CHAPTER FOUR

TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES

It is obvious that a thorough knowledge of a translator's style and method of dealing with his text is necessary if one is to judge aright the nature of the text that lay before him. A casual reference to the LXX of a particular passage without this wider knowledge can lead to unwarranted conclusions. D. R. Ap-Thomas lays down the wise ruling that "every case of discrepancy between the MT and a Version must be decided on its merits, after the main idiosyncrasies of that particular translator have been discovered". But in speaking of a translator's style with regard to Par two as yet unproven assumptions are being made. It is assumed that underlying the mass of ms. variants is a single, consistent attempt to render Chron into Gk. First, as to ms. variants it has already been observed that the Gk mss. fall into four major groups. Their relative value has not yet been analysed and in fact it will eventually be observed that none of these groups can be simply identified en bloc with the original translation. But in order to establish methods of translation, only those features are employed which are common to all four groups. Throughout this chapter cited renderings are shared by groups i-iv unless it is otherwise stated. Moreover, the reading of MT is in little doubt in the cases of translation which are quoted, unless otherwise stated.

While the first assumption concerns ms. variants, the second concerns stylistic variety of renderings to be found in Par. The work bears marks of homogeneity in many respects. But alongside this uniformity lies a host of apparently contradictory features. The translation as a whole presents a picture of strong contrasts. Are these in fact marks of different minds at work? It is a conviction forced upon the writer that this conclusion would be unwarranted and that there is an overall consistency which embraces within it a rich variety of expression. "One man in his time plays many parts", and the reader is invited to note how literal and loose renderings overlap and reappear at every stage of the work.  

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1 A Primer of OT Text Criticism, p. 20.
2 The preponderance of names in I Par must of course be taken into account as the
Helbing characterised Par as inclining to “mechanischer, wortgetreuer Wiedergabe oft auf Kosten der griechischen Sprache in grammatischer und stilistischer Hinsicht”. In similar vein Rehm speaks of the style of Par as “möglichster Wortlichkeit”. Gerleman criticised Helbing’s verdict as misleading: “even if the Paralipomena are by no means free from Hebraisms, it must be stated, after a comparison with the Reigns, that the Paralipomena translation, relatively to the original, is linguistically and stylistically the freer version”. Barthélemy described Par’s use of έκαστος for יִצְוָא as “litteralisme intelligent”. In fact, considerable stylistic mixture will be noted in the translator’s approach, to which no brief summary can do complete justice.

1. Order of words

The translator generally ties himself rigorously to the Heb order. This feature is especially noticeable in the retention of the Semitic order: verb + subject. Clear cases of transposition in translation are attested by all four groups at I 21.22 (δος μου αὐτόν for וְיָכַנ), II 1.7 (σοι δῶ for לֵלָכַנ) and 25.8 where ἐν τούτωι appears a few words later in the sentence. These cases at least show that the Heb order is not absolutely followed.

2. The article

Gerleman, p. 40, noted that Par uses the definite article less than Rg, especially in genitival constructions. This trait he saw to be a Hebraism, corresponding to the lack of article with a Heb noun either in the construct state or having a suffix. He traced the contrast in this respect between Rg and Par through a number of parallel passages. Unfortuna-

reason why examples from II Par are often more numerous. With this paragraph is to be compared the following statement of H.S. Gehman, Textus v, p. 125, not about Par but about the LXX generally: “We often meet in the same verse or in adjacent verses both literalism and extreme freedom of translation side by side. At times the reader of the LXX is reminded of the swing of a pendulum from one end of the arc to the other as if the interpreter was working under a tension between literalism and freedom of rendering”.

1 Kasussyntax, p. xiii.
2 Untersuchungen, p. 40.
3 Studies in the LXX II, pp. 40ff. Gerleman did not undergird his work with a study of ms. groupings. Some of his examples are not available in all the groups and so cannot be cited in this survey.
4 Devanciers, p. 48.
5 See further on this verse part II, p. 85.