

Except for renderings of names, the LXX does not alter significantly the picture that we have built up. The confusing state of affairs in which "Jechoniah," "Jehoiachin," "Coniah" are all used of Jechoniah is simplified by the elimination of "Jehoiachin" and "Coniah,"[10] but a different point of potential confusion is added by the use of Ἰωακίμ at times for both Jehoiachin (4 Kgdms 24:6, 8, 12, 15; 25:27; Jer 52:31) and Jehoiakim ("Jehoiachin' becomes either "Jechoniah" or a second "Jehoiakim").[11] The name changes here may account for Matthew's preference for Jechoniah over Jehoiachin or Coniah, but do not in any straightforward way account for Matthew's wording.

The Matthean text seems, then, to have difficulties on three fronts: Jechoniah is not a son of Josiah; he has no brothers; and the timing of his reign seems to be inaccurately perceived. Despite the possibilities for confusion that this rather complex situation opens up, it is hard to see how the person responsible for the careful work in the genealogy could write "Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brothers."

It has to be admitted that at least one text has become confused in relation to all this: the B text of 1 Esdr 1:32 (ET v 34) puts a Jechoniah in the place of Shallum[12] as the one of the sons of Josiah who first succeeded him to the throne (in v. 41 a second Jehoiakim is named as son of Jehoiakim, as in the LXX above). This confusion in 1 Esdr 1:32 seems to be exactly what we have in Matt 1:11, but I find

[p.175]

myself reluctant to use it in explanation of the Matthean text precisely because there is no clear anchor for the error in either the distinctive LXX usage or in the general complexity of the OT picture, such as would encourage us to believe that this was a repeatable error.[13] The influence could even be, in the copying tradition, from the Matthean text to the text of 1 Esdras.

---

[9] Salathiel could be considered, but both because he comes up for specific mention in Matt 1:12 and because the Matthean text makes such a sharp divide between the time in which the deportation occurred and the period of exile which followed this seems unlikely.

[10] At 2 Chr 36:8, 9 "Jehoiachin" becomes "Jechoniah" and in Jer 22:24, 28 "Coniah" becomes "Jechoniah."

[11] Aberrantly, the A text of Jer 22:24 has the inversion "Jehoiakim son of Jechoniah."

[12] The other texts have "Jehoahaz" (= Shallum).

[13] Only a reading of 1 Chr 3:16 and/or 2 Chr 36:10 making Zedekiah a brother of Jechoniah could contribute to identifying Jechoniah as a son of Josiah, but the former would, on this reading, make it clear that both Jechoniah and Zedekiah are sons of Jehoiakim, while the latter makes it quite clear that the "brother" of Zedekiah immediately preceded him on the throne (as the second Jehoiakim—and not the Jechoniah of 1 Esdr 1:32 [ET v. 34]—does in v. 24 [ET v. 43]). The A text of Jer 22:24 (see n. 11 above) is not a credible source, since its information would have needed to be supplemented by that of other OT texts, which would immediately alert the author to its idiosyncrasy.

The best of the solutions on offer in the literature seem to be those which involve textual emendation (unfortunately without any text-critical support). A. Vögtle[14] argues for an original with "Josiah begat Jehoiakim and his brothers." This leaves a gap between "Josiah begat Jehoiakim" and "Jechoniah begat Shealtiel" in v. 12. Such a gap was forced, Vögtle suggests, by the nature of the time expressions used to mark off the exile as a significant turning point in vv. 11 and 12. The time of the Exile is best thought of as beginning during the reign of Jehoiakim: Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon arrives on the scene; Jehoiakim, at first, switches allegiance from Pharaoh Neco to Nebuchadnezzar, but then rebels, and this is the beginning of the end (see 2 Kgs 23:34-24:4). Matthew's putative original marks this well, but it leaves no place for "Jehoiakim begat Jechoniah" to be fitted. The alert reader is left to fill the gap. But a scribe, alert in another way, filled the gap by altering "Jehoiakim" to "Jechoniah." He could support his move by recalling that the LXX frequently represents "Jehoiachin" = "Jechoniah" as "Jehoiakim."[15] Vögtle's view has two points of vulnerability. The first is obviously the lack of any trace in the textual transmission of the scribal activity postulated. The second lies in the claim that an exile period beginning in the

[p.176]

reign of Jehoiakim explains the failure to include "Jehoiakim begat Jechoniah." It does not! Jechoniah was born well before Nebuchadnezzar appeared on the scene.[16] And while it may be true enough that the reign of Jehoiakim marks the beginning of the end, there is a considerable artificiality in using Jehoiakim to mark the end of Davidic kingship.

What is clear is that the genealogy—if it is to keep to the fourteen generations called for in v. 17—cannot afford to have an extra generation marked here (so no room for a distinction between the generation of Shallum and that of Jehoiachim). In some sense the genealogy must mark the end of Davidic kingship with "Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brothers." But is there a better way of incorporating this strength of Vögtle's view? The (near) identity of two kings' names provides (part of) the basis in v. 8 for dropping out three names from the list of kings. Could we have something similar here? The genealogist needs to evoke in this statement the end of the Davidic kingship, with the collapse of the nation and exile. It is clear that this does all happen in a single generation, since, although a grandson of Josiah—Jechoniah—reigns for three months, it is one of Josiah's own sons—Zedekiah—who is the final king to reign over Judah. At the same time it is Jechoniah who clearly, in 2 Kgs 25:27-30, has some ongoing importance for the Davidic line.[17] How can all this be evoked? We recall that in LXX usage the grandson of Josiah is called either "Jechoniah" or "Jehoiakim," using the same name as his father. What about using a statement that creates a deliberate confusion between father and son? "Josiah begat Jehoiakim and his brothers" would not achieve this, since it would naturally be taken as a straightforward reference to the father. What about, then, using

---

[14] A. Vögtle, "'Josias zeugte den Jechonias und seine Brüder' (Mt 1,11);' 307-13 and idem, "Die Genealogie Mt 1,2-16 und die matthaische Kindheitsgeschichte," 57-102, here 95-99. He is building upon earlier views. J. Masson, *Jésus Fils de David*, 42-55, offers a more complex variant which involves a Semitic original, and several stages of development: (1) an original with "Josiah begat Jehoiakim (and his brothers). Jehoiakim begat Jechoniah at the time of the Babylonian exile"; (2) translation into Greek involved putting "Jehoiakim" for "Jechoniah"; (3) the odd looking "Jehoiakim begat Jehoiakim" was dropped; finally (4) "Jechoniah" replaces "Jehoiakim." The view is burdened by its own unwarranted complexity.

[15] It is of course just possible that the scribe was aware of the B reading of 1 Esdr 1:32.

[16] See 2 Kgs 23:36; cf. 24:8. Jechoniah (= Jehoiachim) was born seven years before Jehoiakim came to the throne, i.e., still in the reign of Josiah.

[17] Jer 22:24-30 does not in any obvious way share the hope of 2 Kgs 25:27-30.

the other name of the son? "Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brothers" is patently not true: Jechoniah is grandson, not son and he does not seem to have had any brothers. The alert reader is set to ponder and recalls that this Jechoniah is also known as Jehoiakim, and that this other name is a name which he shares with his father. "Josiah begat Jechoniah and his brothers" is a statement that clearly reaches the genealogist's goal here in Jechoniah, while at the same time insisting that the Babylonian exile came just one generation beyond Josiah. In the statement "Jechoniah" is first and foremost himself, but secondarily a cipher for the father with whom he shares a name. The genealogist has contained his account of the period from David to the Exile within fourteen generations and has provided us with a rich

[p.177]

texture of allusion to the salvation history of which his genealogy is a brief summary.

We began with a list of the techniques used by Matthew to direct the reader's engagement with the genealogy of Jesus' ancestors back to Abraham. The article has offered a case for adding a further item to the list. This further item takes the form of manipulation of the actual genealogical material, in the one case by the omission of three generations of kings of Judah, in the other case by a deliberate confusing of Jehoiakim and Jechoniah. By careful manipulation of the traditions available to him Matthew is able to use these aberrations not only to achieve his fourteen generation schema but also to evoke significant elements in the history of the period covered by his genealogy. The absence of the three kings is pregnant with significance: their share in the curse on Ahab has eliminated them from sight in this revisionist rendering. The impossible combination of "Jechoniah" with "and his brothers" allows the phrase to evoke significant features of the period of the Babylonian conquest and to span the final two generations of the Judean monarchy.