

Oxford Hebrew Bible
Sample of 2 Kings 1:1-6

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לֹא תִרְדַּם מִמְּנַחָה כִּי מוֹת תָּמוּת
 וַיִּלְךָ אֵלֶיָּהּ:
 5 וַיָּשׁוּבוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים אֵלָיו
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מַה זֶה שִׁבְתֶּם:
 6 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִישׁ עָלָה לְקַרְאֲתָנוּ
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵינוּ לָכוּ שׁוּבוּ אֶל הַמַּלְאָךְ
 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח אֶתְכֶם
 וּדְבַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 הַמְּבַלֵּי אֵין אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 אַתָּה שָׁלַח לְדָרֵשׁ בְּבַעַל זְבוּל אֱלֹהֵי
 עֶקְרוֹן
 לָכֵן כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 הַמְּטָה אֲשֶׁר עָלִיתָ עָלֶיָּהּ
 לֹא תִרְדַּם מִמְּנַחָה כִּי מוֹת תָּמוּת:

לֹא־תִרְדַּם מִמְּנַחָה כִּי מוֹת תָּמוּת
 וַיִּלְךָ אֵלֶיָּהּ:
 5 וַיָּשׁוּבוּ הַמַּלְאָכִים אֵלָיו
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם מַה־זֶּה שִׁבְתֶּם:
 6 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו אִישׁ עָלָה לְקַרְאֲתָנוּ
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵינוּ לָכוּ שׁוּבוּ אֶל־הַמַּלְאָךְ
 אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח אֶתְכֶם
 וּדְבַרְתֶּם אֵלָיו כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה
 הַמְּבַלֵּי אֵין־אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 אַתָּה שָׁלַח לְדָרֵשׁ בְּבַעַל זְבוּב אֱלֹהֵי
 עֶקְרוֹן
 לָכֵן
 הַמְּטָה אֲשֶׁר־עָלִיתָ שָׁם
 לֹא־תִרְדַּם מִמְּנַחָה כִּי־מוֹת תָּמוּת:

כי M G (ὄτι)] אם *כי S (ⲁⲗⲁ) V (sed) (aur? gram) ↓ || [2 אֵלֶיָּהּ 6 || (ed B) M G (τάδε λέγει κύριος) (> ed A: S) (transp) ↓ || [*לשאל (ed A) S (rem שלח (ed B) M (ⲁⲗⲁⲗⲁ)] ↓ || [*לשאל (ed A) S (ⲁⲗⲁⲗⲁ)] ↓ || [זבוב (ed B) M sim G (μῦθον) (theol) ↓ || [זבוב <זבול> (ed A)] ↓ || [*כי אמר יהוה (ed A) G^L=OG (δὲ αὐτῆς) S (ⲁⲗⲁⲗⲁ)] > (ed B) M G^{AB} (transp, v 6 supra) ↓ || [*עליה (ed A) G^L=OG (ἐπ' αὐτῆς) S (ⲁⲗⲁ)] שם (ed B) M G^{AB} (homoi + gram?) ↓ || [כי M G (ὄτι)] אם *כי S (ⲁⲗⲁ) V (sed) (aur? gram) ↓

Commentary

Prefatory Note

The apparatus criticus in this present sample page from 2 Kgs 1:1-6 uses in an extensive way the different sigla of G textual criticism. This option has been taken due to the lack of a published *Göttingen Septuagint* for Kings and the special relevance which the different versions of G play in the history of the biblical text of Kings. The differences between the Old Greek text (in this passage corresponding to the γδ kaige section reflected by the non-recensional readings of G^L and, when extant, OL, along with the pre-Hexaplaric readings in the Armenian version) and the recensional texts (basically G^{AB} and the recensional readings of G^L) arguably mirror a similar process in the Hebrew text: an “Old Hebrew” (our column A) which experienced an editorial process which would result in a revised text (edition B).¹ The revised Hebrew text provided the base for kaige or kaige-like revisions which ultimately produced the recensional texts of G.

1:1 מות אחאב ויפשע מואב בישראל אחרי מות אחאב (ed B) M G (καὶ ἠθέτησεν Μωῶβ ἐν Ἰσραὴλ μετὰ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν Ἀχαάβ) sim S (... מואב ויפשע מואב בל מואב) (harm 3:5?)] > ed A

The initial verse of the book, preserved in all MS evidence, offers, nevertheless, some text-critical difficulties: when examining the beginning of 2 Kings in conjunction with the closing verses of 1 Kings in the G tradition, it is remarkable how, in the G^L family, the inclusion of the phrase violates a standard convention of book transitions in G, where the first verse of the next book is anticipated at the end of the previous one (defining therefore a connector of sorts)². In the case of G^L 1 Kgs 22:54, the connecting phrase is καὶ ἀνέβη Ὀχοζείας εἰς τὸ δικτυωτὸν ὑπερῶν αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ, repeated in the present state of the text at 2 Kgs 1:2. The sentence of 2 Kgs 1:1 is lacking at the end of 1 Kings in G^L, therefore, its presence at 2 Kgs 1:1 violates the “connecting phrase” principle and can be explained as consequence of a recensional revision which edited the Old Greek text according to the Hebrew edition B. Edition B likely introduced the phrase in an attempt to harmonize the text with 2 Kgs 3:5 (ויהי כמות אחאב ויפשע מלך (מואב במלך ישראל), a fact which may be pointed at by S, which stands closer to 3:5 than the other versions (with the inclusion of the element מואב).³

¹ Cf. Trebelle, “Progressive ‘Rabbinization’ of the MT: 1 Sam 20:14-16; 1 Kgs 8:9; 2 Kgs 14:16 and 21:8), IOSOT 2004 (pending publication).

² Cf. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Book of Kings*, 261.

³ Cf. Montgomery and Gehman, *ICC Kings*, 348. The repetition of this phrase could also be working as an editorial marker for the Wiederaufnahme of the royal histories, framing the prophetic Elijah narratives. In particular, its presence in 2 Kgs 1:1 ed B can be related to the displacement of Ahab’s death episode from the continuation of his successors’ line by the inclusion of Jehosaphat of Judah at 1 Kgs 22:41.

1:2 ויעל...שמרון* (ed A) G^L=OG (καὶ ἀνέβη Ὀχοζείας εἰς τὸ δικτυωτὸν ὑπερφῶν αὐτοῦ τῶ ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ) OL (*et ascendit Ohosias in superioribus domus suae in Samariam*)] > (ed B) M G^{AB} (homoi?)

This verse shows two different redactions of the same event, one attested in Old Greek by G^L in concordance with OL, in which Ahaziah ascends to the upper floor before falling through the window; another (in M, G^{AB} and the remaining versions) where the ...ויעל* sentence does not appear and therefore the position of subject and local complement exhibits a different arrangement (ויפל אחזיה בעד השבכה (בעלתו אשר בשמרון). The agreement between G^L and OL would indicate that G^L represents here the Old Greek text, whereas G^{AB} would be due to a pre-Hexaplaric kaige-like revision and therefore closer to M. In accordance with chronology of other features in the Vorlage of G^L, we have proposed an earlier date for that version, and thus its belonging to ed. A⁴. Though it is possible a conscious editorial stylistic revision in A (which would make the narrative more agile via the suppression of an obvious action, Ahaziah has to ascend before falling), it is also conceivable that B experienced a phenomenon similar to homoiarkton by completely skipping the initial element in the series of *wayyiqtol* sentences and consequently attaching the subject and complement to the second.

ויפל] + ויעל...שמרון* (ed B) M G^{AB} (Ὀχοζείας διὰ τοῦ δικτυωτοῦ τὸ ἐν τῶ υπερφῶ αὐτοῦ τῶ ἐν Σαμαρείᾳ) (exeg)

For the ascription of this redaction of the sentence to ed. B, cf. the previous commentary entry.

שאל* (ed A) G^L=OG (ἐπερωτήσατε) S (אִשְׁאַל)] דרשו (ed B) M G^B (theol)

The form שאל has been reconstructed from the G^L + OL (*interrogate*) rendering, which also coincides with S (אִשְׁאַל). This verb is more clearly defined in the BH corpus as a mantic technical word and is more widely attested in combination with the prepositional regime –ב (דרש ב-) is extremely rare in the Bible and mostly located in 2 Kgs, a fact that would point to an editorial substitution). The form דרשו of ed B (in M and G^{AB}) could be interpreted as an ideological-theological substitution in which the original mantic verb שאל (clearly attested in Northwest Semitic as an specialized expression already in the Ugaritic texts⁵) is replaced with a word connected with consultation practices more contemporary to the redactor's temporal background: the investigation and exegesis (דרש > מדרש) which would mature later in Rabbinic Midrashic practice (in the same vein that “consulting the Word of God” is explicitly alluded to in M v.16⁶). Therefore, the ed B reading (which also entered G^B as a recensional reading), would be both a “modernization” and theological substitution of שאל*, an older construction which would be the Hebrew

⁴ Stade, Haupt (tr.), *The Book of Kings* (Notes), 180, considers G^L a “clumsy expansion”, but does not discuss the agreement with OL.

⁵ Cf. Del Olmo and Sanmartín, *DLU*, 425.

⁶ That phrase is remarkably missing from Old Greek and the reference to “the word” fits clearly in later religious paradigms, more akin to the “Rabbinic” thought. Vid. supra n. 1.

Vorlage to the Old Septuagint text (defined here by G^L and OL)⁷. Furthermore, the usage of אֲרַח in S would point in the same direction, indicating that the revision undertaken by the B redactor left traces of the original form.

זְבוּל* (ed A) Symm (ζεβούλ) Hex εβρ. (ζεβούλ)] זְבוּב (ed B) M sim G (μῦλαν) (theol)

The second part of this composite Baal-divine name, a *hapax legomenon* in the Biblical text, has been reconstructed from Symmachus and part of the Ms evidence from Origen's εβρ. (βαλ ζεβούλ; Ms z). This choice is also supported by the clear relationship between the element זְבוּל* and *zbl* as a divine title, attested in the Ugaritic texts in special connection with Baal⁸. Given the quite widespread tendency of Biblical editors to subtly – or bluntly – transform the names of foreign gods via derogatory or moralizing puns, it is quite possible to understand זְבוּב as one of such derogatory puns played upon an older Northwest Semitic divine name. The meaning of the word (“fly”) fits this kind of joke, as it relates to pestilence, reeking and body waste⁹. There would exist a possibility of the pun of זְבוּב being the original form known to the very first stages of composition of the Biblical text, but then, given that the form (an eschatological joke related to stench or filth) has made its way into the totality of M, G and the other versions, it is striking that a non-punned (and fitting to the independently attested Semitic divine name) appears at such late date as Symmachus' version, as well as in the Hexapla. Also, the form βεελζεβούλ is attested in several passages of the NT (Mt 10:25; 12:24; Mk 3:22; Lk 11:15) and, were it to be thought that the NT represents a different supernatural entity which could in turn have contaminated Symmachus' and Origen's text due to phonetic similitude, it should be noted that in three of the four NT cases (Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22 and Lk 11:15) the entity appears in contexts of healing and exorcism (Jesus or his followers are accused of casting off demons by Beelzebul's power), too much of a coincidence with the consultation about sickness in 2 Kgs 1¹⁰. To this contextual / historical evidence it has to be added the particularly complex reception of the whole phrase זְבוּב אֱלֹהֵי עֲקָרוֹן in the G traditions: the case disagreement between ἐν τῷ (G^{AB}) / διὰ τοῦ (G^L) Βάαλ and μῦλαν θεὸν Ἀκκαρῶν (with a literal translation of זְבוּב) is particularly meaningful as this break in the syntax could be connected to a change in prepositional regimes (-ב for the section with preposition, אֵת for the accusative of μῦλαν) dependent of the verbal construction employed (שֶׂאֱל ב vs. דֵּרַש אֵת, vid. supra in the discussion on שֶׂאֱל) which would, in turn, indicates the operation of a revision upon the text (the change of the mantic verb – and the necessary prepositional readjustment – would have been concurrent with the introduction of the punned form זְבוּב). The revision of

⁷ Cf. Torijano, “The Version דֵּרַש = ἐπιζητεῖν and שֶׂאֱל = ἐπερωτᾶν in *I-IV Reges*. Original Text and Recensional Text” (IOSOT 2004, publication pending). Piquer, “Flies, Idols and Oracles. On a Collection of Variants to MT in 2Kgs1”, (IOSOT 2004, publication pending).

⁸ Cf. the tablets of the *Ugaritic Baal Cycle* (KTU 1.1-1.6), especially, KTU 1.5 VI-1.6 I, for the title *b'l zbl* 'rs.

⁹ Cf. e.g. *ABD* I, 554.

¹⁰ Cogan and Tadmor, *2 Kings (ABC)*, 25, cast doubts on the connection “between the god worshipped at Ekron and the demonic Baal-zebul”, but without including the testimony of Sym. or εβρ. in the discussion.

the prepositional regime of such a large chain of names and epithets propitiated the syntactical disagreement in G (especially after the presence of a non-declinable form as Βάαλ) and the grammatical breach (beginning with μυσαν < זבוב) in G (recensional in all text families in this passage) takes place right at the point where the revised word is inserted (זבוב, which would be governed by a verb with *nota accusativi*)¹¹. The previous part of the divine name (Baal) keeps the older structure with prepositional regime. The case disagreement in G as reflection of an addition-revision of the punned epithet is supported by the Coptic version of G, which has “Baal, who is called the Fly-God of Ekron” thus indicating that in the G traditions בעל and the epithet זבוב are not understood as a unit but as a divine name plus an additional epithet (the recensional element which would have obliterated the original non-punned name). The Coptic grammar is clear, as it separates Baal from the rest of the phrase through a standard relative clause formula for the introduction of epithets and appositions and additionally constructs “fly” as a composite name with “god”. This interpretation could be considered part of the Coptic translator’s exegesis, but given its similarity to an OL rendering of the passage (*muscam dea* in OL), as well as the coincidence of its appearance in connection with the syntactical breach in Greek, it can be taken as further evidence of the editorial nature of the inclusion of μυσαν in G, which would therefore reflect a revision according to the Hebrew edition B, which replaced the original divine epithet זבוב with a punned form.

בו יילכו לשאל בו *יילכו לשאל בו (ed A) G^{AB}=OG (και ἐπορεύθησαν ἐπερωτήσαι δι’αὐτοῦ) OL (*et abierunt interrogare per eam*) sim G^L (> δι’αὐτοῦ)] > (ed B) M

This sentence at the end of v.2 is attested by all the G traditions (as well as the OL *et abierunt interrogare per eam*) and is missing from M, as well as S, T¹ and V. The agreement between OL and G^L would indicate that this phrase belongs to the Old Septuagint text and implies a distinct redaction (ed A). It could be argued that the shorter and more agile represented by M (ed B in our proposal) is to be preferred as an older redaction and that the more extensive version of A can be the work of the Septuagint’s translator. Nevertheless, the structure of the paragraph in A (command by the king plus messengers’ departure, ...יילכו...) is remarkably close to the text of v. 4 (command by the angel plus Elijah’s departure, ...וילך), so, from the point of view of the literary structure of the passage, the text of A would be a possible original Hebrew redaction¹². As for the reasons for the omission of the sentence in B, it is possible to conceive that the editorial process was following an euphemistic attitude and therefore trying to devoid the text of any references which could be interpreted as the messengers actually getting to consult the divinity

¹¹ The present state of ed B (in M) indicates that the merging of the original structure with –ב (and probably a verb שאל, as indicated in the previous entry) and the revised construction with *nota accusativi* (and a verb דרש) has left no traces of the later in M, but can be inferred from the accusative μυσαν in G, as well as for the different constructions of דרש throughout the Bible, where the construction with *nota accusativi* (or with directional particles) is overwhelmingly more attested than the construction with –ב, which is, in turn, widely attested with שאל.

¹² Cf. Burney, *op. cit.*, 260, who, regardless, proposes a Vorlage לדרש באתו ויילכו, which does not take into account the verb used in G or the prepositional regime.

of Ekron, thus emphasizing the fact that their journey is cut short by Elijah's appearance. To this revised version of the narrative could also contribute the effect produced by the insertion of the second narrative unit of the chapter (Elijah and the three captains in vv. 7-16) as well as the placement of the prophet on top of a mountain instead of running across the messengers on the road (cf. v. 9 ed B), a fact which produces several discrepancies between A and B in the choice and editing of verbs of motion (see below v. 3).¹³

1:3 לָךְ* (ed A) G^A (πορεύθητι) sim G^B (δεῦρο) G^L (ἀπάντησον)] עלה (ed B) M

Versus a generic verb of motion in ed A (preserved by the Old Greek, which in this case is attested in G^A and partially G^{L14} and also in the kaige reading of G^B, δεῦρο¹⁵), ed B (M) introduces the idea of ascension. This idea of ascension would come out of a clear rationale in B's edition: if Elijah appears at the top of a mountain in v.9, he must have climbed it in a previous moment of the episode. This reading therefore aligns itself with the series of changes which B operates in order to integrate Elijah's situation in a mountain. As for the more neutral reading of A, it has also to be noted how it agrees with the last sentence in v.4, וַיֵּלֶךְ אֵלֵיהֶם, therefore the usage of forms of הָלַךְ in both instances would agree with the standards of correlation in command-fulfillment schemata.

לִשְׂאֵל* (ed A) G^L=OG (ἐπερωτήσαι) S (سأل)] לְדַרְשׁ (ed B) M G^{AB} (theol)

For the considerations on the substitution of לִשְׂאֵל* with לְדַרְשׁ in edition B, vid. supra the explanation of the same phenomenon operating on שְׂאֵל in v.2.

זָבוּל* (ed A)] זָבוּב (ed B) M sim G (μυῖαν) (theol)

We have conjecturally reconstructed the divine name in A in agreement with the evidence and considerations under the same entry in v. 2.

1:4 init] + ו (ed B) M G^{AB} (καὶ) (> ed A: G^L S V) (near-dittog וַ/ו?)

It is difficult to assess the value of such a small variant as the addition or omission of ו before a particle. Its inclusion seems to be unique to M and the recensional versions of G (G^{AB}), whereas it does not appear in G^L or in S and V. That could indicate that the addition of ו belongs to ed B, but the reasons for its inclusion (especially when it is the case that the particle is missing in the parallel instances of the sentence in vv. 6 and 16) cannot be deduced from this isolated case, beyond the general remark of the accumulation

¹³ Cf. Trebelle, *Centena in Libros Samuelis et Regum*, 156 ff. for the composite character of the chapter and the literary and text-critical issues brought about by the placement of Elijah on the mountain top in v. 9.

¹⁴ The Lucianic text uses a Greek verb, ἀπαντάω, specialized in “meeting people,” versus the generic πορεύομαι of G^A. Nevertheless, according to *LSJ*, p. 178, ἀπαντάω conveys the meaning of “moving somewhere to meet somebody”, therefore, even if Lucian's version contracts in a single word the expression לָךְ לְקִרְאָתָהּ, the spirit of the meaning stands closer to a Vorlage with לָךְ, in agreement here with G^A, than to the idea of ascension expressed by עלה.

¹⁵ This expression is characteristic for the translation of imperative forms of הָלַךְ in the kaige revision of the Septuagint. Cf. Avalos, “ΔΕΥΡΟ/ΔΕΥΤΕ and the Imperatives of הָלַךְ”, *EB* 47 (1989), 165-176.

of particles being a possible sign of a later revision. Also, it is possible to propose as a hypothesis that the appearance of ך is not connected to an editorial process *per se*, but that it is a purely scribal mistake (a near-dittography caused by the precedent sequence of ך and ך in the previous word עקרין in v.3) which made its way into the proto-Masoretic text and hence into the recensional revision of G^{AB}.

לכן M G^{L(dbl)}=OG (διὰ τοῦτο)] לא* G (οὐχ οὕτως) (aur? exeg?)

The reading לכן has been included as part of both editions. It is attested both in M and in the Old Septuagint (G^L, which exhibits a doublet composed of the recensional reading οὐχ οὕτως and διὰ τοῦτο¹⁶). In addition to the text-critical evidence in its favor, the particle is a standard element of prophetic formulae in which Yahweh transmits a verdict of condemnation or salvation. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note the variant reading לא* attested by G^{ABL}: though the traditional proposals consider it part of the translation technique of the Septuagint, and therefore an intra-Greek phenomenon, that reading is alien to the Old Greek text (as seen in G^L and in OL, in this and in parallel passages) and connected to kaige-like revisions of G. That could point in the direction of the reading לא* being a minor variant in the Hebrew text – as it would be a proto-M text the one which would be the base for the revision of G^{AB} – one which has not made its way into the text of M. The reasons for this reading could be aural, due to the phonetic similitude between לכן and לא, but it could also be connected to an exegetical principle similar to the Rabbinic ‘*al tiqre*’¹⁷.

עליה* (ed A) G^L=OG (ἐπ’ αὐτη̄ς) S (αὐ)] שם (ed B) M G^{AB} (homoi + gram?)

Here there is a discrepancy between versions in the word used for the retrospective element in the relative clause עליה אשר הבטה. Whereas M and G^{AB} use a locative adverb, שם, both G^L and S coincide in presenting a construction with particle + pronoun, with a proposed Hebrew Vorlage עליה*. The textual evidence of the Lucianic text, which here would correspond with the Old Greek, and its agreement with S, is supported by further textual and stylistic considerations: first, the graphic context suggests that the prepositional construction עליה could have been omitted at some point in the textual tradition due to a scribal error caused by homoiarkton (the preceding verbal form עליה). Also, the usage of a preposition + suffix structure in this relative clause establishes a stronger correlation with the next sentence in Yahweh’s oracle, לא תרד ממנה, therefore constituting a more intense literary unit. For the appearance of the adverb in M and G^{AB}, it can be postulated that, after the prepositional regime being lost to homoiarkton in part of the Hebrew tradition, some redactor or scribe felt the necessity to correct the grammar of the relative clause

¹⁶ In the parallel passage of v. 6 the OL reading is *ideo*, therefore indicating that the second part of the Lucianic doublet is an Old Septuagint reading.

¹⁷ Cf. Trebelle, *Salomón y Jeroboam*, 328-331; Piquer, “Flies, Idols and Oracles. On a Collection of Variants to MT in 2 Kgs 1”, (IOSOT 2004, publication pending). Cf. also Prijs, *Jüdische Tradition in der Septuaginta, pass.* This variant reading would be related with the progressive loss of awareness of the prophetic speech unit structure, a phenomenon which has left traces in other instances in which actually there are textual differences between editions A and B (cf. below vv.6 and 16, as well as the already mentioned substitution of the specialized mantic word שאל with דרש (vid. supra v. 2).

with the inclusion of a retrospective element and subsequently used **ש**. Nevertheless, it is not possible to assess the scope of this variant, whether it was part of the B tradition as a whole or just a minor problem in the transmission of proto-M which in turn affected part of its dependent (through recension or translation) versions. Thus, facing this conundrum, in the edition the form with **ש** has been left in B as agreeing with the copy-text.

כִּי M G (ὅτι)] אִם כִּי* S (אֲלֵךְ) V (*sed*) (aur? gram)

Both editions of the text present the causal construction with **כִּי**. Nevertheless, it is interesting to remark how some versions (S and V) attest an adversative reading for the particle¹⁸. This variant would imply a variation in the appreciation of the prophetic speech (the closing causal clause which constitutes the death sentence for the whole speech becomes an adversative clause to the preceding phrase) which in some measure would weaken the rhetoric force of Yahweh's sentence. Therefore, it has been considered a secondary reading. From a textual criticism point of view, the variation could have been brought about by an aural phenomenon which would have affected word-division: **כִּי + מוֹת** could be aurally dissociated into **כִּי + אִם** (with a mute **א**) + **מוֹת**. This phenomenon could have taken place in the translating phase, but, especially given its presence in two different versions (S and V), it is also possible that the aurally-influenced word division affected part of the Hebrew textual tradition¹⁹.

At the end of v.4, G^{ABL} coincide in including an additional phrase, καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς. Although this text is easily translated into a Hebrew **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים**, it is difficult to discern whether the phrase reflects a Vorlage or it is part of the translator's activity, which would try to smooth an elliptic text. Compared with the end of v.2, in which G^{ABL} also offer a longer text – which in this edition has been considered as part of ed A – the present phrase lacks the same level of coincidence in the verbal roots used between the command (**לֵךְ + דַּבֵּר** in v. 3 ed. A) and the fulfillment, as λεγεῖν would not reflect **דַּבֵּר**, which is repeatedly translated in this passage with the Gk. λαλεῖν. Also, grammatically, it is to be noted that in v. 2 ed. A the fulfillment of the king's commands is rendered with a single sentence, **וַיֵּלֶךְ** + an auxiliary (**לִשְׂאֵל**). In v.4, Elijah's departure (**וַיֵּלֶךְ**) would be enough to establish a correlation with the angel's words. To these considerations of style and structure, a textual criticism element has to be added: an phrase **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים** appears in v.5 (pronounced by Ahaziah) in close proximity to the point where G^{ABL} presents καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς. Given the elliptic quality of the passage and the frequent changes of speaker and addressee, it is conceivable that either a scribe or translator just anticipated Ahaziah's phrase at the end of v.4, generating a duplicated reading.

¹⁸ The adversative is also attested in the G-dependent Armenian version, though G^{ABL} agrees in this case with M.

¹⁹ Cf. Trebolle, *Centena*, 109-11 for a more far-reaching interpretation of the discrepancies between G and M in the usage of **כִּי / אִם** (**כִּי אִם** (ὅτι ἀλλὰ ἦ) in Sam-Kgs. In the present case, nevertheless, the coincidence of the particle with a following **מ** in **מוֹת** and the almost total absence of the adversative from the G versions calls for postponing a similar evaluation until the edition has progressed further and more cases have been examined in detail.

Nevertheless, whether this phrase belongs to a Hebrew Vorlage²⁰ (either as part of the features of edition A or as a scribal phenomenon caused plausibly by the anticipation of part of v.5) or to the translation features of the Septuagint cannot be discerned on the basis of a single sample, but only after a thorough survey of similar cases in the whole book.

1:6 אֱלִיּוֹ ²] + כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (ed B) M G (τάδε λέγει κύριος) (> ed A: S) (transp)

The position of the prophetic formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה defines a difference between eds. A and B in this verse. The versions indicate that, whereas M and the whole G tradition include the formula at the beginning of Elijah's words, therefore constituting a generic introduction to Yahweh's words, S situates it further in the passage, right after the particle לִכֵּן; the formula then works as a specialized introduction which precedes Yahweh's decree or verdict (in this case an oracle of doom for Ahaziah). To the evidence of S, it must be added the doublet in G^L: the Lucianic text includes the formula כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה (τάδε λέγει κύριος) both at the beginning of Elijah's words (in agreement with G^{AB} and M) and in the same position than S, before the prophecy of the king's death. This Lucianic doublet would reflect the inclusion of a recensional reading (in agreement with the revised versions G^{AB} and with M) and the preservation of the Old Septuagint reading²¹, which would here agree with S, as well as with the first instance of the oracle in v. 4. The explanation of the differences between A and B can be found in a progressive loss of awareness of the prophetic consultation structure (vid. supra for similar phenomena with this basis under שֹׁאֵל* and לִכֵּן), which would take a formula whose usage is specialized in the introduction of Yahweh's sentence in oracles and turn it into a generic introduction of Yahweh's words at large²². Within B, the discrepancy between the position of the formula in v.4 and vv.6 and 16 could be explained by the redactor's feeling a situation difference between them, as in the first one it is the angel who speaks, whereas in the two remaining cases the speaker is Elijah, and therefore the need could be felt to include a formula indicating that the paragraph is the word of Yahweh at the very beginning of the speech.

יְהוָה* (ed A) G (πορεύη)] שִׁלַּח (ed B) M (rem שִׁלַּח¹)

Against the whole G tradition, which reads יְהוָה, following the recurring verbal pair in vv.2 and 3 (יְהוָה + שֹׁאֵל), M introduces a form שִׁלַּח which is reminiscent of the previous שִׁלַּח in v.6 and of the וַיִּשְׁלַח in v.2.

²⁰ Such seems to be Gray's posture in his commentary, as he considers the omission of Elijah's speech to the messengers as an "error". Stade, on the other hand, defends that the phrase should be accounted as a scribal expansion to smoothen the text. Cogan – Tadmor incide in the abrupt nature of the narrative sequence, but at the same time consider it "a case of deferring a key scene to a later sequence in order to heighten the dramatic effect". In any case, the different commentaries do not produce solid evidence on the precedence of the expansion / ellipsis, be it translational, scribal, editorial or redactional.

²¹ The Patristic evidence from Or-Lat, *quia haec dicit Dominus* also points in this evaluation of G^L as Old Septuagint.

²² Cf. Piquer, "Flies, Idols and Oracles. On a Collection of Variants to MT in 2 Kgs 1", (IOSOT 2004, publication pending). for a detailed exposition of the phenomenon in 2 Kgs 1.

The option taken agrees with Burney²³ in the secondary character of the M reading (a facilitating change, as Ahaziah does not physically “go”, but one which disregards the unity of “go to enquiry”) and it has been ascribed to the editorial labor of B.

לשאל* (ed A) S (למשאל)] לדרש (ed B) M G (ζητησαι) (theol)

For the considerations on this entry, vid. supra v.3, with the only difference that in the present case the whole G tradition has been affected by a revision akin to M and therefore only S, along with a comparison with vv. 2, 3 and 16, offers textual support for the proposed A reading.

זבול* (ed A)] זבוב (ed B) M sim G (μυλων) (theol)

We have conjecturally reconstructed the divine name in A in agreement with the evidence and considerations under the same entry in v. 2.

לכן M G^{L(dbl)}=OG (διὰ τοῦτο)] כן לא* G (οὐχ οὕτως) (aur? exeg?)

For the considerations on the variant reading for this particle, vid. supra the entry at v. 4

יהוה אמר כה* (ed A) G^L=OG (τάδε λέγει κύριος) S (אמר יהוה כה)] > (ed B) M G^{AB} (transp, v 6 supra)

For the explanation of the differences of placement of the prophetic formula between A and B, vid. supra the first entry on this same verse.

עליה* (ed A) G^L=OG (ἐπ’αὐτῆς) S (על)] שם (ed B) M G^{AB} (homoi + gram?)

Vid. supra the same textual phenomenon at v. 4.

כי M G (ὅτι)] כי* S (כי) V (sed) (aur? gram)

For the reflections on this possible variant reading, vid. supra v. 4.

²³ *Op. cit.* 262.