CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE DEDICATION PRONOUNCEMENT

(1 KGS. 8: 12–13—3 REG. 8: 53A)

In 1 Kgs. 8: 12–13 Solomon is said to make the following statement concerning YHWH’s entrance into the Holy of Holies:

Then Solomon said:

Then Solomon said,

YHWH has said that he would dwell in the dense-cloud.

I have surely built an exalted house for thee,

a place for thy dwelling forever.

The LXX-version of this poetic declaration is found in 3 Reg. 8: 53a, in a context completely different from MT:

Then Solomon said:

The sun did YHWH make known in the heaven.

He said that he would dwell in darkness (LXX B: without darkness).

Build thou my house, a lofty house to thee,

to dwell upon newness.”

Behold, is it not written in the Book of Song?

The dedication pronouncement in the LXX is considerably longer than its material counterpart in MT. Sizable pluses vis-à-vis MT are presented by the first line of the dedication pronouncement, the source citation at the end and the second part of the introductory statement. Moreover, in the text portions that are common to the LXX and MT, several word differences occur. The scheme below visualizes the obvious deviations. For reasons of convenience, the lines containing the text of the dedication pronouncement proper are numbered 1–4.
The question of the purport and the provenance of the dedication pronouncement is beset by numerous difficulties. It is not our intention to deal with these problems in full. Rather, we focus on the question of the text-historical relationship between the versions of the LXX and MT. The Greek of 3 Reg. 8: 53a exhibits several difficulties:

1. It is not entirely clear whether κυρίως is to be construed as the subject of the clause preceding or following it. Since it is natural to suppose that the identity of the syntactic subject is revealed in the opening clause of a declaration, κυρίως is more likely to be taken as the subject to the preceding clause ἕλιον ἐγνώρισεν ἐν οὐρανῷ. This would mean, however, that the opening clause shows a word-order (object-predicate-adjunct-subject) that is anomalous in Greek (though not so in Hebrew).

2. In the LXX the verb γνωρίζειν is never construed with objects denoting astral bodies. As Burkitt notes, “ἐγνώρισεν makes no obvious sense, it is a quite peculiar word to use in this context, such a word as would naturally come to a translator mechanically translating a corrupt text he did not understand.”

3. The identity of the person pronouncing “build thou my house” is questionable. Since no change of speaking subject is indicated in line 3 we are led to assume that it is Solomon who is making the petition. This seems to be the more obvious as the preceding line refers to YHWH in the 3rd person. But in the case of a humble request addressed to the deity, one would expect to find a deferential formula rather than the plain imperative of line 3 (cf. Solomon’s prayer in 3 Reg. 8: 23–53). The use of the imperative suggests that it is YHWH who orders Solomon to build “my

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