

Pedantic Timetabling in 3rd Book of Reigns

David Gooding



**MYRTLEFIELD
HOUSE**

www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

David Gooding has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

Copyright © The Myrtlefield Trust, 2023

All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this document in its entirety, or in unaltered excerpts, for personal and church use only as long as you do not charge a fee. You must not reproduce it on any Internet site. Permission must be obtained if you wish to reproduce it in any other context, translate it, or publish it in any format.

This article was originally published in *Vetus Testamentum* 15:2 (1965), pp. 153–166.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the English Revised Version (1885), the King James Version, or are David Gooding's own translations or paraphrases.

The Myrtlefield Trust

PO Box 2216

Belfast, N Ireland

BT1 9YR

w: www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

e: info@myrtlefieldhouse.com

Myrtlefield catalogue no: acd-art.005/sc

Pedantic Timetabling in 3rd Book of Reigns

I

The $\gamma\gamma$ section¹ of the Books of Reigns is, textually speaking, very obscure. In 1907 Thackeray wrote;²

The three remaining portions (i.e. of the Books of Reigns), so far as my investigations have gone, appear to be homogeneous wholes, that is to say, they are the work of three distinct translators. Possibly an exception should be made in the case of $\gamma\gamma$, where two hands may have been at work As to $\gamma\gamma$, it is impossible to speak very definitely. The text has been so much interpolated that it is difficult to tell what the original version was like. It was probably considerably shorter than our First Book of Kings, while, on the other hand, the translator was not unwilling to paraphrase and to amplify the narrative (especially when dealing with the story of Solomon in all his glory) by information derived from other sources. Such liberties seem to indicate that the translation was made at a time when the Book had not yet been universally recognised as canonical: the freedom of treatment offers a marked contrast to the literalism of the portions $\beta\gamma$ and $\gamma\delta$.

Later³ he says:

Of the *style* of $\gamma\gamma$ it is difficult to speak. The B and A texts diverge so widely, the order of events has so often been transposed in the two texts, while sometimes we get a duplicate record in the same text (e.g. the double narrative of Solomon's prosperity in the B text of 2⁴⁶ a ff and 4¹⁹ ff), that it is extremely doubtful what the original version was like. Probably it consisted of extracts only, and it may be that two separate versions have been run together.

Barthélemy, in his new and brilliant book, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila*,⁴ reports (p. 40) 'On peut donc conclure que la section $\gamma\gamma$ n'a subi, du point de vue qui nous occupe,⁵ aucune recension d'ensemble approfondie comparable a celle qu'avait subie la section $\beta\gamma$.'

Later in the book (pp. 141–2), in a general summary, he says:

Il semble qu'il y ait eu deux recensions palestiniennes successives des deux premiers Livres des Règles Indiquons en complément que la section $\gamma\gamma$ n'a été retouchée que par le second recenseur palestinien; aussi les hexaples retrouvent-ils pour cette section l'allure qu'ils avaient dans les sections α et $\beta\beta$.

¹ The section $\gamma\gamma$ extends from 3 (1) Reigns ii 12 to xxi 43.

² *JTS*, 8, 1907, p. 267.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 276.

⁴ E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1963.

⁵ He is discussing the various translation of $\Delta\lambda$.

Thackeray, then, felt that there may have been more than one translator; Barthélemy considers that the original has suffered only one recension and that that recension was by no means so thoroughgoing as that which affected the βγ section. The fact is that we do not yet know enough about the γγ section to be able to make many general statements of much positive value; we are still at the stage where we must patiently observe and collect phenomena without being too anxious to deduce wide generalisations from them. In that spirit I wish to call attention to a feature of the Greek order of events that seems to betray a deliberate and consistent hand. That the Old Greek has a markedly different order from the MT is obvious almost at first sight, and most people would perhaps agree with Montgomery's dictum:⁶ 'But all presumption is against Greek rearrangements in general'. Yet in a number of places it is possible to go further and observe and evaluate the considerations which have determined not only large and obvious, but also quite small and detailed, differences of order. The leading consideration has been a desire to put things in a strictly logical order of temporal sequence, to denote which I propose, for convenience of frequent reference, to use the term 'timetable'. The reasoning behind this 'timetable' has, however, been at best pedantic and not seldom perverse and mistaken; it is demonstrably the work of a literalistically minded reviser.

This article, then, will investigate a few, typical instances. It will be necessary to investigate them in some detail, for their ramifications can be far-reaching.

II

Let us take an easy example first. The MT lists the plans of Solomon's building operations in the following order:

1. 6:1–10 Temple: structural plans.
2. 6:14–38 Temple: interior design, installations, decoration.
3. 7:1–12 The royal palace.
4. 7:13–51 Temple: pillars, lavers, interior furniture.

In the LXX the order is significantly different:⁷ all the plans relating to the temple are grouped together (1, 2 and 4, in that order) and placed *before* the plans of the royal palace. This order is, of course, deliberate; it occurs again at 4:31 (MT 3:1) where for the MT's 'until he had finished building his own house and the house of the Lord . . .' the non-hexaplaric MSS have ' . . . the house of the Lord and his own house . . . '. Nor is one of the motives behind this order difficult to detect: piety would suggest that it were improper for the palace-plans to be inserted among the temple-plans, or for Solomon to start building his own house before completing the Lord's house. In fact, we have elsewhere explicit expression of this pious feeling. In the strange miscellany of oddments which occurs in chapter 2, we read in verse 35^c, ' . . . ἕως συντελέσαι αὐτὸν τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸν οἶκον Κυρίου ἐν πρώτοις . . . '. Whoever is responsible for this verse in its present form, clearly felt that the verse, as he first found it, gave the impression from its order that Solomon built his own house before the Lord's house. He likewise felt that this impression had to be corrected; only, on this occasion, piety did not

⁶ ICC Kings, p. 319.

⁷ The hexaplaric MSS have their order restored to agree with the MT.

change the offending order, but contented itself with adding an explanatory ‘ἐν πρώτοις’ to ‘the Lord’s house’.

It is easy to see, then, in passing, that compared with the MT’s order of the plans (Temple, Temple, Palace, Temple) the LXX’s order (Temple, Temple, Temple, Palace) is secondary. If the LXX’s ‘reverent’ order had been original, no-one would have altered it to the MT’s order, open as is the latter to a charge of seeming irreverence.

But piety was not the only motive behind the change: ‘timetable’ too has been at work. The MT informs us that Solomon was seven years building the Lord’s house (6:38) and thirteen years building his own house (7:1). At 9:10 it adds these two periods together: ‘And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king’s house . . .’. It thus indicates that these two buildings were not built concurrently but consecutively; and since it reports that the temple was begun in Solomon’s fourth year and completed in his eleventh (6:1, 37, 38), it makes it evident that the palace was built *after* the temple. Montgomery thinks⁸ that the MT’s arithmetic in 9:10 is the work of an editor, but if it is, it was done before the LXX version, for the LXX has the phrase.⁹ And so it may well be that a strict sense of ‘timetable’, as well as piety, is responsible for the LXX’s order, in which the palace-plans came *after* the temple-plans.

But now an interesting thing comes to light. At the end of its fourth set of plans, which concerns the temple, the MT immediately records the ceremony of the bringing up of the ark and the dedication of the temple. The passage from the one subject to the other, easy enough in itself, is further helped by the closing words of the plans: 7:51:

Thus all the work that king Solomon wrought in the house of the Lord was finished. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated, the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, and put them in the treasuries of the house of the Lord, (viii 1) Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel

For the LXX things have not been so easy. In the order which it has followed, the fourth set of plans relates not to the temple but to the royal palace and ends with the words¹⁰ (7:50): καὶ συνετέλεσεν Σαλωμων ὄλον τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. This is then followed by the dedication ceremonies as in the MT, with the Greek’s τότε ἐξεκκλησίασεν corresponding closely with the MT’s וְיִקְרָא לְהִקְדִּישׁ. But the Greek (or the Hebrew text it was following) has felt the need to explain the time to which וְיִקְרָא and τότε refer. The explanation as it stands in the Greek¹¹ is: καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ συντελέσει Σαλωμων τοῦ οἰκοδομῆσαι τὸν οἶκον κυρίου καὶ τὸν οἶκον ἑαυτοῦ μετὰ εἴκοσι ἔτη, (τότε ἐξεκκλησίασεν κτλ.). This, of course, is a most unlikely story. It is impossible to think that Solomon finished the temple, put in it all the treasures which David had dedicated and then delayed the bringing up of the ark and the dedication of the temple for thirteen years, while he got on with the building of his own house. In spite, however, of the gross unlikelihood of

⁸ ICC Kings, p. 161.

⁹ In ix 10 it has omitted the words וְיִקְרָא לְהִקְדִּישׁ at the beginning and construed the sentence differently in relation to its context; but for the rest its v. 10 agrees word for word with the MT.

¹⁰ The positioning of these words here disagrees with the MT which has them in the first verse of the palace-plans (7:1). We shall discuss this difference in a moment.

¹¹ A N v ARM omit this explanation in accordance with the MT.

this interpretation and the bad light it would throw on Solomon, the author of it has insisted on making explicit the ‘timetable’ implications that he (so mistakenly) felt were involved in the simple fact that chapter viii 1 follows chapter 7:50.^{12,13}

If this interpretation of his motives seems too severe, we may consider what he has done with the dating material attached to the palace-plans. The MT says (7:1) ‘And Solomon was building his own house thirteen years, and he finished all his house’; and these words stand as the introduction to the plans which fill the next eleven verses. The LXX, however, has the first half of the MT’s verse, at the beginning of the palace-plans: (LXX 7:38) καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ὠκοδόμησεν Σαλωμων τρισκαίδεκα ἔτεσιν; but it puts the second half of the verse right at the end of the plans: (LXX 7:50) καὶ συνετέλεσεν Σαλωμων ὄλον τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ. The motive behind this order is clearly ‘timetable’: how can one say ‘Solomon finished’ at the beginning of the plans? Since this reasoning is just as clearly pedantic, the order, compared with the MT’s, is also secondary.

III

Another passage where an overscrupulous sense of ‘timetable’ has determined the LXX’s order is to be found at the end of chapter v and the beginning of chapter vi. The texts are set out below; the LXX-text is Rahlfs’, the numeration that of BM.

	MT.		LXX
Pt. I	וַיֵּצֵא הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּסְעוּ אֲבָנִים v 31		
	גְּדֻלּוֹת אֲבָנִים יִקְרְתּוּ		
	לְיִסָּר הַבָּיִת אֲבָנֵי גְזֵיתִי:		= Lxx 6:2, 3: see below
	וַיִּפְסְלוּ בְנֵי שְׁלֹמֹה 32a		
	וּבְנֵי חִירוֹם וְהַגְּבַלִּים		
	וַיִּפְּיֵנוּ הָעֵצִים וְהָאֲבָנִים 32b	v 17	καὶ ἠτοίμασαν τοὺς λίθους καὶ τὰ ξύλα τρία ἔτη.
	לְבִנוֹת הַבַּיִת:		
	וַיְהִי בְשִׁמוֹנִים שָׁנָה vi 1.	v 1.	καὶ ἐγενήθη ἐν τῷ τεσσαρακοστῷ
	וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה		καὶ τετρακοσιοστῷ ἔτει
	לְצֵאת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל		τῆς ἐξόδου υἱῶν Ἰσραηλ
	מֵאַרְצ־מִצְרָיִם בְּשָׁנָה הַרְבִּיעִית		ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, τῷ ἔτει τῷ τετάρτῳ
	בְּחֹדֶשׁ זֶה הָיָה הַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי		ἐν μηνὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ
	לְמֶלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה		βασιλεύοντος τοῦ βασιλέως
			Σαλωμων
	עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל		ἐπὶ Ἰσραηλ,
	וַיִּבֶן הַבַּיִת לַיהוָה _____		

¹² It is noticeable that the Greek with its ἐν τῷ + Infin. and its construing of συνετέλω with τοῦ + Infin. instead of with a participle seems to be a literalistic translation of וַיְהִי בְכָלוֹת. Only B* reads ὡς συνετέλεσεν.

¹³ Josephus, Ant. VIII 99, has the dedication immediately following the completion of the temple, and removes the palace-plans to come after the dedication and God’s second appearance to Solomon.

Pt. II	MT. 5:31, 32a =	2.	καὶ ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ αἴρουσιν λίθους μεγάλους τιμίους εἰς τὸν θεμέλιον τοῦ οἴκου καὶ λίθους ἀπελεκήτους·
	see above	3.	καὶ ἐπελέκησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Σαλωμων καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Χιραμ καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς.
	MT. 6:37, 38a =	4.	ἐν τῷ ἔτει τῷ τετάρτῳ ἐθεμελίωσεν τὸν οἶκον κυρίου ἐν μηνὶ Νισω τῷ δευτέρῳ μηνί·
	· · · והבית אשר בנה	5.	ἐν ἐνδεκάτῳ ἑνιαυτῷ ἐν μηνὶ Βααλ (οὗτος ὁ μῆν ὁ ὄγδοος) συνετελέσθη ὁ οἶκος εἰς πάντα λόγον αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς πᾶσαν διάταξιν αὐτοῦ
		2.	καὶ ὁ οἶκος ὃν ᾠκοδόμησεν . . .

Notice:

1. Both the MT and Greek passages consist of two main parts: the first part deals with the preparatory work that had to be done before the actual building of the Temple could start (Pt. I); the second part describes the beginning of the actual building (Pt. II).
2. The MT has far more material in Pt. I than the Greek has, the Greek has far more material in Pt. II than the MT has.
3. But the material which the MT has, and the LXX lacks, in Pt. I (5:31, 32a), is the almost word for word equivalent of material which the LXX has in Pt. II (6:2, 3) and which in that position is missing from the MT. This means that the MT and the LXX as far as content goes are following a basically similar text, while, nevertheless, disagreeing in order. But this matter of order involves the question of when certain activities took place: were they part of the preparatory work, or were they done at and after the beginning of the actual building? In other words the difference is one of 'timetable'; let us label it Diff. I.
4. Similarly the summary of dates which the LXX puts in Pt. II at 6:4, 5 proves in fact to be an almost word for word equivalent of material which the MT puts later in chapter 6 at verses 37, 38a. The difference in the positioning of this material involves no *difference* in chronology; yet it remains true that the verses are concerned with chronology, and chronology properly so called. We may call it Diff. II.
5. In 6:1 the MT says that the building began in the 480th year In the LXX's counterpart (also 6:1) the date is given as the 440th year: plainly, a difference in chronology, and that in the true sense of the word; we list it Diff. III.

6. Diff. IV likewise concerns chronology, but it is not perhaps of the same importance as the other differences. In 6:1 the MT says that the building began ‘. . . in the month Ziv, which is the second month’; the LXX omits ‘in the month Ziv’. This omission may, or may not, be connected with the fact that in 6:4 (= MT 6:37) the LXX reads Nisan where the MT has Ziv. There is no doubt that the LXX is wrong, for the month referred to both in the LXX and the MT is explicitly said to be the second month, and while Ziv is the older name for the *second* month, Nisan is the later name for the *first* month. To read as the LXX does ἐν μηνὶ Νισω τῷ δευτέρῳ μηνί is palpably wrong. The only doubt is over the question how this reading arose. Montgomery (p. 147) thinks that it is a scribal corruption. Rahlfs’ text, which I have cited, is the reading of Eth. La. The majority text is ἐν μηνὶ Νεισω καὶ τῷ δευτέρῳ μηνί, which is the equivalent of saying ‘in the first month and in the second month’; and it looks more as if the καὶ is a later addition made in order to rescue the text from its otherwise factual error, than as if the μηνὶ Νεισω καὶ were an addition by someone who thought that the first month of the year was a more appropriate time to start than the second. If so, the universal omission of *in the month Ziv* in verse 1 could be explained as an attempt to harmonise verse 1 and verse 4, before the καὶ in verse 4 was added as a second attempt to heal the trouble.
7. The MT at verse 32b says ‘they prepared the timber and the stones to build the house’; the LXX has ἠτοίμασαν τοὺς λίθους καὶ τὰ ξύλα τρία ἔτη. The important difference here is that the LXX has omitted the purpose of the preparations, *to build the house*, but has added the duration of the preparations, *three years*. Diff. V, then, is patently one of ‘timetable’.
8. Diff. VI is that whereas the LXX 6:1 agrees with the MT 6:1 almost word for word, the LXX has nothing to represent the last phrase in the MT ‘that he built the house of the Lord’.¹⁴ In the MT this phrase completes the initial ‘And it came to pass in the . . . second month . . . that . . .’. Its omission by the LXX means that in the LXX the initial phrase is completed by verse 2, and, as we shall presently see, this gives a considerably different picture of what happened in the second month. Once more it is a question of the temporal succession of events.

We have then within these few verses a number of major differences which all concern ‘timetable’. Our next step is to observe that not only is the LXX’s ‘timetable’ pedantic and over-

¹⁴ AMNZ, the majority of the minuscules, Arm and Syr have the phrase thus: καὶ ὠκοδόμηι τὸν οἶκον τῷ κω (Zbycz₂e₂ read ὠκοδόμησεν). A, Arm, and Syr are strongly Origenic and reasons will be given later which suggest that the others, too, are here secondary. But the imperfect tense of AMN etc., as distinct from the aorist of Z etc., is interesting in that it shows that others felt the same difficulty in the aorist as the LXX did. The minuscules i n o also have the phrase, standing out of place as an apparent doublet at the of (LXX) v. 5, which itself represents a verse which in the MT stands at the end of the chapter (v. 38), thus : καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν αὐτὸν (+ εν ο) ἐπτὰ ἔτεσι καὶ ὠκοδόμηι (-μησε i) τον οἶκον τῷ κω . The first phrase belongs properly to v. 5 (MT v. 38), the second is the phrase missing from the end of v. 1.

scrupulous, but the keystone of its system is formed out of what is either a mistranslation or, even worse, a textual corruption.

We may start with Diff. VI. The MT, 6:1, says that in the fourth year of Solomon's reign in the second month **וַיִּבֶן הַבַּיִת לַיהוָה**. The meaning is quite clear: **וַיִּבֶן** is intended in an inchoative sense, he *began to build*; later verses (37, 38) in fact give the starting and finishing dates and point out that the building took seven years. But if **וַיִּבֶן** were taken to mean *built* in the sense *built and completed*, an over-scrupulous mind could protest that Solomon did not build the house in the second month of the fourth year of his reign, he only began to build then. Now we have already found the LXX indulging in this kind of reasoning (p. 8), so that it is possible that here, too, the omission of the offending phrase in the LXX has been made from a similar motive, though of course we cannot rule out the possibility that the omission was accidental.

The possibility that the LXX has deliberately omitted the phrase, however, becomes a strong probability, when we examine Diff. VI along with Diff. I. The MT must have some such phrase as **וַיִּבֶן הַבַּיִת** at the end of 6:1, because without it its verse 1 would structurally connect with verse 2 and result in the following nonsense: *And it came to pass in . . . the fourth year of Solomon's reign . . . that the house which king Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was sixty cubits . . .* But the LXX can happily omit the last phrase of its verse 1 and connect verse 1 structurally with verse 2, because the LXX's verse 2 is different from the MT's verse 2. And so according to the LXX what happened in the second month of the fourth year of Solomon's reign was that ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς—the king gave the word of command—καὶ αἴρουσιν λίθους μεγάλους τιμίους εἰς τὸν θεμέλιον τοῦ οἴκου καὶ λίθους ἀπελεκήτους—and (workmen) haul up (notice the vivid historic present) massive precious stones for the foundation and unhewn stones—καὶ ἐπέλεκθησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Σαλωμων καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Χιραμ and Solomon's sons and Hiram's sons chiselled them into shape—καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς—and laid them down as the foundation. This is all very dramatic. Instead of the simple, and to the pedantically-minded misleading, statement that in the second month Solomon *built* the temple, we are told that the second month saw the vivid ceremony of the laying of the foundation stones, a ceremony attended and performed by the princes of both royal houses.

Now it was noticed above (p. 7) that the LXX verses 2 and 3 of chapter 6 are clearly a translation of a Hebrew text that was materially the same as the MT's verses 31 and 32a of chapter 5. Beyond a doubt those verses in the MT refer to the preparatory work of quarrying and trimming stone and hewing timber and not to the foundation-laying ceremonies. Is it then an exaggeration to claim that the LXX has changed not only the position of these verses but also their intent? A number of considerations show that it is not.

First Diff. V (see p. 7). The LXX's peculiarity here is to tell us explicitly that the preparatory work took three years. We cannot, of course, be sure how this figure was arrived at, but it looks as if someone first noticed that 6:1 says that Solomon laid the foundations in his fourth year; and then he argued that since Solomon must, like a good king, have started the preparatory work in the first year of his reign, the preparatory work must have lasted three years. But however this may be, when the LXX says that the preparatory work lasted three years and then in the fourth year something was done, it is virtually certain that that something is not intended as merely a continuation of the preparatory work.

Secondly the position of MT verse 32b (which = LXX verse 17) relative to the position of the other material common to both MT and LXX is very instructive.

MT	LXX
5:31	—
32a	—
32b	= 5:17
6:1	= 6:1
—	2
—	3

We must remind ourselves again that MT verses 31, 32a and LXX 6:2, 3 are clearly following virtually the same Hebrew text; then we must observe that MT verse 32b is (almost: see Diff. V above) the same as LXX verse 17; then we must see that MT verses 31, 32a and 32b form one connected whole describing the preparatory work. We may then ask why in the LXX this material is split up so that verse 17 is left opposite MT verse 32b and does not stand after 6:3. The answer is obvious: if the LXX intended 6:2, 3 as further preparatory work, or even if its positioning of these verses were simply accidental and not deliberate, then verse 17 could stand after 6:3. But if 6:2, 3 are deliberately placed in their present position because they are intended to describe the foundation ceremonies, it is quite impossible to follow such a description with a verse which reads *καὶ ἠτοίμασαν τοὺς λίθους καὶ τὰ ξύλα τρία ἔτη*.¹⁵

¹⁵ These considerations render untenable the theory advanced by Wellhausen and Burney to account for the LXX's order. That theory, in Burney's words (*Notes on the Hebrew text of the Books of Kings*, Oxford, 1903, pp. 58–59), ran thus: '6,1. As has been noticed above, LXX inserts this verse before vv. 31, 32^a of ch. 5. In its place we now have ch. 6 vv. 37, 38^a which give the dates of laying the foundation of the Temple and its completion. Wellh. (C. 267) remarks that these latter verses in MT break the continuity between 6, 36 and 7, 1–12, while in the position which they occupy in LXX they completely supersede v. 1 MT, which holds the "very unfortunate position" above mentioned. Hence he concludes that v. 1 is the work of a later editor who relegated vv. 37, 38^a to their present place in MT to make room for his addition, and that LXX represents the original text. This will account for the position of v. 1 in LXX, the late addition having been first written in the margin of a MS., and afterwards incorporated in the text as best as could be.' According to this theory the LXX took over an original order thus:

Original Hebrew	LXX
5:31	6:2
5:32 ^a	6:3
6:37	6:4
6:38	6:5

Then later the equivalent of the MT's 6:1 was added to the LXX and placed before LXX 6:2. But the theory omits to tell us where the MT's 5:32b was originally, and that in spite of the fact that Burney (p. 58) regards this part of the verse as original. Where could it have been in the original Hebrew except following immediately after 5:32a? If then the LXX followed the order of the original Hebrew and merely added MT's 6:1 later, to become its own 6:1, the LXX's 6:3 would now contain the equivalent of the Hebrew's 5:32^a and 32^b, and so present the nonsensical order: . . . καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς (laid the foundation stones) καὶ ἠτοίμασαν λίθους τοὺς καὶ τὰ ξύλα τρία ἔτη.

Thirdly, the LXX actually says of the stones (6:3) *καὶ ἐπελέκησαν οἱ υἱοὶ Σαλωμων καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ Χιραμ καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς*. How it comes by this rendering, which is so different from its counterpart **מִלְבָּגְהִי** of the MT, we will consider later on. For the moment we need only observe that *ἔβαλαν αὐτούς* must be intended in the sense *laid them down as a foundation*. Admittedly *βάλλω* in this sense is not very common in the LXX, but there is another, indisputable example in Jb. xxxviii 6 *τίς δέ ἐστὶν ὁ βαλὼν λίθον γωνιαῖον ἐπ’ αὐτῆς*. Moreover no other meaning of *βάλλω* would make sense in the context: *καὶ αἴρουσιν λίθους . . . εἰς τὸν θεμέλιον . . . καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς*. And so this difference in meaning between the LXX *ἔβαλαν αὐτούς* and the MT **מִלְבָּגְהִי** fits in exactly with the intention of all the other differences so far discussed; we shall presently see that it was this difference that in fact determined the others.

Fourthly, Diff. II (see p. 7) shows quite plainly the same underlying motive. The position of these verses in the MT (6:37, 38a) is natural enough: coming at the end of the first two sets of plans which describe the temple-structure, they summarise the time it took to build the structure and also serve as a slight break between the temple-plans and the palace-plans. But in the LXX the order of plans is, as we have seen above, different (p. 4): the two sets of temple-structural plans are followed immediately by the plans of the temple-pillars, lavers and furniture. Here it was not so natural to have a dating summary between the second and third set of plans, and possibly it was partly for that reason that this dating summary was moved. But its present position secures two significant things: it brings together all the dating material into 6:1–5 and it allows the crucial words of verse 3 *καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς* to be followed immediately by the phrase, *ἐν τῷ ἔτει τῷ τετάρτῳ ἐθεμελίωσεν τὸν οἶκον κυρίου*. The resultant emphasis on the foundation and its timing is surely not accidental: it emphasises that verses 1–4 of LXX chapter 6 refer to the foundation ceremonies and are for that reason placed in this particular position.

We now arrive at the crux of the whole matter. The words which are crucial to the LXX’s ‘timetable’ scheme, *καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς*, are undoubtedly mistaken. They do not represent the original Hebrew tradition; possibly they do not represent any Hebrew textual tradition at all; they could quite easily be a mistake in the reading and translation of a Hebrew text, or they could simply be a corruption of an originally correct translation. Clearly a great deal depends on what we decide; for not only are these words the keystone of the LXX’s ordering of its material here, but many such pedantic ‘timetable’ arrangements are to be found throughout the whole of 3 Reigns. If, therefore, it were to emerge that the LXX’s ‘timetable’ scheme in 6:1–5 is built on an inner-Greek textual corruption, the implication would be that the LXX’s differences in the order of the text generally are likely to be a late and secondary feature of the text tradition.

What, then, are the considerations that suggest first that the LXX does not represent the original Hebrew here as well as the MT does? Older scholars, indeed, felt that **מִלְבָּגְהִי**, and *the Giblites*, concealed a corruption, for it was unlikely that the *Giblites* should have received such special notice.¹⁶ Montgomery, however, has convincingly remarked:¹⁷

This is not, and could not be, the LXX’s order; plainly Burney’s simple explanation neither observes the facts fully nor accounts for them.

¹⁶ Burney, *op cit* p. 58.

¹⁷ ICC Kings, p. 138

There is no reason to doubt this novel datum; later editors of the tradition and the text would not have introduced the Gentile Giblites as co-operators in the building of the Temple, in 7^{13f} pains are taken to note that the Tynan artist Hiram had an Israelite mother. The Giblites were employed by Solomon in the same way as Solomon used Phoenician naval experts to build and man his ships in the Red Sea (9^{26ff})

Secondly, if the original Hebrew had read the equivalent of the LXX's καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς standing in its present LXX-position, and the MT had later become corrupted into םִלְגַבְלִי, there was no reason why this corrupt reading should have been moved along with its immediate context to stand where it now does at 5:32a. It would have still made good sense standing at 6:3. On the other hand, if the original Hebrew read םִלְגַבְלִי and had it in the same position as the MT now has it, and this became changed in the LXX to καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς, there was then a compelling reason why καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς had to be removed to 6:3: left as 5:17a and followed by 5:17b it would have made nonsense (see p. 10). Compared, then, with the MT, the LXX's reading and its position are secondary.

To decide next at what stage in the transmission this secondary reading arose is more difficult; there are so many possibilities and the change of order did not necessarily follow immediately upon the misreading or mistranslation of the original םִלְגַבְלִי. The misreading could have existed in the LXX's Hebrew vorlage; it could be a genuine mistake in the Greek translation; it could be a deliberate alteration on the part of an 'interpreter-translator' in order to eliminate unsuitable Gentiles from the building of the temple. Margolis¹⁸ thought it was a corruption of an original (Greek) transliteration:

Dergleichen dürfte III Reg. 6, 3 (5,32) ἔβαλαν αὐτούς . . . aus Γεβαλην = Γεβαλειν (αὐτούς ist dann später dazugekommen) = םִלְגַבְלִי verderbt sein; anstatt Γε kann auch Γαι—geschrieben worden sein (vgl. Q^{ms} in Hes); nach και fiel γαι—aus; was blieb, wurde als Verbum aufgefasst, und so erhielt es Augment und Objekt.

But if καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτούς is the result of an accidental corruption, its present position in the temporal succession of events in the LXX's story is not accidental; nor are all the other surrounding differences to which we have called attention and which are all dictated by the same motive. These are the results of a deliberate recension. Perhaps, in the present state of our knowledge it would be wiser not to press decision further, but to be content to notice how valueless are the principles that guided the recension.

It remains just to notice the various reactions to all this alteration, as we find them in the different text-traditions of the Greek. A n x, Arm, Syr simply follow Origen's corrections according to the MT. The group MN and supporting minuscules have an attempted restoration; but instead of removing simply 6:2 and 6:3 to stand before verse 17, where they would agree with the MT's order, they have removed 6:2, 6:3, 6:4 and 6:5 to stand before verse 17, with the absurd result that the summary of the dates of the foundation and completion of the temple stands before verse 17 καὶ ἠτοιμάσαν τοὺς λίθους καὶ τὰ ξύλα τρία ἔτη They have also

¹⁸ ZAW, 1911, p. 313.

changed the υιοί of Solomon and Hiram into δοῦλοι, but not in accordance with the MT which reads neither 'בָּנָי nor even 'בָּנֵי but 'בָּנֵי *builders*.

The group Z b c₂e₂ retain the typically Greek order, but they have several 'improvements' to help the sense. They explain, 6:2, who they were whom the king commanded to haul the stones: καὶ ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἀρχουσιν ἐνέγκειν; and their Greek is better than the ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς καὶ αἴρουσιν of i o a₂ Eth^a Or-gr and more explicit ('carry', i.e. on to the site, rather than 'lift'). The ἐνετείλατο ὁ βασιλεὺς ἵνα αἴρωσιν of B^{ab} Eth, though boasting subordination instead of typically Hebraic parataxis, rests content with αἴρω. Similarly, when the command is carried out (vi 3), the sons of Solomon (who now declines like any good Greek noun should: Σολομωνος Z: Σολομωντος b c₂ e₂ instead of indeclinable Σαλωμων) do not chisel (ⲓⲗⲟⲩⲛⲓ ⲉⲡⲉⲗⲉⲕⲗⲉⲥⲁⲛ) the stones; the time and place for that are past. They simply ἤνεγκαν the stones and put them in their place: and with this the corrupt καὶ ἔβαλαν αὐτοὺς becomes καὶ ἐνέβαλον αὐτοὺς and assumes the respectability of an Attic, rather than a Hellenistic, verb-ending. Z b c₂e₂, while not hexaplaric, are still not so early a form of text as the B-group.

About the Author

DAVID W. GOODING was Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has taught the Bible internationally and lectured on both its authenticity and its relevance to philosophy, world religions and daily life. He has published scholarly articles on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament, and several books addressing arguments against the Bible and the Christian faith. His analysis of the Bible and our world continues to shape the thinking of scholars, teachers and students alike.