

The Septuagint's Rival Versions of Jeroboam's Rise to Power

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The Third Book of Reigns, as is well known, contains two separate accounts of the rise of Jeroboam I to power.¹ The second of these two accounts is widely different from the first and, unlike the first, has no counterpart in the MT. The debate over its merits has lasted long and still fails to produce general agreement.² The first account, on the other hand, agrees for the most part with the MT's account. Only over one major issue does it disagree with the MT and here scholars seem to be united in the view that the LXX's account is to be preferred.

It might seem a pity, therefore, to call in question even this apparently settled opinion; but the issue turns in part on considerations of timetable, and, as I have demonstrated elsewhere,³ the Third Book of Reigns not only shows a special interest in matters of timetable, but is quite prepared to alter the order of its subject matter so as to make its details follow one another in a pedantically logical time-sequence. Consequently wherever the LXX Third Book of Reigns differs from the MT in order of subject matter and this difference is bound up with considerations of timetable, the LXX is suspect, and we should prefer its order as better representing the original text, only if it can stand up to the most rigorous scrutiny.

Now in the first account of Jeroboam's rise to power the difference between the LXX and the MT involves two questions:

1. at exactly what time did Jeroboam return from his exile in Egypt? Was it immediately after the death of Solomon, or was it not until he heard that all Israel had already gathered in Shechem to make Rehoboam king?
2. did Jeroboam play a prominent part in the attempt of the nation to wring concessions from Rehoboam, or did he remain quietly in the background until, after the revolt, the leaders of the ten tribes discovered that he had returned from Egypt and invited him to be their king?

The MT's account of the matter is as follows:

And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the 7son of Nebat heard of it, (for he was yet in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt, and they sent and called him); that Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came and spake unto Rehoboam . . . So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam . . . (12:1–3, 12).

In other words Jeroboam returned in time to be present at the parliament in Shechem and took a leading part in the appeal to Rehoboam. Then, after relating how the ten tribes revolted, the

¹ The first at 3 Reigns 11:26–xii 24; the second at 12:24a–24z.

² For a helpful summary see Montgomery, *ICC Kings* pp. 251 f.

³ 'Pedantic Timetabling in 3rd Book of Reigns', *VT*, XV, 1965, pp. 153–66.

MT adds: "And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was returned, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel" (12:20).

In the story as thus presented some have felt that there is a serious difficulty. Montgomery, for instance, comments (*ICC Kings*, p. 248):

The Heb. text, treated by itself apart from the Gr. supplement (see at end of this section) has a grave inconcinnity in that it connects Jeroboam's return from Egypt, his being summoned to the parliament, and his leadership in its demands, with the succession of Rehoboam, while according to v. 20 the news of the return of Jeroboam and the summons to him are subsequent to the revolt.

In similar vein Gray (*I & II Kings*, SCM Press, London 1964, p. 278) remarks:

This account of the disruption of Solomon's kingdom has certain inconsistencies, chiefly concerning the time at which Jeroboam returned from Egypt relatively to the assembly at Shechem. In v. 2 it is implied that he heard of the assembly, mentioned in v. 1, while he was still in Egypt, whence he was then summoned by the people of the North (v. 3), with whom he made representations to Rehoboam (v. 3). In v. 20, on the other hand, it was only after the rejection of Rehoboam that the people of the North sent for Jeroboam and made him king over Israel, he having returned from Egypt already, immediately after the death of Solomon, to his ancestral home of Seredah, as is stated in G (I K. 1 24 b-d), remaining, no doubt, discreetly in the background while his plans matured.

Now the charge that there are these serious inconsistencies in the MT's account does, of course, depend on interpreting the Hebrew in the very strict, literalistic manner which Montgomery and Gray have chosen to adopt. If one wished, one could, without forcing the text unnaturally, interpret it in a different way, which would not make the Hebrew contradict itself. But Montgomery and Gray not only offer plausible (though somewhat different) text-analyses to support their interpretation and to explain how the MT came by its inconsistency, but they both claim that the LXX offers a text which is free of inconsistency and is self-evidently superior to the MT. If, then, the LXX is indeed superior and its lack of inconsistency is a mark of original purity, we need not trouble to look around for an interpretation of the MT which will remove its apparent inconsistency; we can accept Montgomery and Gray's interpretation without question or regret. If, on the other hand, the LXX's apparent consistency proves upon examination to be the result of secondary revision, we shall have good cause to go back to the MT and to enquire if the interpretation that produces the troublesome inconsistencies is in fact the only possible one or even the best one.

II

The superiority of the LXX text is stated by Gray (p. 279) as follows:

In v. 3 'And they sent and called him, and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came' is omitted in GBL, which, of course, obviates the chief discrepancy in the passage between the

presence of Jeroboam at the meeting with Rehoboam at Shechem (v. 3) and his summons to the assembly after the rejection of Rehoboam (v. 20).

Montgomery (p. 248) puts it this way:

This disagreement (i.e. the disagreement between MT vv 1–3 and v. 20) is solved by excising vv. 2. 3a, absent in OGrr. (*n.b.* the parenthesis in EVV) as an intrusion from Ch. (*n.b.* Ch's common word *ḵāhāl* vs. *'ēdāh*, v. 20, both translated usually with 'congregation'), excising 'Jeroboam' in v. 12 (with the Grr.), and adding, v. 20, the phrase 'from Egypt' to 'Jeroboam' (with Grr. MSS).

Now Montgomery's observations on verse 12 and verse 20 are accurate enough, but when he says that verses 2, 3a are 'absent in OGrr', his statement needs to be modified somewhat. Certainly the LXX (as distinct from the later revisions of the LXX) has nothing *in this position in chapter 12* to correspond to the MT's verses 2, 3a, but it has what exactly corresponds to the MT's verse 2, only in a different position, at the end of chapter 11. Gray, therefore, is more accurate when he claims simply that the first half of verse 3 is omitted in the LXX. But even this statement would give a truer description of the situation if it were amplified as follows: the block of material, MT 12:2, 3a, is matched in the LXX by a block of material of similar length standing in a different position, in the middle of LXX 11:43. In the LXX the part that corresponds to the MT's verse 2 shows a practically word-for-word agreement with the MT; but the part that corresponds to the MT's verse 3a tells a completely different story. It will help us to grasp what has happened, if we set out these two blocks of material side by side.

MT 12:2, 3a	LXX 11:43
יְהִי כַשְׁמֶעַ	καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς ἤκουσεν
יְרֻבְעָם מִן־נִבְט	Ἰεροβοάμ υἱὸς Ναβατ,
וְהוּא עֹדֵנוּ	καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔτι ὄντος
בְּמִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר בָּרַח	ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ὡς ἔφυγεν
מִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה	ἐκ προσώπου Σαλωμων
וַיֵּשֶׁב יְרֻבְעָם בְּמִצְרַיִם:	καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ
וַיִּשְׁלַח וַיִּקְרָא לּוֹ	κατευθύνει καὶ ἔρχεται
וַיָּבֹאוּ יְרֻבְעָם	εἰς τὴν πόλιν αὐτοῦ
וְכָל־קְהָל יִשְׂרָאֵל	εἰς τὴν γῆν Σαρεία
	τὴν ἐν ὄρει Εφραιμ.

Certain things are at once obvious. In these two blocks the first parts show exceedingly close agreement both in content and word order. The only differences are that the MT has 'the king' in front of 'Solomon', and has 'Jeroboam dwelt' instead of 'he dwelt'. Neither addition alters the sense, and both are such common phrases that their presence or absence is, from the point

of view of textual criticism, scarcely significant. Moreover in the parallel passage in Chronicles (2 Chr 10:2) the MT text, while basically the same as the MT of our passage, shows two notable differences: it omits *עודנו* from the phrase *והאז עודנו במצרים* and it reads *וישב יר"מ מצרים:* instead of *וישב יר"מ במצרים*. The LXX of 3 Reigns with its *καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔτι ὄντος ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ* and its *καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ* that shows its Hebrew vorlage agreed with the MT of 1 Kings not only in its broad features, but also in its special characteristics.

In the second place we should notice that the second parts in each block are syntactically indispensable to the first parts. A construction that begins '*And it came to pass, when . . .*' must be completed by a following '*that . . .*'; it cannot be left hanging in mid air uncompleted. This means that it would be a trifle misleading to say of the MT's second part, that in verse 3 '*And they sent and called him and Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel came*' is omitted in the Greek, particularly if one meant thereby to imply that the LXX was following a superior Hebrew vorlage which simply did not contain the MT's second part. Whatever vorlage the LXX was following, we may be sure that it contained *some* second part. There surely never was a Hebrew text, unless it was a sadly mutilated one, that began its first half by saying '*And it came to pass when Jeroboam heard . . .*' and then had no second half to tell us what Jeroboam did when he heard. We must therefore explain the present difference between the MT and the LXX in one of two ways:

1. The Hebrew texts which the MT and the LXX followed were practically the same in the first half, but diverged widely in the second half; and the MT and the LXX have each followed faithfully its own vorlage. In this case our task is to decide which of these two texts is the more likely to be original.
2. The Hebrew texts which the MT and the LXX followed were alike all the way through, but in the second part the LXX followed its vorlage faithfully while the MT substituted what it now has; or else the MT followed its vorlage faithfully and the LXX substituted what it has now; or else both the MT and the LXX substituted what they now have for something which was quite unlike what either of them have (though in this case it would be difficult to imagine what it could have been).

The next thing to notice is that if we examine the two second parts, the difference of each part is seen to be geared to, if not occasioned by, the position of its block as a whole in the narrative. The MT block stands in chapter xii immediately after the announcement of the forthcoming parliament in Shechem. When, therefore, the MT says '*And it came to pass when Jeroboam heard*', the thing that Jeroboam heard of is clearly meant to be this forthcoming parliament; and consequently in the second part of the block the MT quite naturally has Jeroboam coming with the rest of the people to talk to Rehoboam at this parliament in Shechem. But the LXX has its block in chapter xi immediately after the death of Solomon and before the parliament at Shechem has so much as been mentioned. Its second part, therefore, cannot describe Jeroboam as returning from Egypt to come and speak with Rehoboam at Shechem, as the MT does; it has him coming to his ancestral home, Sarira — where else would he go? But this is not all. Not only does the LXX block by its very position picture Jeroboam hearing of the death of Solomon and not the (somewhat later) parliament in Shechem, but in its second part at the exact point

where it diverges from the MT, it has the phrase κατευθύνει καὶ ἔρχεται, that is, it represents Jeroboam as making a bee-line home the very moment he heard of Solomon's death. He is home in Sarira, it would seem, before the parliament in Shechem is even mentioned. Quite clearly, then, the position of the LXX block and the special features of its second part are not two accidental or unrelated phenomena; they are integral parts of a common plan.

Naturally we look next to see if we can discover any positive reason for this insistence by the LXX that Jeroboam returned immediately upon the death of Solomon before the parliament in Shechem. There would seem to be no other discernible reason than that the verse next-but-one-before says that Jeroboam was in Egypt *until Solomon died*, and so our verse insists that it was precisely upon the death of Solomon, and not a week or so later at the parliament in Shechem, that Jeroboam returned. This, of course, would be pedantry in the extreme, but it is no worse than the pedantry displayed elsewhere in LXX 3 Reigns (see 'Pedantic Timetabling in 3rd Book of Reigns', *VT* XV pp. 155f.). Moreover there is another piece of evidence that tends to confirm that this is the right reading of the LXX's motive: the LXX's block of material is placed immediately between two repetitious mentions of the death of Solomon, thus: καὶ ἐκοιμήθη Σαλωμων μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔθαψαν αὐτὸν ἐν πόλει Δαυειδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἐγενήθη ὡς ἤκουσεν Ἰεροβοαμ υἱὸς Ναβατ, καὶ αὐτοῦ ἔτι ὄντος ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, ὡς ἔφυγεν ἐκ προσώπου Σαλωμων καὶ ἐκάθητο ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, κατευθύνει καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς τὴν πόλιν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν γῆν Σαρειρα τὴν ἐν ὄρει Εφραιμ. καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Σαλωμων ἐκοιμήθη μετὰ τῶν πατέρων αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐβασίλευσεν Ροβοαμ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἀντ' αὐτοῦ. It would be difficult to devise a more emphatic way of saying that Jeroboam's return took place immediately upon the death of Solomon.

But whatever is the true motive behind the LXX's positioning of its block, we can be practically certain that this position is the result of a deliberate revision of the original. The clue to what has happened is the repetition of the phrase '*And Solomon slept with his fathers*'. The phrase '*So-and-so slept with his fathers*' is part of a stock formula which is regularly used throughout the Books of Kings to record the death of a king and the accession of his successor. The formula normally consists of three parts: *So-and-so slept with his fathers*, *he was buried somewhere or other*, and *So-and-so reigned in his stead*. Now the LXX here has all three parts of the formula and, what is more, it has them in the normal order; but immediately in front of the third part it repeats the first part: '*Solomon slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David his father . . . and king Solomon slept with his fathers and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead*'. This is most strange; nowhere else in all the MT Kings or the LXX Reigns do we find a repetition like this in the formula. The reason for its occurrence here, however, is quite clear. The LXX is so keen to associate Jeroboam's return with Solomon's death that it is not content to let the complete formula come first before it mentions Jeroboam's return; for the sequence—*Solomon died, was buried, Rehoboam succeeded him, and when Jeroboam heard of it he returned*—would make Jeroboam's hearing refer at least in part to Rehoboam's succession. The LXX therefore inserts Jeroboam's return after the second part of the formula: *Solomon died, was buried, Jeroboam heard and returned*. But with this it becomes grammatically impossible to tack on the third part of the formula to the end of the insertion. The insertion, which is quite sizeable, has Jeroboam as its only subject and ends '*Jeroboam . . . comes into his city . . .*'. One cannot add '*And Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead*', without making it appear

that Rehoboam was Jeroboam's son. The LXX is obliged therefore to overcome this difficulty by repeating the first part of the formula: *'Jeroboam . . . comes into his city . . . And king Solomon slept with his fathers and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead'*.

The awkwardness and unusualness of this device, then, show that the LXX is not following a freely composed text which happens to be different from the MT; rather its block of material on Jeroboam's return is, in its present position, a secondary insertion into an MT-type text of material that once stood elsewhere. And if the position of the block is secondary, it is very probable that the peculiarities of the second part, which are so well fitted to the secondary position, are a secondary adaptation also.

III

But with this we become involved in the second of our two original problems (see p. 3): did Jeroboam play a prominent part in the attempt to wring concessions from Rehoboam, or did he remain quietly in the background until, after the revolt, the leaders of the ten tribes discovered that he had returned from Egypt and invited him to be their king? The second part of the MT's block runs thus: *'It came to pass when Jeroboam heard . . . that Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came and spake unto Rehoboam'*; that is, Jeroboam did take part in the appeal. Now although the LXX has altered the position of its block so that Jeroboam returns immediately after Solomon's death, and although in consequence it has to have him proceeding directly to his ancestral home in Sarira instead of going to the parliament in Shechem which at this stage has not yet been announced, it could still, if it wanted to, have Jeroboam subsequently taking part in the agitations against Rehoboam. The fact is, however, that it does not have Jeroboam either in verse 3 or in verse 12; the congregation comes and parleys, but no separate mention is made of Jeroboam's presence, as it is in the MT. Presumably, then, the LXX intended to have Jeroboam absent from the appeal. Why?

One possible answer lies ready to hand. The LXX was following, not only in the first part of its block, but also in the second part and in xii 12 as well, a text of the MT type; and it felt the same difficulty with this text as so many modern scholars have felt: if according to verse 20 it was only after the revolt that all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, how can verses 2 and 3a say that all Israel called Jeroboam back from Egypt and that he took prominent part with them in the negotiations which *preceded* the revolt? This difficulty the LXX then solved by removing the references to Jeroboam's taking part in the dispute. Now it is quite possible, if not indeed probable, that this difficulty was the cause behind the LXX's alterations, since the difficulty arises from interpreting the Hebrew in a pedantically strict manner such as the LXX of 3 Reigns customarily employs. But, of course, the Hebrew is patient of another interpretation which involves no difficulty. The main clause in verses 2 and 3 intends to say *'And it came to pass when Jeroboam heard of it (i.e. the proposed meeting in Shechem to make Rehoboam king), that Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came and spake to Rehoboam'*. But with the mention of Jeroboam's hearing, the historian realises that he must explain how Jeroboam, who was last described as being in Egypt, came to hear of these new events and to return. He therefore inserts a parenthesis: *for he was still in Egypt whither he had fled from king Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt, and they sent and called him*. Now it could be,

of course, that the 'they' of 'they sent and called him' refers to 'all the congregation of Israel'; but it is quite possible and reasonable, seeing these two verbs are part of the parenthesis, to suppose that 'they' is simply an indefinite use of the third person plural—some ones or others sent and called him. Indeed it is perhaps the more likely story that at this stage some of his immediate supporters in the tribe of Ephraim (rather than the leaders of the official gathering of all the ten tribes) sent to Egypt and called him back. Jeroboam would then deliberately make himself prominent in the negotiations with Rehoboam; so that when after the revolt verse 20 says that 'all Israel heard that Jeroboam was returned', it simply means that during the negotiations all the ten tribes, as distinct from his immediate supporters, had become aware that Jeroboam had returned.

Nor does the next phrase in verse 20, '*they sent and called him to the congregation and made him king*' raise any difficulty. This congregation was presumably a different and slightly later occasion than the one at which the rebellion was announced. We have no reason to think that the appeal of the ten tribes to Rehoboam for lighter conditions was insincere, that right from the start of the first meeting with Rehoboam they had intended to set up Jeroboam as king, that they made their appeal in the hope that Rehoboam would reject it and so take upon himself the blame for their defection, and that the moment the appeal was rejected, they made Jeroboam king. Rather, the rejection of their appeal provoked their revolt, which in turn made them look round for a suitable person to be king, and, deciding on Jeroboam, they would need to send and call him to a special meeting convened for the purpose of king-making. On the other hand we may be sure that all through the negotiations with Rehoboam, Jeroboam and his party had taken care to keep Jeroboam well to the front, so that he was the obvious candidate when the time came to elect a king.

But reasonable as this interpretation of the MT may be, it cannot stand if any of the criticisms which Montgomery and Gray have brought against the MT are valid. Taken as a whole these criticisms contradict each other; but taken singly they are impressive, and therefore they must be examined one by one.

First we may take Gray's point (p. 278) that

MT of v 2 f. . . . is suspect, since the grammatical consequence 'and they called him' in v. 3a to 'and it came to pass when Jeroboam heard' (v. 2a) is not the natural sequence according to sense.

But this difficulty arises from ending the parenthesis in the wrong place. If one does as the RV does, and includes the words "and they sent and called him" in the parenthesis, not only does the parenthesis make good sense—'*and he was still in Egypt . . . and they sent and called him*'—but the main sentence runs in a thoroughly satisfactory sequence—'*And it came to pass when Jeroboam heard . . . that Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came*'.

Next comes Montgomery's contention (*ICC Kings* p. 248) that the MT's verses 2 and 3a are an intrusion from Chronicles. He bases this first on the twin considerations that: (1) the verses are absent from the OGrr., and (2) that the word used for 'congregation' in verse 3a, **קהל**, is different from the word used for 'congregation' in verse 20, **עדה**. As regards (1) we have already noticed (see above, pp. 5f.) that the OGrr. do not omit the verses; they have them, but in a different position. Moreover they follow the MT of Kings in its two significant differences

from the parallel passage in Chronicles. Montgomery will have it (p. 249) that the verses in Kings have been adapted from their original form in *Chronicles*, in order to fit the *Kings* context. But if this were true, it would mean that the LXX, in following one of these adaptations, shows itself even more clearly to be dependent on the Kings 'intrusion'. The LXX, therefore, provides no evidence at all that the original Hebrew text of Kings did not have this 'intrusion'.

As regards (2) it is interesting to notice that Gray (p. 279) has observed the difference between the **עדה** of verse 20 and the **קהל** of verse 3a, but accounts for it in a different way. For him it is not that the compiler of Kings has used two different words for the same meeting because his material was drawn from two different sources; it is that there were two different meetings, one the meeting of the people with Rehoboam (the **קהל**) and the other the regular tribal gathering at Shechem (the **עדה**). Thus far Gray is most probably right. But as against his further idea that the author of *Kings* has confused these two meetings and, thinking that they were both the same, has represented Jeroboam as present at both when in fact he was present at one only, we have already seen (see above, p. 9) good reason for thinking both that there were two meetings, and that Jeroboam was indeed present at both.

But we come nearer to the heart of things when we consider the third reason Montgomery gives for thinking that verses 2 and 3a are an intrusion from *Chronicles*. He says

VV. 2. 3a are necessary to Ch.'s narrative, in which Jeroboam's early history was omitted, but are superfluous here. With these excisions . . . Jeroboam does not appear as ringleader of the revolt, but his election is an afterthought of the rebels. (p. 248)

But if we go back to the record of Jeroboam's early history in chapter 11, which according to Montgomery renders verses 2 and 3a of chapter 12 superfluous, we find it begins thus (11:26): '*And Jeroboam . . . he also lifted up his hand against the king*'. The phrase seems to denote some kind of deliberate insurrection. The next verse offers to give an account of this insurrection: '*And this is the account how he lifted up his hand against the king*'. There follows the story that he was an industrious young man whom Solomon had promoted to be chief over all the labour of the house of Joseph. One day as he was going out of Jerusalem, he was met by the prophet Ahijah who announced that God was going to rend the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give ten tribes to Jeroboam. But the prophet made it perfectly clear (11:35) that the kingdom was to be rent, not out of Solomon's hand while Solomon still lived, but out of his son's hand. Solomon apparently got to hear of this prophecy, for at its end (11:39) we are told '*Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam: but Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt . . . and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon*' (11:40).

Now thus far no mention has been made of any act of insurrection on Jeroboam's part, only Ahijah's prophecy of Jeroboam's rise to power. The act of insurrection according to the MT was that as soon as Solomon was dead and Rehoboam was about to be made king by all Israel, Jeroboam came rushing back from Egypt and took a leading part in moving the ten tribes to try to wring concessions from Rehoboam, and, when Rehoboam proved obstinate, in openly repudiating his rule. But Montgomery (p. 242) and Gray (p. 268) suggest a completely different story. Montgomery comments:

There is also an evident lacuna between v. 27a, *And this is the account how he (Jeroboam) raised his hand (i.e. rebelled) against the king*, and v. 40a, *And Solomon, sought to kill Jeroboam*. We have to suppose loss of some definite overt act on Jeroboam's part, which caused his flight, and which would equally account for the partisans who ultimately made him king of the North. That datum has been replaced with the popular story of the prophet Ahijah (vv. 29–39)

Similarly Gray remarks (p. 268): 'We may well suppose that between Ahijah's encounter with Jeroboam and Solomon's drastic reaction which drove Jeroboam to seek political asylum in Egypt definite acts of insurrection took place to provoke Solomon's reaction'. The only difference between Montgomery and Gray is that the former seems to think that these acts of rebellion have been replaced by Ahijah and his prophecy, whereas the latter considers that they came after the prophecy.

But there are very strong reasons for preferring the MT's story against Montgomery and Gray's reconstruction:

1. Their reconstruction asks us to suppose a lacuna in a text which makes very good sense as it stands without supposing a lacuna. Moreover the need for this supposition springs itself from a prior conjecture. In the MT Jeroboam's overt act of rebellion is his leading of the ten tribes in their demands and in their subsequent rebellion. But Montgomery and Gray, as we have seen, would excise all the verses in chapter 12 which have Jeroboam taking part in this act of rebellion, and in consequence, because, to satisfy the statement that he did lift up his hand against the king, they must have Jeroboam commit some act of rebellion, they have to suppose that some act of rebellion was once recorded in chapter 11 and has since dropped out.
2. The MT as it now stands is at least consistent. It says that Jeroboam first got his idea of becoming king from Ahijah's prophecy. But that prophecy itself told him that he would have no chance of wresting the kingdom from Solomon, but that he would wrest it from Rehoboam. The MT therefore has Jeroboam begin his insurrectionist activities immediately upon the death of Solomon, but records no rebellious act while Solomon still lived. Now if with Montgomery we are prepared to make a further excision and suppose that Ahijah's prophecy is a late intrusion, we can then suppose without inconsistency that there was originally some act of rebellion perpetrated by Jeroboam before Solomon died. But if with Gray we keep Ahijah's prophecy and suppose that some act of rebellion originally followed Ahijah's prophecy while Solomon still lived, we then have to suppose that Jeroboam impatiently jumped the gun and acted contrary to the prophetic advice.
3. But the really difficult thing to accept is the picture of Jeroboam which emerges when we put together the supposed lacuna in chapter 11 and the proposed excisions in chapter 12. We then have a Jeroboam who, encouraged by the prophet to expect that he would successfully rend the kingdom from Rehoboam when Solomon was dead, attempted to rebel while Solomon was still alive, but did nothing at all when Solomon died apart from coming home and 'remaining . .

. discreetly in the background while his plans matured' (Gray, p. 278), only accepting kingship when the rebellion was a fait accompli. Such a tamed and passive Jeroboam would be difficult to reconcile with the industrious young man of chapter 11 who was so keen to revolt that he jumped the gun, and the daring innovator of 12:25 f. The MT's picture of a Jeroboam who from the start was industrious and influential, was encouraged to expect kingship on the death of Solomon, was persecuted by Solomon and obliged to flee but took the first opportunity to come back and lead first agitation and then rebellion against Rehoboam and was eventually made king — this is consistent and much more convincing.

IV

But unconvincing as is the Jeroboam who emerges from Montgomery and Gray's reconstruction, one must admit that it is a very similar Jeroboam that meets us in the LXX's first account. In fact this Jeroboam is even milder and almost saintly; for the LXX records no act of rebellion on Jeroboam's part while Solomon still lived. Jeroboam, an industrious and loyal servant of Solomon, is persecuted by Solomon simply on the grounds of Ahijah's prophecy. On Solomon's death he returns to Sarira his home, as is natural, but he takes no part in the agitations against Rehoboam and none in the rebellion. In the calm knowledge given through Ahijah's prophecy that he will one day be king, he is presumably content to wait until, after the rebellion, the ten tribes invite him to ascend the throne.

This impeccable behaviour of a 'divinely appointed but reluctant king' has, of course, famous precedents. Saul was anointed by Samuel to be king, but when the day came for him to be appointed, he was nowhere in sight and was found hiding among the baggage (1 Sam 10). Even more apposite is David's case. He was anointed to be king while Saul was still living, was persecuted by Saul and forced to flee; but neither during Saul's lifetime did he rebel against Saul, nor after Saul's death did he attempt to seize the kingdom from Saul's son, Ishbosheth. He was content to wait until the ten tribes came of their own accord and asked him to be their king (see especially 2 Sam 4:1–5:3). It looks quite probable, therefore, that the LXX, in its first account of Jeroboam's rise to power, has not only concerned itself with pedantic 'correction' of the timetable, but has also attempted to whitewash Jeroboam by modelling his behaviour after King David's; just as later on in 3 Reigns the LXX has not only changed the order of the Ahab chapters on pedantic, timetable grounds, but has also attempted to whitewash Ahab.

Now in all this the LXX's account is clearly a secondary remodelling of the original, for at the very beginning of the story the LXX still retains the introductory phrase which was supposed to set the key for the whole story: *'Jeroboam lifted up his hands against the king'* ἐπήρατο χεῖρας ἐπὶ βασιλέα (11:27). Without any doubt the phrase indicates a treasonable act of rebellion. This did not David! We are expressly told several times that David refused 'to put forth his hand against' Saul (e.g. 1 Sam. 24:5, 6; 26:9, 11, 23). Only if the phrase could be construed as not meaning rebellion would the LXX's account be relieved of inconsistency.

Interestingly enough, later rabbis did find a way of so construing it. In the Tractate *Sanhedrin*, 101a–b, we read:

R. Johanan said: Why did Jeroboam merit sovereignty? Because he reprov'd Solomon. And why was he punished? Because he reprov'd him publicly. As it is written, *And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king: Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father.* He said thus to him: Thy father David made breaches in the wall, that Israel might come up [to Jerusalem] on the Festivals; whilst thou hast closed them, in order to exact toll for the benefit of Pharaoh's daughter. What is meant by *And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king?*—R. Nahman said: He took off his phylacteries in front of him".

A note in Dr Freedman's translation of *Sanhedrin* (Soncino Press, London, 1935, p. 690) remarks:

This (i.e. taking off his phylacteries in front of Solomon) was regarded as a mark of disrespect. Another version: he removed his phylacteries, so as to be unconstrained in his abuse of Solomon, which he would not wish to do with these religious symbols upon him.

So, then, according to *Sanhedrin* Jeroboam's lifting up his hands against the king was not rebellion; it was a little indiscreet unrestraint, prompted by youthful, but very righteous, anger, in rebuking Solomon's sin somewhat freely and in public! This is the ultimate in whitewashing; but the LXX's first account may well represent an early tendency in this same direction.

In striking contrast to this, the LXX's second account of Jeroboam's rise to power (3 Reigns 12:24 a–z) stands at the other extreme. It has not a single good word to say for Jeroboam. Gray (p. 268) holds that 'there seems . . . to be a genuine historical source behind the variant account in G (vv. 24 a–z)'. He recognises, of course, that 'the whole . . . including such obvious tendencies to vilify Jeroboam as the statement that his mother was a harlot (v. 24b) and the transference to him of the tradition of marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh (v. 24c) which belongs properly to the story of Hadad of Edom, indicates midrashic expansion' (p. 269). Yet he still feels that 'it is evident here that in G an independent Northern tradition is cited, but it has been worked over by a Judaeian editor . . .' (p. 287). But the vilifying of Jeroboam is so constant and so exaggerated that it is difficult to attribute it to an editor, in the normal sense of that term: Jeroboam's mother was a harlot (24b). Jeroboam himself συνέκλεισεν τὴν πόλιν Δαυειδ καὶ ἦν ἐπαυρόμενος ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν. (24b). Now the history of the first part of this sentence is interesting: the MT of xi 27 has **וַיְבַרְכֵם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**. The subject of the sentence is Solomon; **וַיְבַרְכֵם** describes a repair operation; and the repair is carried out on a breach in the walls. The LXX of this verse has συνέκλεισεν τὸν φραγμὸν τῆς πόλεως Δαυειδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ. Again the subject is Solomon, the operation is one of repair, and it completes the fortifications of the city. But in 24b the subject of συνέκλεισεν is οὗτος, that is Jeroboam; the operation is no longer shutting up a breach in the walls or completing the fortification, but simply shutting up the city. And when this operation is closely connected with the second part of the sentence καὶ ἦν ἐπαυρόμενος ἐπὶ τὴν βασιλείαν it becomes clear that συνέκλεισεν τὴν πόλιν is intended to appear as an act of insurrection, a besieging of Jerusalem in an attempt to

usurp the kingdom.⁴ This of course is a deliberate distortion of the original meaning of the text, to make Jeroboam appear worse than he really was. Rabbinic interpretation is not far away! Other distortions follow: in Egypt he is said to marry Pharaoh's daughter, which attributes to Jeroboam something that in actual fact happened to Hadad the Edomite. On his return from Egypt he gathers the whole tribe of Ephraim in his home town Sarira, and builds a fortification—καὶ συνάγεται ἐκεῖ πᾶν σκῆπτρον Ἐφραϊμ—καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν Ἰεροβοαμ χάρακα (24 f.). This is very treasonable behaviour. He then sends his wife to enquire of Ahijah about his sick child. Ahijah denounces him unsparingly and prophesies his destruction, although as yet he has not turned to idolatry nor even obtained the throne (24 q–n); potential for evil is obviously already apparent! Then at the end of 24n we are told that Jeroboam took the initiative: ἐπορεύθη Ἰεροβοαμ εἰς Σικιμα . . . καὶ συνήθροισεν ἐκεῖ τὰς φυλάς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ. Of course thereupon καὶ ἀνέβη ἐκεῖ Ῥοβοαμ υἱὸς Σαλωμων—in great alarm, one might suppose. There follows a very significant variation on the theme of Ahijah and his object lesson of the rent garment. In the MT and the LXX's first account Ahijah seizes his own garment, tears it in twelve pieces and gives ten to Jeroboam as a vivid pledge to him that he is going to rule over ten tribes. At the same time Ahijah delivers a strong denunciation of Solomon. But in 24o there is no denunciation of Solomon or his house. Shemaiah (not Ahijah) is ordered by God to take a new garment, rend it in twelve pieces, and give Jeroboam ten pieces τοῦ περιβαλέσθαι σε—to clothe yourself with them! It is difficult not to read sarcasm in this purpose clause. At any rate, in this second account, vilifying of Jeroboam is not a superimposed addition; it is the very substance and the basic design.

The two LXX accounts, then, of Jeroboam's rise to power, standing as they do at opposite extremes of whitewashing and vilifying, are excellent early examples of the homiletic principles which another has well described thus:

Even when we find these people [i.e. good people] doing something wrong we should try with the help of the exegetic method to put a favourable construction on their action and to adduce such mitigating circumstances as to show that there was, indeed, no crime at all committed . . . Similarly in the case of the wicked man, the Rabbis strove to expatiate upon his sinfulness as far as they could and, even in cases where wickedness was not expressly stated, they derived it from other cases where wickedness was categorically affirmed, to prove that an evil man is capable of anything, and they supported their expositions even with the slightest and remotest of indications. . . ⁵

We have, then, three versions of Jeroboam's rise to power: the extreme whitewashing version, LXX number 1, the extreme vilifying version, LXX number 2, and, standing somewhere between these two extremes, the moderate version of the MT. The present writer would hold that we have in these versions, not three independent historical sources, and not even three more or less independent textual traditions in the strict sense of that term, but rather the original story plus two Rabbinic, homiletic variations on it.

⁴ Cf. the use of *συγκλείω* in Jer. 21:4, 9 for 'besiege'.

⁵ Z. H. Chajes, *The Student's Guide through the Talmud*, translated, edited and annotated by J. Shachter, London, 1952, pp. 167, 174.

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