Lecture 4: The Chronicler's Sources  
History-telling in the Bible

Turning our attention first to the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles, even though they are the latest of the works we'll explore, is advantageous, since we have fairly ready access to its prime sources, in Samuel & Kings, so as to judge how the author went about formulating his story. Of course, our ultimate goal is to understand what the author (whom I'll refer to as "the Chronicler," without implying that he also authored Ezra and Nehemiah) – what he was trying to say via his narrative. But before we can address that question, which I will next time, we have to identify the building blocks of his story, where he got them, and how he orchestrated them to create his portrayal of Israel's life.

There are, in fact, five possible relationships between a passage in Chronicles and one in the books of Samuel-Kings. On the one hand, a narrative in Chronicles may precisely parallel one that stands in Samuel-Kings; it can be a virtual offprint of it. On the other hand, many narratives, while parallel and nearly identical, have slight but significant differences. These are the passages that, at least on initial consideration, seem most useful for gauging the Chronicler’s use of sources.

Similarly, there are stories that, while clearly a narrative with the same plot as in Samuel-Kings, are different enough that they must be regarded as a different version of the story, owing to the author using a different edition of Samuel-Kings than we know, an issue that Nelson mentions.

Equally important are those passages where material found in Samuel/Kings is absent from Chronicles. These omissions are significant, since, while some are due to the different form of Samuel-Kings available to the author, more often they seem to be material the author considered less-than-helpful in telling his story. Needless to say, then, this is not just a matter of accidental omissions, but of deliberately expunging material that would prove embarrassing.

The final relationship between Chronicles and Samuel-Kings has to do with material that appears in Chronicles but not in Samuel-Kings. This can be material the Chronicler composed himself or that he derived from another source. In this regard, the material he inserts from another source is just as significant as sentences he adds on his own (such as speeches he constructs for some characters), since weaving the additional stories he knows into the framework from Samuel-Kings creates a different sort of narrative than existed previously. I will now give examples of each of these.

While there are many stories that fall into the first category (identical parallels) particularly among the stories about David, if that were the only type of relationship – or even the typical one – there would be little talk about with regard to the Chronicler's use of his sources, and we could conclude that he merely passed on
what he inherited. But that is not the full story, nor is it the most interesting part of it. There are, in fact, many occasions when the relationship must be described as a narrative the Chronicler adopted from Samuel-Kings, but modified in ways either small or large.

One of the smallest and yet most significant modifications is in 1 Chronicles 21:1-3, parallel to 2 Sam 24:1-3. Both passages tell the story of David's decision to take a census of the people and the LORD’s response to it. It is somewhat difficult to tell what’s at stake with this census and why it is judged displeasing to the LORD. One possibility is that it had to do with a plan to replace the old tribal organization of Israel with a new, streamlined administrative structure that would provide for easier taxation and conscripting of workers for public projects. That kind of breakdown of the old tribal order is often viewed critically.

Whatever the case, 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles trace David’s action back to very different causes. In 2 Samuel 24:1 it is the LORD who incites David to do this, as an expression, we're told, of his anger with Israel; i.e. the LORD sets them up for punishment by having David commit an act that merits punishment. 1 Chronicles 21:1, by contrast, attributes the instigation of David's misdeed to Satan. By means of this small change, the Chronicler creates a major ideological shift: rather than the LORD inciting an evil that he finds necessary to punish, the Chronicler attributes this incitement to a proponent of evil named "Satan," and thus averts the problematic relationship assumed between the LORD and evil.

There are also larger-scale differences between parallel passages that can be laid at the Chronicler's doorstep. For example, 1 Chronicles 22:2-3 carries a report parallel to 2 Kings 8:26-27 about the accession of a king named Ahaziah. It agrees with 2 Kings in noting that his mother was Athaliah, a daughter of a northern king named Omri, who is roundly despised in both Chronicles and Kings as an infidel. However, whereas 2 Kgs attributes Ahaziah's evil deeds simply to the fact that he was related by marriage to the house of Ahab, Omri's successor and brother of Athaliah, 2 Chronicles provides a more direct influence, by having Athaliah tutoring Ahaziah in what evils to execute.

Intriguingly, Chronicles makes a similar shift in reporting the reign of the southern king, Joash. As he does elsewhere, the Chronicler omits Kings' synchronistic reference to the northern king and (curiously) transfers the number "7 years" to Joash himself, making him seven years old when he took the throne.

More striking, however, is the modification he makes in the final sentence: Whereas 2 Kings 12 asserts that "Jehoash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all his days, because the priest Jehoiada instructed him," 1 Chronicles 24 limits Jehoiada's influence over Joash (variant form of Jehoash) to his own lifetime: "Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of the priest Jehoiada." And then the chapter subsequently plays out the implications of
that statement by reporting that after Jehoiada died, Joash did evil.

So both in 1 Chronicles 22 and (slightly later) 1 Chronicles 24, a person's behavior is strongly shaped by those who exert influence on them. It is because this theme appears in more than one passage and is allied with the Chronicler's very structured notion of morality that it is attributable to him rather than the "edition" of Samuel-Kings that he used.

These are examples of the kinds of differences to be found in parallel passages that show the Chronicler not entirely bound by the texts he received. He seems to have felt it legitimate to reshape the story in at least minor ways. Next session we'll see some even more strident manipulations of the text the Chronicler undertakes in writing his history. --

There are also instances when the Chronicler uses a story clearly similar to the one in Samuel-Kings, and yet with enough significant differences that it seems to be a variant version of the story we find in Samuel-Kings (in the form we know it). To start with a rather simple and clear example, let's note parallels between 2 Chronicles 8:17-18 and 1 Kings 9:26-28, which report cooperation between Solomon and the Phoenician king Hiram ("Huram" in Chronicles) in shipping gold from a place called "Ophir." While this is clearly the same story, there is a fundamental difference in who owns the ships. Did Solomon build and own these ships at Ezion-Geber, while Hiram simply sent experienced sailors to help staff the voyage (as Kings asserts)– or did Solomon merely travel to Ezion-Geber to make use of ships owned by Hiram, whose experienced crews made the trip possible (as Chronicles portrays it)? Those are two different narrations of the event, and it is difficult to see why the Chronicler would have been interested in altering the story as told by Kings; none of his distinctive interests are involved in the differences in his story. In fact, you might recall Nelson's report that just prior to this, in 2 Chronicles 8:2, the Chronicler has Hiram giving Solomon cities rather than Solomon ceding cities to Hiram in exchange for building materials for the temple, as Kings has it. While Nelson suggests that the Chronicler did this deliberately (to elevate Solomon's status vis-à-vis Hiram, it is very difficult to argue that the same author made changes in this brief space that moved in opposite directions. More likely they are due to his copy of Samuel-Kings carrying an alternative form of the story with different features.

Let's take another example, this one having to do with the story of Solomon's visit to the holy shrine at Gibeon, where he receives from the L ORD a bestowal of heightened wisdom. Again, the fundamental story line is the same; there is no question but that these narratives are parallel. However, there are significant differences between them, such as King's extensive explanation of why the Lord has shown such steadfast love to David. Equally notable are the variations in the order of presentation in the next section, as for example, Solomon's confession of
fundamental clueless-ness in Kings – "I do not know how to go out or come in" – refracted in Chronicles' into Solomon's request for wisdom so as "to go out and come in before this people."

In the next section, the major difference is Kings' underscoring of Solomon's wisdom by saying that he, in his wisdom, is without peer among those who came before and will also be peerless among those who follow him. In the next section both Chronicles and Kings use similar language in describing Solomon's unparalleled wealth and honor, but only Kings promises Solomon a long life if he complies with all that the LORD commands, even as earlier Kings distinctly specified what David did that inspired the LORD's steadfast love for him. This is not, however, something the Chronicler is likely to have deliberately omitted, since he is very concerned to show that both David and Solomon did everything the LORD required of them.

King's conclusion to this episode is likewise distinct in describing Solomon officiating at sacrifices offered in Jerusalem upon his return. Given Chronicles fondness for showing both David and Solomon involved with temple rites, it is unlikely that the Chronicler simply deleted this scene.

The upshot of these comparisons is that, alongside the numerous strong parallels with passages in Samuel-Kings stand other parallels whose relationship is clouded. Their content argues against concluding that the Chronicler simply modified what he found in Samuel-Kings, and yet the differences are hard to account for. In most of these cases, it is likely that the copy of Samuel-Kings the Chronicler had in his possession had not yet been filled out with all the material we find in the copies of Samuel-Kings we know.

The importance of this observation is that the Chronicler's main source, Samuel-Kings was, itself, still undergoing revision and expansion. That, in turn, means that we cannot think of Samuel-Kings as the true report of historical events and Chronicles as a muddying of the waters. Each work is, to some degree, a variant expansion and modification of older reports. This is often what lies behind the different form of the story in Chronicles.

Chronicles’ reshaping of the narrative we know from Samuel-Kings appears not just in modifications it makes to stories, but also in what it leaves out: the absence of a story found in Samuel-Kings, which at times involves a lengthy expanse of text. E.g., Chronicles lacks entirely the narrative of 2 Sam chapters 13-20, which tell of two revolts against David: the first by his son Absalom, who drove David out of his capital, and the second by a man named Sheba, of the tribe of Benjamin, who disaffected northern tribes from David, causing them to secede, until David put a stop to it with a show of force.

Following those episodes, chapter 21 tells of David slaughtering seven of Saul's sons as a reprisal for an attack Saul had executed on the citizens of Gibeon during
his reign.

Needless to say, none of these stories cast David in a positive light, and it is likely for that reason that the Chronicler, for whom David is his prime hero, simply omitted them. In fact, another large omission can be accounted for by the same explanation and gives credibility to the inference that such omissions were due to the Chronicler rather than his copy of Samuel-Kings.

1 Chronicles 20 offers the following report: "1 In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, Joab led out the army, ravaged the country of the Ammonites, and came and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. Joab attacked Rabbah, and overthrew it. 2 David took the crown of Milcom from his head; he found that it weighed a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David’s head." – This is a story derived directly from 2 Sam 11, which the Chronicler seems to have followed rather closely. (The few differences are, again, likely due to the copy of Samuel-Kings the author had before him than to changes he made.)

Moreover, the report of Joab attacking Ramah and overthrowing it (in 1 Chronicles) parallels a report in 2 Samuel that "Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites, and took the royal city." And the notice that David seized the crown worn by the king of Ramah and placed it on his own head (thus assuming rule over the captured city) aligns with 2 Samuel's report that "he took the crown of Milcom from his head; the weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David’s head." – So clearly we're dealing with parallel texts in this story.

However, notice that I haven't indicated in which number of verses the parallel reports of Joab's attack and David's assumption of the crown appear in 2 Sam. Its report of Joab's attack of Rabbah stands not immediately after the report that David remained in Jerusalem (as in Chronicles), but 52 verses later, in 2 Sam 12:26! Similarly, the report of David arrogating the crown of the king of Ramah to himself stands still another four verses away, in 12:30.

So what does the Chronicler displace in his condensation of this story? Notice what follows on 2 Sam 11:1: "2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king’s house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. 3 David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, “This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” 4 So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself after her period.) Then she returned to her house. 5 The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, “I am pregnant.”

The moral of the story is, "When the other Kings go out for war, go out an fight with them. Don't loiter around the palace, 'cuz you might notice Monica."
What the Chronicler omits is another story that shows David as a typical, power-deluded king. But it's clear that it is a matter of the Chronicler deliberately omitting material, given that the version in Chronicles fails to explain how David got from Jerusalem, where he had stayed behind when Joab went to war, to the site of the victory at Rabbah, where he seized the crown. 2 Sam explains that transition by having Joab summon David to Rabbah at the end of the battle. In omitting the disgraceful story of David's dalliances, the Chronicler also removed the mechanism that got David to the scene of the battle.

The upshot of the Chronicler's removal of these three episodes is that, in his narrative, David's reign is untroubled and his behavior is unimpeachable. The Chronicler has been unwilling to live with the unvarnished David that the author of Samuel-Kings portrayed.

I'll provide one more example of the Chronicler's penchant for portraying David's reign as a Camelot era by expunging stories that suggest otherwise. Chronicles provides surprisingly little information about the reign of David's predecessor, Saul. In fact, it cuts to the chase in an extreme way by narrating only his death in battle and then offering its own, distinctive summary statement: 

So Saul died for his unfaithful-ness; he was unfaithful to the LORD in that he did not keep the command of the LORD; moreover, he had consulted a medium, seeking guidance, and did not seek guidance from the LORD. Therefore the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse."

That summary is followed immediately by the report that all Israel gathered at Hebron to acclaim David king. Of course, the attribution of this action to "all Israel" is due to the Chronicler, who has modified 2 Samuel's report of "all the tribes of Israel" (meaning the northern tribes) acclaiming David king. As Nelson says, the Chronicler typically gives an "all Israel" cast to his narratives. But there's an even greater significance to this change. The point the Chronicler makes with his "all Israel" subject in this context begins to dawn on us once we notice what precedes the parallel report in Samuel.

The final chapter of 1 Samuel reports the deaths of Saul and his son Jonathan in battle, the same scene covered in abbreviated form earlier in 1 Chronicles 10. 2 Sam 1 contains, among other things, David's lament for Saul and Jonathan. 2 Sam 2 then narrates the aftermath of Saul's death and includes this report: "But Abner son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ishbaal son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim. He made him king over Gilead, the Ashurites, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and over all Israel. Ishbaal, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. But the house of Judah followed David." – 2 Samuel is very clear that David's rise to power was not as smooth as "the LORD putting Saul to death and turning the kingdom over to David son of Jesse." – And 2 Samuel is even more explicit about the troubles that
followed: "There was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David; David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker." – Even if 2 Samuel foreshadows the end by speaking of David's rise in power vis-à-vis the house of Saul, it frankly acknowledges that Saul's death did not result in a mass acclamation of David as the king of all Israel. The majority of the tribes followed Ishbaal, leading to a protracted conflict with David and his followers in Judah.

So once again, the Chronicler has shaped the tenor of his story by what he has omitted as much as by what he has included. His deliberate skewing of the narrative is evident in his report about the LORD turning over the kingdom to David upon Saul's death and his subsequent report that "all Israel" immediately acclaimed David king. Once again, the Chronicler's changes in the storyline to portray a trouble-free Davidic era. Thus, the Chronicler's omissions are an important part of his shaping of the narrative.

On occasion the Chronicler supplies material not found in the parallel passage in Samuel-Kings, and at times this material seems to go back to additional sources available to the Chronicler, even though he does not explicitly cite them. E.g., 2 Kings 8:24b-25 reports that, after the death of the Judean King Jehoram, "his son Ahaziah succeeded him. 25In the twelfth year of King Joram son of Ahab of Israel, Ahaziah son of King Jehoram of Judah began to reign." 2 Chronicles 22 carries this report, but (among other things) drops the synchronistic notice of the northern king at the time and the specification of his regnal year – a feature of Kings that the Chronicler regularly omits since (as Nelson says) he is largely uninterested in the affairs of the northern kingdom.

On the other hand, you'll notice that the Chronicler infuses this passage with a stress on Ahaziah's rule in Jerusalem, by supplying at the outset the note that it was "the inhabitants of Jerusalem" who made him king and by transforming the final statement from "Ahaziah...of Judah began to reign" into "Ahaziah...began to reign as king of Judah." It's the realm over which Ahaziah reigns that he accents as much as the onset of his rule. This, of course, correlates with the Chronicler's nearly myopic interest in Judah.

More significantly, the Chronicler inserts some information about Ahaziah not found in 2 Kings. First, he informs us that Ahaziah was Jehoram's youngest son, which might seem just a writer's flourish if it weren't for the succeeding note that explains why Joram's youngest son succeeded him: "for the troops who came with the Arabs to the camp had killed all the older sons." In fact, this statement is, in effect, a cross-reference to a report about Jehoram in the previous chapter, 2 Chronicles 21:16-17, a report not found in 2 Kings: "16The LORD aroused against Jehoram the anger of the Philistines and of the Arabs who are near the Ethiopians. 17They came up against Judah, invaded it, and carried away all the possessions they
found that belonged to the king’s house, along with his sons and his wives, so that no son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest son."

The name "Jehoahaz" here designates the same person as "Ahaziah" in v. 1 of the next chapter. They're simply variant spellings, depending on whether the abbreviated form of the divine name is placed first (Yeho-) or last (-yah).

The point, in any case, is that the Chronicler seems to have had access to information not available to the author of Kings, since there is no discernable reason that he would have created this note on his own: it doesn't serve any of his distinctive emphases or interests.

So some of the unique stories found in Chronicles likely go back to sources the Chronicler had besides Samuel-Kings, sources he doesn't mention and whose contents we would not have if it weren't for their inclusion here.

Elsewhere the unique materials supplied by the Chronicler seem to derive from his own pen. We've already seen an example of this in the summary statement the Chronicler provides for the death of Saul in battle, just before launching into his glorious narration of the beginning of David's reign over all Israel.

Another example of Chronicles having material lacking in Kings, but most likely penned by the Chronicler himself rather than derived from a source, has to do with the report of the death of the southern king, Ahaziah. Ahaziah was visiting the northern king Jehoram when a coup d'état erupted, at the instigation of an army commander named Jehu. According to 2 Kings. 9:27, Ahaziah simply got caught up in the violence: "When King Ahaziah of Judah saw this, he fled in the direction of Beth-haggan. Jehu pursued him, saying, “Shoot him also!” And they shot him in the chariot at the ascent to Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to Megiddo, and died there."

Chronicles narrates these events not from the standpoint of Ahaziah, but from that of the usurper, Jehu: "When Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he met the officials of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah’s brothers, who attended Ahaziah, and he killed them. He searched for Ahaziah, who was captured while hiding in Samaria and was brought to Jehu, and put to death."

Leaving aside the origins in the differences in these reports of Ahaziah's death, notice what the Chronicler prefixes to this story: "But it was ordained by God that the downfall of Ahaziah should come about through his going to visit Joram. For when he came there he went out with Jehoram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab." – The idea that a king's death was not simply a historical accident, but was planned by God is very much in line with the way the Chronicler's theme of retributive justice that Nelson mentions and that we'll explore further next session.

And so this verse that prepares the way for the death of Ahaziah is another case of material the Chronicler supplies by his own hand.
So there are at least these four ways that the Chronicler’s unique wrinkles relate to the books of Samuel-Kings. However, to leave it at that would be misleading, because it sounds like the Chronicler is simply rewriting Samuel-Kings. While that is, to some extent, true, it is also important to understand that we can identify other sources he used that we know of from elsewhere in the Bible.

For example, the Chronicler inserts hymns from the book of Psalms. As a case in point, 1 Chronicles 15 tells of David's arrangements to bring to Jerusalem the ark of the LORD—a sacred chest to which is ascribed various functions in the Bible. At the start of chapter 16, 1 Chronicles, like 2 Samuel 6, describes David offering sacrifices before the sacred chest, after which (Chronics uniquely reports) David assigned certain priests to watch over the tent where he had placed the ark. Afterwards the Chronicler reports, "Then on that day David first appointed the singing of praises to the LORD by Asaph and his kindred. 8O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. 9Sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wonderful works." The hymn continues into v. 22, and the whole of it is an exact reproduction of Psalm 105:1-15.

But David's song continues in v. 23: "23Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Tell of his salvation from day to day. 24Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples." These words, together with those that follow, through v. 33, are derived from Psalm 96, vv. 2-13.

V. 34 continues David's song: "34O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever. 35Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and rescue us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise." And the hymn concludes with, "36Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting."

Once again we are faced with lines derived from a Psalm, this time Psalm 106, with 1 Chronicles 16:34 being equivalent to v. 1 of that psalm and vv. 35-36 parallel to vv. 47-48 of Psalm 106.

So in 1 Chronicles 16 we have not only the conclusion of a story adopted from Samuel-Kings, but also the inclusion of a hymn that is an amalgam of verses drawn from three different Psalms. The Chronicler is not just reworking Samuel-Kings, but is also weaving in passages from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible.

His use of other passages goes beyond the Psalms. An intriguing example stands in 2 Chronicles report of a grand celebration of Passover in the days of King Josiah of Judah—an event reported also in 2 Kings 23, but with none of the details we find in Chronicles. The specific element we need to note is reported in 2 Chronicles 35:13: "They boiled the passover lamb with fire according to the ordinance." The expression, "They boiled…with fire" is a peculiar one. Granted that you would need fire to boil the water, but you might expect a phrase more along the lines of "boiled…in water." However, "boiled…with fire" can be
explained when we notice two different directions for cooking the Passover lamb in the Torah.

The first is Exodus 12, the instructions for keeping Passover that stand just before the story of the Hebrews' flight from Egypt after the angel of death killed every firstborn Egyptian child. The command to note is in v. 8: "They shall eat the lamb that same night; they shall eat it roasted with fire." Here the lamb is to be "roasted over the fire." The phrase "roasted with fire" is consistent with Hebrew's frequent specification of "fire" in phrases about burning. One "burns with fire," even though that goes without saying. The phrase "boil with fire," on the other hand, is unexampled elsewhere.

But there is another set of instructions about how to observe the Passover in the Torah, found in Deuteronomy 16, where the relevant prescription for us is in v. 7: "You shall boil it and eat it at the place that the LORD your God will choose; the next morning you may go back to your tents." – So in Deuteronomy, boiling is the mandated method for cooking the Passover lamb. But once you correlate these two passages, it raises the question, "which are we supposed to do: roast it or boil it?"

The Chronicler takes the same path to reconciling these instructions that the rabbis would later take: he harmonized them, incorporating Deuteronomy's demand for boiling with Exodus' specification that it be done with fire. He is using the Torah as one of his sources.

The significance of this detail is that it shows the Chronicler is not simply taking verses from here and there, but is something of a scholar of the collection of sacred literature of his day. And that also means that while he uses Samuel-Kings as the framework for his story, he's not simply rewriting that work, but creating a new one by interweaving passages from a variety of works that became part of the Bible.

Additional evidence for this conclusion comes from the fact that the Chronicler twice refers to the prophet Jeremiah, even though Samuel-Kings never does. I'll cite just one of those references, in 2 Chronicles 36. After reporting, in v. 20, that "He [Nebuchadnezzar] took into exile in Babylon those who had escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and to his sons until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia" – the Chronicler adds that this was "to fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had made up for its sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept sabbath, to fulfill seventy years."

There is no oracle attributed to Jeremiah that takes precisely this form, although he does speak of a 70 year period of subjugation to Babylon, as in 25:11: "This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." – You'll notice that even here, while Jeremiah speaks of the land becoming "a ruin and a waste," his reference to 70 years applies to "these nations," not just Judah. Similarly, in his other statement about a 70 year
Babylonian rule, in 29:10, he speaks of this in terms of Babylon, not specifically Judah: "For thus says the LORD: Only when Babylon’s seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place."

Obviously the Chronicler is acquainted with Jeremiah's forecast of 70 years of Babylonian rule. And his familiarity with that forecast would have, by necessity, come from some source other than Samuel-Kings, which never mention Jeremiah. He is familiar with at least this book from the prophets.

But what about the remainder of what the Chronicler links with Jeremiah's forecast of 70 years continuing "until the land had made up for its sabbaths." That idea is not found in Jeremiah; so where did he get it?

Its source is fairly easy to turn up. It comes from Leviticus 26, which warns that the people's refusal to observe the Lord's commands will result in a number of punishments, the final one of which will be deprivation of Israel's land: "You I [the LORD] will scatter among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword against you; your land shall be a desolation, and your cities a waste. Then the land shall enjoy its sabbath years as long as it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies; then the land shall rest, and enjoy its sabbath years. As long as it lies desolate, it shall have the rest it did not have on your sabbaths when you were living on it."

So not only does the Chronicler show familiarity with the prophet Jeremiah, but he has integrated Jeremiah's prediction of 70 years of Babylonian hegemony with Leviticus' talk of the land's devastation making up for the sabbatical rests it should have had, if the people had followed the LORD's commandments.

Once again, the Chronicler shows that he isn't simply revising the narrative of Samuel-Kings, but is weaving a new story in the light of a variety of documents that came to be incorporated into the Bible. He may take the story of Samuel-Kings as his framework, but the history he tells is a compilation of numerous sources.

Before concluding our exploration of the Chroniclers' sources and his use of them, we need to raise one further question: namely, if the Chronicler made use of sources, what kind of attribution to his sources does he give?

In the main, as we've seen, he is silent about his sources. He uses Samuel-Kings, the Psalms, and the Torah without indicating where he gets his material. However, we should not rush to accuse him of plagiarism for this, as we would a modern author – and I would you, if I found such lifting of others' words in your papers.

The Chronicler employed his sources in accord with a practice common throughout the ancient Mediterranean, called mimesis or (to use the Latin equivalent) imitatio, which means that the author consciously took up the content,
form and style of an older work to pay it honor and, at the same time, to raise the credibility of his own work. I.e., far from simply trying to pass off someone else's work as his own, the author meant to signal his indebtedness to earlier authors and meant for readers to notice the connection.

That said, however, the Chronicler does refer specifically to source documents.

You will recall that the book of Kings makes repeated reference to two sources in summing up the reigns of Israel's and Judah's kings. For Israelite kings the formula is, "Now the rest of the acts of X, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel?" For Judean kings, the formula is the same, except (of course) for the substitution of "Judah" for "Israel." The formula for Israelite kings appears 17x, while the companion formula for Judean kings occurs 15x.

The Chronicler uses attribution to "the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel" only once, in 2 Chronicles 20:34, although even there it varies slightly, reading simply, "the Book of the Kings of Israel." On the other hand, references to "the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah" are entirely lacking in Chronicles.

What we find in their place, in the main, are two other phrases: "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah," which appears four times, and "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel," which also appears four times. Obviously, however, these references, together with the one to "the book of the Kings of Israel," leave us far short of the number of references to sources we find in the book of Kings. And yet, never does Chronicles lack an equivalent to Kings' references to sources in summarizing a king's life. So what does Chronicles offer in the remaining instances? Actually, a variety of attributions.

Most typical and curious, are instances in which the Chronicler has transformed one of Kings' standard attributions into a work by a prophet. E.g., upon the death of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, 1 Kings 14:29 summarizes, "Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?" The parallel report in 2 Chronicles 12:15 reads, "Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the records of the prophet Shemaiah and of the seer Iddo, recorded by genealogy?"

Similarly, upon the death of the Judean king Abijam, 1 Kings 15:7 has the familiar, "The rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah?" The parallel verse in 2 Chronicles 13 reads, "The rest of the acts of Abijah, his behavior and his deeds, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo."

One more example, this one even more striking because it has to do with Solomon. 1 Kings 11:41 concludes its report of Solomon's demise with the rhetorical question, "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did as well as his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?" Parallel to
this, 2 Chronicles 9:29 also poses a rhetorical question: "Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, from first to last, are they not written in the history of the prophet Nathan, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of the seer Iddo concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat?"

In each of these cases the Chronicler lists as his source the writings of a prophet or, in the case of Solomon, writings by several prophets. What's striking is not only that in doing so he runs roughshod over Kings' reference to royal annals, but that, apparently, he regarded labeling these records as written by prophets a surer sign of their trustworthiness. And in this he anticipates the rabbinic impulse to attribute the former prophets – the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings – to the prophets Joshua, Samuel and Jeremiah.

The problem with this picture is that there is no indication prophets were interested in writing history. Of the biblical books bearing prophets' names, only Isaiah and Jeremiah contain any purely historical narratives: Isaiah 36-39, which reports two events during the reign of Hezekiah, and Jeremiah 52, which narrates the fall of Jerusalem. However both of those narratives have been lifted from the book of Kings and transferred into Isaiah and Jeremiah by those who edited their books.

Nevertheless, the attribution to prophets of historical records is consistent with the kind of role and its prominence that the Chronicler ascribes to prophets, on the one hand, and on the other, the way he elevates the status of certain figures in his narrative by describing them as prophets.

For example, in describing musicians employed by David, the Chronicler is not content with letting them be mere musicians. Notice how 1 Chronicles 25:1 describes these musicians: "David and the officers of the army also set apart for the service the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with lyres, harps, and cymbals." – Now notice how v. 6 describes these individuals carrying out their duties: "They were all under the direction of their father for the music in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman were under the order of the king." – These musicians undertake their work as an act of prophecy, thereby elevating the task of making music for temple worship to the level of prophetic activity.

It should not be surprising, then, that the Chronicler equally elevates some of the sources of information he cites by ascribing their authorship to prophets.

What all of this points to is that the Chronicler, like the author of Kings, understood the value of referencing sources for enhancing the credibility of his narrative, but he, in his eyes, increased the authority of his supposed sources at times by making them the works of prophets rather than just royal annals.
So what have we learned about the Chronicler by looking at the evidence of what sources he used and how he used them? We have found that he had high esteem for the work of Samuel-Kings, as evidenced by the fact that he chose it as his prime source, making it the framework for his own work. However, we've also seen that he utilized its narratives selectively, omitting some whose portrayal of the players defeated his own purposes, as is the case with his development of a glowing picture of David.

We've also seen that the Chronicler was not shy about refashioning the stories he adopted so that they bore the emphases and made the points he wanted to convey. His idea of historiography – of history-telling – does not seem to have been simply to convey a picture as close as possible to what had been reported in earlier records. He was interested in fashioning his own images of characters and infusing the narrative with his own interpretations of what happened.

Not only that, but he was interested in expanding the story by incorporating into it selections from other works of ancient Israel, such as the Torah, the Psalms, and the prophets. His aim was broader than just revising Samuel-Kings.

Of course, we've also noted that the version of Samuel-Kings he had before him was likely not identical with what we think of as Samuel-Kings. There are passages that seem derived from Samuel-Kings but have strikingly different arrangements of details than we find in our copies of Samuel-Kings. What this attests is that, while the author of Chronicles was reshaping the stories of Samuel-Kings he received, Samuel-Kings itself was still undergoing development. And that means that the Chronicler was not "perverting" a pristine historical document when he utilized Samuel-Kings, but was making use of it in likely the same way that the stories of Samuel-Kings had been used by its author/authors; indeed, we'll see that confirmed when we study those works. The Chronicler's way of using his sources, then, was not some sort of aberration, but was normal for historians in his era. That recognition will go a long ways towards helping us understand all the history-like books in the Bible.

That judgment applies, equally, to the way the Chronicler does and does not cite sources. On the one hand, he often does not cite his sources because, following the widely used technique of *mimesis/imitatio*, he allowed his work to bear the flavor of his sources and gain credence from the similarity of his work to theirs.

And when he does cite sources, it is clear from his reformulation of numerous citations as references to narratives written by prophets that he was interested in enhancing the trustworthiness of his narrative by invoking the aura of prophetic authority.

The larger question, of course, is why did he do this? What were his aims? Next time we'll step back to take in the larger picture of what the Chronicler was trying to say.