

Temple Specifications
*A Dispute in Logical Arrangement
Between the MT and the LXX*

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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.

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Temple Specifications

The specifications for Solomon’s temple, as presented by the MT and the LXX, raise a number of thorny problems.¹ In the first place the MT (3 Reigns 6:2) and the LXX (3 Reigns 6:6) disagree over the basic dimensions:

	Length	Breadth	Height (in cubits)
MT	60	20	30
LXX	40	20	25

Then the MT gives the overall height of the temple as 30 cubits and the height of the holy of holies as 20 cubits, but leaves unexplained how the difference of 10 cubits is to be accounted for. Was there an upper room between the ceiling of the holiest and the roof of the temple? Or was there a 10 cubit high loft running the whole length of the temple over both the holiest and the Holy Place? Or was the floor of the holiest 10 cubits higher than the floor of the Holy Place? The MT of the 3 Reigns does not tell us. The MT of 1 Chronicles 28:11 and of 2 Chronicles 3:9, however, speaks of עֲלִיּוֹת, upper rooms, and the plural seems to suggest that there was a loft, divided into several rooms, running the whole length of the temple. The LXX on these two occasions uses the term ὑπερῶν, which agrees exactly with the MT, except that in 2 Chronicles 3:9 the LXX uses the word in the singular. That there was a loft running the whole length of the temple is likewise the view of the Talmud.²

More recent scholars, however, have disagreed with this view and suggested several alternatives. One alternative is that the holiest differed in height from the Holy Place because it stood over the holy rock, and its base was accordingly higher than the floor of the rest of the temple. Another suggests that the holiest may have had a separate roof, 10 cubits lower than the roof of the Holy Place. A third view argues that Solomon’s temple will have followed the pattern of other ancient Near-Eastern temples in having the floor of the holiest built up to a higher level than the floor of the Holy Place. A fourth explanation makes use of the theory that the temple was built on top of an artificially constructed platform or podium, 5 cubits high. It argues that in actual fact there was no difference *internally* between the height of the holiest and that of the Holy Place—both were 20 cubits high; but that measured *externally* the overall height of the temple would include the additional 5 cubits of the platform, thus giving a total height of 25 cubits. It is then pointed out that 25 cubits is in fact the figure which the LXX (6:6) gives for the height of the temple, and the conclusion is reached that the LXX’s figure is true and original and the MT’s figure is mistaken and secondary.

¹ For a critical reconstruction of the temple see Leroy Waterman, ‘The Damaged Blue-prints of the Temple of Solomon’, *JNES* 11, 1943, pp. 284 ff.; G. E. Wright, ‘Solomon’s Temple Resurrected’, *B A*, IV, May, 1941; P. L. Garber, ‘Reconstructing Solomon’s Temple’, *B A*, XIV, Feb., 1951; De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, London 1961, pp. 312 ff.

² See, e.g., *Middoth* VI (Mishnah 5); *Pesahim* 86a.

But attractive as this last theory is, it does not fit the facts, for the LXX of 3 Reigns 6:15–17, as we shall presently see (p. 164), appears to describe a loft 5 cubits high in the temple, its height being additional to the 20 cubits of the Holiest and Holy Place. And if this is so, the 25 cubits which the LXX names as the height of the temple, is composed not of 20 cubits temple plus 5 cubits podium, but of 20 cubits temple and 5 cubits loft.

Then there is a further complication. While the LXX agrees with the MT of Chronicles and with the implications of the MT of Reigns that there was a loft in the temple, the verse which in the LXX begins the description of the loft (6:15 καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους δι’ ὅλου τοῦ οἴκου πέντε ἐν πήχει τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ) has as its counterpart in the MT (6:10) a verse which is not describing a loft at all. The verse runs: וַיִּבֶן אֶת-הַיְצִיעַ עַל-כָּל-הַבַּיִת הַמֶּשְׁאָמוֹת קוֹמָתוֹ, and there is great dispute as to what the יְצִיעַ was. Some say it was a side-wing, others hold that it was a podium or platform. But whatever it was, it certainly was not a loft. So here the LXX differs from the MT in a major point of interpretation.

Now since any one of these theories and interpretations is in itself quite plausible, there is a strong temptation to pick on isolated verses in the MT or LXX or both, which seem to support the particular theory that one regards as most attractive. But our prime task is not to produce a reasonable theory as to what the temple may have looked like, but rather to decide what our texts are trying to say and how far each of them may claim to represent the original text. And to understand what our texts are trying to say will mean first studying each of them in its own right as a whole; only then will it be safe to judge the meaning of the individual details, their relevance to the description as a whole, the self-consistency and intelligibility of each description and its claim to represent the original account.

II

Let us, then, set out the first sixteen verses of the MT’s account of the temple, and side by side with them their counterpart in the LXX tradition.

MT	LXX
6:1. Date of building (For MT counterpart see V 31, 32 ^a) (For MT counterpart see VI 37, 38)	6:1. Date of building
2. Dimensions of house.	2, 3 Ceremonies at the foundation.
3. Dimensions of porch. (For MT counterpart see below, verse 14.)	4, 5 Date of foundation and completion.
4. Windows for the house.	6. Dimensions of house.
5. Stories and side-chambers.	7. Dimensions of porch.
6. Dimensions of side-chambers.	8. <u>“And he built the house and finished it”.</u>
7. Preparatory quarry-work.	9. Windows for the house.
	10. Stories and side-chambers.
	11. Dimensions of side-chambers.
	12. Preparatory quarry-work.

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| <p>8. Access to side-chambers.</p> <p>9a. <u>“And he built the house and finished it”</u>.</p> <p>9b. Roofing of house (with hollows and rows, i.e. coffer-work) with cedar.</p> <p>10. ויבן את־הַיְצִיעַ³
עַל־קַלְהֵיבִית
הַמִּשְׁאֲמוֹת קוֹמָתוֹ
וַיֵּאָחֵז אֶת־הַבַּיִת
בְּעֵצֵי אֲרָזִים</p> <p>11, 12, 13. Special plea for obedience.</p> <p>14. <u>“And Solomon built the house and finished it”</u>.</p> <p>15. ויבן את־קִירוֹת
הַבַּיִת מִבֵּיתָהּ
בְּצִלְעוֹת אֲרָזִים
מִקְרַקַּע הַבַּיִת

עַד־קִירוֹת
הַסֵּפֶן צִפָּה
אֶץ מִבַּיִת
וַיִּצַף אֶת־קְרַקַּע הַבַּיִת
בְּצִלְעוֹת בְּרוּשִׁים:

16. ויבן את־עֲשָׂרִים אֲמָה
מִנְרֻכּוֹתֵי הַבַּיִת

בְּצִלְעוֹת אֲרָזִים
מִן־הַקְּרַקַּע עַד־הַקִּירוֹת
וַיִּבֶן לוֹ מִבַּיִת לְדַבֵּר
לְקֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדָשִׁים:</p> | <p>13. Access to side-chambers.</p> <p>14a. <u>“And he built the house and finished it”</u>.</p> <p>14b. Roofing (έκοιλοστάθμησεν, i.e. he coffered) of house with cedar.</p> <p>15. καὶ ὑποδομήσεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους δι' ὄλου τοῦ οἴκου πέντε ἐν πήχει τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ καὶ συνέσχεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους⁴ ἐν ξύλοις κεδρίνοις.
(entirely absent)
(for LXX counterpart see above, verse 8)</p> <p>16. καὶ ὑποδομήσεν τοὺς τοίχους τοῦ οἴκου διὰ ξύλων κεδρίνων ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους τοῦ οἴκου καὶ ἕως τῶν δοκῶν καὶ ἕως τῶν τοίχων· ἐκοιλοστάθμησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν, καὶ περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίνας.</p> <p>17. καὶ ὑποδομήσεν τοὺς εἴκοσι πήχεις ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου⁵ (? τοίχου)
τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἐν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἕως τῶν δοκῶν· καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐκ τοῦ δαβιρ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων.</p> |
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The first thing to notice about these two texts is their overwhelming similarity. It shows that in spite of their differences they are nothing more than variants of a common original.

³ Q^{re}. K^{ethib} וַיְצִיעַ.

⁴ Binν τὸν σύνδεσμον, ANy^{bal} τὸν ἔνδεσμον.

⁵ βοσαε2 All others read τοίχου vel sim.

The next thing of importance to notice is the double occurrence in both texts of the phrase ‘*And he (or, Solomon) built the house and finished it*’ (MT 6:9a and 14, LXX 6:8 and 14a). Obviously from its wording this phrase is meant to be a summary-phrase, and one might therefore expect it to be fulfilling the function of dividing the text into its logical subdivisions. If this is so, then we have a very interesting and revealing phenomenon: both texts agree on one occasion over the positioning of the phrase, for MT 6:9a stands in relation to its context in exactly the same position as LXX 6:14a stands in its context. But they disagree widely over the positioning on the second occasion; and, if the phrases have been positioned deliberately, it means that our texts have radically different concepts of what details should logically be grouped together, and that in turn may well mean that they have a different concept of the details themselves. On the other hand, it is unlikely to be an accidental coincidence that both texts have two summary phrases. It is much more likely that the original text had these two summary-phrases, one of them in the position over which the MT and the LXX agree; and that either the MT or the LXX has changed the position of the other.

But before we go further, let us examine these summary-phrases more closely to see if they do in fact serve the function of dividing the text into logical subdivisions. And let us take the MT first, for its logic has been strongly criticised. Of its first summary-phrase, verse 9a, Montgomery⁶ remarks:

9a. The sentence appears to be quite secondary; the annotator thought of the stone construction, which was first ‘finished’; yet an unroofed house is hardly finished, while that verb is used correctly at the end of the specifications (v. 38).

Of its secondary summary-phrase, verse 14, he says:⁷ ‘V. 14 repeats v. 9 on “the finishing of the house”, introduced because these follow here again items of the cedar work’.

Montgomery’s observations, however, are hardly satisfactory. Admittedly verse 9a and verse 14 in the MT both sound odd to our western ears. Both announce that Solomon ‘built the house and finished it’, yet at verse 9 only the walls of the house are complete, the house as a whole is far from finished; and verse 14 stands at the *beginning* of a long paragraph detailing the work on the interior of the house, whereas not until the end of this work could the house, to our way of thinking, be called finished. Moreover, at the end of this paragraph (vi 38) we find another announcement that ‘*the house was finished*’ and Montgomery can this time approve of its positioning; but the very appropriateness of this verse’s position seems to us to emphasise the inappropriateness of the position of verse 9a and verse 14. Our objections, however, are not valid; they arise simply because we are judging the Hebrew idiom by our western way of looking at things. What the Hebrew intends by the phrase ‘*And he built the house and finished it*’ is made clear by the similar phrase in 7; ‘*And his own house Solomon was building for thirteen years and he finished all his house*’. This verse stands at the *beginning*, not the end, of the paragraph which describes the building of the royal palaces. Its function is to mark the transition from the preceding, to the following, topic by giving in advance a summary of the following topic. Now it is interesting to find that the LXX (or some reviser of it) has felt

⁶ ICC Kings p. 146.

⁷ ICC Kings p. 147.

precisely the same objection against this Hebrew phrase as Montgomery has voiced against 6:9a: how can one say that he *finished* the house when the story of its building is only just beginning?⁸ The Greek, therefore, has left the first half of the verse—καὶ τὸν οἶκον ἑαυτῷ ὠκοδόμησεν Σαλωμων τρισκαίδεκα ἔτη—standing at the beginning of the paragraph (LXX 7:38), but it has removed the second half of the verse—καὶ συνετέλεσεν Σαλωμων ὅλον τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ—to the end of the paragraph (LXX 7:50); which is wonderfully neat and logical after the western manner, but pettily pedantic and quite obviously secondary.

We can return, then, to MT 6:14 and notice that in the text as it now stands the verse is performing precisely the same function as 7:1. It is not, pace Montgomery, ‘introduced because there follow here again items of the cedar work’. It stands at the head of a new paragraph which is about to describe the interior divisions, decorations and installations of the temple (6:14–38) and by its summary-in-advance it marks the transition from the previous verses, (11–13), which contain God’s plea to Solomon for obedience, to the topic which is to follow. The verb *finished* must not be pressed to mean more than it was intended to say. As we have already noticed, the verb is repeated at the end of this same paragraph (verse 38) where we are informed that the house was ‘*finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it*’. And yet the making of the pillars, the sea, the ten lavers and the interior furniture has not yet been described and is not described until the paragraph next but one (vii 13–51). Obviously *finished* in 6:38 refers only to the building as a building with its main installations. The writer has not forgotten that the complete house had furniture and very large and very important vessels of the ministry, which he has not yet described; he is simply concentrating on one aspect of the work at a time. When he comes to describe the furniture and vessels, he again uses the verb *finished*, quite naturally, to mark the subsections of this particular aspect of the work:

7:22b. ‘*So the work of the pillars was finished*’; (separating the account of the pillars from that of the sea and lavers which follows).

7:40b. ‘*And Hiram finished doing all the work which he did for King Solomon in the house of the Lord*’; (separating the description of the sea and lavers from the detailed summary which follows).

7:51. ‘*Thus all the work that King Solomon wrought in the house of the Lord was finished*’; (general conclusion).

If, then, the summary-phrase at 6:14 marks the transition from the three verses of exhortation, 11–13, to the paragraph dealing with the interior renovations and installations, what about the summary-phrase at 6:9a? Part of the logic of its position is at once apparent. The first eight verses deal exclusively with stone-work, the stone shell of the temple, porch and side-chambers. Verses 9b and 10 both deal with woodwork. This in itself is reason enough perhaps why the summary-phrase, 9a, should separate verses 1–8 from verses 9b and 10. But it is not the whole story; for if verses 9b and 10 have in common only the fact that both deal with woodwork, why should they be separated from verses 14 ff. which likewise deal with woodwork? For the moment, however, we cannot go further with this question, for while verse 9b deals explicitly with the wooden roofing of the temple, the meaning of verse 10 is

⁸ See further, ‘Pedantic Timetabling in 3rd Book of Reigns’, *VT* XV, 2 (1965) p. 156 ff.

disputed and we will not anticipate here the result of our later discussion (see p. 11). Is it enough if so far our investigation has shown that in the MT the two summary-phrases do perform the function of dividing the text into logical subdivisions. The MT's scheme, then, is—

- 6:1–8 Stone construction = shell of temple, porch and side-rooms.
 9a And he built the house and finished it.
 9b–10 Wooden construction = 9b. roofing of temple; 10 . . . ?
 11–13 Special plea for obedience as the condition on which God was prepared to dwell in the temple, the shell of which was now complete and which was about to be equipped with an inner sanctuary to accommodate the divine Presence.
 14 And Solomon built the house and finished it.
 15 ff. The interior arrangements—the lining of the walls with cedar and of the floor with fir (v. 15); the division of the space into a debir (v. 16) and a holy place (v. 17), etc.

When we turn to examine the logic of the LXX's arrangement we find that the position of its summary-phrase, verse 14a, corresponds exactly to the position of the MT's summary-verse 9a; that is to say, it agrees with the MT in marking off the stone shell of the building from the wood of the roof. Its second summary-verse, however, stands not at verse 15b, where it would correspond to the MT's verse 14, but at verse 8, which would correspond to a position in the MT at 3b. At the same time the three verses of exhortation which in the MT immediately precede the disputed summary-phrase are in the LXX entirely absent. This has two effects:

1. The material which in the MT stands as one connected whole (vv. 1–8 MT, vv. 1–13 LXX) because it all describes the stone shell of the building, is in the LXX divided into two parts. The division is not without its logic: verses 1–7 relate the foundation and building of the temple and porch, that is the temple proper. Verses 9–13 have as their main burden the building of the side-chambers. Now both the MT and the LXX are careful to emphasise that the side-chambers were not an integral part of the temple; but the LXX by placing a summary phrase between the description of the temple proper and that of the side-chambers, has made this emphasis even more emphatic. Moreover⁹ there is a difference between the LXX's account of the relation of the side-chambers to the temple and the MT's account, and this difference still further emphasises the distinction between the temple and the side-chambers. The MT says that *he made rebatements in the house all round on the outside so that {sc. the side-chambers} should not have hold in the walls of the house*. That is, the temple walls were stepped on the outside and the beams which joined the wall of the side-chambers to the temple wall were not inserted into the temple wall, but *rested* on the rebatements. But the LXX says διάστημα ἔδωκεν τῷ οἴκῳ κυκλόθεν ἔξωθεν τοῦ οἴκου, ὅπως μὴ ἐπιλαμβάνωνται τῶν

⁹ In what follows I am indebted to helpful discussion with Professor K. M. T. Atkinson.

τοιχων τοῦ οἴκου. We notice that διάστημα is singular not plural; certainly it does not mean rebatements. Its natural meaning is *interval*. Then the purpose clause does not say that the side-chambers were not to have hold *in* the walls of the house, but rather that they were not to have hold of the walls at all. In other words, the LXX's view is that there was a clear space between the side-chambers and the temple walls so that the side-chambers did not so much as touch the temple walls. Whether this view rightly represents the original specifications is a matter which we must discuss later; for the moment all we need notice is that this view that the side-chambers were separated from the temple by an interval is all of one piece with the logic that has interposed the summary-phrase '*And he built the house and finished*' between the record of the building of the temple and the building of the side-chambers.

2. The second effect of the LXX's arrangement of the summary phrases may be put as follows: after its two stone-work sections the LXX has a summary-phrase, 6:14a, just as the MT has. Its next two verses, 14b and 15, likewise have in common that they both deal with wood-work. But thereafter it has no verses of exhortation as the MT has, and no summary-phrase to divide these two verses on woodwork from the verses which describe the woodwork of the interior lining and partitioning. The two lots of woodwork verses, therefore, stand together as an undivided whole. This effect, of course, could simply be the inevitable, but unplanned, result of the absence of the summary-phrase on duty higher up the chapter and the fact that the LXX just does not have any verses of exhortation. But there is some evidence that the effect is intentional. The opening verse of the 'first' woodwork section (LXX 6:14b, MT 6:9b) mentions the roof/ceiling of the temple. The LXX uses the word ἐκοιλοστάθησεν which is a rarish word though a remarkably appropriate translation of the Hebrew phrase '*he roofed the house with hollows and rows*' i.e. with coffer-work. Then in verse 16, which is the first verse of the 'second' woodwork section, the LXX uses ἐκοιλοστάθησεν again. Now it is perhaps conceivable that here ἐκοιλοστάθησεν refers to coffer-work on the walls, but it is far more likely, as we shall presently see, that it again refers to the coffering of a ceiling. And if this is so, it is very understandable that the LXX should consider verses 14 and 16, each with its ἐκοιλοστάθησεν, to belong to one and the same section, and should refuse to allow them to be separated by the intervention of three verses of exhortation and a summary-phrase.

We find then that the LXX in the positioning of its summary-phrases is attempting a logical division of the subject matter every bit as much as the MT.

III

The two systems, therefore, are both deliberate, but they cannot both be original. One of them must be the result of a deliberate revision. Now in determining which of the two systems is more likely to be original, it will be helpful to remember that the passage is a highly technical one. A text-tradition, therefore, which is superficially difficult, but on closer inspection proves

to be self-consistent and to have its details so grouped that they are each exactly relevant to its context, will be more likely to be original than a tradition which superficially makes sense but on closer inspection proves to be self-contradictory and to have its details stationed in positions where they are not strictly relevant to their context.

With this in mind let us take first the stone-work section and weigh the comparative merits of the MT and the LXX. Both agree, as we have already seen, that the stone-work section should be marked off from what follows. Their disagreement is over the LXX's insistence that the stone-work section should be subdivided into two parts : (1) the temple proper and (2) the side-rooms. But with this some unsatisfactory features begin to appear.

To start with the LXX has bungled the positioning of its summary-phrase at verse 8. The verses before it were clearly intended to deal with the temple proper, the verses after it with the side-rooms. But unfortunately for the LXX's sense of logic, the windows, which were in fact in the wall of the temple proper, appear on the wrong side of the summary-phrase. They come in verse 9 and so are grouped not with the temple proper but with the side-rooms.

Secondly we have to decide which account of the relation of the side-rooms to the temple is more likely to be original. The MT, we remember, says that the side-rooms rested on rebatements in the temple walls; the LXX maintains that the side-rooms did not touch the temple-walls at all, but there was an interval between the side-rooms and the temple. Now behind both the MT's and the LXX's architectural arrangements are considerations of piety; the side-rooms, built for the convenience of the priests, were not to be considered an integral part of the temple proper. The same pious concern is observable in the LXX's description of the siderooms in Ezekiel's temple (Ezek. 41:6). Departing widely from the MT the LXX says: *καὶ διάστημα ἐν τῷ τοίχῳ τοῦ οἴκου ἐν τοῖς πλευροῖς κύκλῳ τοῦ εἶναι τοῖς ἐπιλαμβανομένοις ὄρᾶν, ὅπως τὸ παράπαν μὴ ἄπτωνται τῶν τοίχων τοῦ οἴκου: and there was a space in the wall of the house in the side-rooms (? or, at the sides) round about, that it should be for those that take hold to see, that they should not at all touch the walls of the house.* The meaning of all this is far from clear. It would seem that for the translator τοῖς ἐπιλαμβανομένοις are no longer the beams of the side-rooms, but people who are climbing up into the second and third storeys of the side-rooms, for whom a space must be provided between the side-rooms and the temple so that they can see clearly and not in any way touch (ὅπως τὸ παράπαν μὴ . . .) the temple walls. But the 'piety-motive' is clear enough. Similarly the Christian Father, Theodoret,¹⁰ shows great concern for the sanctity of the temple walls. Describing the building of the side-rooms he says that their purpose was, in part, ὥστε . . . μηδένα τῶν Λευϊτῶν προσψαύειν τοῖς τοῦ ναοῦ τοίχοις.

Reverting, then, to our passage in three Reigns 6, we may sum up the situation thus: if the LXX's extremely pious arrangement had been original, no one would have changed it subsequently to the less pious arrangement which appears in the MT; but if the MT's arrangement were original, it is quite understandable that a later interpreter out of motives of piety should have altered it to the arrangement which we now find in the LXX.

Moreover the LXX of three Reigns shows 'pious' features elsewhere in the temple context. It has, for instance, changed the position of the plans for the royal palaces: instead of coming

¹⁰ *Quaest. in III Reg. Cap. VI. Interr. XXIII*

in the middle of the temple plans, as they do in the MT, they are not mentioned until all the temple plans have all been detailed.¹¹

The LXX's subdivision of the stone-work section proves thus to be the result of a deliberate, motivated revision. It will serve simply to confirm this verdict if I may mention here what I have demonstrated elsewhere, that the LXX's grouping of time-table material at the beginning of this stone-work section (verses 2, 3, 4, 5) is not only directed by very pedantic motives, but is based on a serious misunderstanding of the original text. It is thus convicted of being a revision, and a bad one into the bargain.

IV

From the fact that the LXX's positioning of the disputed summary-phrase has proved secondary, it might appear a foregone conclusion that the MT's positioning of it must be original. But things are not quite simple. While the MT verses 9b and 10 both deal with woodwork, this fact is not sufficient reason for their being separated from verses 15 ff., which also deal with woodwork. But when we ask what else verses 9b and 10 have in common, we run up against the dispute over the meaning of **יָצִיעַ** in verse 10.

Moreover verses 11, 12, 13, which likewise have the effect of separating verses 9b and 10 from verses 15 ff., have been regarded by some as late intrusions: earlier source critics considered them the work of D; Burney¹² disagreed and dubbed them P; more recently Montgomery¹³ followed Burney's P verdict, while Gray¹⁴ has denied that they are P, and has re-assigned them to D. Whether they are D or P, their absence from the LXX has been held by some to be a sign of faithfulness to the original, and their presence in the MT a secondary feature that alters, if it does not ruin, the logical arrangement of the original.

We must, therefore, examine verses 9b and 10 more closely to see whether their being grouped together by themselves is justified by a special community of subject-matter, or whether, although they both deal with woodwork, they have no justification for being separated from the later woodwork verses. Now verse 9b deals with roofing; the natural presumption would therefore be that verse 10 might also be speaking of roofing. Let us see what it says. It consists of two parts:

1. **וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־הַיָּצִיעַ עַל־כָּל־הַבַּיִת הַקֹּדֶשׁ אַמּוֹת קוֹמָתוֹ**
2. **וַיֵּאָהֲזוּ אֶת־הַבַּיִת בְּעֵצֵי אֲרָזִים:**

The verse is problematical for three reasons:

1. If **יָצִיעַ** is allowed to mean, what for long years it was thought to mean, 'side-wing', then the figure for its height, 5 cubits, seems impossible as it stands. The side-wing was composed of three storeys, and certainly they were more than 1½

¹¹ On pious motives in LXX 3 Reigns see further *VT* XV, 2 (1965) p. 154 f.

¹² *Notes on the Hebrew text of the Books of Kings*, Oxford, 1903, p. 68. Burney also imagined that his conclusion was 'rendered certain by the LXX omission' (!).

¹³ *ICC Kings*, p. 147.

¹⁴ *I and II Kings*, SCM Press, London, 1964. pp. 157–8.

- cubits high each. More likely they were each 5 cubits high (as indeed the RV has it), giving an overall height for the side-wing of 15 cubits.
2. There is doubt about the meaning of צִיֵּעַ. As a technical term of architecture it is in the OT confined to this passage. There are strong grounds in etymology and comparative philology for thinking it means a *platform* or *podium*.¹⁵ On the other hand in later rabbinical Hebrew the term was used to denote a small low structure at the side or back of a house.¹⁶
 3. If one translates צִיֵּעַ as platform it makes good architectural sense: it is very likely that the temple, as well as the side-chambers, was built on a platform. Moreover, 5 cubits would be a very suitable height for such a platform. Yet the second part of the verse says that this צִיֵּעַ 'took hold of the house with cedar beams'; and it is completely out of the question that a stone platform, running beneath the house and side-chambers, should have been bonded to the house with timber.

Leroy Waterman,¹⁷ has an interesting solution to these problems. He would translate צִיֵּעַ as *platform*, and so have part 1. of the verse saying that Solomon built the platform 5 cubits high. Then between part 1. of the verse and part 2. he would suppose that a whole clause has been omitted, due to homoeoteleuton; and he would restore part 2. so as to read 'and he made the side-chambers, each side-chamber was five cubits high and each was attached to the house with timbers of cedar'. All the additional emending which would then be necessary to make the whole paragraph 6:1–10 self-consistent is the substitution of צֹלֵעַ, *storey*, for צִיֵּעַ in verse 6, which, as it stands, talks of a first, second and third צִיֵּעַ. Clearly one cannot have three platforms one on top of the other. In verse 5, however, the meaning 'platform' for צִיֵּעַ makes good sense.

There is, however, one serious snag in Waterman's proposals. If there is any truth at all in the contention that the summary phrases were deliberately placed to group the text into logical sub-divisions, then mention of the massive stone platform would be at home anywhere in verses 1–8 which all describe stone-work, but it would be totally out of place in verses 9b–10. For these verses are not a résumé of the building of the temple as already recorded in verses 1–8; verse 9b at any rate describes an exceedingly important item which has not hitherto been mentioned at all, the timber roof-ceiling.

But it will be objected here that even if the roof-ceiling of v. 9b is a fresh item, the צִיֵּעַ of verse 10a, is not, for it has been already mentioned in verse 5. The objection raises a very interesting question. When verse 10a says 'He built the צִיֵּעַ' does it mean? Is it simply repeating verse 5 which says 'And he built against the side of the house a צִיֵּעַ'? Analogy will answer the question for us. When verse 15 says 'And he built the walls of the house' is it repeating what verse 2 has told us about the building of the temple, 60 × 20 × 30 cubits? Obviously not. The building of verse 2 is the building of the stone walls, the shell of the building. The building of verse 15, as the verse itself goes on to specify, is the building of the wooden wainscoting on

¹⁵ See, Leroy Waterman, 'The Damaged "Blue-prints" of the Temple of Solomon', *JNES* 11, October 1943.

¹⁶ *Baba Bathra* IV.

¹⁷ *Baba Bathra* IV.

the inside of the stone walls. Analogy suggests that a similar difference will exist between verse 10a and verse 5: the building of the *לצ"י* in verse 5 is the building of its stone shell; the building of the *לצ"י* in verse 10a is building in the sense that is specified in the rest of the verse: the provision of cedar beams by means of which 'it, i.e. the *לצ"י*, took hold of the temple'. If the analogy is sound, it cannot, as we have seen, be satisfied by giving *לצ"י* the meaning *platform*, but it is eminently well satisfied by allowing it to mean *side-wing*, for then verse 5 can be understood as talking about the outside stone wall of the side-wing, while verse 10 will be referring to the timbers which formed the ceiling of the first storey in the side-wing and the floor of the second, the ceiling of the second and the floor of the third, and the ceiling/roof of the third, and which *at the same time* served to join the outside stone wall of the side-wing to the wall of the temple. (See diagram below.)

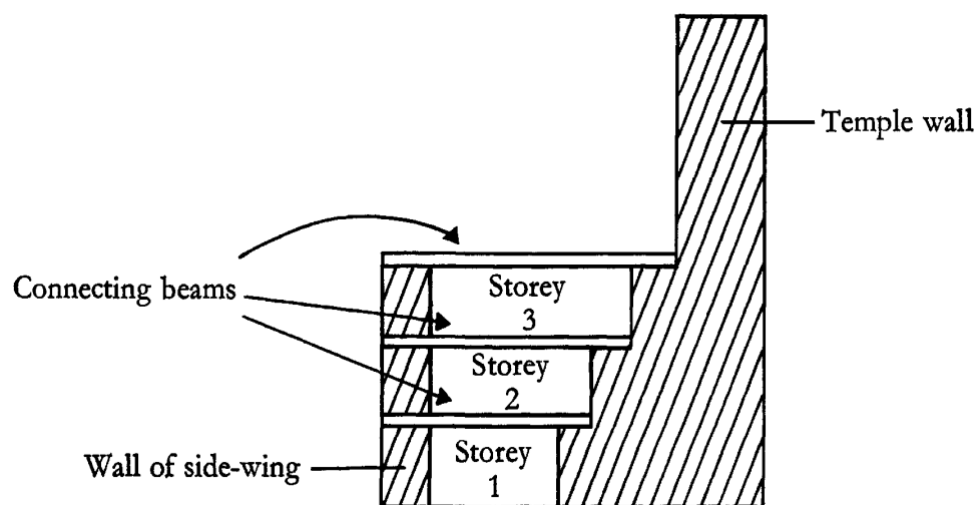


Diagram to show how the beams which formed the ceilings of the three storeys in the side-wing, also served to connect the outside stone wall of the side-wing to the wall of temple proper.

But once grant this much and it becomes immediately apparent how appropriate it is that verses 9b and 10 should be closely grouped together as one small subdivision of homogeneous items. Not only do they both describe woodwork as distinct from the stonework of vv. 1–8, but they both describe wooden roofs as distinct from the wooden wainscoting and partitioning of verses 14 ff.; verse 9b the roof of the temple proper, verse 10 the roof/ceiling and ceiling/floors of the side-storeys. Moreover the remark of verse 10b that the roof/ceiling and ceiling/floors of the side-storeys were the means by which the outer wall of the side-wing was joined to the temple wall is not only a very appropriate remark to make at this precise point, but it is a point of such fine detailed observation that it is much more likely to be part of the original description, than it is to be the work of a later reviser. And if it is original, the subdivisoning of the text into which it fits so appropriately is likely to be the original subdivisoning.

But there remain two problem points. If *לצ"י* is to be understood as 'side-wing', verse 10 says, 'He built the side-wing 5 cubits high', and this is certainly an awkward way of putting things if it really means, 'He built the storeys each 5 cubits high'. Awkward certainly, but on our interpretation of the verses it becomes fairly easy to account for the figure 5. In saying 'He

built the *יציע*, the writer is not thinking of the stone wall of the *יציע*, which was probably 15 cubits high, but of the equipping of that wall at 5 cubit intervals with beams that connected it with the temple wall.

The second point is small and scarcely worth mentioning, only some have felt that there is a contradiction between verse 6 which says that the *יציע* did not have hold in the walls of the house, and verse 10 which says that the *יציע* took hold of the house with beams of cedar. There is, in fact, no contradiction. The operative word in verse 6 is 'in', the beams were not inserted *in* the walls, *אָהוּ בְקִירוֹת לְבַלְתִּי אָהוּ בְקִירוֹת*, they rested on rebatements in the walls. In verse 10 there is no 'in'; the *יציע* simply takes hold of the house, *וַיֹּאזְזוּ אֶת־הַבַּיִת*, that is its beams rest on the rebatements. Yet even in this small detail it is instructive to notice the logic of the MT's arrangement of the text. The fact that the *יציע* was not to have hold *in* the walls of the house is mentioned in verse 6 along with the details of the stonework, because this stipulation meant that the stonework of the temple walls had to be designed and cut so as to provide rebatements at 5 cubit intervals. On the other hand the fact that the *יציע* did have hold of the house with cedar beams is mentioned in the wooden roofing section because, as has been pointed out above, those beams also provided the ceilings/floors/roof of the side-wing.

There is, then, very good reason why verses 9b and 10 should be grouped together and marked off from verses 15ff. by the summary-phrase placed at verse 14. The occurrence of the three verses of exhortation, 11, 12, 13 between verses 9b and 10, and verses 14 ff is therefore not to be condemned on the grounds that these verses break the continuity of the surrounding subject matter. On the contrary, they emphasise the division between verses 9b, 10 and verses 14 ff., which has been deliberately made on the grounds of subject matter. Moreover, it is the fact that these exhortatory verses containing God's promise to dwell among the Israelites are stationed immediately before the very verses which describe the building of the inner sanctuary where God's presence was to dwell (vv. 15–20). So, whether they are a late insertion or not, the position is not without its deliberate logic.

V

Now we must examine the LXX's counterpart passage. As we noticed above, it shows a certain logic in having its two occurrences of *ἐκοιλοστάθησεν* (LXX 6:14b and 16b) standing in the same undivided paragraph. And, indeed, further study will show that it is possible to argue some connection of thought running through these verses. But when we look beneath the surface at the individual details, we shall find that they are very vague and uncertain, if not, in places, mistaken and self-contradictory.

In the three verses concerned, 14b, 15 and 16 there are six elements:

1. 14b. The coffer-work roofing of the temple (*ἐκοιλοστάθησεν*).
2. 15a. The building of the *ἐνδέσμους*.
3. 15b. The tying (*συνέσχεν*) of the *ἐνδέσμους*.
4. 16a. The building of the temple walls with cedar.
5. 16b. *ἐκοιλοστάθησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν*.
6. 16c. The covering of *τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου* with planks of fir.

Of these six elements the first presents no difficulty; in fact its translation ἐκοιλοστάθησεν τὸν οἶκον κέδροις for the Hebrew *'he roofed the house with hollows and beams with cedar'* is a very neat, idiomatic rendering. But the other five elements all raise difficulties of understanding.

Let us take the least difficult first. The last element, 16c, looks innocent enough. It says καὶ περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίνας. But τὸ ἔσω is puzzlingly vague. The MT has at this point (MT 6:15c) עֲרָבָה, *floor*, a word which occurs twice elsewhere in this immediate context (MT 6:15b and 16a), and on both those occasions the LXX has the appropriate word ἔδαφος (LXX 6:16a and 17a). If then its verse 16c is meant to refer merely to the floor of the temple, it is strange that the general term, τὸ ἔσω, is used instead of the more precise τὸ ἔδαφος. Taken naturally τὸ ἔσω would include the whole of the inside, walls as well as floor, possibly walls more than floor. But if one understands τὸ ἔσω to refer to or include the walls, there is a clash between this verse and verse 15a. Verse 15a says *'He built the walls of the house with cedar boards, and'*, if it intends the same thing as the MT, which it parallels fairly closely, it is referring to the cedar wainscoting of the walls. It would be absurd, therefore, for verse 16c to say *'He covered the inside, i.e. the walls i.e. the cedar wainscoting, with planks of fir'*. No architect or builder would have covered expensive cedar wainscoting with fir.

We must look around, therefore, for means of checking whether the LXX does or does not include the walls in its τὸ ἔσω which was covered with fir. Now the MT has a verse later on which could put an end to the uncertainty. In its verse 18 it says *'And there was cedar on the house within, carved with gourds and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen'*. If the counterpart verse in the LXX reads anything like this, the matter will be settled: no one would cover *richly carved* cedar wainscoting with fir, and therefore τὸ ἔσω would have to refer only to the floor. We look, then, to find the LXX's equivalent. It should come in the middle of LXX 6:18, but there is no trace of it whatever. And what is more, the verse in the middle of which it should stand, is, as it now stands, a wreck.¹⁸ It says *'Of forty cubits was the ναός in front of the δαβειρ in the midst of the house within to put there the ark of the Lord'*, i.e. according to strict grammar it says that the ark was put in the ναός, which, of course, is nonsense. But the nonsense is caused because two elements which in the MT are separated by the intervention of the account of the carved cedar wainscoting, have been allowed to come together by the omission of this account. It might therefore be that the omission was deliberately made so as to remove what was understood as a blatant contradiction of the statement in 16c, he covered τὸ ἔσω with fir planks. On the other hand the omission might be nothing more than an accident; we cannot be sure.

Let us try another tack. In both MT and LXX the earlier statement (MT verse 15a, LXX verse 16a) that *'He built the walls of the house with cedar'* is liable to be misleading if one does not realise that 'built' must be understood in the sense of 'wainscoted'. The MT however has two safeguards against misunderstanding. First, it says *'He built the walls of the house within with cedar'*. The 'within' shows clearly that 'built' is referring not to the frame but to the inner cedar lining. But the LXX (as distinct from its later revisions) has no ἔσωθεν 'within'. After all, its τὸ ἔσω, as verse 16b is about to tell us, was covered with *fir!*

¹⁸ See also, 'An Impossible Shrine', *VT*, XV, 4, 1965, pp. 410 ff.

Secondly the MT explains in its verse 15b what it means in verse 15a thus:—

15a. He built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar;

15b. from the floor of the house to the walls (?beams) of the ceiling he covered them on the inside with wood.

Here the verb ‘covered’ of verse 15b is the equivalent of the verb ‘built’ of verse 15a, and, of course, the ‘wood’ of 15b is the ‘cedar boards’ of 15a. So the verb ‘covered’ makes it clear that ‘built’ means ‘wainscoted’. But when we turn to the LXX’s equivalent (LXX verse 16) we find a very significant thing has happened. Instead of breaking the verse at ‘boards of cedar’, it has run the first part of the verse on as far as ‘the walls’, thus:—

16a. καὶ ὑποκόδομησεν τοὺς τοίχους τοῦ οἴκου διὰ ξύλων κεδρίνων ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους τοῦ οἴκου καὶ ἕως τῶν δοκῶν καὶ ἕως τῶν τοίχων·

It has then translated the second half of the verse thus:

16b. ἐκοιλοστάθησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν.

We notice at once that in place of the MT’s ‘he covered’ (הִצִּיף), the LXX has not its normal equivalent, περιέσχεν, but the strange συνεχόμενα, συνεχόμενα, of course, does nothing to help the reader to see that ὑποκόδομησεν τοὺς τοίχους of 16a means the *covering* of the walls with cedar; it therefore leaves the door open for 15c to continue with ‘he covered the inside with fir’. If instead of συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν the LXX had read περιέσχεν ξύλοις ἔσωθεν, it would have been impossible surely for the very next phrase to say περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίνας. But granted the translation συνεχόμενα it was virtually imperative to have in the next phrase περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω, i.e. the *inside* including the walls, instead of ἐδάφος *the floor*: with no ‘within’ in 15a to relate the ‘building’ to the wainscoting, with no mention at all in verse 18 of the carved cedar wainscoting, and now with συνεχόμενα instead of ‘covered’ in 15b, the LXX would be left with no unambiguous reference to the wainscoting at all, if it could not include the walls in the fir wood covering of 15c. But, of course, it still remains that ὑποκόδομησεν τοὺς τοίχους τοῦ οἴκου διὰ ξύλων κεδρίνων of verse 16a, even without an ἔσωθεν to make its meaning clear, does refer, when understood strictly, to a covering of the walls with cedar. Between this statement, then, and the ‘fir-wood covering’ of 15c there is an irreconcilable, if, to the superficial reader hidden, contradiction.

It seems fairly clear, however, that the unhappy and contradictory translation περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω κτλ . . . is occasioned by the preceding, even more remarkable rendering ἐκοιλοστάθησεν συνεχόμενα. What can this phrase mean? ἐκοιλοστάθησεν is comprehensible enough: it denotes coffer-work either on a ceiling or on a wall. Which of these two is intended here would be settled if we could decide what συνεχόμενα means. But it is difficult, to say the least. Whether it is middle or passive, it would have made more ready sense accompanied by the definite article: *the* συνεχόμενα would have clearly referred to some major structural item. Vaticanus B reads the nominative singular masculine συνεχόμενος; but not only does B stand alone; συνεχόμενος yields no immediate sense. Nor does the MT help much. At this point it has הִצִּיף הִצִּיף. Instead of the noun הִצִּיף, *the roof*, the LXX has the verb ἐκοιλοστάθησεν; but seeing the LXX used ἐκοιλοστάθησεν for the verb הִצִּיף in verse 14b (MT 9b), it seems likely that ἐκοιλοστάθησεν here in verse 16b is the intended counterpart of the MT’s הִצִּיף. That leaves συνεχόμενα as the counterpart to the MT’s הִצִּיף, *he covered*. Three words later in the MT the verb occurs again (הִצִּיף) and the LXX has περιέσχεν, the standard equivalent of הִצִּיף Piel

in these chapters; but *συνεχόμενα* bears no resemblance to *הַבָּנָיִם* at all. Either the LXX is following a *vorlage* which had here a completely different reading, or else the LXX has gratuitously departed from its Hebrew. However it is, the only way of making sense out of the phrase is to notice that its two verbs occur above, *έκοιλοστάθμησεν* in 14b and *συνέσχεν* in 15b and to suppose that they carry here in 16b the same meaning as in 14b and 15b.

Even so our problem will find no easy solution; for while verse 14b is straightforward, verse 15 is full of difficulties. Thus *συνεχόμενα* of 16b, may well be connected with *συνέσχεν* of 15b, which says *καὶ συνέσχεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους ἐν ξύλοις κεδρίνοις*. If *συνεχόμενα* is middle, it will denote the things which tied the *ἐνδέσμους*. If *συνεχόμενα* is passive, it will denote the *ἐνδέσμους* which were ‘tied’. But what are the *ἐνδέσμους*? As an architectural term *ἐνδέσμος* strictly means a course of timber laid horizontally in a (stone) wall for the purpose of bonding the wall. This mixture of stone and timber was a building technique much used in the ancient Middle East;¹⁹ and in connection with Solomon’s temple it is explicitly mentioned as the method used in building the court walls, ‘with three rows of hewn stone, and a row of cedar beams’ (MT 6:36, 7:12 ; LXX 6:34, 7:49). If then the *ἐνδέσμους* were horizontal courses of bonding timbers, verse 15b, *καὶ συνέσχεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους ἐν ξύλοις κεδρίνοις*, must mean that the horizontal courses were tied by vertical timbers, either small baulks of timber let into the wall at intervals, or a facing of wooden planking placed on the wall all the way round as a wainscoting. On this interpretation the *συνεχόμενα* of verse 16b, *έκοιλοστάθμησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν*, will be either the horizontal bonding courses (taking *συνεχόμενα* as passive) or the vertical wooden baulks or wainscoting (taking *συνεχόμενα* as deponent middle); and the whole sentence will mean that he coffered the wooden bonding courses and/or connecting timbers with wood on the inside.

But if this is the meaning of *έκοιλοστάθμησεν συνεχόμενα*, we run into the difficulty mentioned above that this elaborate coffer-work on the walls was, according to the very next phrase, verse 16c, covered with fir-planking—*περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίνας*. This is so obviously unlikely, that we must look round for another solution. Perhaps the only other possibility is to give *ἐνδέσμος* the meaning tie-beam rather than *bonding course*. Such tie-beams would run across the temple from wall to wall, presumably high up in the temple, possibly forming the roof-beams. On this interpretation verse 15b, *συνέσχεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους ἐν ξύλοις κεδρίνοις* would mean that he tied these tie-beams with cedar planking, placed presumably on top of the *ἐνδέσμους* and running at right-angles to them. Verse 16b, *έκοιλοστάθμησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν*, would then mean that on the *inside*, i.e. underneath the tie-beams, on the inside as viewed from the inside of the temple proper, he coffered the tie-beams and/or the cedar cross-planking, so as to make an ornate ceiling. This interpretation makes good sense, and has the advantage that it does not clash with the next phrase, 16c, *καὶ περιέσχεν τὸ ἔσω τοῦ οἴκου ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίνας*.

With these alternatives in mind we must now come to the crucial verse, 15a, which describes the making and positioning of the *ἐνδέσμους*. It says *καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν τοὺς ἐνδέσμους δι’ ὅλου τοῦ οἴκου πέντε ἐν πήχει τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ*. We notice first that the *ἐνδέσμους*, whatever they are, are ‘throughout all the house’. That rules out their being anything outside the temple

¹⁹ See PEQ, 1940, p. 136, 1941, pp. 5 ff.; De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 316.

proper, but at the same time it could equally well apply to bonding courses in the walls or tie-beams running across from wall to wall.

Next we notice the strangeness of the dimension: referring to the ἐνδέσμους (plural) it says ‘5 cubits the height of it’ (singular). What can this mean? Did the ἐνδέσμους form only one bonding course, 5 cubits up from the ground? If so how can verse 15b say that he tied the ἐνδέσμους together with cedar beams? To be tied together thus there would need to be several courses; in which case we should have to interpret the dimension as meaning ‘each course was 5 cubits high’, i.e. the courses came at 5 cubit intervals.

On the other hand if the ἐνδέσμους were tie-beams, we must understand the dimension, 5 cubits its height, to mean that the tie-beams occupied a space 5 cubits high in the roof, i.e. they were not the roof-beams, but tie-beams situated 5 cubits below the roof proper. When they were then tied together, as verse 15b has it, by cedar planking, placed presumably on top of them at right angles to the beams, they would provide an inner ceiling for the temple proper and a floor for a loft over the temple.²⁰ This inner ceiling would however hide the coffered roof (the ἐκοιλοστάθμησεν of verse 14b) from the view of anyone standing in the temple. Moreover tie-beams with floor-boards on top would present a rather inelegant view from beneath. Hence, we may suppose, the need for a second lot of coffering, (the ἐκοιλοστάθμησεν of verse 16b), performed upon the inside, i.e. the underside of the tie-beams and loft-floorboards ἐκοιλοστάθμησεν συνεχόμενα ξύλοις ἔσωθεν, in order to provide the temple proper with an elegant, ornamental ceiling.

Now this interpretation can hardly be called satisfactory; but if any consistent sense is to be made of the LXX passage at all, this interpretation presents perhaps the least difficulties and provides a reasonable flow of thought:

1. 14b. The coffered roof of the temple.
2. 15a. Tie-beams 5 cubits lower than the roof.
3. 15b. Floor boards on top of the tie-beams serving as a loft-floor and also to tie the tie-beams.
4. 16a. The wooden lining of the walls up to the beams.
5. 16b. The coffering of the underneath of the tie-beams to form a ceiling for the temple proper.
6. 16c. The covering of the inside, walls and floor, with fir.

VI

We must now compare the LXX with the MT to decide which of them in this passage is more likely to represent the original text. Already the evidence of the previous passage (see above p. 153f.) and the highly unsatisfactory nature of the present passage in the LXX tell against the

²⁰ Montgomery has an interesting note, *ICC Kings*, p. 149: ‘Targum “the gallery” (אק״ת Targ. for הַקַּלְמֵי, Dt. 22⁸, and ק״תא Eze. 41^{15f}), as “above all the house”; Syriac VS (Peshitta) “circular passage-ways (ḥādārētā) above all the house”; Vulgate “tabulatum super omnem domum”, i.e., all applying the item quite logically to the roofing of the house’.

LXX; but when we compare the Greek of the LXX with the Hebrew of the MT, it becomes even more evident that the LXX is secondary. Take first the crucial verse, MT 6:10, LXX 6:15:

וַיִּבֶן	καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν
אֶת־הַיְצִיֵּעַ	τοὺς ἐνδέσμους
עַל־כָּל־הַבַּיִת	δι ὄλου τοῦ οἴκου
שִׁמְנֵה	πέντε
אַמּוֹת	ἐν πήχει
קוֹמָתוֹ	τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ
וַיִּתְּשֵׁן	καὶ συνέσχεν
אֶת־הַבַּיִת	τοὺς ἐνδέσμους
בַּעֲצֵי	ἐν ξύλοις
אֲרָזִים	κεδρίνοις

Apart from the two occurrences of ἐνδέσμους and the translation διὰ (in line 3) the correspondence between the LXX and the MT in word order and general meaning is very impressive. In line 5, it is true, the LXX with its ἐν πήχει is slightly more ‘Semitic’ than the MT,²¹ but on the whole the LXX’s vorlage cannot have differed much from the MT. When therefore, the LXX is found to have a *singular* possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ (with its noun τὸ ὕψος) referring to a *plural* noun τοὺς ἐνδέσμους, can there be any other explanation than that the singular, which grammatically is very odd indeed, appears in the LXX simply because its vorlage had, as does the MT, a singular suffix with its noun for ‘height’, קוֹמָתוֹ? The singular suffix in the Hebrew is, of course, proper since it refers to the singular noun יְצִיֵּעַ. But this means that in the LXX’s vorlage there was a *singular* noun corresponding to the LXX’s plural ἐνδέσμους. To say nothing more, the LXX’s translation, ἐνδέσμους, is thus convicted of being inexact, it is an easy step, however, to the conclusion that what the LXX found in its vorlage was nothing other than יְצִיֵּעַ, and that the LXX, finding it difficult, as the moderns have done, to understand יְצִיֵּעַ in this context, made the best sense it could out of it. Nor is it surprising to find that it has used a plural; it used a plural, μέλαθρα, for יְצִיֵּעַ; in its verse 10 (MT verse 5).

Next we must decide whether the MT עַל־כָּל־הַבַּיִת is more likely to be original than the LXX’s δι ὄλου τοῦ οἴκου. The decision is easy. As we saw above (p. 10) the LXX would not allow anything to stand *against* the house. Instead it prescribed an internal between the side-rooms and the temple wall so that the side-rooms should not have hold of the temple wall. Here then is the reason why the LXX has διὰ in verse 15 and not ἐπί. It could not have ἐπί without contradicting its early prescription. But that prescription, we found, was no part of the original text, but a very secondary feature springing from pietistic motives. Therefore the reading διὰ in verse 15 is likewise secondary compared with the MT’s עַל.

²¹ This is quite a common feature of LXX translation-style; it does not necessarily imply a different Hebrew from the MT.

A similar argument will dispose of the LXX's second occurrence of ἐνδέσμους in verse 15, where the MT has בית. We have earlier seen (p. 13) what precise sense בית makes in its context; is it reasonable to suppose that ἐνδέσμους here represents an even better Hebrew reading? On the contrary, there is a much more likely explanation. In its verse 11, where the MT (verse 6) says that the side-rooms should not have hold *in* the walls of the house, the LXX has simply μὴ ἐπιλαμβάνωνται τῶν τοίχων. It shows no appreciation of the fine technical distinction between 'taking hold *in*', i.e. being inserted *into* the wall, and 'taking hold *of*', i.e. resting *on* the rebatements. Instead it has invented the pious idea that there was an interval between the side-rooms and the temple wall; and consequently it could not and would not say, in verse 15, that 'the side-wing took hold of the house', for it felt that this was quite wrong and detracted from the holiness of the house. Nothing external must be allowed to συνέχεν the temple; it was the internal tie-beams, τοὺς ἐνδέσμους, that Solomon συνέσχευ. The LXX's reading, then, is a secondary alteration, made in the interests of piety.

Finally if we compare the LXX verse 16 with MT verse 15, it is impossible to think that the LXX with all its ambiguities and its obscure ἐκουλυστάθησεν συνεχόμενα represents the original Hebrew more faithfully than the easily intelligible and technically accurate MT. It is much more likely that the LXX has come at its rendering by mistaking the drift of its Hebrew. Here for comparison are the MT and LXX.

MT (verse 15)	LXX (verse 16)
וַיִּבֶן אֶת־קִירוֹת	καὶ ὤκοδόμησεν τοὺς τοίχους
הַבַּיִת מִבֵּיתָהּ	τοῦ οἴκου
בְּצִלְעוֹת אֲרָזִים	διὰ ξύλων κεδρίνων
מִקְרָקַע הַבַּיִת	ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους τοῦ οἴκου καὶ ἕως τῶν δοκῶν
עַד־קִירוֹת	καὶ ἕως τῶν τοίχων·
הַסֵּפֶן צִפָּה	ἐκουλυστάθησεν συνεχόμενα
עַץ מִבַּיִת	ξύλοις ἔσωθεν
וַיִּצָּף אֶת־קְרָקַע	καὶ περιέσχευ τὸ ἔσω
הַבַּיִת	τοῦ οἴκου
בְּצִלְעוֹת בְּרוֹשִׁים	ἐν πλευραῖς πευκίνας.

The Greek καὶ ἕως τῶν δοκῶν καὶ ἕως τῶν τοίχων is clearly, as Montgomery²² points out, an early double reading קְרָקַע וְעַד־קִירוֹת; for the rest the LXX's vorlage agreed exactly with the MT's word order and general sense. But the LXX mistook the drift of the verse, because it failed to see that the second sentence begins at מִקְרָקַע. Taking the first sentence to run down as far as עַד־קִירוֹת it was obliged to try to start the second sentence with הַסֵּפֶן. This it then mistook for a verb, ἐκουλυστάθησεν, and, consequently failing to make sense of צִפָּה, it interpreted the passage freely in the light of what it thought verses 14 and 15 were saying.

²² ICC Kings p. 153.

There is, then, a superficial appearance of logic in the LXX's arrangement of this passage so that its two occurrences of ἐκοιλοστάθησεν, both referring to ceiling work, should stand together uninterrupted by the exhortatory verses and the summary phrase; but on closer examination the arrangement reveals itself as a very secondary and unsatisfactory feature.

VII

With all this in mind we may come back to a detail mentioned at the beginning (p. 3). The MT (6:2) and the LXX (6:6) disagree over the dimensions of the temple as follows:

	Length	Breadth	Height (in cubits)
MT	60	20	30
LXX	40	20	25

Most scholars have no doubt that the LXX's figures are mistaken. Montgomery, for instance, says: *'The Grr. arbitrarily vary the figures here'*; and later, after observing that Josephus too has variant figures, he remarks: *'the cause of the variation is obscure'*.²³ But perhaps it is now possible to see how the LXX arrived at its dimensions. And first the height. The LXX, we have found, most probably envisaged the temple as having a loft, 5 cubits high (see p. 18). This would account for 5 of the 25 cubits of overall height. Then in verse 17a the LXX has a further dimension of 20 cubits, which taken superficially, might easily be understood as another vertical measurement; and this with the 5 cubits of the loft, would give an overall height of 25 cubits. The verse runs καὶ ὑκοδόμησεν τοὺς εἴκοσι πήχεις ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ τοίχου, τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἐν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἕως τῶν δοκῶν. Taken without reference to the Hebrew the phrase ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ τοίχου might quite naturally be understood as 'from the top of the wall', so giving a vertical direction to the measurement.

But when we compare the LXX with the MT difficulties at once arise.

MT vi 16	LXX vi 17
וַיִּבֶן	καὶ ὑκοδόμησεν
אֶת־עֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה	τοὺς εἴκοσι πήχεις
מִרְכַּתִּי הַבַּיִת	ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ τοίχου
בְּצִלְעוֹת אֲרָזִים	τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἐν
מִן־הַקִּרְקַע	ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους
עַד־הַקִּירוֹת (הַקִּירוֹת?)	ἕως τῶν δοκῶν.

In the Hebrew it is quite clear to what this dimension of 20 cubits applies and in what direction it runs; in the Greek it is far from clear. The Hebrew has already told us (in its verse 2) that the overall length of the temple was 60 cubits. Verses 16 and 17 now show how the inside space was divided up: *'He built 20 cubits from the back of the house with boards of cedar from the floor to*

²³ ICC Kings, pp. 145 and 147.

the beams', i.e., at a point 20 cubits distant from the back of the temple, measured towards the front of the temple, he built a partition of cedar planks. It is important to see that the dimension, 20 cubits, is a *horizontal* measurement giving the distance of the partition from the back wall of the temple and not a vertical one giving the height of the partition. Indeed, though the height of the partition is described — from the floor to the beams — the partition itself is not explicitly mentioned. When the Hebrew says *He built 20 cubits* it means what we should express by saying *He built off 20 cubits*. And if out of a total length of 60 cubits you build off 20 for a debir, you will, of course, be left with 40; which is precisely what verse 17 remarks: '*And of 40 cubits was the hekhal before it*', (i.e. before the debir).

The Greek, by contrast, is full of uncertainties. To deal with a minor point first, τοῖχου in the phrase ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ τοῖχου is probably a corruption of an original οἴκου (MT ַיְבִיחַ). Admittedly only *boc2e2* read οἴκου and they are not above suspicion of being secondary. But the change of οἶκος to τοῖχος is very easy and quite common.

The phrase, τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἓν, however, seems not to be a corruption, but a deliberate translation, even if it arises from a misreading of the Hebrew. The difficulty here is to know what the phrase means and how it is to be construed in relation to the rest of the sentence. The phrase *the one side* would naturally imply that another side was also mentioned in the context somewhere, just as later the mention of τὸ ὕψος τοῦ χερουβ τοῦ ἑνὸς δέκα . . . leads us to expect the consequent οὕτως τὸ χερουβ τὸ δεύτερον. But no mention of τὸ χερουβ τὸ δεύτερον appears anywhere in this context, and we cannot, therefore, tell whether 'the second side' was thought of as exactly resembling 'the one side', or being somehow different from, and in contrast to, 'the one side'.

Moreover the construing of the sentence is uncertain. One can punctuate καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν τοὺς εἴκοσι πήχεις, ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἓν, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἕως τῶν δοκῶν; or else καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν τοὺς εἴκοσι πήχεις ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου, τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἓν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἕως τῶν δοκῶν. And to complicate matters further ἄκρου, in the phrase ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου, is ambiguous: it can mean 'top of' or 'end of'. The MT equivalent מִרִכְתּוֹ means definitely 'from the end (the remotest part) of', and presumably the original translator intended his ἄκρου in this sense. But we cannot rule out the possibility that in all the subsequent confusion the text has been interfered with by someone who took ἄκρου as 'top of'.

Let us then list the more likely of the possible interpretations of the Greek.

1. Put a comma before ἀπ' ἄκρου and after τὸ ἓν, and take ἄκρου as 'end of'. The phrase ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἓν will then act as a parenthetical explanation of the dimension, 20 cubits, telling us that 20 cubits is the distance of the one side of the partition from the end of the temple. The implication would be that the other side of the partition stood at more than 20 cubits from the end of the temple. Now this, we know, was a matter that much exercised the later Rabbis. They laid it down that the partition wall must have been a cubit thick, and they debated whether this cubit was to be deducted from the 20 cubits of the debir or from the 40 cubits of the ναός (see *Yoma* 516–521). To say, then, that the one side of the partition stood 20 cubits from the back of the temple would in this context be intended to imply that the other side stood 21 cubits from the back and that the partition did not partake of the sanctity of the debir. But this would

betray an interest in the niceties of rabbinic interpretation, and would mean that here the text of the LXX, and/or its Hebrew vorlage, is decidedly secondary.

2. Put a comma after ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου and so take τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἐν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἕως τῶν δοκῶν as a single phrase while still understanding ἄκρου in the sense of 'end of'. This would make the sentence say *He built (off) the 20 cubits from the end of the house* i.e. by erecting a partition at a point 20 cubits from the end; but it would then add *the one side (of the partition) ran from floor to beams*. Here again the phrase, 'the one side', would seem to imply that there was a second side, but it would still leave uncertain whether: (a) the second side was the same as the first side, i.e. both sides ran from floor to beams; or (b) the second side was different and did not run from floor to beams. On this latter interpretation our phrase would be an observation on the difference between the overall height of the temple, 25 cubits (according to the LXX) and the height of the debir, 20 cubits; and it would be saying that the one side of the partition extended to the roof-beams while the other side was not so high, only 20 cubits in fact.
3. But it is not an impossible interpretation, in fact it may be the most likely one, to suppose that
 - a. in the course of all the accident and editing that have brought the LXX text to its present state of corruption, ἄκρου has been (mis)understood as 'top of'.
 - b. τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἐν has been intended as indicating, not one side of the partition as distinct from the other, but the partition itself as distinct from the three temple walls that together with the partition made up the four sides of the debir.
 - c. the whole phrase, the one side from the floor to the beams stands in apposition to the 20 cubits from the top of the house, mentioned earlier, so that the 20 cubits become a vertical and not a horizontal measurement, and the 'top of the house' is the same point as 'the beams'. The whole sentence would then intend to say: He built the 20 cubits from the top of the house, the one side, namely the partition as distinct from the other three sides of the debir, from the floor to the beams; that is, the top of the house from which the 20 cubits of the partition are measured, is not the roof of the building, which was 25 cubits high, but the ceiling-beams of the temple proper which were 20 cubits high. Thus the walls on three sides of the debir, being outside, structural walls, would run right up to the roof, and be 25 cubits high; but the one wall which was formed by the partition between the debir and the ναός would run only from the floor to the ceiling beams, 20 cubits high.

A weakness in this interpretation is that one has to take the term 'house' to mean the temple proper as distinct from the upper chamber or loft, and this is somewhat unnatural in this context. On the other hand it may have been this difficulty that helped forward the corruption of οἴκου to τοίχου (it is found in all the MSS except *boc2e2*); for the phrase 'top of the wall' is a

more natural expression for the point where an inside wall of the house proper met the ceiling than is the phrase 'top of the house'.

On the other hand this interpretation has the slight merit of helping to account for the LXX's figure 40 for the length of the temple. In the Hebrew, as we have already seen, the 20 cubits of our verse, is definitely to be taken as a horizontal measurement. Added to the 40 cubits, also a horizontal measurement and mentioned in the next verse, they give a total of 60 cubits for the length of the temple. But if in the Greek the 20 cubits came to be regarded as a vertical measurement, it was then easier in the general confusion for the 40 cubits of the next verse to be regarded as the full length of the temple. And certainly it is so regarded, for verse 18 says καὶ τεσσαράκοντα πηχῶν ἦν ὁ ναὸς κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ δαβειρ ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ οἴκου ἔσωθεν δοῦναι ἐκεῖ τὴν κιβωτὸν διαθήκης Κυρίου. In strict terminology the ναός, which is here said to be 40 cubits long, was only the first part of the temple, otherwise called the Holy Place; the second part, the debir or holy of holies, was an extra 20 cubits, so that together the ναός and the debir totalled 60 cubits in length. But verse 18, interpreted according to strict grammar says quite clearly that the ark was put in the ναός and the ναός was 40 cubits long. Now although the ark is said to be put in the ναός the ναός cannot here be interpreted as the holy of holies, for the very same verse mentions the holy of holies under its proper term δαβειρ. The only way, therefore, of making sense of the statement that the ark was put in the ναός would be to take ναός as meaning the whole temple including the δαβειρ and not just the Holy Place. This done, the length of the ναός, 40 cubits, becomes the length of the whole temple; which thus agrees with the figures given for the length of the temple in LXX 6:6. The agreement may not be accidental.

In this connection it is most interesting to notice that both Origen's LXX column and Symmachus appear to have a translation of the opening clause of LXX 6:18 which runs thus: καὶ τεσσαράκοντα ἦν πηχῶν (Σ πηχων ην) ὁ οἶκος, αὐτὸς ὁ ναὸς ὁ ἐσώτατος, i.e. they state that 40 cubits was a dimension of the *innermost* temple. Now it would be difficult to take the term 'the innermost temple' as describing the Holy Place only and excluding the holiest, for the holiest could not be more innermost than innermost. Either it must be intended to describe the holiest by itself, or else the whole inner temple inside which the Holiest was built. Origen and Symmachus, of course, are both late and their interpretation may well reflect the attempts of later rabbis to make sense of the corrupt 'נִפְּלָה' of the MT 6:12, 'Of 40 cubits was the house that is the hekhal *before Me*'. But the interest of their interpretation lies in the fact that in ascribing the 40 cubits to the innermost house, inside of which the ark must have been placed, it seems to agree with the interpretation which the LXX in its present state gives.

Verse 18, however, as it now stands is corrupt. If therefore the LXX's temple dimensions as given in 6:6 are based on verse 18 and on its similarly corrupt and mistaken context, the LXX's dimensions are as valueless as a good deal else that is peculiar to the LXX's temple specifications.

About the Author

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