

Intentional Omissions in the Textual History of the Books of Kings: In Search of Methodological Criteria

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Résumé. Quand des témoins textuels présentent des différences quantitatives, les exégètes, souvent attachés à la règle *lectio brevior potior*, ne courent-ils pas le risque de négliger l'hypothèse d'une omission délibérée de la part d'un copiste ? Tel est bien le cas selon J. Pakkala, qui s'est récemment penché sur de nombreuses situations dans les livres des Rois où l'absence d'un passage s'expliquerait par une censure théologique ou idéologique. Idéalement, l'identification des motivations des scribes devrait permettre de définir des critères méthodologiques conduisant à privilégier dans certains cas l'explication par omission intentionnelle par rapport aux scénarios concurrents (chute accidentelle, expansion du texte). Dans cet article, nous voudrions apporter une contribution à cette recherche en mettant en évidence quatre nouveaux types de motifs, au delà de la censure théologique ou idéologique, ayant pu être à l'origine d'omissions délibérées dans les livres des Rois.

Introduction¹

Long neglected in textual criticism (as well as in compositional criticism), the role of deliberate omissions is now the subject of renewed interest in scholarly discussions regarding the transmission of the Hebrew Bible.² This article investigates four cases of minuses in some textual witnesses of the Books of Kings (ana-

¹ A version of this article was read as an invited paper at the 2015 annual meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies in Cordoba, in the research group "Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible in Light of Empirical Evidence".

² See especially J. Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted: Omissions in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible* (FRLANT 251; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

lyzed in this order: 1 Kgs 4:5; 14:26; 15:7; 11:23-24 MT // 11:14 LXX). These case studies may be instructive with regard to two important questions.

First, *according to which criteria can a text critic decide that a minus in a textual witness is due to an intentional omission?* Indeed, alternative explanations often exist. For instance, many quantitative variants may be due to an accidental omission.³ What are we to conclude when a motive can easily be suspected for a deliberate minus, but the same variant can also be explained by haplography? Should we give preference to the explanation of a mechanical error as the most reasonable scenario, on the principle that such mistakes are common, whereas deliberate changes are less documented and that their detection often remains speculative? Obviously, another possible explanation for a quantitative variant is that of an addition which occurred in other textual witnesses. In the Books of Kings, it is all the more difficult to decide since there exist two editions, attested by the two main textual traditions (MT and LXX), and their *relative chronology* remains the subject of an ongoing debate.⁴ Moreover, making a textual

³ According to N. Fernández Marcos, this could explain many variants in the Old Latin of Kings (*Scribes and Translators: Septuagint and Old Latin in the Books of Kings* [VTSup 54; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1994]).

⁴ See e.g. J. Treballe Barrera, *Salomón y Jeroboán: Historia de la recensión de 1 Reyes 2-12/14* (Bibliotheca Salmanticensis Dissertationes 3; Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1980); idem, *Jehu y Joas: Textos y composición literaria en 2 Re 9-11* (Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo para la investigación bíblica, 1984); A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14* (CahRB 48; Paris: Gabalda, 2000); idem, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher: Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher* (OBO 199; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); P. S. F. van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11* (VTSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2005); Ph. Hugo, *Les deux visages d'Élie: Texte massorétique et Septante dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 Rois 17-18* (OBO 217; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); idem, "Le Grec ancien des livres des Règles: Une histoire et un bilan de la recherche", in Y. A. P. Goldman, A. van der Kooij, and R. D. Weis (eds.), *Sôfer Mahîr: Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker Offered by Editors of Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (VTSup 110; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 113-141; A. S. Turkanik, *Of Kings and Reigns: A Study of Translation Technique in the Gamma/Gamma Section of 3 Reigns (1 Kings)* (FAT II.30; Tübingen:

decision sometimes involves a literary analysis of the text, not only the application of rules of textual criticism, because some textual differences stem from an editorial reworking of the passage.

Second, what are the main reasons why a copyist or translator would have deliberately omitted a part of the text? With regard to the Books of Kings, J. Pakkala has recently pointed out several instances of shortening due to ideological or theological censorship.⁵ Provided that they are due to intentional omissions, the case studies below may illustrate four possible motives of intentional omissions in the same books: suppressing an unlikely piece of historical information (in 1 Kgs 4:5); eliminating a contradiction within the book (in 1 Kgs 14:26); avoiding a repetition (in 1 Kgs 15:7); suppressing some details in the wake of the transposition of a passage, either because they are difficult to understand or because the re-ordering of the text makes a clause redundant (in 1 Kgs 11:23-25 MT // 11:14 LXX). The two first cases concern isolated omissions (of a word or a sentence) that may be due to the sensitivity of a copyist to the accuracy of the text. The third example will show that, ironically, an omission could sometimes be prompted by an addition, as a sort of compensation. Finally, the fourth case study may illustrate the fact that omissions were sometimes “collateral damage” in large-scale reworking of texts.

Mohr Siebeck, 2008); M. Richelle, *Le testament d'Elisée: Texte massorétique et Septante en 2 R 13,10-14,16* (CahRB 76; Pendé: Gabalda, 2010).

⁵ Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted*, p. 224-48; idem, “Yahweh, The Sun-god, Wants a New Temple: Theological corrections in 1Kgs 8:12-13/3Reg 8:53^a”, in K. De Troyer, T. M. Law, and M. Liljeström (eds.), *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 72; Leuven/Paris/Walpole: Peeters, 2014), p. 377-90.

1. A word omitted to avoid an unlikely piece of information (1 Kgs 4:5)

1.1. The textual evidence

The first variant that we consider occurs in the list of Solomon's high officials at the beginning of 1 Kings 4. In the MT, the list contains a surprising item: "and Zabur son of Nathan priest friend of the king" (v. 5). The word "priest" has no equivalent in the LXX.

LXX ^B	LXX ^L	MT
καὶ Ορνεια υἱὸς Ναθαν	καὶ Ορνεια υἱὸς Ναθαν	וְעֶזְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־נָתָן עַל־
ἐπὶ τῶν καθεσταμένων	ἐπὶ τῶν καθεσταμένων	הַנִּצָּבִים
καὶ Ζαβουθ υἱὸς Ναθαν	καὶ Ζακχουρ υἱὸς Ναθαν	וְזַבּוּד בֶן־נָתָן
		כֹּהֵן
ἐταῖρος τοῦ βασιλέως	ἐταῖρος τοῦ βασιλέως	רֵעֵה הַמֶּלֶךְ

But to whom does it refer in the Hebrew text? The closest word is Nathan. While there is no other mention of a priest called Nathan, David had a son of this name, and according to 2 Sam 8:18 several of his sons were priests. Conceivably the word כֹּהֵן might be written here in order to distinguish this Nathan with the patronym in the first part of the verse. However, in a patronym, one would expect the article: "Nathan *the* priest", like it happens in verse 2: "Azariah the son of Zadok the priest" (וְעֶזְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־יְצָדֹק הַכֹּהֵן). By contrast, in this list the titles of the officials themselves are not always preceded by articles (see סֹפְרִים in v. 3; כֹּהֲנִים in v. 4). Therefore, it is more likely that the word כֹּהֵן refers to Zabur. He would be listed here for two qualities mentioned in apposition: "priest" and "friend of the king" (whatever the latter designation means).

1.2. The textual evolution

The word **בִּהֵן** does not seem to be a gloss,⁶ because there is no reason why somebody would have inserted it:⁷ there is no other priest named Zabur, so a copyist would not have been influenced by this kind of preceding information. However, the same reason may explain why somebody would have been puzzled by the word **בִּהֵן** and deleted it, or not translated it. Additionally, a copyist aware of the Greek tradition may have made the connection with “Zachour son of Nathan, the counselor” (Ζαχουρ υἱὸς Ναθαν ὁ σύμβουλος) mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:26h. Indeed, in the LXX¹, the name mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:5 is Ζακχουρ. If so, the mention of the same man as a counselor and as a priest would have appeared to be contradictory. Admittedly, some scholars regard it as possible that a priest would have served as a counsellor to the king,⁸ but the point is that this could have been *perceived* as contradictory by a copyist. This would have prompted the suppression of the word **בִּהֵן**.

1.3. Remarks

It is interesting to compare this problem with the enigma of the mention of David’s sons as priests (**בִּהֲנִים**) in 2 Sam 8:18 according to the MT (as well as the Vulgate and Aquila). In most versions, they are regarded as high officials: “chiefs of the court” (ἀρχαῖ) in the LXX (B and L), “princes in the house of the king” in the OL (*in principes... domus regis*), “great men” in the Peshitta (*rwrbyn*) and the Targum (*rbrbyn*). Likewise, the Chronicler says that they were “next to the king” (1 Chr 18:17: **וּבְנֵי־דָוִד הָרֵאשִׁימִים לְיָד הַמֶּלֶךְ**). Some scholars think that these readings stem from an otherwise unattested meaning of **בִּהֵן** and this is reflected

⁶ This word is regarded as original by M. J. Mulder, *I Kings*, vol. 1: *1 Kings 1-11* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), p. 166. *Contra* J. Gray, who deletes the work (*I & II Kings* [OTL; London: SCM, 1977³], p. 131).

⁷ R. Kittel, *Die Bücher der Könige* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), p. 31.

⁸ E.g. Mulder, *I Kings*, p. 166.

in some modern translations (e.g. “principal officer” in the KJV, “chief ministers” in the JPS [1917], “royal advisors” in the NIV). This explanation may be valid in the Aramaic linguistic area, but in Hebrew it is a purely conjectural, *ad hoc* solution⁹, although of course not impossible. Wenham posits instead a textual corruption from the word *sknym* “administrators (of the royal estates)” (cf. *sknym* in Ugaritic).¹⁰ As McCarter notes, “it is difficult, however, to think of the surprising designation of David’s sons as priests as having arisen by corruption from an uncontroversial text”.¹¹ Therefore, many scholars think that the text originally mentioned David’s sons as priests,¹² then was revised by translators in order to avoid the notion that they were illegitimate,¹³ or “to avoid the implication that there could have been legitimate non-levitical priests”.¹⁴

If so, the versions of 2 Sam 8:18 confirm that calling a priest somebody who was illegitimate for this office was cause for changing a text. In addition, the two cases under scrutiny exemplify two different strategies to deal with a difficulty caused by a single word: changing it (2 Sam 8:18) or deleting it (1 Kgs 4:5). In the latter passage, it was possible to suppress it because there were two titles in apposition, so the absence of the word left a complete sentence. And yet, it would have been easy to drop the final clause in 2 Sam 8:18. Does it mean that the first reflex of a tradent was not to omit an entire clause altogether if it was possible to “save” it? Admittedly, we do not know how the copyist or translator reasoned here. Maybe, like some modern scholars, he told himself that there existed a rare lexical meaning to the word

⁹ For the Semitic attestations of KHN, see D. Cohen, *Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques ou attestées dans les langues sémitiques*, fasc. 10, Leuven, Peeters, 2012, p. 1186.

¹⁰ G. J. Wenham, “Were David’s Sons Priests?”, *ZAW* 87 (1975), p. 79-82.

¹¹ P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1984), p. 254-55 for a summary of the evidence, and p. 255 for the quotation.

¹² W. Nowack, *Richter-Ruth* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), p. 184-85; H. J. Stoebe, *Das zweite Buch Samuelis* (KAT VIII.2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), p. 254, 258-59.

¹³ A. Caquot and P. de Robert, *Les livres de Samuel* (CAT 6; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1994), p. 448-49.

¹⁴ A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas: Word, 1989), p. 137.

כִּהְיֶה. It is even conceivable that he believed that it was a gloss that needed to be suppressed.

2. A verse possibly omitted to avoid a contradiction in Kings (1 Kgs 14:26)

2.1. The textual evidence

According to all the textual witnesses, Pharaoh Shishak took all the treasures of the Temple and of the palace, in particular some shields of gold (1 Kgs 14:26). The MT adds that the latter were made by Solomon in a short relative clause at the end of the verse. In the Septuagint (LXX^B and LXX^L), the narrative contains a longer plus, according to which Shishak also took “the golden spears that David took from the hand of the servants of Hadraazar, king of Souba, and brought them into Ierousalem”. All these traditions come together in the *Antiquity of the Jews* (Ant VIII: 258-59), as shown in the table below.

LXX ^B	LXX ^L [v. 40]	MT	Ant VIII: 258-59
And (Susac) took all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house	And (Susac) took all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house	And (Shishak) took the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house;	He plundered the Temple and he emptied the treasures of God and of the king (...)
<i>and the golden spears that David took from the hand of the servants of Hadraazar, king of Souba, and brought them into Ie-</i>	<i>and the golden spears that David took from the hand of the servants of Hadraazar, king of Souba, and brought them into Ie-</i>		He even took the shields of gold, long and round, that King Solomon had made;
<i>rousaleum;</i> he took all	<i>rousaleum;</i> he took every-	he took every-	
	thing;	thing;	

the shields of gold.	and the shields of gold	and he took all the shields of gold	
	that Solomon had made.	that Solomon had made.	
			He did not ne- glect the gold quivers that David had dedi- cated to God after taking them from the king of Soba.

The Septuagint plus in 1 Kgs 14:26 echoes another one in the Greek version of 2 Sam 8:7 (see the table below). According to the biblical account, David took gold shields to Hadadezer's servants. The LXX (B and L) and the Old Latin add that Shishak "took them when he went up in Jerusalem in the days of Roboam son of Solomon", which is a prolepsis to the plus of 1 Kgs 14:26 LXX. Again, this prolepsis appears in Josephus's narrative (*Ant* VII:104-105). In addition, in 2 Sam 8:7, the LXX^L contains a further plus: David took to Hadadezer not only the gold shields but also "all the shields of gold and the spears".

2 Sam 8: 7 LXX ^B	LXX ^L	4QSam ^a	MT
David took the gold shields that they made upon the servants of Hadadezer king of Souba,	David took the gold shields that were upon the servants of Hadadezer king of Souba, <i>and all the shields of gold and the spears,</i>	David took the gold shields that were upon the servants of Hadadezer,	David took the gold shields that were upon the servants of Hadadezer,
and brought them to Jerusa- lem.	and brought them to Jerusa- lem.	and brought them to Jerusa- lem.	and brought them to Jerusa- lem.
<i>And Susac king of</i>	<i>And Susac king of</i>	<i>And Susac king of</i>	

<i>Egypt took them</i>	<i>Egypt took them</i>	<i>Egypt took them</i>
<i>when he went up to</i>	<i>when he went up to</i>	<i>later when he went</i>
<i>Jerusalem in the</i>	<i>Jerusalem in the</i>	<i>up to Jerusalem in</i>
<i>days of Roboam son</i>	<i>days of Roboam son</i>	<i>the days of Roboam</i>
<i>of Solomon.</i>	<i>of Solomon.</i>	<i>son of Solomon.</i>

Arguably both main plusses were already present in a Hebrew *Vorlage*: in it clear in the case of 2 Sam 8:7 because of the testimony of 4QSam^a, while in the case of 1 Kgs 14:26 it is easy to make a retroversion:

ואת שלטי הזהב אשר לקח דוד מיד עבדי הדדעזר מלך צובה ויביאם ירושלימה

This hypothesis is all the more probable if one accepts E. Nodet's suggestion that Josephus used a Hebrew manuscript of Kings that "has some contacts with the source of the Antiochian (Lucianic) recension" and "never used any known Greek translation of the Bible for 1-2 Kings",¹⁵ but this is a debated subject.

2.2. The textual evolution

Regarding the evolution of the text, two scenarios are conceivable.

1. *Additions*. A redactor could have added these two passages, hence its presence in the *Vorlage* of the LXX and 4QSam^a.¹⁶ Alter-

¹⁵ E. Nodet, "The Text of 1-2 Kings Used by Josephus", in B. Halpern and A. Lemaire (eds.), *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (VTSup 129; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), p. 41. According to a more traditional approach, Josephus used a LXX tradition close to the Antiochian Text. Nodet states that Josephus "never used any known Greek translation of the Bible for 1-2 Kings" (p. 41). Another possibility is that Josephus used several manuscripts, some in Hebrew and others in Greek (J. Koulagna, *Salomon, de l'histoire deutéronomiste à Flavius Josèphe: Problèmes textuels* [Paris: Publibook, 2009], p. 141-48).

¹⁶ C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings with an Introduction and an Appendix* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 194; see also J.A. Montgomery and H.S. Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1951), p. 273.

natively, the plus in 1 Kgs 14:26 may have been added first, then it would have prompted the later insertion of a prolepsis in 2 Sam 8:7. Note in passing that in this hypothesis, the insertion of this tradition in 1 Kgs 14:26 would have been accompanied by the suppression of the last clause of the verse (“that Solomon had made”). This scenario is possible, but it seems difficult to explain where the redactor who inserted this information could have obtained it. It could be a midrashic development, but it really seems to be a short, fairly uninteresting addition, the motive behind which remains difficult to discern. According to Kittel, the aim of the redactor would have been to lessen Roboam’s humiliation,¹⁷ but this explanation seems to me unsatisfactory.

2. *Omissions.* The Septuagint plusses were part of the textual archetype and omitted by the MT. It is also possible that only the clause in 1 Kgs 14:26 was present in the earliest text, and that only this clause was concerned by the omission; the clause in 2 Sam 8:7 would be a late gloss that was never part of the MT. In turn, the omission in 1 Kgs 14:26 can be explained in two ways:

a. *An accidental dropping.* A scribe may have dropped the clause by *homoioarcton*, due to the repetition of וַאֲחַת in Hebrew. (This explanation does not work regarding 2 Sam 8:7.) This is possible but not very likely since the repeated word (here, וַאֲחַת) is very short.

b. *An intentional omission.* The MT omitted a part of 2 Sam 8:7 and 1 Kgs 14:26 *because the information conveyed by these clauses seemed to contradict another text.*¹⁸ Indeed, according to 2 Kgs 11:10, the shields of gold were still in Jerusalem at the time of Athalia (“The priest delivered to the captains the spears and shields that had been King David’s, which were in the house of the LORD”). To make sure that no reader would believe that 1 Kgs 14:26 was about David’s arms, the scribe added a clause: “that Solomon had made” (cf. 1 Kgs 10:16-17). In a word, Schenker notes, the MT is more

¹⁷ Kittel, *Die Bücher der Könige*, p. 122.

¹⁸ A similar explanation has already been suggested in the case of a minus in Josh 20:3-6. See R. Müller, J. Pakkala and B. ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), p. 45-58: according to their analysis, Josh 20:4-5 has been omitted because it contradicted Num 35:25-28.

logical than LXX because it reflects a reworking of an initially confused text.¹⁹ This clause would have entered other Hebrew manuscripts (hence its presence in LXX^L and in Ant VIII:259) by secondary assimilation.

Actually the original meaning of the text may be a little more complicated, because the words used for the different objects (shields, quivers...) differ according on the passage and the textual witness (see the table below). This would merit a detailed examination, but the point for the present discussion is that a scribe may easily have thought that there was a contradiction.

2 Sam 8:7		1 Kgs 14:26		2 Kgs 11:10	
MT	LXX	MT	LXX	MT	LXX
וְהָיָה	B: χλιδων	וְהָיָה	δορυ	וְהָיָה	B:
	L: χλιδων,		όπλον		σειρομαστης,
	όπλον,				τρισσος
	δορυ				L: δορυ,
					φαρετρα

Several scholars already have faced a similar situation and favored the explanation by intentional omission over against the explanation by haplography, because a coincidence is unlikely in the case where a clear theological or ideological motive can be detected.²⁰ It seems to me that this approach should be considered in the present case too, especially because the possible *homioarcton* is based on a tiny repetition, and because the motive for an omission is strong.²¹

¹⁹ A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14*, p. 126-28.

²⁰ Pakkala, *God's Omitted Word*, p. 238 ; A. Schenker, « The Septuagint in the Text History of 1-2 Kings », in B. Halpern et A. Lemaire (eds.), *The Books of Kings*, p. 3-17.

²¹ For a similar situation, see R. Müller, J. Pakkala and B. ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing*, p. 74-76: a minus in 1 Sam 10:1 MT has sometimes been explained by haplography, but this is not entirely convincing from a technical point of view, whereas an intentional omission may have occurred because a scribe regarded the text as contradictory with another passage.

2.3. Remarks

If indeed a scribe deliberately omitted the corresponding clauses in the two passages, then it means two things. First, he regarded 2 Kgs 11:10 as conveying more reliable information than the two other passages (but we do not know why). Second, he did not want to leave a historical inaccuracy, or a contradiction, in the text. Does this tell us something of the authority of the text in his mind? This is possible, but more evidence would be necessary to substantiate this notion.

3. A clause omitted to avoid a repetition (1 Kgs 15:7)

3.1. An addition (v. 6)

In the notice concerning Abiyam's reign (1 Kgs 15:1-8), the MT contains a plus: "and there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all his days" (ומלחמה היתה בינ־רחבעם ובינ ירבעם כל־ימי חייו). This sentence seems out of place insofar as it does not concern Abiyam at all. Note that from a grammatical point of view, it is not possible to translate: "The war begun between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continued all the days of his life" as in the NRSV²². In addition, the sentence already appears in all the witnesses in 14:30.

Admittedly, a case could be made that the verse was present in the archetype:

1. It could have originally mentioned Abiyam instead of Rehoboam, as in some Masoretic manuscripts, then been modified (Abiyam > Rehoboam) under the influence of 14:30.

2. It could have been dropped accidentally by *homoioteleuton* in the LXX or its *Vorlage* due to the repetition of "all his days" in v. 5

²² Rightly criticized by M. Cogan, *I Kings* (AB; New York: 2000), p. 393; see also Barthélemy, p. 367, quoting the same understanding by Yéfet ben Ely.

and in v. 6²³, or deliberately since a translator or a copyist would have had good reasons to regard it as an addition inspired by 14:30 (if it mentioned Rehoboam) or by 15:7 (if it mentioned Abiyam).

However, even in this scenario, such a verse mentioning a war between Abiyam and Jeroboam in 15:6 would have been patently redundant with the end of the next verse; it is thus improbable that both sentences are primitive. The verses 14:29-31 and 15:23-24 suggest that the most likely place for such a historical statement is between the allusion to the royal annals and the mention of the burial place, that is, in 15:7. Moreover, the end of v. 7 is attested in all witnesses (except the Peshitta, see below), which is not the case for v. 6. In sum, v. 6 is most probably an addition, a clumsy repetition of 14:30, probably a gloss. Rehoboam could have been changed into Abiyam in some Masoretic manuscripts in order to make sense of this verse in its context, especially in light of the end of v. 7.

3.2. An omission (v. 7)

What is of interest for our present concern is that ironically, *this addition has prompted an omission further on in the text*. Indeed, the Syriac version has the same addition as the MT in 15:6 but in a slightly different form: “and there was war between Abiyam son of Rehoboam (ܐܒܝܝܡ ܒܢ ܪܚܒܘܡ) and Jeroboam all his days”. As we have seen, the same change occurs in some Masoretic manuscripts. This may be due to polygenesis (several scribes independently reacting in the same way in front of the same difficulty); we do not know if the Syriac translator was responsible himself for the change or if he used an already modified Hebrew text. In any case, this modification creates a doublet with v. 7b, which is now almost identical to v. 6 but the mention of Abiyam’s patronym, and the Syriac version omits v. 7b altogether, most probably

²³ So D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, vol. 1 (OBO 50/1; Fribourg/Göttingen: Editions universitaires/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), p. 367; S. J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC 12; Waco: Word Books, 1985), p. 186.

because of the redundancy. In other words, the translator took on the gloss in v. 6 but dismissed a similar, original verse a little further. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the scribe or translator reacted here as a text or redaction critic, thinking that it was most improbable that the author of this passage had used the same sentence twice in such a short space.

4. Clauses omitted in the wake of a transposition (1 Kgs 11:23-25 MT // 11:14 LXX)

4.1. The textual evidence

The story of Solomon's enemies in 1 Kgs 11:14-25 provides a case where a short passage has been transposed and several minor changes have arguably accompanied this process. In the MT, two notices concerning Solomon's enemies are separated by a flashback, so the outline of the text is:

1. Introduction of Hadad, an enemy to Solomon (v. 14)
2. Flashback: Hadad in David's time (v. 15-22)
3. Introduction of Rezon, an enemy to Solomon (v. 23-24)

In the Septuagint, the introductions of Hadad and Rezon are put together at the beginning of the passage [the verses are numerated after the NETS]:

1. Introduction of Solomon's enemies, Hadad [Hader] and Rezon (v. 14)
2. Flashback: Hadad in David's time (v. 15-24)
3. Final notice concerning Hadad (v. 23-24)

MT

¹⁴ Then the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite;

LXX

¹⁴ And the Lord raised up a satan against Salomon, Hader the Idumean

	(11.23) <i>and Hesrom son of Eeliadae, who was in Raemmath, Hadrazar, king of Souba, his master, (11.24) and men were gathered around him, and he was leader of a band, and he first captured Damasek, (11.25) And they were [LXX^L: he was] a satan to Israel all the days of Salomon.</i>
he was of the royal house in Edom.	And Hader the Idumean was of the seed of the kingdom of Idumea.
[¹⁵⁻²² Flashback: Hadad in David's time]	[Flashback: Hadad in David's time]
²³ God raised up an adversary against him,	
<i>Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. ²⁴ He gathered followers around him and became leader of a marauding band, after David slaughtered them; they went to Damascus, settled there, and made him king in Damascus.</i>	
²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.	
And [here is] the evil that Hadad did : he despised Israel and reigned over Aram.	²⁵ This was the evil that Hader did, and he was indignant with Israel, and he reigned in the land of Edom.

The tables below highlights minor textual differences in v. 23b-24, notably four minuses in the LXX. Note that two variants are probably due to a misreading:

- in v. 23 בָּרַח מֵאֶת has been read as a single word, perhaps with a confusion between ה and ה, hence ἐν Ραεμμαθ;
- in v. 24, וילכו ("they went") has been read וילכדו ("he seized").

MT	LXX
²³ God raised up an adversary against Solomon,	
Rezon son of Eliada, who <u>had fled from</u>	And Hesrom son of Eeliadae Who <u>was in Raemmath,</u>

his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah.

²⁴ He gathered followers around him
and became leader of a marauding
band,

when David slaughtered them;

they went to Damascus,

settled there,

and made him king in Damascus.

Hadrazar, king of Souba, his master,

and men were gathered around him,

and he was leader of a band,

and he first captured Damasek.

MT	LXX
²³ תִּקַּם אֱלֹהִים לוֹ שָׁטָן	¹⁴
אֶת־רִזּוֹן בְּוֹאֲלֵי־דַע	καὶ τὸν Εσρωμ υἱὸν Ελιαδαε
אֲשֶׁר בָּרַח מֵאֵת	τὸν ἐν Ραεμμαθ
הַדַּדְעֶזֶר מֶלֶךְ־צוֹבָה אֲדִינִי:	Αδραζαρ βασιλέα Σουβα κύριον αὐτοῦ
²⁴ וַיִּקְבֹּץ עָלָיו אֲנָשִׁים	καὶ συνηθροίσθησαν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἄνδρες
וַיְהִי שֶׁר־גָּדוֹד	καὶ ἦν ἄρχων συστρέμματος
בְּהֶלֶג דָּוִד אֲתָם	
וַיִּלְכּוּ דָמָשֶׁק	καὶ προκατελάβετο τὴν Δαμασεκ
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ	
וַיַּמְלִכּוּ בְּדָמָשֶׁק:	

4.2. The textual evolution

According to Schenker, the main difference between the MT and the LXX is that “Hadad becomes king of Edom in LXX, king of Aram in MT”.²⁴ The MT results from a reworking of the passage; the (*Vorlage* of the) LXX reflects an earlier literary edition.²⁵ Schenker thinks that a motive behind the reworking of the text is that the mention of Hadad as king of Edom (v. 25) in the LXX’s *Vorlage* seems to contradict 2 Kgs 8:20-22. The latter passage states that Edom revolted against Israel during Joram’s reign,

²⁴ A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l’histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14*, p. 113 (my translation).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

apparently for the first time since David. In Schenker's view, although it is tempting to think that the graphic confusion Edom/Aram occurred in 1 Kgs 11, especially in view of Hadad's name which would perfectly fit an Aramaean, it should be noted that his flight begins in Madian (v. 18), which better fits Edomite origins, and that Hadad comes back to *his* country (v. 21). Accordingly, the earliest redaction of v. 25 probably stated that Hadad was king of Edom not Aram.²⁶ The redactor behind the MT would have changed Edom into Aram in order to remove the contradiction with 2 Kgs 8. Schenker writes that this change "cannot be accidental, since the name Aram is so unexpected after the preceding narrative, 11:15-22, that such an error, had it been purely material, would have immediately been corrected."²⁷ This last argument seems difficult to accept, however, in view of the presence of uncorrected confusions between Edom and Aram in other texts, and because textual assimilations from a chapter to another do happen, but not systematically. From a historical point of view, A. Lemaire has defended the view that 1 Kgs 11 originally concerned only Aram,²⁸ although this hypothesis is not accepted by everybody and many commentators believe, like Schenker, that v. 25 originally mentioned Edom.²⁹

²⁶ The syntax of 1 Kgs 11:25 MT is difficult. Some scholars understand the clause *וְאֶת־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הָדָד* as if *וְאֶת* meant "beside", hence the usual translation "And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria." (KJV, JPS, see also NRS, NIV). Yet this is doubtful and the text is probably corrupted (GKC, §118m³). We should perhaps correct it after the LXX: *זֶה הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָדָד* (so BDB, p. 84). Hence the translation: "And he [Rezon] was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon. And here is the mischief that Hadad did: he abhorred Israel, and he reigned over Aram." Cf. the French translation: "Rezôn fut un adversaire pour Israël pendant toute la vie de Salomon. Le mal que fit Hadad: il détesta Israël, et il régna sur Aram" (TOB).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113-14 (my translation).

²⁸ A. Lemaire, "Les premiers rois araméens dans la tradition biblique", in P. M. M. Daviau, J. W. Wevers and M. Weigl (eds.), *The World of the Aramaeans*, vol. 1: *Biblical Studies in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (JSOTSup 324; Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), p. 130-4.

²⁹ E.g. Cogan, *I Kings*, p. 331.

More to the point, the reason that Schenker suggests for the transposition seems debatable: the MT would have separated the notices about Rezon and about Hadad because they were enemies; Solomon was attacked by Hadad, who, in turn, was attacked by Rezon. Schenker considers that the beginning of v. 23 means God raised up an adversary against Hadad, not against Solomon as most scholars understand.³⁰ This is an astute remark, but would really the narrator be concerned here by a divine intervention in the internal affairs of the Aramaeans? What is topical in this passage is the fact that God raises adversaries against Solomon; the possible quarrels between these adversaries seem beyond the point. Besides, in Schenker's textual scenario, the transposition should have been prompted by some feature in the *earliest* text, that is Hebrew model of the LXX in his view, and yet nothing in the Greek text indicates that Hadad and Rezon were enemies. In addition, Schenker does not provide any explanation for the small textual differences in v. 23-24.

Van Keulen defends the opposite scenario: "All evidence implies that MT (including the minuses over against the LXX) presents a more original order than the LXX, even if it does not represent the original narratives of Hadad and Rezon."³¹ This short narrative concerning Rezon seem to abruptly interrupt the account about Hadad, and this could be the motive behind its relocation in v. 14 in the *Vorlage* of the LXX, as Van Keulen notes.³² Cogan also notes that the location of the episode in the LXX is

³⁰ A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14*, p. 112-3.

³¹ P. S. F. van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Salomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11* (VTSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 237.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 234. Montgomery notes that the LXX "transferred" v. 23-25 "in abbreviated form" to the end of v. 14, and he writes: "was this passage omitted in the earliest form of LXX, and then subsequently introduced gloss-wise in parallelism with the other them of 'an adversary'?" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings*, p. 237). Stade thinks that the place of the episode in the LXX cannot be original and prefers its location in the MT, although he believes that v. 25b has been displaced in MT from the end of v. 22 (B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings. Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with Notes* [Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1904], p. 124).

“hardly original”; he thinks that “the similarity of the opening phrase, ‘YHWH/God raised up an adversary’ may be behind this dislocation”.³³ Such a scribal confusion seems less likely than a deliberate transposition as that envisaged by Van Keulen. Besides, I note that the MT seems to preserve a *Wiederaufnahme* in v. 23a and 25a, since the latter echoes the former:

²³ God raised up an adversary against him,
Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. ²⁴ *He gathered followers around him and became leader of a marauding band, after David slaughtered them; they went to Damascus, settled there, and made him king in Damascus.*

²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.

Therefore, the MT might preserve the trace of the earliest insertion of the notice concerning Rezon; this trace would have been lost in the LXX during the transposition. Other possible instances where a textual witness may preserve a *Wiederaufnahme* whereas another witness has lost it in the wake of a transposition have already been noted in Kings³⁴.

Admittedly, it could be argued that a *Wiederaufnahme* occurs in the LXX in v. 14, because the expression “Hadad the Idumean” is repeated before and after the Rezon notice:

¹⁴ And the Lord raised up a satan against Salomon,
Hader the Idumean ^(11.23)
and Hesrom son of Eeliadae, who was in Raemmath, Hadrazar, king of Souba, his master, ^(11.24) *and men were gathered around him, and he was leader of a band, and he first captured Damasek,* ^(11.25) *And they were [LXX^L: he was] a satan to Israel all the days of Salomon.*

And Hader the Idumean was of the seed of the kingdom of Idumea.

³³ Cogan, *I Kings*, p. 332.

³⁴ M. Richelle, “Revisiting 2 Kings 13.14-21 (MT and LXX): The Transposition of a Pericope and Multiple Literary Editions in 2 Kings”, in I. Himbaza (ed.), *Making the Biblical Text: Textual Studies in the Hebrew and the Greek Bible* (OBO 275; Fribourg/Göttingen, Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), p. 62-81, esp. 73.

But as Van Keulen observes, this is the transposition that caused the copyist to add a minor plus “and Hadad the Idumean” in v. 14b, as a summary repetition necessary to the flow of the text. By contrast, there was no need to repeat that Rezon was an adversary of Solomon in v. 25a, since this does not at all prepare readers for the next sentence, which only concerns Hadad. This is why the repetition of v. 23a and v. 25a can be regarded as a “real” *Wiederaufnahme*, indicating an insertion, whereas the summary repetition of v. 14 is simply a literary necessity.

In the hypothesis that the MT globally reflects an earlier stage than the *Vorlage* of the LXX in this passage, the four minor minus-es in v. 23-24 LXX may receive an explanation:³⁵

— The clause וַיִּקֶם אֱלֹהִים לוֹ שָׁטָן at the very beginning of v. 23 was deleted since it became redundant with the beginning of v. 14 when the transposition occurred.

— The clause בְּהִרְגֹּךְ דָּוִד אֹתָם (“when David slaughtered them”) is not very clear in the MT. To whom does the suffix refer? From a grammatical point of view, the most natural antecedent is the men gathered in a band according to the beginning of the verse, but this does not make sense in the context. This could have prompted a copyist to take the transposition as an opportunity to remove this clause.³⁶ (The real antecedent is probably “Zobah”, regarded as a collective; this could be an analepsis to 2 Sam 8:3-12, according to which David struck the Zobaites. The narrative thus explains how Hadad was still able to be an enemy to Israel in Solomon’s time: admittedly, David killed many soldiers, but Hadad recruited other men.)³⁷

— The clauses וַיִּמְלְכוּ בְּדִמְשֶׁק and וַיָּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ may have been omitted in the LXX because they were difficult to understand in their context. First, the plural clause וַיִּמְלְכוּ בְּדִמְשֶׁק is very surprising

³⁵ Space prevents me from discussing the differences between MT and LXX in the narrative about Hadad’s flight in Egypt; see Van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, p. 235-37; in his opinion, their analysis confirms the notion that a copist behind the LXX or its *Vorlage* made changes in order to clarify the text.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁷ This shows that the argument here is reversible: the clause may be regarded as a gloss added to clarify the text.

(“they reigned in Damascus”, as if all the men in the band were kings); in fact it is perhaps to be corrected to a *hifil* (וַיַּמְלִכֻהוּ), “they made him king”), which would fit the fact that Hadad is not explicitly named as the subject in the next sentence. Secondly, the plural in the two clauses is surprising after the singular προκατελάβετο in the LXX or וַיִּלְכְּדוּ in its *Vorlage*.³⁸

4.3. Remarks

Here we have encountered an example of a general difficulty in the textual criticism of Kings. In contrast with the Book of Jeremiah, the most striking differences between the Hebrew and the Greek texts do not lie mainly in many plusses scattered through one edition of the book; rather, the *same* material often appears in different places. For instance, most of the material found in the miscellanies in the LXX (e.g. 3 Kgdms 2.35a-o, 46a-l) also appears in the MT, albeit scattered in several passages of 1 Kgs 1-11; 14. However, scholars are divided with regard to the relative chronology of the editions of Kings. This makes the detection of omissions difficult, since some of them are linked to the transpositions.

If indeed the MT (globally) reflects an earlier textual stage in 1 Kgs 11:14-25, then we find in this case two kinds of omissions:

- the omission of v. 23aα (“God raised up an adversary against Solomon”) is due to the fact that the transposition made them redundant with v. 14a;
- small omissions in the rest of v. 23-24, made in the wake of the transposition, as if the redactor took this opportunity to remove details which were difficult to understand.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to present several cases that illustrate both methodological difficulties in the search of intentional omis-

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

sions in the transmission of the books of Kings, and several possible motives behind such changes. If our analysis of these variants is correct, the following conclusions can be proposed:

1. Causes for intentional omissions include not only ideological and theological censorship, but also the reluctance to leave in the text (a) unlikely information, (b) contradictions, or (c) simply repetitions. The cases (a) and (b) may tell us something about the hermeneutics of some copyists (e.g. the authority they acknowledged for the book of Kings) at some point during the transmission of the text, but a lot more evidence would be necessary to substantiate this notion. Moreover, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether intentional omissions due to this kind of reason and scattered in the Books of Kings are to be ascribed to the same copyist, so we cannot add up this kind of evidence. The case (c) may tell us something of the stylistic or literary sensitivities of the copyist, but the same remarks as above apply.

2. Some minuses can equally be explained by haplography or by intentional omission. From a methodological point of view, it could be argued that the explanation by accidental error is the simplest and most prudent one. But this approach should probably be reconsidered, especially when the basis for the haplography is tiny (e.g. an *homoioleuton* due to the repetition of small elements), or when a strong motive for removing the clause under scrutiny can be identified. It is noteworthy that J. Vroom, in a recent article inspired by a cognitive approach, states that haplography occurs neither with the repetition of individual letters, nor with long passages. In the latter case, where a sizable portion of text (e.g. an entire paragraph) is absent from a textual witness, Vroom suggests that “the possibility of an intentional omission should be considered, rather than haplography”.³⁹

Incidentally, the default preference for the explanation by accidental omission may explain why intentional omissions are not well documented by text critics, and, in turn, less favored as an explanation. Like the rule *lectio brevior potior*, this may have

³⁹ J. Vroom, “A Cognitive Approach to Copying Errors: Haplography and Textual Transmission of the Hebrew Bible”, *JSOT* 40 (2016), p. 259–79, esp. 278.

caused scholars to underestimate the role of omissions in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible.

3. Intentional omissions sometimes occurred in the wake of the reworking of a text, especially the transposition of a passage. The analysis here may be complicated in the context of a debate regarding the relative chronology of the two editions of Kings. In that case, at least two categories of omissions could occur: (a) the deleting of clauses rendered redundant by their new place after the relocation, and (b) “opportunistic” omissions of difficult clauses. In the process, a *Wiederaufnahme* can disappear, and thus also the trace of the insertion of a passage. Maybe this could provide, in some cases at least, a criterion to detect an omission: the textual witness preserving the *Wiederaufnahme* has a good chance of reflecting an earlier stage of the text.