CHAPTER THREE

THE DUPLICATION OF 3 REG. 2: 8–9 AT 35L–O AND
THE SUPPLEMENTARY CHARACTER OF 35–46L

1. Introduction

One of the most intriguing phenomena of 3 Regum is the occurrence of duplicate translations. The case of duplication that is discussed here occurs in connection with the story of Shimei’s elimination in ch. 2. Both MT and the LXX recount this story in two parts. The first part of it occurs in 2: 8–9. It relates David’s dying charge to Solomon to find a legal pretext to kill David’s former adversary, Shimei. The second part, recounting how Solomon managed to comply with David’s last will, does not appear until 2: 36–46. Unlike MT, the LXX has this second part preceded by a repetition of the first part. The duplicate, counted as 3 Reg. 2: 35lβ–o, is provided with a short introductory statement in v. 35lα, and its diction is slightly different from 2: 8–9.

For what reason, or due to what kind of process, does the LXX represent two translations of one and the same passage within a distance of a mere 30 verses? One possibility can be ruled out of hand, namely that the LXX inserted a copy of 2: 8–9 at 2: 35l–o for fear that a reader coming across 2: 36–46 might not remember the previous history of the Shimei episode. The slight but unmistakable difference in wording makes it clear that vv. 35l–o are not a straight copy of vv. 8–9.

A possible explanation might be sought in the circumstance that the duplicate passages each appear in different translation units. As has been pointed out in the introduction, Thackeray attributed the sections 2 Reg. 11: 2–3 Reg. 2: 11 and 3 Reg. 2: 12–21: 43 to different translators on the basis of a number of translation characteristics. The distribution of characteristics did not enable Thackeray to establish the exact dividing line between the translation units βγ and γγ, because he found the last characteristic of βγ in 3 Reg. 2: 5 and the first characteristic of γγ not until 2: 16. His claim that
the transition occurs between 3 Reg. 2: 11 and 12 is primarily founded on the fact that in the Ant. manuscripts the division between the books of 2 and 3 Regum is situated here. Carrying further the thought that the beginning of the γγ-section corresponds to an ancient book division in Regum, one may speculate that this section was written on a different scroll than the previous section. Possibly, the Greek text simply followed the division of the Hebrew source text, even though MT 1 Kings and all Greek witnesses but the Ant. text agree in localizing the book division immediately before 1: 1. Now, one consequence of transposing the beginning of 3 Regum from 1: 1 to 2: 12 is that the first part of the Shimei story at 2: 8–9 falls outside the coverage of the book. As the second part at 2: 36–46 cannot possibly be understood without knowledge of the first part, it is conceivable that someone took the initiative to copy the first part and insert it immediately before v. 36. The slight differences between the two texts, then, might be explained by the somewhat different recensional histories of the translation units in which they appear.

Though this hypothesis, which in its essentials originates with Gooding, provides a coherent explanation for the duplication, several features of 3 Reg. 2 cast doubt on its plausibility. The following reservations should be made. In the first place, it is by no means sure whether 2: 8–9 takes priority over 2: 35l–o as the original position of David’s dying charge in the LXX. Barthélemy has identified the translation unit βγ, to which 2: 8–9 belongs, as a recension undertaken to bring the OG into line with MT. This would mean that there is a possibility that the OG did not yet contain these verses in 2: 8–9. It is significant that the Ant. text of 3 Reg. 2: 1–9, which, at least in its pre-Lucianic stratum, is believed to represent a stage closer to the OG than Kaige, shows certain features which suggest that it is secondary in its context.

In the second place, note should be taken of what may be termed the “supplementary character” of the text portion stretching from 3 Reg. 2: 35a to 2: 46l. This section is separated from the previous one by a note of concluding character in 3 Reg. 2: 35aβ which has

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