**Introduction**

**1. The Other Version of 1 Kings**

The first part of the Book of Kings (1 Kings 1–14) is a tale of wisdom and folly. Solomon’s great wisdom, which ushered in a long period of peace and the largest kingdom in Israel’s history, was abruptly interrupted by the folly of his son Rehoboam, who refused to heed the people’s requests and led to the division of the kingdom. Thus began the famous story of the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. However, the Book of Kings, commonly known from the Masoretic Text (MT), was not crafted in a single moment. The Septuagint (LXX), the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, presents a markedly different version of Kings than the MT.

While many biblical books, including the latter parts of Exodus, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Jeremiah, exhibit numerous differences across their versions (such as the MT, the Septuagint, and the Qumran scrolls), the Book of Kings, particularly 1 Kings, contains perhaps the most significant set of differences. These are not merely textual variations found in most biblical books but substantial differences, including numerous omissions, additions, and various transpositions. The most striking differences appear in the narrative of wisdom and folly, detailing Solomon’s heyday and the kingdom’s division during Rehoboam’s reign. The Septuagint preserves a story about the Kingdom of Israel in Solomon's time and its subsequent schism that diverges significantly from the familiar MT version.

One of the most unusual phenomena in the Septuagint is the presence of three extensive additions or supplements within the story of Solomon and the division of the kingdom. The first two additions, each about ten verses long, are found in the account of Solomon’s rise to kingship in 1 Kings 2 (LXX 3 Kingdoms 2:35a–k, 46a–l). These sections, sometimes referred to as Miscellanies, contain various brief details about Solomon’s reign. Many of these details are duplicates of verses found in the subsequent Solomon narrative in chapters 3-11 (of both the MT and the Septuagint). The third addition, which is longer than the first two and comprises 24 extensive verses, appears within the story of the kingdom’s division in 1 Kings 12 (LXX 3 Kingdoms 12:24a–z). This section largely duplicates scriptures from other parts of the kingdom division narrative and represents another version of the story, alongside the MT version and its counterpart in the Septuagint. Due to its duplicative nature, this supplement is sometimes referred to as the “Alternative Story.” These unusual phenomena, which are almost unparalleled elsewhere in the Septuagint, will be the focus of this book. The first and second chapters will examine these additions in detail, alongside other textual differences in the chapters covering Solomon’s reign and the division of the kingdom.

In contrast to some scholars who attribute these additions and other changes in the LXX to the Greek translators or later Greek revisers working on a Hebrew *Vorlage* similar to the MT, the evidence presented in this book demonstrates that these additions, along with other textual variants, are based on a Hebrew *Vorlage* that differs considerably from the MT. While there are instances where the MT preserves an earlier version, in many cases the earlier version is rather found in the Septuagint, particularly in the unique additions in chapters 2 and 12. These findings indicate that during the Second Temple period, there were different literary editions of the Book of Kings, which may reflect various stages in the formation of the book.

**2. History of Research**

Throughout the last decades, scholars have explained the many differences between the two major versions of the Book of Kings, the MT and LXX, in various ways. One approach attributes the significant changes between the MT 1 Kings and LXX 3 Kingdoms to the work of the Greek translators or later revisers. John William Wevers devoted two studies to this topic in the 1950s, suggesting that the unusual text in the Septuagint resulted from the Greek translators’ work.[[1]](#footnote-1) William Gooding further developed this perspective, producing a series of studies in the 1960s and 1970s, attributing the exceptional version in the LXX to the activity of later Greek revisers.[[2]](#footnote-2) Gooding often described the Greek translation of the Book of Kings as a type of midrashic commentary, akin to the Rabbinic Midrash. According to Wevers and Gooding, the Greek translation depended therefore on a *Vorlage* similar to the MT, with the Greek translators or editors making extensive changes to the order, adding or omitting texts for various exegetical reasons.

Although most later scholars have opposed and criticized this approach, Wevers and Gooding also have some successors in the twenty-first century. Percy S.F. van Keulen, for instance, published a comprehensive study in 2005, attributing the differences between the LXX and the MT to inner Greek revisional activity, aligning with Gooding’s approach. While van Keulen did not rule out the possibility that the Greek translator “must have drawn upon Hebrew texts for his revision,” he estimated that the main text of Kings available to the translators was similar to the Masoretic Text, and the changes occurred during the Greek translation stage.[[3]](#footnote-3) Similarly, Andrzei Turkanik, in a monograph written in 2008, continued to support Wevers’ proposal by attributing the differences between the Septuagint and the MT versions of Kings to the Greek translators.[[4]](#footnote-4) This approach, championed by Wevers, Gooding, and their successors, is problematic in several respects, which I will discuss later. Notably, it presents the activity of Greek translators and revisers in a manner completely opposite to other late Greek revisers. In most cases, these revisers generally sought to bring the Greek text closer to versions akin to proto-MT texts, either through a more literal translation or by following a consistent translation approach. They did not typically distance the translation from proto-MT texts through exegetical or midrashic translation methods.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Following the discoveries of the scrolls from the Judean Desert and the unearthing of the large variety of biblical texts that circulated during the Second Temple period, the approach to studying the differences between the LXX and MT in the Book of Kings has changed. Although there are only a few fragments of the Book of Kings’ scrolls from the Judean Desert,[[6]](#footnote-6) the numerous finds of other biblical scrolls have revealed many variants and phenomena similar to those appearing in the Septuagint’s version of the Book of Kings (3–4 Kingdoms). These phenomena, evident for example in the Hebrew scrolls of Samuel, Jeremiah, and the Pre-Samaritan scrolls of the Pentateuch, established the assumption that the version of the LXX Kingdoms could be based on a completely different Hebrew *Vorlage* than the MT version. This assumption is further supported by evidence that I will present later, regarding the Hebrew substratum behind the supplementary material in the Septuagint.

Since the publication of the Qumran scrolls, more and more scholars have begun to accept the assumption that the Septuagint reflects a different Hebrew edition of the Book of Kings. This direction of research has been raised in the past, especially in the critical commentaries on the Book of Kings from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, but the discussion on the textual variants in these commentaries is relatively small. With the publication of the findings from Qumran, renewed validity was given to the claim that the LXX represents a Hebrew text that circulated in the days of the Second Temple, and it should be examined in the same manner as the MT version alongside other textual witnesses.[[7]](#footnote-7)

However, even among scholars who believe that the lengthy additions and variants in LXX Kingdoms are based on a Hebrew *Vorlage*, there is disagreement. Many scholars, such as Emanuel Tov and Zipora Talshir, argue that although the Septuagint version is based on a Hebrew *Vorlage*, it represents a late reworking of the version reflected in the Masoretic Text. This perspective led many mid-twentieth-century commentators to base their discussions of historical, theological, and redactional questions primarily on the MT. Conversely, the Septuagint, often perceived as representing a later development or even a midrashic adaptation of the MT—whether in its Hebrew *Vorlage* or during the stage of Greek translation—received relatively little attention and was not considered as important for understanding the book's formation and composition.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Other scholars, such as Julio Trebolle Barrera, Adrian Schenker, and Philippe Hugo, maintain the opposite view. They argue that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint represents an earlier version, anterior to the Masoretic Text.[[9]](#footnote-9) According to this perspective, the MT is a later development, originating from a Hebrew text similar to the one underlying the Septuagint. Each scholar offers a slightly different interpretation. Schenker,[[10]](#footnote-10) for instance, identifies two distinct editorial stages within the Greek tradition and the Vetus Latina, suggesting that the MT represents a third, later stage.[[11]](#footnote-11) Hugo’s research primarily focuses on 1 Kings 17–19, while many other studies emphasize the first half of 1 Kings (3 Kingdoms), where the most significant differences between the MT and the Septuagint are found. Despite their differing methodologies, all three scholars share the assumption that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint predates the MT. However, while this approach provides valuable insights in several places, it is not universally convincing. In many cases, the Septuagint appears to reflect a secondary arrangement and contains variants that seem to be later developments.

The two approaches regarding the relationship between the MT and the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint each have their advantages and disadvantages. Philological and historical considerations reveal that, in some cases, the Septuagint reflects an earlier version, while in other cases, the MT is earlier. This leads to the conclusion that there is no single explanation for all the textual phenomena in the Book of Kings. Unlike cases where a shorter version develops from a longer one or vice versa, the Book of Kings does not fit neatly into such patterns. The opinion presented in this study posits that the two editions reflected in the Septuagint and the MT developed from a common source, which was subsequently expanded at different stages through a series of late additions. Each version continued to evolve in its own unique way. As will be explained below, the extensive additions in chapter 2 and 12 in LXX 3 Kingdoms are particularly significant. They reflect different forms of later material, which were integrated in varying ways into both the MT and the LXX.

**3. The Unique Case of the Septuagint in 3 Kingdoms (MT 1 Kings): Basic Definitions and Scope of Discussion**

Before reviewing the structure and content of this book, it is essential to clarify some basic definitions that will be used throughout. Specifically, even the term “Septuagint” in case of the Book of Kings / Kingdoms, already used, warrants a more in-depth discussion and clarification. Since the studies of Henry St. John Thackeray and Dominique Barthélemy, most scholars have accepted that the major Greek manuscripts of the Books of Kingdoms (MT Samuel–Kings), particularly codex Vaticanus (B), do not reflect in all places the Old Greek (OG) tradition, namely, the hypothetical Greek translation of Samuel-Kings produced by the first Greek translators (“the original Septuagint”).[[12]](#footnote-12) Thackeray proposed that the oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint combined translations from two different hands. According to his analysis, the sections 1 Sam (α´), 2 Sam 1–11 (ββ´), and 1 Kgs 2:12–21:43 (γγ´) were translated by the early translators of Samuel–Kings and reflect the Old Greek. In contrast, the sections 2 Sam 11:2–1 Kgs 2:11 (βγ') and 1 Kgs 22:1–2 Kgs 25:30 (γδ') were translated by a different hand. Barthélemy accepted this division but correctly recognized that it was not a case of two different translators. Instead, he identified an original translation and a later reviser. The reviser based his work on the Old Greek translation but adapted and corrected it in light of Hebrew proto-Masoretic texts prevalent in his time. Consequently, most of 1 Samuel (α´), the beginning of 2 Samuel (ββ´), and the majority of 1 Kings (γγ´) were produced by the Old Greek translator. In contrast, the majority of 2 Samuel (βγ´) and 2 Kings (γδ´) were edited by a later reviser who aligned the text towards a proto-MT version.[[13]](#footnote-13) This mixture likely occurred because the Greek translations of the Books of Kingdoms (Samuel–Kings) spanned several scrolls. When these scrolls were copied into a codex, scrolls from different sources were combined: some were based on the Old Greek translation, while others were based on a later Greek revision.

The revision reflected in the sections βγ´ and γδ´ (most of 2 Samuel and 2 Kings) is called *kaige*-revision or *kaige*-Theodotion due to its proximity to the texts attributed to Theodotion, which are found in the sixth column of Origen’s Hexapla. Barthélemy also recognized the connection between this revision in the Books of Kingdoms and the Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (8HevXII gr), which reflects the same type of revision and not the Old Greek.[[14]](#footnote-14) This finding from the Judean Desert indicates that this revision process probably occurred at the end of the Second Temple period or shortly thereafter, rather than in the second century CE or later, as was commonly assumed regarding the time of Theodotion’s activity.[[15]](#footnote-15)

For our purposes, it is important to note that the *kaige* sections—most of 2 Samuel (βγ´) and 2 Kings (γδ´)—are closer to the MT as we know it, while the parts that reflect the Old Greek—most of 1 Samuel (α´), the beginning of 2 Samuel (ββ´), and most of 1 Kings (γγ´)—preserve, as expected, many differences from the MT.[[16]](#footnote-16) In light of this, regarding the majority of 1 Kings (γγ´), which is the focus of this study, we are on solid ground. Codex B, along with other ancient manuscripts of the Septuagint, may reflect the Old Greek quite well. Therefore, this evidence is more faithful to the supposed Hebrew *Vorlage* that circulated in the days of the Second Temple than the parts that have come down to us through later revisions. Throughout this study, the terms “LXX” or “Septuagint” refers, especially in 1 Kings, to the Greek tradition in the major manuscripts that reflect the Old Greek. Specific references to the manuscripts and other Greek traditions will be mentioned during the discussion and in the margins when needed.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Since LXX 3 Kingdoms (MT 1 Kings) reflects the Old Greek, not a later revision, it contains significant differences from the Masoretic Text (MT). Research surveys of the Septuagint versions of the Book of Kings highlight several notable differences compared to the MT, most of which appear in 1 Kings:[[18]](#footnote-18) (1.) *Long Additions or Supplementary Blocks*: There are three major additions in the Septuagint of 1 Kings. Two lengthy additions, often referred to as Miscellanies, are found in chapter 2 (3 Kgdms 2:35a–l; 46a–k). Another long addition, sometimes called the Alternative Story, is included in chapter 12 (LXX 3 Kgdms 12:24a-z). These sections largely contain additional and unique versions of scriptures related to Solomon’s reign (chapters 3–11), Jeroboam’s rise to power, and the division of the Kingdom (chapters 11–14). (2.) *Large-Scale and Small-Scale Transpositions*: Several order differences, both large and small, are found between the Septuagint and the MT. Some of these transpositions are within 1 Kings 1–11 and relate to the Miscellanies mentioned above. Additional transpositions are found outside of chapters 1–14, such as 1 Kings 22:41–50, which appears in the Septuagint of chapter 16 (verses 28a–h). (3.) *Short Additions and Omissions*: Some short additions or omissions are often ideologically motivated. For example, short extensions in the Priestly style are evident in both the MT and the LXX in chapters describing the construction of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 6–8). (4.) *Different Chronological Details*: Throughout the Book of Kings, there are differences between the MT and LXX regarding the years of reign and the years of accession to the throne, reflecting different chronological views.

This book will focus on the first three cases highlighted in chapters 1 Kings 1–14, which are significant for understanding the formation of the Book of Kings. Based on the conclusions drawn in this section, we can also address broader questions concerning the origin of the textual variants in Kings and the composition of the book. Naturally, it is not feasible to discuss all the differences between the MT and the LXX of the Book of Kings / Kingdoms within the scope of one book. Therefore, I have not addressed the fourth phenomenon mentioned: the numerous chronological discrepancies between the MT and the LXX regarding the ages of the kings and the duration of their reigns. While this issue is relevant to historical and chronological inquiries, it is less pertinent to understanding the formation and development of the book.[[19]](#footnote-19) In addition, due to the limited scope of the study, not all textual differences in 1 Kings were examined, particularly those in the latter chapters (15-22). However, the conclusions drawn from the analysed cases can be applied to other phenomena in the Book of Kings and will be addressed in future research.

**4. The Structure of this Book**

This book will focus on the most prominent differences between the LXX and the MT in 1 Kings 1–14, which are crucial for understanding the development of the Book of Kings. The first two chapters will be dedicated to the extensive additions in the Septuagint found in chapters 2 and 12. These additions include duplicate versions of various texts from the Solomon account (chapters 3–11) and the story of the kingdom’s division (chapters 11–14). Although the long supplements in both chapters share certain similarities, different approaches are necessary to comprehend the circumstances of their formation, dating, characteristics, and the ideologies underlying these literary units.

The **first chapter** examines the extensive additions in the Septuagint’s version of chapter 2, known as the Miscellanies. These additions provide a series of notices about Solomon and his kingdom, including his marriage to Pharaoh's daughter and the construction of cities like Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, and Tadmor. Notably, most verses from the Miscellanies are duplicated in Solomon’s narrative in chapters 3–11 in both the MT and the LXX, though sometimes in different locations. Contrary to earlier claims, this study demonstrates that these Miscellanies are not a later reworking of verses from subsequent chapters. However, the Septuagint version does not represent the earlier arrangement either. The key to understanding these additions lies in analyzing the corresponding verses in chapters 3–11 alongside those in the Miscellanies. This analysis reveals that these verses appear as foreign elements, distinct from their surroundings wherever they occur. Furthermore, a linguistic analysis of the Miscellanies and their counterparts in chaps. 3–11 exhibit similar stylistic and linguistic features similar to Late Biblical Hebrew, suggesting a different origin and formation process than previously proposed.

The **second chapter** examines the extensive addition found in the Septuagint version of Chapter 12. This addition presents a different version of the anthology of stories concerning the division of the kingdom and the rise of Jeroboam to power, which is found in Chapters 11–14 in both the MT and the LXX. Due to this duplication, the addition is often referred to as the Alternative Story (AS), a term also used in this study. A common explanation is that the AS is a later Midrashic reworking (in either Greek or Hebrew) of the schism story, based on a text similar to the Masoretic Text (MT). However, comparative analysis of these two versions does not support this hypothesis. On the contrary, in several instances, the AS appears to reflect an earlier version of the narrative. On the other hand, the AS cannot be considered the source of the more familiar story found in the MT and other versions because it too has undergone late reworking. This study proposes that the AS and the kingdom’s division story known from other versions likely originated from a common source. Comparative analysis of these major versions also yields new insights into the formation of the stories about the kingdom’s division, the date of their composition, and their differing ideologies. Therefore, this discussion is significant not only for understanding the unique AS unit but also for comprehending the development of the narrative concerning the kingdom’s division and Jeroboam’s rise to power in Israel.

The **third chapter** focuses on a series of shorter additions, primarily evident from the textual differences between the MT and the LXX in the description of the Temple’s construction (1 Kings 6–8). Many of these additions are written in the style of the Priestly source found in the Pentateuch. These additions appear in both the MT and the LXX, suggesting they were incorporated at various stages of the text’s development. This chapter illustrates the multiple phases of rewriting and editing of the Book of Kings, some of which occurred after the Torah had been compiled and established as an authoritative text during the Second Temple period.

The textual differences reviewed in the previous chapters, along with the identification of later layers in the Book of Kings, indicate the presence of linguistic and ideological similarities with the Chronistic work found in the Book of Chronicles. This phenomenon will be explored in the **fourth** and concluding **chapter**. By examining the ideologies, linguistic features, and dating of these later layers in the Book of Kings, we can view its different editions as various stages leading up to the creation of the Book of Chronicles. These stages were likely influenced by writers whose worldview, language, and temporal context were closely aligned with the Chronistic circles. Therefore, this chapter will investigate the possibility that the Chronistic work evolved over a long process, with its initial stages already evident in the later compositional and early transmission processes of the Book of Kings.

**5. Conclusions and ramifications**

The analysis of the main differences between the MT and the LXX presented in this book leads to several key claims:

(1) The Septuagint version of the Book of Kings reflects a distinct Hebrew edition of the text. The numerous differences between the MT and the LXX, especially in the accounts of Solomon and the division of the kingdom during the reigns of Rehoboam and Jeroboam in 1 Kings, are not the result of late Greek translators or revisors. Instead, they indicate the existence of various Hebrew editions of the Book of Kings that circulated during the Second Temple period.

(2) The analysis of the differences between the versions presented in this book demonstrates that it is overly simplistic to claim that one edition is consistently earlier than the other. This assertion is inconsistent with recent developments in textual studies, particularly following the discoveries of the Dead Sea scrolls, which have revealed the complexity of the biblical text and the necessity of examining each variant individually. It is more accurate to view the MT of Kings and the Hebrew *Vorlage* of Kingdoms as two parallel developments originating from a common source.[[20]](#footnote-20) The cases examined here will show that the Book of Kings continued to evolve during the Second Temple period, incorporating expansions from a series of later sources.

(3) The long additions in chapters 2 and 12 of 3 Kingdoms are a unique case. These units emerged as independent sources, consisting of the same materials that were incorporated differently in the more familiar editions of MT 1 Kings and LXX 3 Kingdoms. Thus, they may ostensibly seem as preserving duplicates of materials from the main body of the composition. Several indications suggest that some of the materials found in these long additions, as well as their counterparts in the main body of the work (whether in the MT or the LXX), were created at a relatively late stage of the redaction of the Book of Kings, most likely at the beginning of the Persian period. These passages exhibit linguistic features and worldviews characteristic of the days of the returnees to Zion in the Persian period. This late date likely explains why these materials appear in different forms in the various editions of the Book of Kings, and as separate and independent additions in chapters 2 and 12 of 3 Kingdoms.

(4) This claim has significant implications for understanding the history and formation of the Book of Kings, particularly concerning the dating of Solomon’s stories and the various traditions about the division of the kingdom. Contrary to the recent trends in Book of Kings research, which have focused on the Deuteronomistic editorial stages,[[21]](#footnote-21) this study suggests that the Book of Kings continued to develop during the Persian period, even during the later stages of Deuteronomistic activity and sometime after the decline of this scribal school. Many of the textual differences discussed in this book belong to the post-Deuteronomistic period or are close to the end of its activity, indicating extensive developments in the later stages of the formation of the Book of Kings, even after the mid-sixth century BCE (mentioned at the conclusion of Kings).

(5) This last issue also highlights the distinctive nature of the later layers in the Book of Kings and their proximity to the Book of Chronicles. In some of these later layers, we see similar rewriting techniques, worldviews, and unique expressions characteristic of the Book of Chronicles and the Chronistic scribes. It appears that these units originated from literary circles preceding the formation of Chronicles, which can be termed pre-Chronistic scribes. These groups were active during the final stages of the Book of Kings’ formation, possibly coinciding with the decline of the Deuteronomistic scribal school. This suggests that the Chronistic work did not emerge instantaneously but rather through a long process, signs of which are reflected in the later layers of the Book of Kings across its various versions. This book makes an initial effort to identify pre-Chronistic features evident in these later layers and to highlight the differences between the versions of the Book of Kings. These features can provide insight into the extensive rewriting of the Book of Kings that occurred at the Persian period or later, processes that eventually culminated in the separate work known as the Book of Chronicles.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. As … correctly points out. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See the fragments of the Book recovered in Qumran… [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. In 1 Kings, the importance of both the LXX and MT is crucial. I will refer to other textual witnesses, such as the text of Chronicles, the Vetus Latina, and the writings of Josephus, when necessary. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Many scholars have demonstrated that in the *kaige* sections, the Lucianic manuscripts and Vetus Latina may reflect earlier versions going back to Old Greek. See... [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. See the following studies, each of which has a quite different approach, without focusing on the long additions: [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)