1 Chr 26:17 details the order of the daily levitical watch. The text, according to the MT, reads: לֶמֶדְרוֹת הָלוֹם שָׁשָׁה לְפָרָם לְיָם אֲרֻבָּה לְיָם אֲרֻבָּה. ‘At the east—Six Levites; at the north—four daily; at the south—four daily’ (NJPS). The Peshitta has a reading similar to that of the MT, but containing an apparent error: לֶמֶדְרוֹת הָלוֹם שָׁשָׁה לְפָרָם לְיָם אֲרֻבָּה. This error is probably the result of translating לֶמֶדְרוֹת הָלוֹם twice.

However, the LXX preserves a different version of the beginning of this verse: Πρῶτος ἀνατολάς εἶξε τὴν ἡμέραν, which reflects a Hebrew text that reads לֶמֶדְרוֹת הָלוֹם. This variant creates symmetry between the different clauses of the verse: לֶמֶדְרוֹת הָלוֹם ... לְפָרָם לְיָם ... לְיָם אֲרֻבָּה. Several scholars have preferred the LXX reading, and this retroversion has been accepted in several recent commentaries and translations.

1 The biblical manuscripts mentioned in the Kennicott collection contain no variant readings within the Masoretic texts.


3 See, for example S. Japhet, I & II Chronicles (OTL; London, 1993) 450; W. Rudolph, Chronikbücher (HAT; Tübingen, 1955) 172; J. C. McConville, I & II Chronicles (Philadelphia, 1984) 87, translates ‘On the east there were six each day,’ without noting the divergence from MT. Scribal errors of this kind, namely metathesis (לֶמֶדְרוֹת—לְיָם) and different division of

Support for this suggestion may be found in a textual tradition preserved in rabbinic literature. In *b. Tamid* 27a, we read, according to the Vilna edition:

ממא הני מיל?: אומר רב יהודה מוסר, אמרתי לה בחרת התあって, דכתיב "לומדות הלויים הששה לשבחת לוי ארבעה, לושב ארבעה, ואספנטים שוהי שוהי.

On what Scriptural text was this practice based?—Rab Judah from Sura replied—according to others, it is taught in a Baraitha: Because it is written: *Eastward were six Levites, northward were four Levites, southward were four Levites, and for the Storehouse [asuppin] two and two.*

However, the text of the Vilna edition here is without basis, and is certainly corrupt. Indeed, in the *editio princeps* of the Talmud (Venice 1523), which is the basis for all subsequent printings, the text of the quoted verse matches that of the LXX: לומדות לוי הששה. This is also the case in two manuscripts of the Talmud, Ms words (לומדות לוי הששה), are found in all of the textual witnesses of the Bible. See E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Assen-Maastricht, 1992) 209, 250–253.


5 To the best of my knowledge, this is the only place in which this verse is cited in rabbinic literature.

6 Adapted from the Soncino translation of *b. Tamid* (London, 1960) 5, except for the verse from Chronicles that has been corrected in this edition according to the reading of the MT.

7 In the Vilna edition (1886), one detects a correction of לומדות לוי הששה, apparently under the influence of the MT reading. The continuation of the verse was then “corrected” twice according to this pattern, from לומדות לוי הששה, thereby creating symmetry between the various elements of the verse. The resulting text, the invention of late printers, differs from all extant textual witnesses.

S. Rosenfeld, *Mishpechet Soferim* (Vilna, 1883) 241, prefers the Talmudic tradition as represented in the later (and erroneous) printed editions over that found in the MT (and similarly in the Targum to Chronicles). This approach is characteristic of the author who consistently favors the textual variants found in rabbinic literature over the readings of the Masoretic Text.
Florence and Ms Vatican 120, as well as in quotations in early medieval literature of the 11th century, such as the commentary attributed to R. Gershom and an anonymous early Ashkenazi commentary.

By contrast, in Ms Paris 1408 of b. Tamid the text of the verse matches the MT: לֵמָּוִּית הָלוֹוִּים. This was also the reading of the anonymous commentary printed alongside b. Tamid, the commentary of R. Asher (13th–14th cent.), the commentary ascribed to R. Abraham b. Daud (13th cent.), and an additional early anonymous commentary (app. 13th cent.). The verse was corrected accordingly in R. Bezalel Ashkenazi’s marginalia, which altered the text of the editio princeps to agree with the MT. The text of the verse in Ms Munich 95, לֵמָּוָּוָּיִית הָלוֹוָּיִים can be seen as a conflation of לֵמָּוָּוָּיִית הָלוֹוָּיִים from one group of textual witnesses and לֵמָּוָּוָּיִית הָלוֹוָּיִים from the other.


9 See Y. Goldstoff (ed.), Perushei Ha-Rishonim z”l le-Masechet Tamid (Jerusalem, 1989) (Hebrew): “אֵיךְ קָרָא לָמָּוָּוָּיִית לָוָּוָּיִים”.


11 According to the Venice edition: לֵמָּוָּיִית הָלוֹוָּיִים ... קָרָא בְּמֶשֶׁם חָכִי בֶּן מֶר. כְּפֶר קָאָפָר לֵמָּוָּיִית לָוָּוָּיִים ... שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּа קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא וּלְמָוָּיִית שֶׁהוּא קָרָא V.

12 Goldstoff, Perushei Ha-Rishonim, 153.

13 Goldstoff, Perushei Ha-Rishonim, 27. The verse is not quoted there, but from the commentary itself it is clear that read so as to be: "רֹאִית דִּרְחָם לְזָה שָׁנַיְוָא וּמִשָּׁל מָה. לֵמָוָּוָּיִית הָלוֹוָּיִים". From this one can see that he did not read לָוָּוָּיִים in relation to the east.


It would seem that the original textual tradition of the verse in *b. Tamid* is לְמֹרְדוֹת לְיָוָן, as in the Septuagint. The reading לְמֹרְדוֹת לְיָוָן would appear to be a correction towards the MT. Such ‘corrections’ are a well-known phenomenon. The Talmudic tradition of the verse, corresponding to the LXX, was preserved through the 16th century, even though it was at odds with the text of the MT. By contrast, the MT influenced medieval commentators and scribes, who corrected the Talmud’s text to conform with the text of the verse as known to them. This correction was only partially successful. Even the contemporary editions of the Talmud do not fully reflect this emendation. The verse as it appears in them agrees neither with the MT nor with the original Talmudic reading.

16 Admittedly, the evidence would be even stronger if the reading מֹרְדוֹת לְיָוָן actually formed the basis of the Talmudic proof. Nevertheless, the large number of textual witnesses that preserved this reading and its accordance with the version of the LXX would appear to indicate its reliability. On the distinction between evidence of textual variants derived from citations, and evidence derived from exegetical discussion see, for example, D. Rosenthal, “The Sages’ Methodical Approach”; M. Kahana, “The Text of the Bible” (supra, n. 4).