

Athaliah sentenced to death: A text-critical analysis of 2 Kings 11:15

Summary

This article examines two textual variants in 2 Kgs 11:15 that are almost never mentioned, let alone discussed, in the scholarly literature. In this verse, the priest Yehoiada tells some soldiers what they should do with Athaliah, who has just entered the Temple and seen that the young Yoash has been crowned. The first part of v. 15 contains an enigmatic Hebrew expression, often translated as: “bring her out within/between/through the ranks.” It is argued here that LXX^B, Aquila, Theodotion and the Vulgate reflect an earlier form of the text, which read “bring her out of the precincts (of the temple).” The second textual difference entails a long plus in the Antiochene text (LXX^L) and some transpositions. The very few scholars who mention this problem think that LXX^L reflects here the Old Greek, and that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the latter represents the earliest form of the text. On the contrary, it is argued here that LXX^L constitutes here a rewritten, facilitating text.

Sommaire

Cet article examine deux variantes textuelles en 2 R 11 :15 qui ne sont presque jamais mentionnées, et encore moins discutées, dans la recherche. Dans ce verset, le prêtre Yehoiada dit à des soldats ce qu’ils doivent faire d’Athalie, qui vient d’entrer dans le Temple et a vu le jeune Yoash être couronné. La première partie du v. 15 contient une expression hébraïque énigmatique, souvent traduite par : « Faites-la sortir dans/entre/à travers les rangs ». On défend ici l’idée que LXX^B, Aquila, Theodotion et la Vulgate reflètent une forme plus ancienne du texte, où l’on pouvait lire: « Faites-la sortir des cours (du Temple) ». La seconde différence textuelle implique un long plus dans le texte antiochien (LXX^L) et quelques transpositions. Les très rares chercheurs qui font état de ce problème pensent que LXX^L reflète ici le Vieux Grec, et que la *Vorlage* hébraïque de ce dernier représente la forme la plus ancienne du texte. On montre ici, au contraire, que LXX^L constitue ici un texte réécrit et facilitant.

The story of Jehoiada’s coup, whereby he has Athaliah killed and Joash enthroned, is a lively narrative (2 Kgs 11). It is also a relatively coherent one, as demonstrated by J. Trebolle Barrera in an illuminating article just republished in an English and revised version, as part of his collected essays on the Books of Kings.¹ By paying attention to the Septuagint and especially to the Antiochene text (LXX^L), Trebolle Barrera has been able to bring clarity to this passage, especially to the complicated vv. 5-11.² In the revised version of his article, which

¹ J. Trebolle Barrera, “2 Kings 11 (MT/LXX^{B/L}): Textual Variants and Literary Unity of the Narrative”, in *idem*, *Textual and Literary Criticism of the Books of Kings: Collected Essays*, ed. A. Piquer Otero and P. A. Torijano (VTS 185; Leiden/Boston: Brill), 191-210, originally published as “La coronación de Joás (2 Re 11). Texto, narración e historia”, *Estudios Bíblicos* 41 (1983) 5-16.

² See also A. Schenker, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher: Der hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher* (OBO 199; Fribourg: Academic Press/Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 122-26, about LXX^L in v. 17.

incorporates analyses made in his book *Jehu y Joas*,³ the Spanish scholar also had recourse to the Antiochene text in his analysis of the difficult v. 15. Thanks to a long plus, this Greek witness provides here a clearer and fuller account than the other witnesses and the Masoretic text (MT) in particular. In his recent and excellent exegetical commentary, S. L. McKenzie also adopts the Antiochian form of this verse⁴. This article, however, argues that what LXX^L contains in v. 15 is a rewritten, facilitating account. In addition, it addresses another textual variant in this verse that is not noted by the aforementioned scholars and has never, in fact, been discussed in detail.⁵

1. A synoptic view of the main textual witnesses

Let us begin by identifying the main textual differences in 2 Kings 11:15.

1.1. Synoptic tables

At this point in the narrative, Athaliah realizes that the young Joash has been declared king in the temple, and she cries: “Treason! Treason!” (v. 14). The priest Jehoiada, who has supervised the entire process and notably recruited soldiers to protect Joash, now gives new orders to their leaders. The synoptic table below contains the text of the Hebrew and Greek main textual witnesses.⁶ To simplify references to the various parts of the verse in the course of what follows, I have divided the verse in a number of sections, each with a number indicated in the left-hand column.

Table 1: Synoptic view of the main textual witnesses (original languages)⁷

part	LXX ^L	LXX ^B	MT
(1)	καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς	καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς	וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם
	Ἐξαγάγετε αὐτήν	Ἐξάγαγε αὐτούς	הוֹצִיאוּ אֹתָהּ
	ἔσωθεν τῶν σαδηρωθ	ἔσωθεν τὸν ἀσηρώθ,	אֶל-מִבֵּית לְשָׁדְרָת
(2a)	καὶ εἰσαγάγετε αὐτήν ὀπίσωθεν οἴκου τῶν στρατηγῶν		
(2b)	καὶ θανατώσατε αὐτήν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ		
(2c)	καὶ μὴ θανατώσητε ἐν οἴκῳ Κυρίου		

³ J. Treballe Barrera, *Jehu y Joas: Textos y composición literaria en 2 Re 9-11* (Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo para la investigación bíblica, 1984), 179-181.

⁴ S. L. McKenzie, *1 Kings 16 – 2 Kings 16* (IECOT; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2018), 424.

⁵ I am very grateful to for his comments on an earlier version of this article. Any remaining error is my responsibility alone.

⁶ This passage is not represented in the Dead Sea scrolls.

⁷ For the edition of LXX^B, see A. E. Brooke, N. McLean, and H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Old Testament in Greek*, vol. 2, Part II (Londres: Cambridge University Press, 1930); for the edition of LXX^L, see Fernández Marcos, N. and J. R. Busto Saiz, *El Texto Antioqueno de la Biblia Griega. II. 1-2 Reyes* (TECC; Madrid: Instituto de Filología del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992).

(3)	Καὶ ἔσται, πᾶς ὁ εἰσπορευόμενος ὀπίσω αὐτῆς	καὶ ὁ εἰσπορευόμενος ὀπίσω αὐτῆς	וְהָיָה אֲחֶרֶיהָ
	ἀποθανεῖται	θανάτῳ θανατωθήσεται ρομφαίᾳ·	הָמָת בְּחֶרֶב
(4)		ὅτι εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς	כִּי אָמַר הַכֹּהֵן
		Καὶ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ ἐν οἴκῳ Κυρίου.	אֶל־תּוֹמַת בֵּית יְהוָה

Table 2: Synoptic view of the main textual witnesses (English)

part	LXX ^L	LXX ^B	MT
(1)	And he told them	And he told them	And he told them
	“Bring her out	“Bring them out	“Bring her out
	within the σαδηρωθ	within the ἀσηρώθ	within (?) the ranks
(2a)	and bring her in behind the house of the officials		
(2b)	and kill her by the sword		
(2c)	and do not kill her in the house of the Lord.		
(3)	And it will be, whoever enters following her	And anyone enters following her	And anyone who follows her,
	will die.”	will certainly die by the sword.”	kill by the sword.”
(4)		For the priest said:	For the priest told himself:
		“And let her not die in the house of the Lord.”	“She must not be killed in the house of Yhwh.”

1.2. The main textual differences

A comparison between the columns of the tables above shows that the most potentially significant differences are the following:

- In part 1, the order given by Yehoiada begins with “bring her out” (addressed to one person) in MT (וְהָיָה אַחֶרֶיהָ) and in LXX^L (Εξαγάγετε αὐτήν), but with “bring them out” (addressed to a group) in LXX^B (Εξάγαγε αὐτούς). Because the latter reading is the furthest away from MT, it might be tempting to apply Paul de Lagarde’s rule and conclude that it represents the Old Greek here; the other Greek reading would then be an assimilation towards MT. However, Ἐξάγαγε αὐτούς (“bring them out”) is clearly a mistake: it does not any make sense after καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς (“he told them”). One expects an order given to a group of people, and however one understands this order to “bring out” somebody, the object must be “her” (Athaliah), not “them”. It is easy to explain Ἐξάγαγε as a mistake for Ἐξαγάγετε: the haplography of τε was prompted by the visual resemblance between τε and γε in uncials. As for αὐτούς, it is most probably an assimilation to the first occurrence of this word in the

same verse, just two words before. In the *Vaticanus* manuscript, a later hand rightly corrected these words in the margin.

- Still in part 1, σαδηρωθ in LXX^L can be explained as transliteration of שָׁדֶרֶת (MT), but not ἁσηρώθ in LXX^B. It is difficult to argue that ἁσηρώθ is a corruption of σαδηρωθ, because the confusion between σαδ- and ἁσ- is far from evident. This is not impossible, but perhaps a better explanation could be found. (As we shall see, ἁσηρώθ may well reflect a Hebrew *Vorlage* which provides a good meaning in the sentence, which would be a surprising coincidence if it was a corruption.)
- Compared to TM and LXX^B, LXX^L has a long plus (2a to 2c), but also a minus (4) which happens to be very similar to 2b, except that 4 is introduced by כִּי אָמַר הַכֹּהֵן. In addition, ῥομφαία appears in two different places, 2b or 3. Because an elaborate transposition is involved (whatever its direction), even two transpositions, what we are facing here cannot be chalked up to a scribal mistake: a deliberate change occurred. In particular, it would not be sufficient to argue that LXX^B lost 2a to 2c due to a homoioarcton prompted by the repetition of καὶ at the beginning of 2a and of 3. That would explain neither the transposition of 2b to 4 with a new introductory sentence (ὅτι εἶπεν ὁ ἱερεὺς), nor the transposition of ῥομφαία, nor even the absence of ἔσται after καὶ in LXX^B since this word would not have been part of the text that was skipped.

This very preliminary enquiry shows that the last two textual differences (or even set of differences, in the second case) require a thorough examination. And yet, as we shall see, they are almost never mentioned, let alone discussed, in the scholarly literature.

2. A puzzling hapax in MT and a long-forgotten variant in LXX^B

Before addressing the first problem, it is necessary to point out a problem of Hebrew philology.

2.1. A surprising Hebrew expression

The turn of phrase in which שָׁדֶרֶת appears, namely אֶל־מִבֵּית ל-, is a *hapax* and, whatever meaning one can reasonably ascribe to it, it is very difficult to understand it in its context. Because מִבֵּית sometimes means “within”,⁸ some exegetes translate אֶל־מִבֵּית ל- as “to the interior of”, that is, “into” or “within”.⁹ However, in addition to the fact that this semantic inference is uncertain, the resulting order seems inconsistent with the rest of the verse: Jehoiada wants Athaliah to get out of the temple, not to join the ranks of soldiers surrounding Joash.

Some other scholars assume that the meaning of אֶל־מִבֵּית ל- is the same as that of לְמִבֵּית ל- in Numbers 18:7:¹⁰

⁸ HALOT, 124.

⁹ E.g. A. Klostermann, *Die Bücher Samuelis und der Könige* (KKHSAT 3; Nördlingen: Beck, 1887), 431 (“nach dem Inneren der Sederoth”), although he does not translate שָׁדֶרֶת, or more recently M. A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: John Knox, 2007), 341.

¹⁰ J. A. Montgomery and H. S. Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1951), 425-426; J. Gray, *I and II Kings* (OTL; Philadelphia: SCM, 1970³), 576.

וְאַתָּה וּבְנֶיךָ אֶתְּךָ תַּשְׁמְרוּ אֶת־כְּהֻנַּתְכֶם לְכָל־דְּבַר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וּלְמִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת וְעַבְדְּתֶם עֲבֹדַת מִתְּנֶה

“But you and your sons with you shall diligently perform your priestly duties in all that concerns the altar and the area behind the curtain.” (NRSV)

However, in this verse, *לְמִבֵּית ל־* means “regarding what is behind:” the preposition *ל* has the same function as in the preceding expression, *לְכָל־דְּבַר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ*; we cannot ascribe the same meaning to *אֶל־* in *לְמִבֵּית ל־אֶל־*.

Yet another translation is “out (of the ranks).”¹¹ Perhaps this rests on the assumption that *אֶל־מִבֵּית ל־* means “out of the interior of”, but this would entail neglecting *אֶל־*.¹² Moreover, it does not fit the context because Athaliah is obviously not initially standing among the soldiers; it is far-fetched to imagine that “ranks” designate here the people watching the scene, since it already is used about the soldiers in the same passage (v. 8).

Finally, some commentators understand “between the ranks” or “through the ranks,”¹³ the idea being that Athaliah is to be escorted by soldiers, walking between lines of them. Perhaps this idea is inspired by the fact that *מִבֵּית* means, in a couple of instances, “between.”¹⁴ However, it requires a significant leap of faith to believe that *אֶל־מִבֵּית ל־* means exactly the same as *מִבֵּית*, and this notion seems rather to be an *ad hoc* solution.

In the end, although the construction does not violate any grammatical rule, it is unique and problematic in its context: it is “awkward,” as a commentator notes.¹⁵ As a result, some scholars, like C. F. Burney,¹⁶ regard the expression as a gloss. C. Levin thinks that it is a specific addition made by a redactor who took up the lexicon of v. 5 while giving it another meaning: the ranks of soldiers do not serve to protect the king anymore, they serve as a “sentencing ceremony” (*Verurteilungszereemoniell*) whereby anyone who enters the ranks is to be killed; this redactor did not pay attention to the fact that this creates a problem with the immediate context.¹⁷ However, if we remove v. 15a (or even the entirety of v. 15; Levin regards it as made of two successive additions), then the resulting text is incomplete. Indeed, it becomes difficult to account for the movement described in v. 16: “So they laid hands on her; *she went through the horses’ entrance to the king’s house*, and there she was put to death” (NRSV). Right after reading that Athaliah has been seized by soldiers, it is surprising to read that she did this walk if it has not been stated before, as it is in v. 15a, that she is to move from the inside of the temple

¹¹ As in some modern French versions, for instance : “Faites-la sortir des rangs” (*Traduction Œcuménique de la Bible*) ; “Faites-la sortir en dehors des rangs” (*Nouvelle Bible Segond*). See perhaps also the Kings James version: “ha~~v~~e her forth without the ranges.”

¹² Or it may be that these translations presuppose an emendation of *מִבֵּית* into *מִחוּץ* (see later).

¹³ O. Thenius, *Die Bücher der Könige* (KHAT; Leipzig: Hirzel, 1873²), 336; A. B. Ehrlich, *Ranglossen zur hebräischen Bibel: Textkritisches, Sprachliches und Sachliches*, vol. 7 (Leipzig: Hinrich, 1914), 306; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday, 1988), 125; CTAT 1, 398; McKenzie, *1 Kings 16 – 2 Kings 16*, 427; see also the NRSV: “between the ranks.”

¹⁴ HALOT, 129.

¹⁵ T. R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco: 1985), 142.

¹⁶ C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings with an Introduction and an Appendix* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 312.

¹⁷ C. Levin, *Der Sturz der Königin Atalja: Ein Kapitel zur Geschichte Judas im 9. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 105; Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk GmbH, 1982), 49-50.

to the outside escorted by soldiers. In addition, relegating difficult sentences to the status of glosses should always be a last resort solution, and before that we should also be able to explain the textual variants, which is the purpose of this article.

2.2. A long-forgotten textual problem

The key to the problem, in my view, lies in the variant that immediately follows: as we have seen, where LXX^L reads τῶν σαδηρωθ, which is a transliteration of שְׁדָרֶת, LXX^B has τὸν ἄσηρωθ. This was noted by B. Stade in his critical notes on Kings, but he did not make anything of it: he just wrote that this reading and that of the Targum “try to render” MT.¹⁸ However, P. Haupt added a brief paragraph, in brackets, to Stade’s notes, as he often did as general editor of *The Sacred Books of the Old Testament* (often known as the *Polychrome Bible*). Haupt hypothesized that the word ἄσηρωθ was a transliteration of הַצִּירוֹת (“courts”).¹⁹ In his view, הַצִּירוֹת was the earliest wording, and it was changed to שְׁדָרֶת due to a miswriting. In turn, this prompted a copyist to replace מַחוּץ with מִבֵּית. In sum, Haupt proposed reading אֶל-מַחוּץ לְהַצִּירוֹת, noting that the same turn of phrase (-לֵ מַחוּץ) appears in Lev 4:12; Num 5:3-4; Deut 23:11. This was supported by the Vulgate, which reads *extra consepta templi* (“outside the precinct of the temple”), and, to a lesser extent, by the Syriac version (ܡܚܘܝܬܐ). It makes perfect sense in the context: the priest Jehoiada orders the leaders of the army to bring Athaliah out of the precincts, because, as v. 15b, he thinks that she must not die in the area of the Temple.

Only two years after the publication of Stade’s book, the first edition of the *Biblia Hebraica*²⁰ included Haupt’s emendation as a proposed reading in the critical apparatus. Before editing the Books of Kings in the *Biblia Hebraica*, R. Kittel had written the volume on Chronicles in the *Polychrome Bible*; he was certainly aware of Stade’s own volume in the same series.²¹ Later, this suggestion was removed from the apparatus; it is absent from the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Few modern versions reflect any awareness of it, or simply of the Vulgate reading: we read “outside the precincts” in the Jerusalem Bible, and “out from the precincts” in a footnote in the NRSV, where it is mentioned as an alternative translation. As a matter of fact, the textual problem has never been really discussed in scholarly analyses of the verse since the time of Haupt. The fact that Rahlfs adopted the reading τῶν σαδηρωθ in his widely used edition of the Septuagint may have contributed to the fact that most exegetes lost sight of the alternative reading, τὸν ἄσηρωθ. In his commentary, Montgomery briefly ruled out the emendation מַחוּץ: in his view, the word “outside” in the Vulgate and in the Peshitta was due to the influence of some corrupted manuscripts of the Septuagint containing ἔξωθεν instead of ἔσωθεν.²² This explanation was taken up in Barthélemy’s *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*,²³ which did not discuss the variant reading ἄσηρωθ either. Würthwein was content

¹⁸ B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings: Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with Notes* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), 237.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 237.

²⁰ *Biblia Hebraica*, Pars 1, ed. R. Kittel (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1905), 525. The publication date on the front page is 1905, but the book apparently came out only in 1906 (see <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/bible-society-and-biblical-studies/scholarly-editions/hebrew-bible/bhk/>).

²¹ R. Kittel, *The Books of Chronicles* (The Sacred Books of the Old Testament; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895).

²² Montgomery and Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings*, 426.

²³ *CTAT* 1, 398.

to mention, in a footnote, that some scholars translate “ausserhalb der Vorhöfe”, although he himself translates “führt sie hinaus durch die Reihen hindurch.”²⁴ Hobbs wrongly assumed that ἀσῆρῶθ means “asheras.”²⁵ Treballe Barrera did not mention the variant.²⁶ To the best of my knowledge, only in McKenzie’s recent commentary does Haupt’s proposal resurface; it is mentioned as “attractive” but not adopted, with no particular reason stated.²⁷

In what follows, I will discuss Haupt’s suggestion in detail.

2.3. The existence of a Hebrew Vorlage containing the word הַצִּירוֹת

First of all, more evidence can be marshalled to support the notion that ἀσῆρῶθ is a transliteration of הַצִּירוֹת. The same transliteration appears in Numb 11:35; 12:16; 33:17; Deut 2:23; it is also indirectly attested by the Old Latin in 2 Kgs 13:17.²⁸ The alternative explanation would be to regard ἀσῆρῶθ as a corruption of σαδῆρῶθ, but as already noted, the confusion between σαδ- and ἀσ- is not evident. Note that the very rare publications which mentioned and ruled out Haupt’s reconstruction of the text (Montgomery’s commentary, *CTAT*) only discussed the prepositional locution; they did not explain the reading ἀσῆρῶθ. Moreover, it would be an extraordinary coincidence if ἀσῆρῶθ was a corruption and yet constitute a possible reflection of a Hebrew *Vorlage* which makes excellent sense in the context.

Furthermore, Aquila and Theodotion read τῶν περιβόλων.²⁹ The word περιβόλος designates almost always either the precinct of the temple³⁰ or the wall enclosing it.³¹ The choice of περιβόλος can hardly be explained by a Hebrew text of 2 Kgs 11:15 containing שְׁדָרֶת (“ranks”); rather, it confirms the existence of a Hebrew text containing הַצִּירוֹת (“courts”).³² The use of הַצִּיר to designate the court of the Tabernacle or the court(s) of Solomon’s temple is well attested in the Hebrew Bible, notably in Kings (1 Kgs 7:12; 21:5; 23:12).³³

²⁴ E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige. 1. Kön. 17–2. Kön. 25* (ATD 11.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984), 345.

²⁵ Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 135.

²⁶ This is apparently because Treballe Barrera’s table (“2 Kings 11 (MT/LXX^{B/L},” 207) contains a mistake: he has σαδῆρῶθ both in the LXX^L and in the LXX^B columns. This mistake can be traced back to his book *Jehu y Joas*, 180.

²⁷ McKenzie, *1 Kings 16 – 2 Kings 16*, 427 (see also the translation, 424).

²⁸ J. Treballe Barrera, “Textual Criticism and the Literary Structure and Composition of 1-2 Kings/3-4 Kingdoms: the Different Sequence of Literary Units in MT and LXX,” in *idem, Textual and Literary Criticism of the Books of Kings*, 293-96, previously published as. See also M. Richelle, “Revisiting 2 Kings 13.14-21 (MT and LXX): The Transposition of a Pericope and Multiple Literary Editions in 2 Kings,” in *Making the Biblical Text: Textual Studies in the Hebrew and the Greek Bible*, ed. I. Himbaza (OBO 275; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 62-81.

²⁹ F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum graecorum in totum Vetus Testamentum fragmenta*, vol. 1: *Prolegomena. Genesis-Esther* (London: Clarendon Press, 1875), 675.

³⁰ Si 50:2; 1 M 14:48; 2 M 1:15; 6:4; 4 M 4:11.

³¹ Is 54:12; Ezek 40:5; 42:20.

³² As it happens, none of the occurrences where περιβόλος designates the temple precinct has a Hebrew equivalent since 1, 2 and 4 M were written in Greek and because Si 50:2 does not appear in the preserved Hebrew fragments of Ben Sira. It is nonetheless clear that it cannot be a rendering of שְׁדָרֶת but corresponds well to הַצִּירוֹת.

³³ See plenty of instances in BDB, p. 347. It should be noted that Aquila and Theodotion also have πρὸς τοὺς περιβόλους in 2 Kgs 11:8, where LXX^B has εἰς ἀῆδῶθ, LXX^L has εἰς τὰ σαδῆρῶθ, and MT has אֶל-הַשְּׂדָרֹת. Could it be that here too, πρὸς τοὺς περιβόλους come from a *Vorlage* containing הַצִּירוֹת? Contrary to what happens in v. 15, the latter reading does not have the support of other textual witnesses. It is clear from the immediate context that שְׂדָרֶת is the correct reading in v. 8, whereas הַצִּירוֹת does not make sense at all in this verse, so nothing in the same context could have prompted a copyist to change שְׂדָרֶת into הַצִּירוֹת. The only possible explanation would be

Therefore, two distinct readings are represented in Hebrew manuscripts: שְׂדֵרֶת (in MT) and הַצִּירוֹת (presupposed by LXX^B, Aquila, Theodotion, and the Vulgate). In Greek, they were transliterated respectively into σαδηρωθ and ἀσηρώθ.

A preliminary scenario already presents itself: the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek contained the word that is, among the Greek readings, the furthest away from MT (in keeping with Paul de Lagarde's rule), namely הַצִּירוֹת, and it was transliterated into ἀσηρώθ by the Greek translator. Later, during a revision of the Greek text designed to conform it to MT, a reviser noticed the reading of the latter, that is, שְׂדֵרֶת, and thus changed the transliteration into σαδηρωθ, which was all the more natural because the same transliteration occurs in v. 8 (as attested by LXX^L). But before reaching any definitive conclusion regarding the textual development, it is necessary to broaden our perspective and discuss the entire expression in which the word appears.

2.4. Haupt's reconstruction of the archetype

Haupt posited that the archetype of the expression was אֶל־מַחוּץ לְהַצִּירוֹת, reflected by *extra consepta templi* in the Vulgate (the last word serves to clarify what precincts are concerned). This reconstruction of the archetype seems to me a plausible hypothesis, provided that one is able to show how the various textual readings stemmed out of it.

In this regard, let us recall Haupt's own scenario: שְׂדֵרֶת was a miswriting of הַצִּירוֹת, and once the change הַצִּירוֹת >> שְׂדֵרֶת had taken place, it prompted another modification: מַחוּץ >> מִבֵּית, hence the MT reading. He did not explain why, but presumably the reason would be that אֶל־מַחוּץ לְהַצִּירוֹת, which means "bring her outside of the ranks," does not fit the context: Athaliah was not standing between the ranks of soldiers, so she cannot go out of their ranks. Hence the possible desire to change this to "bring her within the ranks". This scenario has a weakness: it does not account for the existence of the reading ἔσωθεν τὸν ἀσηρώθ (LXX^B).

As a matter of fact, the two changes suggest by Haupt could also have occurred for other reasons.

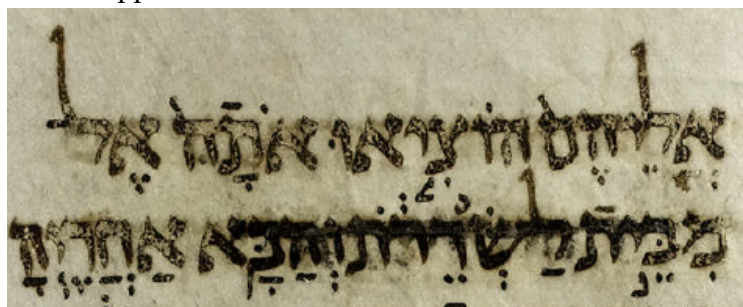
(1) The change מַחוּץ >> מִבֵּית may be explained as follows. Because in v. 15b, Yehoiada says: "Let her not be killed in the house (בֵּית) of the Lord," a reader or a copyist reasoned that the instructions given by this priest in v. 15a must have included the order to take Athaliah "from (or out of) the house" (מִבֵּית).³⁴ This word may have been first written as a marginal note; later, it crept into the text because a copyist thought that it was a correction for the word (מַחוּץ) that began with the same preposition. This temptation to simply read "out of the house" in this sentence is attested in the parallel verse in Chronicles, where the Septuagint (LXX^B and LXX^L) simply has ἐκτὸς τοῦ οἴκου (more on this below).

that this change occurred due to an assimilation towards v. 15, where הַצִּירוֹת was already present. This would be yet another hint that the latter reading existed in some Hebrew manuscripts in v. 15. Alternatively, the equivalent assimilation of v. 8 towards v. 15 could have occurred in Greek, with the word περίβολος.

³⁴ Alternatively, it is perhaps due to a misreading prompted by the visual resemblance between these words in the Jewish (square) script. In the Jewish script attested in most Dead Sea scrolls, *yod* and *waw* are very similar; also, if *waw* was written very close to the preceding *beth* and wrongly regarded as a part of the same letter (a leg), the result resembled a *heth*; similarly, if it was written very close to the *taw*, the result would resemble a *tet*.

(2) The change $\text{לְהַצְרֹת} >> \text{לְשַׁדְּרֹת}$ could result from an assimilation to v. 8, where לְשַׁדְּרֹת already appears in a very similar sequence of words: compare $\text{וְהִבָּא אֶל־הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת יוֹמָת}$ (v. 8) and $\text{לְשַׁדְּרֹת וְהִבָּא אַחֲרֶיהָ הָמָת}$ (v. 15). The latter was originally $\text{לְהַצְרֹת וְהִבָּא אַחֲרֶיהָ הָמָת}$. Such assimilations are omnipresent in the textual transmission of Kings. In addition to the formal similarities between the verses, a copyist may have been prepared by v. 8 to read v. 15 as reporting that Athaliah did what was forbidden in v. 8, that is, approaching (and even entering) the ranks of the soldiers. (This connection has been made by some commentators.)³⁵ That would explain why she must receive the punishment announced in v. 15, that is, to be killed.

Yet another factor that may have helped the change is the visual/aural resemblance between the words לְשַׁדְּרֹת and לְהַצְרֹת . It is even stronger when the former is written with a definite article (לַהַשְּׂדֵרֹת), as in some Masoretic manuscripts.³⁶ The resemblance לַה and לֵה , the phonological/aural proximity between the sifflants צ and ש , and the similarity between רוֹת and רֹת (or even identity, if both words were written in defective spelling) would make the confusion easy. This definite article, which is a grammatical anomaly in v. 15, most probably betrays an assimilation towards אֶל־הַשְּׂדֵרוֹת in v. 8. Interestingly, it seems that the Aleppo codex originally bore לַהַשְּׂדֵרֹת in v. 8, and was later corrected into לְשַׁדְּרֹת . While the manuscript now has the latter reading, a look at the corresponding folio³⁷ immediately reveals that the ink in the expression where the word appears is much darker than in the rest of the folio.



In fact, while the ink of all the surrounding words is fading, that of the words $\text{מִבֵּית לְשַׁדְּרֹת}$ וְהִבָּא is darker. More precisely, this concerns the entire word לְשַׁדְּרֹת but only the end of מִבֵּית and the beginning of וְהִבָּא . Yet reinking a manuscript is not something one does for just three words. A closer look shows that the word לְשַׁדְּרֹת is a *correction*; there are traces of different letters underlying it. Although it is not possible to identify all of the latter, the beginning of the underlying word was apparently לֵה .³⁸

³⁵ Symon Patrick, *A Commentary upon the Two Books of Kings* (London: Ric. Chiswell at the Rose and Crown in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1705), 455, writes about the ranks in v. 15: "through which they had suffered her to come, being a Queen, contrary to the Order, v. 8." See also Klostermann, *Die Bücher Samuelis und der Könige*, 431.

³⁶ B. Kennicott, *Vetus testamentum hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1776), 662.

³⁷ Images from Wikimedia commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Aleppo-HighRes2-Neviim4b-Kings2.pdf&page=20>, retrieved 12/30/2020.

³⁸ Underlying ל and the upper right extremity of ש , we can see three strokes: two are vertical strokes, the other, to the left, is a small curve. The two strokes to the left may belong to a ה of which remains the right leg and the left shoulder (the lower part of the left leg has faded). Between the two **rightmost** upper extremities of the ש , one can see a horizontal stroke, which may be the **leftmost** part of the horizontal, upper stroke of this ה . As for the very first vertical stroke, to the right, it may be a remnant of the original downstroke of the ל . When the scribe



This underlying word was probably להשדרת, as in a few other Masoretic manuscripts.³⁹ This is consistent with the *masora parva*, which states that שדרת, in defective spelling, is attested twice in the Hebrew Bible; the only other instance of this spelling is 1 Kgs 6:9. If 2 Kgs 11:15 did not contain an occurrence of שדרת, then this would be inconsistent with the *masora parva*. Moreover, this explains why the entire word, and the beginning of the following one, had to be corrected: the replacement of לה with ל created a general shift in the letters.

In sum, it seems that the first hand of Aleppo codex wrote להשדרת in v. 15, an error caused by the influence of v. 8, and that a second hand corrected it into לשדרת. And the reading להשדרת, which is a grammatical anomaly in v. 15, probably betrays the fact that an assimilation towards אֶל־הַשְּׁדָרוֹת in v. 8 had occurred beforehand. Perhaps v. 15 originally read לשדרת and the assimilation simply consisted in the erroneous addition of a definite article. But, as we have seen, there were several possible motives for another assimilation, from להצרות to להשדרת.

At the very least, the Aleppo codex contains a hint that copyists were liable to assimilate v. 15 towards v. 8. In addition, while the change הַצָּרוֹת >> שְׁדָרוֹת is perfectly plausible in itself for the reasons we have seen above, the Aleppo codex and a couple of other Masoretic manuscripts show that the reading להשדרת existed, and the change להצרות(ו) >> להשדרת was even likely to happen.

Now if, starting from the archetype אֶל־מַחוּץ לְהַצָּר(ו)ת, the change (1) occurred before (2) (see above), then a scenario obtains which accounts for both the LXX^B and LXX^L readings:

- (1) The change מַחוּץ >> מִבֵּית led to אֶל־מִבֵּית לְהַצָּר(ו)ת, which explains ἔσωθεν τὸν ἀσκηρῶθ in LXX^B. This change was not a great move, because the resulting expression (“bring her out within the courts”) does not fit the context well; but this kind of clumsy alteration sometimes happens when a copyist intervenes occasionally by changing only one word and not paying much attention to the context. Note that in Greek also, ἔσωθεν τὸν ἀσκηρῶθ is unclear, but the translator did not understand its meaning anyway, as evidenced by the fact that he transliterated the last word.
- (2) Then the change הַצָּר(ו)ת >> שְׁדָרוֹת led to אֶל־מִבֵּית לְשְׁדָרוֹת, which is the MT reading, or, more precisely, the reading in virtually all the Masoretic manuscripts, notably the Leningrad codex. Subsequently, the Greek text was harmonized towards this Hebrew reading by adapting the transliteration of the last word, hence ἔσωθεν τῶν σαδηρωθ in LXX^L.

corrected the word, he penned this downstroke slightly more to the left in order to cover the space previously occupied by the first underlying letters.

³⁹ Kennicott, *Vetus testamentum hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*, 662.

This scenario presents the advantage that all its stages are attested, whether directly or in translation, by manuscript evidence, from the archetype (reflected in the Vulgate) to an intermediary stage (reflected in LXX^B) to MT (also reflected in LXX^L).

The only reading that still need to be accounted for, in the present scenario, is **וְהָיָה** in the Peshitta. It can be explained as follows: once the reading **לְשַׁדְּרֹת אֶל־מִבֵּית** was attested in some manuscripts, it proved enigmatic to readers and copyists, and the context (v. 15b) created a recurring temptation for copyists or translators to prefer the understanding that v. 15a contained an order to bring Athaliah *out of* the place, even though the resulting movement was still unclear. Hence a change of the prepositional locution **אֶל־מִבֵּית** into **אֶל־מַחוּץ**, and thus a partial return to the oldest reading, but a partial one only: this is why one finds the reading **לְשַׁדְּרֹת אֶל־מַחוּץ** in a Masoretic manuscript.⁴⁰ The latter is hardly the sole remnant, among all the medieval manuscripts, of an old reading; more realistically, it is a spontaneous change. A similar Hebrew reading might lie behind **וְהָיָה** in the Peshitta, unless it is the Syriac translator himself who was responsible for the same inflection in the meaning of the expression.⁴¹

2.5. Could the MT reading be the archetype?

Methodologically speaking, it is necessary to explore also the competing scenario: **אֶל־מִבֵּית** (MT) as the archetype, and all the other readings deriving from it.

To begin with, MT would be identical to the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek, here represented by **ἔσωθεν τῶν σαδερῶθ** (LXX^L). Then the change **אֶל־מִבֵּית** >> **אֶל־מַחוּץ** could be explained as in the last paragraph of the previous section (2.4), and, again, this would explain the Syriac reading. As for the change **לְשַׁדְּרֹת** >> **לְהַצִּיר(ו)ת**, it could result from a correction of the order given by Jehoiada in v. 15a in light of v. 15b, which states that Athaliah must not be killed in the temple in his view. This copyist would have reasoned that the order given by the priest consisted in bringing Athaliah outside of the courts (of the temple) rather than “into the ranks.” Hence, finally, the *Vorlage* of the Vulgate (**לְהַצִּיר[ו]ת אֶל־מַחוּץ**).

This hypothesis is attractive at first, but on close examination it runs into problems. First, the choice of words is a bit surprising: if a revision of v. 15a had really been inspired by v. 15b, then the copyist would have likely taken up the same vocabulary and written “bring her outside of the house” (i.e. the house of Yhwh), not “bring her outside the courts.” This is exactly the solution that we find in the Greek version of the parallel verse in Chronicles: while the MT text is identical to 2 Kgs 11:15 (**אֶל־מִבֵּית הַשְּׁדָרוֹת**), the Septuagint (LXX^B and LXX^L) simply has **ἐκτὸς τοῦ οἴκου**. The translator, or perhaps even a copyist responsible for his Hebrew *Vorlage*,⁴² did not know what to make of **הַשְּׁדָרוֹת** (perhaps he regarded it as a mistake); so he stuck to **מִבֵּית**, who makes perfect sense in the context (he also ignored **אֶל** or decided that **אֶל־**

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* (manuscript 1).

⁴¹ Alternatively, if one prefers Haupt’s scenario described *supra*, then these readings would correspond to the second stage in his hypothesis, after the change **לְשַׁדְּרֹת** >> **לְהַצִּיר(ו)ת**.

⁴² This is all the more plausible **because** the Chronicler changed **אֶל־הַשְּׁדָרוֹת** (2 Kgs 11:8) into **אֶל־הַבַּיִת** (2 Chr 23:7).

מְבִית was equivalent to מְבִית.⁴³ By contrast, אֶל־מַחֲוִין לְהַצְרוֹת corresponds to the kind of literary precision one expects of a writer telling a lively story and making efforts to have the characters speak in an “authentic” way in the setting of the scene; it is less expected of a copyist who is making a specific emendation of the first part of a verse in light of its last part. In a word, the change שְׁדָרַת >> הַצְרוֹת is far from natural and difficult to explain here.

Second, it is an intriguing coincidence that the correction changed שְׁדָרַת into a word in which most letters bear some visual and/or aural similarity with its letters (הַצְרוֹת); this interchange between resembling words in the textual evidence usually betrays some scribal mistake rather than an attempt to solve a problem in the substance of the text. If the change occurred the other way around (שְׁדָרַת >> הַצְרוֹת) due to a simple assimilation, as was argued in 2.4, then the resemblance between the words is not surprising: it might have facilitated the assimilation.

Third, the scenario does not account for the apparition of the reading ἔσωθεν τὸν ἀσκηώθ (LXX^B). One would need to explain it as the Greek rendering of the second stage in another development: (a) אֶל־מְבִית לְשְׁדָרַת >> (b) אֶל־מְבִית לְהַצְרוֹת >> (c) אֶל־מַחֲוִין לְהַצְרוֹת. But there is no reason why a copyist would have changed (a) into (b); replacing לְשְׁדָרַת with לְהַצְרוֹת makes sense only if the latter word is preceded by אֶל־מַחֲוִין.

Fourth, the most important problem of this scenario lies in the implausibility of the reading that it presupposes as the earliest text. It is not just that אֶל־מְבִית לְשְׁדָרַת is *difficilior*; it is problematic, as we have seen. To put it another way, it is unlikely that a writer would have composed such a sentence, in this context, in the first place. It is, however, perfectly plausible that a clumsy copyist would have modified the text in such a way that it became problematic, not at the level of the grammar, but at the level of the coherence of the scene; copyists are far more liable to make such blunders than writers, as they do not always have in mind the full picture of the narrative that they copy.

In the end, I regard the other scenario (cf. above, in 2.4) as more probable: the archetype was אֶל־מַחֲוִין לְהַצְרוֹת(ו).

3. A long plus in LXX^L

The other important textual divergence to address is the fact that LXX^L contains a long plus in the middle of the verse (part 2) and a minus at the end of the verse (cf. part 4), compared to MT and LXX^B. In fact, this minus seems to appear in a slightly different form at the end of the long plus (part 2c). Before discussing the textual history of this part of the verse, it is worth noting that these differences have significant literary consequences.

3.1. Literary differences

Let us consider MT: “Bring her out within (?) the ranks, and kill anyone who follows her with the sword.” For the priest said, “She must not be killed in the house of Yhwh”. This text is difficult for several reasons: (1) the expression translated here by “within the ranks” is

⁴³ Needless to say, מְבִית cannot be the earliest reading, because it is impossible to explain why a scribe would have transformed it in the problematic אֶל־מְבִית לְשְׁדָרַת.

problematic, as we have seen; (2) the priest does not explicitly tell the soldiers to kill Athaliah; (4) it is unclear when and to whom the priest said: “She must not die in the house of Yhwh”. The same problems are present in LXX^B.

By contrast, LXX^L is clearer: “*Bring her out within the σαδηρωθ, and bring her behind the house of the chiefs and kill her by the sword; and do not kill her in the house of the Lord. And it will be, anyone who follows her will die.*” The beginning of the sentence is still obscure, but then the soldiers (and the reader) are clearly told that Athaliah must be killed, and that it must not happen in the temple. There is no “afterthought”, all is clearly stated at once; there is no ellipsis.

In spite of this interesting situation, most commentators simply do not mention, let alone discuss, this textual divergence between MT and LXX^L. The couple of scholars who do reach opposite conclusions. Stade dismisses the Antiochene plus as a “doublet” of “no critical value.”⁴⁴ However, what we have here is more than a doublet; the plus contains some material without equivalent in MT (see 2a and 2c in the tables).⁴⁵ Stade explains neither why a copyist added it, nor why he transposed at its end what constitutes the last part of the verse in MT. On the contrary, Treballe Barrera regards the Antiochene text here as “superior” and reflects the earliest attainable form of the verse.⁴⁶ McKenzie adopts it in his translation.⁴⁷

3.2. LXX^L as a translation of the oldest text?

Treballe Barrera provides three arguments in favour of his theory:

- (1) The verse in LXX^L “makes perfect sense and does not offer any critical difficulty.”⁴⁸
- (2) The last sentence of the verse in MT (part 4 in the table), looks suspicious: explanations provided after the main account of a story and introduced by יִבְּ exhibit all the appearances of glosses. In addition, the following verb (יִבְּ) seems redundant in view of the presence of יִבְּ earlier in the verse. (Similarly, C. Levin interprets this clause as secondary,⁴⁹ and McKenzie regards it as “intrusive and repetitive.”)⁵⁰
- (3) The expression “by the sword” does not appear in the same place in MT and in LXX^L: in the former, it is applied to a possible murder of Athaliah in the temple (part 4); in the latter, it concerns the killing of her possible followers (part 3). The expression ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ does not derive from LXX^B, from which the preposition is absent; but it cannot come from MT either, “since in such a case it would appear on the same place as MT (...) The explanation could be the following: the type of text from which the Masoretic one arises lost the part of text corresponding to LXX και εισαγαγετε αυτην οπισωθεν οικου των στρατηγων και θανατωσατε αυτην. It knew, however, the one corresponding

⁴⁴ Stade and Schwally, *The Books of Kings*, 237.

⁴⁵ Incidentally, A. Rahlfs includes this plus in a list of instances where LXX^L deviates from the Old Greek, but not in the list of doublets contained in LXX^L (*Septuaginta-Studien*, vol. 3 [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911], 289).

⁴⁶ Treballe Barrera, “2 Kings 11 (MT/LXX^{B/L}),” 207.

⁴⁷ McKenzie, *1 Kings 16 – 2 Kings 16*, 424.

⁴⁸ Treballe Barrera, “2 Kings 11 (MT/LXX^{B/L}),” 207.

⁴⁹ Levin, *Der Sturz der Königin Atalja*, 23.

⁵⁰ McKenzie, *1 Kings 16 – 2 Kings 16*, 428.

to the following words: ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ μὴ θανατώσατε⁵¹ ἐν οἰκῷ, whose text now appears out of its correct context.”⁵²

However, these arguments are debatable:

- (1) The literary qualities of LXX^L could well result from a facilitating rewriting of an obscure verse. In reality, it is very tempting to think that the fuller and clearer account in the Antiochene text was precisely designed to alleviate the difficulties of the elliptic MT verse.
- (2) When Treballe Barrera writes that part 4 of the verse in MT is a gloss, he does not mean that it is an idea that came to the mind of a copyist *ex nihilo*; in this scenario, it is a remnant of the earliest text that has supposedly been transposed. But he does not explain why such a transposition happened, which is all the more problematic since this change made the text more difficult. In fact, the presence of יְהוֹיָדָה here is best explained otherwise: the expression יְהוֹיָדָה יְהוֹיָדָה is a Hebrew locution that often serves to introduce an inner thought;⁵³ here, we may translate: “(Jehoiada) said to himself” or “(Jehoiada) thought.”⁵⁴ Thus this expression is not a mere repetition or resumption of יְהוֹיָדָה; it is a normal Hebrew turn of phrase that serves to introduce another kind of illocutionary act.
- (3) There is no reason why ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ could not come from a rewriting of the Old Greek made both in light of MT and in order to smooth the difficulties contained in the latter, by way of additions and transpositions (as I shall explain into details later). The preposition ἐν could spontaneously be added, as it so often happened in the transmission of the Greek text; in the Septuagint, it is often used with an instrumental dative. By adding part 2b, the reviser introduced the explicit order to kill Athaliah before the mention of the murder of her possible followers; quite naturally, he attached the precision “by the sword” to what was now the first mention of a killing in the verse. Note, in addition, that Treballe Barrera does not provide any explanation as to why some part of the Antiochene plus was lost in MT, whereas another part was not. As far as I can see, the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX^L, assuming it existed, did not lend itself to obvious scribal mistakes such as homoioteleuton or other easily explainable haplography. If one prefers to hypothesize a deliberate change from the *Vorlage* of OG to MT, then one needs to find a motive behind this transformation if this hypothesis is to be regarded as plausible. No such motive has ever been suggested, and it is very difficult indeed to imagine why a scribe would have done so.

3.3. LXX^L as a revised, facilitating text

In my view, the text was deliberately transformed the other way around, that is, from the form of the text attested in MT and LXX^B to LXX^L, and we can understand the reason why. Moreover, there is a hint that the change was made in Greek, not in Hebrew.

⁵¹ I reproduce the Greek text as it appears in Treballe Barrera’s article because this is a quotation; note, however, that the edition of LXX^L by Fernandez Marcos has θανατώσητε.

⁵² Treballe Barrera, “2 Kings 11 (MT/LXX^{B/L}),” 208.

⁵³ J. Joosten, “Temporalité, *Sprechhaltung* et modes narratifs dans le récit biblique. Quelques remarques sur la tournure *kī ’amar*, ‘car il disait’,” in *Temporalité et intrigue: Hommage à André Wénin*, ed. D. Luciani and H. Ausloos (BETL 296; Leuven: Peeters, 2018), 195-203.

⁵⁴ B. O. Long, *2 Kings* (FOTL; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1991), 151.

As we have seen, both MT and LXX^B are difficult, whereas LXX^L is clearer. I suggest that the special features of LXX^L were designed to solve the problems of the Old Greek, which is mainly represented by LXX^B in this verse, except for Ἐξαγάγε αὐτοὺς which is a corruption of Ἐξαγάγετε αὐτήν (see *supra*). To make the text clearer, the reviser of the Greek text needed to tackle (1) the lack of clarity regarding the movement that was supposed to materialize Jehoiada's order: where was Athaliah to be led?; (2) the absence of an explicit order to kill her, or rather the relegation of the information about her fate to a complement that looks like an afterthought, in the form of a prohibition to kill her in the temple (v. 15b). So the copyist who revised the text did two things.

First, to the obscure “bring her within the ἁσηρώθ” – or σαδηρωθ, depending on when this change occurred, but it did not make the text clearer – the reviser added a clear direction: “and bring her behind the house of the chiefs” (καὶ εἰσαγάγετε αὐτήν ὀπίσωθεν οἴκου τῶν στρατηγῶν; part 2a in the table). The similarity of εἰσαγάγετε αὐτήν ὀπίσωθεν and Ἐξαγάγετε αὐτήν ἔσωθεν betrays the artificial character of 2a: the reviser created it by using the extant text of 1 as a model, with a slight twist because he could not simply repeat the same verb of movement; he could not just write “bring her out of the house of the Lord” immediately after “bring her out within the σαδηρωθ”. The extant verb, referring to an exit movement, was accompanied by an obscure destination; to clarify the text without deleting any part of it, the solution was to add a verb referring to an entry movement with a clear destination. The clumsy, loaded text that results from this hardly correspond to what a writer would pen.

Why did the reviser choose “behind the house of the chiefs” (οἴκου τῶν στρατηγῶν) as the place where Athaliah should be led? Rahlfs suggested that the “house of the chiefs” was meant to be the same as the “chamber of the officials”, in the Temple, mentioned in Jer 35:4 (וְשֵׁכֶת הַשָּׂרִים; τοῦ οἴκου τῶν ἀρχόντων).⁵⁵ But the terms there are different, Jer 35:4 is talking about a “room”, not a “house”, and nothing indicates that he is talking about military chiefs; in fact, it is doubtful that this verse presupposes the existence of a room in the temple assigned to military leaders. In my view, οἴκου τῶν στρατηγῶν in 2 Kgs 11:15 is related to καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ in the preceding verse (11:14). Remarkably, both expressions are found there only in LXX^L, and they are the only mentions of this word in the entire chapter, whether in LXX^B or in LXX^L. The word στρατηγοὶ normally renders שָׂרִים,⁵⁶ but the latter only appears in this chapter as part of the syntagm הַמְּאִיּוֹת שָׂרֵי, which is translated into ἐκατόνταρχοι (vv. 4, 9, 14, 19), whether in LXX^B or in LXX^L. The only mention of שָׂרִים alone (without הַמְּאִיּוֹת) is to be found in v. 14, but here the Masoretes made a mistake when they pointed the word: the musical context indicates that שָׂרִים was intended, as the Greek translator correctly understood (ῥῥοι). In v. 14 LXX^L, שָׂרִים is rendered twice, first as ῥῥοι (from שָׂרִים), second as στρατηγοὶ (from שָׂרִים). The secondary character of στρατηγοὶ is betrayed by its position in καὶ οἱ ῥῥοι καὶ αἱ σάλπιγγες καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ; it is a doublet added by a copyist who conflated two renderings of שָׂרִים. In sum, καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ in v. 14 was not part of the Old Greek but is an addition.

⁵⁵ Rahlfs, *Septuaginta-Studien*, vol. 3, 289.

⁵⁶ N. Fernández Marcos, V. Spottorno Díaz-Caro, and J. M. Cañas Reillo, *Índice griegohebreo del texto antioqueno en los libros históricos*, vol. 1: *Índice general* (TECC 75; Madrid: Instituto de Filología CSIC, 2005), 421.

Similarly, (οἶκου) τῶν στρατηγῶν in v. 15 looks suspicious. If it were based on שְׂרִים in a possible Hebrew *Vorlage*, then this would be the only mention of שְׂרִים in the chapter, which only knows the category of שְׂרִי הַמְּאִיּוֹת. I suggest that οἶκου τῶν στρατηγῶν is part of an addition made by the same hand that added καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ in v. 14; the word στρατηγοὶ, which deviates from the lexicon of this chapter, is the signature of this reviser, so to speak. Or, alternatively, οἶκου τῶν στρατηγῶν could have been inserted by a still later hand that was influenced by the gloss καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ in v. 14, but the result would be the same, we are dealing with an addition made in Greek. This is all the more significant since 2a is the only expression of LXX^L, in the long plus 2a-2b-2c, that has no equivalent in LXX^B or in TM. This addition was made in order to make sure that Jehoiada explicitly told the soldiers to lead Athaliah to a place that was situated outside the temple. Because a “house” is mentioned, not a mere room, and because it belongs to soldiers (στρατηγοὶ), it is clear that this building was not situated in the temple area. The reviser got the idea of a place belonging to military leaders because Jehoiada was talking to such leaders according to the first words of v. 15. Basically, the order meant: “bring Athaliah behind your barracks and kill her there”.

Secondly, the reviser added an explicit order to kill Athaliah (καὶ θανατώσατε αὐτήν ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ, part 2b) and transposed v. 15b (changing μὴ ἀποθάνῃ into μὴ θανατώσητε) between this addition and the order to kill the possible followers of Athaliah, thus creating part 2c. As a result, all of this is now clearly part of the instructions given explicitly and at once to the soldiers. This is why he changed μὴ ἀποθάνῃ (“let her not die”) into μὴ θανατώσητε (“do not kill her”); it is now a direct prohibition addressed to the soldiers. In addition, because the order to murder Athaliah was now the first mention of a killing in the verse, he felt it more natural to transpose there the expression “by the sword” (ἐν ῥομφαίᾳ). In a word, the reviser filled in the main lacuna, making the text less elliptic, and he reordered it to remove any ambiguity and make it more flowing.

Conclusion

This article has discussed two textual variants in 2 Kgs 11:15, where the priest Jehoiada tells the military leaders what they should do to Athaliah. In the first case, which concerns the place where they should lead her, the archetype was אֶל-מַחֲוֶיץ לְחֻצְרוֹת, that is, the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek, here represented by the LXX^B, whereas MT (אֶל-מִבֵּית לְשַׁדְרָת) is a secondary reading, towards which LXX^L was corrected. In the second case, which concerns the rest of the verse, the archetype is none other than the MT reading, identical with the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek, again represented by LXX^B; by contrast, LXX^L results from an elaborate rewriting aimed at resolving the difficulties of the Old Greek. In the end, the earliest attainable Hebrew text is: הוֹצִיאוּ אֹתָהּ אֶל-מַחֲוֶיץ לְחֻצְרוֹת וְהָבֵא אַחֲרֶיהָ הֶמֶת בְּחֶרֶב כִּי אָמַר הַכֹּהֵן אֶל-תּוֹמַת בֵּית יְהוָה. It may be translated as: “Bring her out of the courts (of the temple) and kill anyone who follows her with the sword. For the priest said to himself: she must not be killed in the house of Yhwh”.

This conclusion in no way contradicts the hypothesis that LXX^L leads us to the earliest form of the text in other verses of 2 Kings 11. Indeed, LXX^L is multi-layered: in Kings, it is based on a text that (mostly) escaped the kaige revision, and this is why it often gives us access to the Old Greek in the kaige sections; however, it was later revised for various reasons,

including stylistic ones, and some copyists also intervened occasionally on it.⁵⁷ Therefore, it is not surprising that we find here and there deliberate changes made in order to render the text more understandable.

⁵⁷ See the history of research in P. Hugo, *Les deux visages d'Elie: 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), 43-47.