

On Kings.¹²⁰⁰

The question is raised, whether Samuel rose by the hand of the sorceress or not. And if, indeed, we were to allow that he did rise, we should be propounding what is false. For how could a demon call back the soul, I say not of a righteous man merely, but of any one whatever, when it had gone, and was tarrying one knew not where? But he says, how then was the woman dismayed, and how did she see in an extraordinary way men ascending? For if her vision had not been of an extraordinary kind, she would not have said, "I see gods¹²⁰¹ ascending out of the earth." She invoked one, and how did there ascend many? What then? Shall we say that the souls of all who appeared ascended, and those, too, not invoked by the woman,¹²⁰² or that what was seen was merely phantasms of them? Even this, however, will not suffice. How, he urges further, did Saul recognise (what appeared), and do obeisance? Well, Saul did not actually see, but only, on being told by the woman that the figure of one of those who ascended was the figure he desired, and taking it to be Samuel, he consulted it as such, and did it obeisance. And it could be no difficult matter for the demon to conjure up the form of Samuel, as it was known to him. How then, says he, did he foretell the calamities that were to befall Saul and Jonathan at the same time? He did foretell indeed the end of the war, and how Saul would be overcome, drawing that as an inference from the wrath of God against him. Just as a physician, who has no exact knowledge of the science, might yet, seeing a patient past cure, tell of his death, though he made an error as to the hour, so, too, the demon, knowing the wrath of God by Saul's deeds, and by this very attempt to consult the sorceress, foretells his defeat and his death at the same time, though in error as to the day of his death.



1200 A fragment from the tractate of Hippolytus, *On the Sorceress (ventriloquist), or On Saul and the Witch, 1 Sam. xxviii*. From the Vatican ms. cccxxx, in Allat., *De Engastr.*, edited by Simon, in the *Acts of the Martyrs of Ostia*, p. 160, Rome, 1795.

1201 [Rather "god," the plural of excellence, Elohim.]

1202 [This passage is the scandal of commentators. As I read it, *the Lord interfered*, surprising the woman and horrifying her. The soul of the prophet came back from Sheol, and prophesied by the power of God. Our author misunderstands the Hebrew plural.]