Seeking Out
the Wisdom of the Ancients

Michael V. Fox

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the Wisdom of the Ancients

Essays Offered to Honor
Michael V. Fox
on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday

Edited by
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Michael V. Fox:
A Tribute

In planning this Festschrift we were warned of the perils: wooing tardy submissions from contributors' hands, the tedium of conforming all essays to a style sheet, and the mass of letters and e-mails necessary to coordinate the work. Happily, the burden has not been as onerous as forecasted, thanks largely to the contributors, whose cooperation and collegiality made the task enjoyable, and thanks to the always ready assistance of Jim Eisenbraun.

In truth, the most daunting part of the project was this essay. How do you offer a tribute for someone who would just as soon quietly take his place among the academy's cadre of senior scholars? This problem has been largely solved by the 30 scholars whose articles published here attest Michael's influence and standing in academe. Their quick acceptance of invitations to write essays for this volume is itself a tribute to Michael.

Most readers already know Michael's reputation for careful reading of Hebrew texts, his mastery of secondary sources, and his control of English prose. We, representing all his students, wish to provide a tribute to him from within the halls and classrooms of the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Like all scholars renowned for sharing their expertise in writing, Michael can readily be found at his computer keyboard. The care and sensitivity with which he reads the Hebrew text is apparent; less obvious is the labor he puts into the clear and effective prose that, for the reader, has an air of effortlessness. One of us, having vetted an early draft of an article Michael wrote on *hebel* in Qoheleth, was taken aback when it was published two years later ("The Meaning of *Hebel* for Qohelet," *JBL* 105 [1986] 409–27); the article was barely recognizable as a successor to that early draft. His already excellent essay had gone through repeated revisions and was now fitted with a new frame that appropriately contextualized his arguments, which had also undergone refinement.

Thankfully, Michael did not keep his belief in rigorous revision to himself; he also inflicted it on us. Likely all his students would agree that he taught us to believe in the dictum that clear verbal expression is the prerequisite for clear thinking. His demand for precision and uncluttered writing had the effect of helping us formulate clearly the problems encountered in research, as well as our proposed solutions. However, this was but one instance of his application to us of the demands he places on himself.

A feature of the graduate program in Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison that Michael has consistently ranked essential is mastery of Classical Hebrew. He expects students to attain the same grasp of morphology, syntax, and fluency in oral reading that he commands. He did not conceal his frustration when one of us was unable to parse or produce a Hebrew form on demand, and we all dreaded his sighs as he endured our sometimes stumbling oral reading of the Hebrew text. But equally apparent was his exasperation with himself when he placed an errantly conjugated Syriac verb on an exam for parsing. As much as we were aware of his displeasure with our errors, we were equally aware of his expectations of himself.

In fact, what remains most amazing to us is that, even though he had developed skills far beyond our immediate grasp, he took seriously our proposed solutions to problems in the text, testing them for validity and copying into his own notes suggestions that passed his scrutiny. He never revealed a need to prove his conclusions unassailable or to show himself superior. And he never gave us the feeling that time in class was a distraction from his research; he was always engaged, seeming to regard class as an opportunity to study the text with others who could offer valid insights.

It should come as no surprise, then, that his first response to news that we were planning this project was to ask whether those who had finished the Ph.D. with him would be invited to contribute essays. And so nine of the essays included here, as well as the detailed bibliography, were written by graduates of this department.

Strikingly, Michael's own research agenda did not determine the path of our education. While Job is one of the biblical books studied as part of a three-year cycle in our program, the topic of wisdom literature did not loom large in his classes generally. Indeed, it was not until students appealed to him to incorporate more of his research into course work that he substituted a semester of Proverbs for one of the two semesters previously devoted to Job. Not only that, but among courses Michael offers on regular rotation are year-long book studies in Isaiah and Ezekiel, as well as graduate seminars on pentateuchal criticism and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and he regularly incorporates forays into textual criticism and study of the ancient versions into his courses. While these are certainly areas of interest to him, his main purpose in integrating them into the curriculum has been to give students exposure to the breadth of our discipline.

The revelation of how much a *Mensch* Michael is comes to most students when they innocently click the link marked "photo" at the top of Michael's CV on the Hebrew and Semitic Studies Web site. They are startled to find themselves faced with the surly visage of Hulk Hogan, teeth bared and holding open his vest to expose a rippling pectoral. Michael's "inner scholar" is surely well represented in that photo.

Alas, for this book we have had to use a tamer portrait. However, the effect remains the same, as can be measured by the number and range of essays we dedicate to him on the occasion of his 65th birthday, with gratitude for his contributions to scholarship and in anticipation of the benefits that his current and future endeavors will bring.

We could think of no ancient text that better expresses Michael's career than the one from which we derived the title for this volume, Ben Sirach 39:1–3 (NRSV):

> He seeks out the wisdom of all the ancients,
>   and is concerned with prophecies;
> he preserves the sayings of the famous
>   and penetrates the subtleties of parables;
> he seeks out the hidden meanings of proverbs
>   and is at home with the obscurities of parables.

RONALD TROXEL,
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and DENNIS MAGARY

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The Publications of Michael V. Fox:
Overview and Bibliography

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The subtle achievement of the published works written by Professor Fox is that they are well focused without being narrowly restricted. Except for reviews, the majority of his writings relate either to Egyptian literature (mainly wisdom and love songs) or to one or another of five biblical books. All of his first book and fully half of his second (both 1985) are devoted to Egyptian love songs, providing translations, philological notes, and hieroglyphic transcriptions that include much previously unavailable material. Equally significant is his treatment of Egyptian wisdom literature, chiefly in journal articles. His advances in both areas of research succeed in improving our understanding of the ancient "culture of the Nile" and in providing in-depth background for the study of particular biblical writings:

Professor Fox's books on biblical literature fall into a three-phase progression. The initial phase includes Qohelet, viewed in the light of ancient Near Eastern wisdom, and the Song of Songs compared with Egyptian love songs. If we classify his two chapter-length commentaries on those biblical books (1986) as short monographs and group them with his dissertation (1972)[1] and the two books published in 1985 and the one in 1987 (see below under "books"), the biblical focus of his first six major works is Qohelet and Song of Songs. It is in this phase that his work on Egyptian parallels serves as a discernible base for his comments on the Hebrew literature.

The second phase begins with two books on Esther in 1991 and a rereading of Qohelet in 1999. Although interrupted by the first volume of his commentary on Proverbs (2000), it continues with a further treatment of Esther (2001) and a Jewish Publication Society popular commentary on Qohelet (2004).

The third, and current, phase of his work, begun with his first volume on Proverbs, includes the second volume of his commentary plus a text-critical

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1. Michael V. Fox, ספר קהלת ויחסו לאסכולת החכמה (The Book of Qohelet and Its Relation to the Wisdom School), Ph.D. diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1972 (276 pages).

edition of Proverbs and two volumes on Job: a commentary for the Old Testament Library and a parallel, more technical, book of philological-textual annotations for Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft.

Professor Fox's articles and essays also display the progression of his thinking on issues that have occupied him. From his earliest articles, his insights into text criticism, interpretation, poetry, proverbial sayings, rhetoric, character portrayal, religion, and wisdom literature have steadily matured in preparation for the steep ascent to the Everest heights of the book of Job.

Professor Fox's rethinking of his previously published scholarship on biblical works, done most conspicuously with Qohelet and Esther, deserves special comment. After thirteen years of arduous labor to finish his monumental commentary on Ezekiel, Walther Zimmerli commented, "it would be dishonest of the author if he were silent about the feeling with which he comes to the end—a feeling that he is now ready to begin the work with some understanding." He even added, "there is still much new work that needs to be done."[2] It is axiomatic that great literary works, not least the collection in the Hebrew Bible, reward reexamination and invite an occasionally bewildering variety of interpretations. Revisiting books of the Bible at length when one has already treated them in earlier monographs demands more of the author than at first (no rehashes here!) and can foster perceptions having greater depth and refinement. Thoroughly grounded rereading that includes such "new work" as Zimmerli mentioned is an advantage that Professor Michael V. Fox has pressed as he leads readers into the riches of biblical wisdom literature and the delights of three of the *Megillot*.[3]

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2. Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24* (ed. Frank Moore Cross and Klaus Baltzer; trans. Ronald E. Clements; 2 vols.; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) xiii.

3. Notably, Professor Fox's 1972 dissertation was only the beginning of his work with the book of Qohelet. In the course of time, he distanced himself from his early approach, and his first monograph on Qohelet was a fresh study. His work on this book of the Bible thus far totals four book-length treatments (one during each of four consecutive decades) and thirteen articles (including eleven from 1986 onward). Thus far, his articles and essays on Song of Songs/Egyptian love songs, on wisdom, and on Proverbs also number approximately a dozen each, along with five on Esther. Of course, there are many more besides.

A. Books [*see also D. Editoriral Activity below*]

1985

1. שירי דודים ממצרים העתיקה (*Love Songs from Ancient Egypt*). Jerusalem: Magnes. [123 pages]

2. *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. [454 pages] Reprinted 1989, 1999.

1987

3. *Qohelet and His Contradictions.* Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 71. Bible and Literature Series 18. Sheffield: Almond. [384 pages] Reprinted 1989.

1991

4. *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther.* Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. [317 pages]

5. *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts*. Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 40. Atlanta: Scholars Press. [195 pages]

1999

6. *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes.* Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. [422 pages]

2000

7. *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* Anchor Bible 18A. New York: Doubleday. [474 pages]

2001

8. *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther.* 2nd edition, with an Afterword: A Decade of Esther Scholarship. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. [333 pages]

2004

9. *Ecclesiastes: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New Jewish Publication Society Translation*. The Jewish Publication Society Bible Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. [87 pages]

Forthcoming Books

10. *Job: A Commentary.* Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox.

11. *Proverbs: A Text-Critical Edition. The Oxford Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Ronald S. Hendel et al. New York: Oxford University Press.

12. *Proverbs 10–31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* Anchor Bible 18B. New York: Doubleday.

13. *The Text and Language of the Book of Job.* Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft. New York: de Gruyter.

B. Articles, Essays, and Chapter-Length Commentaries

1968

1. "Aspects of the Religion of the Book of Proverbs." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 39: 55–69.

1971–1972

2. "Agur, son of Jakeh." Column 434 in volume 2 of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Edited by Cecil Roth, Geoffrey Wigoder, Raphael Posner, and Louis I. Rabinowitz. 16 volumes. Jerusalem: Keter / New York: Macmillan.

3. With Alan R. Schulman. "Erman, Johann Pieter Adolf." Column 845 in volume 6 of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

4. "Moses, Blessing of." Columns 412–13 in volume 12 of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

5. "Noth, Martin." Columns 1232–33 in volume 12 of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

6. "Sea, Song of the." Columns 1070–71 in volume 14 of *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

1973

7. "תפיסת האלהות בספרות החכמה הדידאקטית" (The Concept of Divinity in Didactic Wisdom Literature). *Beer Sheva* 1: 162–70.

8. "Jeremiah 2:2 and the 'Desert Ideal.'" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 35: 441–50.

9. "Tôb as Covenant Terminology." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 209: 41–42.

1974

10. "קהלת" (Qohelet). Columns 70–83 of volume 7 of אנציקלופדיה מקראית (Encyclopaedia Biblica). 9 volumes. Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1965–1982.

11. "The Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Light of the Priestly ʾôt Etiologies." *Revue biblique* 81: 557–96.

1976

12. "בייל לישני (מנצות ע׳׳ב)" ("*byyl lishney*" in *b. Men.* 65b). *Lešonénu* 41: 75.

1977

13. "Frame-Narrative and Composition in the Book of Qohelet." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 48: 83–106.

14. "A Study of Antef." *Orientalia* 46: 393–423.

1978

15. "[Comment on] John Donne's 'A Nocturnal upon S. Lucies Day.'" *The Explicator* 36: 24.

16. With Bezalel Porten. "Unsought Discoveries: Qohelet 7:23–8:1a." *Hebrew Studies* 19: 26–38.

1980

17. "The Cairo Love Songs." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 100: 101–9.

18. "The Identification of Quotations in Biblical Literature." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 92: 416–31.

19. "'Love' in the Love Songs." *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 66: 181–82.

20. "The Rhetoric of Ezekiel's Vision of the Valley of the Bones." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 51: 1–15. Pages 9–11 reprinted on pages 384–86 of *The Hebrew Bible in Literary Criticism*. Compiled and edited by Alex Preminger and Edward L. Greenstein. A Library of Literary Criticism. New York: Ungar, 1986. Pages 1–15 reprinted on pages 176–90 of *The Place is Too Small for Us: The Israelite Prophets in Recent Scholarship*. Edited by Robert P. Gordon. Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 5. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995.

21. "Two Decades of Research in Egyptian Wisdom Literature." *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 107: 120–35.

1981

22. "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric." *Semeia* 19: 53–61.

1982

23. "The Entertainment Song Genre of Egyptian Literature." Egyptological Studies. Edited by Sarah Israelit-Groll. *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 28: 268–316.

1983

24. "Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric." *Rhetorica* 1: 9–22. Reprinted on leaves 21–34 of *The Maxims of Ptahhotpe*. Edited by Evan Blythin. Translated by Raymond O. Faulkner. Annandale, Virginia: Speech Communication Association, 1986.

25. "Love, Passion, and Perception in the Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102: 219–28.

26. "Scholia to Canticles (i 4b, ii4, i 4a, iv 3, v 8, v 12)." *Vetus Testamentum* 33: 199–206.

27. "Some Love Songs from Ancient Egypt." *Wisconsin Academy Review* 29: 36–40.

28. "The Structure of the Book of Esther." Pages 291–304 in volume 3 of ספר יצחק אריה זליגמן: מאמרים במקרא ובעולם העתיק (Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World). 3 volumes. Edited by Alexander Rofé and Yair Zakovitch. Jerusalem: Rubenstein, 1982–1983.

1984

29. "Egypt." Pages 23–28 in *Sign, Symbol, Script: An Exhibition on the Origins of Writing and the Alphabet*. Madison: Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies, College of Letters and Science, University of Wisconsin–Madison.

30. "ארבעה שירי אהבה ממצרים העתיקה" (Four Love Songs from Ancient Egypt). *Shnaton* 7–8: 187–214.

1985

31. "LXX Proverbs 3:28 and Ancient Egyptian Wisdom." *Hebrew Annual Review* 8: 63–69.

1986

32. "Egyptian Onomastica and Biblical Wisdom." *Vetus Testamentum* 36: 302–10.

33. "The Meaning of *hebel* for Qohelet." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105: 409–27.

34. With Jacob Klein. "קהלת" (Qohelet). Pages 10–61 in מגילות: קהלת, אסתר, דניאל (Megillot: Qohelet, Esther, Daniel). אנציקלופדיה or עולם התנ״ך עולם התנ״ך (The World of the Bible or The Biblical World Encyclopedia) 16B. Tel Aviv: Revivim. Reprinted on pages 161–210 in מגילות:שיר־ השירים, רות, איכה, קהלת, אסתר (Megillot: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Qohelet, Esther). Tel Aviv: Dodzon-ʿIti, 1997.

35. With Jacob Klein. "שיר־השירים" (Song of Songs). Pages 11–68 in מגילות: שיר־השירים, רות, איכה (Megillot: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations). עולם התנ״ך (The World of the Bible) 16A. Tel Aviv: Revivim. Reprinted on pages 11–68 in מגילות: שיר־השירים, רות, איכה, קהלת אסתר (Megillot: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Qohelet, Esther). עולם התנ״ך (The World of the Bible). Tel Aviv: Dodzon-ʿIti, 1997.

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36. "On Footnotes." *Hebrew Studies* 28: 6–8.

37. "Qohelet's Epistemology." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 58: 137–56.

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38. "Aging and Death in Qohelet 12." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 42: 55–77. Reprinted on pages 381–99 in *Reflecting with Solomon: Selected Studies on the Book of Ecclesiastes*. Edited by Roy B. Zuck. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. Reprinted on pages 199–221 in *The Poetical Books*. Edited by David J. A. Clines. The Biblical Seminar 41. A Sheffield Reader. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997. Reprinted in revised form as "Excursus II: Aging and Death in Qohelet 12," pages 281–310 in *Qohelet and His Contradictions*. By Michael V. Fox. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 71. Bible and Literature Series 18. Sheffield: Almond, 1989. [See above, A. Books]

39. "Qohelet 1.4." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 40: 109.

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40. "The Alpha Text of the Greek Esther." *Textus* 15: 27–54.
41. "The Religion of the Book of Esther." *Judaism* 39: 135–47.
42. "The 'Soules Language' in the Song of Songs." Pages 33–44 in *The Solomon Goldman Lectures: Volume 5*. Edited by Byron L. Sherwin and Michael Carasik. Volume 5 of *The Solomon Goldman Lectures: Perspectives in Jewish Learning*. Edited by Nathaniel Stampfer, Byron L. Sherwin, Michael Carasik, Mayer I. Gruber, Dean Phillip Bell, and Hal M. Lewis. Chicago: Spertus College of Judaica Press, 1997–.

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43. "Egyptian Love Songs." Pages 393–95 in volume 2 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 volumes. New York: Doubleday.
44. "The Redaction of the Greek Alpha Text of Esther." Pages 207–20 in *"Shaʿarei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon*. Edited by Michael A. Fishbane and Emanuel Tov. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns.

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46. "Love Poetry, II. Eastern, C. Hebrew." Page 711 in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Edited by Alex Preminger and Terry V. F. Brogan. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
47. "Wisdom in Qohelet." Pages 115–32 in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John Gammie*. Edited by Leo G. Perdue, Bernard B. Scott, and William J. Wiseman. Philadelphia: Westminster/John Knox.

48. "Words for Wisdom." *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 6: 149–69.

1994

49. "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113: 233–43.

1995

50. "The Uses of Indeterminacy." Pages 173–91 in *Textual Determinacy, Part Two*. Edited by Robert C. Culley and Robert B. Robinson. Semeia 71. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

51. "World-Order and Maʿat: A Crooked Parallel." *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 23: 37–48.

1996

52. "ʾ*Amon* Again." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115: 699–702.

53. "The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs." Pages 227–39 in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*. Edited by Michael V. Fox, Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, Avi Hurvitz, Michael L. Klein, Baruch J. Schwartz, and Nili Shupak. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns. [See D. Editorial Activity, below]

54. "The Strange Woman in Septuagint Proverbs." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 22: 31–44.

1997

55. "Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116: 613–33.

56. Introduction, translation, and notes to "Prayer to Re-Harakhti." Page 47, text 1.29 in *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*. Volume 1 of *The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 volumes. New York: Brill, 1997–2002.

57. Introductions, translations, and notes to "Love Poems." Pages 125–30, texts 1.49–1.52 in *Canonical Compositions from the Biblical World*. Volume 1 of *The Context of Scripture*. Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 volumes. New York: Brill, 1997–2002.

58. "What the Book of Proverbs Is About." Pages 153–67 in *Congress Volume: Cambridge 1995*. Edited by John A. Emerton. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 66. New York: Brill.

59. "What Happens in Qohelet 4:13–16." *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 1, article 4. http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/JHS/abstracts-articles.html#A4 (accessed 28 November 2004).

60. "Who Can Learn? A Debate in Ancient Pedagogy." Pages 62–77 in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Essays in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday*. Edited by Michael L. Barré. Catholic

Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 29. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association.

61. "Words for Folly." *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 10: 4–17.

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62. "The Inner Structure of Qohelet's Thought." Pages 225–38 in *Qohelet in the Context of Wisdom*. Edited by Anton Schoors. Bibliotheca Ephemeri-dum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 136. Leuven: Peeters.

63. "Out of Egypt: An Essay on Jan Assmann's *Moses the Egyptian*." *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 11: 83–96.

64. "Qohelet's Catalogue of Times." *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 24: 24–39.

1999

65. "Erziehung, IV. Biblisch 1. Altes Testament." Columns 1509–10 in volume 2 of *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Handwörterbuch für Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*. Edited by Hans Dieter Betz. 4th revised edition. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998–.

66. "Qohelet: History of Interpretation." Pages 346–54 in volume 2 of *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by John H. Hayes. 2 volumes. Nashville: Abingdon.

2000

67. "L'amour chanté en Egypte." Translated by Farah Mébarki. *Le monde de la Bible* 128: 30–32.

68. "Ecclesiastes." Pages 506–8 in *Reader's Guide to Judaism*. Edited by Michael Terry. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn.

69. "Proverbs." Pages 153–56 in *Reader's Guide to Judaism*. Edited by Michael Terry. Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn.

70. "Wisdom in the Joseph Story." *Vetus Testamentum* 50: 1–16.

2001

71. "Proverbs 1–9: A Commentary: Author Explains the Meaning and His Approach to the Book of Proverbs." *Bible and Interpretation*. http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/proverbs.htm (accessed 28 November 2004).

2002

72. "Translation and Mimesis." Pages 207–21 in *Bible Translation in Context*. Edited by Frederick W. Knobloch. Studies and Texts in Jewish History and Culture 10. Bethesda: University Press of Maryland.

2003

73. "Three Esthers." Pages 50–60 in *The Book of Esther in Modern Research*. Edited by Sidnie White Crawford and Leonard J. Greenspoon. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 380. New York: T. & T. Clark.

74. "Wisdom and the Self-Presentation of Wisdom Literature." Pages 153–72 in *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J. A. Clines*. Edited by J. Cheryl Exum and Hugh G. M. Williamson. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series 373. New York: Sheffield Academic Press.

2004

75. Introductory material and annotations to Proverbs. Pages 1447–98 in *The Jewish Study Bible: Featuring the Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*. Edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler. New York: Oxford University Press.

2005

76. "Job the Pious." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 117: 351–66.
77. "LXX-Proverbs as a Text-Critical Resource." *Textus* 22: 95–128.
78. "The Rhetoric of Disjointed Proverbs." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29: 165–77.

Forthcoming

79. "The Concepts of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs" in the Shalom M. Paul Jubilee Volume. Edited by Chaim Cohen, Avi Hurvitz, Victor Hurowitz, and Jeffrey H. Tigay. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns.
80. "מה היא החכמה" (What Is Wisdom?). *Beer Sheva*.

C. Reviews

1976

1. Review of Yehoshua M. Grinz, מן הספרות המצרית העתיקה (From the Ancient Egyptian Literature) (1975). *Kiryat Sefer* 51: 477–79. [Hebrew]

1979

2. Review of Menaham Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (1977). *Hebrew Studies* 20–21: 213–15.

1982

3. Review of Takamitsu Muraoka, *Modern Hebrew for Biblical Scholars* (1982). *Hebrew Studies* 23: 251–52.

1983

4. Review of *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies: Jerusalem, August 16–21, 1981. Hebrew Studies* 24: 233–35.
5. Review of Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981). *Journal of Reform Judaism* 30/1: 105–8.

1984

6. Review of *Eretz-Israel* 16 (Harry M. Orlinsky Volume) (1982). *Hebrew Studies* 25: 177–80.
7. Review of Erik Hornung, *Conceptions of God in Ancient Egypt: The One and the Many* (1982). *Biblical Archaeologist* 47/3: 187–88.

1987

8. Review of *Compucord* (software). *Hebrew Studies* 28: 218–22.
9. Review of *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* (1987). *Hebrew Studies* 28: 200–201.

1988

10. Review of David J. A. Clines, *The Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story* (1984). *Hebrew Studies* 29: 103–10.

1989

11. Review of Bo Isaksson, *Studies in the Language of Qoheleth* (1987). *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108: 510–12.
12. Review of *Zeitschrift für Althebräistik* 1 (1988). *Hebrew Studies* 30: 201.

1990

13. Review of Lise Manniche, *Sexual Life in Ancient Egypt* (1987). *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 110: 757–58.

1992

14. Review of Claus Westermann, *Wurzeln der Weisheit: Die ältesten Sprüche Israels und anderer Völker* (1990). *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111: 529–32.
15. Review of Franz-Josef Steiert, *Die Weisheit Israels: Ein Fremdkörper im alten Testament?* (1990). *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111: 134–37.

1995

16. Review of Daniel C. Snell, *Twice-Told Proverbs and the Composition of the Book of Proverbs* (1993). *Critical Review of Books in Religion* 8: 147–54.

1996

17. Review of Stuart D. E. Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (1994). *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 116: 138–39.

1998

18. Review of Harold C. Washington, *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope and the Hebrew Proverbs* (1994). *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118: 282–84.

1999

19. Review of Steven Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (1997). *Jewish Quarterly Review* 90: 176–79.

2000

20. Review of Craig G. Bartholomew, *Reading Ecclesiastes: Old Testament Exegesis and Hermeneutical Theory* (1998). *Interpretation* 54: 195–98.

2003

21. Review of Knut Martin Heim, *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver: An Interpretation of Proverbial Clusters in Proverbs 10:1–22:16* (2001). *Hebrew Studies* 44: 267–72.

2004

22. Review of Gerhard Tauberschmidt, *Secondary Parallelism: A Study of Translation Technique in LXX Proverbs* (2004). *Review of Biblical Literature* 11. http://www.bookreviews.org/pdf/4192_4111.pdf (accessed 28 November 2004).

D. Editorial Activity

1. Editor, *Hebrew Studies*. 1982–93.
2. *Temple in Society*. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1988. [138 pages]
3. Editor, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series. 1994–99.
4. *Texts, Temples, and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*. Edited with Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, Avi Hurvitz, Michael L. Klein, Baruch J. Schwartz, and Nili Shupak. Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1996. [438 English + 133 Hebrew pages]

Abbreviations

General

ANE	Ancient Near East
Aram. Tg.	Aramaic Targum
BH	Biblical Hebrew
CEV	Contemporary English Version
col.	column
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
EA	El-Amarna (tablet)
Eg.	Egyptian
ET	English translation
Heb.	Hebrew
JPSV	Jewish Publication Society Version
KJV	King James Version
LB	Living Bible
LXX	Septuagint
masc.	masculine
MT	Masoretic Text
NAB	New American Bible
NEB	New English Bible
NIV	New International Version
NJB	H. Wansbrough (ed.). *New Jerusalem Bible*
NJPSV	New Jewish Publication Society Version
NLT	New Living Translation
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OB	Old Babylonian
OG	Old Greek
P	Priestly writer
Pap.	Papyrus
ptc.	participle
REB	Revised English Bible (Revised NEB)
RS	Field numbers of tablets excavated at Ras Shamra
RSV	Revised Standard Version
Sam	Samaritan version
sing.	singular
Symm.	Symmachus
Syr.	Syriac
Ug.	Ugaritic
Vg.	Vulgate

Reference Works

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N. (editor). *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992
AEL	Lichtheim, M. *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. 3 vols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971–80
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung*
AfOB	Archiv für Orientforschung: Beiheft
AHw	Von Soden, W. *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1965–81
AJT	*American Journal of Theology*
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANET	Pritchard, J. B. (editor). *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BBR	*Bulletin for Biblical Research*
BDAG	Bauer, W. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. of BAGD revised by F. W. Danker. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (editors). *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984
Bib	*Biblica*
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
BWL	Lambert, W. G. *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford, 1960. Reprinted Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CA	*Current Anthropology*
CAD	Oppenheim, A. L., et al. (editors). *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1956–
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica, Old Testament
CurBR	*Currents in Biblical Research*
CurBS	Currents in Research: Biblical Studies

DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
EncJud	Roth, Cecil (editor). *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 16 vols. Jerusalem: Keter, 1972
ER	Eliade, M. (editor). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. 16 vols. New York: Macmillan, 1987
ErIsr	*Eretz-Israel*
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GCT	Gender, Culture, Theory
GKC	Kautzsch, E. (editor). *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1910
HALOT	Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Trans. and ed. under supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994−2000
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HS	*Hebrew Studies*
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
IB	Buttrick, G. A., et al. (editors). *The Interpreter's Bible*. 12 vols. New York: Cokesbury
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	Buttrick, G. A. (editor). *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. 4 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962
IDBSup	Crim, K. (editor). *IDB Supplementary Volume*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
ISBE	Bromiley, G. W. (editor). *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979−88
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JE	Singer, I. (editor). *The Jewish Encyclopedia*. 12 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1925
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JM	Joüon, P. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Sibsidia Biblica 14/1−2. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JN(W)SL	*Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JR	*Journal of Religion*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSOR	*Journal of the Society of Oriental Research*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KBo	Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi
KeHAT	Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIB	*New Interpreter's Bible*
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OIP	Oriental Institute Publications
Or	*Orientalia*
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
PAAJR	*Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RelEd	*Religious Education*
RGG	Galling, K. (editor). *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* 7 vols. 3rd ed. Tübingen, 1957–65
SAOC	Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScrHier	*Scripta hierosolymitana*
SSN	Studia semitica neerlandica
TBü	Theologische Bücherei
TCL	Textes cunéiformes du Louvre. Paris: Geuthner, 1910–
TDOT	Botterweck, G. J., and H. Ringgren (editors). *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.* Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1974–
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
UT	Gordon, C. H. *Ugaritic Textbook: Texts in Translation, Cuneiform Selections.* Rev. ed. Analecta Orientalia 38. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1998
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WW	*Word and World*
ZA	*Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
ZAH	*Zeitschrift für Althebräistik*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZB	Zürcher Bibel

Observations on Ezekiel as a Book Prophet

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I. Ezekiel as a Writing Prophet

From the outset of critical research of the book of Ezekiel, many scholars referred to Ezekiel as a book prophet, that is, a prophet who manifested himself only in writing.[1] At first, this definition was accompanied by an acceptance of the book as a literary unity, totally belonging to Ezekiel. Abraham Kuenen, for instance, asserted that "there are no reasons compelling us to assume that the book of Ezekiel's prophecies were edited by someone other than himself."[2] It was Johannes Herrmann, and especially Gustav Hölscher, who perceived Ezekiel as one of the First Temple prophets, as a speaker, preacher, and poet. But this perception led them to break up the book into a pile of fragments and to claim (as Hölscher did) that a distinction should be made between the historical Ezekiel and the book that bears his name.[3] My own conviction is that Ezekiel indeed has the distinctive characteristics of a book prophet, but the literary material incorporated in the book represents the writings of only one personality, in addition to which one can also discern marks of an editor who was not the prophet himself. I will suggest some observations regarding Ezekiel as a book prophet, without intending to exhaust the subject in this discussion.

The qualification of Ezekiel as a prophetic writer can be proved, among other things, by the number of literary units in his book that are presented to us in a form that had no previous oral existence. These units are, especially,

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Author's note: It gives me pleasure to dedicate these observations to Michael, who was a bright student and is now a noted and creative scholar as well as a real friend.

1. Defining Ezekiel as a book prophet was put forward as early as 1847 by Ferdinand Hitzig in his commentary on Ezekiel (*Der Prophet Ezechiel erklärt* [KeHAT 8; Leipzig: Weidmann, 1847]).

2. Abraham Kuenen, *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in die Bücher des alten Testament* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Schulze, 1892) 2:293.

3. Johannes Herrmann, *Ezechielstudien* (BWAT 2; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908); idem, *Ezechiel, übersetzt und erklärt* (KAT 11; Leipzig: Deichart, 1924); Gustav Hölscher, *Hesekiel, der Dichter und das Buch* (BZAW 39; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1924).

Ezekiel's call (1:1–3:15), with its cosmographical speculations and the details
of the Divine Chariot described in it, which in their present form were cer-
tainly not meant to be heard; the literary unit succeeding the call (3:16–5:4),
in which ceremonial acts performed by the prophet are described, headed by
the command to shut himself up in his home and not go out among the
people (3:24–25); the prophecy about Gog (chaps. 38–39), describing his as-
sault "in the latter years" at the head of hordes from the remotest north on
"the people who were gathered from the nations," which ends in his calamity
on the hills of Israel and is a bookish formation with its inquisitive erudition;
the law code comprising chaps. 40–48, where it is unimaginable that any part
of it was ever delivered by the prophet as a live speech—not the detailed geo-
metric contour of the visionary temple or the meticulous ritual regulations or
the division of the land west of the Jordan into imaginary, widthwise strips.[4]
The series of visions in 8:1–11:25 and the vision of the dry bones in 37:1–14,
which are products of the imagination and have nothing to do with the public,
also belong here (on 11:25, see below, §III). In all of these prophecies, Ezek-
iel, in reality or in his fantasy, is alone, with no one seeing him or his where-
abouts; nor does he speak with human beings. Among the symbolic actions
described in the unit 3:16–5:4, there are some that Ezekiel could apparently
perform in front of an audience. But because he performs them all while being
shut up in his home, he does them for himself, and furthermore, he does not
speak. The discourse between him and the Lord in this unit (4:14–15), as well
as in the vision of the dry bones (37:3), is not contradictory with this situation,
and the same is true for the prophecy that he utters to the spirit (37:9–10),
which also takes place in his imagination. At the beginning of the law code of
chaps. 40–48, the "man" from the heavenly entourage tells him to "report
(הגד) everything you see to the House of Israel" (40:4); the meaning is appar-
ently that he should notify them by means of writing in the book. This is
stated explicitly farther on: "report (הגד) the temple to the House of Israel . . .
make known to them the plan of the temple and its layout, its exits and en-
trances . . . and *write it down* before their eyes" (43:10–11).[5] The code of
chaps. 40–48, as well as the prophecy concerning Gog, should by no means
be separated from Ezekiel's literary possession. These too are essentially similar

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    4. On chaps. 40–48 as a literary composition that was not preceded by any live rhetoric,
see Menahem Haran, "The Law Code of Ezekiel XL–XLVIII and Its Relation to the
Priestly School," *HUCA* 50 (1979) 46–53.

    5. These two verses have been somewhat distorted, but the wording presented above
appears in the LXX. The *waw* of וצורת was omitted due to haplography with עשׂו preced-
ing it. The *waw* of וכתב is *waw explicativum* (GKC §154*a*, n. 1 [b]), that is, by writing before
them you will inform them, as they shall be able to see what was written.

to his prophecies, their exceptional character being the result of their unusual subjects.

All the acts described in section 4:1–17 symbolize the siege of Jerusalem, and they are performed one alongside the other, one inside the other, so that all of them combine into a unified action. The association of the various acts into one symbol was not agreeable to moderns, who, searching for total unity, professed that there are different strata and expansions in this section and attempted to reconstruct a shorter original version than the one before us but in vain. Following are the symbolic acts described in this section: (1) The prophet engraves the shape of a city, Jerusalem, upon a brick, and places an iron plate between himself and the brick, thus symbolizing siege (vv. 1–3). The siege continues until all the succeeding acts are completed. (2) He lies on his left side and "bear(s) the punishment" of Israel 390 (the LXX: 190) days, and then lies on his right side for 40 days and "bear(s) the punishment" of Judah, "one day for each year" (vv. 4–6; compare Num 14:34). Thus the reader is informed how long the presentation of the siege lasted. All this time, the prophet faces Jerusalem, his arm is bare (4:7), and he is bound in cords so as not to turn over from side to side:[6] "until you have completed the days of your siege(s)" (v. 8), that is, according to the number of days allotted to each of the kingdoms.[7] (3) During this entire time, he eats poor bread in which vegetables are mixed with wheat and barley (Rashi and Qimḥi: due to the hunger) and drinks water by measure, while both the bread and the water are rationed in small quantities. In addition, he must eat a barley cake that was (previously) baked on human dung, though on this point God leniently allows him to use cattle dung (vv. 9–17).[8] In the following section (5:1–4) the fourth act is

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6. The purpose of the cords mentioned in connection with the lying down is: "so that you cannot turn from one side to another" (4:8). The different purposes convey different uses, and the two should not be confused.

7. The number of days (390 or 190 for Israel; 40 for Judah) is a riddle that has not been solved. Some scholars, among them Walther Zimmerli (*Ezechiel* [2nd ed.; BKAT 13; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979] 18, 163–68), referring to v. 9 which only mentions 390 days, claim that the 40 days allotted to Judah is an addition to an addition (which is lying on the left side). However, one can argue with the same degree of certainty that the 40 days were omitted there. Verse 8 reads: "until you complete the days of your מְצוּרֶךָ)." The last word, being plural, implies "(two) sieges." The reasoning put forward above serves to reject the notion that the number of days is not an original part of the text. The purpose of the "cords" mentioned as part of the confinement is: "so that you cannot go out among them" (3:25).

8. Verse 13: "Thus shall the people of Israel eat their bread unclean (טמא)." The word טמא here means "unclean," "loathsome" (see Rashi), not "defiled," because, from the ritual standpoint, preparing bread on coals of human dung does not cause impurity; compare

mentioned: he shaves his head and beard, dividing the hair into three equal parts. One part he burns "in the fire inside the city when the days of the siege are completed" (these are the days that were mentioned in 4:5–6); one part he must "strike with the sword all around the city"; and one part he scatters to the wind. In addition, he takes a small number of the hairs and binds them into the skirts (the LXX: skirt) of his robe, and from this small number there are some more that are burned in fire (v. 4).

All these acts are extremely peculiar, but most of them cannot be considered unfeasible in actuality. The only one that the prophet could not conceivably have performed is lying on his left side for 390 straight days or even only 190 according to the LXX, and then an additional 40 on his right side.[9] It is not surprising that many scholars claimed that the issue of lying on his right and left sides was a gloss (or a gloss upon a gloss), while the use of the first-person form in the text, not to mention the fluency of the passage, did not disturb them. The assumption is that, if the prophet could not perform that act, he also could not write it, and therefore the inconceivable must be attributed

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Luzatto's note on v. 13 in his Hebrew *Commentary on Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (orig. 1876; Jerusalem: Maqor, 1969). The sentence "among the nations to which I will drive them" (4:13) was displaced from the end of the chapter (as I will try to prove elsewhere). The reason for eating in loathsome conditions is not the exile but the siege. In v. 14, the prophet cries out that he has never defiled himself with נבלה (the corpse of an animal that died of itself), or טרפה (that which is torn by beasts), nor did meat of פגול (that which has been kept for three days and become corrupt [see Lev 7:18; 19:7; Isa 65:4]) ever come into his mouth. The issue is not that the barley cake belongs to one of these three impurities but that Ezekiel, being a priest, was strictly observant of the laws of purity, and he does not deserve to be humiliated by eating loathsome food.

9. See G. A. Cooke: "It is incredible that any man could lie prostrate on one side for such a length of time and retain his senses" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936] 53). Georg Fohrer claims that "maybe one should think of an ecstatic state" when considering the act of lying on both sides and suggests that, because it is an act that can only be performed for a limited while, the prophet received "only the call to act, and began to perform it" (*Ezechiel* [HAT 13; Tübingen: Mohr, 1955] 30). Fohrer was compelled to leave at least some of the act as having been performed, because according to his view, the symbolic acts of prophets were intended to "generate curiosity, attract attention and in this way reach the uninterested as well" (*Die symbolischen Handlungen der Propheten* [2nd ed.; ATANT 54; Zurich: Zwingli, 1968] 91). But the text before us does not mention an initiation of the act, and Fohrer's definition of symbolic acts does not accord with performing them at home, behind closed doors, as Ezekiel did. See also Ellen Davis's objection to Fohrer's view (*Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* [JSOTSup 78; Sheffield: Almond, 1989] 68). Maimonides (*Guide to the Perplexed*, part 2, chap. 46) opined that Ezekiel's lying on his side was one of the acts performed "in prophetic vision."

to someone else who, allegedly, was capable of telling it, and in the name of Ezekiel only. However, the lying on his left and right sides is said to have been performed, as the text explicitly states, when the prophet was confined, alone, within his home. From this aspect, there is no difference between these acts of lying on his side and the other symbolic acts that he is supposed to have performed at the same time and place. These are all parts of one and the same theatrical performance, all of which exist in the book in their present form, and the book is their place. In other words, if this set of actions was performed behind closed doors, with no one but the prophet as a witness, it is not so important how it was done, whether in reality or in the imagination. Moreover, we are not told when it took place, whether before the destruction of Jerusalem, or as a burdensome echo in the prophet's memory when he put his prophecies in writing after the destruction. The assumption underlying my method in interpreting the book of Ezekiel is that the intense psychological tremors that stirred this prophet concerning the fate of Jerusalem following its destruction should not be doubted, but his writings were put down in retrospect, not a few years after the destruction, and their verbal garb became a kind of self-sustaining literary work.[10]

As I mentioned, when experiencing prophetic visions, Ezekiel is alone. He is also alone whenever the "word" of God comes to him, and in this respect he belongs to the category of classical prophets, whose connection with the Divinity was certainly a personal experience. Yet, despite this similarity, Ezekiel's status is still unique. The visions seen by the prophets of the First Temple period are often intertwined within the reality in which they are living (compare Amos 7:1–2, 4; 8:2; 9:1; Isa 6:1; Jer 1:11; 24:1). This is not the case with Ezekiel, whom the hand of the Lord throws far away from his place, whether to the courtyards of the Jerusalem Temple or to the temple of his utopian vision or to fantastic sights that are not of this world. He is completely detached from his surroundings for the duration of these visions.[11] Acts of "insanity,"

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10. This method will be presented in detail in the third part of my work, *The Biblical Collection* [Hebrew], to be published before long.

11. To be sure, Michaiah ben Imlah also saw the Lord "sitting on his throne, with all the host of heaven standing beside him to the right and to the left of him" (1 Kgs 22:19), and the throne also appears in the visions of Ezekiel (Ezek 1:26) and Isaiah (Isa 6:1), as well as in metaphors that have a traditional element (cf. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*, 18–21). But Ezekiel's visions contain cosmological elements as well, which are apparently taken from the Mesopotamian sphere; concerning these elements, which are realized in drawings, and some may be connected to what is described in chaps. 1 and 10 of Ezekiel; see Othmar Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* [SBS 84/85; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1977] 139–273; Christopher Uehlinger and

whose entire existence is only as part of the story, can indeed be found in the prophetic miracle stories. Ezekiel's report about lying on his right and left sides (as well as the other acts mentioned in the same context) is also a miraculous happening. However, Ezekiel is unique among the prophets in this respect as well. The prophetic miracle stories are told in the third person, as the literary genre requires. Ezekiel speaks in the first person telling what he did when he was confined within his home. On the face of it, this report resembles chaps. 1 and 3 of Hosea, which describe in first person the prophet's marrying adulterous women. But, as amazing as it may seem that a man should take for himself "a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom" (Hos 1:2), it is not entirely inconceivable. This is not the case with Ezekiel's acts of lying on his sides, which—leading as they do to the other acts mentioned in the same context—together symbolize the siege of Jerusalem. The sequence of these symbols is, as said, a book work.

The eating of the scroll in Ezekiel's call prophecy (2:8–3:3) is very close in its characteristics to the previously mentioned sequence of symbols and, like this sequence, is unrealistic. After the Lord pre-warned him to eat what he was given, he sees "a hand stretched out" toward him holding a written scroll. The scroll is opened, and he sees "words of lamentation and mourning and woe" inscribed on both sides of the papyrus, just as the majority of Ezekiel's prophecies are going to be those of mass destruction. Upon eating, he senses the taste of the scroll as though it were "sweet as honey." This is an imaginary experience and Ezekiel, for whom the distinction between real and imaginary is often nonexistent, could easily have been attracted to it. Though we are entitled to believe that he in fact experienced what is described, the actual act of eating could not exist outside of his imagination, in objective reality. At the same time, the eating of the scroll is an extremely appropriate way of expressing Ezekiel's character as a book prophet. Jeremiah "eats" the words told him by the Lord and proclaims: "Your words were found and I ate them (compare Ezek 3:1: "eat what is offered to you," although this does not appear in the LXX), and your words (*Qere*: word) became to me a joy and the delight of my heart" (Jer 15:16). Jeremiah is "a man of words" (compare Exod 4:10; also Deut 18:18, Jer 1:9), although his prophecies are eventually written as a book

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Susanne Müller Trufaut, "Ezekiel 1, Babylonian Cosmological Scholarship and Iconography: Attempts at Further Refinement," *TZ* 57 [2001] 140–71). On the other hand, Jeremiah felt the touch of the Lord's hand on his mouth (Jer 1:9), at which time he was necessarily detached from his surroundings. Nonetheless, Ezekiel's uniqueness is also expressed by the intensity of the visions he experiences. We have not heard of anyone other than him who needed to sit "stunned" for seven days after the prophetic vision left him, in order to sober up and return to his daily schedule (Ezek 3:15).

(Jer 36:5–8, 27–32). Ezekiel "eats" the actual scroll on which his prophecy is written; he fills his stomach with this scroll (Ezek 3:3), because his prophecy is communicated through the book.[12] On the scroll, which he eats, the essence of his prophecies is already written, because this report was written only at a late stage, with a distant perspective that was also seasoned with prophetic imagination.

II. The Book of Ezekiel as Essentially a Literary Work

Ezekiel's character as a book prophet is confirmed by features of his prophecies that should only be interpreted as expressions of an essentially literary work. These features supplement the prophecies mentioned above, which had no previous oral existence. Thus, if one claims that these prophecies only speak for themselves, the following features will broaden his or her conclusions. Ezekiel's manner of setting his face toward the place or the people about whom he is prophesying, which occurs frequently and follows the order of "the word of the Lord," is an essentially bookish characteristic. This setting of his face is apparently borrowed from what we are told about Balaam, who needed to see Israel when he was about to curse them (Num 22:41, 23:13, 24:2), though because of Divine intervention the curse was turned into a blessing. Ezekiel looks and then prophesies toward the mountains of Israel (6:2), the false prophetesses (13:17),[13] the southern forest (21:2[20:46]) which is interpreted as Jerusalem (21:7[2]), the Ammonites (25:2), Sidon (28:21), Pharaoh (29:2), Mount Seir (35:2), and Gog (38:2). There are nine occurrences of this kind, which is corroborative evidence for the literary unity of distant chapters. There is, however, a crucial difference between Balaam and

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12. This point was also emphasized by Davis, that Ezekiel's prophecy was expressed in writing, which served as his basic mode of work (*Swallowing the Scroll*, 27, 50, 54). But Davis's view is quite different from my own. According to her assumption, the writing was a basis for the live speech that followed it (see especially pp. 24–28, 56–58). In my view, the live speech should have preceded the written text, and because we do not know the content of that speech, we can only guess at it.

13. Formally, chap. 13 is a continuous unit, the last section of which, vv. 17–23, addresses the prophetesses. Verse 17 is not the opening of a new unit. Johannes Lindblom considers chap. 13 to be one of the examples of what he calls a "fictitious speech," because "we can hardly imagine that Ezekiel once assembled all the false prophets of Israel and prophesied doom against them" (*Prophecy in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1962] 153). In his view, such "speeches" are prevalent with Ezekiel. The appellation "fictitious speech" is certainly appropriate, though not because of Lindblom's reasons, because he believes that the "fictitious speeches" were also delivered in public, "not in their present form, but in another way" (p. 154). He does not explain what this different way might have been.

Ezekiel regarding this matter. Balaam's curses, transformed into blessings, are a type of witchcraft and are connected with his act of looking at the camp of Israel. He is taken to hills from which he can see the people (Num 22:41; 23:14, 28), and Balak changes his point of observation each time, in order to achieve the "proper" effect. Ezekiel's turning of face is merely a literary cliché, for he is said to have turned his face in cases that could not have happened in reality, such as turning toward the false prophetesses or Pharaoh or Gog.[14] The formulaic character of these turnings is apparent in the set idiom used to convey them, which is always "set your face toward (שׂים פניך על/אל) . . . and prophesy against (והנבא על/אל)."[15] When the apparent object of the turning of face is different, a different verb instead of שׂים is used (4:3: והבינתה את פניך; 4:7: תבין פניך; 14:8: ונתתי פני [P's influence]). These gestures have no meaning outside of their written existence.

Ezekiel's characterization as a book prophet undermines the argument that he must have acted in Jerusalem because he supposedly had an "intimate familiarity" with what was happening in the city. This argument is supposedly supported by a few segments that create the impression that Ezekiel was in Jerusalem, speaking directly to its residents. These segments are: 5:5–17 (v. 5: "this is Jerusalem; I have set her in the center of the nations," and from v. 7 onward the second person is used); 12:17–20 (v. 19: "and say to the people of the land, Thus said the Lord God concerning the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the land of Israel"); 22:1–16 (v. 3: "a city shedding blood within itself," and from v. 4 on there is continuous use of the second-person feminine). In actuality, there is no agreement about the place and time in which these segments were written.[16] But apart from this disagreement it is assumed, and for some

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14. Fohrer maintains that looking at the object of the prophecy originally derived from a magical gesture (*Ezechiel*, 37). Zimmerli views it as an archaic trait in Ezekiel's prophecies (*Ezechiel*, 143). As far as the book of Ezekiel is concerned, I do not think that it implies anything more than literary dependence. William Brownlee took the phrase "set your face toward" to imply that the prophet traveled to all of those places ("Son of Man, Set Your Face," *HUCA* 54 [1983] 83–110), which is inconceivable.

15. Ezek 21:2[20:46] has merely a minor change.

16. In 12:17–20, Volkmar Herntrich (*Ezechielprobleme* [BZAW 61; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1933]) thought that the prophet was in Jerusalem; Alfred Bertholet (*Hesekiel* [HAT 13; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1936]), that he was in Judah but not in Jerusalem; Hölscher (*Hesekiel*) and Fohrer (*Ezechiel*), that he was in exile and that the prophecy addresses those who remained in the land after 597 B.C.E.; Zimmerli (*Ezechiel*), that he was necessarily in exile and that these verses can be dated between the years 593 and 586 B.C.E. Regarding the list of offenses put in the style of the Book of Holiness, in the unit 22:1–16, Hölscher (*Hesekiel*) claims that it cannot belong to Ezekiel. Herntrich (*Ezechielprobleme*) and Bertholet (*Hesekiel*) claim that, on the contrary, this is evidence of Ezekiel's activity in Jerusalem,

reason is taken for granted, that the words before us were uttered in a live speech, even though we have them only in writing. Since what is written is already distanced from the time when the "word of the Lord" came to the prophet, it is impossible to prove that these words had an existence in the form of live rhetoric before being written down and that they were phrased exactly as we have them written before us. At any rate, one cannot deny that what we have before us is in writing, and in writing the prophet could speak to Jerusalem using the second person, even from a thousand miles away. In just the same manner he uses the second person when addressing nations and countries he never visited, which is true not only of Ezekiel but of all the latter prophets. To a certain extent, the written words have autonomous rules. Even if they were preceded by live oratory, they are not necessarily identical to it. The written text is the only testimonial. Ezekiel's residing in Jerusalem is nothing other than an illusion caused by the unique delivery of his words in writing.

The five ritual images that Ezekiel sees in, and on the outskirts of, the inner temple court after he was carried there by the spirit (chap. 8) are an even less convincing evidence for his residence in Jerusalem. Let us not forget that the Lord in person, appearing as a fire from the loins and downward and as brightness from the loins and upward (v. 2), leads Ezekiel around the court, and there is nobody else there with the prophet. He sees 70 elders of Israel burning incense before animals engraved on the wall, after he had dug in the wall, entering a secret chamber (vv. 8–12), which means that practically no one reached the place before him. Of the remaining images, two are odd and incomprehensible: "the image of jealousy"[17] by the northern gate of the inner court (vv. 3, 5) and the branch of vine that the people of Judah put to "their

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because otherwise it would be merely a literary work. Zimmerli (*Ezechiel*) holds that this could not have been said in Jerusalem (p. 506: the Jerusalemites would have viewed these words as only "an unrestrained exaggeration"), and one must not exclude the possibility that they belong before the destruction.

17. "The image of jealousy" (סמל הקנאה) is a polemic term, so there is no way of knowing to what shape it is referring. It cannot be the Asherah placed in the Temple by Manasseh and "beat to dust" in the time of Josiah (2 Kgs 23:6). The orthostats of northern Syria and Mesopotamia in the twelfth to seventh centuries B.C.E., whom William Albright (*Archaeology and the Religion of Israel* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1942] 165–66) mentions, are irrelevant here, and his basic approach (pp. 165–68) to Ezekiel 8 as a cultic reality influenced by Egyptian and Mesopotamian rituals does not seem reasonable. Zimmerli is correct in rejecting Albright's view regarding the orthostats, but he attempts in vain to reveal a realistic element in the descriptions (*Ezechiel*, 214–15).

nose" (emendation by the *Sopherim* for "my nose"; v. 17).[18] One of the im-
ages is clearly understandable, and yet it appears to be imaginary: men in the
inner court are bowing to the sun, while their backs are turned to the temple
(v. 16). It is unimaginable that this was the practice in the Jerusalem court,
even in Manasseh's time, despite the fact that the temple's layout incorporates
an antiquated orientation toward the sun, which is Canaanite and even Egyp-
tian in origin. When worship of the sun was practiced in Jerusalem (in the
time of Manasseh, 2 Kgs 23:5, 11; Jer 8:2; see also Deut 4:19), it was surely an
alternative or a syncretistic form of Yhwh worship, which would not have jus-
tified turning someone's back to the temple.[19] The additional image is at the
entrance to the northern gate of the inner court, where the prophet sees
women "sitting," that is, on the ground, like mourners (compare Ezek 26:16,
Job 2:13, Lam 2:10), "bewailing Tamuz" (Ezek 8:14). Tamuz, the son and
lover of Ištar as well as the god of fertility, is well known in the Mesopotamian
sphere, as is his wailing (in the fourth month, not the sixth [8:1]). And this is
the only occurrence of his name in the Bible, appearing here with the deter-
minative article. The analogy of this image to the other alternating images in
this context, with the general frame of the vision, testify that this image, as
well, is not a realistic one. Tamuz, as a concept, was possibly known to Ezekiel
and thus was implanted in Ezekiel's ecstatic experience—and this was in the
temple, no less, which was doomed to destruction, as Ezekiel (who wrote his
vision after the destruction) already knew. The temple's destruction, as an
earth-shattering experience, required an explanation, and in the case of a
prophet such as Ezekiel the explanation could have exceeded the boundaries

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18. In chap. 8, זמורה is a branch of vine (see Num 13:23; Isa 17:10; Ezek 15:2; Nah 2:3).
Those who accept this meaning here and those who search for another meaning have made
various suggestions, without finding an acceptable solution. The omission of the end of the
verse is not a solution either.

19. The assumption by medieval commentators that the text deals with what actually
occurred cannot be accepted, nor the tedious efforts of modern scholars (Hölscher, *Hesekiel*,
10, and others) to find a historical element in this bowing and to search for equivalents in
the rituals of Egypt (Fohrer, *Ezechiel*; Zimmerli, *Ezechiel*) and other regions. I am also not
of the belief that these images in chap. 8, altogether, derive from what happened in the time
of Manasseh, as Kuenen (*Einleitung*, 2:267 n. 1) assumed in his time, following F. Hitzig
(*Der Prophet Ezechiel erklärt*): "the times of Manasseh hovered in spirit before the prophet").
This was also Yehezkel Kaufmann's opinion (*Toledot ha-ʿemuna ha-yiśreʾelit* [4 vols.; Tel
Aviv: Mosad Bialik and Dvir, 1937–56] 3:502: "the shadow of the sins of Manasseh still
lingers upon the city and the temple"; 3:538: "there is no doubt that the shadow of Ma-
nasseh's time lingers upon his [Ezekiel's] book"). Formerly, this was my view as well, but it
is more correct to state that there are no shadows of the past here, because it is no more
than prophetic imagination, which should not come as a surprise with Ezekiel.

of reality. All of the five above-mentioned images, which are in fact one progressive vision, were the product of a wild imagination that must have pressured the conscience of the prophet into writing them down. It was in writing that their expression was given to them, and from a certain distance of time.

Still another manifestation of Ezekiel's character as a book prophet are his historical surveys (chaps. 16, 20, 23), which are full of "learnedness" that is tendentious in its rulings, and are, due to their nature, literary products not meant to be heard. These surveys contain strange exaggerations that contradict the consensus of biblical tradition. If people besides Ezekiel, who probably were aware of their historical or supposed past, heard them, they would have been puzzled. These exaggerations are the accusations that were directed at Israel and Jerusalem: that Jerusalem was faulty from the time of her birth, and her father was an Amorite and her mother a Hittite (16:3, 45); gifts are made to prostitutes, but Jerusalem gave gifts to her lovers and bribed them (16:32–34, 41); Israel was already defiled when they were in Egypt, and they did not abandon Egypt's idols even after the exodus (20:7–8; 23:3, 8, 19, 21, 27); Jerusalem was more corrupt than Sodom and Gomorra, while Samaria did not commit "even half" of the sins of Jerusalem (16:46–52; 23:11).[20] These surveys also include accusations concerning historical crimes for which the people in exile were certainly not responsible, such as offering sacrifices at the high places after Israel arrived in Canaan (16:16, 31; 20:28–29), human sacrifices (16:20), and passing children through the fire (20:31; compare 16:21), which was the worship of Molek practiced in the time of Ahaz (2 Kgs 16:3; see also Isa 30:33) and Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:6).[21] If the prophet had announced these

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20. The mourner in Lamentations says: "the chastisement of my people has been greater than the punishment of Sodom" (Lam 4:6). If this analogy proves something, it is that Ezekiel's words were also written after the destruction of the temple. The destruction, as a horrible, incomprehensible happening, is the reason for the exaggeration.

21. Despite the vagueness of some parts of chaps. 16 and 20 referred to above, they still contain enough to comprehend the nature of the accusations against Israel throughout the ages. In 16:20, "you took your sons and your daughters," there is a reference to other human sacrifices besides the firstborn, which was a sacrifice of males. The children ("which you had borne to me, and these you sacrificed to them") are sacrificed to male images, which are foreign gods (vv. 17–19). In 16:21, the accusation "you slaughtered my (LXX: your) children" refers not to the firstborn, although it is followed by בהעביר אותם (as is 20:26 as well), which is the language used for firstborn (cf. Exod 13:12; 34:19). Rather, it refers to sacrificing before Molek, despite the absence of either the word *Molek* or the term באש 'by fire' here (compare Ezek 23:37: "and their sons . . . they have also set apart to them [to the idols] *for food*"). In 20:25–26, the two verses should not be interpreted each on its own; rather, they should be understood as one continual sequence: I gave them statutes that were not good and by this "defiled them with their gifts." This is based on the rule "measure for

accusations to the exiles, they could have responded, "How can we help, for we have already been punished and are in exile?" It is clear that the historical surveys and the accusations regarding crimes for which the exiles were not responsible were meant to explain and justify the destruction of the temple. Consequently, it transpires that at the time of these surveys the destruction had already occurred. In other words, it is not that the destruction is inevitable, which on the face of it one might conclude from some of Ezekiel's devastation prophecies, not having a historical perspective. The destruction has already taken place, and it is the need for explication that causes a distortion of the historical perspective. We cannot guess what the initial forms of these surveys were, when the "word of the Lord" that reached the prophet was not yet written down. But we would not be wide of the mark by assuming that, if there were preliterary formations that preceded the text before us, they were not favorable at all.

Another extraordinary manifestation of Ezekiel's character as a book prophet is his ceremonial act symbolizing the unification of Ephraim and Judah as one people. This theme is mentioned by other prophets as well (Hos 2:1–3; Jer 3:11–15; 30:3; 31:1–8), but only Ezekiel expresses it by writing, as befits a writer. In the prophecy of comfort in 37:15–28, in the first paragraph (vv. 15–20), Ezekiel brings two "trees" close to one another until they become "one tree joined together" in his hand, after he has written the name Judah on one and the name Joseph on the other. In this context, the 'tree' עץ means a writing tablet, as *Targum Jonathan* has it (לוחא), which is the correct interpretation.[22] These tablets do not resemble the 'staffs' מטות in Num 17:16–26[1–11]

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measure": just as their eyes were set on the idols (v. 24), and thus they defiled themselves (vv. 7, 18, 30, 31), so I made them "defiled" by unworthy gifts (see Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 218). The unworthy gifts are indicated in v. 26 which, again, speaks not of the firstborn but of sacrifices to Molek, as is clear from v. 31 (which mentions passing the children "through fire"). If they were not aimed at Molek, vv. 25–26 together with the explanatory efforts would be utterly strange. In 20:31, "when you make your children pass through the fire . . . to this day," the last words may be a vertical dittographic double but not a secondary "addition" from the end of v. 29 (where they are problematic as well). This is a distortion of historical perspective, which is typical of Ezekiel, and it accounts for the destruction.

22. Suggested with some hesitation by J. Philip Hyatt ("The Writing of an Old Testament Book," *BA* 6/4 [1943] 75–76), and with certainty by G. R. Driver (*Semitic Writings from Pictograph to Alphabet* [3rd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1976] 80). Some recent English versions such as the NEB and REB, have correctly rendered עץ אחד as one leaf of a wooden tablet. Concerning wooden tablets in Assyria, of which two, three, or more could be joined together, see D. J. Wiseman, "Assyrian Writing Boards," *Iraq* 17 (1955) 3–13; see also my remarks in "Scribal Workmanship in Biblical Times," *Tarbiz* 50 (1981) 72–73 [Hebrew].

on which Moses wrote, nor do they resemble the shepherds' 'staffs' מקלות in Zech 11:7–17, which were only given names but not written on. Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Habakkuk have the actual act of writing in common, and the latter two mention that they have also been written on tablets (Isa 30:8; Hab 2:2).

III. *Writing, Remembering, and Apocalypticism*

The above-mentioned state of affairs leads us to ask: was Ezekiel solely a book prophet, or were his prophecies also realized aloud before an audience? Ezekiel's prophecies allude to things he said, or should have said, to other people; but these are, as can be proved, not direct representations of oral speech. Ezekiel does not appear in public at all. When the text refers explicitly to Ezekiel's contact with other people, the prophet is sitting in his home, and the people ("the elders of Judah," "certain elders of Israel") come and sit with him (8:1; 14:1; 20:1; 33:31). They come in order to "inquire of the Lord" (20:1, 3, 31; also 14:3, 7), which means that they expect him to inform them of what is to be in the future, which was the common practice for "inquiring of the Lord" through prophets (for example, see Gen 25:22; 1 Sam 9:9; 1 Kgs 22:8; 2 Kgs 22:28). Because there is no contact between the two sides, it looks as if a curtain was stretched between him and them. They sit before him while a "form of a hand" is taking him by a lock of his hair and carries him to the temple court in Jerusalem (Ezek 8:3). In another case, before they have a chance to say anything, the Lord informs the prophet that they have "set up their idols in their mind," and therefore he "should not be inquired of by them" (14:3).[23] Moreover, any of the people of Israel who turns to the prophet, as well as any prophet who is "seduced and does speak a word" will be destroyed (14:7–10). In still another instance, Ezekiel gives the elders sitting with him a long historical survey without being asked to do so. This survey is (as is usual in this book) a distinct literary unit, describing the wayward behavior of Israel from the time of their exodus from Egypt until they entered the Promised Land (20:2–29). Following this survey, and as a continuation of the same unit, Ezekiel tells the "House of Israel" that they are defiling themselves as their ancestors did, and therefore the Lord repeats his oath not to be "inquired of by them" (20:30–31). Here the unit turns to elated expressions of comfort regarding their destiny, and with that it ends (20:32–44). It appears that, while giving this speech, the prophet disregards the presence of

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23. On the infinitive form at the beginning of the sentence in Ezek 14:3: האדרש אדרש להם, see GKC §51*k*; H. Bauer and P. Leander, *Grammatik* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1962) §44*a* (the latter think there is Babylonian influence in this case). It may be a distorted dittography and should be read האדרש להם, as some commentators have suggested (compare 20:3, 31).

"certain elders of Israel," despite their explicit appearance at the beginning of the unit (see 20:3; compare 14:3–4). Similarly, concerning the people who have come to sit with him, the prophet is told: "To them you are just a singer of bawdy songs . . . ; they hear your words but will not obey them" (33:32).

The answers that the prophet is commanded to give in response to questions he will be asked, which are generally also given to him by the Lord in advance (see 21:12; 24:18–24; 37:18–19), are just a kind of prearranged theatrical ceremony. These answers do not turn Ezekiel into an orating prophet, who was foreordained to stand before an audience of "thistles and thorns" (2:6). His speech in the east gate of the temple, performed within an imaginary framework and leading to the death of Pelatiah ben Benaiah (11:1–3), surely does not make Ezekiel a prophet of the preexilic type.[24] In the call prophecy, as well as in the prophecy following it, he is told a number of times (2:4, 7; 3:27) that he is being sent to Israel in order to "say to them: 'Thus said the Lord!'" But in the same breath he is warned: "He who listens will listen and he who does not will not, for they are a rebellious house" (2:5, 7; 3:27); and yet more decisively: "But the House of Israel will refuse to listen to you, for they refuse to listen to me" (3:7). The premonition about the people's inattentiveness means that, from the very beginning, there is little point in speaking to them and may also explain the paucity of real speeches. And it goes without saying that the theoretical contemplations about each person's responsibility for his or her own actions and the prophet's responsibility, as a "watchman," to "warn a wicked man of his wicked course" and "warn the righteous man not to sin" (3:21; 33:8) have nothing to do with this prophet's

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24. We do not read about Pelatiah son of Benaiah anywhere else, but scholars assume, apparently rightfully so, that he is a historical figure. The question is how Ezekiel saw Pelatiah's death from a thousand miles away, and how this death took place as a response to the prophet's proclamations within a visionary framework. Some scholars viewed 11:13 as proof of Ezekiel's telepathic ability or of his activity in Jerusalem, or else they considered this verse a later gloss. Zimmerli asserted that "if this [the death of Pelatiah] did not occur at that same point in time," Ezekiel did not have to see this as a denial of his prophecy, because "the validity of a prophecy . . . is in no way dependant on performances set according to the calendar" (*Ezechiel*, 246). As I see it, there should be no great difficulty here. We do not know what the prophet felt at the moment he was caught up by the vision. Quite a few years had to elapse after this moment, and what we have before us is what he sensed at the time of *writing*. At this time, Pelatiah was undoubtedly no longer alive, and it seems that in the course of time the images floating in the prophet's mind took on a slightly different form. The assumption that the words were written very close to the ecstatic experience is what overburdens the text with an unsolvable difficulty. Assuming that a significant distance of time extended between the experience and its being put into writing, toward the end of the prophet's activity, frees up the solution.

way of life. It is unimaginable that Ezekiel spent his time running from one person to another in order to watch their behavior.[25]

The only verse containing explicit evidence of active contact between Ezekiel and the exiles, on his own initiative, is at the summation of the series of visions in chaps. 8–11: "and I told the exiles all the things that the Lord had shown me" (11:25). This summation is not fully compatible with the opening of chap. 8, where "the elders of Judah" who are sitting with the prophet in his home are referred to (8:1). From the moment the "hand of the Lord" fell on Ezekiel, while they were sitting with him, no contact between him and them could have existed. When the last vision left him, we would expect him to turn to them but it again appears that the presence of the elders was forgotten in the flow of events. Nevertheless, I would not regard the summation verse as a mere addition. Ezekiel's literary units, with their loose structure, can sustain a certain incompatibility between beginning and conclusion. The aforementioned verse, which in any case is part of Ezekiel's literary inventory, can decide the question of his oral activity. Scholars who conceive Ezekiel to be similar to the First Temple prophets try, in vain, to identify units in his book that were spoken, as they appear before us, to a live audience. The truth of the matter is that, when this prophet put into writing what he had experienced or said at different times, he expressed himself as the images came to memory and materialized at the moment of writing, in retrospect, when the actual prophetic performance was over. Before putting his words into writing, however, he did not completely refrain from coming into contact with the exiles, though essentially he was an ecstatic recluse, a harsh man of fantasies. The very references to words that Ezekiel was supposed to say (for example, 17:3; 19:2; 21:14; 30:2) are evidence

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25. Zimmerli is not of this view. He maintains that from the call (2:4) to the vision of the new temple (40:4) we have repeatedly heard the explicit order to speak, and "before the dumbness clasps his (Ezekiel's) mouth, he becomes an admonisher." However, the dumbness comes upon Ezekiel only seven days after his call, seven days in which Ezekiel does nothing but sit "stunned" with the exiles (3:15). Zimmerli himself, with his inner integrity, seems to have sensed the insufficiency of this evidence and adds that the book of Ezekiel contains passages that present the oral form as it was. These are especially rhythmic passages or rhythmical prose, which by their nature are meant more for hearing than for writing (*Ezechiel,* 105). Recently, some have gone even further and claimed that the book of Ezekiel, which they consider to be a whole unified literary corpus, is also a "rhetorical unit" that was presented publicly to listeners of the first and second generations of exiles and was aimed at influencing them to sever their ties with Israel's past (Thomas Renz, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel* [VTSup 76; Leiden: Brill, 1999]). Regarding Zimmerli's position, let me remark that there are to be found (and not just in the book of Ezekiel) passages of poetry (such as the prophecies against the nations) that are certainly more than rhythmical prose but that existed only in writing, with no oral presentation.

that he had contact with the exiles, even if these are only apparent sayings that could not have taken place in reality (for example, 6:3; 25:3; 27:3; 28:12, 22; 29:3; 32:2). The explicit statement at the end of chap. 11 joins these sayings. In other words, when Ezekiel began to put his words into writing, he acted only as a prophetic writer. Before writing down his prophecies, he had some connection, restricted as it was, with his surroundings as a speaking or mumbling prophet.

The distinction we make between two stages in Ezekiel's activity, the stage of limited contact with the exiles among whom he lived and the stage of writing down his experiences as a prophet in the course of time, is apt to clarify what kind of relation there was between him and apocalypticism. The concept of apocalypticism is difficult to define, because as a genre it includes other genres that were blended into it, while as a spiritual movement its definition depends on the boundaries set for apocalyptic literature, which is a controversial issue.[26] Scholars who paid no heed to the complexity of the term tended to define Ezekiel as the founder of apocalypticism. Others claimed that Ezekiel had some of the qualities of this movement, but they did not consider him one of its representatives, certainly not one of its founders.[27] This second

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26. The term 'apocalypse' ἀποκαλύψις, appears at the beginning of Revelation and is typical of this work, the first two verses of which (1:1–2) express its character. The term, as a noun and as a verb deriving from it, appears again on a few occasions in the New Testament (Matt 16:17; Gal 1:12; Eph 3:3–5). But this is not a basically Christian term, and its definition requires flexibility; see Paul Hanson's comment: "Rather than describing an ideal type, it is preferable to sketch the typical features of the work originally designated 'apocalypse' in antiquity, the Book of Revelation, and then to consider which other compositions of the same era show sufficient similarity to justify extension of the term to them as well" (*IDBSup*, 27). In contrast, one New Testament scholar stated that "the term has often been defined so loosely and broadly as almost to lose any distinctiveness" (M. Rist, "Apocalypticism," *IDB* 1:157). Regarding apocalypticism as a spiritual movement, Hanson asserted that "it is impossible to devise one list which includes all the important characteristics" of this movement, though certain continuity is discernible in the major apocalyptic trends (*IDBSup* 31b).

27. Bernhard Duhm, after distinguishing between prophecy and apocalypse, seems to have been the first to consider Ezekiel "the father of apocalypse" (*Israels Propheten* [2nd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr, 1922] 232–34). This is also the way that Ezekiel is presented in Lorenz Dürr's book, *Die Stellung des Propheten Ezechiel in der israelitisch-jüdischen Apokalyptik* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1923). For examples of those who find some characteristics of apocalypse in Ezekiel's prophecies but do not consider him to be one of the representatives of the movement, see, for example, Otto Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (3rd ed.; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1964) 514; Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 406; Hanson, *IDBSup* 28b ("Though it is difficult to designate the visions of Ezekiel as apocalypses, individual motifs from his visions had profound influence on the development of the genre"); Julius Wellhausen, *Israelitische*

opinion is probably correct. Indeed, Ezekiel's prophecies contain some characteristics reminiscent of apocalypticism, foremost of which are the literary qualities of his prophecies, which on the whole appear to be works of writing. This is due to the fact that the prophet's feelings and perceptions at the time of writing were projected onto the memory of his ecstatic and prophetic experience years ago, and the temporal distance facilitated the projection. The fantastic character of his experiences, which were intensified by an uncontrolled imagination, also contributed to the apocalyptic appearance. That is to say, what imparts to his prophecies some apocalyptic features is not necessarily their influence on subsequent apocalypses but the circumstances of his activity, which only at its concluding stage became strenuous and vigorous writing. Ezekiel cannot be defined as an apocalyptic, precisely because his writing was preceded by live contact with the exiles, whereas the clear-cut apocalypses, concealing themselves as they did behind a pseudoepigraphic veil, are merely works of writing. However limited Ezekiel's contact with the exiles may have been, an undeniable repercussion of this contact is felt in his prophecies.

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und jüdische Geschichte (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1958) 147 ("his description of the new Jerusalem set an example for the apocalypses"); also Kaufmann, *Toledot* (3:537: "From a certain aspect, Ezekiel's prophecy set a model for the apocalyptic prophecy"; 3:548: "None the less, Ezekiel's prophecy was essentially classic, not apocalyptic").

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The Decrees of Yahweh That Are "Not Good": Ezekiel 20:25–26

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Within the prophetic indictment of Ezekiel 20, there are two verses (vv. 25–26) that are considered to be among the most theologically enigmatic of the whole book. Verses 25–26 state that, as part of the divine punishment delivered to the second generation in the wilderness, Yahweh declared:

> 25 Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they could not live. 26 I defiled them through their very gifts, in their offering up all their firstborn, in order that I might horrify them, so that they might know that I am the LORD.[1]

<div dir="rtl">

25 וגם אני נתתי להם חקים לא טובים ומשפטים לא יחיו בהם:
26 ואטמא אותם במתנותם בהעביר כל פטר רחם
למען אשמם למען אשר ידעו אשר אני יהוה:

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The context of these verses is a prophetic message given in response to the elders' inquiry (vv. 1–4). It is rhetorically structured in a chronological progression of three sections moving from the past (vv. 5–29) to the present (vv. 30–31) into the future (vv. 32–44).[2] Verses 5–29 are a historical retrospect dealing

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1. The NRSV (Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States, 1989) is used at this point to give a sense of how the passage is normally rendered. Elsewhere in the essay, unless otherwise stated, the English translation is my own.

2. Because almost all commentators regard vv. 25–26 as part of the original content of the oracle, the debate over the compositional unity of the chapter, specifically whether vv. 27–29 and 32–44 are editorial additions, is not one that needs to be entered into or resolved for the purposes of this essay. It is sufficient to note that 20:1–44 are thematically and rhetorically interwoven as a literary unit. See specifically the discussion of this in Daniel Block, *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 611–13; Ellen Davis, *Swallowing the Scroll: Textuality and the Dynamics of Discourse in Ezekiel's Prophecy* (JSOTSup 78; BLS 21; Almond, 1989) 110–13; Moshe Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20* (AB 22; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983) 376–88.

with the past generations' willful disobedience to Yahweh's proclamations.[3] The present aspect of the prophetic address in vv. 30–31 drives home the point that Ezekiel's contemporary audience in the Babylonian exile continues in the behavioral patterns of their ancestors. The message then culminates in vv. 32–44 with the future prospect of the purgation and reestablishment of the people in the land.

Verses 25–26 occur as part of the historical retrospect, which is composed of four thematic subsections that describe sequentially four epochs that are tied directly to their geographical venue: the people in Egypt (vv. 5–10), the first generation in the wilderness (vv. 11–17), the second generation in the wilderness (vv. 18–26), and the settlement in the land (vv. 27–29).

The theological anomaly of vv. 25–26 is highlighted by the contrasting nature of their content in relation to other declarations within the same oracle. The description of the decrees and judgments as being 'not good' and 'not life-giving' (לא טובים . . . לא יחיו בהם) contrasts with the perspective in vv. 11, 13, and 21 that observance of the divinely given statutes and ordinances, alluding to the Sinai experience, bestows life (אשר יעשה אותם האדם וחי בהם).[4]

Also, in Ezek 16:20–21, 36, and 23:37, 39, child sacrifice is spoken of as an act of spiritual apostasy and is considered repulsive by Yahweh and not something that he intended the people to do.[5] Thus the statement in 20:26, if understood as Yahweh decreeing child sacrifice, seems to be out of synch with the other pronouncements regarding child sacrifice in the book.

The most common way of interpreting vv. 25–26[6] is that חקים 'decrees' and משפטים 'judgments' refer to provisions of the covenantal law given by Yahweh, as in vv. 11–13 and 19–21.[7] Some modern commentators have un-

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3. Conclusions related to the derivation and the historical validity of the retrospect in vv. 5–29 are not focused on in this essay since such do not affect the issue specifically of how to interpret vv. 25–26.

4. See also the pronouncements of life for observance of the law in Ezek 18:9, 17, 21, 28; 33:15, 16, 19.

5. See also Jer 7:31, 19:5, and 32:35, where child sacrifice is not something that Yahweh commanded, nor did it even enter his mind for the people to do it.

6. For a survey of ancient interpretations, see P. W. van der Horst, "I Gave Them Laws That Were Not Good: Ezekiel 20:25 in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity," in *Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism* (ed. J. N. Bremmer and F. García Martínez; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1992) 106–18.

7. The other major line of interpretation is that these "laws" refer to the laws of Israel's foreign enemies, among whom they would be scattered by God; see Johan Lust, "Ez., XX, 4–26: Une Parodie de l'Histoire religieuse d'Israël," *ETL* 43 (1967) 509–13. While in exile,

derstood the declaration fairly literally as either a denigration of the Sinai law[8] or as a revealing of Ezekiel's true negative subconscious feelings with respect to Yahweh.[9] But most commentators have sought, in some way, to ease the theological disparagement.

One proposal is to read the verses as an interrogative[10] that constitutes a rhetorical question: "Did I give to them decrees that were not good and judgments by which they could not live, so that I defiled them by means of their gifts, by means of their offering all their firstborn, in order to devastate them?" The obvious answer would be "of course not" and thus a reaffirmation of the goodness of the law. But this interpretation flounders because there are no grammatical indicators that this is a question, and reading it as one destroys the literary parallelism with the preceding strong asseverations in vv. 15 and 23, which also begin with גם אני 'also I'. Just as those previous declarations cannot be read as rhetorical questions, so too the parallel form of expression in vv. 25–26 should not be.

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the people were either forced to follow the nations' edicts and customs, even those contrary to God's decrees, or willfully assimilated to them. This interpretively connects with the people's statement in v. 32 of wanting to be like the nations. This interpretation is found in the Targum of the Rabbinic Bible: "25. So, too, *since they had rebelled against My Memra, and did not wish to listen to My prophets, I removed them and delivered them into the hand of their enemies; they followed their stupid inclination and they obeyed religious decrees which were not proper and laws by which they could not survive*" (Samson Levy, *The Targum of Ezekiel* [The Aramaic Bible 13; Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1987] 62–63). But Levy notes that within the Targum tradition two separate lines of interpretation have been preserved. Thus the Sperber manuscript omits "enemies," with the resultant meaning being that "God delivers them into the power of their stupid inclinations, so they go 'and they make' the unworthy religious decrees and laws" (p. 63 n. 9). The latter reading corresponds with the interpretation that the people had misconstrued the divinely given laws and created regulations derived from them that were contrary to the divine intent.

8. Steven Tuell, "Divine Presence and Absence in Ezekiel's Prophecy," in *The Book of Ezekiel: Theological and Anthropological Perspectives* (ed. Margaret Odell and John Strong; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 200: "even the Sinai revelation itself was understood by Ezekiel as shot through with corruption (see Ezek 20:25–26)."

9. David J. Halperin, *Seeking Ezekiel: Text and Psychology* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 170: "In the unconscious thoughts that underlie Ezekiel's fantasies, Yahweh . . . demands . . . that children be sacrificed to his pleasure. . . . Of course, Yahweh will then emerge as a monster of cruelty and hypocrisy. But surely this is an accurate statement of Ezekiel's unconscious perception of his God."

10. C. Torrey, *Pseudo-Ezekiel and the Original Prophecy* (New York: Ktav, 1970) 88–90; Ernst Vogt, *Untersuchungen zum Buch Ezechiel* (AnBib 95; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1981) 120–26.

Other scholars have resorted to the emendation of rearranging the verses so that vv. 25–26 follow v. 27.[11] Verse 27 bears the accusation, "In this also your ancestors blasphemed me." Following that statement, vv. 25–26 are then understood as the quotation of the people that explicates exactly what their blasphemous pronouncement was: the people were erroneously attributing child sacrifice to Yahweh. But this rearrangement of the verses destroys the literary parallelism of the declarations of judgment (vv. 15–16 // vv. 23–24 + 25–26) in the two adjacent subsections, which follow the numerically increasing pattern of 1 followed by 1+1, all three of which begin with גם אני 'also I'.

The most common way of interpreting the "not good decrees" and "not life-giving judgments" of v. 25 that seeks to maintain an ideological consistency with the statements in vv. 11, 13, and 21 that observance of the law leads to life is to view those negative results as being the consequence of human misinterpretation of the divine regulations, rather than being an inherent quality of them. The divinely bestowed decrees of the law were actually "good," but the people's misconstruing of them resulted in the complete subversion of their intended life-giving effects. Verse 26a is then understood as citing either the reason or the purpose for Yahweh's intending or allowing the people to misconstrue the laws, so that through the observance of those misinterpreted statutes Yahweh would defile his people (ואטמא אותם). Verse 26b then expresses the resulting act of judgment, 'so that I will devastate them' (למען אשמם). The people's actions, based on fabricated interpretations, were thus contrary to the original divine decrees and were what, in turn, resulted in divine judgment coming upon the people.

The manner in which the divine participation is expressed in vv. 25–26 is interpreted somewhere along a theological continuum, the one end of which is that Yahweh "deliberately" gave the laws in "a form calculated to cause his people to fall."[12] In other words, Yahweh intentionally gave ambiguously expressed laws with the awareness that the people would misconstrue them, and he did it so that he could then punish them for their lack of obedience to the originally intended meaning and application of the laws. Yahweh thus created the circumstances that would elicit the people's disobedience. Cited analogies to this are the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in Exodus 7–11, 14, the sending of the lying spirit to the prophets in 1 Kgs 22:19–23, and the statement in Isa 6:9–

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11. Julius Bewer, "Textual and Exegetical Notes on the Book of Ezekiel," *JBL* 72 (1953) 159–61.

12. Walther Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 272. See also John Wevers, *Ezekiel* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969) 118: the "people's minds are wilfully darkened so that it is misinterpreted to mean child sacrifice."

10 that God worked in the situation so as to bring about the intended result of judgment. Ezekiel's declaration here is seen as a radicalization of that theological concept, in that Yahweh intentionally orchestrated the whole scenario.

The other perspective on the theological continuum is that the divine act of the verses is to be understood in a "permissive" sense. Yahweh allowed the people to follow after their own misinterpretations of the law.[13] An example of this reading is the NIV[14] translation: "I also gave them over to statutes that were not good and laws they could not live by; I let them become defiled through their gifts—the sacrifice of every firstborn—that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD."

Following these lines of interpretation, the manner of expression that attributes the activity directly to God is then explained as deriving from either theological perspectives or rhetorical motivations. It could be attributed to the radical theocentric nature of Ezekiel's theology, in which all events and results were directly attributed to God, even though in a modern systematic theology a more precise distinction would be made between what God actively does and brings about, and what God allows or permits to happen. Or similarly, because of God's foreknowledge of the people's rebelliousness, the subsequent punishment that resulted was spoken of in terms of divine causation. Or it could be a rhetorical exaggeration designed for its impact. Or possibly in attributing these laws to Yahweh, Ezekiel was, for rhetorical purposes, accommodating to and adopting the viewpoint of the people who held that Yahweh had actually given the traditions that they were following, even though Ezekiel would not have considered them from Yahweh.

Following the interpretation that the decrees and judgments of v. 25 refer to the divinely given law that was misinterpreted by the people, v. 26a is seen to be explanatory, because it cites a specific example of a "decree that is not good"—that is, the offering of the firstborn (בהעביר כל פטר רחם).

In the expression פטר רחם 'that which first opens the womb', Ezekiel is echoing the specific language of Exod 13:2, 12–13, 15[15] and 34:19–20, in which the firstborn belong to Yahweh and are to be given to him.[16] In fact the

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13. See a similar concept expressed in Ps 81:12–13[11–12]. Also frequently cited is the New Testament passage of Rom 1:28–32.

14. New York International Bible Society, 1978.

15. Although the interpretation of vv. 25–26 argued for in this essay differs substantially from George Heider's, he does elucidate the links between this chapter and the Exodus tradition and language ("A Further Turn on Ezekiel's Baroque Twist in Ezek 20:25–26," *JBL* 107 [1988] 721–28).

16. Exod 22:28b[29b] is frequently cited as the tradition being drawn upon by Ezekiel because it does not have the exemption clause related to redemption. But that verse uses the

echoing of Exod 13:12 seems evident, in that Ezekiel uses the same verb, the *Hiphil* of עבר: Ezek 20:26, והעברת כל פטר; Exod 13:12, בהעביר כל פטר רחם; רחם ליהוה. But for Ezekiel, the verb is a pregnant term signifying the sacrificial death of the firstborn, not merely a dedication of the firstborn. Although Exod 13:12–13, as well as 34:20 and Num 18:15, have the subsequent stipulation that the firstborn of humans are to be redeemed, the people, if they were aware of that qualifier, either disregarded it or understood it not as a universal regulation but as an optional alternative; that is, not that every firstborn must be thus redeemed but that the firstborn could be either redeemed or sacrificed. Thus the law related to the firstborn being given to Yahweh was misconstrued in the sense that what he demanded included literal child sacrifice. When understood in this way, v. 26 refers to child sacrifices that were performed as sacrificial acts of worship devoted to Yahweh.

That v. 26 refers to the cultic activity of child sacrifice seems to be well established.[17] Outside of v. 26 there are six other references in Ezekiel to cultic activity of this sort. In all seven occurrences, slightly different terminology is used to describe the practice:

16:20: ותקחי את בניך ואת בנותיך . . . ותזבחים להם לאכול 'and you took your sons and your daughters . . . and you sacrificed them to them [that is, to the idols] to be eaten';

16:21: ותשחטי את בני ותתנים בהעביר אותם להם[18] 'and you slaughtered my sons and you gave them by causing them to pass through to them [that is, to the idols]';

16:36: וכדמי בניך אשר נתת להם 'and on account of the blood of your sons that you gave to them [that is, to the idols]';

20:26: בהעביר כל פטר רחם 'in causing all firstborn to pass through';

20:31: בהעביר בניכם באש 'in causing your sons to pass through fire';

23:37: וגם את בניהן . . . העבירו להם לאכלה 'and also their sons . . . they caused to pass through to them [that is, to the idols] for food';

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term בכור 'firstborn' rather than פטר רחם. That the firstborn of humans belong to Yahweh is also found in Num 3:40–51 and 8:17–18, where the term בכור is used.

17. Contra Hartmut Gese, who argues that it does not refer to child sacrifice but only to animal sacrifices ("Ezechiel 20,25f. und die Erstgeburtsopfer," in *Beiträge zur alttestamentlichen Theologie* [Festschrift Walther Zimmerli; ed. H. Donner, R. Hanhart, and R. Smend; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977] 140–51).

18. A similar grammatical construction of נתן 'give' + the *Hiphil* infinitive of עבר 'pass through' also occurs in Lev 18:21, where it refers to the giving of offspring to Molech. See also Lev 20:2–5, where only נתן is used.

23:39: ובשחטם את בניהם לגלוליהם 'and in their slaughtering their sons to their idols'.

It is precisely the variety of expressions that reinforces the conclusion that the cultic acts described refer to the actual burning of the children as slaughtered sacrifices.[19] In 16:20 and 23:37 the children are presented as food offerings to the idols. In light of the literalness of the food offerings in 16:19, both 16:20 and 23:37 should not be interpreted merely in a metaphorical sense that the people had dedicated their children to foreign gods.

In 16:21 and 23:39, the children are said to be 'slaughtered' (שחט) to the idols. The word שחט is clearly a sacrifice-related term in Ezekiel, because the only other occurrences of the verb refer to the cultic slaughtering of various sacrifices in worship to Yahweh in 40:39, 41, 42, and 44:11.

In 16:36, what is 'given' (נתן) is 'the blood of your children' (דמי בניך). When the action is again referred to in v. 38, it is described as 'shedding blood' (שפכת דם). Similarly in 23:37, 'blood is on their hands' (דם בידיהן) stands in parallelism to 'offering their children as food to the idols' (את בניהן . . . העבירו להם לאכלה). And in 23:45, where the action is again mentioned, it is described as both 'shedding blood' (שפכות דם) and 'blood is on their hands' (דם בידיהן).[20]

The *Hiphil* of עבר is used four times in 16:21; 20:26, 31, and 23:37, and means literally 'to pass through'. The term העביר, by itself, can be ambiguous regarding the specifics of the ritual involved. But the interchangeable synonymous terms indicate that העביר refers to actual sacrifice when children are the direct object. The terminology of 23:37, העביר . . . לאכלה, is parallel to the expression of 16:20, זבח . . . לאכול, indicating that זבח and העביר are interchangeable as synonyms. As noted above regarding these two passages, the giving of the children as a food offering must be understood in a literal sacrificial sense. The more common expression with respect to child sacrifice is 'make to pass through the fire' העביר באש,[21] which appears in 20:31. Based on the use of that expression elsewhere when children are the objects,[22] there

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19. Contra H. Fuhs, who argues that the activity "refers not to a form of child sacrifice by incineration but to some sort of consecration associated with magic" and that specifically Ezek 23:37 "refers to Israel having alienated its own children from Yahweh, introduced them to foreign cults, and dedicated them to other gods" ("עָבַר, *ʿābar*," *TDOT* 10:417–18).

20. Elsewhere in Ezekiel the crimes of "shedding blood" frequently involve social injustices of exploitation and oppression that result in the actual killing of individuals (see 7:23; 9:9; 22:2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13, 27).

21. On the specific expression העביר באש as a cultic activity involving children, see Deut 18:10; 2 Kgs 16:3, 17:17, 21:6, 23:10; 2 Chr 33:6; Jer 32:35.

22. The expression העביר באש in Num 31:23 is not speaking of the same cultic activity. It is addressing the issue of purifying the spoils of war (vv. 19–24) and the way to determine

seems to be little doubt that an actual incineration rather than a nonsacrificial ritual of child consecration is meant. For example, in Jer 32:35 the expression העביר באש is used as the synonymous replacement for שׂרף באש 'burn in fire' found in the parallel passages of Jer 7:31 and 19:5.[23] Thus, העביר in 20:26 should be understood as referring to the act of child sacrifice.

Having given the common interpretation of this passage, I now turn to exploring whether this is, from a literary standpoint, the most viable interpretation. Of primary concern are five issues: (1) whether the decrees and judgments of v. 25 refer to the Sinai law referenced elsewhere in the preceding historical retrospect; (2) in what way the divine declaration of vv. 23–24 correlates with the activity of vv. 25–26; (3) whether the defiling of v. 26 is a consequential result following v. 25 or a distinct additional divine action; (4) the precise meaning of "defiling" in v. 26; and (5) whether the child sacrifice in v. 26 is to be understood as an act of worship to Yahweh or as an act performed in the worship of idols.

With respect to the referents of the decrees and judgments in v. 25, many commentators have noted the variant of the masculine plural חקים 'decrees' rather than the feminine plural (חקות) used elsewhere in chap. 20 for the covenant statutes (vv. 11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24). But deviation from the stereotypical phraseology of chap. 20 appears not solely in the use of the masculine plural but also in the use of both 'decrees' and 'judgments' without the first-person possessive suffix. Elsewhere in the chapter, the coordinated phrase is always חקותי 'my statutes' with משפטי 'my ordinances' (vv. 11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24).[24] A deviation from the stereotypical coordination of these two terms is also noticeable in v. 18 (אבותיכם חוקי 'the decrees of your fathers' and משפטיהם 'their judgments'), which is the only other occurrence of the masculine plural (חקים) in the chapter. In v. 18, the variance draws attention to the contrast between the inappropriate teachings that were formulated and followed by their ancestors as opposed to the divine stipulations of Yahweh.

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which purification process is appropriate for any given inanimate object. Although the similar expression of "passing through fire" is used there, it does not provide an appropriate hermeneutical parallel to the passages under discussion here; the same meaning of the phrase should not be assumed to be applicable to the differing context of making a child "pass through the fire."

23. See also מעביר בנו ובתו באש 'one causing his son or his daughter to pass through fire' in Deut 18:10, which seems synonymous with את בניהם ואת בנתיהם ישרפו באש 'their sons and their daughters they burn in fire' in Deut 12:31.

24. Outside of the six occurrences in chap. 20, this coordination also appears six more times in Ezekiel (5:6, 7; 11:20; 18:9, 17; 37:24) in the similar sense of covenant obligations.

Although the feminine plural (חקות) is the predominate form in Ezekiel in reference to the divine decrees of the law, on two occasions the masculine plural (חקים), in coordination with משפטים, is used: 11:12 and 36:27. In both of these cases, the first-person possessive, in reference to Yahweh, is attached to both nouns to avoid ambiguity regarding the source of the decrees. And the stereotypical language of Ezekiel, 'to walk' הלך, 'to keep' שמר, and 'to do' עשה, is coordinated with the two terms. So, although the masculine plural form is used in a couple of instances for the divinely given law, within the specific context of chap. 20 there does seem to be a differentiation between the referents of the masculine plural and the feminine plural forms, as evidenced from the different connotation of the masculine plural in v. 18. In v. 25, the grammatical deviation of the masculine plural coupled with the variant of no possessive pronoun attached to the nouns seem to be ways of literarily distinguishing the "decrees" and "judgments" of v. 25 from the "statutes" and "ordinances" of the divine covenantal law spoken of elsewhere in the chapter.

That a difference in referents is intended can also be deduced from the contrastive perspectives regarding the covenant statutes in the chapter and the decrees of v. 25. As already noted, the contrast is evident when comparing vv. 25–26 with vv. 11–12. In v. 25 the decrees and judgments are "not good" and are "not life-producing," whereas in v. 11 (also in vv. 13 and 21) Yahweh's statutes and ordinances are those by the observance of which "one shall live" (וחי בהם). Furthermore, Yahweh's 'declaring the people unclean' (ואטמא אותם) in v. 26 is a counterpoint to his 'sanctifying them' (מקדשם) in v. 12. These contrasts, which occur within the same literary unit, suggest that v. 25 is referring to declarations by Yahweh other than the covenant obligations formerly referenced, because it becomes illogical for the identically referenced decrees to produce opposite results.

To what then do the "decrees" and "judgments" of v. 25 refer? A clue to this can be found in the structural link between vv. 23–24 and vv. 25–26. Both begin with גם אני 'also I', which literarily highlights their structural interconnectedness. This repetition in v. 25 can be understood in one of two ways. It can be understood as an additional, unrelated declaration of judgment, or it can be understood as a literary device indicating a resumption of the subject of v. 23,[25] in which Yahweh swears to scatter and disperse the people. As a resumptive repetition, v. 25 would refer to that specific oath of judgment. Clearly that decree of judgment in v. 23 is not to the people's benefit—in

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25. See the similar use of וגם 'and also' in v. 12, where וגם . . . נתתי להם 'and also . . . I gave to them', with respect to the Sabbaths, is a further resumptive repetition that elaborates on and specifies the preceding "giving" of the statutes and ordinances in v. 11 (ואתן להם).

other words, it is not good. Rather it is essentially a declaration of death for the nation—in other words, it is not life-giving. Understanding v. 25 as refer-ring to the new declarations of judgment in v. 23, rather than to Yahweh's covenantal statutes and ordinances, would thus explain the variation in using the masculine-plural חקים as opposed to the feminine-plural חקות.

The generic משפטים 'judgments' also conforms with this interpretation, because the only other occurrence in Ezekiel of the plural not determined by a suffix or a construct relationship is in 5:8, where it also bears the meaning of 'judgments' in the sense of punishments for sin. In fact, 5:8 bears interesting literary similarities to v. 25 in that both are strong divine asseverations intro-duced by גם אני 'also I'. The generic plural of משפטים is juxtaposed in 5:8 with the immediately preceding threefold use of the noun in 5:6–7, where it has the first-person suffix and is coordinated with חקותי. Thus the משפטים 'judg-ments' in 5:8 are for failure to keep Yahweh's חקות 'statutes' and משפטים 'or-dinances' mentioned in the indictments in 5:6–7. And in 5:6–7 the people's disobedience to the covenant law is spoken of using the terminology 'rebel' מרה, 'not walk in' . . . לא הלך ב, 'not do' לא עשה, and 'reject' מאס, the same as in 20:8, 13, 16, 21, and 24. Also 5:8 declares that the judgments will be done 'in the sight of the nations' לעיני הגוים. This same motif appears in 20:9, 14, and 22, where Yahweh refrains from pouring out his wrath so that his name will not be profaned "in the sight of the nations," and in v. 41, where his restoration is done "in the sight of the nations."[26]

Thus it is appropriate in v. 25 for חקים and משפטים to be understood, not as statutes and ordinances that Yahweh had given for the people to follow—that is, the Sinai law—but, rather, the newer decrees of punishment that Yah-weh had declared would come upon the people due to their disobedience.

As already noted, vv. 25–26 along with vv. 23–24 form a two-part, parallel declaration of judgment, both beginning with גם אני 'also I'. The structure of vv. 23–24 is that of a twofold declaration of judgment expressed with infini-tives (להפיץ אתם 'to scatter them' and ולזרות אותם 'to disperse them'), fol-lowed by the reason clause introduced by יען 'because', which gives four reasons for that judgment. Verses 25–26 appear to be similar in construction, with a twofold declaration of judgment using the finite verbs (נתתי להם) 'I gave to them' and (ואטמא אותם) 'I defiled them', followed by the reason introduced by two prepositional phrases (במתנותם 'on account of their gifts' and בהעביר כל פטר רחם 'on account of [their] causing to pass through all [the] firstborn'), which in turn are followed by the two purpose clauses, each introduced by

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26. Outside of 5:8 and the four occurrences in chap. 20, the specific phrase לעיני גוים appears only four other times in Ezekiel (22:16, 28:25, 38:23, 39:27).

למען 'so that'. Understood this way, ואטמא אותם is not explanatory of the reason for or the consequence of giving the decrees that are not good but a coordinated, separate declaration of the judgment that Yahweh had decreed. The grammatical sequence should not be read as "I gave them decrees . . . so as to defile them" or "I gave them decrees . . . and thereby defiled them," but as "I gave them decrees . . . and, in addition, I defiled them."

A key to understanding v. 26 is the unique declaration that 'Yahweh defiles the people' (ואטמא אותם). This is the only place in which Yahweh is the subject of that verb.[27] When the *Piel* of טמא 'to defile' occurs and the object is a person (rather than a place or thing), it has the following meanings:

1. the subject performs a sexually defiling act upon another person that violates the other person's being (Gen 34:5, 13, 27; Ezek 18:6, 11, 15; 22:11; 23:17; 33:26);
2. the subject performs a defiling act, the contagion of which violates another person's sphere of holiness (for example, the death of a person violating the high priest, Num 6:9; the people's actions defiling Yahweh, specifically, his holy name, Ezek 43:7, 8);
3. the subjects do defiling actions that bring defilement upon themselves (Lev 11:44);
4. a sanctified person declares that the person who is presumed to be in an unclean state or condition is actually in a state of cultic defilement (Lev 13:3, 8, 11, 15, 20, 22, 25, 27, 30, 44, 59).

In the first three instances, it is clear that the *Piel*, when referring to bringing defilement upon a person, always means that it occurs because the one doing the defiling is also defiled in some way. In other words, it is not used in the sense of an undefiled person's performing an act that defiles the other person exclusively or causes the other person to defile only him- or herself. Nor is it used for an act of judgment upon another that results in the judged person's being in a state of uncleanness.

The fourth example is distinct, because it refers to a cultic pronouncement rather than an action that produces defilement. In other words, the priest does not bring defilement upon the person, nor does the action of the priest make the person unclean. The priest is making a cultic declaration based on the pre-existing condition of the person.

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27. The only comparable expression in Ezekiel in which Yahweh is the subject is in 24:21, in which he profanes (חלל) his sanctuary in an act of judgment. But there the object is a thing rather than a person.

Of these uses of the *Piel*, the one that most appropriately fits Ezek 20:26 is the one in Leviticus 13 (example #4). Understood in this way, 20:26 is stating that Yahweh is declaring the people to be ritually unclean and thereby unfit to worship him in his sanctuary. The "being unclean" is therefore not what Yahweh has caused them to be, nor is it something that Yahweh has done to them, but it is a consequence of what the people themselves have done.

In v. 18, the generation under discussion (vv. 18–26) was instructed 'not to defile themselves (*Hithpael*) with their ancestors' idols' (ובגלוליהם אל תטמאו). Although the specific terminology of defilement is not echoed in vv. 21 and 24, as the people are adjudged guilty, defilement is clearly implied because v. 24 declares that "their eyes were after the idols of their ancestors."[28] The question in v. 30, where Ezekiel asks his contemporaries whether they will defile themselves (*Niphal* of טמא) in the manner of their ancestors, also makes it clear that the previous generations had indeed defiled themselves through their worship of idols. In v. 26, Yahweh affirms this condition by making an official cultic declaration, implying that the people will bear all the consequences of defilement.

Understanding ואטמא in v. 26 as an act that involves divine speech fits the context well. Repeated in the historical retrospect of vv. 5–29 is the emphasis on divine speech (vv. 5, 6, 7, 15, 18; also implicit in the "giving" of vv. 11, 12, 25). As a verbal pronouncement affirming defilement, v. 26 provides the counterpoint to the voiced command for the people not to defile themselves in vv. 7 and 18. Also as an act of divine communication, v. 26 parallels the divine pronouncements of judgment in vv. 23 and 25, with all three verses citing negative consequences for the people. The parallel sequence could be paraphrased as follows: "I verbally swore that I would scatter them" // "I spoke decrees (of punishment) . . . and judgments" // "I officially pronounced you unclean."

The reason for the declaration of defilement is specifically cited in the following prepositional phrases: במתנותם בהעביר כל פטר רחם 'on account of their gifts, on account of (their) passing through all (the) firstborn'. In this chapter, one of the key issues related to the people's disobedience is idolatry (see vv. 7, 8, 16, 18, 24, 28–29, 30–31, 32, 39). This contextual emphasis suggests an identical cultic setting for the people's actions in v. 26. Clearly v. 26 is literarily linked to v. 31, which also uses the term מתנות 'gifts', the expression העביר 'pass through' with respect to children,[29] and the concept of defilement

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28. See the similar command and indictment for the generation in Egypt in vv. 7–8 and the similar indictment against the first generation in the wilderness in v. 16.

29. In v. 31, the LXX lacks the phrase בהעביר בניכם באש. Thus some commentators consider it an addition in the MT based on v. 26 (see G. Cook, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1970] 220; John Wevers,

(טמא). In v. 31 the object to whom the gifts and child sacrifices are given is the idols. Also, through the term מתנות there is a literary link between vv. 26, 31, and 39, where again the "gifts" are given to idols. Thus the specific terms in v. 26 literarily foreshadow their later appearances in vv. 31 and 39 and consequently can also be understood as offerings given to the idols, not to Yahweh.

Interpreting the gifts and child sacrifices in v. 26 as being given to the idols is consistent with all of the other references to child sacrifice in Ezekiel, where idols are the objects of these offerings: in 16:20–21 the indirect object is the צלמי זכר 'male images' in 16:17; in 16:36, 20:31, as well as 23:37 and 39, it is their גלולים 'idols'. Although no indirect object is given in 20:26, to understand the child sacrifices as being given to Yahweh would be an anomaly.

The understanding of the gifts and offerings of the firstborn as being to idols is also consistent with the use of טמא 'to defile' in chap. 20. The word is only used in this chapter when speaking of idols (see vv. 7, 18, 30, 31, 43[30]), not when describing violations of other covenant stipulations. When other covenant violations are referred to (see vv. 8, 13, 16, 21, 24), distinctive terminology ('rebel' מרה, 'not walk in' . . . לא הלך ב, 'reject' מאס, 'profane' חלל, 'not keep' לא שמר, or 'not do' לא עשׂה) is used,[31] but never טמא. Thus, in v. 26, the use of טמא points toward Yahweh's declaration of defilement as resulting not from acts of worship directed to him, but because of their gifts and offerings of children to idols.

As previously noted, the language in v. 26, העביר פטר רחם, echoes the divine statute about the dedication of the firstborn in Exod 13:12 (והעברת כל פטר רחם ליהוה). This deliberate literary echoing serves to highlight the levels of irony between that statute and the people's actions and perceptions referred to here. First, whereas in Exodus 13 the firstborn were to be dedicated to Yahweh, Ezekiel's fellow Judahites had been giving their children to the idols. Second, whereas in Exod 13:12–13 (also 34:19–20) Yahweh demanded the redemption of the firstborn of humans, implying that the actual sacrifice of humans was repulsive to him, the Judahites were not performing any redemption

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Ezekiel, 119; Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 1* [trans. Ronald Clements; Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979] 402). But the LXX has also (mis)interpreted the reference in v. 26 (בהעביר כל פטר רחם) as a divine act of judgment ("when I pass through upon every one that opens the womb"), rather than an indictment of the people's activity of child sacrifice. Once the phrase was understood in that way by the LXX translator in v. 26, it was not logical to translate the similar phrase in v. 31 that way, because such a meaning would then make no sense.

30. Although the "defiling" in v. 43 is tied to the more general "ways" and "deeds" of the people, the specific indictments in the preceding context (vv. 32 and 39) are only for serving idols.

31. See also the same terminology in the positive command of v. 19.

but were actually sacrificing their children to the idols, presumably because they thought the idols required or preferred it.

Ezek 20:26 places the activity of child sacrifice to idols during the period of the wilderness sojourn of the second generation after the Exodus. Elsewhere, child sacrifice is only attested among the Israelites after they were in the land (see Ps 106:34–39), with specific instances being cited during the period of the monarchy (see 2 Kgs 17:17).[32] Just as the historical recitation of chap. 20 temporally carries the sin of idol worship back into Egypt prior to the Exodus, so too v. 26 indicates that practices such as child sacrifices had antecedents that predated the entrance into the land. The lack of attestation elsewhere for the practice during the wilderness period need not mean that Ezekiel has fabricated this detail, for he may have drawn on a tradition no longer extant to us.[33]

The rhetorically intended purpose for the decrees and judgments in v. 25 (referring back to the oath in v. 23) and the divine pronouncement of the people as unclean in v. 26a is given in v. 26b through the twofold למען 'so that'. The intended result was for them 'to be horrified' שׁמם. Although at times this is translated 'to devastate them', in the sense of an imposed judgment, it should not be understood as physical destruction[34] but as an emotional result. When the *Hiphil* of שׁמם has a person as the accusative it clearly has an emotional connotation;[35] thus it means to bring about emotional and psychological devastation, "to cause to be appalled," as in Ezek 32:10. This contrasts with a situation in which a place is in the accusative, in which case "to devastate" refers to physical desolation, as in Ezek 30:12 and 14 (see also Lev 26:31, 32). Although what they will be horrified at is not specified here, whether the horrendous judgment inflicted or their horrific sins that brought about the punishment, it is probably the latter, because of the fairly frequent

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32. During the reign of Ahaz: 2 Kgs 16:3, 2 Chr 28:3; during the reign of Manasseh: 2 Kgs 21:6, 2 Chr 33:6; an issue dealt with in the reforms of Josiah: 2 Kgs 23:10; as a practice during the latter days of Judah: Jer 7:31, 19:5, 32:35. The only earlier example of human sacrifice may be Jephthah's vow and its fulfillment in Judg 11:30–31 and 39, if one understands it to be the actual sacrifice of his daughter.

33. The prohibitions of Lev 18:21, Deut 12:31, and 18:10 are rhetorically placed in the context of the wilderness legislation (see Lev 18:3, Deut 12:29, and 18:9, respectively) as part of the delineation of practices performed by the Egyptians and the Canaanites that the Israelites were not to appropriate. Although none of these passages accuses the Israelites of performing child sacrifices during this period, and clearly the dating of this practice even among the other peoples is dependent on when one dates these pieces of legislation, nevertheless the prohibitions may reflect a tradition of the Israelites' *awareness* of these practices while in Egypt and prior to their entrance into the land.

34. Contra Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1–20*, 369; Heider, " Further Turn," 721.

35. See Cooke, *The Book of Ezekiel*, 224.

occurrence of that motif in Ezekiel. This is precisely the rhetorical purpose cited in vv. 43–44 to be achieved through the restoration to the land: the people will remember (זכר) their ways and deeds through which they have defiled themselves (*Niphal* of טמא) and will loathe themselves (קוט בפנים). A similar rhetorical purpose is cited in 6:8–10 and 7:16–18 with respect to the acts of judgment, and in 16:54, 61, 63; 36:31–32, and 43:10–11 with respect to divine acts of restoration. The events of judgment and restoration are designed to produce within people a remembering (זכר) of and groaning (המה) over their sins that will result in emotional responses of shame (בוש), dismay (כלם), and a loathing of themselves (קוט בפנים). Although the specific terminology of שמם is not used in any of these other passages, clearly the intended rhetorical outcome is the same. Thus the aim of Yahweh's actions in vv. 25–26a is to shock the people into recognizing the severity of the evil they have done.

A second purpose is to produce within the people a recognition of Yahweh: למען אשר ידעו אשר אני יהוה 'so that they will know that I am Yahweh'. Whereas the first purpose is focused on the people's view of what they have done, with the production of a negative attitude toward it, this second purpose is positive in that it focuses the people's attention on who Yahweh is. Although a number of commentators have deleted this phrase as a secondary addition,[36] caution should be exercised in doing so, given that in 20:43–44 and 6:8–10 the recognition formula is also coupled with declarations that the people would experience shame for their sins.

The interpretation of 20:25–26 proposed here is consistent with both the literary context and the terminology and grammatical forms used elsewhere in the book.

(1) The use of the generic masculine plural (חקים 'decrees') in v. 25 indicates that those decrees refer not to the covenantal laws, which are elsewhere indicated through a feminine plural with first-person possessive suffix and in vv. 11, 13, and 21 are viewed as being life-giving.

(2) The structural connections between vv. 23–24 and 25–26 suggest that the decrees and judgments of the latter refer back to the divine judgment of exile in v. 23. It is then the divine declarations of impending judgment that are "not good" and that result in "death" to the nation.

(3) The grammatical construction of נתתי . . . ואטמא 'I gave . . . and I defiled' should be read as two coordinated acts, akin to the grammatical construction in v. 23, which cites two divine acts by using infinitives. Thus, in v. 26, the conjunction on ואטמא does not introduce a result or purpose clause.

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36. Ibid., 219; Zimmerli *Ezekiel 1*, 401.

(4) The best comparable use of the *Piel* of טמא 'defile' is found in Leviticus 13. In Ezek 20:26, Yahweh is "declaring the people unclean," just as the priest made a declaration regarding the person with a skin disease in Leviticus.

(5) The reason for the decrees of judgment and the declaration of the people as defiled are the consequences of the people's gifts and child sacrifices. The literary links to the subsequent verses (31 and 39) suggest that these offerings by the people were not to Yahweh; rather, they were to idols.

Thus vv. 25–26 are best rendered:

> And also I gave them decrees [regarding their dispersion and scattering] that were not good and judgments [of punishment] by which they would not have life. And I declared them defiled on account of their gifts [to their idols], on account of offering [by fire to idols] all [their] firstborn, so that I would cause them to be horrified, so that they would know that I am Yahweh.

Ellipsis Involving Negation in Biblical Poetry

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1.0   Introduction

Ellipsis involves words that are not phonologically present, but whose existence is understood by speakers and hearers, as well as writers and readers. In (1), for example, only the first instance of the verb is phonologically realized; in the second line the verb is equally present, though it is neither spoken nor heard:

(1) Isa 1:27[1]

Zion by justice <u>shall be redeemed</u>　　　　　　ציון במשפט תפדה
and her repentant ones by righteousness [*shall be redeemed*].　ושביה בצדקה

In this case, it is relatively easy to determine that the second line is elliptical. Ellipsis has deleted a required element in the sentence, resulting in the fragmentation of the surface syntax: 'and her repentant ones by righteousness' is not a complete sentence. The hearer or reader must restore the missing verb on the basis of the previous sentence, which has identical constituents as well as the missing verb.

Ellipsis involving negation, however, is far more problematic, because the deletion of a negative particle does not result in fragmentation of the surface syntax. Consider (2):

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1. In translations of biblical examples involving ellipsis, underlining indicates the antecedent(s). Material that has been deleted by ellipsis is italicized and enclosed in square brackets.

(2) Isa 23:4

    a. I have <u>not</u> labored,   לֹא־חַלְתִּי

    b. and I have <u>not</u> given birth,   ולֹא־יָלַדְתִּי

    c. and I have <u>not</u> reared young men,   ולא גדלתי בחורים

    d. I have [*not*] brought up young women.   רוממתי בתולות

The three clauses in (a), (b), and (c) are each explicitly negated with לֹא. The clause in (d) must also be understood as negated, although no trace of the negative remains in the surface structure.

    Another example is found in (3):

(3) Ps 38:2

    O Lord, <u>do not</u> in your anger rebuke me,   יהוה אל־בקצפך תוכיחני

    and [*do not*] in your wrath discipline me.   ובחמתך תיסרני

On the level of poetics, the two lines are "synonymously" parallel. The second line is understood as negated, although no negative marker is present.

    Ellipsis involving negation, then, is a particularly troublesome phenomenon. Deletion of a negative does not leave any detectable trace in the surface structure, but it reverses the semantic polarity of the sentence. It is probably for this reason that ellipsis of the negative is quite unusual in biblical poetry. Ordinarily, if both lines are negative, an explicit indicator of negation is present in both lines, as in (4):

(4) Isa 5:12

    And the doing of the Lord they do <u>not</u>   ואת פעל יהוה לא יביטו
        acknowledge,

    and the work of his hands they do <u>not</u> see.   ומעשה ידיו לא ראו

Nonetheless, because ellipsis of the negative is possible, it is very important to know the extent to which negatives can be elided in biblical poetry and how to recognize, or at least suspect, that this elision has taken place.

    In this essay I discuss the interplay of negation and ellipsis in biblical poetry. I describe the various kinds of ellipsis that are attested and provide a preliminary description of the syntactic environments within which ellipsis of the negative is possible.[2]

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2. The research for this paper involved an exhaustive analysis of negative ellipsis involving לא in Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah, The Twelve, Lamentations, and Song of Songs; additional examples from elsewhere in the biblical text are included where relevant. Three kinds of elliptical constructions involving negation are excluded. First, rhetorical questions introduced with הלא (e.g., Ps 139:21, Joel 1:16) are excluded from consideration, because

2.0   Syntactic Preliminaries

2.1   Negation in Biblical Hebrew

Linguists distinguish two types of negation—constituent negation, in which only a constituent is negated, and sentential negation, in which the entire proposition of the sentence is negated.[3] Both types of negation are present in Hebrew. Constituent negation in Hebrew is less common than in English, but it is attested, as illustrated in (5):[4]

(5) Jer 22:13—constituent negation

Woe to the one who builds his house with <u>unrighteousness</u>	הוי בנה ביתו בלא־צדק
and his upper chambers with <u>injustice</u>.	ועליותיו בלא משפט

Constituent negation does not interact with elliptical processes and thus will not be discussed further here.[5]

Sentential negation involves negative particles such as לא, אל, אין, and בל, as well as the negatives used for negating subordinate clauses: לבלתי and פן. In prose, sentential negation requires an explicit indicator of negation for each negated predication, as in (6):[6]

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semantically they do not involve negation. Second, ellipsis involving verbless clauses is also excluded here, although preliminarily I note that ellipsis can involve either the subject constituent (e.g., Ps 75:7) or the predicate constituent (e.g., Prov 18:5). Third, ellipsis involving a deictic pro-element (such as כן in Ps 1:4) is excluded.

3. See Edward S. Klima, "Negation in English," in *The Structure of Language* (ed. Jerry A. Fodor and Jerrold J. Katz; Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964) 246–323. For difficulties in distinguishing sentential negation from constituent negation in English, see Laurence R. Horn, *A Natural History of Negation* (2nd ed.; Stanford, Calif.: CSLI, 2001) 184–92, 504–18. For a cross-linguistic survey of types of negation, see John R. Payne, "Negation," in *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (ed. Timothy Shopen; 3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 1:197–242.

4. For a list of instances involving constituent negation, see GKC §152a n. 1 and Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 661 n. 59. Waltke and O'Connor refer to constituent negation as "item negation" (§39.3.2).

5. However, in some cases (e.g., Isa 31:8, 45:18, 55:1; Zech 14:7), it is difficult to know whether constituent negation is involved or whether all of a sentence except for one constituent has been deleted (as described in §3.3 below).

6. JM §160q lists some exceptions, but the prose examples (Exod 28:43; Lev 22:9, 15–16) are dubious in that they relate to conditional sentences within pentateuchal regulations. Two other exceptional cases can be mentioned. In Jer 26:19, הלא occurs at the beginning of a series of verbs; the construction seems to mean: 'Isn't it the case that . . .' (see also

(6) 1 Sam 12:4—sentential negation in prose (each verb negated)

<div dir="rtl">ויאמרו לא עשקתנו ולא רצותנו ולא־לקחת מיד־איש מאומה</div>

  a. (literal)   They said, "You have <u>not</u> defrauded us, and you have <u>not</u> oppressed us, and you have <u>not</u> taken from anyone anything."
  b. (cf. English)   They said, "You have <u>not</u> defrauded us, oppressed us, or taken[T]anything from anyone."

In English, unlike Hebrew, it is possible to delete the repeated negative as in (b), where each verb is understood as negated, but only the initial verb is preceded by an explicit marker of negation.

The requirement in Hebrew that each verb "bear the burden of its own negation" is usually followed in biblical poetry as well; ordinarily the negative is repeated with each predication, as we saw in (4) above.[7] Ellipsis of the negative, as exemplified in (2) and (3), is thus an unusual phenomenon, even in biblical poetry.

Another feature of negation in Hebrew involves the placement of the negative marker. In both prose and poetry, the negative marker must always appear *before* the verb (it can never appear *after* the verb), and usually it appears *immediately* before the verb.[8] This syntactic fact will play an important role in the discussion concerning ambiguity of negative ellipsis in §3.4 below.

2.2   Ellipsis in Biblical Hebrew

As noted above (§1.0), ellipsis involves words that are "missing" but yet understood by speakers and hearers. We can refine this description of ellipsis by

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Jer 22:15). In Amos 9:10, the negative is gapped and the verbs share a subject: לא־תגיש ותקדים בעדינו הרעה 'The evil will not draw near and will [not] meet us'. Interestingly, the noun phrase that serves as subject of both verbs follows the second verb, though it is hard to know what to make of that fact. Compare Isa 48:19, which has no ellipsis and the subject intervenes between the verb and the prepositional phrase (i.e., in the middle of the verb phrase).

7. As O'Connor observes: "The rule that every verb must bear the burden of its own negation is rarely contravened by gapping and in our corpus there are no examples of negative gapping" (M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1980] 406). O'Connor mentions Deut 32:6cd as a possible exception, but that example involves a rhetorical use of הלא.

8. This fact concerning the placement of the negative marker with respect to the verb in Biblical Hebrew reflects the most prominent pattern of negation cross-linguistically (Ö. Dahl, "Typology of Sentence Negation," *Linguistics* 17 [1979] 79–106). In addition, Biblical Hebrew has syntactic negation (i.e., it uses an uninflected negative particle) rather than morphological negation.

stating that ellipsis is a syntactic phenomenon that involves the deletion of a required element.[9] With this definition, I am excluding verses that involve the distribution of the constituents of a clause across multiple poetic lines without any evident fragmentation in the surface syntax.[10] Consider (7):

(7) Prov 8:26

When he had not made the earth, and the fields,	עד־לא עשה ארץ וחוצות
and the beginning of the dust of the world.	וראש עפרות תבל

The object consists of three conjoined noun phrases. If this sentence were encountered in prose, we would not consider it to have a structural hole or gap.[11]

Similarly excluded are instances in which the constituent in the second line is appositional to the final constituent in the first line, as in (8):

(8) Jer 31:7

Save, O LORD, your people,	הושע יהוה את־עמך
the remnant of Israel.	את שארית ישׂראל

The noun phrase 'the remnant of Israel' is in apposition to 'your people'.[12]

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9. For a linguistic overview of ellipsis, see Shalom Lappin, "The Interpretation of Ellipsis," in *The Handbook of Contemporary Semantic Theory* (ed. Shalom Lappin; Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) 145–75; and Chris Wilder, "Some Properties of Ellipsis in Coordination," in *Studies on Universal Grammar and Typological Variation* (ed. Artemis Alexiadou and T. Alan Hall; Linguistik Aktuell 13; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1997) 59–107. For discussions from the standpoint of biblical poetry, see O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 124–29, 401–7; Wilfred G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (JSOTSup 26; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984) 303–6; Paul E. Dion, *Hebrew Poetics* (2nd ed.; Mississauga: Benben, 1992) 14–16; and my "Linguistic Approach to Ellipsis in Biblical Poetry: Or, What to Do When Exegesis of What Is There Depends on What Isn't," *BBR* 13 (2003) 251–70.

10. For additional examples, see Zech 12:7 (with coordinate subjects), Prov 8:26 (with coordinate objects), and Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6 (with coordinate prepositional phrases).

11. I acknowledge that many generative linguists would consider these structures to be formed through deletion of underlying coordinate structures. Example (7) would be understood to have three underlying coordinate sentences: [*he had not made the earth*] [*he had not made the fields*] [*he had not made the beginning of the dust of the world*]. Conjunction reduction factors out the identical subjects and verbs to produce a single sentence: [*he had not made* [[*the earth*] and [*the fields*] and [*the beginning of the dust of the world*]]]. (Following linguistic convention, I use square brackets to indicate constituent boundaries.) Similarly, it is possible to understand appositional phrases, such as those in (8) below, as derived from underlyingly coordinate structures: [*save, O Lord, your people*] [*save, O Lord, the remnant of Israel*] → [*save, O Lord,* [[*your people*] [*the remnant of Israel*]]].

12. For additional examples, see Ps 91:5 (with appositional prepositional phrases) and Lam 4:12 (with appositional subjects).

Ellipsis is possible only when three conditions are met.[13] First, ellipsis operates on coordinate structures. In Biblical Hebrew poetry, conjoined lines with identical syntax may be coordinated explicitly with the conjunction *waw*, as in (9):

(9) Ps 88:13

<u>Are</u> your wonders <u>made known</u> in darkness,	היודע בחשך פלאך
and [*is*] your righteousness in the land of oblivion [*made known*]?	וצדקתך בארץ נשיה

However, in the syntactically identical verse in (10), *waw* does not occur. Instead, the lines are asyndetically coordinate; that is, they are conjoined without an overt conjunction.

(10) Ps 88:12

<u>Is</u> your faithfulness <u>recounted</u> in the grave,	היספר בקבר חסדך
[*is*] your constancy in Abaddon [*recounted*]?	אמונתך באבדון

In both (9) and (10), the two lines are syntactically coordinate; ellipsis of the verb has operated in each.

   The requirement that ellipsis operate on coordinate structures is important because it tells us, for example, that we should not expect ellipsis to occur from a main clause to a subordinate clause. And this is, in fact, the case in Biblical Hebrew. We do not find sentences such as:

(11) Unattested sentence (ellipsis from main clause to subordinate clause)

Zion by justice <u>shall be redeemed</u> (תפדה),
<u>so that</u> (למען) her repentant ones by righteousness [*might be redeemed* (יפדו)].

Ellipsis, then, is possible between two lines (a bicolon) within biblical verse only when the lines are coordinate, with each line comprising a clausal conjunct. Not all bicola meet this requirement. Furthermore, ellipsis is possible within a single line of poetry, if it contains two coordinate clauses. As a result, the syntactic contexts within which ellipsis occurs do not necessarily correspond to poetic lines.

   A second requirement of ellipsis is that the two halves of the coordinate sentence must correspond syntactically, though languages differ concerning the nature of the correspondence. In Biblical Hebrew, this requirement usually

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13. For a more detailed discussion, see my "Constraints on Ellipsis in Biblical Hebrew," in *Papers on Semitic and Afroasiatic Linguistics in Honor of Gene B. Gragg* (SAOC; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, forthcoming).

means that the constituents in the two conjuncts match exactly. For example, in (2), the constituents of conjuncts (c) and (d) are identical and occur in the same order: verb, object. In (3), the clausal constituents of the two conjuncts also match precisely: prepositional phrase, verb, object. Note that for the purposes of ellipsis, the vocative does not count as a clausal constituent.[14] Ellipsis is possible in Hebrew when the constituents do not match precisely, under certain specifiable syntactic conditions, a point to which I will return below.[15]

A third requirement of ellipsis is that the item that is present and the item that is deleted must be lexically identical—the deleted verb in (1) must be יפדו ('they will be redeemed'), the same lexical item that is present in the first conjunct, adjusted to agree in gender and number with the subject of the second conjunct. When ellipsis involves negation, the requirement of lexical identity means that the specific negative particle must be identical in both conjuncts. For example, in (3), it is impossible to restore לא as the negative particle that has been deleted, even though in isolation תיסרני, understood as an imperfect, could be negated with לא. Instead, the presence of אל in the first conjunct means that we must understand אל to be the item that is deleted from the second conjunct.

A final feature of ellipsis involves the direction of ellipsis. All of the Hebrew examples we have looked at thus far involve forwards ellipsis, that is, an item is present in the first conjunct and is deleted from the second conjunct. The opposite situation—when deletion occurs in the first conjunct—is known as backwards ellipsis. Backwards ellipsis in Biblical Hebrew is highly constrained. Backwards ellipsis of constituents is possible only from final position in the clause, as in (12):[16]

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14. Similarly, O'Connor considers the vocative to be "extraneous" to the clause (O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 79–81), and McCawley views the vocative as "extrasentential," that is, it is not a syntactic constituent of the host sentence (James D. McCawley, *The Syntactic Phenomena of English* [2 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988] 2:763–64).

15. Two conditions will be mentioned briefly. First, within a finite clause a prepositional phrase in one line may correspond to an adverbial phrase in the other line (see example [17] below). Second, the constituent structures may match only as far as a clause boundary within the line. For example, in Mic 7:1, the existential predicate אין has been elided from the beginning of the second line: אין־אשכול לאכול בכורה אותה נפשי 'There is no grape cluster to eat / [*there is no*] ripe fig (that) my soul desires'. The two lines match only at the highest syntactic level; they differ in that the subject in the first line (אשכול) is modified by an infinitival clause, whereas the subject in the second line (בכורה) is modified by an unmarked relative clause.

16. This observation about backwards ellipsis corresponds to what we know about ellipsis cross-linguistically. Languages that allow backwards ellipsis, such as Russian, do so from final position. For example, Russian allows both forwards and backwards gapping of

(12) Ps 94:3

How long [*will*] the wicked [*exult*], O LORD,   עד־מתי רשעים יהוה
how long <u>will</u> the wicked <u>exult</u>?   עד־מתי רשעים יעלזו

Recall that the vocative does not count as a clausal constituent; underlyingly the two conjuncts have identical constituents (prepositional phrase, subject, verb). The verb is in final position in the second conjunct and has gapped backwards into the first conjunct. Backwards ellipsis is unusual, but possible, in Biblical Hebrew when the constituents of both conjuncts match exactly and the constituent to be deleted is in final position.[17]

With this introduction, I will now examine the ways in which ellipsis and negation interact in biblical poetry. To simplify the presentation, I will concentrate on the most frequent type of ellipsis: לא in finite verbal clauses.

3.0   Description of Ellipsis and Negation

Sentential negation intersects with ellipsis of verbal constituents in a limited number of patterns.[18] In the first pattern (§3.1), the verb or verb phrase[19] is

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verbs: (a) forwards gapping: *Ja čitaju naučnuju stat'ju, a on ____ detektiv* 'I read a scientific article, and he ____ a detective novel'; or *Ja naučnuju stat'ju čitaju, a on detektiv ____* 'I a scientific article read, and he a detective novel ____'; (b) backwards gapping: *Ja naučnuju stat'ju ____, a on detektiv čitaet* 'I a scientific article ____, and he a detective novel read'. (The examples are from Robert R. van Oirsouw, *The Syntax of Coordination* [Croom Helm Linguistics Series; London: Croom Helm, 1987] 122.) Note that, when the Russian verb is in final position in its clause, either forwards or backwards gapping is possible; with the verb in non-final position, only forwards gapping occurs.

Ugaritic is similar to Hebrew in that it allow backwards ellipsis only from the ends of lines; see my article "Patterns of Verbal Ellipsis in Ugaritic," *UF* 31 (1999–2000) 333–72.

17. Purported instances of backwards ellipsis of the verb from non-final position can be understood in alternative ways; three such instances will be mentioned briefly. In Prov 13:1, the first conjunct should be understood as a verbless clause, rather than an elliptical sentence; see the discussion in my "Linguistic Approach to Ellipsis in Biblical Poetry," 258, 267–68. Ps 91:9 can be understood without ellipsis, following the NJPSV: "Because you took the LORD—my refuge, the Most High—as your haven," rather than as an instance of medial backwards ellipsis (pace M. Dahood, *Psalms I: 101–150* [AB 17a; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970] 435). Finally, the verb יְנוֹבֵב in the second half of Zech 9:17 should be understood as being embedded within an unmarked relative clause rather than as the antecedent of medial backwards ellipsis (following the analysis of Arnold B. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zur Hebräischen Bibel* [reprint; Hildesheim: Olms, 1968] 5:344).

18. Excluded from consideration are cases where the negative serves as an echo reply to a yes-no question (with the original proposition elided in the reply); see Isa 30:16; Amos 6:10; Hag 2:12; Zech 4:5, 13. The use is identical to that in prose (see Num 22:30, Judg 12:5).

deleted from one conjunct, but the negative appears in both conjuncts. In the second pattern (§3.2), the negative is deleted with the verb or verb phrase from one conjunct. In the third pattern (§3.3), all of a conjunct is deleted except for one constituent, which is preceded by the negative. In the fourth pattern (§3.4), the negative is deleted from a conjunct without the verb or verb phrase that it negates.

3.1   Ellipsis of Verb or Verb Phrase Out of Conjoined Negated Clauses

In the first pattern, two negative sentences are conjoined and a verbal constituent is deleted. In (13), the verb phrase (the verb and its object) are elided out of a negated sentence:

(13) Ps 115:17

The dead do not <u>praise the LORD</u>,	לא המתים יהללו־יה
and those who go down into silence do not [*praise the Lord*].	ולא כל־ירדי דומה

The second conjunct has only the negative particle and the subject. This kind of ellipsis is not difficult to recognize and interpret because ellipsis has fragmented the syntax in the second clause; it is also quite rare.

3.2   Ellipsis of Negative and Verb (Phrase)

In the second construction, both the negative particle and the verb are deleted, as in (14):[20]

(14) Ps 1:5

Therefore the wicked <u>will not stand</u> in the judgment,	על־כן לא־יקמו רשעים במשפט
and sinners [*will not stand*] in the congregation of the righteous.	וחטאים בעדת צדיקים

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19. Following linguistic practice, I will use "verb phrase" to refer to the verb and its object or adjunct(s). In Modern Hebrew (as in English), VP-ellipsis (i.e., ellipsis of the verb phrase) differs from ellipsis of the bare verb (see Edith Doron, "V-Movement and VP Ellipsis," in *Fragments: Studies in Ellipsis and Gapping* [ed. Shalom Lappin and Elabbas Benmamoun; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999] 124–40). Biblical Hebrew does not display a similar differentiation between ellipsis of the verb phrase and the verb.

20. Analogous examples are not grammatical in English. The sentence *I didn't eat fish, Bill didn't eat rice, and Harry didn't eat beef* cannot undergo gapping to produce the sentence **I didn't eat fish, Bill rice, and Harry roast beef* (John Robert Ross, "Gapping and the Order of Constituents," in *Progress in Linguistics: A Collection of Papers* [ed. Manfred Bierwisch and Karl Erich Heidolph; Janua Linguarum Series Maior 43; The Hague: Mouton, 1970] 250).

In this type of ellipsis, the negative marker is always immediately adjacent to the verb, and the constituent structures of the two conjuncts match. In (14), the constituents of both conjuncts match precisely—the two clausal conjuncts have the constituents verb, subject, prepositional phrase. (Note that the conjunction עַל־כֵּן governs both clauses; it is not part of the first conjunct.) As illustrated in (15), however, matching constituent structure means identical syntactic relations at the highest level of the sentence:

(15) Prov 19:10

> Luxury <u>is not fitting</u> for a fool,   לֹא־נָאוֶה לִכְסִיל תַּעֲנוּג
>
> even more, ruling over princes [*is not fitting*]   אַף כִּי־לְעֶבֶד מְשֹׁל בְּשָׂרִים
>   for a slave.

The infinitival phrase מְשֹׁל בְּשָׂרִים ('to rule over princes') functions as the subject of the second conjunct; both conjuncts have identical constituent structures: verb, prepositional phrase, subject.

Usually this construction exhibits explicit coordination between the two conjuncts, with *waw*, as in (14), or with another conjunction, as in (15). Less frequently, the two conjuncts are asyndetic, as in (16):

(16) Ps 50:9

> <u>I will not accept</u> from your house a bull,   לֹא־אֶקַּח מִבֵּיתְךָ פָר
>
> [*I will not accept*] from your flocks goats.   מִמִּכְלְאֹתֶיךָ עַתּוּדִים

Chiastic order of constituents is also possible, as in (17), although it is rare:

(17) Ps 121:6

> By day the sun <u>will not strike you</u>,   יוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יַכֶּכָּה
>
> and the moon [*will not strike you*] in the night.   וְיָרֵחַ בַּלָּיְלָה

This example also illustrates another way in which the constituents in the conjuncts may not be identical but still bear the same syntactic relationship to the verb: the adverb יוֹמָם and the prepositional phrase בַּלָּיְלָה are both adverbial modifiers of the verb phrase.[21]

To summarize, this second type of ellipsis has two syntactic requirements in addition to matching constituent structures: the negative marker immediately precedes the verb, and the negative plus verb are either at the very beginning of the clause, as in (14), or at the end of the clause, as in (17).[22]

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21. This example also illustrates that another constituent may be deleted along with the negative particle + verb. Here the object is deleted.

22. For additional examples, see Ps 129:7 (the elliptical structure is inside a relative clause), Isa 10:14 (the negative + הָיָה are gapped), 60:18; Hos 4:14; Joel 1:16; Prov 17:7,

3.3   Ellipsis of Everything Except One Constituent

In the third construction, ellipsis deletes everything except one constituent in the second conjunct.[23] The remaining constituent semantically contrasts with its counterpart in the other conjunct:[24]

(18) Hos 6:6

> For loyalty <u>I desire</u>,   כי חסד חפצתי
> and [*I do*] not [*desire*] sacrifice (or, and it it not sacrifice   ולא־זבח
>   [(that) *I desire*]).

The two objects ('loyalty', 'sacrifice') are contrastive: one God desires, one he does not. Note that, on semantic grounds, the phrase לא זבח cannot be understood as constituent negation ('I desire non-sacrifice') but rather involves sentential negation of the elided verb.

Ellipsis of this sort typically involves a contrast between the objects of the verb (as just discussed) or a prepositional phrase, as in (19):

(19) Hos 8:4

> <u>They set up kings</u>   הם המליכו
> but [*they did*] not [*set up kings*] from me   ולא ממני
>   (or, and it it not from me [(that) *they set up kings*]).

This type of ellipsis is used to affirm the proposition of a sentence while negating a portion of the sentence that is in contrastive focus. In Biblical Hebrew, the two conjuncts in this construction are explicitly coordinated with *waw* as in (18), except when more than one sentence serves as the antecedent of the deleted portion. This exceptional case is illustrated in (20), where the two conjuncts are asyndetically coordinate:[25]

(20) Isa 45:13

>   a. <u>he will build my city</u>   הוא־יבנה עירי
>   b. and <u>my exiles he will release</u>   וגלותי ישלח
>   c. not for a price [*he will build my city/he will release my exiles*]   לא במחיר
>   d. and not for a reward [*he will build my city/he will release*   ולא בשחד
>   *my exiles*]

19:10. Qimḥi correctly recognized Isa 42:8 as involving ellipsis of negative plus verb (William Chomsky, *David Kimḥi's Hebrew Grammar* [*Mikhhol*] [New York: Bloch, 1952] 357).

23. In generative linguistics this elliptical process is referred to as "stripping" (see McCawley, *The Syntactic Phenomena of English*, 2:527) or "bare argument ellipsis."

24. Other examples include: Ps 100:3; Isa 29:9; 30:1; 45:13; 48:7, 10; 51:21; Hos 8:4; Lam 3:2; Prov 31:12. When the first sentence is negated, the contrastive elided sentence is introduced with כי אם (see Jer 3:10).

25. See also Isa 48:1.

Both (c) and (d) consist of the negative plus a prepositional phrase, and they are related both to (a) and to (b).[26] The lack of an explicit conjunction between (b) and (c) is a result of larger concerns: (a) and (b) are conjoined parallel clauses and form the antecedent clauses; (c) and (d) are conjoined parallel clauses and form the elided clauses.[27]

In one remarkable example of this category of ellipsis, the direction of ellipsis is not forwards but backwards:

(21) Ps 115:1

a.	Not to us [*give glory*], O Lᴏʀᴅ,	לא לנו יהוה
b.	not to us [*give glory*],	לא לנו
c.	but to your name <u>give glory</u>.	כי־לשמך תן כבוד

Here the verb and its object in (c) are in the third conjunct. Because these constituents occur in final position in their conjunct, backwards ellipsis is possible.[28] The previous two conjuncts provide a contrast between giving glory to 'us' and giving glory to God's name.[29] Each conjunct in (a) and (b) is a sentence fragment; the verb phrase must be supplied from (c).

Ellipsis in this category, in which everything except one constituent is deleted, requires that the constituents of the two conjuncts match precisely. The negative particle negates the elliptical conjunct.

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26. O'Connor refers to this construction, in which four interrelated clauses appear together, as "mixing" (O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 421–22). A classic example is 2 Sam 1:20.

27. For evidence that conjuncts (c) and (d) must involve deletion of a verb (even though we can translate לא במחיר and לא בשחד in English as 'without price' and 'without reward', respectively), see Isa 55:1: הוי כל־צמא לכו למים / ואשר אין־לו כסף / לכו שברו ואכלו ולכו שברו בלוא־כסף / ובלוא מחיר יין וחלב 'Ho, all who are thirsty, come to the water / and whoever does not have money, / come, buy and eat / come! buy without silver and without price wine and milk'. The negative is within each prepositional phrase (בלא מחיר and בלא כסף) rather than outside each prepositional phrase, as in Isa 45:13. Therefore, these are examples of negated prepositional phrases.

28. The conjoined prepositional phrases at the end of the verse (על־חסדך על־אמתך) should probably be understood as part of the preceding clause. In that case, they should be considered to have elided backwards along with the verb and object ('Do not to *us* [give glory on account of your lovingkindness and faithfulness], but rather *to your name* give glory on account of your lovingkindness and faithfulness').

29. The form of the verb in (a) and (b) must be תתן. Although it is unusual for the psalmist to use לא with the imperfect in a command to God, the same construction occurs in Ps 40:12: אתה יהוה לא־תכלא רחמיך ממני 'You, O Lᴏʀᴅ, do not withhold (imperfect) your mercies from me . . .'.

3.4 Ellipsis Involving Deletion of the Negative but Not the Verb

We are now ready to examine the kind of ellipsis that is the most difficult to recognize, namely, ellipsis involving the deletion of a negative (but not the verb) in the second conjunct. There are two syntactic requirements that must be met before the negative particle can elide. The first requirement is one that is universally present in elliptical constructions—the constituent structures must be identical.[30] Example (22) illustrates identical constituents in the same order in both conjuncts:

(22) Isa 38:18

a. For Sheol does <u>not</u> thank you,   כי לא שאול תודך
b. death does [*not*] praise you;   מות יהללך
c. those who go down to the Pit do <u>not</u>   לא־ישברו יורדי־בור אל־אמתך
   hope for your faithfulness.

Ellipsis of the negative is possible in (b) because the clause has a constituent structure identical to (a): subject, verb, object. Ellipsis of the negative is blocked in (c) because of a different order of verb and subject. Other examples with constituents in identical order are found in (2) and (3) above.[31]

The constituents may also be arranged in chiastic order, as in (23):[32]

(23) Ps 9:19

For the needy will <u>not</u> be forgotten forever,   כי לא לנצח ישכח אביון
the hope of the dejected will [*not*] perish forever.   תקות ענוים תאבד לעד

The conjuncts have constituents orders that are precisely chiastic—prepositional phrase, verb, subject / subject, verb, prepositional phrase. The conjunction כי governs both conjuncts.

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30. In Ps 131:2, אם לא introduces a complex sentence that contrasts with the preceding negative sentences in v. 1. The first two clauses share an object; thus their constituent structures are identical underlyingly: 'But rather I have stilled [my soul] and quieted my soul . . .'. In rare cases, the constituent structures are not precisely identical. In Job 32:9, the first conjunct has an intransitive verb, whereas the second conjunct has a transitive one. The constituent structures of the two conjuncts are: S V // S V O. The negative should be understood as elided from the second conjunct.

31. See also Job 3:11.

32. See also Isa 28:27. In Ps 44:19, the constituents are partially chiastic. The verbal constituents are initial in both conjuncts and the remaining constituents are chiastic. O'Connor refers to this type of partial chiasm as a "back simple chiasm" (O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 394); he lists as additional examples Deut 33:26bc; Hab 3:13d, 14a; Ps 78:16ab, 26ab; 107:41ab.

The second syntactic requirement relates to the position of the negative particle: the negative particle must appear at the head of the first conjunct. This is the case in (22) and (23) as well as in (2) and (3) above. In initial position, the negative can be understood as having scope over both conjuncts. This requirement means that ellipsis of the negative is not syntactically possible in bicola such as (24) (the asterisk indicates a grammatically impossible interpretation of the second line):

(24) Prov 28:5

Evil men do <u>not</u> know justice;   אנשי־רע לא־יבינו משפט
and those who seek the Lord understand   ומבקשי יהוה יבינו כל
    everything.
*and those who seek the Lord [*do not*] understand everything.

Quite apart from the exegetical difficulties in understanding the second conjunct as negated, the negative in the first conjunct is not in initial position. As a result, from a syntactic point of view, the negative cannot be understood as having scope over the second conjunct.[33]

When these two syntactic requirements have been met, the main difficulty in identifying whether ellipsis of the negative has taken place involves cases in which the verb immediately follows the negative in initial position in the first conjunct. In (25), we understand the second line as negative on semantic (or, exegetical) grounds:

(25) Ps 35:19

Let <u>not</u> my treacherous enemies rejoice over me,   אל־ישמחו־לי איבי שקר
Let [*not*] those who hate me gratuitously wink   שנאי חנם יקרצו־עין
    the eye.

However, in (26), we do not understand the second line as negative, again on semantic/exegetical grounds:[34]

(26) Ps 78:7

And they should <u>not</u> forget the works of God,   ולא ישכחו מעללי־אל
and (but) keep his commandments.   ומצותיו ינצרו

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33. A similar example appears in Prov 3:1, in which the object precedes the negative in the first conjunct. The negative cannot be understood as elided from the second conjunct.

34. Similarly, Ps 31:9 has constituents that are partially chiastic within a "back simple chiastic" pattern; ellipsis of the negative is syntactically possible. Most translations do not understand the negative to be elided on exegetical grounds (e.g., 'and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place', NRSV). Dahood, however, understands the negative to be elided and translates: 'You did not put me into the hand of the Foe, nor set my feet in the broad domain' (i.e., the netherworld) (Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1: 1–50* [AB 16; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966] 185).

It is possible to provide a precise syntactic description for the semantic difference. In (25), the negative of the first line has scope over both clausal conjuncts that follow. By contrast, in (26), the negative belongs *inside* the first clausal conjunct and therefore does not have scope over the second clausal conjunct. These differences are schematized in (27), where (a) represents the negative having scoping over both clausal conjuncts as in (25), and (b) represents the negative within the first clausal conjunct as in (26):

(27)   a. Negative has scope over both clausal conjuncts, e.g., (25)
          Neg.   [clausal conjunct]
                 [clausal conjunct]
       b. Negative is within the first clausal conjunct, e.g., (26)
          [Neg. clausal conjunct]
          [clausal conjunct]

The difficulty lies in the fact that there is no way to determine which underlying syntactic structure is operative in any given instance except through the semantics of the lines.

There are only a few examples like these in which the verb is in initial position in the first line, and the syntactic requirements for ellipsis have been met, resulting in syntactic ambiguity concerning the scope of the negative.[35] However, constructions like these are the primary area involving ellipsis and negation in which syntax is not determinative and the polarity of the second line can be ascertained only through semantics. That is, an interpreter must decide which syntactic structure to assign on the basis of exegesis.

Another area of difficulty involves a few instances in which the verb in the second conjunct is one of the so-called "consecutive" forms, usually *wayyiqtol*:[36]

(28) Job 3:10

Because he did <u>not</u> shut the doors of the womb,   כי לא סגר דלתי בטני
a. [*nor*] hide trouble from my eyes.   ויסתר עמל מעיני
b. so as to hide trouble from my eyes.

The constituents of both conjuncts match, and the negative particle appears at the head of the first conjunct, so both requirements for ellipsis of the negative

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35. For example, Ps 50:8 could be elliptical or not. See also Prov 30:3 (which has two clausal constituents in chiastic order); most translations understand the negative to be gapped (e.g., NJPSV, NRSV), but it is not necessarily the case (e.g., JPSV).

36. See also Ps 44:19, Job 31:15 (with הלא), Lam 3:33, and Jer 22:10 (with a perfect consecutive). JM §160q lists additional examples. In other examples in which *wayyiqtol* follows a negated clause, the negative does not have scope over the clause with *wayyiqtol* (e.g., Ps 52:9, 109:16).

have been met. However, there are two ways to understand the verse, each reflecting differing syntactic analyses. The negative in the first conjunct could be understood to have scope over the second conjunct, even though it is not possible in the surface syntax for a negative particle to be present within a clause that has a *wayyiqtol* verb. This interpretation is illustrated by the translation in (a). But alternatively, it is also possible to understand the *wayyiqtol* as representing an action that is consequent upon the verb in the previous conjunct; in that case, the negative particle from the first conjunct does not have scope over the second conjunct. This interpretation is illustrated by the translation in (b). At the moment, I do not have compelling reasons for preferring one analysis over the other, and both analyses are syntactically problematic.

4.0   Conclusions

We have seen that sentential negation interacts with elliptical processes in ways that are in accord with the patterns of ellipsis in Biblical Hebrew. Ellipsis of negative particles, the last category examined, is the most critical type of ellipsis to identify. Ellipsis of the negative without the verb (or verb phrase) can be understood to have occurred only when a number of syntactic features are present: the two clauses must be coordinate, the negative must appear in initial position in the first clause, and the constituent structures of the two clauses must be identical with the constituents either in identical order or in chiastic order. In addition, ellipsis of the bare negative is always forwards and never backwards, because the negative is never in final position in the clause. As a result, even though ellipsis of the negative does not appear to leave a detectable structural hole or gap in the syntax of a verse, there are a limited number of contexts in which it can occur, thus significantly decreasing the potential for uncertainty concerning whether a sentence should be understood positively or negatively.[37]

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37. The possibilities for confusion are further reduced in that biblical poetry ordinarily pairs a positive sentence in the first line with a negative sentence in the second line (Adele Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985] 56–57, 94), rather than coupling a negative sentence in the first with a positive sentence in the second.

Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22:
Two Versions of the Same Song

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Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 have been studied extensively as synoptic texts, from varying perspectives and for different purposes.[1] The purpose of this essay is to analyze some differences between the two texts as preserved in Codex Leningradensis (L)[2] with a view toward arriving at conclusions about the transmission of the original composition in two forms.

David is presented in both versions as author. Internal evidence does not preclude Davidic authorship; however, identification of the author is not important to the focus of the present study. Cross and Freedman[3] suggest, on the basis of orthography and archaisms, a minimal date in the ninth through eighth centuries B.C.E. for the composition. Reconstruction of the original composition is also not one of my purposes, but one should recognize that the texts are two versions of a single original composition. The high degree of correspondence between them should be sufficient evidence to support this assumption. Certainly ancient scribes should also have recognized them to be

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Author's note: Professor Fox's students learn early that he is a *demanding* teacher. Study of the biblical text and of the languages and methods used in its interpretation is a demanding field that requires thoughtful attention and dedication. Professor Fox imparts a sense of seriousness and purpose to his students, and I can testify that, because of his challenging tutelage, I have achieved more in my professional life than I had imagined possible. Professor Fox's students also learn that he is a *giving* teacher, often working behind the scenes for their benefit: preparing recommendations for scholarships, creating academic and professional opportunities, and interacting with the students' research projects. I am very grateful to have benefited from both of these aspects of his character. I count it a privilege to know him.

1. See especially Frank Cross Jr. and David Freedman, "A Royal Song of Thanksgiving: II Sam 22 = Psalm 18," *JBL* 72 (1953) 15–34; F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (repr.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975), especially pp. 269–78; "Psalm XVIII according to the Text of 2 Sam. XXII." An important recent study by David Clines has been unavailable to me for consultation ("What Remains of the Hebrew Bible? Its Text and Language in a Postmodern Age," *Studia Theologica* 54 [2001] 76–95).

2. Codex Leningradensis according to BHS.

3. Cross and Freedman, "Royal Song of Thanksgiving," 16.

two versions of a single original, even though the texts were transmitted on separate scrolls. Nevertheless, the many significant variations between the texts beg an explanation.[4] What is the nature of the differences, from a general perspective? Can everything be explained on the basis of errors introduced during the copying process, or should we look for other causes?

Emanuel Tov[5] makes an important distinction between genetic and alternative readings in the interpretation of textual variants. Genetic readings are those that developed from another reading, generally on the basis of scribal practices. Examples are: (1) transposition, modification or graphic confusion of letters, words, and sentences; (2) variant word division; (3) variation in use of *matres lectionis*, *maqqeph*, *dagesh* and final letters; (4) interpretive variations; and (5) accidental additions and deletions. I presuppose that genetic variants in these two texts are the result of errors introduced into the texts as a result of scribal negligence or historical conventions (that is, in the case of *matres lectionis*). Although many variants of this type are found within the two texts under study, genetic variants are not specifically treated in this essay.

A significant number of differences between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 are alternative readings, which are the principle focus of the present study. Alternative readings do not result from modification of a written Vorlage, nor were they generated from another reading as a result of scribal mishap. These readings are equally acceptable in context on the basis of grammar, syntax, and usage, and deserve equal claim to "originality." Synonym variants, for example, are clearly alternative readings because synonyms, by definition, are semantically interchangeable in a given context.[6] I will also give attention to unique readings (pluses and minuses), duplicated morphological variants, single morphological variants, and stylistic variants.

In the following sections I will identify, list, and classify the alternative variants of the composition with some commentary to orient the reader to the nature of the evidence.

1. Unique Readings (Pluses and Minuses)

These readings are unique in the sense that the synoptic text contains nothing that corresponds to the reading under consideration. Both texts contain

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4. I have identified 162 differences between the texts, the most frequent in the use of *matres lectionis*. The decision to count a complex difference as one or more variants is subjective.

5. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2nd rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 170.

6. For a definition and detailed study, see Shemaryahu Talmon, "Synonymous Readings in the Textual Traditions of the Old Testament," in *Studies in the Bible* (ed. Chaim Rabin; ScrHier 8; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961) 335–83.

unique readings. The following items merit special attention because they are supported by the LXX evidence, proof of their existence in a period earlier than the third through second centuries B.C.E. Some unique readings are not treated here, because they are to be identified as conflate readings or are not supported by the LXX.

a. Psalm 18:2

Ps 18:2 reads ארחמך יהוה חזקי 'I love you, Lord, my strength'. Some scholars[7] propose to emend ארחמך to ארממך, 'I exalt you', because first, רחם in the *Qal* is a hapax legomenon that expresses a rare intimacy with the deity, and second, רמם would form a near inclusio with v. 49, תרוממני 'You exalt me'. Ps 116:1 expresses a similar sentiment of intimacy with different vocabulary, אהבתי כי ישמע יהוה את קולי, 'I love that the Lord hears my voice'. Given the support of the LXX here, there is no good reason to expunge or modify the reading.

b. 2 Samuel 22:3

2 Sam 22:3 includes משעי מחמס תשעני 'My savior, you save me from violence', where the psalm text offers nothing. As is, it balances an idea similarly expressed in v. 49, מאיש חמסים תצילני, 'You deliver me from men of violent acts'.

c. 2 Samuel 22:5

The LXX of 2 Sam 22:5, ὅτι, presupposes the Hebrew equivalent כי. The corresponding psalm text lacks an equivalent in both language versions.

d. Psalm 18:7

Cross and Freedman[8] consider the reading לפניו תבוא '(my cry) comes before him (into his ears)' in Ps 18:7 to be a case of conflation or haplography. No manuscript or versional evidence is offered to support this proposal. 2 Samuel 22 has the non-verbal sentence "My cry *is* in his ears."

e. Psalm 18:15

The root רבב-II 'to shoot' is rare,[9] but its association with arrows, as in Ps 18:15 is confirmed by its use in Gen 49:23, "the archers *shot* at him." The

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7. For example, Luís Alonso Schökel and Cecília Carniti, *Salmos I (Salmos 1–72)* (São Paulo: Paulus, 1996) 300; H. Bardtke (ed.), *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia: Liber Psalmorum* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977) 1098.

8. Cross and Freedman, "Royal Song of Thanksgiving," 23.

9. See BDB 914.

LXX ἐπλήθυνεν 'multiplied (lightnings)' interprets differently; nevertheless it reflects the reading of L. 2 Samuel 22 presumes an ellipsis of the verb וישלח from the beginning of the verse, '(and he sent) . . . lightning'.

f. Psalm 18:16

The second masculine-singular pronominal suffix in Ps 18:16, מגערתך 'at your rebuke' is absent in 2 Samuel 22 (בגערת), which continues a third masculine-singular form of address from v. 15 and into v. 17 and beyond. At some point a decision was made to alter the original here either to second masculine singular or to third masculine singular. The more intimate second masculine-singular form conforms to the sentiment of Ps 18:2, ארחמך 'I love you'.

g. Psalm 18:19

The preposition ל with the predicate is optional in the syntagma—"היה + ל-predicate + ל-person"—as in Ps 18:19 למשען and 2 Sam 22:19 למשען.[10] The variation seen here may be due to a dialectal preference or due to a sty-listic preference of the recorder.

h. Psalm 18:29

In Ps 18:29 the plus תאיר, used to convey the idea 'You light my lamp' is equally as good as 2 Samuel 22 'You are my lamp'. The verb אור 'to light' is used elsewhere in poetry to complement the noun נר 'lamp' (for example, Ps 119:105; Job 18:6, 29:3; Prov 6:23, 13:9).

i. Psalm 18:36

The syntactical structure of וימינך תסעדני 'Your right hand supports me' in Ps 18:36 is identical to the following colon, "Your help makes me great." Cross and Freedman think that it has dropped out of 2 Samuel 22.[11] If we ask whether the omission was accidental or intentional, no certain conclusion is possible. Its omission would still leave a well-formed bicolon: "You have given me your shield of salvation, and your condescension has made me great."

j. 2 Samuel 22:47

The extended construct chain of 2 Sam 22:47 with צור 'rock' ("the God of the rock of my salvation") seems overloaded. Alter reads 2 Samuel 22 with L and interprets the unit as an example of semantically complementary verse halves.[12] L's reading is supported by the LXX, though vocalizing differently,

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10. Compare Gen 20:12 with 24:51, and other examples in BDB 266.
11. Cross and Freedman, "Royal Song of Thanksgiving," 31.
12. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic, 1985) 29–38.

as "my God, the rock of my salvation." Its omission in Psalm 18 avoids a verbatim repetition from the preceding colon.

2. *Synonym Variants*

Synonyms, that is, words similar in meaning, are a common source of textual variants. Synonyms and synonym variants appear in poetic parallelism, in alternation within the same narrative text, in parallel expressions of contemporaneous prophets (for example, Isaiah and Micah), in parallel passages within the Masoretic Text (MT), between the MT and the Samaritan Pentateuch, and between manuscripts of the MT.[13]

Not all of the variants listed here are, technically speaking, synonyms having equivalent meanings; some are words commonly associated in a literary context. They may be used interchangeably in expressions elsewhere in the Bible, though not with a strictly synonymous meaning (see, for example, §2b2, below). These are treated here along with synonyms so as to not multiply categories needlessly.

a. *Repetition and Variation*

It is noteworthy that in four cases, by use of a synonym, Psalm 18 avoids a repetition that exists in the 2 Samuel text: (1) Ps 18:1 מכף . . . ומיד; 2 Sam 22:1 אקרא . . . אקרא; (2) Ps 18:7 אשוע . . . אקרא; 2 Sam 22:7 אקרא . . . ומכף; (3) Ps 18:32 זולתי . . . מבלעדי; 2 Sam 22:32 מבלעדי . . . מבלעדי; (4) Ps 18:29 יהוה אלהי; 2 Sam 22:29 יהוה ויהוה. In a fifth case, Psalm 18 repeats a construct noun but maintains variation by use of an alternate *nomen rectum*: (5) Ps 18:5–6 משברי מות . . . חבלי שאול; 2 Sam 22:5–6 חבלי מות . . . חבלי שאול. The omission of צור in Ps 18:47 (see above, §1j) is a sixth case of variation over repetition. The preference for variation in the psalm version surely cannot be ascribed to scribal carelessness but must be credited to a conscious artistic purpose. Of course, it is an open question which technique was used in the original composition: repetition or variation?

The words יד 'hand' and כף 'palm' are a common word pair in Hebrew and Canaanite poetry (for example, Isa 1:15; 62:3; Ps 71:4; Prov 10:4; 31:19, 20; Song 5:5). They are used interchangeably and often indistinguishably[14] in common expressions (for example, "the work of his hands" in Ps 17:9 פעל כפיו; Deut 33:11 פעל ידיו). The variant ומיד in Ps 18:1 (2 Samuel 22 ומכף), creating diversity in the place of reiteration, is therefore not surprising.

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13. These are treated extensively in Talmon, "Synonymous Readings." See also Isac Seeligmann, "Studies in the History of the Biblical Text," *Textus* 20 (2000) 4.

14. So BDB 496.

b. Synonymous Nouns

In addition to variants used to avoid repetition (§2a, above) other synonymous nouns are found, generating a variant for which no internal motive is discernible.

b1. The expression חבלי מות 'cords of death' in Ps 18:5 alternates with משברי מות 'breakers of death' in 2 Samuel 22. The semantic connection between 'cords' and 'breakers' is in the idea of "dragging down to death." Both are used of death and of the sea (see Ps 93:4 משברי ים; Ezek 27:9 חבלי הים).

b2. The 2 Sam 22:8 variant השמים (versus Psalm 18 הרים) in the phrase "the foundations of the heavens" is a striking turn of expression and ought to be retained as the *lectio difficilior* in its place. The psalm reading might be a harmonization from Deut 32:32, although "the foundations of X" appears in seven other passages (Isa 24:18, 40:21; Jer 31:37; Mic 6:2; Prov 8:29; Ps 18:16 = 2 Sam 22:16) where X is one of three associated words: 'the mountains' הרים, 'the earth' ארץ, and 'the world' תבל.

b3. Ps 18:33 has "the God who girded me (המאזרני) with strength" where 2 Sam 22:33 reads "the God who is my strong refuge (מעוזי)." The concept of a God who "girds with strength" is found also in 1 Sam 2:4 and, notably, in v. 33 of this passage. The concept of a God who is "my (or their) refuge" is found in Ps 31:5, 37:39, 43:2, and Jer 16:19. Thus the two notions are equally at home in hymnic literature.

b4. The idiomatic expression כעפר (ה)ארץ 'as the dust of (the) earth' is used in Gen 13:16, 28:14, and 2 Chr 1:9 to speak of what is numerous. The combination כעפר plus some other noun is also a common simile for numerousness. Its use in 2 Sam 22:43 is as a simile for what is finely pulverized. The locution על פני רוח 'on the face of the wind' in Ps 18:43 is unique (though לפני רוח 'before the wind' is found with "chaff" as a simile for what is easily moved) and certainly not a genetic development from the synoptic text-form.

c. Divine Names

Both texts use variations of the divine name freely. Aside from the introductions, in only 3 places do the texts vary. Although we might ascribe these 3 variants to genetic causes, there are valid reasons to view them as alternative variants. In Ps 18:3 we find אלי (2 Sam 22:2 אלהי), a form that appears only 12 times in BH. Ten times it appears in direct address to the deity, and twice it emphasizes a personal relationship with the deity (here and Exod 15:2). Its use then connotes a sense of intimacy, and this sentiment complements the unique opening of v. 2, "I love you, Lord."

A second variant in Ps 18:29 effectively avoids a repetition (see above, §2a). A third variant in Ps 18:32 is interesting from a dialectal standpoint. The form

אלוה (versus אל in 2 Samuel 22) is a favorite form of the book of Job (occurring 41 times). In 8 other instances (Deut 32:15, 17; 2 Kgs 17:31; Isa 44:8; Ps 50:22; Prov 30:5; Neh 9:17; 2 Chr 32:15) the text is identified as being of Northern origin by Gary Rendsburg and others.[15] In 49 of a total of 58 uses, then, the form אלוה is used as a feature of a Northern dialect.

d. Synonymous Verbs

d1. For Ps 18:7 אשוע 'I cry for help' = 2 Sam 22:7 אקרא 'I call' (see above, §1g). These verbs are used as word pairs in Isa 32:5, 58:9, and Jonah 2:3.

d2. Waltke and O'Connor[16] identify a modal use of the nonperfective verb (that is, *yiqtol*) to denote the capability of the subject to perform the action of the verbal root. They cite 2 Sam 22:39 (יקומון 'they can [not] rise') along with other examples. If this analysis is correct, then the use corresponds semantically to the same root with auxiliary יכל[17] 'to be able' in Ps 18:39 (יכלו קום 'they are [not] able to rise'), making more explicit the idea of capability. The two readings, accordingly, are completely synonymous, and the variation may be due to the dialectal or stylistic preferences of the recorders of the two versions.

d3. The meaning 'subdue' for the *Hiphil* of דבר (Ps 18:48 וידבר) is rare but confirmed by the same use in Ps 47:4 (also with עמים 'peoples', as here). The *Hiphil* of ירד in the sense 'bring down (peoples)' (2 Sam 22:48 ומוריד) is also rare but confirmed by Ps 56:7 (with עמים) and Isa 10:13 (with ישובים 'inhabitants'). If these uses were also rare in the living language of preexilic Israel and Judah, then this variation may be the result of regional preferences.

d4. The participle with first common-singular pronominal suffix, מפלטי, 'who redeems me' (Ps 18:49; 2 Sam 22:49 ומוציאי) is used five other times in the Psalms (18:3, 40:18, 55:9, 70:6, 144:2). The *Piel* of פלט corresponds semantically to the *Hiphil* of יצא in the sense 'bring forth' in a limited number

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15. See Gary Rendsburg, "The Northern Origin of 'The Last Words of David' (2 Sam 23, 1–7)," *Bib* 69 (1988) 113–21; idem, "Additional Notes on 'The Last Words of David' (2 Sam 23, 1–7), " *Bib* 70 (1989) 403–8; idem, *Linguistic Evidence for the Northern Origin of Selected Psalms* (SBLMS 43; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); idem, "The Northern Origin of Nehemiah 9," *Bib* 72 (1991) 348–66; idem, "The Strata of Biblical Hebrew," *JNWSL* 17 (1991) 81–99; idem, "Morphological Evidence for Regional Dialects in Ancient Hebrew," in *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (ed. Walter Bodine; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 65–88.

16. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 507 n. 28.

17. For יכל as an auxiliary verb, see Luís Alonso Schökel, *Dicionário Bíblico Hebraico-Português* (São Paulo: Paulus, 1994) 277–78.

of contexts (for example, Job 21:10; perhaps Ps 56:8). Thus, the two readings are synonymous, and there is no genetic explanation for the substitution of one for the other.

e. Prepositions

In six cases the texts differ in the use of prepositions, though a difference of sense is not necessarily implied.

e1. The use of the preposition ב in בשמים (Ps 18:14) in the sense of מן 'from' (as in 2 Sam 22:14 מן שמים) has been studied by Rendsburg, Dahood, and others.[18] Rendsburg identified this usage as a Northernism. The non-assimilated *nun* of 2 Sam 22:14 (מן שמים) makes it unlikely that this is a case of graphic confusion of *bet* and *mem*.

e2. Both מן and monographic ב function regularly to indicate the cause of an action or situation as here in Ps 18:16 (מגערתך) and 2 Sam 22:16 (בגערת).[19] Viewed in isolation, the variation might easily be interpreted as a case of graphic confusion.[20] If the alteration is intentional, then the motive could be either a regional preference (that is, localect), a personal preference (that is, idiolect), or a stylistic preference of the recorder. The use of the preposition ב in 2 Sam 22:16 avoids the close repetition of מן (בגערת 'at the rebuke'; מנשמת 'at the blast').

e3. For Ps 18:19 למשען = 2 Sam 22:19 משען, see above, §1g.

e4. The expressions היה תמים עם (Ps 18:24) and היה תמים ל (2 Sam 22:24) 'to be blameless before' are unique in BH, so no firm conclusion can be drawn from this case. The syntagma היה שלם עם in 1 Kgs 15:14 is analogous to the use in Ps 18:24, demonstrating that the preposition עם is appropriate to the context. Graphic confusion of the prepositions is not likely, nor is any other genetic explanation of the variation.

e5. The preposition זולתי 'besides' in Ps 18:32 is by no means a genetic development from the synonymous מבלעדי of 2 Samuel 22. Its use in Psalm 18 avoids the repetition of מבלעדי in 2 Samuel 22. Both prepositions are of low frequency in BH (16 times זולתי / זולה; 12 times מבלעדי), so it is unlikely here that a rare word has been replaced by a more familiar term.

e6. The preposition אל 'to' appears as a complement of the verb שוע 8 times in Psalms (18:7, 28:2, 30:3, 31:23, 88:14) and Job (30:20, 38:41); the complement על 'upon' only appears in Ps 18:42. The prepositions אל and על overlap substantially in their functions, and על is found where אל might be ex-

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18. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence,* 106; Mitchell Dahood and Tadeusz Penar, *Psalms III: 100–150* (AB 17A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970) 391.

19. Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 198 and 213.

20. For examples of *bet* / *mem* confusion, see Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 247–48.

pected with verbs of motion 'to(ward)' or of speaking 'to' (especially in later texts, though this use of עַל by itself is not a sure mark of lateness).[21] The interchange of these prepositions in Ps 18:42 and 2 Sam 22:42 therefore is not significant for my argument here.

f. Conjunctions

Conjunction variants, listed here mainly for the sake of completeness, do not make a strong case for an alternative versus genetic explanation but do contribute some weight when added to other data presented.

f1. The conjunctions כִּי and וְ appear with such frequency in BH that it would be legitimate to presume that a scribe substituted one in the place of the other, the result of a simple mental error. The readings of Ps 18:28 (כִּי) and 2 Sam 22:28 (וְ[אֶת]) are supported by the LXX, which may indicate nothing more than that an error slipped into the text at an early stage. However, this variation of conjunctions is not an isolated case, as demonstrated by the following examples.

f2. In seven other cases a *waw* conjunction appears in one version and not the other (see Ps 18:5, 8, 13, 18, 29, 30, and 41 along with the corresponding verses in 2 Samuel 22). These cases are to be distinguished from the use of *waw* to form the verb tense *wayyiqtol* (see §3e, below). No pattern is evident and no grand conclusion is to be drawn from these cases other than that the number of cases must reflect more than scribal carelessness. The care with which scribes preserved a *waw* or its absence could and should be studied in the versions and manuscripts, but such an exercise goes beyond the parameters of the present study.

f3. The coordinating conjunction אַף (Ps 18:49 [מִן קָמַי]) is most often equivalent to conjunctive *waw* (2 Sam 22:49 [וּ]מְקַמַי) but may add some emphasis, perhaps the more so because of its relative rarity.[22]

3. Repeated Morphological Variants

Morphological variants are arguably genetic in nature. However, when the same type of difference occurs in two or more places within the same text, it is likely evidence of design rather than of an accident of copying.

a. Noun Formation

The forms צֶדֶק and צְדָקָה appear 160 times or more each in BH, broadly distributed among the various books. Each noun is used in concentration in

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21. Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* 216.

22. Schökel, *Dicionário Bíblico Hebraico-Português*, 72; also BDB 65.

Isaiah, Psalms, and Job. In Isa 45:2, 58:2, and Hos 10:12, both forms appear in the same immediate context, demonstrating an equivalence of meaning and usage. A single variant could easily be explained as a genetic development. However, given that in two separate verses the psalm text has צדק (Ps 18:21, 25 כצדקי) where the 2 Samuel text has צדקה (2 Sam 22:21, 25 כצדקתי), the variation is probably intentional.

b. Pronominal Suffixes

In vv. 37, 40, and 48, the psalm has תחתי 'under me' where 2 Samuel has תחתני, a form otherwise not found in BH. Gesenius (GKC §103d) explains the form תחתני as an example of a preposition with a *verbal* suffix. Delitzsch rightly ascribes this to "an inaccuracy of the common dialect which confused the genitive and accusative suffix."[23] The 2 Samuel text has preserved a local variation of the תחת plus first common-singular suffix form. It is perhaps worth noting that BH also preserves two forms of תחת plus third masculine-plural suffix (תחתיהם 5 times, and תחתם 11 times) and two forms of the תחת plus third masculine-singular suffix (תחתיו 99 times, and תחתו 4 times, always with *Qere* תחתיו). Either the use of this preposition was subject to local variation, or two competing forms were concurrently employed in the living language at the time of the recording of these two versions. In either case, 3 separate cases of the rare form in 2 Samuel 22 cannot be explained as a result of genetic processes.

Another variant in pronominal suffix formation appears in 2 Sam 22:46. The feminine plural noun with third masculine-plural suffix (Ps 18:46 ממסגרותיהם) appears without ṣērê yôd (ממסגרותם). The shorter (and older) form of the pronoun competes with the longer form with certain high-frequency nouns (אב 'father', אם 'mother', and שם 'name').[24] In these 2 examples of pronominal-suffix use, then, the 2 Samuel 22 text presents the reader with a minority formation in relation to standard BH.

c. Verb: Hithpael

In 2 cases, the 2 Samuel 22 text presents the reader with a verb in the *Hithpael* where the psalm text records a different *binyan*. The *Piel* of כחש (as in Psalm 18) appears 19 times in BH; the *Hithpael* appears only in 2 Sam 22:45. Once again, the Samuel text preserves a legitimate but minority form. The *Hithpael* of געש is represented in the *Qere* of 2 Sam 22:8 (first occurence of 2 in the verse) where the *Kethiv* and Psalm 18 have a *Qal* form. It is unclear

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23. Delitzsch, *Books of Samuel*, 275.
24. JM §94g.

whether the *Qere* is a correction to the majority form or is preserving an earlier text reading. The *Qere* form, if original, would preserve another case of repetition in the 2 Samuel text where the psalm has variation.

d. Verb: Geminate Root Formation

Two variants involve the formation of verb forms from geminate roots. In each case the psalm text records a normal form (that is, with the second consonant duplicated; see JM §82a) where the 2 Samuel text records a reduced form (that is, without duplication of the second consonant). The sentence structure is the same in each version, so a difference of meaning is not signaled by the use of differing verb formations. The occurrence of the same phenomenon twice within the texts decreases the likelihood of a genetic explanation (that is, haplography or dittography). Do the versions preserve here a preference of two concurrent dialects, or do they preserve a stylistic preference of forms occurring in free variation within the language?

In the case of ברר, the evidence is very limited. The *Hithpael* of this root appears only three times: Ps 18:27 (תתברר), 2 Sam 22:27 (תתבר), and Dan 12:10 (יתבררו).

In the case of סבב, the form סבבוני (Ps 18:6) appears seven times in BH (once with defective spelling), whereas the form סבוני (see 2 Sam 22:6) appears twice (once with defective spelling). Both forms appear in a single verse in Ps 118:11, supporting the conclusion that, at least at some point in history and in some location, the forms were stylistic variants of a single dialect.

e. Verb: Final hê Formations

The formally cohortative (ארדעה) of 2 Sam 22:38 is labeled a "pseudo-cohortative" by Waltke and O'Connor[25] and usually interpreted as a simple *yiqtol* (see RSV "I *pursued* my enemies") as in Ps 18:38 (ארדוף). In Ps 18:50 the cohortative force of the second verb (אזמרה) should be applied to the first (אודך); the 2 Samuel reading implies that both verbs are to be read as *yiqtol*.

The question of the cohortative form in 2 Sam 22:24 (ואשתמרה) versus the *wayyiqtol* in Ps 18:24 (ואשתמר) should be considered in conjunction with the full and defective forms of the *Qal wayyiqtol* first-common singular of היה in the same verse (Ps 18:24 ואהי; 2 Sam 22:24 ואהיה). In both cases the psalm version lacks *hê* where the 2 Samuel version has it. The shorter spelling of ואהיה is found 16 times in BH, 7 times in texts identified by Rendsburg as "Northern" (Judg 18:4; Hos 13:7, 10, 14; Ps 73:14; Job 30:9).[26] On the other hand,

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25. Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax,* 576.
26. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence,* 8–13.

the longer version also appears in Northern texts twice (Hos 11:4, Job 7:20) in 10 uses in BH. Since the forms alternate in Hosea and Job, we conclude that they are style variants. The long form of 2 Samuel 22 (ואשתמרה) must be another pseudo-cohortative. It is inserted between two *wayyiqtol* verbs, the second of which states a reward given to the psalmist based on past faithfulness shown in the previous three verses. In 3 of 4 cases, the 2 Samuel text uses an extended form with final *hê*; in 1 case the psalm text does the same.

f. Consecutive Waw

We should not hastily jump to the conclusion that all variations in the use of consecutive *waw* are to be explained as cases of scribal carelessness. A study of the frequency of this type of variant among the manuscripts would be helpful, especially comparing L with the Qumran and Cairo Genizah manuscripts. The number of differences of this sort between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 is not great. Twice (vv. 14 and 16) the psalm text is fuller; 6 times the 2 Samuel 22 text is fuller (vv. 7, 12, 39 bis, 41, and 44). The Ps 18:14 *wayyiqtol* (וירעם) resolves an isolated jussive (ירעם), unnatural in context, appearing in 2 Sam 22:14. The reverse is true in 2 Sam 22:12 (וישת) and Ps 18:12 (ישת). Volitives are used sparingly in the hymn: v. 47 contains the only unsuspicious jussive (psalm וירום; 2 Samuel וירם). Variants in vv. 38–44 (Psalm ואשיגם, 2 Samuel ואשמידם; Psalm אמחצם, 2 Samuel ואמחצם; Psalm יפלו, 2 Samuel ויפלו; Psalm אצמיתם, 2 Samuel ואצמיתם; Psalm תפלטני, 2 Samuel ותפלטני) create a distinction of perspectives. Wilson[27] notes that in the psalm text imperfect verb forms suggest "an immediacy of narrative as if it is currently happening," whereas the Samuel text "creates an unambiguously past reference" through use of "verb forms . . . pointed as *waw* consecutives." The grouping together of similar variants suggests purpose, rather than accident.

4. Single Morphological Variants

Each of the following morphological variants occurs only once in the text, so the likelihood of a genetic explanation increases. However, they are just as likely to be the product of linguistic or stylistic preferences of the recorders and therefore should be treated as alternative readings. Taken with the other evidence presented, they add weight to the argument.

a. Noun Formation

The noun מוסד 'foundation' (see the masculine-plural construct in Ps 18:8 מוסדי) appears 10 times in BH, 8 times in the plural. The noun מוסדה 'foun-

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27. Gerald Wilson, *Psalms: Volume 1* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) 349 n. 35.

dation' (see the feminine plural construct in 2 Sam 22:8, מוסדות) appears 7 times in BH, 6 times in the plural. Both appear in construct with ארץ 'earth', and no difference of meaning is implied by the substitution of one for the other.

b. Singular versus Plural Noun

The noun ברק 'lightning' is used 12 times in the singular (as in 2 Sam 22:15 ברק) and 9 times in the plural (as in Ps 18:15 וברקים). The singular noun is general ('lightning') and the plural specific ('lightning flashes').

c. Plural versus Singular Noun

The noun חמס 'violence' appears 60 times in BH; only 4 times in the plural. Three times the plural is used in the expression איש חמסים 'man of violent actions' (as in 2 Sam 22:49); 4 times the singular is used in the corresponding expression איש חמס 'man of violence' (as in Ps 18:49).

5. Stylistic Variants

a. Preposition מן

It is noteworthy that in two verses the psalm text has the preposition מן with nonassimilated *nun* (Ps 18:12 ומן איבי and 18:49 מן קמי), where the 2 Samuel text has it with the *nun* assimilated (2 Sam 22:12 ומאיבי and 22:49 ומקמי). Both forms may appear in combination with the same word in the same text (for example, Ps 18:49 מאיבי; 18:4 ומן איבי). But in addition to being style variants, the forms reflect a difference of pronunciation. These are the only 2 of 23 occurrences of מן in the psalm text that have nonassimilated *nun*.

b. Emphasizing Pronoun

The form מפלטי 'my deliverer' (*Piel* participle with first common-singular pronoun) appears 6 times in BH. In 2 Samuel 22 the preposition ל follows with emphasizing first common-singular pronoun, which is lacking in the Psalm 18 version. This same structure is seen one other time in BH, in Ps 144:2, a text that borrows directly from 2 Samuel 22 = Psalm 18.

c. Accusative Pronoun: Suffixed to Verb or to Particle את

In Ps 18:20 an accusative pronoun is suffixed to the verb (ויוציאני). In the corresponding 2 Samuel 22 text, the accusative pronoun is joined to the particle את (ויצא . . . אתי). The recorders thus conveyed the same idea through different options available to them, and the variation is best explained as an alternative reading rather than a result of genetic causes.

6. *Three Models of Explanation*

Three models may be proposed to explain the alternative variants, though indeed, other models may exist that at present are unknown to me.

1. *Modification by Scribes.*   One option would be to ascribe all the data to scribal interventions, especially harmonization to parallel passages. In this model the scribes, wittingly or unwittingly, modified a *canonical* composition by writing something that was not in their Vorlage but was actually a reading of another, similarly-structured text familiar to them.

2. *Modification by Disciples.*   A second theory might be that disciples introduced variants in the form that they committed to memory for later promulgation (of an ostensibly *canonical* composition). Disciples introduced synonymous expressions in their versions according to their own preferences that did not significantly alter the original meaning of the text.

3. *Modification through Cultic Usage.*   In the third model, free modification of an original composition took place within different communities through repeated usage in worship—in a *precanonical stage*, perhaps even before each version was committed to writing. The type of modification would have taken place gradually over time according to the preferences of local communities.

7. *Interpretation*

Let me now discuss the interpretation of the evidence with these models in mind.

a. *Unique and Synonymous Readings*

Either we must accept that the majority of unique readings are the result of separate and deliberate modifications of the original composition, or we must conclude that haplography and/or harmonizing tendencies have played havoc with the text. The presence of many synonymous readings argues for the former explanation, because these cannot be directly explained on the basis of copying practices. It seems more natural to think that the substitution of a synonym was made during an oral stage. The occasional synonym variant might be explained as a case of harmonization, especially if it can be shown to conform to common expressions or parallels found elsewhere in ancient Hebrew or Canaanite literature. However, the accumulation of synonym variants is evidence of an active purpose at work to modify the original form of the composition.

The evidence from repetition and variation in the use of synonyms (§2a above) is important. It suggests that two different techniques of poetic style are operating within these versions. The use of repetition in the 2 Samuel version

and variation where possible in the psalm version must be the result of editorial intent rather than the fortuitous product of a series of scribal accidents.

The number of unique readings (pluses and minuses) in evidence in the psalm version and in the 2 Samuel version is significant. The nature of these readings is also significant. In four cases, the pluses of Psalm 18 tend to increase the intimacy in the relationship between the implied author and the deity, especially by use of a second-person address in place of third-person: "I love *you*, Lord, my strength" (v. 2), "my God" (v. 3; see §2c above), "at *your* rebuke" (v. 16), and "Your right hand supports me" (v. 36). This evidence implies that an editorial purpose is involved in the differences. Admittedly, these four examples do not present a strong argument. But taken in conjunction with other evidence, they suggest that the differences are a result of creative purpose and not mishap.

b. Stylistic Variants

A number of readings show that in cases where two equally good options existed in the language to express an idea, each version preserves a different option. The choice of prepositions and conjunctions (§§2e–f), of noun formations (§3a, §4a) and number (§4b–c), of pronominal suffix forms (§3b), and of verb morphology (§§3c–f) are all examples. The option to assimilate the *nun* of מן or not (§5a) and the choice of an accusative pronoun attached to the verb or preceded by את (§5c) are more direct examples, because these variations alternate freely in texts nearly everywhere in BH. The use of an emphasizing pronoun or not (§5b) is also direct evidence that willful choice operated in the preparation of the text.

c. Morphological Variants

In many cases of morphological variants, we have seen that one form is as much used as the other, and there is no evident reason to select or prefer one reading over another. The usage in BH does not support the conclusion that harmonization was the motive for the substitution of one form over another. For all practical purposes the forms are synonymous or interchangeable. In the case of the use of a singular versus a plural noun, this is true to a lesser degree, but even here the use of the plural is as common as the singular (§§4b–c), and both are used in similar contexts. Certainly we cannot say that the use of a singular in place of a plural (and vice versa) took place on the basis of harmonization to a more common expression. A genetic explanation could be given to resolve one or two cases in the text, but the large number of morphological variants encountered between these two versions substantiates the notion that the readings are alternative rather than genetic. The large number of *duplicated*

morphological variants suggests that the versions preserve linguistic data from different (speech) communities.

d. Dialect and Provenance

The data presented here represent linguistically diverse types of evidence. A continuum of language use includes idiolects (that is, a speaker's own system of language), localects (that is, the language system of a locality), dialects (that is, the language system of a region), and languages (that is, a group of mutually intelligible dialects).[28] Style options operate within an individual speaker's idiolect and represent equivalent options that might be selected on the basis of undefinable factors, such as the mood of the moment. The variants of this study are both stylistic *and* dialectal. Dialectal differences imply that the two versions developed within different localities. Within those distinct localities, the speakers who developed the versions also substituted readings on the basis of style preferences, implying that they did not at the time consider the composition to be canonically fixed.

A rigorous application of linguistic methods can often yield information regarding the provenance of a literary composition. This approach has been used effectively by Gary Rendsburg to identify a number of the psalms as being of "Northern" or "Israelite" origin. The variants between Psalm 18 and 2 Samuel 22 do not divide clearly along dialectal lines, especially not according to the criteria presented in publications of Rendsburg (and others).[29] Unfortunately, the data do not permit us to identify the regions or localities represented in each version—certainly not as indicating one version as Israelite and the other as Judahite. Rendsburg, in his detailed study of Northern psalms, has not identified these texts as being of Northern origin, not because no Northern features appear, but because there is an insufficient concentration of features to support such a conclusion.[30] Northern features are sometimes found in Southern texts. Psalm 18 includes a couple of features that are Northern (that is, the divine name אלוה and the use of the preposition בּ in the sense of מן; see §2c and §2e1). 2 Samuel 22 preserves a couple of minority forms (§§3b–c). At best, we conclude that the versions come from different localities.

Psalm 18 is not a poorly preserved copy of a written text of 2 Samuel 22; nor is 2 Samuel 22 a copy of Psalm 18. We do not have here a text that was initially preserved in written form in one version and as a copy of that text in

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28. Isabel Hub Faria et al., *Introdução à Linguística Geral e Portuguesa* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1996) 480–82.

29. Rendsburg, *Linguistic Evidence*, especially pp. 105–7.

30. Ibid., 104.

the other version. We have two versions of a song—each preserved in writing somewhat independent of the other. The number of alternative readings between the two versions points definitively in that direction. This observation was made by C. F. Keil already in the nineteenth century:

> The idea that the text of 2 Sam. rests upon a careless copy and tradition must decidedly be rejected: for, on the one hand, by far the larger portion of the deviations in our text from that of the Psalter are not to be attributed to carelessness on the part of the copyists, but are evidently alterations made with thoughtfulness and deliberation.[31]

After the initial reduction of the versions to writing, genetic variants were produced as errors in the copying of the consonantal text. James Barr rightly noted: "One cannot, indeed, assume that all such differences between parallel texts are a result of textual corruption; some may go back to free variants in oral tradition."[32] Modification within different communities is the model that corresponds most naturally to the data introduced in the earliest (oral) stage. Two lines of evidence support this explanation. First, the presence of differences of pronunciation, morphology, grammadr, and word choice suggests that we are looking at more than just a collection of the stylistic preferences of an individual. Second, given the nature of the text—that is, a thanksgiving hymn to be sung and appropriated in worship repeatedly—we might expect that local versions would develop. I have observed the same phenomenon repeatedly among worship communities in Portugal, where newly-created choruses, not yet recorded in hymnals, are employed in worship and freely modified within the different localities.

For some readers, this conclusion may seem unnecessary. But it is one thing to suppose that this was the case and another thing to try to draw a connection between the evidence and the conclusion—as I have attempted to do here.

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31. C. F. Keil, *Biblical Commentary on the Books of Samuel* (repr., Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1956) 468.

32. James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968) 192–93.

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The Wisdom of Creation in Psalm 104

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Although Psalm 104 is not usually classified as a "wisdom psalm," its affinities to wisdom thought have been noted by several scholars.[1] First and foremost, contemplation about the cosmos and the place of humans in it is a major concern in wisdom literature, and it is also the main topic of this psalm. A more specific reference to wisdom is the statement that God made all of creation with wisdom (v. 24), an idea also found in Prov 3:19. That is, wisdom is the means, the divine tool as it were, through which the universe was created. Our psalm also implies that the creation manifests the quality of wisdom, in that it is well crafted and logical. A third point of contact with wisdom thought is the banishment of the wicked at the end of the psalm (v. 35), reminiscent of the destruction of the wicked in Psalms 1 and 37 (generally considered wisdom psalms). In our psalm, however, the idea is not that the righteous are superior to the wicked but that there is no place for the wicked in the perfect world that God created.

These affinities to wisdom notwithstanding, I do not want to argue that Psalm 104 is a wisdom psalm, for its stated aim is to "bless the Lord," not to instruct or to inquire into matters of good and evil. Nonetheless, these affinities raise the question of the use of wisdom thought in the Psalms and also, by extension, the relationship of wisdom to Torah.

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1. For instance, E. Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations* (FOTL 15; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 226. J. G. Gammie calls it a wisdom psalm ("From Prudentialism to Apocalypticism: The Houses of the Sages amid the Varying Forms of Wisdom," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* [ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990] 481–82), as does R. N. Whybray (*The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* [Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974] 154). S. Terrien speaks of the "sapiental flavor of the entire psalm" (*The Psalms* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 717).

Wisdom in Psalms is not the pragmatic, universalistic, "nonsectarian" an-
cient Near Eastern wisdom that scholars commonly associate with biblical wis-
dom literature. All the so-called wisdom psalms put wisdom ideas in the
context of trust in God to do justice, punish the wicked, and so forth. Success
or failure in life is determined not by intellectual knowledge or by savvy be-
havior but by loyalty to God and to his commandments: "Fortunate is every-
one who fears the Lord, who follows his ways (Ps 128:1; cf. Psalms 1, 37, and
112). In the Psalms, the path to wisdom is through following God's com-
mandments (the same idea expressed in Eccl 12:13). And knowledge of the
commandments is achieved through the study of God's words—learning
them, speaking them (Pss 1:2; 37:30–31; 119:12–16, 74–77 et passim). That
is, in the view of many psalms, the form in which wisdom is accessible to Israel
is through the Torah, the textual record of God's words.[2] The Torah makes
the simple wise (Ps 19:8). In this sense, there is little difference between "wis-
dom psalms" and "Torah psalms" (Psalms 1, 19, 119) except that the term
"Torah" appears in the second group.[3]

This connection between wisdom and Torah should be seen as having been
made under the influence of Deuteronomy, a book whose relationship to wis-
dom was explicated by Moshe Weinfeld some years ago.[4] According to Wein-
feld, the beginning of deuteronomic literary activity (during the time of
Hezekiah) marks a turning point in the Israelite conception of wisdom. The
concept of wisdom then took on a new meaning. "The Deuteronomist no
longer conceived of 'wisdom' as meaning cunning, pragmatic talent, or the
possession of extraordinary knowledge, but held it to be synonymous with the
knowledge and understanding of proper behavior and with morality." Wein-
feld goes on: "Until the seventh century Law and Wisdom existed as two sepa-
rate and autonomous disciplines. Law belonged to the sacral sphere, whereas
Wisdom dealt with the secular and the mundane. These two disciplines were

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2. Clearly the Psalms and other parts of the Bible use "Torah" to indicate some known
traditional text, be it the Torah as we now have it or a precursor.

3. "Torah psalm" designates psalms that advocate the study of the Torah, such as Psalms
1, 19, and 119. James Luther Mays indicates that these three psalms are the only ones com-
posed on the theme of Torah, but he includes along with them, in his category of Torah
psalms, Psalms 18, 25, 33, 78, 89, 93, 94, 99, 103, 105, 111, 112, 147, 148 ("The Place of
the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106 [1987] 8 n. 12). These psalms all have Torah in-
terests. They all follow the lead of Psalm 1 in the idea that God's Torah is the concern of
the righteous and that adherence to it determines the individual's success or failure.

4. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972;
repr. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 244–81. The quotations that follow are from
p. 255.

amalgamated in the book of Deuteronomy, and the laws of the Torah were now identified with wisdom."[5] The proof text is Deut 4:6–8, where observance of the laws is "proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples." For Deuteronomy, Israel's wisdom is distinctive and superior to that of other nations. It consists of God's laws and rules, as revealed through Moses. (Notice how close to this idea is Ps 119:98: "Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies.") Stephen A. Geller succinctly sums up the deuteronomic change to wisdom in the following words: "The development of full biblical religion, in the form of the Deuteronomic–covenantal complex, created a crisis for the wise. Deuteronomy rejects wisdom that does not concern itself with revelation and covenantal law."[6] In the exilic and postexilic periods, explains Geller, the themes of the earlier traditional wisdom were combined with the newly emerging faith. Eventually, as Geller puts it, "wisdom's focus on nature gave way entirely to a focus on covenant, with the results we see in the 'Torah psalms,' of which Psalm 119 is the longest . . . example."[7]

This does not mean that the focus on covenant completely blotted out concern with nature and with the cosmos but, rather, that the consideration of nature was drawn into the orbit of covenantal thought. In fact, the creation of the world is a dominant motif in postexilic writings, a mainstay of covenantal thought that shows God's power over the universe, including the great empires of Babylonia and Persia. Indeed, one might ask: Where in the Bible is the creation of the world *not* part of covenantal thought?[8] The Bible views the creation

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5. If this is so, as most scholars agree, then one may question how much, if any, of the predeuteronomic view of wisdom has been preserved in the Bible. A few recent studies suggest that such wisdom books as Job and Proverbs are more "covenantally" focused than has been appreciated. See Mayer Gruber, "Human and Divine Wisdom in the Book of Job," in *Boundaries of the Ancient Near Eastern World: A Tribute to Cyrus H. Gordon* (ed. Meir Lubetski, Clairs Gottlieb, and Sharon Keller; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998) 88–102. Alan Cooper discusses wisdom in Proverbs in an essay in the forthcoming Festschrift for Stephen A. Geller. See also Murphy, "Wisdom and Creation," *JBL* 104 (1985) 3–11.

6. "The Religion of the Bible" in *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford, 2001) 2038.

7. Ibid., 2039.

8. This question was posed by Roland Murphy, who argued that the God of wisdom and the God of creation were viewed by ancient Israel as one and the same, and that creation/wisdom was never outside the realm of faith. "Rather, the concept, as well as the development of creation in wisdom theology, can be accepted as a genuine element (and not merely an importation) of the faith of the Israelites as they encountered the Lord in the created world" ("Wisdom and Creation," 5). This position is diametrically opposed to E. Gerstenberger, who says in reference to Psalm 104: "the major characteristics of God, humankind, and world seem to be aligned to international wisdom rather than national Torah and election theology" (*Psalms, Part 2, and Lamentations*, 226).

as God's greatest accomplishment, with bringing Israel out of Egypt a close sec-
ond (or perhaps equal, as in Psalm 114). It is not strange, then, that creation
becomes a primary mode of praise for God, since God is known through what
he has done. Contemplating creation leads to the praise of God, or perhaps one
should say that contemplating creation *is* a form of praising God.[9]

It has been observed that the topic of creation is never an end in itself in
Psalms but always a trope or subtheme that supports a psalm's main theme.
The psalm that appears to break this rule is Psalm 104, because, as some read
it, its main topic is creation.[10] Meir Weiss has argued that it is not about cre-
ation per se but about praising God, like the many other psalms in which cre-
ation figures.[11] True enough, but I think something more than just praise is at
issue in the psalm's use of creation. Creation is a part of what God revealed of
himself to humans, a revelation that is impossible not to see. The natural world
is, as it were, an ongoing visual revelation, just as the Torah is an ongoing tex-
tual (or aural) revelation. That is the sense of Psalm 19, which draws a parallel
between the cosmos and the Torah, mapping one onto the other.[12] In this way
is the cosmos drawn into the orbit of covenantal thought. God is revealed to
Israel both through creation and through Torah.

Like Psalm 19, Psalm 104 operates in this nexus of creation and Torah.
Clearly, the idea of wisdom in creation is paramount. Verse 24 ("How mani-
fold are your works, Lord; you made them all with wisdom; the earth is full
of your creations") has been identified as central to the message of the psalm.
It implies that to understand creation is to understand wisdom. The wisdom
through which God created the world is, as the psalm demonstrates, manifest
in the created world. The effect of this line of thought is to make creation not
only a way to praise God but also a way of access to divine wisdom—that
same divine wisdom embodied in the Torah. There may be a stronger con-
nection between creation and Torah at the end of the psalm, in v. 32, which
describes God as "He who looks at the earth and it trembles, who touches the
mountains and they smoke." This is the language of creation and of revelation

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9. We see this also in Psalm 8, but whereas Psalm 8 celebrates the special place of hu-
mans in the cosmic hierarchy, Psalm 104 presents the cosmos as a nonhierarchical ecosystem
in which each component, including humans, is interconnected, and all are provided for.
Cf. Mays, "Maker of Heaven and Earth: Creation in the Psalms," in *God Who Creates: Es-
says in Honor of W. Sibley Towner* (ed. Dean McBride Jr. and William P. Brown; Grand Rap-
ids: Eerdmans, 2000) 85.

10. See Mays, "Maker of Heaven and Earth," 75; Patrick D. Miller, "The Poetry of Cre-
ation: Psalm 104," in *God Who Creates*, 87.

11. Meir Weiss, *The Bible from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984) 90 n. 33.

12. See Harold Fisch, *Poetry with a Purpose* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988)
120−26.

(cf. Amos 9:5 and Ps 144:5). Exegetes have identified this as the language of theophany, and it is especially close to Exod 19:18, where Mt. Sinai was all in smoke and shaking. If this verse is an oblique allusion to that most famous theophany, then it is implying that the God of creation is the God who revealed himself at Sinai, the record of which is preserved in a written text. If this psalm is exilic or postexilic, as I suspect it is, then the Sinai text is the Torah, just as it is in the "Torah psalms."

Now while the term "Torah" is nowhere found in this psalm, the Torah text is very much present, for the psalm is not simply employing the oft-used theme of creation in a general sense but is specifically engaged with the story of creation as recounted in the Torah, at the beginning of Genesis.[13] The psalm is a poetic retelling of the Genesis story, and it therefore falls under the rubric of "innerbiblical interpretation."[14] I will not belabor the arguments about whether, or to what degree, Psalm 104 is based on Genesis 1 or on other ancient Near Eastern texts.[15] It is clear to me that Genesis 1 informs the psalm, although the psalm is also informed by other strands of cosmological thinking common in the Bible and the ancient Near East (upon which Genesis 1 also draws). I would point out that, whatever cosmological ideas were borrowed from Israel's neighbors, they had been borrowed long before the psalm was written. All of them had worked their way into biblical literature by the time of our psalmist, so he did not have far to go for them.[16] The trend of reading biblical texts against ancient Near Eastern counterparts, while extremely useful, may exaggerate the "foreignness" of many cosmological ideas, which over time became "Israelite" despite their foreign origins. This trend also temporarily diverted attention from the psalm's allusions to Genesis 1. But given the more recent interest in biblical intertextuality, especially innerbiblical interpretation, it is time to revive the comparison of the psalm to Genesis 1.

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13. While Genesis 1 is the main basis for the psalm, it also knows the story of Genesis 2–3. Human working of the soil is reflected in v. 14, and the creation of humans from dust and God's breath is alluded to in v. 29.

14. Other psalms in which I see the rewriting, or interpretation, of Torah texts include 68(?), 78, 81, 83(?), 89, 103, 105, 106, 114, 132, 135, and 136.

15. The Egyptian hymn "The Great Hymn to the Aten" bears many similarities, but its relationship to the psalm is difficult to ascertain. Most scholars today doubt any direct relationship, ascribing the similarities in language to the similar themes of the two poems. For a summary of scholarship, see Leslie Allen, *Psalms 101–150* (WBC; Waco, Tex.: Thomas Nelson, 2002) 40–41. C. Uehlinger argues that vv. 25–26 are better explained as stemming from Canaanite-Phoenician thought, as demonstrated by a cylinder seal from Tell el-Dabʿa ("Leviathan und die Schiffe in Ps 104, 25–26," *Bib* 71 [1990] 499–526).

16. This point is made by Dennis J. McCarthy, "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," *CBQ* 29 (1967) 405–6.

The psalmist uses the Genesis blueprint, but he does not structure his picture of creation exactly the way Genesis does.[17] He adds mythological references, expands by association, and does not organize the events into a six- or seven-day schema. As does Genesis 1, the psalmist speaks of the light, the sky, the separation of the waters, the land with its vegetation, animals, the sun, and the sea with its marine life; but the account is less rigid and the order is slightly different. The psalm's "dischronologizing" of the Genesis story results from the way it organizes the domains of the world. I use "domains" to refer to the sky, land, and sea—the habitats that according to Genesis were first created and then, in a second round, populated. Thus, according to Genesis, the sky is first created, but only later are the celestial bodies formed and placed in it; the land is separated from the water, but only later are the water and land creatures created. Psalm 104, on the other hand, treats everything in the sky at once (vv. 2–4), everything on the land, including streams, rain, birds, and sunshine (vv. 5–23), and finally everything in the sea (vv. 25–26). The psalm does not structure the creation on a six- or seven-day plan and therefore attempts to equate sections of the psalm with specific days in Genesis 1 fall short. Instead, the psalm derives its structure from the story of the separation of the waters: first the separation of the waters above and below the firmament and then the separation into dry land and seas. The psalm speaks first of the domain of the sky, then of the dry land, and then of the sea. The thread that links these three domains, especially the last two, is the water.

Additional observations: Genesis 1 has a God's-eye perspective, whereas Psalm 104 looks at the world through the eyes of humans, seeing what a person standing on earth would see. The events of Genesis 1 are in the distant past—it is the story of origins, the world at the beginning of time; Psalm 104 paints a picture of the present world—the (idyllic) world as it is now. What does the psalmist see? What does the world look like? How is God envisioned? These questions will be the focus of the remainder of this essay.

1. The Domain of the Sky:
God Is Arrayed in His Creation

After opening with the idea that God is very great, the psalm describes God as dressed in glory and majesty. The next verses elaborate: the majestic glory is

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17. That Genesis 1 lies behind the psalm, or that it should be used as the interpretive strategy for this psalm, is an old idea, espoused by, for example, the medieval exegete David Qimḥi. Many modern scholars have outlined the similartities; see, for example, the chart in Weiss, *The Bible from Within*, 89. Others try to find a seven-part structure in the psalm, to match the seven days of creation, but this is less convincing.

the light, heavens, waters, clouds, and wind. These are the first things God created, but in this poem they do not stand separate from God but serve as God's clothing and habitat—his suit, house, and car, as it were. The light is like a robe; the sky is his curtain or tent cloth (cf. Isa 40:22)—the walls of his house; the (upper) waters are his roof beams; the wind-driven clouds are his chariot. At this point the description in Genesis is made more vivid by the picturesque imagery of God riding on the clouds. Similar imagery is in Deut 33:26; Isa 19:1; Ps 18:11 = 2 Sam 22:11; and Ps 68:34, where God rides in the sky, on the clouds, or on the wind. Drawing on storm imagery and the idea of divine beings or angels, v. 4 makes the wind and lightning God's servants, his entourage. A similar idea is found in Ps 103:20–21, where the angels are described as doing God's bidding and the heavenly hosts, his servants, as doing his will.[18] While drawing on Genesis 1, the psalm has, with a few extra brush strokes, painted a majestic picture of God as king in his heavenly abode. The first part of the creation becomes, through the poetry of this psalm, the heavenly place that God fashioned for himself. As Ps 11:4 puts it, "The Lord is in his holy palace/Temple; the Lord, his throne is in heaven."[19] This is the domain of the sky, the domain of God. The sun and moon are not part of this domain; the image of God residing in the heavens does not include the sun and moon, although it may include the stars (cf. Isa 40:26). Therefore, the sun and moon are relegated to the domain of the land (v. 19). For the same reason, the birds are not in the sky but part of the land scene.

The domain of God is separate from the domain of the earth. The creation of the earth is not mentioned until v. 5. Unlike Genesis 1, here heaven and earth are separate entities, not part of a heaven-and-earth complex. God is already present, ensconced in his heavenly splendor, when he sets to work on the earth and waters (cf. Ps 90:2).

2. The Creation of the World

Verses 5–9 describe the creation of the world in mythological terms—the cosmic battle against the primeval waters—invoked elsewhere in psalms (e.g.,

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18. James Kugel links this verse with the idea of angels developed more clearly in later literature (*The Bible as It Was* [Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1997] 58–59).

19. It is possible, as J. C. McCann Jr. suggests, that the mention of יריעה is a reference to the Temple, because the word is most frequently used in connection with the Tabernacle ("Psalms," *NIB*, 4:1097). However, I would not say, as he does, that "v. 2b then suggests that God's real house is not in the Temple but the universe." There is no polemic here. Rather, God's abode is imagined to be like the Temple or Tabernacle, in the same manner that God is often imagined as a king. The Temple, earthly or heavenly, is the palace of the divine king.

Ps 29:3; see also Jer 5:22). In our psalm's battle the cosmic waters are no real rival to God, for he has complete control over them. He first made the waters cover the earth and then made them recede; then he barred them from ever covering the earth again. While the imagery is mythological, the thought reflects Gen 1:2 and 9, where the waters first cover the earth and are then removed. The land, with its topographical features, is already present but submerged in water. As the water rushes away, it runs up the mountains and down the valleys, till it reaches the place assigned to it, where it is permanently restrained.[20] The image of the waters covering the mountains may owe something to the Flood story, where the waters cover the mountains (Gen 7:19–20, 24). The Flood is a return to the precreation state, before the waters were separated by the firmament, when "all the fountains of the deep burst apart and the floodgates of the sky broke open" (Gen 7:11). Our psalm later pictures a more-benevolent watering of the earth from the streams and the rain.

3. The Domain of the Land

The domain of the land begins with a section (vv. 10–18) that encompasses the work of the third and sixth days in Genesis 1, the creation of vegetation and of land animals. Having disposed of the primeval waters, the psalmist now looks at the land, but he does so by continuing the story of the waters, only now these are the beneficent waters of the streams and the rainfall (not the cosmic waters that have been chased away and confined to the seas). This section connects nicely to the previous section through the mention of water and mountains. In the place of the primeval waters running over the mountains in their escape, we have the springs gushing through the mountains bringing the water to sustain life. The mountains, the habitat of the wild animals, frames the section, with humans at the center.

As in Genesis, the vegetation is of two types: grass (vv. 14–15) and trees (vv. 16–17). Most of the wildlife mentioned by name is also found in Job 38–39: mountain goat (v. 18; Job 39:1), wild ass (v. 11; Job 39:5), lion (cub) (v. 21; Job 38:39), stork (v. 17; Job 39:13). The שפן 'badger or coney' is not listed in Job but appears in Prov 30:26 as a weak animal that lives in the protection of the rocks, where the psalmist also locates it (v. 18). It seems likely that this zoological taxonomy is part of a known list or catalog, of the type as-

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20. The NJPSV translation of v. 8, "mountains rising, valleys sinking" is incorrect; mountains and valleys are not being formed. Better is the NRSV, "They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys." The subject of these verbs is the waters, not the mountains and valleys.

sociated with scribal circles, that poets deployed for their own purposes.[21] If so, this is another point of contact between the psalm and wisdom writings. Psalm 104 and Job draw on the list for different ends, but both link the divine knowledge and protection of wildlife to the creation. This is part of the "wisdom" with which the world was created.

What is the בהמה? This is another term from Genesis 1, usually translated 'cattle' (vv. 24–26). Does בהמה have the same meaning in v. 14 of our psalm? Most commentaries think so, reasoning that domesticated animals immediately precede human agriculture. "God sends rain for domestic animals and crops," says R. Clifford, and S. Terrien speaks of "pastures for goats, sheep, and cattle."[22] However, I want to argue for a more general meaning for בהמה as a grass-eating animal, be it wild or domesticated. The combination of בהמה and חציר appears also in Ps 147:8–9 and in Job 40:15, where the general sense of herbivore obtains. Job likens the בהמה to cattle (בקר) in that it eats grass. Ps 147:9 pairs it with birds of prey, carnivores. In neither of these references is 'cattle' or 'domesticated animals' the best reading. So too in Ps 104:14, where the pairing of grass for the בהמה and herbage for human labor is better understood as the pairing of the uncultivated vegetation (eaten by both domesticated and wild animals) with the cultivated vegetation. The same type of pairing of wild-animal activity and human activity is found in vv. 20–23. God simultaneously provides for the natural world to get its food and for the human world to produce it.

The sun and moon, created on the fourth day in Genesis to be placed in the sky, are here not part of the domain of the sky, but of the land. Their purpose is not calendrical, but to "separate day from night," to mark the diurnal cycle of activity of the land creatures—their habitat in time. In this regard, the moon is actually superfluous, because the setting and rising of the sun determines day and night; but it is mentioned along with the sun, much the way we associate the sun with the day and the moon with the night.[23] The nighttime

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21. See Yair Hoffman, *A Blemished Perfection: The Book of Job in Context* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 84–114, on catalog literature, and pp. 95–96 on Psalm 104 in particular. He considers the entire psalm to be a catalog, whose title is v. 24, "How many are the things you have made, Lord; you made them all in wisdom." See also idem, "תהילים קד: עיון ספרותי," in *"Shaʿarei Talmon": Studies in the Bible, Qumran, and the Ancient Near East: Presented to Shemaryahu Talmon* (ed. M. Fishbane and E. Tov; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992) *13–*24; McCarthy, "'Creation' Motifs," 405.

22. Richard J. Clifford, *Psalms 73–150* (Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries; Nashville: Abingdon, 2003) 149; Terrien, *The Psalms*, 714.

23. The word למועדים in v. 19 is best understood as 'for fixed times', not 'for seasons' (the moon does not mark seasons). The word למועדים comes from Gen 1:14, which the

world is the world of forest creatures, nocturnal predators, represented by lions hunting for food. The daytime world is represented by humans doing their work. These natural enemies, lions and humans, are here kept apart, their activities assigned to mutually exclusive time-slots. Job 38:39 also uses the image of the lion hunting prey that only God can provide.

A miniature of the same idea of God as creator and provider is in Ps 147:8–9: "[God] who covers the sky with clouds, who provides the earth with rain, who makes mountains sprout grass; he gives the animal (בהמה) its food, the raven's brood what they call for."

4. Natural and Man-Made

The psalmist's picture of the world includes both natural and man-made elements, for it is not a picture of the beginning of the world but of the world as it exists for the psalmist in real time. So human agricultural products— wine, oil, and bread, signifying the three agricultural seasons and the basic provisions for life—are mentioned in the domain of the land. (The more-frequent triumvirate is דגן, תירוש, and יצהר.) The sun, too, is seen in reference to the regularity of human work. In the same vein, ships take their place along with sea creatures in the domain of the sea.[24] The ships represent commerce; or perhaps, as Qimḥi suggests, fishing, which would make a nice parallel with human agricultural endeavors. Human work and its products are celebrated in the psalm as part of creation. Animals also "work," doing what animals do: wild animals find food and drink (vv. 11, 21), birds sing (v. 12) and build nests (v. 17). The purpose of all this work is to obtain food and shelter, which is actually provided by God, who has arranged the world in such a way that all its creatures find (or produce) the food and shelter they need (vv. 27–28).

5. The Domain of the Sea

The story of the waters continues further. "God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters he called Seas," says Gen 1:10. The psalm follows this order: having described the domain of the earth/land, it now describes the sea. The sea is large and wide, with an uncountable number of creatures in it. "Living things great and small" may be a merismus for all sea life, or it may reflect the two-part division of sea creatures in Gen 1:21: the sea monsters (התנינים הגדולים) and the swarming creatures.

NJPSV translates "they shall serve as signs for set times—the days and the years." Our psalm is concerned only with days, not years.

24. Uehlinger points to Phoenician ships with animal-headed prows as an explanation of why ships are included among the large sea animals ("Leviathan und die Schiffe," 522–24).

Is the domain of the sea parallel to the domain of the land? We have seen that the domain of the sky is set off separately from the land. Is the domain of the sea also set apart from the land? The question arises because the summary line in v. 24 precedes the mention of the sea and its constituents. One might expect this verse to follow the domain of the sea, summing up all of creation, including both land and sea domains. Secondly, the point of the description of the domain of the land is to show how God provides food and shelter for all his creatures. This is not the point of the description of the domain of the sea, where the emphasis is, rather, on its size and the quantity of marine life. The sea is deep and wide, and its creatures are without number. The domain of the sea is a second illustration or proof of "how manifold are your works . . . the whole earth is full of your creations." Therefore, the phrase זה הים is best rendered as 'such is the sea', not 'there is the sea' (as if pointing to it in the distance).[25] The main focus of the psalm is on the picture of the land, which takes up the greatest number of verses and occupies the central position in the structure. The sea, while part of the land-sea complex in the Genesis story, is given less attention in the psalm. It is a side thought to explain part of v. 24. The main thought of v. 24, "*all of them* you made with wisdom" is then continued in v. 27, "*all of them* look to you to give them their food." Providing food is the wisdom with which God created the world, and food is precisely what was emphasized in the picture of the land. Nothing is said about food for sea creatures.

6. Leviathan

What is the Leviathan? One possibility, the most widely-accepted one, is that the Leviathan is the well-known mythical sea-serpent or sea monster. If so, this figure serves here as an interpretation of the great serpents, התנינים הגדלים, mentioned in Gen 1:21. This would then be an early reference to an interpretation found in later literature.[26] The sea monster, known from mythology and folklore, is not invoked here in the sense of a cosmic enemy or symbol of evil. Rather, the monster has been "tamed"; it is no more threatening than the other inhabitants of the sea.

Another possibility is to understand Leviathan in the sense that many exegetes understand it in Job 40:25, as a crocodile. Given the other similarities to Job 38–41 in this psalm, and given that the psalm is here describing the natural

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25. For other examples of 'such is', see *HALOT* 1:264. Most translations take זה as indicating distance, as if the psalmist is pointing to the sea, as in the NRSV's "yonder is the sea."

26. E. Lipiński (לִוְיָתָן, *TDOT* 7:506) cites (Ethiopic) *1 Enoch* 60:7; 2 Esd 6:49; *2* (Apoc) *Bar* 29:4; *Gen. Rab.* 7:4; *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 1:21.

world rather than the mythological world, it may be better to take Leviathan as a crocodile. This may explain why it is not included in the large marine creatures in v. 25. Additionally, Job 40:29 asks if Job can play (תשחק) with the Leviathan as with a bird—another suggestive connection between the psalm (in v. 26 the Leviathan was created in order to play) and Job. These wonders of the natural world are, like the cedars of Lebanon (v. 16), simply large-scale examples of the wonders of the created world, on the land and in the sea.

Meir Weiss has opted for a more-mundane explanation, explaining the etymology of "Leviathan" as the one who escorts (לוה) and understanding the reference to tuna or tunny fish (or dolphins), which are often found in the proximity of ships.[27] This, says Weiss, is why the Leviathan is listed after the ships rather than among the sea creatures "small and great."

These interpretive possibilities are interesting, but in the end it is not crucial to decide among them. It matters little whether the Leviathan is real or mythological; the point is that it is large and lives in the sea. Verses 25–26 want to say that the sea is teeming with life, and yet it is so vast that there is plenty of room for large objects, ships, and a giant sea creature (be it a whale or the Loch Ness monster) to move around in it.[28] Verse 25 exemplifies living things; v. 26 exemplifies large things, animate and inanimate.

7. *The Ending of the Psalm*

The description of creation ends in v. 26, yet the psalm continues. Not only did God create the world, says the psalm (a world that is perfect in its plan and execution), but God's continued presence in the world is necessary. Without God's favor, all life will starve, perish, and disintegrate.

At stake in this psalm is more than just praising God for his wonderful and wise creation. The psalmist is praying that God will not abandon his creation, that life as we know it will not come to an end. The psalmist is praying for the continuation of the world. If v. 24 is the first key to the psalm, v. 31 is the second: "May the Lord's glory (כבוד) be forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works." The term כבוד means the manifestation of the divine presence that fills the world (cf. Num 14:21; Ps 57:6, 12; 72:19; 108:6). In our psalm, God's presence, his כבוד, is manifest in creation, an idea shared with Ps 19:2: "The

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27. Weiss, *The Bible from Within*, 91–93.

28. This interpretation requires parsing the syntax of v. 26b as "Leviathan that you formed to sport in it" (NRSV), meaning that the Leviathan sports or plays in the sea, rather than as "Leviathan that you formed to sport with" (NJPSV), meaning that God sports with the Leviathan. This is an old crux, reflected in ancient, medieval, and modern commentaries. See Weiss, *The Bible from Within*, 78–93.

sky tells of the כבוד of God; the firmament proclaims his handiwork." The psalmist hopes that the divine presence will remain in the world and that God will continue to approve of his creation, thereby guaranteeing its continued existence.[29] The disappearance of sinners (v. 35) reinforces the point, for sinners undermine God's favor to the world: they may cause God to hide his face. To ensure that God will look with favor on the world, the psalmist promises to praise him continually. Such is the power of prayer.

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29. Amos Hacham sees in "May the glory of the Lord be forever" a counterpart to "Long live the king" (ספר תהלים [Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1990] 261). Several commentaries suggest a relationship between God's rejoicing in his works and Gen 1:31: "And God saw all that he had made and behold it was very good." The phrase "may God rejoice in his works" is unusual; normally humans rejoice in God and his works, as the psalmist does in v. 34.

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"Come, O Children . . . I Will Teach You the Fear of the Lord" (Psalm 34:12): Comparing Psalms and Proverbs

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Comparative studies of Psalms and wisdom have been limited largely to locating "wisdom psalms" in the Psalter,[1] an endeavor recently and vigorously called into question.[2] Until certain criteria have attained universal consent (an unlikely prospect), I propose advancing the discussion in a way that declines, respectfully, the challenge to identify "wisdom psalms" as such. The burden of proof lies in demonstrating that the allegedly wisdom material in the Psalms is *uniquely* sapiential, an intractably difficult, if not impossible, task.[3] Nevertheless, identifying shared rhetoric between Psalms and the wisdom literature is

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1. Or, more modestly, units of sapiential rhetoric allegedly reflecting the editorial hand of the sages. Representative examples include, on the maximalist side, Roland Murphy, "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms,'" in *Congress Volume: Bonn 1962* (VTSup 9; Leiden: Brill, 1962) 156–67; J. Kenneth Kuntz, "The Canonical Wisdom Psalms of Ancient Israel: Their Rhetorical, Thematic, and Formal Dimensions," in *Rhetorical Criticism: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (ed. Jared Jackson and Martin Kessler; Pittsburgh: Pickwick, 1974) 186–222; Leo Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult: A Critical Analysis of the Views of Cult in the Wisdom Literature of Israel and the Ancient Near East* (SBLDS 30; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977); Anthony Ceresko, "The Sage in the Psalms," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John Gammie and Leo Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 217–30; R. N. Whybray, "The Wisdom Psalms," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton* (ed. John Day et al.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 152–60. A comparatively minimalist view is found in Avi Hurvitz, "Wisdom Vocabulary in the Hebrew Psalter: A Contribution to the Study of 'Wisdom Psalms,'" *VT* 38 (1988) 41–51; idem, *Wisdom Language in Biblical Psalmody* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991) [Hebrew].

2. See James Crenshaw, "Wisdom Psalms?" *CurBS* 8 (2000) 9–17; idem, *The Psalms: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 87–95. See most recently the exchange between J. Kenneth Kuntz ("Reclaiming Biblical Wisdom Psalms: A Response to Crenshaw," *CurBR* 1/2 [2003] 145–54) and James Crenshaw ("Gold Dust or Nuggets? A Brief Response to J. Kenneth Kuntz," *CurBR* 1/2 [2003] 155–58).

3. See ibid., 156.

no vain exercise. Sharing more than just a few words, these two corpora exhibit similar language, parallel motifs and metaphors, and comparable didactic aims.[4] Yet it is precisely their rhetorical affinities that help to delineate their *divergent* emphases. Differences, after all, can be measured in degrees; apples and oranges belong to the same food group.[5]

In the face of the current impasse, new questions need to be asked that afford more subtle and suggestive comparisons. How do Psalms and Proverbs, for example, deploy didactic rhetoric within their respective contexts and to what ends? This essay examines several so-called "wisdom psalms" (Psalms 32, 34, 37, and 111–112, as well as Psalm 78)[6] and identifies their distinctive goals and theological nuances in relation to comparable motifs and passages in Proverbs.

Psalm 37

Roland Murphy declares, "if ever a psalm could be classified as wisdom, it is this one."[7] Its tone is thoroughly admonitory, and profiles of the righteous and the wicked are sharply contrasted. The psalm's central theme is indicated in the opening verse and effectively summarized in v. 7:

> Be still (דּוֹם)[8] before YHWH,
>   and wait passionately (הִתְחוֹלֵל)[9] for him.

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4. By "didactic," I simply mean anything meant for instruction that is *explicitly* indicated as such by form and/or language. Didactic literature is by no means limited to Psalms and the wisdom literature and could include the prophetic summons to pay attention (see, for example, Deut 31:12–13; Isa 1:2–3; 28:23–29; Jer 9:20; Joel 1:2–3; Amos 3:3–8). For an overview of biblical and other ancient Near Eastern witnesses to education, see James Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1998) 51–220.

5. Tellingly, *both* Kuntz and Crenshaw regard the image of two similar buildings as an apt analogy for the overlapping of vocabulary and concepts between the wisdom literature and Psalms (Crenshaw, "Gold Dust?" 156–57; Kuntz, "Reclaiming Biblical Wisdom Psalms," 149).

6. Other "wisdom psalms," so called by some, include Psalms 1, 19, 49, 119, and 127, three of which are better labeled Torah psalms (see James Mays, "The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106 [1987] 3–12). For the purposes of this essay, I have selected those psalms most frequently labeled sapiential (with the exception of Psalm 49; see n. 37).

7. Roland Murphy, *The Gift of the Psalms* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000) 88. Samuel Terrien refers to this acrostic as a "sapiential homily" (*The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 317, 322–32).

8. For the use of this verb, which does not occur in Proverbs, see Pss 4:5; 31:18; 62:6; 131:2.

9. The verb can suggest writhing (Job 15:20), as in the case of giving birth (Isa 51:2), dancing (Judg 21:21), and anxiety (Esth 4:4). The parallelism suggests that "waiting" for God is no passive exercise; rather, it involves pathos.

> Do not get worked up (אל־תתחר) over those who prosper in their way;
> [do not fret] over those who carry out evil schemes.

Characteristic of the psalm as a whole, this verse is balanced by positive and negative commands. The positive imperatives profile a certain posture before YHWH (v. 7a), namely that of patient longing, whereas the negative command (repeated elliptically in the final colon) does the same vis-à-vis the wealthy wicked (v. 7b). The juxtaposition of commands betrays a striking irony: a posture of restraint is commanded with respect to *both* the wicked and the deity. They require concomitant orientations. This paradox of God and the wicked sharing the same syntactic stage is, however, signaled only here. The commands in vv. 1, 7b, and 8 exhort an attitude of restraint vis-à-vis the wicked. But much more is enjoined with respect to one's orientation toward God, as indicated in the positive commands: "Trust in YHWH" (v. 3a; see v. 5b); "Take delight in YHWH" (v. 4); "Commit your way to YHWH" (v. 5a); and "Wait for YHWH, and keep to his way" (v. 34). Most explicit in v. 7a, the proclivity toward anger against the wicked is transformed into *passionate* longing for God (compare Psalm 73).

The problem of the wicked and their attendant success is acknowledged and resolved in a series of assurances regarding their imminent destruction[10] and the vindication of the righteous.[11] The present condition of disparity is to be reversed: "The meek shall inherit the land and delight themselves in abundant riches" (v. 11; see also vv. 9, 22). In the meantime, the psalmist offers a typically, but not exclusively, sapiential expression in v. 16, a *Tobspruch*. The righteous are to be, for the time being, content with their meager resources. Thus, to "wait for YHWH" is, in part, to wait with assurance for the passing of the wicked "yet in a little while" (v. 10).

This "wisdom psalm" bears certain rhetorical similarities to Proverbs, while exhibiting its own distinctive emphases. Although the players remain the same by name or role (that is, the righteous, the wicked, and the speaking voice of experience), Psalm 37 places proportionally greater emphasis on the *destiny* and *condition* of the wicked and the righteous than on their general *conduct*. The conduct of the wicked is an issue primarily insofar as it impacts the welfare of the righteous (vv. 12, 14, 21, 32, 35). Only peripherally are the wicked indicted for unethical behavior apart from their persecution of the righteous. Conversely, the righteous are distinguished, in addition to their moral conduct, by the protective favor they (are to) receive from God. The wicked are destined by God for destruction; the righteous, for prosperity in the land.

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10. Verses 2, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17a, 20, 28β, 36, 38.
11. Verses 11, 17b, 18–19, 23–24, 25–26, 28abα, 29, 33, 34b, 37b, 39–40.

Akin to wisdom's laughter over the imminent destruction of scoffers (Prov 1:26–27), "Yʜᴡʜ laughs at the wicked, for he sees that their day is coming" (v. 13), and on that day the righteous shall "inherit the land" (vv. 9, 22, 29, 34).[12] In the meantime, however, the righteous assume a distinctively unsapiential profile: they are *vulnerable* and *victimized*; they have "little" (v. 16).[13] Beset by hardship, they are the "meek" and the "poor and needy" (vv. 11, 14).[14] This sort of identification of the righteous is largely absent in Proverbs. At stake in the psalm is the *vindication* of the righteous (v. 6), indeed their deliverance from the wicked, not their enlightenment or moral growth.

Consonant with proverbial literature, the righteous in this psalm are ethically defined by both their mouth and their heart:[15]

> The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
>   and their tongues speak justice.
> The law [or teaching, תורה] of their God is in their hearts;
>   their steps do not slip. (vv. 30–31)

Wisdom and justice characterize the discourse of the righteous, but an inner source is identified that is not given full play in Proverbs, namely, divine "law" lodged in the "heart."[16] In Proverbs, wisdom penetrates the heart (for example, Prov 2:2, 10; 14:33). In Psalm 37, this implanted "law," or divine guidance,[17]

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12. The expression is not found in Proverbs, but see Prov 2:21–22; 10:30. The figure of the righteous in Psalm 37 takes on a more disenfranchised position than in Proverbs with respect to the "land."

13. Several psalms identify the righteous or speaking voice of the Psalms with the "poor" and "needy" (for example, Pss 40:18[17]; 70:6[5]; 86:1; 109:22). For a general description of the *vulnerable* righteous in the Psalter, see J. Clinton McCann Jr., "'The Way of the Righteous' in the Psalms: Character Formation and Cultural Crisis," in *Character and Scripture* (ed. William Brown; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 141–42. For a more materialist profile of poverty in the Psalms, see John Pleins, *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible: A Theological Introduction* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 419–37.

14. The "poor" and the "needy" are referenced in altogether four passages in Proverbs, and in no instance are these categories identified with the righteous (Prov 14:31; 30:14; 31:9, 20). Indeed, it is the righteous who are consistently in the position of *helping* the needy (31:9, 20; see also 29:7). In the Psalms, God is the one who rescues the needy. Positive references to the poor in Proverbs are found primarily in the *Tobsprüche* (Prov 19:1, 22; 28:6; see also 28:11).

15. See Prov 2:2, 10; 3:1, 3; 4:21, 23; 10:8; 16:21; 23:15.

16. In Proverbs, Torah is referenced in the first nine chapters as parental "teaching" (Prov 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20, 23), but its more legislative sense is found concentrated in chaps. 28–29, part of the Hezekian collecton, where Torah is treated as something external yet without reference to the deity (28:4, 7, 9; 29:9, 18).

17. For a suggestive examination of Torah in the Psalter, see Jon Levenson, "The Sources of Torah: Psalm 119 and the Modes of Revelation in Second Temple Judaism," in *Ancient*

is directly tied to the deep desires of those who "trust in Yʜᴡʜ" (v. 4): "law" and desire meet in the heart. As the seat of volition, the "heart" is the natural repository for appropriated "law." This sort of "law" makes for right conduct, ensuring safe passage through life (v. 31b). Consonant with rabbinic *halakah*, "law" and "way" are integrally related.

The familiar metaphor of the "way" wends through this psalm, as it does through much of Proverbs.[18] There is the deity's "way," enjoined by the psalmist (v. 34a), and there is the "way" of the righteous, whose "steps do not slip" and are "made firm by Yʜᴡʜ" (vv. 23–24, 31). The way of the wicked, so prevalent in Proverbs, is scarcely mentioned in the psalm (only obliquely in v. 7). Indeed, like Proverbs 1–9, two distinct "ways" are mapped in Psalm 37. But, unlike Proverbs, the two ways in the psalm are not diametrically op-posed, as evident in the following two injunctions:

> Commit *your way* to Yʜᴡʜ;
> trust in him, and he will act (v. 5).
> Wait for Yʜᴡʜ and keep to *his way*,
> and he will exalt you to inherit the land (v. 34a).

The merging of Yʜᴡʜ's "way" and the addressee's "way," of divine guidance and human conduct, is rife with soteriological significance. Compared to Proverbs, reference to the *via dei* appears distinctive in this psalm, although the motif is in fact quite common throughout the Psalter.[19] The two "ways" in Proverbs are those of the righteous and the wicked,[20] but explicit reference to the *deity's* way is scarce.[21] Telling are the injunction in Ps 37:5, cited above, and a parallel in Prov 16:3a:

> Commit your work to Yʜᴡʜ,
> and your plans will be established.

Developed throughout the psalm,[22] the force of the injunction in Ps 37:5b ("trust") bears far less rhetorical weight in Proverbs.[23] Similarly, the motif of

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Israelite Religion: Essays in Honor of Frank Moore Cross (ed. Patrick Miller et al.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 559–74.

18. See Norman Habel, "The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9," *Int* 26 (1972) 135–39.

19. See Pss 44:19[18]; 77:14[13], 19–20[18–19]; 85:14[13]; 119:3, 27, 32, 33, 35, 37.

20. For the way of the wicked, see Prov 1:15, 31; 2:12, 18; 4:14, 19; 7:27; 8:13; 12:15 ("fools"), 26; 13:15; 15:19 ("lazy"). For the way of the righteous, see 2:8, 20; 3:23; 4:11 ("wisdom"); 5:8; 6:23 ("way of life"); 8:26; 9:6 ("insight"); 13:6.

21. Only Prov 10:29 ("The way of Yʜᴡʜ is a stronghold for the upright"). See also Prov 4:11 ("I have taught you the way of wisdom").

22. For example, "wait," "wait passionately," "be still," "trust" (vv. 1, 5, 7, 9, 34).

23. Only Prov 3:5; 16:20; 22:19.

"waiting" for God is virtually absent in Proverbs.[24] Thus, the psalmist's call for restraint "from anger" (v. 8a), a value prized also in proverbial instruction,[25] is given a distinctly theocentric cast: the outcome is God's action (v. 5b), not necessarily success in human devices.

Another motif that receives prominent attention in the psalm, and indeed throughout the Psalter, but not as such in the proverbial literature, is that of divinely established "refuge":[26]

> The salvation of the righteous is from Yнwн;
>   he is their refuge (מעוז) in the time of trouble.
> Yнwн helps them and rescues them;
>   he rescues them from the wicked and saves them,
>   because they take refuge (חסה) in him. (vv. 39–40)

The theme of "refuge" marks a fitting conclusion to the salvific promise given in the psalm, namely, deliverance from the wicked. As destination, "refuge" is the locus of divine protection for the righteous, who "keep to [Yнwн's] way" (v. 34). To "take refuge" in God is to trust in Yнwн, the provider of security.

Psalm 34

A thanksgiving psalm cast as an acrostic, Psalm 34[27] opens with words of praise (vv. 2–4) and, like Psalm 37, concludes with reference to the righteous and the wicked (vv. 16–23): the righteous enjoy God's protective favor in the face of their "afflictions" (v. 20), whereas "evil" and "condemnation" are the designated lot of the wicked (v. 22). Between these two sections is the speaker's testimony of divine deliverance (vv. 5–11), followed by an explicitly didactic address (vv. 12–15). Like the instructional material in Proverbs, this address opens with a call to attention that marks the audience as recipients of moral counsel ("children"),[28] matched by the speaker's desire to "teach . . . the fear of Yнwн" (compare v. 10). The initial exhortation is followed by a statement of motivation (v. 13), cast as a rhetorical question, which leads to a

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24. Only Prov 20:22 provides a parallel to the psalmist's injunction to "wait" for God.

25. See the expression "slow to anger" in Prov 14:29; 15:18; 16:32; 19:11. Compare 12:16; 15:1; 22:8, 24; 29:11, 22; 30:33.

26. Only Prov 14:26 and 30:5 make explicit reference to "refuge." For a full study of this theme in the Psalter, see Jerome Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup 217; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996). That is not to say that wisdom does not take on a *function* of refuge by, for example, protecting the "son" from the "smooth tongue of the alien woman" (Prov 6:24).

27. In the discussion of Psalm 34, Hebrew versification is used.

28. See Prov 4:1; 5:7; 7:24; 8:32.

series of general moral admonitions (vv. 14–15). This section is followed by concluding observations about the deity's orientation toward the righteous and the wicked (vv. 16–23).

As a whole, the moral exhortation of vv. 12–15 not only invests this thanksgiving psalm with didactic intent; it renders a complex profile of the speaking voice. The "poor soul" who is "saved from every trouble" (v. 7) is identified as one who teaches (vv. 12–13). This teacher counts himself among "the brokenhearted" (v. 19a), "the crushed in spirit" (v. 19b), and "the humble" (v. 3b), as well as among "the righteous" (v. 16), who undergo many "afflictions" (v. 20), and Yhwh's "servants." The speaker's character provides testimonial credence to the general observation that Yhwh *delivers* the righteous. Along with general moral counsel (vv. 13–15), the soteriological side of the deity forms an integral part of the psalmist's teaching. Linked to the boast of blessing (v. 3), the psalmist's testimony of deliverance provides the basis for thanksgiving *and* admonition.

The exhortation to "fear Yhwh" encapsulates the prescriptive force of the entire psalm. A motif in both psalmic and sapiential literature, divine reverence constitutes the expressed object of the psalmist's teaching (vv. 10, 12) yet lacks the distinctly cognitive focus it is given in Proverbs 1–9.[29] In the psalm, reverence is not so much the object of understanding and knowledge[30] as the subject of personal testimony and holy orientation. Such "fear" is life-giving (v. 13)[31] and sufficient for all needs (v. 10b).[32] To "fear Yhwh" is to "seek Yhwh" (v. 11) and, thereby, to reflect God's holy effulgence in joy (v. 6). "Fear of Yhwh" casts out "all . . . fears" (v. 5). Such *reverence*, moreover, has its home in *refuge*, which confers happiness (v. 9b) and security (see v. 8). By coordinating these two motifs, the psalmist cements their connection such that one takes on the characteristics of the other (vv. 8–9, 22). Refuge-taking is as much a matter of moral orientation as reverence is charged with saving significance. "None of those who take refuge in [Yhwh] will be condemned" (v. 23; compare Ps 52:9[7]).

To sum up, where psalmic teaching and sapiential admonition seem joined in Ps 34:12–15, the motif of divine reverence functions differently in each corpus. In the psalm, reverence establishes "refuge" from evildoers; in Proverbs, the "fear of Yhwh" provides enlightenment and fosters integrity, the beginning

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29. See, especially, Prov 1:7; 2:5. The latter places "fear" and "knowledge" in parallel positions. Drawing from Dermot Cox, Michael Fox defines this fear as "conscience" or "deep knowledge" (*Proverbs 1–9* [AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000] 70).

30. See Prov 1:7, 29; 2:5; 9:10; 15:33.

31. See Prov 10:27; 14:27; 19:23.

32. Parallels in older wisdom material include Prov 10:27; 14:26–27; 19:23.

point of moral growth (Prov 1:7; 9:10). For the psalmist, salvation—rather than formation—is paramount.

Psalm 32

One of the so-called penitential psalms, this thanksgiving song opens with two macarisms that extol the related conditions of forgiveness and innocence (vv. 1–2), followed by an account of personal affliction (vv. 3–4) and a confession of sin marking a dramatic turn-around in the psalmist's state (vv. 5–7). Employing the standard terminology of forgiveness, the psalmist proclaims that God has "lifted the guilt of my sin" (v. 5b). The consequent release of the psalmist's burden leads to a joyful exhortation to prayer and a profession of God's protective care from the fearsome "many waters" (v. 6). God, the psalmist declares, has become a "hidden shelter (סתר)"; the speaker is surrounded "by glad cries of deliverance" (v. 7). This joyous scene of the sanctuary is interrupted by the directive words of instruction in vv. 8–9. This section signals instructional intent and is followed with a general observation about the afflictions of the wicked and the protection that divinely wrought חסד affords the one "who trusts in Yʜᴡʜ" (v. 10b). A call for the righteous to rejoice concludes the psalm (vv. 10–11). Psalm 32, in short, begins with a beatitude and ends in a command to joyful praise; in between unfolds a personal testimony of forgiveness and instruction.

The placement of this didactic passage is telling. The setting of the sanctuary presupposed in the previous section marks vv. 8–9 as an oracle. Yʜᴡʜ responds to the psalmist's statement of forgiveness with words of instruction.[33] The reference to the "eye upon you" confirms the source of instruction.[34] This divine intrusion plays an integral role within the psalm as a whole. Words of counsel *follow* forgiveness. The main speaker in the psalm has committed sin, suffered for it, come to acknowledge it, and is forgiven (vv. 3–5). Exhortation is then given, and a profession of trust is made (v. 7), a seemingly fitting conclusion that proves to be merely provisional in light of the psalm's larger context. Verse 8 signals a turning point from personal testimony of the past to future orientation, from forgiveness to counsel. The didactic passage, in short, gives shape to the forgiven self and identifies the role of instruction as the outcome and goal of the repentant life. Refuge (v. 7) gives way to pathway (v. 8), security to conduct.

As a whole, Psalm 32 claims forgiveness as the fundamental starting point of faithful conduct. By contrast, the wisdom literature has little to say about

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33. Terrien refers to vv. 8–9 as a "sapiential oracle" (*The Psalms*, 294).

34. See also Judg 18:6; Ezra 5:5; Ps 33:18; Zech 12:4. Compare Isa 30:20–21.

divine forgiveness.[35] The starting point of moral formation in Proverbs, for example, is the renunciation of immaturity (Prov 9:6) and a willingness to receive instruction (1:21−33) and obtain wisdom (4:5−8). The psalm, however, establishes the occasion of instruction within an explicitly cultic setting (that is, a setting of prayer, refuge, and praise) by situating confession and forgiveness as foundational for wise conduct.

Psalm 78

Only a few have regarded Psalm 78 as sapiential,[36] and for good reason: the psalm provides a lengthy account of Israel's national history, a subject entirely lacking in the wisdom literature. Nevertheless, the psalm opens in vv. 1−2 with explicitly didactic terminology:

> Listen, my people, to my teaching (תורתי)!
>> Incline your ears to the words of my mouth (אמרי פי)!
> I shall open my mouth with instruction (משל);
>> and draw hidden truths (חידות) from of old.

The terminology of this exordium resembles the opening words of Proverbs (1:2, 6).[37]

> To know wisdom and instruction (הכמה ומוסר),
>> to understand words of insight (אמרי בינה). . . .
> To understand a saying (משל) and a figure (מליצה),
>> the words of the wise (דברי חכמים) and their enigmas (חידתם).

Both passages share two common terms of instruction, משל and חידה,[38] as well as several related terms. They mark what follows as distinctly didactic in function. But the rhetorical similarities are not limited to these introductions. Proverbs moves immediately into a parental lecture, that of a father to a son (1:8−19); Psalm 78 also slides effortlessly into a world of generational division in vv. 3−8.

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35. See only Prov 28:13 and 17:9, which are confined only to interhuman relations.

36. See Sigmund Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Martin Noth and D. Winton Thomas; VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955) 213−14; Erhard Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2 and Lamentations* (FOTL 15; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 98−99 ("didactic homily" edited by "wisdom teachers"); Whybray, "The Wisdom Psalms," 158.

37. See also Ps 49:2−4[1−4]. Psalm 49 is identified by many as a "wisdom psalm," but its rhetorical affinities lie more with Ecclesiastes; hence, it is not treated in this essay.

38. The term משל does not designate a defined genre or category (see Fox, *Proverbs 1−9*, 54−55). For further interpretation, see Otto Eissfeldt, *Der Maschal im Alten Testament* (BZAW 24; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1913) 13−14; Gerstenberger, *Psalms, Part 2*, 93−94. The term חידה is not unique to the wisdom literature (see Ezek 17:2; Hab 2:6).

The differences, however, are suggestive. Whereas the speaker in Prov 1:8–19 conveys nonnegotiable parental instructions, the psalmist expresses the words of "sons" who bear witness to the counsel *and failures* of their "fathers." Together, these passages hold, as it were, an intergenerational conversation. The psalmist at once venerates and disparages the "fathers"; the parental sage imposes counsel upon a receptive son. In Proverbs, the son never speaks; in Psalm 78, the corporate speaker talks back, as it were. Both the sage and the psalmist are mutually concerned with the transmission of tradition from one generation to the next (see Prov 4:1–4). But the psalmist stops short of encouraging a seamless transmission of tradition and example. To be sure, what the "fathers have told" must not be "concealed," but the previous generations failed to live up to their own testimony, itself a testimony that invites *critical* appropriation of the past.

In addition, the issues at stake differ significantly. The parental figure in Proverbs warns the son of the dangers of highway robbery and greed (1:10–19) and, later, urges him to obtain wisdom and to avoid adulterous women (4:5–9; 5:1–20; 7:1–27).[39] Featured also are occasional references to trusting in or fearing YHWH and to the salutary benefits that accrue from doing so (1:7; 2:5; 3:5–9, 11; 9:10). Lacking, however, is any sense of corporate historical consciousness; the rhetorical world of Proverbs is immediate and crisis-filled.

The didactic discourse of Psalm 78 is not a parental lecture but a history lesson. The psalm charts the history of Israel's failure in the wilderness, from the exodus to the occupation of the land, met by God's forbearance (vv. 12–55). Divine restraint, however, comes with a cost: Israel's progressive rebellions lead ultimately to God's rejection of the Northern Kingdom and to Zion's election (vv. 56–72). The psalmist's "teaching" is, at base, a corporate narrative. Inextricably related are God's mighty deeds, on the one hand, and covenantal obedience, on the other. Binding law and glorious deed issue from the same source and, thus, bear comparable prescriptive force (vv. 10–11). Israel's failure was to refuse and to forget, a failure on two counts: to abide by God's "commandments" and to remember the "works of God" (v. 7). The sin that breaks the forbearance is idolatry (v. 58), a renunciation of God's integrity as both savior and lawgiver. For the psalmist, God's saving deed and binding law form a seamless unity reflected, at the level of praxis, in an ethos of gratitude and obedience.[40]

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39. For a discussion the sage's central concern about the dangers of adultery, see Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 252–62.

40. For comparable presentation of the essential unity of divine deed and law, see the Prologue of the Decalogue (Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6; compare 6:20–25).

As in the psalm, the morally formed individual (the "son") in Proverbs 1–9 is one who "trusts in Yʜwʜ" (3:5a; compare v. 9). The opposite of this trust, however, is not idolatry—indeed no reference to idolatry is given in Proverbs—but exclusive trust in one's "own insight" and being "wise" in one's "own eyes" (3:5b, 7). Intellectual hubris, not apostate worship, is the cardinal sin for the sage.

Moreover, the respective objects of teaching highlighted in Psalm 78 and Proverbs 1–9 are different. The father figure in Proverbs 1–9 exhorts the son to "possess," "keep," and "love" wisdom (4:5–6). Although the "son" is exhorted to "guard her" (v. 13), it is she who guards the son, ensuring safe passage ("way") through life (see 2:10–12; 3:21–23; 4:6). She acts, as it were, in tandem with the deity; for Yʜwʜ, the source of wisdom (2:6), also secures the wise one (3:26). Wisdom's content features a trinity of cardinal virtues: justice, righteousness, and equity (1:3; 2:8–9). Wisdom is "every good path" (2:9) and the ultimate prize in a life well lived (4:5–9). More precious than jewels, she is the supreme object of desire (3:15), the son's most intimate "kin" or friend (7:4). Wisdom's acquisition, then, is the goal of learning by which the son is properly domesticated.[41]

The content of the psalmist's teaching features a dual-object of learning: God's "works" and God's "commandments" (Ps 78:7). Adopting the metaphor of the "way," the psalmist indicts Israel for refusing "to walk in [Yʜwʜ]'s law" (v. 10b).[42] This "law" ("decree," "commandments," "covenant," "decrees") is not enumerated except insofar as it can be inferred from Israel's various failures: rebellion (vv. 17, 40), testing (vv. 18, 41), lack of trust in God's power (vv. 22, 32, 42), lying to God (v. 36), worshiping at high places (v. 58a), and idolatry (v. 58b). The "law" behind the failures demands exclusive allegiance to God. The flipside of this allegiance is trust in God's power to save, also a topic of inquiry. As another psalm states, "Great are the works of Yʜwʜ, examined (דרושׁים) by all who delight in them" (111:2). God's wonders and God's law are the constituent halves of the same object of learning, and lacking is any specified mediator. Neither wisdom nor Moses makes an appearance in this psalm. Obedience and trust in God are of greatest importance to the psalmist.

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41. Indeed, Yʜwʜ is also domesticated in Proverbs, namely, as a reproving "father," a parental guide (Prov 3:12). For a discussion of the deity's profile in this text, see Lennart Boström, *The God of the Sages: The Portrayal of God in the Book of Proverbs* (ConBOT 29; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990) 223–24.

42. See Pss 94:2; 119:29.

Whereas the God of Proverbs 1–9 is cast primarily in the image of a parental sage who rebukes and instructs individuals (Prov 3:12), the God of the psalmist's "teaching" is both lawgiver and savior, one who redeems and constitutes a people. God's wondrous works and authoritative guidance, divine deed and commandment, are indispensable to the psalmist's curriculum. History bears witness to God's saving works; human integrity embodies God's law. For the sage, the *mythos* of God's mighty deeds and the *ethos* of covenantal law or teaching do not replenish the fount of either wisdom or reverence. Rather, wisdom is evinced in the natural order (Prov 3:19–20; 8:22–31) and reflected in a prudential life of discipline.

United in didactic intent, the psalmist and the sage also render different, albeit complementary, profiles of human integrity. In the psalm, adherence to divine law and attention to divine deed inspires "hope in God" (v. 7), a "heart steadfast toward God" (vv. 8a, 37a), faithfulness (v. 8), obedience to God's covenant and decrees (vv. 17, 37b, 56), earnest seeking of God (v. 34), and trust in God's works and saving power (vv. 22, 42). Not one trait of moral character is named without reference to God. Not so in Proverbs: offering counsel in familial responsibility, neighborliness, and moral conduct, wisdom is the primary shaper of character.

Psalms 111–112

As commonly recognized, these two psalms—*Zwillingspsalmen*[43]—are compositionally paired. Both are cast in short acrostic form, and a number of verbal and thematic correspondences can be discerned across their distinctive genres.[44]

Psalm 111 is a thanksgiving song that opens with a command to praise and an expressed desire to give thanks (v. 1). The psalm continues with ascriptions of praise that honor God's "wonderful deeds" (vv. 2–4a), which include providing food (v. 5a), establishing and abiding by an eternal covenant (vv. 5b, 9b), granting Israel an "international heritage" (v. 6b), establishing "his precepts" (vv. 7b–8), and redeeming "his people" (v. 9a). These deeds allude to Yhwh's historical guidance in the wilderness and establishment of Israel in the land. God's "work" is characterized by "splendor and majesty" (הוד והדר, v. 3) and described as "faithful and just" (אמת ומשפט, v. 7a). Apart from the references to the deity's various deeds, Yhwh (or Yhwh's "name") is described as "gra-

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43. Walther Zimmerli, "Zwillingspsalmen," in *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Prophetie: Gesammelte Aufsätze 2* (TBü 51; Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1974) 263–67.

44. For a recent discussion, see Raymond Van Leeuwen, "Form Criticism, Wisdom, and Psalms 111–112," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (ed. Marvin Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003) 71–81.

cious and merciful" (חנון ורחום, v. 4b) and "holy and fearsome" (קדוש ונורא, v. 9b). The psalm (v. 10a) concludes with a sapiential-like saying:

> The fear of Y<small>HWH</small> is the beginning of wisdom;
>> comprehension of the good (שכל טוב)
>>> is for all who perform them (לכל עשיהם).[45]

While the first colon of this couplet appears in variant forms in Prov 1:7, 9:10, and Sir 1:14 (see also Job 28:28), its association with covenantal praxis is unprecedented from a sapiential perspective. Indeed, the second line serves to qualify the first. Nowhere in Proverbs is wisdom or reverence referred to as something *done* or *performed*. Wisdom, rather, is *found* and *possessed*; reverence is *chosen* and *understood*.[46] In Proverbs, they are primarily objects of attainment. The psalmist offers a different nuance: wisdom and reverence constitute an explicit level of covenantal praxis: wisdom is evidenced in *fulfilling* the divine commandments (compare Deut 4:5–6). Wisdom is contextually related, moreover, to the capacity to render praise and give thanks (vv. 1b, 10b). To "fear Y<small>HWH</small>" is to give due praise and thanks, a wise thing to do in the psalmist's estimation. Praise and thanksgiving, however, do not fall within the scope of sapiential conduct in Proverbs.

Psalm 112 is often considered the sequel to the previous psalm, perhaps both psalms forming a pilgrimage litany.[47] Of the two, Psalm 112 is more often regarded as a "wisdom psalm," even though Psalm 111 features the proverbial saying about wisdom. In any case, both psalms contain numerous thematic and verbal correspondences. Psalm 112 opens with an identical "hallelujah" command, immediately followed by a macarism: "Happy is the one who fears Y<small>HWH</small>, who delights greatly in his commandments" (v. 1b). Regardless of whether the saying draws from a uniquely sapiential genre, the content forges a direct comparison between "wisdom" in 111:10 and "commandments" in 112:1b (see also 111:7b), as well as the "works of Y<small>HWH</small>" in 111:2. Through the juxtaposition of these two psalms, divine deed, command, and wisdom are inseparably bound.

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45. The antecedent of the masculine-plural suffix in the MT is a crux. The LXX and Peshiṭta feature a feminine singular, presupposing "wisdom." The MT, however, bears the more difficult reading, whose antecedent is evidently "precepts" in v. 7b.

46. The "fear of Y<small>HWH</small>" is chosen (בחר, Prov 1:29) and understood (בין, 2:5); a person is "in" reverence of God (14:26; 23:17). "Wisdom," similarly, is something chosen, received, found, bought, loved, and possessed or appropriated (for example, 2:2a, 10; 3:13; 4:5, 7; 10:13; 16:16; 19:20; 23:23; 29:3), as well as understood and communicated (2:2b; 10:31). Only Prov 28:26 contains the expression "walk in wisdom."

47. So Terrien, *Psalms*, 760–61.

Together, the psalms effectively join the theocentric and the anthropocentric. Whereas Psalm 111 describes primarily Yhwh's character and power, Psalm 112 characterizes the individual who acknowledges Yhwh in reverence ("fear"). The "Lord-fearer" prospers (v. 3a), is altogether righteous (vv. 3b, 6a, 9b), is generous and just (vv. 5, 9a), is renowned (v. 6b; see also 111:4), has a "firm" and "steady" heart (vv. 7b, 8a), has no fear (vv. 7a, 8b), and receives honor (v. 9b; see also 111:3a). Like Yhwh's character described in 111:4b, the righteous individual is "gracious and merciful" (112:4b). Both deity and human being are defined by their comparable deeds, sharing, moreover, an identity marked by righteousness, grace, mercy, renown, and power. In content, the psalms are veritable mirror images: they profile the divine—human poles more in terms of similarity than difference. Van Leeuwen argues that the psalms, forming a conceptual whole, impart the message, "humanity is image and imitator of God" (*imago et imitatio dei*).[48] Such essentialist language, however, is not part of the psalmists' discursive repertoire. More accurate is the observation that the righteous individual comes to share in Yhwh's nature *by virtue of* his or her reverence. Crassly put, "you become what you revere" ethically and, to a degree, efficaciously.[49] The righteous individual, in addition to modeling and appropriating the deity's moral attributes, accrues a certain power. The one who reveres Yhwh is in a position to give.

In addition to the opening macarism,[50] one reason why Psalm 112 is often regarded as a "wisdom psalm" is that the central figure, the "righteous" man, bears a family resemblance to the figure profiled in the concluding acrostic of Proverbs (31:10–31), namely, the "woman of strength" (אשת חיל).[51] Like the righteous man in the psalm, she is powerful (vv. 17, 25), generous to the poor (v. 20), lacks fear (v. 21), accrues wealth (vv. 16, 18a), and holds an estimable reputation (vv. 23, 28–31). In short, "a woman who fears Yhwh is to be praised" (v. 30b). Nevertheless, there are other activities described in this ode to the ideal spouse that have no parallel in the psalm: she is commercially industrious (vv. 13–16, 18–19, 24) and resourceful in providing for and managing the household (vv. 15a, 21–22). The household is of no concern to the

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48. Van Leeuwen, "Form Criticism," 77, 80. See also Beth LaNeel Tanner, *The Book of Psalms through the Lens of Intertextuality* (Studies in Biblical Literature 26; New York: Peter Lang, 2001) 144.

49. This "principle," if one can call it that, is developed negatively by the prophets: for example, Isa 1:29–31; Jer 2:8–13; Hos 9:10b.

50. James Mays refers to this psalm generically as an "extended beatitude" (*Psalms* [IBC; Louisville: John Knox, 1994] 359).

51. See Al Wolters, "Proverbs XXXI 10–31 as Heroic Hymn," *VT* 38 (1988) 448; Tanner, *Psalms through the Lens of Intertextuality*, 141–57.

psalmist. The man's source of material wealth remains unidentified; his pros-
perity is not specifically tied to industry. While the righteous man is blessed
(Ps 112:2b; see also 128:4), the woman *earns* her praise (Prov 31:31b). In the
psalm, the wicked—absent in Proverbs 31—"gnash their teeth and melt
away" before the integrity of the righteous (Ps 112:10). In addition, while the
woman of Proverbs "opens her mouth with wisdom, and covenantal loyalty is
on her tongue" (Prov 31:26), nothing is said about the righteous man's dis-
course in the psalm. Whereas praise is due the woman (v. 31), it is reserved
only for Yhwh in the psalm (Ps 112:1). Whereas the woman embodies wis-
dom, the man exemplifies obedience to Yhwh's "commandments."

"Wisdom," thus, is given greater theocentric orientation in the psalmic dyp-
tich than in Proverbs. With Ps 111:10 serving as the linchpin of both psalms,
wisdom finds its home *exclusively* in reverence of God. For the psalmist(s), wis-
dom is not primarily a matter of understanding; it is all about covenantal
praxis, the fruit of obedience. Wisdom is embodied in righteousness born of
trust in Yhwh (Ps 112:7b) and delight in Yhwh's commandments (v. 1b).

Conclusion: Seeking Sophia in the Psalms

Such inductive comparisons invite more broad-based observations about
Psalms and Proverbs. Theologically, the most striking difference is the sophia-
centric focus in Proverbs 1–9. Wisdom's personified stature in Proverbs is ut-
terly absent in the Psalms. While wisdom acts as a mediating figure of instruc-
tion for humanity in Proverbs (see, for example, 8:22–31), the psalmists
address their concerns and prayers directly to God with the expectation of a
response. The obvious genre difference between wisdom lecture and psalmic
prayer decisively shapes the theological distinctions of each corpus. In Prov-
erbs, no prayers are addressed to wisdom; indeed, there are no prayers in
Proverbs 1–9 and only one in the entire book (30:7–9).[52] And yet the reader
is exhorted at one point to address wisdom directly: "Say to wisdom, 'You are
my sister,' and call insight your intimate friend" (Prov 7:4).[53] As an agent of
instruction, wisdom, at least rhetorically, can be an object of address, but not
definitively so, as in the case of the psalmist's deity.[54]

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52. For a discussion of this text in the context of prayer in the wisdom literature, see
James Crenshaw, "The Restraint of Reason, the Humility of Prayer," *Urgent Advice and
Probing Questions: Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer Univer-
sity Press, 1995) 212–14.

53. This address to wisdom is enjoined here specifically in order to resist the advances
of the "strange woman" (v. 5).

54. As Crenshaw points out, the later sage Ben Sira acknowledges the formative role of
prayer and praise in learning (ibid., 217–21).

In Psalms, God is the primary agent of instruction and protection, hence the prominent theme of refuge in the Psalter. Although Yhwh is acknowledged as protector also in Proverbs (3:25–26), elsewhere "prudence" and "understanding" are named as guardians of the person's way (2:1–12), and evil is defined more as moral corruption than as life-threatening danger.[55]

As a parallel to the psalmists' "refuge," the sages offer a comparable metaphor, namely, wisdom's house, hewn and furnished by wisdom herself (Prov 9:1–2). There, a banquet is furnished for her disciples (vv. 3–6). Wisdom's domicile represents the new "home" for her students, co-opting as well as extending the counsel of the parental sage profiled earlier. Her house is a destination and source of sustenance, a sapiential counterpart to God's "refuge" in the Psalter. As God has "his" habitation on Zion, providing refuge for worship, so wisdom has "her" domicile, a place of instruction. Sophia's house is also a house of life and serves as a refuge from death and danger (see Prov 9:18). Conversely, refuge in the Psalms is occasionally construed as a place or destination of instruction, whose source is God, the Temple's *resident* theologian (Pss 31:3–4; 43:2–3).

In Proverbs, wisdom is a preeminent source of instruction. In the Psalms, wisdom is the outcome of reverence. More pronounced as a source of instruction in the Psalms is Torah, which is occasionally invested with cosmic import (for example, Pss 19:1–10; 119:89).[56] But, unlike wisdom, whose proportions are also cosmically informed, Torah is nowhere given personified status in the Psalter. The metaphorical richness that vivifies wisdom in Proverbs is lacking in psalmic treatments of Torah. Torah never speaks in the first person in the Psalter. For all the expansive reach it enjoys in the Psalms, Torah does not compare to the lively character that wisdom embodies in Proverbs. In the Psalms, Torah is transcendentalized but never personified, in contrast to the profiles of Torah, for example, in Sirach 24 or the Midrashim.[57] Why not?

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55. See the related phrases "the way of evil," "doing evil," "delight in the perverseness of evil," and "crooked paths" in vv. 12–15. Danger is implied in Proverbs when "evil" comes in the form of the seductive adulteress, whose way "leads down to death" (7:27; see also 6:20–35).

56. See Levenson, "The Sources of Torah," 559–74. Most recently, Stephen Geller has argued that many of the "wisdom psalms," such as Psalm 19, were composed as a response from the perspective of nature-based wisdom ("Old Wisdom") to Deuteronomic covenantal theology. Such psalms represent a "New Wisdom," a "hybrid wisdom-Torah" theology ("Wisdom, Nature and Piety in Some Biblical Psalms," in *Riches Hidden in Secret Places: Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Memory of Thorkild Jacobsen* [ed. Tzvi Abusch; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2002] 101–21).

57. For example, *Gen. Rab.* 59:2; 85:9; *Lam. Rab.* par. 24.

An obvious guess is that the psalmists placed great value on God's *unmediated* agency in teaching. The language of "command" is the exclusive prerogative of God. Not so in Proverbs 1–9: "commandments" are given by the parent or by wisdom, not directly by God.[58] Hence, a personification of Torah comparable to that of wisdom would have compromised such singular theocentric focus. With Torah as the direct repository of divine prescription, there was no need for a mediating figure. Indeed, hints of a polemic against the wisdom of the sages can be discerned in the Psalter (see Ps 119:98–100, 102).[59]

Nevertheless, can one talk about a constructive relationship between wisdom and psalmic Torah? Indeed, yes. Particularly suggestive is the social location that wisdom is given in Proverbs. She traverses the domains of human intercourse that lie outside the domain of the cult: from the family to the larger corporate, particularly urban, environment defined by marketplaces, crossroads, and city gates (Prov 1:20–21; 8:2–3). But nowhere does she gain entrance to the Temple (contra Sir 24:8–11).[60] Nowhere does she play a definitive role in the history of salvation (contra Wis 10:1–21). Corporate history and cult are not her primary domains. Wisdom is a special creation of God (Prov 8:22–31) but not God's consort. It is in the noncultic, public domains of the city square and marketplace that the sages found her to be a theological necessity. Her realm lies apart from the sanctuary of praise and petition that the God of the psalmists inhabits. As the embodiment of "public theology," as it were, wisdom's reach is beyond, as well as removed from, the explicit practice of worship.

Finally, complementarity between Proverbs and Psalms is well illustrated in the respective goals of the two corpora. As indicated in the Hebrew title of the Psalter, the psalms collectively point toward full praise of God. With few exceptions, even the lament psalms invariably conclude with thanksgiving or a vow to praise. In Proverbs, however, the resounding note of divine praise is never played. As the prologue to the book indicates, "gaining instruction" is

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58. For example, Prov 2:1; 3:1; 4:4; 7:1–2; 8:10. The only reference to God's issuing a "command" in Proverbs is in a creation context, directed at the sea (8:29).

59. As the putative masters of wisdom, the "teachers" and elders serve as foils for the one who obeys Yʜwʜ's commands. The psalmist possesses a higher order of knowledge; Torah exceeds human insight because it remains, like the Decalogue (Exod 19:24–20:17; see also Deut 4:5–8), unmediated teaching, wisdom direct from the divine (see also Pss 19:7; 119:24).

60. To be sure, the sage in Proverbs gives a deferential nod to the cult (Prov 3:18–10). For an important, albeit one-sided, analysis, see Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult*, 142–55.

the overarching goal.[61] Throughout the first nine chapters of Proverbs, the reader is repeatedly exhorted to appropriate wise counsel and discipline,[62] and such appropriation verges on the erotic,[63] a rhetorical feature entirely lacking in the Psalms. Wisdom is a lover who enables her partner to navigate the complexities of life. In short, praise of God in Psalms is conjoined with assent to wisdom in Proverbs. "Learning the ropes" of life through wisdom (Prov 1:5) is matched by "singing to God with a new song" in praise (Ps 149:1).

Yet the peals of praise in Psalms find some resonance in Proverbs. Like the Psalter, Proverbs ends on a note of praise, but not praise of God:

> Her children rise up and call her happy;
>   her husband too, and he praises her:
> "Many women have done excellently,
>   but you surpass them all."
> Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain,
>   but a woman who fears YHWH is to be praised.
> Give her a share in the fruit of her hands,
>   and let her works praise her in the city gates. (Prov 31:28–31)

Praise in Proverbs is given a distinctly anthropocentric, specifically gynocentric, cast.[64] As God is to be praised in "the assembly of the faithful" (Ps 149:1b), so also the female LORD-fearer in the household and city gate. The accolade "happy" concludes Proverbs and, not coincidently, opens the Psalter.

Despite the theological divergences between these two complex books, indeed despite evidence of a polemically strained relationship, the psalmist and the sage are canonically associated in constructive dialogue over the proper morphology of the self. The canonical union of Proverbs and Psalms, of the "woman of strength" and the "righteous man," of the marketplace and the sanctuary, of Sophia and Torah, is a match made on earth, if not in heaven.

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61. For a general discussion of the pedagogical aims of Proverbs, see Daniel Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1–9* (New Studies in Biblical Theology; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) 63–87.

62. For example, Prov 1:8a; 2:1, 2; 4:1a; 5:1; 7:1, 2, 24; 8:32–33; 9:4–6.

63. Prov 4:6–8; 8:34–36; see also 5:15–19.

64. I do not take the "woman of strength" in Proverbs 31 as merely a metaphor for mythic wisdom, although she is not unrelated to wisdom's profile in Proverbs 1–9. See Christine Yoder, *Wisdom as a Woman of Substance: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31* (BZAW 304; New York: de Gruyter, 2001).

A Proverb in the Mouth of a Fool

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"When sight and hearing fail, the mute leads." This variant of "Among the blind the one-eyed is king" is embedded in the "historical romance in pseudo-prophetic form" attributed to Neferti, an Egyptian sage from the Middle Kingdom Twelfth Dynasty (1990–1785 B.C.E.). As part of an apologetic discourse for Amenemhet I, the text describes a period of social chaos, real or imagined, and proleptically "predicts" the rise of a ruler who will establish order, inaugurating an era of peace.[1] Faintly resembling biblical prophecy and early apocalyptic, it has few affinities with the body of literature to which the adjective "wisdom" has been attached by modern scholars. Nevertheless, the author uses an aphorism to communicate a harsh reality: an absence of intellectual leadership leaves a vacuum that is rapidly filled by the inept. According to the proverbial saying, both organs of acuity, sight and hearing, are inoperative, while a speechless leader usurps their place. A single statement sums up such a situation: "All people think of themselves." The result of numbness of observation and listening creates a situation of total lawlessness like that described in the scandalous stories at the end of the book of Judges that offer a persuasive defense of centralized rule (Judges 19–21; note the refrain in 19:1, "In those days, when there was no king in Israel," and 21:25, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes").

"Want is followed by deceit." This proverbial saying appears in "The Hymn to Hapy," a hymn to the personified Nile. Also from the Middle Kingdom, the literary composition praises the inundating river for nourishing life, and the section under consideration emphasizes the theme that bread sustains

1. The translation is from Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (3 vols.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971–80) 1:142. The probability that the theme of national distress became a literary topos in the ancient Near East complicates every attempt to explain texts of this sort as products of social crises.

humankind.[2] The brief proverb suggests that hunger creates its own ethical norm,[3] a point also made in the prayer attributed to Agur in Prov 30:8–9,[4] and perhaps in Prov 6:30, "One does not despise a thief who steals to satisfy a hungry appetite."[5] "The Hymn to Hapy" seems to demean mercantile endeavors and religious rites in that the former secure no bread and the latter no meat.[6] Furthermore, it elevates bread and barley over gold, silver, and lapis lazuli in that the latter cannot be eaten or drunk. This early effort at prioritizing human possessions has a parallel in Ben Sira, who reduces life's necessities to water, bread, clothes, and a house (Sir 29:21), or, in a less Spartan mood, water, fire, iron, salt, flour, milk, honey, wine, oil, and clothes (Sir 39:26).

"Who would give water at dawn to a goose that will be slaughtered in the morning?" This proverb, the final sentence in "The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor," captures the trepidation of an official who has been sent on a mission and failed.[7] The tale reckons with the arbitrariness of human destiny, against which excellence does not always succeed. Sometimes, it suggests, individuals put forth Herculean effort to achieve a desired goal only to be thwarted in the

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2. Ibid., 1:208. The poem goes on to say that anyone who consorts with the sea does not harvest grain, which remotely resembles Eccl 11:1 and 4, where bread is associated with the sea, and it is said that "whoever observes the wind will not sow, and whoever watches the clouds will not reap."

3. See the stimulating analysis of ethics by Miriam Lichtheim, *Moral Values in Ancient Egypt* (OBO 155; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997). She identifies three sources of the Egyptian's moral code: self-esteem, the sense of interconnectedness with others, and the recognition of an underlying right order, *maat* (p. 13).

4. In these verses, access to one's daily bread, but nothing in excess, staves off the profanation of the deity, either from dire need or from a feeling of self-sufficiency.

5. The author nevertheless holds the thief responsible, noting that a sevenfold repayment will be exacted if the thief is caught. Here is an example of case law that failed to keep up with moral sentiment (only here and in the Greek text of 2 Sam 12:6 does sevenfold payment occur). Some interpreters read Prov 6:30 as a rhetorical question, but this understanding weakens the contrast in the larger unit, vv. 20–35, between prostitution and adultery, money and life. On the text, see Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 234–37. He notes a similar leniency in the Egyptian "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant": "Stealing by a thief is the misdeed of one who is needy. He should not be blamed, for this is just a matter of seeking (necessities) for himself" (p. 234, citing Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 1:174).

6. The observation that even exuberant praise of the gods cannot bring birds to the desert stands in stark contrast with the biblical story of divine succor in the wilderness by means of quail.

7. See Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 1:215. This proverbial saying is also discussed by Antonio Loprieno, "Theodicy in Ancient Egyptian Texts," in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (ed. Antti Laato and Johannes de Moor; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 46–47.

end by random events. The effect of following the proverb's implied counsel would be catastrophic, for no one would attempt anything worthwhile lest the effort be wasted. Another version of the saying has been widely formulated: "Humans propose, but the gods dispose." Whereas this version suggests that an unpredictable transcendent factor may alter the best-laid plans, the other contemplates a similar unknown: fate. In some religious systems, the two are equated.

"Mouth or muscles, men are what they're born." This obscure saying is from an epic poem that Benjamin Foster entitles "Tiglath-Pileser and the Beasts," a description of the Assyrian king's massacre of mountain peoples.[8] Depicted as a hunter stalking wild game, the king strikes terror in his prey, which they attempt to conceal beneath braggadocio. The meaning of the saying—a part of their response—is unclear, but it may intimate that education in both senses, intellect and skill (at hunting), is innate;[9] hence, it cannot be pressed beyond prescribed limits. A modern variant would then be "An apple does not fall far from the tree."

"Water flows under the straw." This proverbial saying is attributed to the god Dagan and is spoken by a prophet. The full oracle indicates the specific use to which the proverb was put. It reads: "The peace initiatives of the king of the city of Eshnunna are treachery, water flows under the straw. But I will capture him for the very net he meshes; I will destroy his city; and I will make plunder of his ancient possessions."[10] In short, the deity warns against pursuing a treaty with a sovereign who is covertly stalling and biding his time until a propitious moment, when he will launch an attack. Contemporary parallels easily come to mind, the most obvious being the argument by U.S. government officials that Saddam Hussein's political maneuvering was a calculated move to gain time to hide weapons of mass destruction.

"The bird takes refuge in its cage, and the cage saves its life." This Hittite proverbial saying from Muršili's "Second Plague Prayer" is the first of three analogies in support of the king's plea for relief from a devastating plague.[11]

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8. Benjamin Foster, *From Distant Days: Myths, Tales, and Poetry of Ancient Mesopotamia* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1995) 206.

9. "Like the good moral character traits, the intellectual qualities were understood as innate dispositions which grew with age, training, and experience" (Lichtheim, *Moral Values in Ancient Egypt*, 84).

10. Foster, *From Distant Days*, 213; William Moran, "New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy," in *The Most Magic Word* (ed. Ronald Hendel; CBQMS 35; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 2002) 136–37.

11. Harry Hoffner Jr., "Theodicy in Hittite Texts," in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* (ed. Antti Laato and Johannes de Moor; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 100.

The metaphorical language, familiar from biblical psalms, envisions the deity as a refuge from danger.[12] Just as an endangered bird flees to its nest and then rests securely, the king seeks safety in the deity's presence. The other two analogies emphasize the servant relationship between the king and the god. They note that a servant in distress flees to his master, who takes pity on him and gives protection from danger; and that a servant who has committed an offense, confessed the wrong, and made restitution has done enough to satisfy the master, who, if not in fact satisfied, can then tell the servant what else is required to set things right. The symbolism of a bird taking refuge under its mother's wings, which continues into New Testament times, is a domestication and democratization of the sentiment expressed by Hittite royalty.

"He has put his one foot in the boat; may he not stay the other on dry land." This proverbial saying, which means that there is no turning back after a decisive step, occurs in a mythic text from ancient Sumer, "Enki and Ninhursaga."[13] In hot pursuit of the goddess Ninnisiga, Enki seeks encouragement from his page Isimu: "Is this nice youngster not to be kissed?" Obligingly, Isimu urges him on: "Is this nice youngster not to be kissed? With a (favorable) downstream wind blowing for my master, a downstream wind blowing, he has put his one foot in the boat; may he not stay the other on dry land!" Whereupon, Enki makes love to Ninnisiga, and she conceives a daughter, Ninkurra. A similar scene later unfolds, and Enki impregnates Ninkurra, who gives birth to Nin-imma. The scene is perpetuated until Uttu, the daughter of Nin-imma, is forewarned about Enki's amorous ways. Uttu succumbs, nonetheless, but the verbal chain is broken.

These seven proverbial sayings from Egypt and Mesopotamia[14] adorn a variety of literary types: historical romance, hymn, wondrous tale, epic, oracle, prayer, and myth. Who would ever think of classifying such texts as wisdom literature? Yet each of them uses a proverb to make an important point. In this

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12. Jerome Creach, *Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (JSOTSup 217; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); P. Hugger, *Jahwe meine Zuflucht: Gestalt und Theologie des 91. Psalms* (Münsterschwarzacher Studien 13; Würzburg: Vier-Türme, 1971). William Brown surveys the wide range of metaphors in the Psalms (*Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002]).

13. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once . . . : Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) 192.

14. Further examples may be found in Foster, *From Distant Days*, 389–90; William Hallo, "Proverbs Quoted in Epic," in *Lingering over Words: Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Literature in Honor of William L. Moran* (ed. Tzvi Abusch, John Huehnergard, and Piotr Steinkeller; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990) 203–17; Gary Beckman, "Proverbs and Proverbial Allusions in Hittite," *JNES* 45 (1986) 19–30.

regard, the proverbs resemble biblical sayings that are interspersed within narratives and oracles.[15]

"We must all die. We are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again" (2 Sam 14:14). Reflections on human mortality such as this one emphasize a return to the material from which we were created, "Dust you are, and to dust you will return" (Gen 3:19; compare "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust," *The Book of Common Prayer*). The observation that all die is placed in the mouth of an astute woman from Tekoa, an accomplished actress who follows a script assigned to her by David's chief warrior, Joab. The Hebrew text leaves no doubt here; it states that Joab "put the words in her mouth" (2 Sam 14:3b), that is, he gave her specific instructions about what she was to say.[16] Indeed, he needed a woman for his subterfuge, a widow's appeal to the king for redress from grievous harm implicit in the law. Playing on royal ideology, particularly the belief that a king was the champion of widows, the speech evoked royal pity and opened the door for its extension to the king's own household.

"I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (2 Sam 12:23). This statement of resignation is credited to David on learning of the death of the child conceived in a clandestine encounter with Bathsheba. The king is represented as truly practical, resorting at first to religious entreaty but wasting no time once that approach proves to be in vain. The statement's reasoning is based on the common belief, expressed in the Yahwist's story of creation, that humans are destined to return to their original source and then to exist in Sheol as pale replicas of their earthly form.[17] That journey was nothing to welcome with open arms, unlike the later Jewish and Christian hope of joining loved ones in another world.

"Let not the one putting on armor boast like the one taking it off" (1 Kgs 20:11). This aphorism contrasts proven valor with untested enthusiasm, noting

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15. The older work by Otto Eissfeldt (*Der Maschal im Alten Testament* [BZAW 24; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1913]) has been supplanted by the broader cultural setting in the work of Carole R. Fontaine (*Traditional Sayings in the Old Testament* [BLS 5; Sheffield: Almond, 1982]).

16. The operative word in the narrative is "pretend." Similar language occurs in the story about Jonadab, who used his intelligence to help Amnon rape his half-sister Tamar. Curiously, no one to my knowledge has insisted that he was a professional sage. This fact alone casts suspicion on all attempts to show that the woman of Tekoa belonged to the חכמים 'wise'. After all, the adjective חכם is attributed to both individuals. In the case of Jonadab, it is even reinforced by מאד 'exceptionally' (2 Sam 13:3).

17. For views of the afterlife in the ancient Near East, see J. Edward Wright, *The Early History of Heaven* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

that only an experienced warrior who has defeated the enemy and lived to tell it really knows the outcome of a contest of arms. The untried warrior may believe that he has superior strength and skill, and like many cocky athletes, he may talk a good game, but his inexperience may speak otherwise. In the last resort, the bragging comes to nothing, and death ensues. The verbal contest that precedes the armed conflict between the champion of the Philistines and David illustrates the role of rhetoric in ancient warfare, especially its psychological force.[18]

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are sensitive" (Ezek 18:2, Jer 31:29). Transgenerational punishment, a principle embedded in the old confessional formula in Exod 34:6–7—"visiting the iniquity of fathers upon the children and the grandchildren, to the third and fourth generation"—is harsh enough without the added freight of theological legitimation.[19] The decisions in Judah during the Babylonian threat had lasting consequences, according to the exiles who were paying the price for what their ancestors had done. With this proverb, the descendants of the guilty ones assert their innocence and protest the inequity of the situation, accusing the deity of treating them unfairly. Beneath this simple proverb glows a tiny coal that will soon threaten to consume faith itself. As is evidenced by the recent massive tome devoted to theodicy in the world of the Bible,[20] that smoldering ember erupted into a full-scale fire in Second Temple times with the loss of temple, land, Davidic dynasty, and religious autonomy.

Proverbial sayings of this sort, biblical and extrabiblical, could easily be multiplied,[21] but these examples suffice to reveal the widely diverse contexts

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18. Although several biblical narratives emphasize the important psychological influence of rhetoric on the enemy (for example, the confrontation between David and Goliath [1 Sam 17:43–47], the dissimulating speech of Hushai that won precious time for a fleeing David [2 Sam 17:7–13], and the mocking taunts of the Rabshakeh against Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem [Isa 36:4–10, 13–20 and parallels in 2 Kgs 18:19–25, 28–35; 2 Chr 32:10–15]), it is Wisdom of Solomon that first introduces psychology as a central theme in divine retribution.

19. On this formula and its significance for theodicy, see my *Defending God: Biblical Responses to the Problem of Evil* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

20. Laato and de Moor (eds.), *Theodicy in the World of the Bible*.

21. "The bitch in its haste gave birth to blind puppies"; "An ant if disturbed bites the hand that disturbs it"; "One cannot snatch a dead body from the jaws of a roaring lion; where one is raging another cannot advise him"; "Evil deeds proceed from evil people" (1 Sam 24:14[13]). In the last instance, the saying is identified as a *mšl* (מָשָׁל). When a designation of this sort is absent, a proverb can be recognized by other indications: its apparent incongruity in context, a remark that people regularly say it, or its presence in a list of proverbs (Hallo, "Proverbs Quoted in Epic," 212–13).

of their use. Not one of them comes from a sapiential text, nor does any of them constitute advice from a professional sage. The gathering evidence seems to support the conclusions based on paremiological studies in general that certain societies used proverbial sayings for argument in circumstances as diverse as entertainment and legal decision-making.[22] I firmly believe that we need to acknowledge as much for ancient Israel.

After all, even sages recognized that fools could cite proverbs. In Prov 26:9 we read: "Like a thorn that penetrates the hand of a drunkard is a proverb in the mouth of fools." An alternative translation of the first colon may be preferable: "Like a thorn taken up by a drunkard."[23] The first rendering suggests an individual whose oblivion to reality prevents him from recognizing the harm he inflicts on himself, while the second suggests one who grabs a thornbush in his drunken stupor and wields it as a weapon or in fun. This proverbial saying resembles the one in v. 7, which has the same second colon but is introduced by the words "Like a lame person's legs that hang useless." The picture of a person suspended between two crutches may point to the external form of the biblical proverbs, their employment of two cola.[24] It would then mean that fools may use the correct structural device, but the content of their proverb lacks effectiveness.

Whereas Prov 26:9 seems to refer to a comic or absurd figure, a drunk waving a thornbush in the air, Prov 9:17 indicates real and present danger, the eloquence of the seductive woman of folly herself: "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant." This rival to personified wisdom[25] does her

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22. It seems that proverbs functioned in the ancient world the way sound bites do in modern society, summing up a distinct view of things in a brief, catchy phrase. Seldom, however, do sound bites carry authority.

23. This reading is preferred in the REB and NRSV. The late use of the verb עלה 'go up, ascend' followed by the preposition ב 'with' has this meaning, on which see William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970) 598–99; W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Book of Proverbs* (London: Methuen, 1929) 232–33. Richard Clifford thinks this interpretation "strains the meaning of the verb" (*Proverbs* [OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999] 232).

24. Oesterley, *Book of Proverbs*, 232.

25. Feminist scholars have thrown considerable light on the background and function of personified wisdom (and folly); see especially Sylvia Schroer, *Wisdom Has Built Her House: Studies on the Figure of Sophia in the Bible* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2000); Judith McKinlay, *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Christl Maier, *Die "Fremde Frau" in Proverbien 1–9* (OBO 144; Fribourg: Universitätsverlag / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995); Claudia Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Bible and Literature Series 11; Sheffield: Almond, 1985); Gerlinde Baumann, *Die Weisheitsgestalt in Proverbien 1–9* (FAT 16; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996).

own wooing, making no use of servant maids to issue an invitation to her feast. Her use of furtive suggestion promises more than culinary delights, and by appealing to the illicit she taps into the human desire to throw off all restraint. That is why the warning that follows conjures up the dreaded Rephaim in the depths of Sheol: "He does not know that the Rephaim are there, in the depths of Sheol, her guests" (v. 18). Metaphors for adultery and erotic pleasure (see also Prov 5:15–20) are thus matched by a literal reminder of death.

It naturally follows that biblical sages had no monopoly on such proverbial sayings, which would have found their way into common discourse from the very beginning. Moreover, it is probable that many, perhaps most, proverbial sayings in the Bible arose from common experience rather than the study of professional sages.[26] The same can be said for related speech forms such as pedagogic incentives in parental, prophetic, and priestly instruction (for example, "listen," "pay attention"), macarisms about receptive hearing, and terminology pertaining to the intellect (for example, smart, astute, clever, stupid). By analogy, the rhetorical devices in common use (for example, cases of polygenesis, especially opposites and graded numerical sayings) and existential responses to nature's harshness and grandeur (for example, expressions of awe and wonder, as well as musings about life's brevity and frailty) are better attributed to society in general. These features are universal, hardly limited to an elite professional group that made up a tiny percentage of the population in Israel. Like specialists in ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature, biblical scholars should make a distinction between the general use of חכמה 'wisdom' (and similar words for intelligence) and the technical use of such words among sages.[27] Anything short of this only brings confusion into an already complex situation.

If the assessment of the extrabiblical evidence of proverbial sayings as creations of the populace in general is correct, and if the conclusions based on this evidence are sound, it follows that biblical interpreters may have overlooked a natural source of many expressions that they have attributed to professional sages. The issue is complicated by the probability that many sayings in the book of Proverbs arose in the larger society before being assimilated into a text that eventually became the exclusive domain of sages.

For this reason, modern biblical scholars are divided over the scope of wisdom influence on prophetic, historiographic, and psalmic texts. This argument

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26. Claus Westermann, *Roots of Wisdom* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995).

27. See the careful analysis of words for wisdom and folly by Michael Fox, "Words for Wisdom," *ZAH* 6 (1993) 149–69; idem, "Words for Folly," *ZAH* 10 (1997) 1–12; idem, *Proverbs*, 28–43.

continues unabated, despite caveats about hidden assumptions and unwanted consequences from one side[28] and claims of canonical shaping from the other.[29]

In some ways, the most innovative insights into redactional structuring of a text relate to the Psalter, and the persons responsible for this activity are said to have had sapiential interests. One of the latest to make this claim is Samuel Terrien, no novice in the long-standing debate over wisdom influence. In his massive commentary on Psalms, Terrien frequently mentions sapiential influence, sometimes qualifying the observation with a "possibly" or posing the issue as a question.[30] This enormously erudite scholar has capped an impressive literary contribution with a testament to faithful reading. Its publication poses an old question anew: Did the sages influence the Psalter? What response can one make?

First, what indicators point to sapiential shaping of the book of Psalms? Terrien suggests that two "sapiential meditations," Psalms 73 and 90, form two poles on which the rest of the book is articulated, a variant of others' claim that the first of these two psalms is the book's "theological center." Moreover, he appears to trace to the sages the dogma of reward and retribution, in which he sees the risk of latent biblicism. Similarly, he views acrostic psalms—"artificial" poetry devoid of artistic spontaneity—as a product of sapiential teachers, and the "prolix and redundant" recitation of history in Psalm 78 as akin to sapiential instruction.

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28. I have led this charge, beginning with "The Influence of the Wise upon Amos," *ZAW* 79 (1967) 42–52, which by coincidence was partly directed against Terrien's views, and culminating in wholesale questioning of the utility of the category "wisdom psalms" (*The Psalms: An Introduction* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001] 87–95), with a much-cited article in between ("Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon 'Historical' Literature," *JBL* 88 [1969] 129–42 [= *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995) 312–25]).

29. The design of the book of Psalms has evoked fresh approaches that rival earlier form criticism, as recent analyses of interpretation demonstrate: above all, see my "Foreword: The Book of Psalms and Its Interpreters," in Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004) xix–xl; Erich Zenger, "Psalmenforschung nach Hermann Gunkel und Sigmund Mowinckel," in *Congress Volume: Oslo, 1998* (ed. André Lemaire and Magne Saebø; VTSup 80; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 399–435; Manfred Oeming, "An der Quelle des Gebets: Neuere Untersuchungen zu den Psalmen," *TLZ* 127 (2002) 367–84.

30. Samuel Terrien finds possible sapiential influence in numerous psalms (*The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003]): see pp. 22–24, 43, 57, 71, 73, 85–86, 98–99, 104, 122, 131–32, 143, 145, 164, 166, 172, 179, 193, 201, 215–16, 254, 294, 300, 305, 320–21, 326, 331, 339, 388, 412, 458, 526, 534, 554, 564–65, 589, 630, 635, 638, 643, 645, 655–56, 664, 693–94, 717–18, 740, 800, 805, 811, 822, 851, 854, 875, 877, 881, 896, 909–10.

From my perspective, Terrien's association of dogma and acrostics with wisdom fails to do justice to their wide association with laments and prophecy, and his reflections about the pedagogy of Psalm 78 do not take into account the vast differences between this material and the use of Israelite history in Sirach 40–50 and Wisdom of Solomon 10–19. The argument about the two poles of the Psalter, while suggestive, is highly subjective. Still, some critics find the context of Psalm 73 too similar to the book of Job to ignore the possibility of sapiential origin, even if similar thoughts appear in prophetic texts, especially Jeremiah and Habakkuk.

Second, Terrien thinks that the depiction of human grandeur in Psalm 8 and the comparable portrayal of divine majesty and human frailty in Psalm 90 derive from the sages, whose views were similar to those articulated in Hebraic myths of creation. He does not identify the particular myths he has in mind, but he does note that the myths of creation are more sapiential than cultic. Given the prominent place of cultic worship in his interpretation of Psalms and the book of Job, this acknowledgment of noncultic myths of creation within wisdom literature is significant. Scholars have often described wisdom theology as creation theology,[31] by which they mean that it embraces the human as opposed to a particular nation and that it is open to the world. Nevertheless, the myth of the ordering of society through cosmic conflict with chaos is very much at home in prophecy and sacred narrative in the Torah. Terrien does not demonstrate that specific features of sapiential reflection on creation that may correspond to those in Psalms 8 and 90 do not occur in other treatments of the theme.

Third, Terrien's sense of the radiant divine presence in the theology of Psalms leaves little space for religious doubt, despite its prominence in a few psalms (94:7–9, 14, 53). He labels the speakers who deny divine justice rebels or empirical atheists from the sapiential circles.[32] The problem of theodicy, to which these and similar texts attest, lays no legitimate claim on Terrien. In this view he has modern allies, especially in the Barthian camp,[33] but ancient thinkers did not hesitate to raise the question of divine justice. Like the authors of

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31. The seminal essay is that by Walther Zimmerli, "The Place and Limit of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (ed. James Crenshaw; New York: Ktav, 1976) 314–26 ("Wisdom thinks resolutely within the framework of a theology of creation," 316). See also Leo Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

32. On practical atheism as one response among many to divine injustice, see my *Defending God*, chap. 1.

33. Terrien is not alone in this aversion to theodicy. He is joined by, among others, Terrence Tilley, *The Evils of Theodicy* (Eugene, Oreg.: Wipf & Stock, 2000). Ancient peoples

the psalms of lament (with the exception of Psalm 88), Terrien suppresses the feelings of absence and anxiety while basking in the hoped-for deliverance.[34]

Fourth, Terrien tends to erase distinctions between wisdom and prophecy, especially in the case of Jeremiah and the Jeremianic tradition.[35] Again and again he links a psalm with this prophet and the sages; this association is made in Psalms 73, 88, and 119, while both Psalms 52 and 62 are said to show affinities with prophetic and sapiential discourse. Jeremiah's deep probing of the psyche is similar to that of certain psalms, particularly 39, but it also reminds Terrien of Qoheleth's inner questioning.[36] The differences, however, between the psalmist and Qoheleth are major, for the latter does not examine his life to make himself more acceptable in God's sight[37] but, rather, uses autobiographical fiction on the one hand and internal dialogue on the other to muse about life's absurdity.

Fifth, Terrien builds evidence of sapiential influence on assumptions about ancient Israelite society that need revision in light of current research, tentative as it is. At one point he suggests that nomadic terminology in Psalm 25 has been normalized among prophets, priests, and poetic musicians. Does he imply a nomadic past for the ancestors of these psalmists, as was typical of scholars in the first half of the twentieth century? That is not clear. He does, however, state that wisdom schools were fashionable in several cities of the Diaspora,[38] a claim that rests on analogy with neighboring cultures, which has been

were less hesitant to raise the question of divine justice than many modern theologians. Marcel Sarot addresses the modern philosophical issue of defining theodicy and opts for a broad definition similar to that of the ancients ("Theodicy and Modernity: An Inquiry into the Historicity of Theodicy," in *Theodicy in the World of the Bible* [ed. A. Laato and J. de Moor; Leiden: Brill, 2003] 1–26).

34. In his stimulating book *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978), the adjective "elusive" scarcely functions, so powerful is the sense of divine presence.

35. Language of individual retribution permeated the entire social fabric of the ancient world; it is therefore natural to expect commonalities of expression between Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Psalms. This sentiment does not derive from sages.

36. "Such confessions of confidential introspection belong generally to the sapiential circles (Job 9:27; 29:18; Eccl 2:1; but see Jer 5:40; cf. also Ps 119:8, 17, 34, 44, 55, 88, 101, 134, 146)" (Terrien, *Psalms*, 331).

37. The contrast between Qoheleth and the orthodox epilogist who added Eccl 12:13–14 could hardly be greater. Qoheleth may well have counseled others to fear the deity, that is, to tremble before divine presence, but this has little if anything to do with revering God and keeping the commandments.

38. Terrien, *Psalms*, 645. For an assessment of this claim, see my *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

sharply criticized.[39] Terrien also writes that sapiential ethics addressed itself chiefly to the socially elite, ignoring decisive indications that many of the persons described in the book of Proverbs were peasants struggling to eke out an existence from the land.[40] True, Qoheleth advises the people to seize the day, but he appears to be teaching ordinary people, העם. It has been argued, on slight grounds, that the book of Job envisions two types of privileged people, the generous and the selfish,[41] but this argument is difficult to sustain. Sirach, however, does fit Terrien's description of sapiential ethics, for he seems to have belonged to a privileged class.[42]

Sixth, Terrien relies on style and vocabulary to link psalms and the sages, despite the overwhelmingly negative conclusions that specialists in this endeavor have reached.[43] All such attempts founder on the incontestable fact that the limited vocabulary of ancient Hebrew is insufficient to yield such conclusions about exclusive use in certain sectors. It is highly probable that cognitive expressions belonged to every segment of the population.

Seventh, although Eccl 11:5 acknowledges human ignorance about the miracle of life within a fetus, it does not follow that, as Terrien suggests, Psalm 139 derives its interest in embryology from sages. In Israelite society, midwives and pregnant women seem like the logical sources of reflection about the mystery of embryology.[44] In any event, the harsh remark in Ps 139:19–22 distances this psalm from the sages, with a single exception (Sir 50:25–26).

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39. Friedemann Golka*, The Leopard's Spots: Biblical and African Wisdom in Proverbs* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993).

40. R. N. Whybray, *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs* (JSOTSup 99; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990). Whybray detects four types of social milieu: the court, educated urban society, prosperous farmers, and farmers with limited land earning a precarious living (p. 116).

41. Rainer Albertz, "Der sozialgeschichtliche hintergrund des Hiobbuches und der 'Babylonischen Theodizee,'" in *Die Botschaft und die Boten* (ed. Jörg Jeremias and Lothar Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981) 349–72.

42. Oda Wischmeyer, *Die Kultur des Buches Jesus Sirach* (BZNW 77; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995); James Crenshaw, "The Book of Sirach," *NIB* 5:603–867.

43. See the judicious study of the linguistic evidence by Avi Hurvitz, "Wisdom Vocabulary in the Hebrew Psalter: A Contribution to the Study of 'Wisdom Psalms,'" *VT* 38 (1988) 41–51. Opposite interpretations of the data are presented in my "Wisdom Psalms?" *CurBS* 8 (2000) 9–17; idem, "Gold Dust or Nuggets? A Brief Response to J. Kenneth Kuntz," *CurBR* 12 (2003) 155–58; J. Kenneth Kuntz, "Reclaiming Biblical Psalms: A Response to Crenshaw," *CurBR* 12 (2003) 145–54.

44. The mystery of pregnancy evoked comments in Israel and in Egypt (Eccl 11:5 and "The Hymn to the Aten"). The latter text reads, "Who makes seed grow in women, who creates people from sperm; who feeds the son in his mother's womb, who soothes him to still his tears. . . . When the chick in the egg speaks in the shell, You give him breath within

The widespread use of proverbs in literary genres distinct from wisdom literature, both within the Bible and in ancient Near Eastern texts, can be explained in one of two ways. Either the sayings are the product of sages, or they derive from popular culture. The second of these options would render less likely the widespread claim of sapiential influence, for example, in the book of Psalms. The evidence is sufficiently ambiguous to point scholars in opposite directions. Those who, like Terrien, discern the influence of sages in prophetic books and in the Psalter may be right. In my view, however, their labeling of words and expressions as sapiential serves no useful purpose. After all, labels ought to clarify or to issue vital information. Perhaps it is time to move beyond speculation to a different task, that of specifying *functional* similarities and differences among genres. After all, fools had access to proverbs. It was the *use* of proverbs that distinguished the fools from the wise.

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to sustain him" (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 2:97–98). This idea was not alien to Egyptian sages, however; see Papyrus Insinger 32,7–9: "He created the breath in the egg though there is no access to it. He created birth in every womb from the semen which they receive. He created sinews and bones out of the same semen" (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3:210).

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Genericity, Tense, and Verbal Patterns in the Sentence Literature of Proverbs

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A perusal of the Hebrew text of the book of Proverbs will quickly uncover a rich variety of verb constellations employed in its maxims. However, this richness is generally lost on commentators and translators, who tend to render the proverbial sayings with present-tense verb forms. This translation practice finds support in numerous cross-linguistic examples of present-tense maxims and linguistic treatments of the present verb form in such gnomic expressions as a "generic (or gnomic) tense." However, more recent linguist research has abandon the idea of a "generic tense" as mistaken. Although there are discernible cross-linguistic patterns of association between genericity and verbal semantics, no particular tense, aspect, or modality (TAM) is alone sufficient to produce a characterizing (or generic) expression.

Unfortunately, this newer linguistic research has yet to be brought to bear on the question of genericity in Biblical Hebrew.[1] As a result, even the most recent Hebrew grammars continue to employ classical terminology such as "gnomic perfect"[2] and identify present gnomic or habitual as a central area of semantic overlap among the finite verb forms.[3]

A review of recent linguistic discussion of genericity suggests that the traditional approach to generic statements in the Hebrew Bible (especially the book of Proverbs) is inadequate both linguistically and exegetically. Semantically, the treatment of all verb forms in proverbial literature as expressing present tense begs the question why different verb forms have been employed.

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1. An exception is Max Rogland's recent work, in which he raises doubts about the traditional understanding of the so-called gnomic perfect (Max Rogland, *Alleged Non-Past Uses of Qatal in Classical Hebrew* [SSN 44; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003] 15–51).

2. For example, Christo H. J. van der Merwe, Jackie A. Naudé, and Jan H. Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 146; Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 488.

3. J. C. L. Gibson, *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar: Syntax* (4th ed.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994) 61–62.

Exegetically, discerning the distinct contribution each verb form makes in generic statements leads to a fuller understanding of the meaning and rhetoric of biblical maxims.

Generic(ity) is used by linguists in reference to statements such as *The whale is a mammal*, *Only fools rush in*, and *Robert drinks coffee*. More traditional labels for statements of this sort include gnomic, general/omnitemporal/timeless truth, proverb, and habitual.[4] With respect to these and similar sentences, genericity refers to two distinct but related phenomena. The noun phrases (NPs) *the whale* and *fools* (but not *Robert*) do not refer to individuals but to kinds. Such NPs are called "kind-referring NPs" or simply "generic NPs."[5] The second phenomenon has to do with the propositions themselves. They do not refer to specific episodes or events but to general properties or characteristics. Thus they are called "characterizing" (or simply generic) sentences in contrast to "particular" sentences.[6]

Within the larger category of generic sentences, habituals are distinguished variously by different linguists. Krifka et al. apply the label "habitual" to generic sentences whose predicate is related to a dynamic or "episodic" predication.[7] On this basis, *Only fools rush in* and *Robert drinks coffee* would be categorized as habituals. Krifka et al. would call the third example, *The whale is a mammal*, a "lexical characterizing sentence" because of its inherently stative predicate. Characteristic of all generics is the neutralization of this dynamic: stative distinction; in other words, whether derived from a dynamic predicate (habitual) or a stative one, all generics are stative.

By contrast, Langacker proposes a distinction between generics and habituals based on whether the subject NP is kind-referring or not.[8] Thus, *The whale is a mammal* and *Only fools rush in* are generics based on the fact that both *the whale* and *fools* are not individual NPs, but kind-referring NPs. By contrast, the subject NP in *Robert drinks coffee* presumably refers to an individual named *Robert*; hence it is habitual, rather than generic.

This lack of unanimity about how to distinguish habituals within the larger category of generics is characteristic of the challenge linguists face in analyzing

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4. See John Lyons, *Semantics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) 680–81.

5. Manfred Krifka et al., "Genericity: An Introduction," in *The Generic Book* (ed. Gregory N. Carlson and Francis Jeffry Pelletier; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 2.

6. Ibid., 3.

7. Ibid., 17.

8. Langacker states this contrast in terms of whether the subject NP is inherently plural or not (Ronald W. Langacker, "Generics and Habituals," in *On Conditionals Again* [ed. Angeliki Athanasiadou and René Dirven; Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 143; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1997] 195).

genericity. On the one hand, the way Krifka et al. explain the distinction makes sense on a certain level: "Habitual sentences intuitively generalize over patterns of events as a component of their meaning."[9] On the other hand, this understanding breaks down when applied to generics such as *Only fools rush in*, which is intuitively not a habitual. Although the difficulties in distinguishing habituals serves to illustrate some of the characteristics of generic sentences, they do not impinge upon the study here, which is based on the concept of generic statements in the broader sense.

To round off this general introduction to genericity, let me note two related distinctions that linguists make with respect to the interpretation of generic sentences. The first is between a universal and an existential interpretation.[10] To illustrate, *Jared eats oatmeal* may be interpreted universally to mean that on *every occasion* that Jared eats, he eats oatmeal. By contrast, an existential interpretation would simply be that *on occasion* Jared eats oatmeal.[11]

The second interpretive distinction is between "descriptive" and "normative" generics (to use Dahl's terminology).[12] The former refers to probabilities or tendencies in the actual world, whereas the latter has to do with a state of affairs that is valid across a number of possible worlds but that may never actually be realized.[13] For instance, a statement such as *My friends drive Volkswagens* may be paraphrased according to either a descriptive or a normative interpretation: *My friends tend to/generally drive Volkswagens* (descriptive interpretation), or *I will only be friends with those who drive Volkswagens* (normative interpretation).

These two distinctions are helpful for understanding generic sentences. First, the commonplace notion that generics are statements that are universally valid is misleading, because a generic may refer to a possibility (existential interpretation) or a tendency (descriptive interpretation) rather than a universal necessity (universal and/or normative interpretation). Second, these related distinctions explain the law-like characteristic of generic sentences that are interpreted as aphorisms or maxims (for example, *A friend in need is a*

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9. Krifka et al., "Genericity," 17.

10. John M. Lawler, "Generic to a Fault," in *Papers from the Eighth Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society* (Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 1972) 247–58.

11. Dahl relates these categories of universal and existential to the English modal operators "necessity" and "possibility," respectively: a universal generic is necessarily the case in the possible situations, whereas an existential generic is possibly the case in the possible situations (Östen Dahl, "On Generics," in *Formal Semantics of Natural Language* [ed. E. Keenan; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975] 105).

12. Ibid., 100–102.

13. The term "possible world" derives from model-theoretical semantics, in which the truth conditions of a statement are the ways in which the "world" must be in order for it to be true.

friend indeed) or those that are employed as directives (such as *There is no smoking in here*). These types of generics are interpreted as both universal and normative. Third, Declerk suggests that semantic indeterminacy of the sort discussed here is characteristic of generics. He claims that generic interpretations arise expressly from the fact that such statements are "unspecified for various distinctions."[14]

Despite the extent to which these distinctions help our understanding of the nature of generic statements, there remain some questions that linguists have been unable to answer satisfactorily. The first of these has to do with analyzing how generic sentences mean. A frequently used example to illustrate this problem is *Birds fly*. While most people interpret this statement as true, most people also know that not all birds fly. Similarly, the generic *Mammals bear live young* is not invalidated by the fact that it does not apply to male or immature mammals. This is in a sense the primary difficulty in understanding generics. Therefore, it is important to survey some approaches to the problem, realizing however, that there is not yet a completely satisfactory answer.

Two types of approaches to analyzing generics are the inductivist approach and the rules-and-regulation approach.[15] The inductivist approach interprets a generic statement as true or valid if and only if there are a sufficient number of instantiations for which the predicated property holds true. So, if Colin walks to school regularly, at some point I can validly state that *Colin walks to school* as a generalization about his behavior. The greatest difficulty for this approach is that some generics apply even if there are no instantiations of the predication. For example, *Kathy does not take cream in her coffee* may be considered valid even if she has never drunk coffee. The statement may perhaps be deduced from the fact that she is lactose intolerant rather than from her observed coffee-drinking habits.

The rules-and-regulations approach sidesteps the difficulty of a lack of instantiations by interpreting generic statements as true or false based on whether they have a corresponding structure (that is, a rule or regulation) in the world. Carlson lists examples of generics that favor this explanation over an inductivist one such as *Bishops move diagonally* and *Tab A fits in slot B*.[16] These

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14. Renaat Declerk, "The Manifold Interpretations of Generic Sentences," *Lingua* 68 (1986) 151.

15. See Gregory N. Carlson, "Truth Conditions of Generic Sentences: Two Contrasting Views," in *The Generic Book* (ed. Gregory N. Carlson and Francis Jeffry Pelletier; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 224–37; Ariel Cohen, *Think Generic! The Meaning and Use of Generic Sentences* (Dissertations in Linguistics; Stanford, Calif.: CSLI, 1999) 5–29; and Krifka et al., "Genericity," 45–63.

16. Carlson, "Truth Conditions," 225.

generics are considered valid even though there may be no instantiations of them, because they correspond with some rule or regulation with respect to the way the world works. Nevertheless, this approach has attracted criticism as well, primarily for the fact that it is "ontologically more extravagant" than the inductivist approach.[17] It places the burden of validity on the existence of rules and regulations in the world structure. This seems particularly problematic when, as Carlson points out, generics appear to be formally based on particular or episodic sentences that clearly refer not to rules and regulations but to individuals.[18] If the nongeneric sentence *Twenty birds fly* refers directly to individual instantiations in the world, on what basis can we argue that the generic statement *Birds fly* refers to some rule or regulation about bird behavior?

In any case, both these approaches have difficulty dealing with exceptions to certain generic sentences such as those mentioned above (*Birds fly, Mammals bear live young*). In an attempt to overcome the problem of exceptions, linguists have proposed limiting the quantification or application of generics to "normal," "prototypical," "stereotypical," or "relevant" subjects, or else constraining the situations to which they apply.[19] According to Cohen's recent "alternative-based" theory, the truth of a generic statement must be evaluated with respect to a set of possible alternatives. Thus, *Birds fly* must be evaluated with respect to a set of alternative means of locomotion {*fly, walk, swim*}.[20] Cohen calls such readings "absolute," in contrast to "relative" readings in which the set of alternatives is related not to the predicated property, but to the NP. Thus, *The Frenchman eats horsemeat* is not evaluated on the basis of an alternative set of foods but relatively, that is, on the basis of an alternative set of nationalities {*Frenchman, American, Russian*}. In this case, the statement is valid if the Frenchman is more likely to eat horsemeat relative to the alternative nationalities in the set.[21] In either case, Cohen argues, generic statements must be understood as probability statements;[22] hence, exceptions to generics are always possible.

The above discussion forms a relevant background to the issue of genericity and verbal semantics because TAM distinctions may reasonably be expected to contribute at some level to the interpretation of a generic statements. Unfortunately, here we encounter a further difficulty in that languages rarely have

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17. Cohen, *Think Generic*, 14.
18. Carlson, "Truth Conditions," 227–28.
19. See Krifka et al., "Genericity," 43–63.
20. Cohen, *Think Generic*, 34. Following set theory convention, I am using curly brackets { } to enclose members of the relevant set of alternatives.
21. Ibid., 52–56.
22. Ibid., 35–36.

distinct structures to signal generic readings.[23] Rather, various verbal predicates may permit a generic interpretation. For example, although English generics predominantly occur in the Simple Present, they may also be expressed by Past or Future tense forms:[24] *Bill plays golf / Bill played golf (every chance he had) / Bill will play golf (all week if he can).*

Nevertheless, English sentences with Perfect and Progressive show a strong tendency toward a particular rather than generic interpretation. However, certain adverbs serve to enforce a generic reading even with a Progressive construction: *Bill is usually playing golf.* An explanation for this tendency toward particular readings may be found in the aspectual value of Perfects and Progressives: both create distinct temporal bounds on a situation and hence lead to a particular reading. By contrast, the simple tense forms in English allow for an unbounded characteristic reading.[25]

Despite the fact that most languages, like English, have no distinctively "generic tense," a pattern can be discerned cross-linguistically with respect to which TAM values are most commonly associated with genericity. Dahl makes two main observations about generics and TAM marking based on his extensive cross-linguistic database.[26] First, there is a "minimal marking tendency" among generic statements cross-linguistically. In other words, languages tend to employ the less-marked verb form in generics, such as the English Simple Present versus the Progressive Present: *Bill drinks* versus *Bill is drinking.*[27]

Second, Dahl finds three exceptions to the minimal-marking tendency among languages. One is that imperfective verbs, which might not be the least-marked forms, predominate in generic sentences in some languages. A second, related exception is that "receding non-progressives" (that is, forms that have developed beyond a progressive meaning on the universal grammaticalization path of progressive → present / imperfective) are predominantly used in generic expressions in many languages. For instance, Dahl cites the example of Tamil, in which the verb form labeled "Future" commonly appears in generic sentences.[28] He hypothesizes that this form was earlier a general non-past

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23. Krifka et al. cite an example from Swahili in which the verbal prefix *hu-* marks habitual genericity, but they also note that markings of this sort are only a sufficient and not a necessary marker of genericity ("Genericity," 8).

24. I have followed the common convention here of capitalizing the names of language-specific verbal forms.

25. Langacker, "Generics and Habituals," 192–94.

26. The database is discussed as the basis of his earlier work, Östen Dahl, *Tense and Aspect Systems* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985).

27. Östen Dahl, "The Marking of the Episodic/Generic Distinction in Tense-Aspect Systems," in *The Generic Book* (ed. Gregory N. Carlson and Francis Jeffry Pelletier; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 415.

28. Ibid., 418.

(present / imperfective) form that has been superseded in this role by the development of a progressive form now labeled "Present." Finally, a few languages actually employ an overt generic marker, as in Cebuno where the progressive *ga-suwat* 'he is writing' is distinct from the generic *mu-suwat* 'he (usually) writes' through a "real durative" marking on the former (the prefix *ga-*) and an "unreal" marking on the latter (the prefix *mu-*).[29]

Let me summarize the main conclusions from this discussion of generic statements before moving on to a discussion of the statements in Proverbs. First, generics are characterizing probability statements. That is, they do not refer to particular episodes or events but characterize properties of certain states of affairs, and as probability statements their characterizations are not without exceptions. Second, generic statements are unspecified with respect to several distinctions, so they may be interpreted in a number of ways depending on their pragmatic context. Third, although most languages have no particular marking of generic sentences and no specifically "generic tense," there are some discernable cross-linguistic patterns with respect to TAM and generics. Among these are (1) a "minimal-marking tendency," meaning that languages tend to use the less-marked or unmarked verb forms in generic statements, and (2) a preference for progressive → present / imperfective verb forms in generic statements.

The book of Proverbs offers an extensive collection of generic statements containing a variety of verb forms. However, not all of the material in Proverbs qualifies as generic. In particular, it has been customary among biblical scholars to distinguish between two main literary types in the book: instructional material and sentence literature. Although the instructional material is interspersed with some generic sentences, it is dominated by directive (command) statements with modal verb forms (mostly imperatives and negated jussives). The collections in chaps. 1–9 as well as the "Words of the Wise" (22:17–24:35), and the "Words of Lemuel" (31:1–9) are usually characterized as instructional material.[30] By contrast, the sentence literature, predominantly found in the two "Solomonic" collections (10:1–22:16 and 25:1–29:27), consists mostly of generic sentences interspersed with some directive statements. Thus I have made these two "Solomonic" collections the basis of my investigation.[31] I have tabulated the proverbs from these two collections in table 1, according to which verb form constitutes the main predication in the first line (vertical axis) and second line (horizontal axis). Examples in which the verb is

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29. Ibid., 418–19.

30. Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1998) xxii, 240.

31. I have also excluded from consideration the "Words of Agur" and the numerical sayings in chap. 30 as well as the poem in 31:10–31.

Table 1. Verbal Patterns in Proverbs 10:1–22:16 and 25:1–29:27

Verb form in line 2

	Yiqtol	Verbless	Ptcp.	Qatal	Wayy.	Modal	Gapped	Nothing	TOTAL
Yiqtol	103	31	8	7	0	1	11	18	180
Verbless	49	68	14	4	2	1	0	64[a]	202
Ptc.	16	16	13	1	0	0	0	2	48
Qatal	11	6	3	6	4	0	6	2	38
Wayy.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Modal	16	2	0	1	1	9	1	1	31
TOTAL	195	123	38	19	7	11	18	87	499[b]

Verb form in line 1 (left margin label)

a. This number includes 26 examples (27 verses) of the sort "(Like) X, (so is) Y" (10:26; 11:22; 25:11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 28; 26:1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17, 18–19, 23; 27:8, 19; 28:3, 15) and 15 examples of the sort "Better (is) X (than) Y" (12:9; 15:16, 17; 16:8, 19, 32; 17:1; 19:1; 21:9; 25:7, 24; 27:5, 10b; 28:6).

b. I have left out of this tabulation 14 examples whose textual reading is uncertain: 12:12, 26; 13:8, 23; 14:9; 18:3, 17; 19:19, 26; 20:4, 9; 25:1, 27; 27:17.

gapped in the second line are tabulated in the "gapped" column; those with only one main predication are listed as having "nothing" in the second line.

Let me begin my analysis by noting that the data are in keeping with Dahl's cross-linguistic observations. The most frequently employed verb forms are associated with the progressive → present / imperfective grammaticalization path, namely, the participle and *yiqtol*. Although the progressive participle is beginning to encroach upon imperfective *yiqtol* in the sphere of the present, *yiqtol* appears more frequently in the generic statements of Proverbs than the participle. Between these two forms, in terms of frequency, are verbless predications, which illustrate the "minimally marked tendency" of generics discussed above. Together, minimally marked verbless predications, progressive participles, or imperfective *yiqtol*s occur in some combination to the exclusion of any other verb forms in over 80 percent of the examples in the data.

Although one may protest (as Rogland has done with regard to *qatal*)[32] that TAM distinctions are preserved even in generic statements, how can such protestations be substantiated? I think an answer lies in the analogy between generics and direct speech. In both the generic statements in Proverbs and direct speech in Biblical Hebrew narrative, the TAM value of the verb form is uninfluenced by the surrounding context—both are "deictically" indepen-

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32. Rogland, *Uses of Qatal*, 46.

dent of the surrounding discourse.[33] As a result, discourse-determined TAM values, such as past perfect for *qatal* (for example, Gen 5:24) and future in the past (the equivalent of English Past Conditional) for *yiqtol* (for example, Gen 43:25), are rare in short stretches of direct speech and are likewise expected to be rare in the short generic statements in Proverbs. This correlation would conform to the "minimal-marking tendency" observed in generic statements cross-linguistically.

Within direct speech, just one or two TAM values are consistently associated with each finite verb form: (1) *qatal* expresses past tense (perfective aspect), or perfect aspect; (2) *yiqtol* expresses present (imperfective aspect) or future tense; (3) the participle expresses (present) progressive aspect; and (4) the narrative verb *wayyiqtol* is rare in direct speech, as it also is in generic statements (see table 1). These "default" TAM values, which are illustrated by the examples in (1), provide a baseline or a starting point for analyzing the TAM values in generic statements.[34]

(1) a.   2 Sam 3:24
           What <u>did</u> you <u>do</u> / <u>have</u> you <u>done</u>?   מה עשׂיתה
     b.   Deut 1:30
           He [Yhwh] <u>will fight</u> for you.   הוא ילחם לכם
     c.   Gen 37:15
           What <u>are you seeking</u>?   מה־תבקשׁ
     d.   Gen 37:16
           I <u>am seeking</u> my brothers.   את־אחי אנכי מבקשׁ

The validity of the above analogy between generics and direct speech seems evident in the fact that these "default" TAM values can account for the respective verb forms throughout the generic statements in Proverbs. However, this is only a starting point. It remains to explain the significance of the various verb choices in Proverbs. Although not every example can be analyzed in this space, and semantics alone cannot account for every verb choice, some distinct differences can be seen among the major predicate patterns in the data.

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33. On direct speech as deictically independent, see Cynthia L. Miller, *The Representation of Speech in Biblical Hebrew Narrative: A Linguistic Analysis* (HSM 55; 2nd printing; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 74. With respect to the generic sentences in Proverbs, Declerck's characterization of generics as "underspecified" may perhaps be applied to the issue of context as well (Declerck, "Generic Sentences," 151).

34. Direct speech examples also provide an excellent context in which to evaluate the basic TAM values of the various verb forms, as illustrated in my "Hebrew Verb: A Grammaticalization Approach," *ZAH* 14/2 (2001) 127–35.

Verbless predications are the most basic ("minimally marked") type of predication and are analyzed as present tense or "tenseless."[35] The types of proverbial statements that utilize verbless predication are, not surprisingly, quite varied but fall into two broad categories: those that express identity between two entities (nouns or noun phrases), often in the sense of providing a definition, as illustrated by (2a–b); and those that make a descriptive statement using a predicate adjective or some other predicate than a noun, as illustrated by (2c–d).

(2) a. Prov 10:5

Whoever stores up at harvest (is) a wise son;   אגר בקיץ בן משׂכיל

whoever sleeps at harvest (is) a shameful son.   נרדם בקציר בן מביש

b. Prov 10:15

The wealth of the rich (is) their strong city;   הון עשׁיר קרית עזו

the ruin of the poor (is) their poverty.   מחתת דלים רישׁם

c. Prov 14:4

Without oxen the crib (is) empty,   באין אלפים אבוס בר

but in the strength of an ox (is) much
produce.   ורב־תבואות בכח שׁור

d. Prov 10:16

The wage of the just (is) for life;   פעלת צדיק לחיים

the income of the wicked (is) for sin.   תבואת רשׁע לחטאת

The progressive participle occurs third-most frequently in the data. As in other languages (for example, Swedish), the Hebrew participle may express either a general present or present progressive predication. However, because of the bounded, particular reading (versus unbounded, generic) associated with

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35. Two explanations have been offered for verbless predications in Hebrew and other languages. The first is that the copula verb is absent, and the predicate is unmarked for TAM; in this case, the copula when present is analyzed as a "dummy" verb necessary only for the placement of TAM marking (see John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968] 323; for criticism of this view, see Leon Stassen, *Intransitive Predication* [Oxford Studies in Typology and Linguistic Theory; Oxford: Clarendon, 1997] 65–76). The second explanation posits that in verbless predications a copula is syntactically present but only *phonologically* null; the lack of a "present" copula form in Hebrew merely makes the language "defective morphologically" according to Shlonsky, a proponent of this view (Ur Shlonsky, *Clause Structure and Word Order in Hebrew and Arabic: An Essay in Comparative Semitic Syntax* [Oxford Studies in Comparative Syntax; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997] 39. For a treatment of verbless clauses in Biblical Hebrew see Cynthia L. Miller (ed.), *The Verbless Clause in Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Approaches* (LSAWS 1; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1999).

progressives, the participle in generic statements is best understood as a general present. In contrast to verbless predications that equate or describe states of affairs, participial generics present actions that are typical or characteristic, as illustrated in (3).

(3) a. Prov 11:13

      A slanderer <u>reveals</u> confidences,

      and a trustworthy spirit <u>conceals</u> a word.

<div dir="rtl">

הולך רכיל <u>מגלה־</u>סוד

ונאמן־רוח <u>מכסה</u> דבר
</div>

    b. Prov 11:17

      A kind person <u>benefits</u> him/herself,

      but a cruel (one) <u>harms</u> him/herself.

<div dir="rtl">

<u>גמל</u> נפשו איש חסד

<u>ועכר</u> שארו אכזרי
</div>

    c. Prov 15:20

      A wise son delights/will delight his father,

      but a foolish man <u>despises</u> his mother.

<div dir="rtl">

בן חכם ישמח־אב

וכסיל אדם <u>בוזה</u> אמו
</div>

Yiqtol is the most common verb in the data; it is also the most varied semantically. Three distinct nuances may be expressed by *yiqtol*. The first of these is a general generic statement to which an adverb like "typically" or "usually" may be added without changing the meaning, as illustrated by the English aphorisms *Boys will (typically) be boys*, and *Birds of a feather (typically) flock together*. In such examples the TAM value of *yiqtol* may be interpreted as general (imperfective) present tense or future tense; I have chosen to translate all the examples in (4) with English Future tense forms.[36]

(4) a. Prov 11:16

      A graceful woman <u>will (typically) grasp</u> honor,

      but strong men <u>will (typically) grasp</u> riches.

<div dir="rtl">

אשת־חן <u>תתמך</u> כבוד

ועריצים <u>יתמכו־</u>עשר
</div>

    b. Prov 12:8

      A man <u>will (typically) be praised</u> according to his intelligence,

      but the twisted of heart <u>will (typically) be</u> despised.

<div dir="rtl">

לפי־שכלו <u>יהלל־</u>איש

ונעוה־לב <u>יהיה</u> לבוז
</div>

    c. Prov 29:3

      A man who loves wisdom <u>will (typically) make</u> his father rejoice;

      but a friend of harlots <u>will (typically) squander</u> wealth.

<div dir="rtl">

כל־רוחו <u>יוציא</u> כסיל

וחכם באחור <u>ישבחנה</u>
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36. Other examples of "typical" *yiqtol* generics include 10:1; 11:6; 12:25; 13:16; 14:17; 15:1, 2; 16:23; 18:1; 26:24; 29:2, 8.

The second category of examples demands a future-tense interpretation of *yiqtol*. Rather than expressing typical states of affairs, these proverbs feature inevitable states of affairs, similar to English maxims such as *What will be will be* and *Accidents will happen*. Such examples, illustrated in (5), are distinct from the first category in that they allow adverbs such as "inevitably," "eventually," or "ultimately" to be added to them without a change in meaning, whereas they yield a quite different sense with the adverbs "typically" or "usually."[37]

(5) a. Prov 11:4

      Wealth <u>will (ultimately/?usually)</u> not <u>avail</u> on the day of wrath,

      לא־יועיל הון ביום עברה

      but righteousness <u>will (ultimately/?usually)</u> <u>deliver</u> from death.

      וצדקה תציל ממות

   b. Prov 13:20

      Whoever walks (*Qere*) with the wise <u>will (inevitably) become</u> wise,

      הולך את־חכמים יחכם

      and whoever consorts with fools <u>will (inevitably) suffer harm</u>.

      ורעה כסילים ירוע

   c. Prov 12:24

      The hand of the diligent <u>will (eventually) rule</u>,

      יד־חרוצים תמשול

      but the slacker <u>will (eventually) become</u> forced labor.

      ורמיה תהיה למס

   d. Prov 22:8

      Whoever sows iniquity <u>will (inevitably) reap</u> trouble,

      זורע עולה קצור־און

      and the rod of his wrath <u>will (ultimately) come to naught</u>.

      ושבט עברתו יכלה

Deciding to which of these first two categories an example belongs is an issue of interpretation. Although some statements, such as (5a) above, quite clearly demand an inevitable interpretation, others, such as (5b) might be interpreted as either typical or inevitable. It is an interesting question to what degree the choice between these interpretations is dependent on the view of reward and punishment in the book of Proverbs.

The third category consists of examples in which *yiqtol* has some variety of modal meaning.[38] There is only one case of *yiqtol* with a clear directive (command) modal meaning, given in (6a); but several examples in the data seem

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37. Other examples of "inevitable" *yiqtol* generics include 11:11, 31; 13:13; 14:11; 17:2, 20; 19:5, 9; 21:11; 27:18; 28:18; 29:23.

38. Modal in the sense of nonindicative. For a discussion of the various types of nonindicative modality discussed here, see Frank R. Palmer, *Mood and Modality* (2nd ed.; Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001). For discussions

ambiguous between an indicative and directive modal interpretation, as illustrated in (6b).[39]

(6) a. Prov 20:19

A slanderer reveals confidences;

גולה־סוד הולך רכיל

you <u>should</u> not <u>associate</u> with a big-mouth.

ולפתה שפתיו לא <u>תתערב</u>

b. Prov 22:5

Thorns (and) snares (are) in the way of the perverse,

צנים פחים בדרך עקש

whoever guards his life <u>will/should keep far</u> from them.

שומר נפשו ירחק מהם

There are several examples in which *yiqtol* is employed to express epistemic (probability) modality, as in (7a),[40] and quite a few others that may be understood as expressing dynamic (ability) modality, as in (7b).[41]

(7) a. Prov 14:13

Even in laughter a heart <u>may be hurt</u>,

גם־בשחוק יכאב־לב

and the end of rejoicing (is) grief.

ואחריתה שמחה תוגה

b. Prov 28:5

Wicked men <u>cannot understand</u> justice,

אנשי־רע לא־<u>יבינו</u> משפט

but those who seek Yhwh <u>can understand</u> everything.

ומבקשי יהוה <u>יבינו</u> כל

Finally, there are a some examples of *yiqtol* expressing contingent modality within temporal clauses, as illustrated in (8).[42]

(8) Prov 28:28

When the wicked arise, people <u>hide</u>,

קום רשעים <u>יסתר</u> אדם

but when they perish, the just <u>become</u> <u>many</u>.

ובאבדם <u>ירבו</u> צדיקים

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of these modalities in Biblical Hebrew, see my *Biblical Hebrew Verbal System: A Grammaticalization Approach* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 2002); and Andy Warren, *Modality, Reference and Speech Acts in the Psalms* (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1998).

39. See also 11:12, 16:10, 22:5.

40. See also 14:20, 17:28.

41. See also 10:12b, 30a; 14:10, 15b; 16:14b; 17:21; 18:14b; 20:5, 6b, 18, 30, 24; 25:15; 27:4, 20; 28:11; 29:7, 19a.

42. See also 29:24b; 18:10b; 21:1b, 13, 27; 28:12. I use the term "contingent modality" to encompass (semantically, though not always syntactically) subordinate constructions such

The use of perfective *qatal* and past *wayyiqtol* forms in Proverbs is less fre-
quent and is of particular interest because these forms are less expected in light
of the dominance of progressive → present / imperfective forms in generic
statements cross-linguistically. Most often translations and commentaries fol-
low the traditional approach of identifying such occurrences as "gnomic per-
fects" (and by analogy applying it to *wayyiqtol* as well) and translating them as
present tense. [43] However, this treatment is not self-evidently correct because
in many instances the usual translation of the verb is perfectly acceptable, as
illustrated by (9). [44]

(9) Prov 21:22
     A wise man <u>goes/went up</u> to a city of   עיר גברים <u>עלה</u> חכם
     strong men,
     and <u>brings/brought down</u> its strong   <u>וירד</u> עז מבטחה
     fortification.

In addition, there are enough examples of past and perfective verb forms in
generic statements from the world's languages to raise doubts with respect to
this analysis of *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* in Proverbs. [45]

Beyond this negative assessment of the traditional understanding, I believe
a positive explanation for the use of *qatal* and *wayyiqtol* in Proverbs is possible
through understanding examples such as the one in (9) to be anecdotal. [46]
Anecdotes are closely related to moral generic statements, as explained by
Frykenberg:

> A maxim states some general principle which serves as a guide or rule. An anec-
> dote narrates facts and circumstances, giving details in sequence. An anecdote,

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as purpose, result, and conditional/temporal clauses (see my *Biblical Hebrew Verbal System*,
70). Palmer grouped such constructions under "oblique" in his first edition (Frank R.
Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1986] 172–207).

43. Although Driver does not employ the term "gnomic," he cites examples of *qatal* ex-
pressing general truths, about which he states that "the idiomatic rendering in English is by
means of the present" (S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew and Some
Other Syntactical Questions* [3rd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1892; repr. with an
introductory essay by W. Randall Garr, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans / Livonia, Mich.:
Dove, 1998] 17).

44. Thus, Murphy (*Proverbs*, 157), the REB, and the NAB translate this verse with English
Present tense verbs, whereas Scott (R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* [AB 18; Garden City,
N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965] 124), the NRSV, and the NJPS use Past tense verb forms.

45. This is the basic argument made by Rogland for *qatal* (*Uses of Qatal*, 46).

46. Other possible anecdotal proverbs are 11:8 and 22:12.

even if and when it points to some conclusion or some general observation, will not do so explicitly. . . . It is the audience (or reader) who draws the inferences and connects the particular to the general. In any case, whether anecdote or maxim, the form of one is the other form inside out, back-to-front, or upside down: one gives a general conclusion or theory without supplying evidence; and the other does just the reverse, narrating details and providing evidence without drawing general conclusions or principles. The empirical and the theoretical, by nature, work in opposite ways.[47]

An example such as the one above in (9) should be translated in its most straightforward manner—as a past tense anecdote whose moral message is left for the reader to discern: "A wise man <u>went up</u> (against) a city of strong men, and <u>brought down</u> its strong fortification."

   This anecdotal explanation does not hold for all the examples, however. In particular, some examples have a stative predicate and thus are properly rendered as presents, as in (10a).[48] Others should be understood as expressing some variety of perfect aspect based on the context, which signifies that some present state of affairs holds true based on some previous event, as illustrated by (10b).[49] Finally, I identify some examples as instances of modal *qatal* in proverbs.[50] These examples may have a generic habitual sense, as illustrated in (10c); the habitual sense is found frequently in prose narrative (for example, Gen 29:3).[51] In other examples the form appears in some type of contingent modal clause, such as a purpose, conditional, or temporal clause.[52] This is illustrated by the examples in (10d–e).[53]

(10) a.   Prov 12:21
            No harm will befall the righteous,   לא־יאנה לצדיק כל־און
            but the wicked <u>are full</u> of evil.   ורשעים <u>מלאו</u> רע

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47. Robert Eric Frykenberg, *History and Belief: The Foundations of Historical Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans with The Institute for Advanced Christian Studies, 1996) 98–99.

48. See also 12:21; 14:6b; 15:22; 17:7; 19:7a, 10; 19:29; 21:10, 26; 27:15.

49. See also 11:7 (future perfect); 13:24 (future perfect?); 14:7; 16:30; 20:16; 21:7, 25; 22:9; 27:13.

50. On modal *qatal*, see my "Hebrew Verb," 134–35. The identification of modal *qatal* in the examples here is buttressed by their Verb-Subject word order, which is indicative of modality in Biblical Hebrew (see Holmstedt, in this volume, pp. 135–154).

51. See also 14:6, 19; 22:13; 26:7.

52. Langacker notes the similarity between generic statements and conditional clauses ("Generics and Habituals," 191).

53. See also 19:24 (temporal); 20:28 (purpose); 22:3 (temporal); 21:29 (concessive); 27:12 (temporal), 25 (temporal).

b.   Prov 20:12
     An ear that listens and an eye that sees—   אזן שמעת ועין ראה
     Yhwh <u>has made</u> both of them.   יהוה עשה גם־שניהם

c.   Prov 26:13
     The lazy man <u>says</u>, "A lion (is) in the street, אמר עצל שחל בדרך
     a lion (is) in the middle of the square."   ארי בין הרחבות

d.   Prov 16:29
     A violent man will seduce his neighbor,   איש חמס יפתה רעהו
     <u>in order to lead him</u> in a way that is not   והוליכו בדרך לא־טוב
     good.

e.   Prov 18:22
     If one <u>has found</u> a wife, he <u>has found</u> a good   מצא אשה מצא טוב
     thing,
     and received favor from Yhwh.[54]   ויפק רצון מיהוה

Something further may be said with regard to *wayyiqtol*. First, the number
of examples is extremely small: only seven verses have *wayyiqtol* as the main
predicate, in addition to one verse where it occurs following a leading *qatal*.[55]
Second, although most of these examples are plainly past tense, there remain
some problematic examples, such as those following a verbless clause in (11).

(11) a.   Prov 12:13
           In the sin of the lips (is) a bad trap,   בפשע שפתים מוקש רע
           but the righteous <u>escaped</u>(?) from the   ויצא מצרה צדיק
           difficulty.

      b.   Prov 20:26
           A winnower of the wicked (is) a wise king;   מזרה רשעים מלך חכם
           <u>he rolled</u>(?) a wheel over them.   וישב עליהם אופן

Intriguingly, examples of *qatal* following a verbless clause are likewise some-
times awkward whether translated with a past or perfect, as illustrated in (12).

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54. Although modal *qatal* regularly expresses non-past tense, the fact that the second half
of this verse begins with a *wayyiqtol* (past tense) argues for a Perfect rendering of the *qatal*s
in English instead of a Simple Present tense.

55. As main predicate in 11:8, 12:13, 18:22, 20:26, 21:22, 22:12, 25:4; following *qatal*
in 11:2.

(12) a. Prov 13:1[56]

A wise son (is) the (result of the) discipline of a father,

בן חכם מוסר אב

but a scoffer <u>has</u> not <u>heeded</u>(?) rebuke.

ולץ לא־<u>שמע</u> גערה

   b. Prov 18:8 = 26:22

The words of a gossip (are) like dainty morsels,

דברי נרגן כמתלהמים

and <u>they have descended</u>(?) into the inner stomach.

והם <u>ירדו</u> חדרי־בטן

These puzzlements admitted, the past-tense reading (or perhaps a modal reading for *qatal*) is not completely ruled out for these examples, and thus they do not detract from the overall observation that TAM distinctions do exist in Proverbs.

Despite the voluminous research on the Hebrew verb, the role of the verb forms in generic statements in the book of Proverbs have largely been left unaddressed. This is unfortunate for two reasons. First, since most models of the Hebrew verb recognize that all the finite indicative forms appear with varying frequencies in generic sentences, determining the semantic distinctiveness of each of these forms in such sentences contributes to our understanding of the Hebrew verbal system overall. In particular, what this study has shown is that the TAM values for the finite verb forms in generic sentences are consistent with the values these forms have in direct speech. The degree of overlap among these forms in the present sphere may not be as great as is sometimes portrayed.

Second, the distinction among the verb forms in generic statements has interpretive import. The examination of genericity in this study, as tentative as it is, provides a basis for investigating the interpretive significance of different verb forms in generic statements. In particular, the participle usually expresses typical actions that are indicative of particular characters. Generics with *yiqtol* may be interpreted as either an expression of "typical" truths or future "inevitable" truths, in addition to the various modal nuances *yiqtol* may have. Finally, *qatal* along with the few examples of *wayyiqtol* in Proverbs may portray past tense anecdotes from which the reader is left to extract a general maxim.

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56. See the discussion of this verse with respect to ellipsis in Cynthia L. Miller, "A Linguistic Approach to Ellipsis in Biblical Poetry (Or, What to Do When Exegesis of What Is There Depends on What Isn't)," *BBR* 13 (2003) 258, 267–68.

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Word Order in the Book of Proverbs

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I. Introduction

There are innumerable studies of Biblical Hebrew (BH) proverbs—as a genre, as a book, as individual units—and almost as many studies of BH word order. Oddly, few works have broached the subject of the word order of BH proverbs. Perhaps it is due to the poetic, nonnarrative nature of proverbs; it is possible, if not likely, that the lack of lengthy stretches of discourse combined with the perceived syntactic "chaos" of BH poetry has motivated grammarians to look for greener, more easily accessible pastures elsewhere.

My biblical wisdom teacher, however, declined to graze elsewhere, and both his tenacity and refusal to be intimidated by the obscurities and complexities of BH wisdom texts have produced a scholar, who, to modify a biblical line, הוא מבין משל ומליצה דברי חכמים וחידתם. It is in his honor, and in the spirit of stubbornly working a knot until it is undone, that this study is offered.

Word order in the book of Proverbs is indeed a knotty grammatical issue. In this initial foray into this complex issue, I will proceed by examining the discourse features of BH proverbs, the typological study of word order, and the syntactic and pragmatic features that determine the word order of BH proverbs, focusing on the relative placement of subjects and verbs.

II. The Discourse Feature of Biblical Hebrew Proverbs

There is a tendency within the study of BH word order, particularly among those working within a typological-functional approach, to distinguish among various discourse types and/or genres.[1] Thus, the natural unmarked constituent order in BH narrative prose is believed to differ from that of the poetry in Psalms or the poetic prose within the prophets or, for example, Genesis 1, as

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1. See, for example, P. J. MacDonald, "Discourse Analysis and Biblical Interpretation," in *Linguistics and Biblical Hebrew* (ed. W. R. Bodine; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 153–76; N. A. Bailey and S. H. Levinsohn, "The Function of Preverbal Elements in Independent Clauses in the Hebrew Narrative of Genesis," *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 5/3 (1992) 179–207; R. E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse* (New York: Plenum, 1996).

well as—to cut along a different axis—from reported speech/dialogue.[2] BH proverbs, which clearly fit into the category of poetry, present us with a rich and largely unstudied body of linguistic data. The results of a word order study of BH proverbs have the potential not only to enhance our abilities to interpret the book of Proverbs but also to contribute to our understanding of BH grammar in general.[3]

Perhaps there is still a lingering objection to my use of Proverbs: How could a poetic corpus be an appropriate corpus for investigating the basic word order of BH? It is because the crucial issue for word order study is not the prose-versus-poetry distinction—both prose and poetry exhibit a variety of stylistic and pragmatic features; that is, they both have conventions that any adequate word order study must analyze. Choosing one over the other, as long as the nature of the text is recognized and the salient features are analyzed, provides no advantage either way. Rather, the linguistic distinction that is important is between narrative (often monologic in nature) and nonnarrative (often dialogic in nature).

Typologists engaged in identifying basic word order for any given language have for quite some time debated about whether monologue or dialogue is more likely to provide basic word order examples. For many years narrative/monologue material was preferred: according to Robert Longacre, "If story-line clauses in narrative discourse in a given language are VSO, then that language should be classified as a VSO language."[4] Longacre bases this claim on several assumptions, the first of which is that "monologue discourse is a better

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2. See, for example, J. MacDonald, "Some Distinctive Characteristics of Israelite Spoken Hebrew," *BO* 23 (1975) 162–75.

3. A significant question that is often overlooked in BH word order studies concerns the use of genre distinctions for the study of BH grammar. I suggest that pressing distinctions among a number of genres too far renders the study of anything called "BH syntax" impotent. Indeed, a valid objection to maintaining any sort of strict discourse boundaries is that, for the purposes of BH syntax, discourse distinctions between, for example, prose and poetry are facile: either there is a "syntax" of BH or not. If there is, then the syntactic patterns of BH proverbs belong to that grammar, and while they may exhibit greater variety than nonproverbial material or nonpoetic material in general, their basic syntactic features should be in accordance with those of any other discourse type. Therefore, in some sense this essay does not aim to sketch simply "the grammar of BH proverbs" or even "the grammar of the book of Proverbs" (as if either would somehow constitute a distinct "grammar") but aims to contribute to the larger determination of the basic patterns of constituent order in BH grammar as a whole.

4. R. E. Longacre, "Left Shifts in Strongly VSO Languages," in *Word Order in Discourse* (ed. P. Downing and M. Noonan; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995) 331–54.

guide to language typology than dialogue . . . in that the exigencies of repartee presumably make for departures from standard word order at many places."[5]

However, an increasing number of typologists and discourse analysts are arguing that the opposite of Longacre's position is preferred, that reported-speech/dialogue texts are less idiosyncratic and thus should be used to determine basic word order.[6] In fact, it has been suggested that features associated with temporal succession in narrative result in narrative/monologic texts, rather than reported-speech/dialogic texts, exhibiting greater departures from standard word order.[7]

With proverbs, we have perhaps the best genre in the Hebrew Bible for isolating basic word order; it is, at least, of equal value to the long narratives most often studied (e.g., Genesis). How so? BH proverbs present us with nonnarrative discourse, thus this discourse type avoids the problems associated with temporal succession in narrative (e.g., foreground vs. background narrative and any correlation that this distinction has with word order). BH proverbs also straddle the fence in terms of the dialogue-versus-monologue distinction: they are cast as a dialogue between father and son, but the son is silent; thus, the intentionally unidirectional nature of the speech suggests that features of monologue exist. Certainly, it is apparent that Longacre's concerns about the "exigencies of repartee" do not apply to BH proverbs.

Additionally, most of the line pairs in the book of Proverbs are not "bound" within the discourse; that is, individual proverbs, or occasionally small groups of proverbs, constitute a self-contained world of discourse and are thus not influenced by discourse factors beyond the syntactic boundaries of the proverb or proverb group.[8] Thus, with the data in the book of Proverbs we have few of the long, pragmatically complex stretches of discourse found in narrative.

Finally, studying BH proverbs allows us to deal with a corpus that is relatively free from the skewing presence of the narrative-past verb *wayyiqtol*. This verb form greatly complicates the study of word order whenever it is present. Indeed, its dominance in BH narrative has misled most word order studies

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5. Ibid., 333. Longacre also comments that, although BH narrative is primarily VS, "in expository discourse . . . SVO [i.e., subject–verb–object] predominates and is on the mainline" (*The Grammar of Discourse*, 23).

6. P. Downing, "Word Order in Discourse: By Way of Introduction," in *Word Order in Discourse* (ed. P. Downing and M. Noonan; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995) 1–27.

7. D. L. Payne, "Verb Initial Languages and Information Order," in ibid., 449–85 (quotation from p. 454).

8. For a similar observation, see M. Salisbury, "Hebrew Proverbs and How to Translate Them," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics* (ed. R. D. Bergen; Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994) 434–61.

with regard to the essential syntax of the BH clause. It is self-evident that a verb form that requires a clause-initial position (i.e., one cannot have a pre-verbal constituent with the *wayyiqtol*) in a language that otherwise exhibits nearly free word order should be analyzed separately and that other clause types should be used to study basic word order.

Now that I have provided a brief justification for using BH proverbs to study BH word order, I will alert the reader to my methodological stance before proceeding to the data. Perhaps the approach taken in this essay could best be labeled "generative-typological." In other words, there is a strong typological element to the following analysis of the BH data, but it is predicated on generative principles.[9] To some, these two linguistic approaches may seem to be strange bedfellows, but in fact they are not theoretically irreconcilable.[10]

III. The (Generative-)Typological Study of Word Order

What is the typological study of word order? It is most often traced back to Joseph Greenberg's seminal 1963 article, "Some Universals of Grammar with Particular Reference to the Order of Meaningful Elements."[11] This essay set in motion a rich comparative linguistic method with the goal of discerning morphological and syntactic "universals"[12] within the incredible diversity of human languages. The first section in Greenberg's essay, focusing on "certain

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9. See N. Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Instiute of Technology Press, 1995); idem, "Minimalist Inquiries: The Framework," in *Is the Best Good Enough? Optimality and Competition in Syntax* (MIT Working Papers in Linguistics 15; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998); idem, "Derivation by Phase," in *Papers from the Workshop on Structure and Constituency in Native American Languages* (MIT Occasional Papers in Linguistics; Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999). For somewhat more readable expositions of the recent generative model, see A. Radford, *Syntactic Theory and the Structure of English: A Minimalist Approach* (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); J. Ouhalla, *Introducing Transformational Grammar: From Principles and Parameters to Minimalism* (2nd ed.; London: Arnold, 1999).

10. For a lengthy discussion of typology and generative linguistics, see F. J. Newmeyer, *Language Form and Language Function* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998) 297–369. See also the essays in the volume edited by Artemis Alexaidou (*Theoretical Approaches to Universals* [Linguistik Aktuell 49; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2002]).

11. In *Universals of Language* (ed. J. H. Greenberg; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1963) 73–113.

12. The quotation marks around the word "universal" simply serve to distinguish the typological notion of language universals (which are rarely in fact "universal"—that is, without exception) and the Chomskyan generative concept of universals (which are, as "principles of Universal Grammar," taken to be without exception and part of the language faculty that is a genetic feature unique to humans).

basic factors of word order," is perhaps the most significant for our discussion. In order to identify the basic word order of any given language, Greenberg proposed using three criteria:[13]

(1) the use of prepositions versus postpositions;
(2) the relative order of subject, verb, and object in declarative sentences with nominal subject and object;
(3) the position of qualifying adjectives, either preceding or following the modified noun.

Although these three criteria have been modified as the typological program has matured, they still reflect the fundamental questions involved in determining how a language patterns: do heads (i.e., the constituent being modified) precede or follow their modifiers?

Typologists have refined the procedure considerably, and many have reduced the basic classification of languages to the VO-versus-OV and SV-versus–VS distinctions.[14] Generativists (and many other formalists) typically recast syntactic description such as this by using the the terms "complement" and "adjunct."[15] Complements are constituents that complete the head and are thus obligatory for forming a larger grammatical item. For instance, transitive verbs require complements, often in the form of direct objects but sometimes also in the form of prepositional phrases, and so forth. Adjuncts, in contrast, are nonobligatory modifiers, such as adjective, adverbs, and noncomplement prepositional phrases. Finally, the category of "specifier" includes subjects, articles, demonstratives, possessives, and subordinators. Using these three syntactic categories, the basic oppositions for a typological study are "head–complement versus complement-head," "head-adjunct versus adjunct-head," and "head-specifier versus specifier-head."

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13. Ibid., 76. It should be noted, with regard to the nature of Greenberg's "universals," that Greenberg himself lists exceptions in his footnotes. In defense of this "loose" approach to language universals (which some now call "tendencies" rather than "universals"), Thomas Payne suggests that "[l]anguages which deviate from Greenberg's ideal types do not 'violate' Greenberg's universals. They are simply inconsistent with the ideal type. Since the majority of languages of the world are inconsistent, it may be more appropriate to dub perfectly consistent language as a violation of expectations!" (T. E. Payne, *Describing Morphosyntax: A Guide for Field Linguists* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997] 90–91).

14. See M. Dryer, "On the Six-Way Word Order Typology," *Studies in Language* 21/1 (1997) 69–103.

15. See A. Alexaidou, "Introduction," in *Theoretical Approaches to Universals*, 3.

Our typological goal is thus to determine whether and how a language exhibits strong tendencies one way or the other for each grammatical category, such as nouns and verbs, and each syntactic relationship, such as complementation and adjunction. The table in example (4) illustrates the way we might sketch a simple typological analysis for English, asking the "head-initial" or "head-final" question for each syntactic category.

(4)

Heads	Complements (≈ obligatory modifiers)	Adjuncts (≈ optional modifiers)	Specifiers
Nouns	***destruction*** *of the city*	*big* **cities** **cities** *in Africa*	*the/that/our* **city**
Verbs	***destroy*** *the city*	***run*** *quickly* *quickly* ***run***	*They* **destroyed** *cities*
Adpositions	***in*** *the city*	*N/A*	*Straight* **down** *the street*
etc.			

The English examples in the table illustrate the facts that English is strictly head-initial for the order of head and complement, strictly head-final for the order of head and specifier, and both head-initial and head-final for the order of head and adjunct, with greater weight given to the head-final examples because they occur in less-restricted environments (see below, examples [14] and [15] and the discussion there). So English exhibits no one order for all "grammatical" categories but is fairly consistent within each "syntactic" category; in this way, English is a fairly typical SVO language.

When we investigate BH complements and adjuncts, we find that it is a strongly head–initial language, illustrated by the examples in (5–9).

(5)   Preposition + Nominal Complement (= Preposition + Object): "head-initial"
                    לדם   for blood (1:11)

(6)   Noun + Nominal Complement (= Construct Phrase): "head-initial"
                    יראת יהוה   the fear of YHWH (1:7)

(7)   Verb + Complement (= Verb + Object): "head-intial"
                    נמלא בתינו   we will fill our houses (1:13)

(8)   Noun + Adjunct (= Noun + Adjective): "head-initial"
                    בן חכם   wise son (10:1)

(9)   Verb + Adjunct (= Verb + Adverb):
       a. "head-initial"
       let's hide for the innocent   נצענה לנקי חנם
       (man) <u>without cause</u> (1:11)

b. "head-final"

therefore his distress will
come <u>suddenly</u> (6:15)

על כן <u>פתאם</u> יבוא אידו

When we turn to the issue of specifiers, we arrive at the knotty issue. First, the evidence of nouns and specifiers is ambiguous, as the examples in (10) illustrate.

(10)　　Noun + Specifier (= Noun + determiner): (a) "head-final" and (b) "head-initial"

　　a.　　**היום**　　the day (4:18)

　　b.　　**בני**　　my son (1:8)

While articles precede nouns (that is, they exhibit head-final order), demonstrative and possessive pronouns follow nouns (that is, they exhibit head–initial order). Unfortunately, the evidence of verbal specifiers (subjects) further complicates the determination of basic order for this syntactic category. To put a point to the question for the book of Proverbs: Does the SV/head-final example in (11) or the VS/head-initial example in (12) represent the basic order? (Remember, the verb is the head.) [16]

(11)　　Subject-Verb

<u>hatred arouses</u> strife (10:12)

<u>שנאה תעורר</u> מדנים

(12)　　Verb-Subject

<u>the lazy person says</u>: A lion is outside! (22:13)

<u>אמר עצל</u> ארי בחוץ

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16. The overwhelming majority opinion is that VS is basic in BH; most of the analyses have focused on narrative. For representative recent studies, see T. Goldfajn, *Word Order and Time in Biblical Hebrew Narrative* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); J.-M. Heimerdinger, *Topic, Focus and Foreground in Ancient Hebrew Narratives* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999); C. H. J. Van der Merwe, "Towards a Better Understanding of Biblical Hebrew Word Order (review of Walter Gross's *Die Satzteilfolge im Verbalsatz alttestamentlicher Prosa*)," *JNSL* 25/1 (1999) 277–300; A. Moshavi, *The Pragmatics of Word Order in Biblical Hebrew: A Statistical Analysis* (Ph.D. diss., Yeshiva University, 2000); K. Shimasaki, *Focus Structure in Biblical Hebrew: A Study of Word Order and Information Structure* (Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 2002). Representative of the majority opinion applied to the syntax of BH proverbs, Murray Salisbury assumes VS basic order ("Hebrew Proverbs and How to Translate Them," 446). For rare dissenting voices to the VS analysis, see P. Joüon, *Grammaire de l'Hebreu biblique* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1923); V. DeCaen, *On the Placement and Interpretation of the Verb in Standard Biblical Hebrew Prose* (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1995); R. D. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew: A Linguistic Analysis* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2002).

Not surprisingly, when this issue is analyzed from a generative perspective, the options—as well as the starting point—change considerably. To simplify for the sake of space, current generative analysis has determined that initial derivations (perhaps we could call these "clauses-in-the-making") start with the subject preceding the verb. Since within the generative approach many constituents in the clause (it depends on the language) "move" from this starting position to higher positions in the clause (that is, toward the front of the clause), it is possible for this derivation to result in a clause with VS or SV order (hence, the older distinction between "deep" structure and "surface" structure[17]).

Furthermore, the structural position of subject constituents is quite unlike that of complements and adjuncts. Whereas complements and adjuncts (again, depending on the language) may occupy positions on either side of the verb (that is, VO vs. OV and V–Adv vs. Adv–V, etc.), subjects are thought to occupy a unique position called the "specifier" (abbreviated as "Spec") that is only to one side—to the left side, or "higher"—of its phrasal head. In informal terms, the specifier position is occupied by constituents that "specify" salient features of the main constituent; so, for example, subjects specify the agent/theme/patient of verb phrases, articles specify the definiteness of noun phrases, and complementizers (e.g., English "that") specify the finiteness and illocutionary force of the complementizer phrase (i.e., clause).[18]

Recast in this paradigm, the issue for BH becomes whether the verb "raises" over the subject, producing VS order, or whether the verb remains lower than the subject, producing SV order. And, as we shall see, there are further complicating factors: additional movement of constituents (e.g., the verb moving even higher than normal) can be "triggered"[19] by the presence of other constituents, such as clause-initial grammatical items like relative words.[20]

Thus, the typological study of basic word order, when performed within the paradigm of generative linguistics, becomes at once more complex and

17. On the conceptual changes brought about by the Minimalist Program, with particular reference to "deep structure" and "surface structure" as components of the model, see A. Marantz, "The Minimalist Program," in *Government and Binding Theory and the Minimalist Program: Principles and Parameters in Syntactic Theory* (ed. G. Webelhuth; Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) 349–82.

18. On the general nature of complementizer and complementizer phrases (CPs), see Radford, *Syntactic Theory*, 54–58, 95–96.

19. See U. Shlonsky, *Clause Structure and Word Order in Hebrew and Arabic: An Essay in Comparative Semitic Syntax* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); also U. Shlonsky and E. Doron, "Verb Second in Hebrew," in *The Proceedings of the Tenth West Coast Conference on Formal Linguistics* (ed. D. Bates; Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992) 431–45.

20. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, 145–50.

more powerful. A typologically minded generativist recognizes the value of cross-linguistic analysis, the nuanced discussion of which clause type best approximates the basic clause type, the identification of a variety of discourse types, and the typological obsession with compiling vast sets of data. However, the generative approach qualifies what it views as the naïve acceptance of the final or "surface" product as the sole object of syntactic study;[21] in other words, the basic distinction between "deep" structure and "surface" structure allows a generativist to identify relevant features in a way that a nongenerativist cannot.[22]

At this point, I have introduced the basics of the typological study of word order, described many of the features of BH harmonics, excluding the subject and verb issue, and set this typological study within the broader generative theoretical program. I have yet to identify whether BH proverbs suggest that BH is VS or SV. This is not an easy task, and we must use a few established criteria in order to analyze the data. The four most commonly used criteria for this task are listed in (13).[23]

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21. Although Chomsky's earliest comments on the value of "statistical studies" are somewhat dismissive in tone (and he took a slightly more positive approach toward typology within the Principle and Parameters approach in the mid-1980s), the basic critique of Greenberg's initial study has not changed: "Insofar as attention is restricted to surface structures, the most that can be expected is the discovery of statistical tendencies, such as those presented in Greenberg 1963" (N. Chomsky, *Aspects of a Theory of Syntax* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965] 118). Frederick Newmeyer has recently proposed a method by which generativists can make use of typology (see above, n. 8), he made the following skeptical observation in an earlier work:

> [T]here is no evidence that "the collection of valuable facts" has ever led or could lead to the discovery of any generalizations other than the most superficial sort. For example, the seven-year-long Stanford University Language Universals Project (whose results are now published as Greenber, Ferguson and Moravcsik 1978) carried out Li's program to perfection yet has not led, as far as I know, to any substantial theoretical revisions. The problem is that the fairly shallow generalizations and statistical correlations described in the project's reports were far too sketchily presented to be of much use in ascertaining even the grammatical structure of the individual languages treated, much less shed any light on universal grammar. (F. Newmeyer, *Grammatical Theory: Its Limits and Its Possibilities* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983] 71)

22. See J. A. Naudé for a similar critique of surface-level approaches ("A Syntactic Analysis of Dislocations in Biblical Hebrew," *JNSL* 16 [1990] 115–30).

23. See M. Dryer, "Word Order," to appear in *Language Typology and Syntactic Description* (2nd ed.; ed. T. Shopen; forthcoming) 13–14 [May 2003 draft].

(13)   Criteria for identifying basic word order
     a.   clause type
     b.   frequency
     c.   distribution
     d.   pragmatics

IIIa. Clause Type

The criterion of clause type builds upon Greenberg's initial approach; however, typologists have since refined the definition of the appropriate basic clause considerably. An example is Anna Siewierska's, in which she defines the basic clause as: "stylistically neutral, independent, indicative clauses with full noun phrase (NP) participants, where the subject is definite, agentive and human, the object is a definite semantic patient, and the verb represents an action, not a state or an event."[24]

Admittedly, clauses of this sort may not occur in abundance in a typical text or discourse due to the nature of human communication.[25] For example, in languages that allow subject pronouns to be omitted (that is, "pro-drop" languages, such as Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew), clauses with "full noun phrase" subjects will be difficult to isolate. The fact that "basic clauses" may not be frequent does not invalidate the search for basic word order, however; rather, this simply illustrates the complexities of typical human discourse.[26]

IIIb. Frequency

Those who assign primacy, or at least significance, to statistics use the frequency criterion. Whereas a "basic clause type" may be in the statistical minority—here of course is the potential rub—the frequency approach demands that the basic order designation be assigned to a statistically dominant pattern.[27] It is interesting to note that the frequency criterion is used by Takamitsu Muraoka in his study of emphatic structures in BH: "[W]e are not interested in discussing the theory that [VS] order is normal because action is the most important piece of information to be conveyed by this sentence type called verbal clause. In other words, by saying that V-S is the normal word-order we do not mean that it is logically or intrinsically so, but simply statistically."[28]

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24. A. Siewierska, *Word Order Rules* (London: Croom Helm, 1988) 8.

25. Ibid., 8–14.

26. For a concise summary of the basic issues involved in the typological quest for determining "basic word order" in any given language, see Newmeyer, *Language Form and Language Function*, 330–37.

27. See, for example, J. A. Hawkins, *Word Order Universals* (New York: Academic, 1983).

28. T. Muraoka, *Emphatic Words and Structures in Biblical Hebrew* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985) 30.

However, there have been a number of challenges to using simple statistical dominance to determine basic word order. For example, given a 2:1 ratio of VS to SV order in a given text, are we justified in classifying that language as VS? Linguists are not in agreement on this issue. The problem is exacerbated when the statistics are even closer, as Matthew Dryer notes: "In the Auk dialect of Tlingit, for example, a text count (Dryer 1985) for the order of subject and verb revealed VS outnumbering SV by 177 to 156. In a case like this, the difference in frequency is sufficiently small that it does not seem reasonable to say that VS is more frequent than SV or that VS is basic."[29]

IIIc. Distribution

The third approach is based on the test of "distribution." Given two or more alternatives for a syntactic construction, the one that occurs in the greater number of environments, that is, it is less restricted, is the basic order. Note that this is not the same as statistical dominance, because the issue at hand is not "occurrence" but "environment." For instance, in English, manner adverbs may both precede and follow the verb, as in (14–15):

(14) a.   Ethan slowly walked into the room.
                  Adv   V

       b.   Ethan walked into the room slowly.
                  V   Adv

(15) a.   ?*Ethan is slowly walking.
                  Adv   V

       b.   Ethan is walking slowly.
                  V   Adv

Although both options exist in English, based on the distributional patterns, it can be argued that "verb-adverb" order is basic because there are environments in which the order "adverb-verb" is not used (e.g., ?*Ethan is slowly walking), or is less felicitous.[30]

IIId. Pragmatics

Finally, we come to the last criterion by which basic word order is often examined: pragmatics. This criterion is particularly significant for "free-order" languages, that is, languages exhibiting a great deal of word order variation. At the core of this approach is the recognition that the majority of language data contains pragmatically "marked" or "non-neutral" clauses due to the nature of

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29. Dryer, "Word Order," 19.
30. Ibid., 9.

human communication. Even for languages that have a more rigid word order, such as English, pragmatics can produce extreme but grammatically acceptable examples, as in (16a) and (17a):[31]

(16)   a.   Mary, I saw.
         b.   I saw Mary.
(17)   a.   Into the room came the Prime Minister.
         b.   The Prime Minister came into the room.

The recognition of the importance of pragmatics in the order of constituents in some languages has provided a necessary corrective to the investigation of basic word order. Marianne Mithun even questions whether some languages can be assigned to a typologically word order category.[32] In particular, for languages with an apparently "free word order," Mithun argues that we should not be looking for a basic word order in terms of the position of subject, verb, and modifiers. Rather, she suggests that in these languages it might be the case that the syntactic role of an item (subject, object, etc.) is less important than its discourse role (e.g., topic-hood, identifiability, "newsworthiness"). Thus, the order of the constituents, subject noun phrase, verb, complements, and so on, will change in a "basic clause," depending on the information status of the constituents. At the very least, this type of argument has made it clear that an awareness of how a language allows information to be structured is a fundamentally important part of word order study.[33]

IV. The Word Order of Proverbs

With the four basic criteria in hand, we are adequately prepared to begin considering the data from BH proverbs. The first task is to isolate the proper database of examples from the book of Proverbs. Since the primary issue for this study is the position of the subject in relation to the verb (not complements or adjuncts), we are limited to clauses with full noun phrase subjects. In addition, we are limited to examples with finite verbs, because clauses with non-finite verbs often exhibit their own distinctive syntactic features. After

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31. Ibid., 14.
32. M. Mithun, "Is Basic Word Order Universal?" in *Pragmatics of Word Order Flexibility* (ed. D. L. Payne; Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1992) 15–61.
33. I do not think, however, that Mithun's observations obviate a basic word order discussion for those languages. I would still suggest that in clauses in which the constituents all share the same pragmatic marking (e.g., all the constituents are "new," such as in presentative clauses), the observable order could be identified as basic.

sifting through the clauses in Proverbs for these features, I arrived at an initial database of 504 clauses (18), with the statistic breakdown noted:

(18)   Clauses to include: full NP (external) arguments (i.e., subject); finite verbs
      a.   SV (335) = 66%
      b.   VS (169) = 34%

However, this database includes all types of clauses and verbs. The basic clause type criterion, however, reflects the recognition that there are a number of factors that affect word order for purely syntactic reasons.[34] Thus, it has been established cross-linguistically that subordinate clauses, modal clauses, negative clauses, and interrogative clauses are complicating factors.[35] Therefore, I will eliminate those clauses specified in (19) and illustrated by the examples in (20–23):

(19)   Clauses to exclude:
      a.   dependent clauses
      b.   modal clauses
      c.   negative clauses[36]
      d.   interrogative clauses

(20)   Dependent clauses in Proverbs
      because better . . . than (one) humili-   כי טוב . . . מהשפילך
      ating you before a noble <u>whom your</u>   לפני נדיב <u>אשר ראו עיניך</u>
      <u>eyes have seen</u> (25:7)

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34. Not all word-order variation is motivated by discourse-pragmatic concerns; see N. A. Bailey for a functional-typologist who recognizes this principle as well (" 'What's Wrong with My Word Order?' Topic, Focus, Information Flow, and Other Pragmatic Aspects of Some Biblical Genealogies" [*Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 10 (1997)] 10 n. 4).

35. See Payne, *Describing Morphosyntax*, 77.

36. Negation is often closely linked to modality (see J. Lyons, *Semantics* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977] 768–77; F. R. Palmer, *Mood and Modality* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986] 218–21; L. Hoye, *Adverbs and Modality in English* [London: Longman, 1997]). Furthermore, in some languages negative function words clearly affect the word order of the subject, verb, and object constituents (see T. Givón, *On Understanding Grammar* [New York: Academic, 1979] 124–25). Thus, the negative examples should be subsumed under the presentation of modal clauses, unless the negative in question is an item adverb; see Ps 103:10 (cf. GKC 478–79; B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990] 659–60; JM 603).

(21) Modal clauses in Proverbs

     May your father be glad, and your mother //

     <u>and may she who bore you rejoice</u> (23:25)

       ישמח אביך ואמך

       <u>ותגל יולדתך</u>

(22) Negative clauses in Proverbs

     <u>Treasures of wickedness do not profit</u> //

     but righteousness delivers from death (10:2)

       לא יועילו אוצרות רשע

       וצדקה תציל ממות

(23) Interrogative clauses in Proverbs

     <u>Can a man snatch fire into his lap</u> //

     and his garments not be burned? (6:27) [37]

       <u>היחתה איש אש בחיקו</u>

       ובגדיו לא תשרפנה

Once the dependent, modal, negative, and interrogative clauses are sorted out, the remaining database includes 319 clauses from the book of Proverbs:

(24) Clauses to include: full subject NP, finite verbs, "basic clause type"
    a. SV (297)=93%
    b. VS (22)=7%

And yet another sorting needs to be performed. Both syntactic (that is, parallel constituents) and semantic (that is, parallel lexemes) parallelism make it clear that many line pairs present contrasts (for example, righteous vs. wicked, rich vs. poor, wise vs. foolish).[38] Because the presence of a contrast suggests

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37. The S-Neg-V order of the b-line presents an interesting case of focus-fronting (see below for a brief explanation of this phenomenon). First, the semantics of the syntactic coordination between the a-line and the b-line should probably be interpreted as result. Second, the placement of the subject noun phrase above the negative and verb (which, due to the negative, would normally be located in the highest position in the clause) suggests that the subject is being focused. The intended nuance of the line pair, then, is probably similar to a *Qal weḥomer* statement: if the garments are burned, how much more will the man's lap, or worse! be burned. Thus, the subject בגדיו is contrastive with one explicit (the man's lap) and other implicit alternatives, which are presumably more sensitive items that could be burned.

38. See B. Hrushrovshki, "Prosody, Hebrew," in *EncJud* 13:1195–1203; M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Verse Structure* (rev. ed.; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997 [1981]); E. L. Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?" in *A Sense of Text* (Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement; Philadelphia: Center for Judaic Studies, 1982) 41–70; A. Berlin, *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic, 1985); W. G. E. Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1986); J. C. L. Gibson, "The Anatomy of Hebrew

the great likelihood that one or both of the clauses are no longer "unmarked" or "normal" and that the word order may have been affected, we must exclude such examples as specified in (25) from the basic word order database. The example in (26) illustrates the variety of contrastive constituents in the book of Proverbs, from prepositional phrases to entire clauses.

(25) Clauses to exclude, in addition to a–d in (19):
    e. clearly contrastive constituents (for example, clefts, answers to questions, etc.)

(26) Contrastive examples in Proverbs
    Noun Phrase[39]
    (the) wise of heart receives commands //   חכם לב יקח מצות
    but the foolish of lips is thrust aside (10:8)   ואויל שפתים ילבט

It is equally evident, however, that many line pairs do not contain contrastive relationships between the parallel items. Indeed, this feature no doubt contributed to the identification of Lowth's categories of "synonymous" and "synthetic" parallelism. Prov 22:8 is a good case in point: it is difficult to imagine what kind of contrast exists between the two lines of (27).

(27)
    the one who sows injustice will reap trouble //   זורע עולה יקצור[40] און
    and the rod of his anger will come to an end (22:8) ושבט עברתו יכלה

Both lines in (27) exhibit SV order, thereby presenting a degree of syntactic parallelism. There is also a very general semantic parallelism that binds the two lines together, because presumably the rod of anger in the b-line belongs to

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Narrative Poetry," in *Understanding Poets and Prophets: Essays in Honor of George Wishart Anderson* (ed. A. G. Auld; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) 141–48; W. L. Holladay, "Hebrew Verse Structure Revisited (I): Which Words 'Count'?" *JBL* 118 (1999) 19–32.

    39. The two noun phrases are clearly contrastive; however, although the verbs differ, it cannot be argued that they are contrastive as well, because "receiving commands" and "being thrust aside" are simply different actions/events, not opposing members of the same semantic continuum. Proverbs like this are elliptical in nature, with the opposites of the predicates intended for application to the opposites of the subjects (i.e., 10:8a should be read as both "the wise of heart receives commands" and "the not-wise of heart does not receive commands"; so too, 10:8b).

    40. *Kethiv*; *Qere* יקצר.

the 'one who sows injustice' from the a-line (i.e., the third masculine-singular possessive suffix in עברתו refers back to the implicit subject of זורע).

The numerous examples like (27) seriously challenge a VS analysis of BH, whether in proverbs or elsewhere. If there is no apparent contrast (and, since there is no larger discourse, the issue cannot be a change in topic—that is, what functionalists call "topicalization"), then what motivates the SV order? However, if BH were an SV language, these examples would simply be pragmatically unmarked and representative of basic word order.

The exclusion of overtly contrastive clauses results in a database of 103 clauses from which we can potentially identify basic word order in Proverbs, illustrated in (28–29). That is, these clauses do not appear to be dependent, negative, modal, or interrogative, and they present no clear contrast.

(28) VS (22×)[41]
      <u>a scoffer seeks</u> wisdom but (finds) none (14:6a) <u>בקש לץ</u> חכמה אין

(29) SV (81×)[42]
      <u>the one who sows injustice will reap</u> trouble (22:8a) <u>זורע עולה יקצור</u>[43] און

These statistics greatly favor an SV analysis of word order in BH proverbs (by a ratio of 4:1). Two additional linguistic features support this SV analysis. First, it is significant that many, if not all, of the VS clauses included in the 22 examples described above in (28) can be analyzed as a type of modal clause. Consider the example in (30):

(30) VS = modal
      <u>the lazy person says</u>: A lion is outside! //   <u>אמר עצל</u> ארי בחוץ
      In the streets I'll be killed! (22:13)   בתוך רחבות ארצח

In VS examples such as Prov 22:13, the event represented by the perfective verb אמר appears to be "habitual"; in the case of (30), this is what the lazy person repeatedly says in order to get out of work.

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41. See also 3:24; 11:2; 14:18, 19; 17:10; 19:24, 29; 21:29; 22:13; 24:24, 31 (2×); 26:13, 15, 26; 27:25 (3×); 30:17; 31:11, 28.

42. See also 1:14; 2:11 (2×); 3:20; 5:22; 8:15, 17, 22, 36; 9:1, 17 (2×); 10:10 (2×), 27; 11:7, 25, 29; 12:2, 14; 14:17 (2×); 15:10, 20, 30 (2×); 16:20, 21, 23, 26, 28, 29; 17:2, 5, 11, 20; 18:6, 15 (2×), 16, 21, 22; 19:3, 4, 9, 15 (2×), 16, 28 (2×); 20:5, 6, 28, 30; 21:7, 10, 14, 21, 25; 22:2, 12, 15; 23:24, 33 (2×); 24:31; 25:15, 23; 26:28 (2×); 27:9, 16, 17, 18 (2×); 29:9, 13, 15, 22.

43. *Kethiv*; *Qere* יקצר.

The connection between VS order and the habitual nature of the action lies in the issue of modality. Importantly, linguists have come to recognize that many languages use modal forms to express habitual action;[44] additionally, the BH perfective has recently been associated with modal uses.[45] Thus, we have the habitual action associated with the BH perfective in (30) reflecting the modal use of the verb. More to the point, it has been observed by both E. J. Revell (for the narrative material in Judges)[46] and me (for Genesis)[47] that modal clauses in BH prose exhibit VS basic order, whereas indicative clauses exhibit SV basic order. To summarize, perfective verbs expressing habitual action in the book of Proverbs are being used modally and as such exhibit a basic VS word order; as "modal" clauses, they should be excluded from consideration as basic word order. This leaves us with no VS examples, and 81 SV examples from which to identify basic word order in BH proverbs.

If SV is the basic word order, why then are there so many clauses with VS order? The answer lies with an inherently generative syntactic notion that I briefly mentioned above in section III: "triggered inversion." Thus, for all of the clauses that I have excluded so far in this study, the simplest explanation for the dominant VS order is that subordinating functors like אשר or כי, negatives like אל or לא, interrogatives like למה or ה, and modality all serve as syntactic triggers, causing the verb to rise higher than the subject and producing VS order.

The second feature that buttresses the SV analysis of BH proverbs—or at least removes a possible set of counter examples—concerns the status of the first line in a contrastive line pair. It is far from obvious that that SV order of the a-line in line pairs that do present a contrast is pragmatically marked (i.e., exhibit the fronting of the subject for contrast). Up to this point, I have excluded such examples from my database. Yet, it is arguable whether the initial subjects in this type of example, such as the first line in (31),[48] need to be read as contrastive, because the first-time reader/listener really has no idea if the proverb contains an opposing or non-opposing second line.

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44. See S. Chung and A. Timberlake, "Tense, Aspect, and Mood," in *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, vol. 3: *Grammatical Categories and the Lexicon* (ed. T. Shopen; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 202–58; Palmer, *Mood and Modality*, 216.

45. See J. A. Cook, *The Biblical Hebrew Verbal System: A Grammaticalization Approach* (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2002) 230–31.

46. E. J. Revell, "The System of the Verb in Standard Biblical Prose" *HUCA* 60 (1989) 1–37.

47. Holmstedt, *The Relative Clause in Biblical Hebrew*, 126–59.

48. See also 10:1a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 12a, 14a, 21a, 31a, 32a; 11:3a, 5a, 6a, 16a, 27a; 12:11a, 17a, 19a, 21a, 24a, 25a; 13:6a, 9a, 15a, 17a, 19a, 20a [*Qere*], 22a; 14:1a, 9a, 11a, 15a, 31a; 15:1a, 2a, 5a, 7a, 13a, 14a, 18a, 28a; 16:9a; 17:22a; 18:14a; 21:28a; 22:3a; 26:14; 27:7a, 12a; 28:4a, 18a, 19a, 25a; 29:3a, 8a, 10a, 23a, 25a; 31:29.

(31) <u>a wise son gladdens</u> his father //   בן חכם ישמח אב
     but a foolish son is his mother's misery (10:1bc)   ובן כסיל תוגת אמו

In other words, at the outset of the proverb, one has no idea whether the b-line will reinforce or heighten the positive statement about the wise son in the a-line, or make an observation about the opposing constituent, the foolish son, as (31) does. Because examples of this sort are open to different readings (some may prefer to read the initial subject constituent as contrastive in the a-line, but whether this was intended is far from clear), they do not provide support for either argument—that BH is VS or SV.

In summary, what the data from BH proverbs suggest is that an SV analysis for BH word order provides the greatest descriptive adequacy. If we start with an SV arrangement, we can account for all other arrangements by means of two very common linguistic phenomena: "triggered inversion" (which I have just described) and "focus fronting." Note that both are predicated upon a theory of constituent movement; that is, both imply that a constituent has been "raised" further than normal in the clause due to some motivation.

I have already argued that examples (20–23) illustrate syntactically motivated triggered inversion; in the remaining space I will briefly illustrate focus-fronting in BH proverbs. First, it is important to recognize that triggered inversion is not limited to clauses with initial function words; any item that is positioned above the subject and verb constituents serves as a trigger, producing VS order. Not surprisingly, then, we find VS order in clauses in which a constituent has been fronted for focus.[49] How is focus fronting manifested in the syntax of BH proverbs? The b-line in (32) provides us with a good example.

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49. I find it useful to distinguish two general approaches to focus. On the one hand, focus may refer to the information in a clause that the addressee does not share with the speaker and thus is "asserted," "new," or "added" (see Lyons, *Semantics*, 509; K. Lambrecht, *Information Structure and Sentence Form: Topic, Focus, and the Mental Representations of Discourse Referents* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994] 206–18). It should be noted that "new," "added," and "asserted" are not necessarily equivalent concepts, and often linguists take great pains to distinguish among them. On the other hand, focus may refer to the relatively most important or salient piece of information in a clause (see S. C. Dik, *The Theory of Functional Grammar, Part 1: The Structure of the Clause* [2nd rev. ed.; ed. K. Hengeveld; Berlin: Mouton, de Gruyter, 1997]; E. Vallduví and M. Vilkuna, "On Rheme and Kontrast," in *The Limits of Syntax* [ed. P. Culicover and L. McNally; San Diego: Academic, 1998] 79–108). The first approach to focus means that every clause must have a focused item (excluding an absolute redundancy) because some information is always being added or asserted. The second approach to focus often consists of a linguistically nuanced way of discussing the non-linguist's "emphasis" or "contrast." In this work, I am using a definition of focus that falls into the latter category. For further discussion, see my "Adjusting Our Focus (review of Katsuomi Shimasaki, *Focus Structure in Biblical Hebrew: A Study of Word Order and Information Structure*)," *Hebrew Studies* 44 (2003) 203–15.

(32) PPVS

    the righteousness of the blameless will straighten
        his path //

    but in his wickedness <u>the wicked will fall</u> (11:5)

<div dir="rtl">

צדקת תמים תישר דרכו
<u>וברשעתו</u> יפל רשע

</div>

In the a-line of example (32), we have a banal statement attributing the blameless person's success to his righteousness. The b-line presents an initial PP (prepositional phrase), ברשעתו, that does not parallel any item in the a-line in a strict syntactic sense but apparently contrasts semantically with the syntactic subject of the a-line, צדקת. The formal semantic features of both items (both are feminine-singular nouns) suggest that the contrast is indeed between the two initial constituents in the line pair. (I belabor this point in order to demonstrate that, while one could identify a chiasm in this verse [SVO//PPVS], such an analysis would lack any explanatory power.)

In terms of the pragmatic structure of the two lines, the first line presents an ambiguous case: it is possible to read first lines of this sort (whether in Hebrew or English) as having either a contrastive or noncontrastive initial subject. It is the order of the b-line that is unambiguously illustrative. The initial PP ברשעתו is clearly focus-fronted to set the reason[50] of the wicked person's failure in contrast: it is his "wicked behavior" that will bring about his end. The function of the focus instructs the listener/reader to establish a membership set[51] that includes all the possible reasons that a wicked person might fail—for example, his thoughts, his associates, his behavior, and so on—and set the one reason chosen in the PP, "his wickedness," over against the others, presumably to stress with absolute clarity the reason that the wicked must lack success in life.

The pragmatically motivated movement of the PP to the clause-initial position sets in motion a chain of events that results in the raising of the verb over the subject (that is, triggered inversion occurs). Thus, the VS order in the b-line can be explained in simple syntactic terms (thereby further undermining

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50. Or the initial PP may specify the type of result if the preposition specifies manner rather than means; see M. V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31* (New York: Doubleday, forthcoming).

51. "A set is any collection of objects, which are described as its members. We can specify a set by reference to a property which all members share: for example, we can speak of a set of British towns with a population over 1 million, or a set of English sentences. Alternatively, a set can be specified by listing its members: for example, there is a three-membered set whose members are Margaret Thatcher, the number 7, and the city of San Francisco. As this example indicates, the members of a set need not 'belong together' in any natural fashion" (K. Malmkjær, *The Linguistics Encyclopedia* [London: Routledge, 1991] 401; see also J. van der Does, "Set Theory," in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* [ed. R. E. Asher; Oxford: Pergamon, 1994] 3861–64).

any sort of chiastic, or similar "stylistic," analysis). There are many of these focus-fronted PPs[52] or even focus-fronted objects[53] in Proverbs.

As a last example, the a–line in Prov 22:23 presents a focus-fronted subject. One environment in which these unambiguously appear is within dependent clauses, clauses that should exhibit triggered inversion to VS order but do not.

(33)   CSV[54]

      because Yʜwʜ pleads their case,   כי יהוה יריב ריבם

      and (he) robs their robbers (of) life (22:23)   וקבע את־קבעיהם נפש

Example (33) presents one of those less–common situations in which a two–line proverb is dependent on the previous context, in this case, the preceding verse (22:22). The preceding verse is an exhortation to avoid oppressing the lowly and poor and suggests a legal context. In the a–line of Prov 22:23, then, the legal language is continued, and a rather forceful motivation is given for abiding by this advice: because "it is Yʜwʜ" that will take up their case against you if you oppress them. To make this point unambiguously, the subject noun phrase "Yʜwʜ" is focus-fronted within the subordinate clause. That is, the focus-fronting results in SV order even though the syntactic environment is a dependent clause and normally exhibits VS due to triggered inversion. Such examples, of which there are many, indicate that the triggered inversion to VS order can be superficially negated by the movement of a focus-fronted constituent to a position even higher than the raised verb. SV examples like the one in (33) also demonstrate that even SV order need not present an unmarked, basic word order clause.

V. Conclusion

I have focused on data in the book of Proverbs to further our understanding of BH word order. Using both typological and generative principles, I have asserted that BH proverbs exhibit a basic SV word order. However, at the outset I also suggested that BH proverbs provide a better source of data for a basic word order analysis than BH narrative. If so, then word order studies should reevaluate the rest of the data in the Hebrew Bible in light of my conclusions here. In other words, I suggest that the syntax of BH narrative should be studied in light of BH proverbs and not the other way around.

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52. See also 4:12; 7:11, 23; 9:11; 10:12, 13, 19; 11:5, 7, 10, 11, 14; 12:8; 14:10, 13, 14, 20, 23, 26, 32, 33; 16:6, 10, 12, 33; 17:14; 18:1, 3, 10, 12, 20; 19:3; 21:11; 24:3, 25; 25:15; 26:20, 24; 28:12, 21, 28 (2×); 29:1, 2, 16, 18, 19; 30:21.

53. See also 5:3, 12; 8:7; 13:5, 21 (2×); 15:25; 16:4; 18:18, 23; 20:14; 21:22; 23:21; 24:2, 26; 29:11.

54. See also 1:16, 32(2×); 2:6, 10, 21 (2×), 22 (2×); 3:26; 8:35; 11:31; 23:21; 28:22; 30:33.

Exegetical and Stylistic Analysis of a Number of Aphorisms in the Book of Proverbs: Mitigation of Monotony in Repetitions in Parallel Texts

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The study of parallel texts in Hebrew Scripture and the variations, small and great, between them has a long history. Scholars have called attention to two kinds of variations. The first kind of variation includes slight changes in the order of the elements, which results in a chiastic structure. The second kind of variation involves the substitution of alternate synonymous words and/ or phrases.[1] Assuming that the respective variations are significant on the level

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1. Gershon Brin and Yair Hoffman, "Chiasmus in the Bible," in *Moshe Zeidel Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem: Israel Society of Biblical Research, 1962) 280–88 [Hebrew]; Avi Hurvitz, "Diachronic Chiasmus in Biblical Hebrew," in *Studies in Bible and Jewish History in Memory of Jacob Liver* (ed. Binyamin Uffenheimer; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Faculty of Humanities, 1971) 248–55 [Hebrew]; Yitzhak Avishur, "The Forms of Repetition of Numbers Indicating Wholeness (3, 7, 10) in the Bible and in Ancient Semitic Literature," *Beer Sheva* 1 (1973) 1–55 [Hebrew], especially pp. 2–17 and 33–36; idem, *Repetition and Parallelism in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (Tel Aviv–Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2002) [Hebrew]. Avishur deals with the phenomenon of word-for-word repetition in parallel clauses and in the variations introduced when a given clause is repeated in a different context. Avishur attempts to account for the variations in repeated versets chronologically. See also Meir Paran, *Repeated Proverbs and the Study of the Development of the Proverb* (M.A. Thesis; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1975) [Hebrew]; Paran also deals with the phenomenon in question frequently in his *Forms of the Priestly Style in the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989) [Hebrew]. Likewise, Yair Zakovitch frequently provides important insights into the matter under discussion in his *Literary Pattern of Three and Four in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1979) [Hebrew]. Adele Berlin examines the forms of stylistic variation in eleven psalms that share the common idea of God's hearkening to the prayer of the psalmist (*The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985] 127–30). She shows that the variation is accomplished in a variety of ways. See also Isaac Kalimi, *The*

of meaning and content, scholars have tried to account for the variations in several ways. Some scholars saw in the variations the influence of the practices of ancient copyists.[2] Others accounted for the variations as an attempt to avoid monotony.[3] In fact, Talmon presented a theory that combined the latter two suggestions.[4]

In the present essay, I suggest a fourth hypothesis to account for the variations encountered when a particular proverb is repeated in the book of Proverbs. According to my hypothesis, many of the variations among repeated texts can be accounted for as a function of the phenomenon that Freedman and Hyland called "expanded repetition."[5] Expanded repetition involves the appearance of a given root twice or more within parallel versets or verses or larger textual units. In fact, the phenomenon of expanded repetition appears also in prose texts characterized by rhythm that marks them as high-register prose. Texts of this sort are found especially in legal and cultic contexts, in which patterns of repetition serve a mnemonic function.

Indeed, this model of expanded repetition is found not only in Hebrew Scripture but also in other literatures of the ancient Near East. A few examples appeared already in Akkadian literature. The phenomenon is attested much more frequently in Ugaritic literature, and a few examples can be found in Phoenician inscriptions. The Hebrew Ben Sira also presents numerous ex-

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Book of Chronicles: Historical Writing and Literary Devices (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2000 [Hebrew]; ET: *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005]), who frequently mentions parallel texts. See also my "Stylistic and Syntactic Variants in Repeated Texts in the Bible," in *Yitzhak Avishur Festschrift* (ed. Michael Heltzer and Meir Malul; Tel Aviv–Jaffa: Archaeological Center Publications, 2004) 171–78 [Hebrew]. See also the standard commentaries and introductions to the Bible.

2. Isaac Seeligman, "Researches into the Criticism of the Masoretic Text of the Bible," *Tarbiz* 25 (1955–56) 118–19 [Hebrew].

3. Shemaryahu Talmon, "Synonymous Readings in the Textual Tradition of the Old Testament," in *Studies in the Bible* (ScrHier 8; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961) 335–83; Abba Ben-david, *Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew* (rev. ed.; 2 vols.; Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1967–71) [Hebrew].

4. Idem, "Between Style and Text in Biblical Research," *Shnaton: Annual for the Study of the Bible and the Ancient Near East* 2 (1977) 116–63 [Hebrew].

5. David Freedman and C. Frank Hyland, "Psalm 29: A Structural Analysis," *HTR* 66 (1973) 248. The term "expanded repetition" is to be preferred to the description "augmented word-pairs" suggested by Wilfred Watson, *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984) 132. For a survey of research concerning the phenomenon in question, see my "Who Is Afraid of Repetition? One of the Patterns of the Expanded Repetition in Biblical Rhetoric" [Hebrew], in *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of the Bible* (ed. Zipora Talshir, Shamir Yona, and Daniel Sivan; Beersheva: Ben-Gurion University Press / Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 2001) 234–44.

amples of expanded repetition. In addition, poetic texts from Qumran reveal several important examples of expanded repetition.[6]

In expanded repetition, a word that appears in one verset or verse reappears in another verset or verse either in the same or in another morphology. If, for example, a term appears in the construct or the genitive in a construct genitive chain in a given verse or verset, it will reappear in the opposite position in the later verse or verset. For example, in Isa 56:5 the term שֵׁם 'name' appears in verset A as an isolated word, while in verset C it appears as a construct:

> I will give them in my Temple and in my walls a monument and a **name** (שֵׁם) //
> **an eternal name** (שֵׁם עוֹלָם) I will give them.

Similarly, in Joel 4:19 the noun שְׁמָמָה 'desolation' appears in verset A as an isolated form serving as object of the preposition לְ, while in verset B it reappears in genitive position at the end of a prepositional phrase:

> Egypt will be for **a desolation** (שְׁמָמָה)
> and Edom **a desolate waste** (לְמִדְבַּר שְׁמָמָה).

However, in many cases the order is turned around so that the construct genitive chain precedes the use of one of its elements as an isolated term. For example, in Ps 124:7 the term פַּח 'trap' appears in verset A in the construct genitive chain 'trap of fowlers', while in verset B the term פַּח 'trap' appears as an isolated term functioning as the subject of a clause.

In Ps 104:3–4 the single term רוּחַ 'wind' appears as a genitive in both of the clauses. However, in the first clause the term is singular, while in the following clause the term is plural. Together, the two clauses function as "parallelism of singular and plural":

> He sets the rafters of his lofts in the waters,
> makes the clouds his chariot,
> moves on the **wings of the wind.**
> He makes the **winds** his messengers,[7]
> fiery flames his servants.

Just as in Ps 104:3–4 the term רוּחַ 'wind' appears as singular and plural in the two respective clauses, thereby forming an example of singular–plural parallelism, so in Jer 23:19 the terms סַעֲרַת 'a storm of' (feminine and construct) and סַעַר 'storm' (masculine and isolated) create both feminine-masculine parallelism and expanded repetition:

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6. See my forthcoming book on patterns of repetition, to be published by Ben-Gurion University Press.

7. In the Peshiṭta, the reading is "He makes his messengers wind."

> Lo, **the storm of** the Lord goes forth in fury,
> a whirling **storm**;
> it whirls down upon the heads of the wicked.[8]

As I pointed out above, the phenomenon of expanded repetition is also reflected in many parallel passages. In one member of the pair/group of parallel passages, a given lexeme appears as an isolated word, whether substantive or verb. In another member of the group of parallel passages, the same word functions as a construct or a genitive in a construct genitive chain. In some instances, the parallel text—for our purposes, text B—exhibits expansion in that the lexeme that appears in text A as an isolated noun or verb reappears in text B as part of a construct genitive chain. In other cases, one senses that the relationship between the members of a group of parallel passages exhibits contraction rather than expansion. In the latter instance, the construct genitive chain is replaced by a single word, which is synonymous in meaning with the given construct genitive chain. The frequent use of this structure of contraction makes a strong case for its having been deliberately employed by the ancient authors.

The stylistic logic demonstrates a tendency to limit verbatim repetition by employing a minor variant that in no way interferes with the attempt to repeat the same thing in different words.[9]

In this study we will concentrate on variation in several aphorisms, which recur several times in the book of Proverbs with variations that exemplify expanded repetition. In Prov 6:24 we read:

> to keep you from an evil woman,
> from the smooth talk of a woman from abroad;

while in Prov 7:5 we read:

> to keep you from a strange woman,
> from a woman from abroad who speaks smoothly.

The two verses serve as textbook cases of the variations presented in expanded repetition. In the first clause of Prov 6:24, the construct genitive chain is אשת רע 'evil woman'. Indeed, this expression is grammatically plausible, but it is anomalous from the standpoint of biblical parallelism. Some scholars emend רע to זרה in light of Prov 7:5. In fact, this emendation would create greater

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8. See also Jer 30:33. Concerning feminine-masculine parallelism in this verse, see Berlin, *Dynamics*, 42.

9. It is well known that the translators responsible for the Old Greek versions of Proverbs, Job, and Sirach reduced the number of parallel clauses precisely because of the difficulty they had in imitating Hebrew synonymous parallelism in Greek.

congruence between Prov 6:24 and its various parallels.[10] Other scholars suggest revocalizing רַע רָע as רֵעַ.[11] Indeed, it is accepted that the vocalization in the standard Hebrew text does not always reflect authorial intent.[12] Many modern scholars emended אשת רע to אשת רעך 'your neighbor's wife'. Indeed, in the immediate context in v. 26, we find that idea expressed by the Hebrew expression אשת איש, while in v. 29 we find that idea expressed by the Hebrew expression אשת רעהו 'his neighbor's wife', which is to say, 'someone else's wife'.[13] Indeed, if we adopt the emendation of אשת רע 'an evil woman' to אשת רעך 'your neighbor's wife' in Prov 6:24, the entire passage consisting of Prov 6:24–29 constitutes an inclusio referring to adultery.[14]

Additional support for the emendation is found in the LXX, whose rendering γυναικὸς ὑπάνδρου means 'a married [to someone else] woman'. The logic behind the restored text is that, on the basis of the principle of contracted repetition, the restored version of Prov 6:24 employs the construct genitive chain 'woman of your neighbor'. According to the same logic, the parallel text in Prov 7:5 employs the isolated term אשה 'woman' with the addition of the attributive adjective זרה 'strange'.

The same pair of verses, Prov 6:24 and 7:5, exhibits a second pair of expressions that reflect the principle of contracted repetition. In 6:24b we find the

10. See BHS; Crawford Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899) ad loc.; and so also Naphtali Tur-Sinai, *Peshuto Shel Miqra* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1962) ad loc.

11. Toy (*Proverbs*) notes that Baumgartner objected to this emendation because in his opinion the expression אשת רֵעַ 'someone else's wife' always appears in Biblical Hebrew with a pronominal suffix; cf. also William McKane, *Proverbs* (OTL; London: SPCK, 1970); see also BHS. For another suggestion, see Gustav Boström, *Proverbia Studien: Die Weisheit und das Fremde Weib in Spr. 1–9* (Lunds Universitets Arsskrift n.s. 1/30/3; Lund: University of Lund, 1935) 143–45; cf. also Roger Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs* (London: SCM, 1965) 49.

12. See David Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1972) 7.

13. So Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000). Fox suggests that the original final *kap* could easily have dropped out by haplography because the following letter in the verse, *mem*, was so similar to the *kap* in Paleo-Hebrew script.

14. Indeed, the recognition of the inclusio is important also for settling the controversy among scholars concerning the composition of the literary unit in Prov 6:20–35. See, for example, the view of Boström (*Proverbia*), who holds that the passage in question is not a unity because vv. 20–26 deal with pagan cultic prostitution, while vv. 27–35 deal with the prohibition against adultery. Concerning the non-unitary nature of the passage and the later additions contained therein, see Whybray, *Wisdom*. McKane (*Proverbs*) argued against the theory of cultic prostitution, expressing doubt that the woman in question is necessarily a foreigner; see also the criticism of Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 231. He holds that the passage deals with adultery, regardless of who the woman may be.

construct genitive chain חלקת לשון 'smoothness of tongue',[15] while in Prov 7:5b we find an isolated word, the verb החליקה, which constitutes, vis-à-vis Prov 6:24b, an example of variation achieved by noun-verb parallelism.[16] Moreover, the two clauses constitute a chiastic structure, which itself is one of the most frequently employed devices for achieving variety in both the poetry and the prose of the Hebrew Bible.[17]

Were we to juxtapose Prov 6:24b and Prov 7:5b, we would in fact achieve the following chiastic structure:

> from the smooth talk of a woman from abroad **//**
> from a woman from abroad who makes her speech smooth.

Another interesting example of expanded repetition in the book of Proverbs comprises the pair Prov 9:1a and 14:1a:

> Wisdom built her house **//**
> the wisest of women built her house.

Some scholars found it difficult to comprehend the expansion accomplished by use of the construct genitive chain in Prov 14:1a. Therefore, they suggested removing the word 'women'. However, this emendation requires us to revocalize the noun חַכְמוֹת 'the wisest' to חָכְמוֹת 'wisdom'[18] on the basis of the parallel text in Prov 9:1a.[19] The imaginary crux leads to two additional emendations in the single verset of Prov 14:1a: (1) substituting the verb תשׂים 'she

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15. Avraham Kahana (*The Book of Proverbs* [ed. A. Kahana; Zhitomir: A. Kahana, 1903]) explains: 'smoothness [an abstract noun] of tongue' of the strange woman. Other scholars (e.g., BHS) suggest the reading לְשׁוֹן נכריה, meaning that the emphasis is first and foremost on the foreignness of the speech; so also Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*. Tur-Sinai, in his commentary, argues for a different syntactical division so that מחלקת לשון 'one who speaks smoothly' is the main issue here, while "a strange woman" serves as an appositive to "one who speaks smoothly." In this case, the expression "strange woman" does not mean a woman of foreign origin but, as Fox (*Proverbs 1–9*) explains, 'someone else's wife'.

16. Concerning verb-noun parallelism employing the same root, see Berlin, *Dynamics*, 54–55.

17. With reference to the chiastic structure found here, see Paran, "Repeated Proverbs," 27. Paran also called attention to the interchange of noun and verb.

18. Concerning the ending of this word as indicating feminine singular rather than feminine plural, see GKC §86L. See also William Albright, "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East Presented to Professor Harold Henry Rowley* (VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955) 8.

19. See Berend Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos* (HAT 1/16; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1937) ad loc.; similarly McKane, *Proverbs*, ad loc. This suggestion is also found in BHS. For the other possibility, see the following note.

will put' for the noun נשים 'women'; and (2) changing the verbal predicate 'she built' to the adverb of manner באיתן 'with strength'.[20] The two emendations together yield the following reconstruction: Wisdom will establish her house with strength.

These emendations demonstrate both the insensitivity of many scholars to the phenomenon of stylistic variations and the ease with which they rush to improve texts that they assume to be difficult. Often the proposed emendation serves only to make a given aphorism more like its expanded or contracted parallel and neglects an in-depth examination of the meaning of each of the texts. Now, a number of scholars have opposed shortening the expanded aphorisms. Delitzsch, for example, relying on the expression "the wisest of her ladies" in Judg 5:29, interpreted חכמות נשים in Prov 14:1 as 'the wisest of women', and Toy agreed.[21] Dahood, in turn, sought a parallel to this interpretation in the Ugaritic expression ʿmq nšm,[22] which he translated 'the wisest of men'. However, this Ugaritic expression can, with equal plausibility, be rendered 'the strongest of men', as was argued by Gordon and then by Sivan.[23] Paran,[24] following Delitzsch, takes the Hebrew expression חכמות נשים to mean 'a wise woman', the antithesis of the אשת כסילות 'foolish woman' referred to in Prov 9:13–18.[25] On the basis of this comparison, Paran argues that in Prov 9:1 the term חָכְמוֹת also denotes 'a wise woman' (literally, 'a woman of wisdom').

In my opinion, we should accept Delitzsch's view. However, we must note that from a stylistic point of view we have a pattern of repetition in which an isolated word in one text is expanded into a construct genitive chain in another text. The variation is motivated by the poet's desire to avoid monotony. In addition, we must emphasize the fact that, while from a morphological-syntactic point of view the expression חכמות נשים is a construct genitive meaning 'the wisest of women', it has another sense altogether from a semantic point of view: women's wisdom.

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20. This is the second of the two suggestions offered in BHS.

21. See Franz Delitzsch, *Der Salomon Spruchbuch* (Leipzig: Duerffling & Franke, 1873) ad loc.; Toy, *Proverbs*, ad loc.

22. Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (Munster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995) 1.17 VI, 45.

23. Cyrus Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) #1874; Daniel Sivan, *A Grammar of the Ugaritic Language* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 208.

24. Paran, "Repeated Proverbs."

25. Both antithesis and the similarity between the two women who symbolize wisdom are discussed in the various commentaries; see Toy, *Proverbs*, 183 in his introduction to Proverbs, chap. 9; and see also Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, at Prov 9:13.

This phenomenon of a construct genitive chain serving as a substitute for a noun followed by an attributive adjective is reflected also in legal and cultic texts of Hebrew Scripture. For example, רקיקי מצות (Lev 2:4), which, from a syntactic point of view is a construct genitive chain, serves semantically to mean 'thin wafers'.[26] Similarly, Cassuto explains the expression 'the blood of my sacrifice' in Exod 23:18 and 34:25 as meaning 'my sacrifice of blood'.[27] In the same vein, the expression 'the evil of your doings' in Isa 1:16 is used to mean 'your evil doings'.[28]

Another fascinating example of the phenomenon of expanded repetition is afforded by comparing Prov 10:1, 15:2, and 29:3. The three verses read as follows:

Prov 10:1
A wise son brings joy to his father;
a foolish son is his mother's sorrow.

Prov 15:20
A wise son brings joy to his father;
a fool of a man humiliates his mother.

Prov 29:3
A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
but he who keeps company with harlots will lose his wealth.

Two of the three pairs of antithetical proverbs are very similar, while the third is similar to the other two only in its opening clause. Let us look first at the two very similar pairs (10:1; 15:20). These two proverbs are characterized by very precise antithetical parallelism, whose cohesion is enhanced by both the antithetical nouns wise/fool and the fixed pair father/mother.[29] The opening clauses of the two proverbs are identical,[30] while the second clauses of the two

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26. Concerning this syntactic phenomenon, see GKC §132c.

27. Bruce Waltke and Michael O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 151; JM §141d.

28. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975) [Hebrew], at Exod 23:18; see also Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978; repr. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985) 329.

29. On the appearance of this latter pair in Biblical Hebrew and other Semitic languages, see Yitzhak Avishur, *Stylistic Studies of Word-Pairs in Biblical and Ancient Semitic Literatures* (AOAT 210; Kevelaer: Butzon and Bercker, 1984) 3, 604–5.

30. It is widely held that, when a given clause recurs in a number of different proverbs, the repeated clause must originally have been an independent short proverb; so, for example, Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1971) 63–70. The most extreme position on this question is found in W. O. E. Oesterley and Theodore

proverbs are distinguished from each other in two ways. The two second clauses are related to each other by chiasm[31] in that the first opens with the expression בן כסיל 'a foolish son', while the second opens with the expression כסיל אדם 'a fool of a man'. The second form of variegation is achieved by the pattern of contracted repetition in that Prov 10:1b ends with the construct genitive תוגת אמו 'his mother's sorrow',[32] while Prov 15:20 ends with the isolated noun אמו functioning as the direct object of the participle בוזה.

   Now let us consider the relationship between the first two aphorisms and the third proverb. This relationship is limited to the first clause. In the third proverb (Prov 29:3), the first clause is very close in ideational content to the opening clause of each of the other two aphorisms. However, the opening clause of the third proverb differs from the other two opening clauses in that it is longer.[33] In addition, it exhibits stylistic variations. What is of interest to

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Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (London: SPCK, 1953) 205–6. In fact, Tamar Oron, in her comment on this verse, treats it as a short popular proverb, to which another hemistich was added in order to create a pair of parallel clauses (*The Book of Proverbs* [ed. Nili Shupak; Olam ha-Tanakh; Tel Aviv: Davidson-Ittai, 1998] Hebrew). According to Oron, the frequent occurrence of the proverbial statement in question in a variety of contexts in the book of Proverbs proves that the clause in question was widely quoted. However, it seems doubtful to me that this is really a case of a single hemistich proverb. In any case, this is not the place to argue this point one way or the other. For another view, see Hans-Joachim Hermisson, *Studien zur israelitischen Spruchweisheit* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968) 52; Roland Murphy, "Form Criticism and Wisdom Literature," *CBQ* 31 (1969) 478; see also Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, ad loc.

   31. Concerning this structure, see Paran, "Repeated Proverbs," 27. Note that in some Hebrew manuscripts and in some ancient versions (the LXX, the Aramaic *Tg. Proverbs*, and the Peshiṭta) Prov 15:20 has the expression "a foolish son" instead of "a fool of a man" (see BHS). However, the expression "a fool of a man" recurs in Prov 21:20. Consequently, there is no reason to emend it. See McKane, *Proverbs*, at Prov 15:20.

   32. In the Aramaic *Tg. Proverbs* (as in many places in which an abstract noun appears in the Hebrew text), the construct genitive expression employing two nouns "his mother's sorrow" is replaced by the verbal expression "he makes his mother miserable" (see Prov 17:21, where in place of "her sorrow" in the MT, the Aramaic version reads "her misery"), which apparently means that he embarrasses her. One of the meanings of חימוצא in Aramaic is blushing because of embarrassment, while in the *Pael* the verbal root חמץ means 'to embarrass'. See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim* (New York: Pardes, 1950) 457b, 479b, s.v. חמץ I; Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press / Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) 470a, s.v. חמץ II.

   33. Concerning the lengthening of the aphorism in Prov 19:3, see Paran, "Repeated Proverbs," 24. Paran, however, does not deal with the aphorism in question in the context of his discussion of expanded parallelism.

us is the stylistic variation, which here again consists of the expansion of the isolated noun חכם 'wise person', found in each of the first two proverbs, into the construct genitive phrase 'one who loves wisdom'. In addition, we should point out the recurring root חכם, whose noun form appears in gender-matched parallelism,[34] once as a masculine-singular adjective and once as an abstract feminine noun.

The last two examples of expanded repetition to be considered are Prov 16:9 and Prov 20:24. The two verses read as follows:

> *Prov 16:9*
> A man's heart may plot out his course,
> but it is the Lord who directs his steps.
>
> *Prov 20:24*[35]
> A man's steps are decided by the Lord;
> what does a man know[36] about his own way?

The stylistic-structural variation between the two aphorisms is double. The two aphorisms stand in a chiastic relationship[37] to each other. The two synonymous clauses shared by the two proverbs involve contracted repetition in that the subject of the first proverb is the construct genitive phrase 'a man's heart', while the subject of the second clause is the isolated noun 'man'. Similarly, the relationship of the isolated noun 'steps' at the end of Prov 16:9 to the genitive construct phrase 'a man's steps' at the beginning of Prov 20:24 is

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34. This kind of parallelism, which is found both in Hebrew Scripture and in Ugaritic literature, was first pointed out by Umberto Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1951) 36–37 [Hebrew]; other studies of the phenomenon include Wilfred Watson, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) 192–239; Berlin, *Dynamics*, 41–44; Avishur, *The Repetition and the Parallelism,* 205–9.

35. An aphorism very similar to this one is found in Ps 37:23: "The steps of a good person are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his behavior." Concerning the relationship between these two aphorisms, see Toy, *Proverbs*, at Prov 20:24; Artur Weiser, *The Psalms* (OTL; London: SPCK, 1962), at Ps 37:23; Zvi Peretz Chayes, *The Book of Psalms* (ed. A. Kahana; Zhitomir: A. Kahana, 1903), at Ps 37:23. Chayes had difficulty with the verb כוננו, which is found in Ps 37:23 but disappears from the aphorism in Prov 20:24. Despite the fact that his interpretation is forced, Chayes concludes that the verb כוננו in Ps 37:23 is superfluous. There is here a clear tendency to level the distinctions between parallel texts. This tendency is the consequence of insensitivity to deliberate stylistic variations that were employed by scribes who adapted the work of earlier authors.

36. BHS suggests reading יכין. This emendation is not necessary once one observes that the root בין is also juxtaposed with the noun דרך 'way, path, behavior' in Prov 14:8: "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way."

37. See Paran, "Repeated Proverbs," 29.

one of expanded repetition. In addition, while 16:9 employs the singular *qaṭal*-noun צעד, 20:24 employs the synonymous plural construct *maqṭal*-noun מצעדי. These are additional forms of well-known variation in the repetition of aphorisms.[38]

Our examination of many examples of deliberate variation in the repetition of aphorisms has demonstrated that the variants are not the product of scribal errors. Consequently, one must reject conjectural emendations designed to eliminate supposed scribal errors. Examination of the proposed emendations reveals a lack of sensitivity by various scholars to stylistic variations and a cavalier smoothing out of presumed textual difficulties. Often the proposed emendation simply levels the distinction between two versions of the same proverb. Indeed, we have seen that by and large the variations are deliberate. What lies behind them is the principle of mitigation of monotony in the repetition of aphorisms.

Consequently, biblical scholars would do well to pay careful attention to the phenomenon of expanded/contracted repetition that we have discussed in the present essay. This stylistic feature is not just a resource for use in biblical prosody but also an important exegetical tool for lower and higher criticism of biblical literature.

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38. Concerning the employment of alternative noun forms derived from a single root see Naphtali Tur-Sinai, *Hallashon VeHasefer* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1954) 1:235–39; Ben-david, *Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew*, 35–36; Avishur, *The Repetition and the Parallelism*, 273.

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Forming "Fearers of Yahweh":
Repetition and Contradiction as Pedagogy in Proverbs

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Over the last few decades, several studies have called our attention to various ways that the book of Proverbs—the aim of which is to teach wisdom (1:2–7)[1]—commends and embodies certain didactic strategies and techniques.[2] In one such study of pedagogy in Prov 10:1–31:9, William P. Brown identifies an "overarching editorial arrangement and pedagogical movement of the book as a whole,"[3] namely, a progression from Israelite to international

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1. The prologue (1:2–7) is a series of phrases introducing the goals of the book of Proverbs (vv. 2–6), followed by its "motto" (v. 7). Each phrase, with the exception of v. 5, begins with an infinitive (e.g., "for learning," v. 2; "for gaining instruction," v. 3; "to teach," v. 4; "to understand," v. 6), a syntactical construction that connects the phrase back to the superscription, "the proverbs of Solomon" (v. 1). The result is an extended description, an advertisement replete with wisdom terminology, of the book's pedagogical intentions.

2. See, for example, M. V. Fox, "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2," *JBL* 113 (1994) 233–43; idem, "Who Can Learn? A Dispute in Ancient Pedagogy," in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. M. L. Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1997) 62–77; W. Brueggemann, *The Creative Word: Canon as a Model for Biblical Education* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982) esp. 67–90; J. L. Crenshaw, "The Acquisition of Knowledge in Israelite Wisdom Literature," *WW* 7/3 (1987) 245–52; idem, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York: Doubleday, 1998); C. F. Melchert, *Wise Teaching: Biblical Wisdom and Education Ministry* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998) esp. 1–73; D. Estes, *Hear, My Son: Teaching and Learning in Proverbs 1–9* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); M. Hinds, "Teaching for Responsibility: Confirmation and the Book of Proverbs," *RelEd* 93 (1998) 207–26; and S. C. Jones, "Wisdom's Pedagogy: A Comparison of Proverbs VII and 4Q184," *VT* 53 (2003) 65–80.

3. W. P. Brown, "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 10:1–31:9," in *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation* (ed. W. P. Brown; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002) 152.

wisdom, an increasing variety and complexity of literary forms, and an increasing breadth and complexity of moral purview. Thus, the book guides readers through a process of maturation from a silent, dependent son (chaps. 1–9) to a mature adult companion of wisdom (31:10–31).[4] Progressing pedagogically from "basic staples" to "more advanced variegated fare,"[5] Proverbs develops readers by its content and its arrangement.

Assuming Brown's overarching movement, I consider here two specific pedagogical techniques employed in the book: repetition and contradiction. Both have a somewhat checkered past in Proverbs scholarship. Repetition at the level of the proverb, for example, has long been construed as a vestige of the book's compositional history. Some interpreters posit that it is the result of minimal or poor editing of what were originally independent subunits;[6] repetition signals a literary "seam," so to speak, that must somehow be explained.[7] Others contend that iterative sayings are a consequence of the book's oral formulation and transmission.[8] And P. W. Skehan argued that many of the repeated sayings were produced ad hoc so that the number of verses in the book would correspond to the numerical value of the names in its superscription (Solomon, son of David, king of Israel = 930; see 1:1).[9] To date, no proposal has garnered a consensus; indeed, in the most comprehensive study to date of "twice-told" proverbs,

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4. Ibid., 153.

5. Ibid., 181.

6. See, for example, O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (trans. P. R. Ackroyd; New York: Harper & Row, 1965) 472. To explain repetition within subunits of the book, proponents of this view argue that editors put together larger "collections" using smaller, unmarked ones. D. C. Snell aptly notes that ultimately the reasoning is circular: "if repetition stems from literary cleavage, then repetition remains the major indication that there is literary cleavage" (*Twice-Told Proverbs and the Composition of the Book of Proverbs* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1993] 11).

7. C. H. Toy, for example, claimed that repetition *across* subunits of the book demonstrates that the collectors of 10:1–22:16, 22:17–24:22, 24:23–34, and chaps. 25–29 were "not acquainted with the work of the others," while some repetition within subunits may be scribal errors (*Proverbs* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1899; repr. 1959] vii–viii); similarly, W. O. E. Oesterley claimed that the compiler of the book "failed to notice" the same sayings in the different collections and that nearly identical sayings in closely contiguous verses "must either be due to carelessness, or they may be the work of a later scribe who overlooked the fact that they had already been utilized" (*The Book of Proverbs* [New York: Dutton, 1929] xviii).

8. See Snell's discussion of this proposal in *Twice-Told Proverbs*, 13–14.

9. P. W. Skehan, "A Single Editor for the Whole Book of Proverbs," *CBQ* 10 (1948) 115–30; revised in *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* (CBQMS 1; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1971) 15–26.

Daniel C. Snell concludes that the data neither rule out any of these proposals nor provide a clearer chronology of the collecting of the book's subunits.[10] However, not much has been done to consider the significance of repetition from a vantage point other than that of compositional history.[11]

By comparison, the prevalence and importance of the book's contradictions remain largely unexamined. Notable exceptions to this include Kenneth G. Hoglund's work on Prov 26:4–5,[12] arguably the best-known example of divergent admonitions in Proverbs and, according to the Talmud, a threat to the book's inclusion in the canon (*b. Šabb.* 30b); and Raymond C. Van Leeuwen's analysis of Proverbs' contradictions with regard to the relation of wealth and poverty to righteousness and wickedness.[13]

The aim of this essay is to consider what role(s) repetition and contradiction play in the pedagogical movement of Proverbs. What effects do repetition and contradiction have on readers? How do the techniques contribute to the book's goal to form wise people? I propose that repetition and contradiction buttress vital claims in the book about the limits of human knowledge; that is, the reader's experience of repetition and contradiction reinforces certain proverbial content, making it more likely that readers will emerge with the humility characteristic of "fearers of Yahweh" (see 15:33, 18:12, 22:4). After a brief overview of the pedagogical shifts from Proverbs 1–9 to 10–30, I address each of the techniques in turn.

I. From the Household into the World

Interpreters commonly regard Proverbs 1–9 as a hermeneutical guide for the remainder of the book. Set in a household in an unidentified city,[14] the

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10. Snell concludes: "the uncertainty we have attained is not a bad thing if we therefore manage to see a little more clearly what exactly we do not know" (*Twice-Told Proverbs*, 84; cf. p. 75).

11. Although some interpreters identify repetition as a significant element of the book's rhetoric, they do not elaborate on this significance, pedagogically or otherwise (e.g., L. G. Perdue, *Proverbs* [Interpretation; Louisville: John Knox, 2000] 32–33; R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Proverbs" in *NIB* 5:23). Melchert is an exception, but he only attends to the fact that repetitive language can "heighten impressiveness" and enable memorization (*Wise Teaching*, 23, 47–48).

12. K. G. Hoglund, "The Fool and the Wise in Dialogue," in *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland M. Murphy, O. Carm.* (ed. K. G. Hoglund et al.; JSOTSup 58; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) 161–80.

13. R. C. Van Leeuwen, "Wealth and Poverty: System and Contradiction in Proverbs," *HS* 33 (1992) 25–36.

14. See, for example, 1:8, 20–21; 6:20; 7:6–12; 8:1–3; 9:3, 14–15.

chapters are the instructions of a father to his son(s).[15] Readers, regardless of
their actual identities (for example, the young and the old, 1:4–5), are asked
repeatedly to assume the identity of the silent son. Although the sages' privi-
leging of the father-son relationship as the authoritative context for learning
offends modern Western sensibilities, this starting point is perhaps apt for a
book about the formation of human character. While notions of family cer-
tainly vary over time and between and within different cultures, because most
people have or have had a family, and the family is typically where our identi-
ties are first formed, the household appears to be a "natural," familiar domain
for theological-ethical teaching.[16] Families command loyalty and bear primary
responsibility for initiating children into the moral beliefs, traditions, and in-
stitutions of the family and community. Similarly, the city is a bastion of hu-
man culture, purportedly a symbol of civilization at its most advanced. Both
locations are conventional, though certainly value-laden,[17] places for moral
education.

The father teaches primarily in long didactic poems, or instructions. Ac-
cordingly, when he uses what appear to be preexisting, self-contained two-
line proverbs, he nestles them in larger literary contexts that directly inform
their interpretation (see, for example, 1:17; 2:21–22; 6:10–11). J. L. Cren-
shaw argues that this use suggests that each proverb "reinforces the argument
within an instruction as if to provide irrefutable proof of the position being
defended."[18] While it is debatable whether the purpose of the proverbs is, in

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15. The father-to-son setting is common in ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature. For
example, the epilogue of the Egyptian *Instruction of Anii* is a dialogue between a father and
son (*AEL* 2:144–45) and the Sumerian *Instructions of Shuruppak* are lessons that Shuruppak
teaches his son (*BWL* 92–94). Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, Ecclesiastes addresses "my
son" (12:12). In Proverbs, the father-to-son setting appears in chaps. 1–9 and is assumed
occasionally elsewhere in the book (cf. 19:27; 23:15, 19, 26; 24:13, 21; 27:11). Twice, the
father associates his teaching with the teaching of his wife (1:8, 6:20), but she never speaks
directly to the son.

16. So C. A. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of
Proverbs 1–9," in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader* (ed. A. Bach; New York: Routledge,
1999) 86.

17. The family setting, for example, eclipses class interests: "[t]his is not a landed aristo-
crat speaking, not a senior bureaucrat, not a member of the urban middle class or a disen-
franchised intellectual, but 'your father'" (ibid.). Indeed, when one looks more closely, it
appears that Proverbs 1–9 was intended for young men of relatively privileged circum-
stances, perhaps the sons of affluent and moderately wealthy members of an urban commer-
cial class (see, e.g., 3:9–10; 5:10; 6:1–5, 35).

18. J. L. Crenshaw, "Wisdom and Authority: Sapiential Rhetoric and its Warrants," in
Congress Volume: Vienna 1980 (VTSup 32; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 13–14.

fact, to "prove" anything, they appeal to communal consensus and function as "capstones" that encapsulate the larger lessons.[19] Consequently, when readers first encounter proverbs in the book, they find them in literary frameworks (appropriate contexts of use) that demonstrate when and how the proverbs "make sense." The father, that is, models for readers "right" use of the sayings.

At 10:1, however, the literary landscape changes dramatically. No longer is the father in evident control of the discourse, nor is personified wisdom on center stage. No longer do proverbs appear hand-in-glove with longer instructions that inform their meaning. No longer is the reader even directly addressed (until 14:7). Instead, sayings follow one after the other, in no apparent order of priority and often without ready connection to those around them. Although scholars identify exceptions to this, namely, formal and thematic arrangements that connect adjacent proverbs,[20] many of the proverbs are like polished bits or shapes placed, without being changed, next to others also unmodified.

On the heels of the didactic poems of Proverbs 1–9, this seemingly indiscriminate arrangement is disorienting and abruptly shifts responsibility for making sense of proverbs from the father to the readers—those with whom, given the book's aim to form wise people, responsibility must ultimately reside.[21] Moreover, the arrangement itself initiates a process of contemplation and criticism,[22] inviting readers who have been instructed by the father in

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19. For the language of the "capstone," see M. V. Fox, *Proverbs* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2002), e.g., pp. 92, 102.

20. See, for example, R. C. Van Leeuwen, *Context and Meaning in Proverbs 25–27* (SBLDS 96; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988); T. Hildebrant, "Proverbial Pairs: Compositional Units in Proverbs 10–29," *JBL* 107 (1988) 207–24; J. Krispenz, *Spruchkomposition im Buch Proverbia* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 349; Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989); T. P. Mc-Creesh, *Biblical Sound and Sense: Poetic Sound Patterns in Proverbs 10–29* (JSOTSup 128; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); H. C. Washington, *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope and the Hebrew Proverbs* (SBLDS 142; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994) esp. 191–202; A. Meinhold, *Die Sprüche* (2 vols.; ZBAT 16/1–2; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991); J. Goldingay, "The Arrangement of Sayings in Proverbs 10–15," *JSOT* 61 (1994) 75–83; and R. N. Whybray, "Yahweh-Sayings and Their Contexts in Proverbs, 10,1–22,16," in *La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament* (ed. M. Gilbert; BETL 51; Gembloux: Duculot / Leuven University Press, 1979) 153–65; idem, *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs* (JSOTSup 168; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994).

21. Said differently, at 10:1 the youth (and reader) of Proverbs crosses the *limen* or threshold from adolescence (the status presumed in chaps. 1–9) to a different, more-mature position. For more on Proverbs 1–9 as "threshold speeches," see R. Van Leeuwen, "Liminality and World View in Proverbs 1–9," *Semeia* 50 (1990) 111–44.

22. J. B. White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning: Constitutions and Reconstitutions of Language, Character, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 41.

chaps. 1–9 to participate now in "wisdom-making" themselves. The apparent lack of prioritization among the sayings compels readers to test each one, considering which seem fallacious and which valid. Ironically, the fact that the proverbs are for the most part "disconnected" from their literary and oral contexts sharpens the significance and effects of context itself.[23] So-called "decontextualized" proverbs[24] require readers to imagine appropriate contexts from their own experience in which the proverbs would be applicable. To this extent, Gerhard von Rad observed, "the single line [a proverb comprising two parallel sections] often enough makes higher claims and demands a greater degree of intentional participation than a developed didactic poem."[25]

Borrowing a metaphor from James Boyd White,[26] we may say that Proverbs 10–30 reads like a literary mosaic: a text formed by small pieces of variously colored proverbs, each a polished entity unto itself, placed next to other equally polished and vibrant sayings. Viewed up close, where interpreters have long positioned themselves, the eye focuses on each proverb, then on those immediately around it, noting ways the colors interact with or are distinct from one another. From a step or two back, however, the bits of polished color blur together into something beyond what any of the pieces, standing alone, resembles—the "overarching pedagogical movement" that Brown suggests. We might say, then, that the proverbs generate "patterns of experience" that, as much as their content, instruct readers in the ways of wisdom.[27] I turn now to the two features of this mosaic to be analyzed here—namely, repetition and contradiction.

II. Repetition

Repetition abounds in Proverbs.[28] The structure of the book is itself repetitive: three collections of sayings are attributed to Solomon (משלי שלמה, 1:1–

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23. Ibid., 41.

24. Drawing on folklore studies, C. R. Fontaine notes: "the saying which exists in a collection or by itself without a context of use has a discrete nucleus located in its topic and comments. This is the context-free kernel (Baukern) . . . this core is the carrier of the message, however mundane or profound" (*Traditional Sayings in the Old Testament* [BLS 5; Sheffield: Almond, 1982] 165). Indeed, the lack of "context" for proverbs in a collection prompted renowned paroemiologist W. Meider to declare that "the proverb in a collection is dead" ("The Essence of Literary Proverb Study," *Proverbium* 23 [1974] 892). See also C. V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (BLS 11; Sheffield: Almond, 1985) esp. 165–78.

25. G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (trans. J. D. Martin; London: SCM, 1972) 27.

26. *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 40.

27. Ibid., 41.

28. Given the limitations of space here, I intend to analyze repetition at the level of individual proverbs or cola as compared with the levels of theme, motif, metaphor, and

9:18, 10:1–22:16, 25:1–29:27), and two are 'the words of the wise' (דברי חכמים, 22:17–24:22, 24:23–34). At the level of individual proverbs, the level of concern here, various manifestations of verbatim and nearly verbatim repetition of content appear, from whole two-line sayings and cola to syntactically similar sayings and double-verb forms. Moreover, these repetitions are found between and within the main subunits of the book. In his catalog of "twice-told" proverbs, for instance, Snell identifies 6 two-line sayings that repeat with only minor variations in spelling,[29] 5 two-line sayings and one quatrain that repeat with merely one dissimilar word,[30] 11 two-line sayings that repeat with two dissimilar words,[31] and so on. With regard to repeated cola, he finds that 16 recur with minor spelling variations,[32] 20 with only one dissimilar word,[33] and 22 with two dissimilar words.[34] Finally, at the micro-structural level, the sages frequently employ alliteration, assonance, anaphora, refrains, and inclusios.[35]

Given the extent of the repetition in Proverbs and, as recent interpreters argue, the likelihood of a selective final redaction of the book,[36] it makes little

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plot. Moreover, I am concerned only with repetition within Proverbs; that is, I restrict the locality of this analysis to the book itself. Further study is needed about how sayings from the book are "repeated" in other biblical and nonbiblical texts and/or oral contexts. For a helpful discussion regarding the complexities of defining repetition, see B. Johnstone et al., "Repetition in Discourse: A Dialogue," in *Repetition in Discourse: Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (2 vols.; Advances in Discourse Processes 47–48; Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1994) 1:1–20.

29. Namely, 9:4 and 16; 14:12 and 16:25; 18:8 and 26:22; 20:16 and 27:13; 21:9 and 25:24; 22:3 and 27:12 (Snell, *Twice-Told Proverbs*, 35).

30. Namely, 2:1 and 7:1; 2:16 and 7:5; 5:7 and 7:24; 19:5 and 9; 23:18 and 24:14b; 6:10–11 and 24:33–34 (ibid., 36).

31. Namely, 1:8 and 6:20; 1:25 and 30; 2:2 and 5:1; 3:2 and 9:11; 4:20 and 5:1; 10:1 and 15:20; 11:1 and 20:23; 12:11 and 28:19; 13:14 and 14:27; 19:1 and 28:6; 19:24 and 26:15 (ibid., 37–38).

32. See, for example, 4:4b and 7:2a; 5:7a, 7:24a, and 8:32a; 6:15b and 29:1b (ibid., 42–44).

33. See, for example, 1:9a and 4:9b; 3:21a and 4:21a; 3:31a and 24:1a (ibid., 44–48).

34. See, for example, 1:7a and 9:10a; 1:8a and 4:1a; 3:7b and 16:6b (ibid., 48–52).

35. Verbatim and nearly verbatim repetition occurs in other ancient Near Eastern wisdom texts, though to a notably lesser extent. See, for example, the Egyptian *Instruction of Amenemope* (e.g., IX 7–8 and XVI 13–14; XI 13–14 and XV 13–14 [*AEL* 2:147–63]); the *Instruction of Ankhsheshonq* ("a man's character is his family" in 11:11, 18:13; cf. 21:25 [*AEL* 3:159–84]); *Instruction of Papyrus Insinger* (e.g., variations on the refrain "the fate and fortune that come, it is the god who determines/sends them" conclude nearly every instruction [*AEL* 3:184–217]); and the Babylonian *Counsels of Wisdom* ("in your wisdom, study the tablet" in lines 142, 154, 159 [*BWL* 105–6]).

36. So M. V. Fox: "The diversity comes from the varied sources, the unity (of the book) from the redactors' individual creativity. The redactors' intervention was radical and determinative, going far beyond just attaching 'later additions' to existing proverbs. They did collect sayings and add some of their own, but, most important, they *selected*. They chose

sense to attribute repetition merely to editorial sloppiness or oral transmission. Commenting on repetition in biblical texts generally, Meir Sternberg writes:

> Since the literary text is characterized by rigorous selection and arrangement . . . the dismissal of its redundancies in terms of "noise" is the reader's last rather than first resort. After all, the general presumption of coherence applies to redundancy no less than to any other literary feature, dissonance, or incongruity. . . . The chances therefore are that this redundancy, too, is deliberate and functional—in fact, no redundancy at all. The text has devised a redundancy on some level with an eye toward a definite effect; that is, in order to impel the reader to transfer it to another level (pattern, context, framework) where it will duly fall into place.[37]

Wondering about this effect in Proverbs is particularly important given the book's aim to teach and, to that end, its use of such didactic techniques as indirection, analogy, and motivational clauses.[38] Despite fairly widespread and longstanding distaste for repetition,[39] repetition is a helpful device, particularly in suasive speech.[40] In oral and written discourses alike, repetition has long been recognized as an effective means to clarify, emphasize, and recapitulate; moreover, its connection with memory makes it of particular didactic value.[41]

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what to include and what to ignore, and what they included they reshaped" (*Proverbs*, 11; emphasis his). See also R. E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC 22; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) xxi; and Van Leeuwen, "Proverbs," 22.

37. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 368–69.

38. See Melchert, *Wise Teaching*, 47–58.

39. As J. P. Fokkelman describes: "Many [modern readers] make our first tentative forays into the field of serious writing in high school, when we have to write an essay, and are immediately criticized for using the same words too frequently. . . . We often leave school with the impression that repetition is something to be avoided at all costs" (*Reading Biblical Narrative: An Introductory Guide* [trans. I. Smit; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999] 112). This negative regard for repetition is certainly not new; consider, for example, the following in the *Complaints of Khakneperre-sonb*, an Egyptian text that dates to the Middle Kingdom: "Had I unknown phrases, / Sayings that are strange, / Novel, untried words, / Free of repetition; / Not transmitted sayings, / Spoken by the ancestors! (*AEL* 1:146).

40. B. A. Strawn, "Keep/Observe/Do—Carefully—Today! The Rhetoric of Repetition in Deuteronomy," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller* (ed. B. A. Strawn and N. R. Bowen; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 219.

41. I am informed here by various resources on repetition, most notably: Johnstone, *Repetition in Discourse*; and B. F. Kawin, *Telling It Again and Again: Repetition in Literature and Film* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1989). With regard to repetition in biblical texts, see especially Strawn, "Keep/Observe/Do," 215–40; Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, esp. 365–440; and J. Muilenberg, "Hebrew Rhetoric: Repetition and Style," *Congress Volume: Copenhagen 1953* (VTSup 1; Leiden: Brill, 1953) 97–111.

So what pedagogical effects does repetition have in Proverbs? Although ideally we would consider every instance of repetition in the book on its own terms (a task beyond the scope of this essay), I suggest the following as a start.

An important clue emerges when we compare the content of the repetition in chaps. 1–9 with the content in chaps. 10–30. The preponderance of what is repeated (whole sayings and half-verses, verbatim and nearly verbatim) in Proverbs 1–9 is exordia, specifically the father's appeals for disciplined attention and obedience. Repetition thus serves principally as a means to "interpellate" readers, that is, to call on them again and again to take up a particular subject position,[42] specifically that of a silent, receptive son in relation to an authoritative father. For example, the father repeats these exordia with only minor variation:[43]

> Listen [Keep], my son, to your father's instruction [command],
>   and do not neglect your mother's teaching. (1:8, 6:20)

> Listen, my son [sons], to your [a] father's instruction. (1:8a, 4:1a)

> My son, if you accept [keep] my words,
>   and treasure up my commands within you. (2:1, 7:1)

> [My son,] making your ear attend [attend] to [my] wisdom,
>   inclining [incline] your heart [ear] to [my] understanding. (2:2, 5:1)

> So now, my sons, listen to me,[44]
>   do not depart from [give heed to] the words of my mouth. (5:7, 7:24).

> Bind them (i.e., my teachings) on your throat [fingers];
>   inscribe them on the tablet of your heart. (3:3bc, 7:3)

> Keep my commands and live. (4:4c, 7:2a)

> My son [   ], do not let them (i.e., my words) escape your eyes. (3:21a, 4:21a)

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42. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," 86. Newsom borrows the term "interpellation" from Louis Althusser (*Lenin and Philosophy* [trans. B. Brewster; London: Monthly Review, 1971] 174–75), who "speaks of the way in which ideology 'recruits' subjects, 'hails' them as a policeman might: 'Hey, you there!' The individual recognizing himself or herself as the one addressed, turns around in response to the hailing. And with that gesture he or she becomes a subject, takes up a particular subject position in a particular ideology."

43. The brackets indicate in what ways, if any, the second specified text varies from the word or phrase underlined.

44. That personified wisdom issues the same summons in 8:32a is one of several indicators that Proverbs 1–9 presents a unified pedagogical "front": as the father describes it, his teachings are inextricably associated with those of personified wisdom and God—so much so that, in places such as 8:32a, the figures themselves resemble each other (see 3:11–12).

Repetition of particular verbs (for example, *listen*, *hear*, *keep*, *bind*, *attend*, *do not depart*) and direct objects (for example, *discipline*, *commandment*, *teaching*, *my words*), coupled with the use of second-person address and frequent imperatives, suggests that Proverbs 1–9 aims to foster in readers the very discipline, receptivity, and obedience to (parental) instruction that the book presumes necessary for attaining wisdom (see, for example, 2:1–4). Each repeated exordium ushers readers another step up "on a scale of intensity, the note of desperate urgency pitched slightly higher,"[45] so that refusing the desired subject position becomes progressively more difficult. Moreover, the text underscores the idea that attaining wisdom is a matter of survival—three times readers are told that wisdom saves a person from the strange woman with her "smooth words" (2:16, 6:24, 7:5) and three times that wisdom brings long life (3:2, 4:10b, 9:11). The rhetorical effect of this "heaping up" of exordia and motivation clauses is that, by chap. 9, readers still engaging the text[46] have so internalized the (parental) instruction that they may serve as teachers in their own right (see 9:7–9) and may choose wisely when personified wisdom and folly issue verbatim invitations from the highest places in town ("Let you who are simple come over here," 9:4, 16). In sum, repetition in chaps. 1–9 functions largely to form the readers' subjectivity, to interpellate readers into a particular way of seeking wisdom.

This focus on what is repeated disappears beginning with 10:1. Even a cursory look through Snell's catalog of "twice-told" proverbs indicates that what the sages reiterate in chaps. 10–30 is comparatively arbitrary; with some exceptions, there are no apparent thematic or structural indications for the repetition of certain sayings or cola and not others. One effect of this seemingly indiscriminate use of repetition is heightened awareness of the relativity and malleability of proverbs.

Closer examination of sayings repeated verbatim, for example, reveals that word-for-word repetition cannot be equated with identity of meaning(s). What Meir Sternberg argues with regard to repetition in narrative also applies here: "every new use entails deviant use, every repetition a variation. For the original is rooted in its native ground—tone, genre, situation—so that even to reiterate it word for word is to uproot and transplant it."[47] That is, variations

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45. R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic, 1985) 65.

46. As Kawin points out, it is possible that readers will "turn off" the exordia, that is, set Proverbs aside. Kawin writes: "repetition . . . *makes intense* and *solid* through persistence. Repeated enough, a word or idea or phrase or image or name will come to dominate us to such an extent that our only defenses are to concede its importance or turn off the stimulus completely" (*Telling It Again and Again*, 49–50, emphasis his). See also Strawn, "Keep/Observe/Do," 222, 229.

47. Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 390.

in literary contexts, among other things, inform readers' experiences of a proverb. So, for example, we first encounter the saying "the words of a gossiper [literally, 'whisperer'] are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body" (18:8) after a pair of proverbs about the trouble that fools get themselves into by talking (18:6–7). The emphasis on speech in the immediate context draws readers' attention to the words of whisperers (18:8)—how, like junk food, they taste delicious but are harmful when swallowed.[48] When the sages repeat the same proverb later (26:22), however, it is nestled between proverbs that reflect on the power of words to spark conflict (26:20–21) and on the deceptive cruelty that the gossiper harbors (26:23–26). The context invites readers to reconsider the proverb in light of the gossiper's malicious disposition.[49]

In turn, sayings and cola repeated nearly verbatim highlight the adaptability of proverbs themselves, how they are "subject to reexamination and complication, to a further process of thought."[50] Repetition makes apparent the fact that proverbs are not fixed units of a stable theoretical system but are inherently tentative, structurally flexible, and prone to revision. Consider the following examples:

(1) Prov 19:5 and 19:9
    A false witness will not go unpunished,
        and a liar *will not escape* (לא ימלט, 19:5).
    A false witness will not go unpunished,
        and a liar *will perish* (יאבד, 19:9).

(2) Prov 10:1bc and 15:20
    A wise son gives joy to a father,
        and a foolish son, *grief* (תוגת) to his mother (10:1bc).
    A wise son gives joy to a father,
        but a fool *of a man despises* (אדם בוזה) his mother (15:20).

(3) Prov 12:11 and 28:19
    Whoever works his land will have enough food,
        but whoever pursues empty goals *lacks sense* (חסר־לב, 12:11).
    Whoever works his land will have enough food,
        but whoever pursues empty goals *will have plenty of poverty*
        (ישבע ריש, 28:19).

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48. For the junk food analogy, see Van Leeuwen, "Proverbs," 173.

49. Compare also 20:16 and 27:13; 21:9 and 25:24; and 22:3 and 27:12.

50. White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 152.

By repetition (verbatim and nearly verbatim), Proverbs teaches that wisdom—at least as represented by the book itself—cannot be reduced to a repository of static propositions but is continually being recreated by the sages and, ultimately, by readers.[51]

Finally, experience of the book's repetitive rhetoric teaches readers something about what it is to be human—namely, that we are incapable of holding on steadily to what we know. Seemingly inexorable is the human capacity to forget even the most significant of lessons. White argues that a climactic scene in Book Ten of Homer's *Iliad* teaches readers the same lesson. There, on a corpse-strewn battlefield, a passionate appeal by Patroclus on behalf of the Achaeans so strongly evokes the reader's sympathies that she (momentarily) forgets what she learned at the poem's beginning about the equal humanity of those who die—Achaean and Trojan alike. White then writes: "we learn something in the early books, we forget it, and learn it again; and this time we learn something else as well, about our own susceptibility to circumstance, our own incapacity to keep solidly to what we know."[52]

So, too, repetition in Proverbs reminds us that human learning is inescapably repetitious: we learn, forget, and relearn. We are "subject to repeated fallings-off from what we have once partly known (and in some sense still know) into a seemingly unnecessary, almost willful, ignorance."[53] This steady erosion of our knowledge means that we must discover or be told what we "know" again and again. It may be said that, in this sense, readers become the subject of Proverbs, and the process of life about which we are taught is the continual reconstitution of knowledge and self.[54] By reminding us of the human disposition to forget, the sages underline our lifelong need for wisdom and pedagogy of the sort that Proverbs offers to us.

The experience of repetition thus reinforces what the book's content teaches about the human need for lifelong education. The prologue, for instance, summons the naïve, the young, the wise, and the discerning to pay attention, signaling up front that the quest for wisdom is a continual endeavor (1:2–7). In 8:4, personified wisdom takes her stand in the city streets and summons everyone (בני־אדם) to listen to her. Throughout the book, the sages describe seekers of wisdom as lovers of discipline (for example, 12:1, 13:1), always receptive to advice, reproof, and instruction (for example, 9:9; 12:15; 19:20, 25b; 21:11b). They also caution repeatedly about our capacity for bad judgment (for example, 14:12, 16:25) and our tendency to put too much

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51. Ibid., 153.
52. Ibid., 52.
53. Ibid., 144.
54. Ibid., 58.

stock in our own ingenuity: "do not rely on your own insight . . . do not be wise in your own eyes" (3:5b, 7a; compare 28:26).[55] Indeed, as the sages tell it, only fools hate knowledge (for example, 1:22) and rely, to their detriment, on their wits instead (28:26).

III. Contradiction

I turn now to contradiction[56] as a pedagogical technique in Proverbs. As noted above, arguably the best-known instance is Prov 26:4–5:

> Do not answer a fool according to his folly (אל־תען כסיל כאולתו),
>   or you will be a fool yourself.
> Answer a fool according to his folly (ענה כסיל כאולתו),
>   or he will be wise in his own eyes.[57]

More typical are incongruous proverbs scattered throughout the book, inviting readers into a sort of disputational dialogue. Compare, for example, proverbs concerned with wealth and poverty. Some speak of wealth as an unqualified good (for example, 10:15, 22; 14:20; 22:4, 7), others as a liability (see 11:4, 28); some attribute poverty to laziness (for example, 6:10–11//24:33–34, 10:4, 12:24, 20:13), others to violence, extortion, and deceit (see 1:10–19; 11:1, 16; 13:23; 21:6). Similarly, consider the sayings that describe a wife as an unqualified good (so 18:22, 5:15–20) with those that indicate otherwise (21:9, 19; 27:15). Insofar as Proverbs preserves such divergent points of view, it ensures a certain ambiguity: wisdom does not afford only one perspective on wealth or poverty, wives, or, for that matter, most anything. Interpreters acknowledge the didactic significance of this, but few elaborate.[58]

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55. Other ancient Near Eastern wisdom texts similarly emphasize the ongoing nature of human learning. The Egyptian *Instruction of Ankhsheshonq*, for instance, teaches: "a wise master who asks advice, his house stands forever" (*AEL* 3:168), and the *Instruction of Ptah-hotep* cautions: "Do not be proud of your knowledge, consult the ignorant and the wise. The limits of art are not reached; no artist's skills are perfect" (*AEL* 1:63).

56. Contradictions are understood here broadly as logical inconsistencies (for example, two propositions related to each other in such a way that if one is true then the other is false) and "unresolved tensions between incongruous and incompatible observations" (see M. V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and A Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999] 3).

57. While I recognize that it remains a matter of some debate whether or not Prov 26:4–5 contains contradictory proverbs, I maintain that, for most readers, the two sayings appear contrary and, therefore, require explanation as such (for the same argument regarding contradictions in Ecclesiastes, see ibid., 14).

58. Exceptions are Melchert, *Wise Teaching*, 54–56; and Van Leeuwen, "Proverbs," 23.

So what might incongruities across the book of Proverbs teach readers? First, they call attention to incongruities in the world; they convey that the arena of wisdom is replete with competing discourses, with divergent perspectives on reality and morality (note the proverb "the one who first states a case seems right, until the other comes and cross examines him," 18:17). While some of the contradictory sayings may represent perspectives of the different social groups who collected, augmented, and edited the book along the way, the idea that the world is full of contradiction is also a theme of the book.

In Proverbs 1–9, for example, the father seeks to establish his discourse over against competing discourses—different (moral) "languages" (such as those of the sinners [1:10–19]; the wicked [2:12–15]; the strange woman [7:14–20])—each of which vies with the others over what it means to live wisely and well. As Carol Newsom notes, readers find themselves "hailed from many directions, offered subject positions in discourses that construe the world very differently"[59]—all under the watchful eye of the father, who "quotes" or gives voice to the rival characters and disparages their points of view. The father aims to teach readers to recognize and resist the opposing discourses (some of which the father acknowledges are quite compelling, for example, 1:10, 7:21) lest those discourses inform the readers' development.

After 10:1, the battle of perspectives and words continues but without the father's heavy interpretive hand. Warnings about rival discourses abound (for example, 10:14, 32; 11:9; 12:5–6), even as the sages make the situation more complex with divergent proverbs side by side, or nearly so, without reflection. In short, what readers experience as a world of incongruities between the wise and the foolish (//wicked) in chaps. 1–9 broadens to include tensions between the proverbs themselves. Suddenly, the moral world looks more complicated. Moreover, whereas the father in chaps. 1–9 presents a unified pedagogical "front"—by associating his teaching with that of Solomon, whose renowned wisdom bears the stamp of royal office and is the voice of the state (1:1); personified wisdom, who speaks with communal and transcendent authority (1:20–21, 8:22–31); and God (for example, 3:1–4, 11–12; 6:20–23)—readers of Proverbs 10–30 find themselves responsible for navigating this "strange new world" riddled with conflict on their own, informed by what they learned in chaps. 1–9. Contradiction between proverbs renders palpable and unavoidable the complexity and ambiguity of the world.

Ironically, the contradictions may, in fact, also facilitate the book's appeal to everyone (see 1:2–6, 8:4). In his analysis of contradictions in the law codes of the Hebrew Bible, J. W. Watts explains:

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59. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," 88.

Politicians regularly address multiple, and frequently opposed, audiences. Court decisions usually address individuals or social groups in conflict with each other. Analyses of these modern texts point out that . . . the separate treatment of the concerns of each audience can be effective in gaining their acceptance even when other parts of the speech may offend them.[60]

Analogously, while the sages' inclusion of incongruous proverbs—some of which may have emerged from divergent social groups[61]—renders Proverbs self-contradictory, it simultaneously makes the book more persuasive to more people. Inclusive of varying points of view, self-contradiction as pedagogical strategy makes it more likely that Proverbs can lead "all who live" (8:4) in the ways of wisdom. The book may succeed, at least in part, because it contradicts itself.

Second, contradictory proverbs teach something about the nature of the mature moral self. The series of countering appeals woven into Proverbs, none of which is discounted or trivialized, asks readers to adopt inconsistent points of view simultaneously, to experience statement and counterstatement at the same moment (for example, 26:4–5).[62] The sages thereby put readers in a position where no single response, no one proverb or perspective, can always work for them.[63] By doing so, they point readers to a reality larger than the proverbs in question: the moral self inevitably holds views that are in conflict with one another and applies those views depending on the immediate circumstances. Readers cannot avoid the relativity of human knowledge—the fact that meaning is contextual.[64] Indeed, the availability of contradictory proverbs enables them to more readily "accommodate the many fine distinctions and qualifications to which each particular life situation is subject."[65]

The experience of divergence thus reinforces what the content of Proverbs elsewhere makes clear about the situational nature of wisdom. Indeed, as various proverbs emphasize, being wise requires perceptiveness and good timing:

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60. J. Watts, *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* (Biblical Seminar 59; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 81.

61. See, for example, J. L. Crenshaw, "The Sage in Proverbs," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 205–16.

62. White, *When Words Lose Their Meaning*, 43.

63. Ibid., 44. As Fox notes with regard to Qoheleth: "His response to something in one place need not be the same as his response elsewhere. And even a single response may be compounded by various attitudes or remain resolutely unstable" (*A Time to Tear Down*, 3–4).

64. So Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, 381; B. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Toward a Theory of Proverb Meaning," *Proverbium* 22 (1973) 823.

65. Ibid., 826.

"Apples of gold in a setting of silver, such is a word spoken at the right time" (25:11), and "A gold ring, an ornament of gold is a wise person's rebuke to a listening ear" (25:12). Conversely, the foolish notoriously misread their circumstances and misspeak (for example, 26:7, 9).

Finally, contemplation of contradictory proverbs may teach the moderation of impulses, a lesson esteemed by Proverbs (for example, 14:29, 15:27, 19:2, 23:19–21). Speech communication specialists Paul Goodwin and Joseph Wenzel argue that what often emerges from a clash of contradictory statements is a sensible "middle way." [66] This seems to be the strategy at work, they note, in West Africa, when a Yoruban father invokes a proverb to justify disciplining a child harshly, only to be countered immediately by the mother, who quotes a proverb on tempering discipline with love. [67] Or when in African judicial proceedings, prosecutors and defendants recite proverbs to bolster their arguments, much as European or American lawyers cite legal precedents. [68] Although contradictions, at first glance, suggest inconsistency, Goodwin and Wenzel conclude, "they may be found to achieve consistency at a higher level . . . they constitute a unique kind of solution to conflicting human tendencies." [69] Said differently, perhaps if we know both "look before you leap" and "he who hesitates is lost," we will hesitate just long enough to look. [70]

IV. Conclusion

So how do repetition and contradiction contribute to the book of Proverbs' goal to teach wisdom? Viewed up close, repetition in Proverbs 1–9 serves principally to form the reader's subjectivity as a seeker of wisdom while the father introduces and mediates a world replete with contradictory discourses. After the pedagogical shift at 10:1, repetition and contradiction in chaps. 10–30 generate "patterns of experience" that (just as much as certain content in the book) instruct readers about the relativity of human wisdom and the

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66. P. Goodwin and J. W. Wenzel, "Proverbs and Practical Reasoning: A Study in Socio-Logic," in *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb* (ed. W. Mieder and A. Dundes; New York: Garland, 1981) 143.

67. See P. Farb, *Word Play* (New York: Bantam, 1975) 119.

68. Ibid., 118.

69. Goodwin and Wenzel, "Proverbs and Practical Reasoning," 143.

70. Similarly, contrasting contemporary proverbs include "you are never too old to learn" and "you cannot teach an old dog new tricks"; "out of sight, out of mind" and "absence makes the heart grow fonder"; "the more the merrier" and "too many cooks spoil the broth"; "nothing ventured, nothing gained" and "better safe than sorry"; and "haste makes waste" and "strike while the iron is hot" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Toward a Theory," 823).

world "at odds." Proverbs thus forms readers through its content and its arrangement, making palpable and unavoidable the limits of human knowledge, our dependence on and accountability to context, and our need for lifelong education.

These lessons, I contend, in the end inspire humility in readers, a hallmark of those who "fear Yahweh." To teach wisdom, that is, to form "fearers of the LORD"—persons who recognize God's sovereignty and the place of humanity (our potential and limitations) in relation to God—is the aim of Proverbs (see 1:7, the book's "motto"). Indeed, the idiom "the fear of Yahweh" is itself repeated 12 times in the book (1:7; 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26–27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17) and the imperative "fear the LORD!" three times (3:7, 14:2, 24:21). The phrase also forms an inclusio around chaps. 1–9 (1:7, 9:10) and Proverbs as a whole (1:7, 31:30[71]). For the sages, "fear of Yahweh" is the quintessential expression of what it means to be wise; it is the beginning and end, the best and fullest expression of wisdom (1:7).[72] And intrinsic to "fear of Yahweh" is abiding humility: humility that comes from knowing one's capacities and limitations as a creature of God (so 15:33, 18:22, 22:4). Repetition and contradiction in Proverbs engender just such humility. In the end, it seems, these brightly colored proverbs (each a polished entity unto itself) blur into something quite spectacular after all.

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71. Reading MT יראת־יהיה substantively (compare with Prov 1:7, 9:10, 15:33) and in apposition to אשה ("a woman, fear of Yahweh"). MT יְרְאַת is vocalized as the feminine construct of יִרְאָה, not as the feminine adjective suggested by the typical translation "a woman who fears Yahweh" (for example, the NRSV, NIV). One would expect the feminine adjective to be יְרֵאַת or יְרֵאת (see, for example, T. P. McCreesh, "Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10–31," *RB* 92 [1985] 28–29 n. 11).

72. According to the sages, "fear of the LORD" is the ראשית of knowledge (1:7a; cf. 9:10a). The term ראשית has a range of possible meanings. It may be interpreted temporally as "beginning or starting point" (cf. Gen 10:10, Jer 26:1), suggesting that "the fear of the LORD" is the prerequisite, the foundation for knowledge. It may also be read qualitatively, as "first, best, or epitome" (Amos 6:6, Jer 2:3, Ezek 48:14). Either way (and the ambiguity may well be intentional), there is no wisdom without it.

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Visual Metaphors and Proverbs 5:15–20: Some Archaeological Reflections on Gendered Iconography

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It is with great pleasure that I present this essay in celebration of the exceptional scholarship of Prof. Michael V. Fox. His work in Egyptology, wisdom literature, and lyric poetry has been an ongoing inspiration in my own studies since the early days of my graduate education. Prof. Fox's work provides commentary and analysis of fine philological and theological acumen, and he has been particularly attentive to aspects of female imagery, even in his earliest works. In this essay I attempt, in some small way, to add an art historical and gender archaeological perspective to his skillful textual exegesis of a particular metaphor in biblical love and wisdom poetry: the woman whose body (sexuality?) is a well/cistern or a fountain (Prov 5:15, 16, 18; Song 4:12b, 15). Using methodologies developed from representation theory,[1] I hope to show that the biblical metaphor of the "woman–well" can be found rendered in clay and stone in a variety of contexts, providing a frame of reference for many of the same variations in meaning that can be found in the biblical text.

It should be noted at the outset that studies of the physical representation of sexuality in ancient art are still in their methodological adolescence. This is reflected even in the level of basic terminology. No longer do analysts consider a representation of sexual activity to be an unambiguous reflection of real practice, nor is this sort of representation necessarily considered erotic in function (that is, designed to arouse). Instead, with recognition of the cultural construction of sexuality (gendered practice) based on biological difference (the anatomical "givens" of the sexes, a concept itself under revision), the terminology "sexuality" has come to mean both *more* and *less* than it did in the

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1. For a basic introduction to representation studies in the area of sexuality, see Natalie Boymel Kampen (ed.), *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth-century studies. Sexuality is no longer considered an indelible category of dualisms (male/female;[2] active/inactive; procreative/recreational; heterosexual/homosexual; natural/unnatural) but instead a sliding scale of behaviors taught and inscribed by culture on the bodies of its members. Further, in such an interpretive framework, issues of sexual identity may not always coincide with actual sexual practice or the representations of sexuality found in the culture in question.[3] In other words, the whole concept of gender, the cultural meanings assigned to a range of biological differences and behaviors, is alive and well in art history, cognitive or symbolic archaeology, and representation studies.

The benefit of using studies of this sort to understand biblical imagery for sexuality and gender better comes from a key feminist insight in gender archaeology: gender is a *process*, a cultural performance, and not a given.[4] Openness to this dynamic will help us understand our texts and their implications better. Hence, this analytical category of gender-as-process must be brought to bear on materials available from the ancient world of the Bible and its neighbors, as well as the biblical materials themselves.

Another methodological point is critical to our interpretation of what might also be called "visual theology." Visual theology is the deliberate expression of theological and social meanings via artistic media, as opposed to arts that in modern culture might be considered merely decorative embellishments. When image becomes a motif or archetype, it subsequently may find verbal expression in later or contemporaneous texts. The notion that anepigraphic evidence of material culture from the ancient world has much to tell us (contra the views of the so-called Minimalist or Copenhagen school of biblical interpretation) is key here, but such materials seldom function as straightforward "historical" proof of much of anything—except, perhaps, the unconscious biases

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2. Julia Asher-Greve, for example, is able to posit not two but *three* genders in Mesopotamia ("Decisive Sex, Essential Gender," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East: Proceedings of the 47th Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale, Helsinki, July 2–6, 2001* [ed. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting; 2 vols.; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project, 2002] 1:11–26.

3. Kampen, *Sexuality in Ancient Art*, 1. See also Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990) and Athalya Brenner, *The Intercourse of Knowledge: On Gendering Desire and "Sexuality" in the Hebrew Bible* (Biblical Interpretation Series 26; Leiden: Brill, 1997). For the difference between ideology of normative sexual practice and actual practice, see Ann Kessler Guinan's study of sex omen texts, "Erotomancy: Scripting the Erotic," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East* (ed. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Project, 2002) 1:185–201.

4. Sarah Milledge Nelson, *Gender in Archaeology: Analyzing Power and Prestige* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira, 1997) 30.

of the excavators and interpreters.[5] Some archaeologists prefer to speak of convergences between texts and artifacts. This is a more-nuanced position that moves the excavator and interpreter away from simplistic models of biblical archaeology that seek to determine or prove the Bible's historical or theological claims.[6]

I believe it is quite fair to speak of convergences between text and contextual artifact, whether it is in terms of social and ideological function or archetypal representation, even in cases in which the relationship between text and artifact must remain conceptual because no direct influence or sequencing can be adduced. I choose to take this approach with the Woman-Well metaphor and correlative images in ancient Near Eastern art. A congruence between wisdom literature's and the Song of Song's images, metaphors, form, and content with the international world of the ancient scribes, bureaucrats, and artisans has been affirmed repeatedly in scholarly discourse.[7] One might cite the convergence between the sages' vision of Yahweh as "weighing the heart" to requite one's deeds in Prov 21:2 and 24:12 and its clear connection to the vignette in chap. 125 of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, where the heart is weighed on a balance against Maʿat, the goddess who symbolizes justice and right action. Similarly, the image of Wisdom herself as engaging in Hathor-like acrobatics of pleasurable cultic frolicking before the high god is portrayed in Prov 8:30–31.[8] Examples such as these demonstrate that there is much in

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5. See ibid*.,* 25.

6. This approach is thoroughly (if somewhat trenchantly) discussed by archaeologist William G. Dever in *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 53–96; see especially his discussion of the "eloquent store jar" found on pp. 91–95.

7. O. Keel, *The Song of Songs* (Continental Commentary; trans. F. J. Gaiser; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), beautifully illustrates the power of adding visual materials to the exegetical task. See also Harold A. Liebowitz, "The Impact of Sumerian Art on the Art of Palestine and Syria," in *The Legacy of Sumer* (ed. Denise Schmandt-Besserat; Bibliotheca Mesopotamica 4; Malibu, Calif.: Undena, 1976) 87–98.

8. See my "Modern Look at Ancient Wisdom: The Instruction of Ptahhotep, Revisited," *BA* 44 (1981) 155–60 for a picture and discussion of the Book of the Dead's relationship to Israelite wisdom literature; see also O. Keel's "Die Weisheit 'spielt' vor Gott," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 21 (1974) 1–66, admirably criticized by Prof. Fox in his *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 288. For evidence of convergences outside wisdom literature, see Eleanor F. Beach, "An Iconographic Approach to Genesis 38," in *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible: Approaches, Methods, Strategies* (ed. Athalya Brenner and Carole R. Fontaine; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997) 285–305, an article sadly lacking in actual iconography but spirited in its discussion of the biases and difficulties in trying to correlate text and artifact in context.

the biblical text that may be fruitfully illumined by close attention to ancient artistic traditions of the cultures that produced both texts and artifacts. Mesopotamian narrative traditions are clearly in evidence as sources known to and reworked by the biblical authors and editors. If a culture can borrow the stories of another region, then we might reasonably posit a similar borrowing of motifs from the world of the arts and representation, especially where extensive trade networks between the two regions can be established with a fair degree of certitude.[9] A salient question about these connections arises from perusal of the narrative and artistic evidence of "borrowing": *what* causes one motif to be used by a local Levantine craftsperson or artist and others to be excluded deliberately from reproduction or to be drastically altered in their new context? Ecology, ideology, and theology come to mind as potential sources for this variation.

As is often the case, time and chance affect the materials that survive and are available to scholars for study; in Mesopotamia and Egypt we can often establish a better sequence of artistic images as they mutate through time and social changes. We will take up our questions in relation to the relevant materials from ancient Sumer to the kingdoms that followed it in the period of state-formation, before comparing them with the material and social contexts of texts from the Levant.

The artifact under consideration is a single-handled jug, one of many of the so-called "mother-goddess type" associated with late Early Dynastic IIIA–early IIIB pottery type "A." It was found in Mound A of the cemetery carved into the ruined ED IIIA palace complex at Kish, the first city to receive "kingship" after the Great Flood, according to the Sumerian King List.[10]

Ancient Kish, mentioned in lists and inscriptions from Sumer and elsewhere, has been identified with Tell Uhaimir in Iraq, lying about 12 km east of Babylon and 14 km northeast of modern Hillah. A group of about 40 mounds, including the ziggurat named Uhaimir, extends approximately 8 km (east–west) by 2.5 km (northeast) in an oval-shaped area. The whole area is generally referred to as "Kish," a city associated with the warrior deity Zababa in Early Dynastic IIIA hymns, though it may be that some of the tells of interest did not lie within the boundaries of the earliest city.[11] In Protoliterate and Early Dynastic times, this region of northern Mesopotamia was dominated by three cities—Babylon, Kutha, and Kish—which, not coincidentally,

9. Liebowitz, "Impact," 87–89.

10. James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed.; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) 265.

11. Moorey, *Kish*, xx, 19.

grew up along the three most hardy branches or channels of the Euphrates River extending into the south.[12] Water and its management were critical in the political and economic fortunes of these cities and would have exerted profound impact on the iconographic and artistic traditions of the site.

Sadly, early excavations of Kish Mound A, which concerns us here, and the related temple mound of Tell Ingharra (known in the Early Dynastic period as Hursakalama, a great temple complex dedicated to Ninhursag and later to Ishtar in the Neo-Babylonian period) were divided between several different excavators from Oxford and Chicago, who used different methodologies for recording their field notes. This has caused considerable confusion in handling the collection of artifacts and inscriptions divided between the Iraq Museum, Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, and the University of Chicago Oriental Institute. Making sense of grave groups in terms of chronology and relationship to pottery sequences often requires the researcher to consult the extremely cryptic Field Note cards of excavator Mackay, and even then, it is not always possible to reconstruct the exact position of artifacts (both the numbering for forms and the method of publication changed between seasons 1923 and 1925), though Mackay's documentation is clearly superior to that of excavator Watelin, who followed him. Later specialists trying to make sense of the full sweep of the excavations lament our lack of a clear picture of the life of the city and region, not from lack of finds, but because of "uniform inadequacy of publication."[13] The confusion surrounding these excavations underscores the serious difficulties encountered when one tries to provide a full provenance, much less an interpretation, of even the artifacts that excavators considered to be the "most distinctive" finds of the cemetery.[14]

The scientific excavations of the 1920s found evidence of many "clandestine" excavations, whose finds have been dispersed into private and university collections (for example, Yale University) via the private antiquities market, but the content of whose inscriptions make clear that the artifact in question originated in Kish. Materials from the excavations show that the city was occupied from the late Protoliterate period well into the Sassanian period, when the oldest areas of Kish and Hursagkalama were largely deserted. Re-cutting of canals in the Samarran period caused a brief flourish in the form of a small wealthy city on the old site, giving way to a small and poor village settlement

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12. M. Gibson, *The City and Area of Kish* (Coconut Grove, Fla.: Field Research Projects, 1972) 47–48.

13. Moorey, *Kish*, 20.

14. Ibid., 67. This is quite a loss because grave goods form an important source of information about power and prestige, both of which relate directly to questions of gender (V. A. Alekshin, "Burial Customs as an Archaeological Source," *CA* 24 [1983] 137–49).

during the Ottoman period. Surveys of canals and watercourses show that the expansion and contraction of occupation in this general area, like so much of Mesopotamia, was dependent on the fortunes, health, and upkeep of the canals and river channels.[15]

The so-called "mother-goddess" handled jars are the most ornate examples of a type of jar that is found in almost every intact set of grave goods (Mackay's Pottery Type A; see fig. 1). It was invariably accompanied by a low, round stand (Type B), considered a brazier by Mackay but perhaps better understood as a fruit stand, with Moorey.[16] Type B stands have also been found at Ur, Mari, Fara, and Susa from the Early Dynastic IIIA period into the early Akkadian period. The association of these stands with the mother-goddess handled jars is illuminated by a stand of the same type B at Ur, which shows date palm trees incised on the stand, along with the doorways of two shrines and two incised triangles representing the female pudenda, or the m u n u s/SAL sign, a pictogram of the vulva, meaning "woman."[17] Early excavators, noting the two ziggurats and temple of Hursagkalama at Tell Ingharra right next door, concluded that the "goddess" modeled onto the most-ornate handles of the Type A grave jars must be Aruru (Ninhursag) or Inanna-Ishtar. While this attribution of the "mother-goddess" title certainly fits for Aruru or Ninhursag, it is hard to think of a goddess *less* motherly than Inanna-Ishtar, a female warrior filled with erotic allure, a dangerous sex partner at best, and a demonic, spurned female at worst. Further, the most imposing temple to Ishtar at Kish is clearly a Neo-Babylonian building, though naturally it has earlier strata. Regardless of the "mother" to whom these handles and fruit stands were dedicated, the items themselves are dated to late Early Dynastic IIIB, and later excavation of Tell Ingharra provided additional evidence for this dating. Given the lack of explicit evidence to identify the female figure on the handles, who is neither pregnant nor nursing, one can only conclude that, for some excavators, the mere presence of breasts was an indelible indication of motherhood, just as the simple appearance of a female figure in a world gendered as normatively male *must* indicate her divinity.

Looking at our jar, we note a number of striking features. First, in all the jars of this type, decoration is mostly confined to the pronounced ledge shoul-

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15. Gibson, *The City and Area of Kish*, 58–60. For maps and diagrams of changing canal courses and associated pottery, architecture, and cemeteries, see pp. 241–331.

16. Mackay, *Sumerian Palace*, 146–48; Moorey, *Kish*, 68. Mackay found no evidence in any of the Type B stands that charcoal or incense had ever been burned in them, so he concluded they were provided for "warmth" for their owners in the underworld.

17. Moorey, *Kish*, 68. To be fair, the earliest symbol for "male" in Sumerian is the erect penis, so symbols for both sexes were rendered very concretely in terms of sexuality.
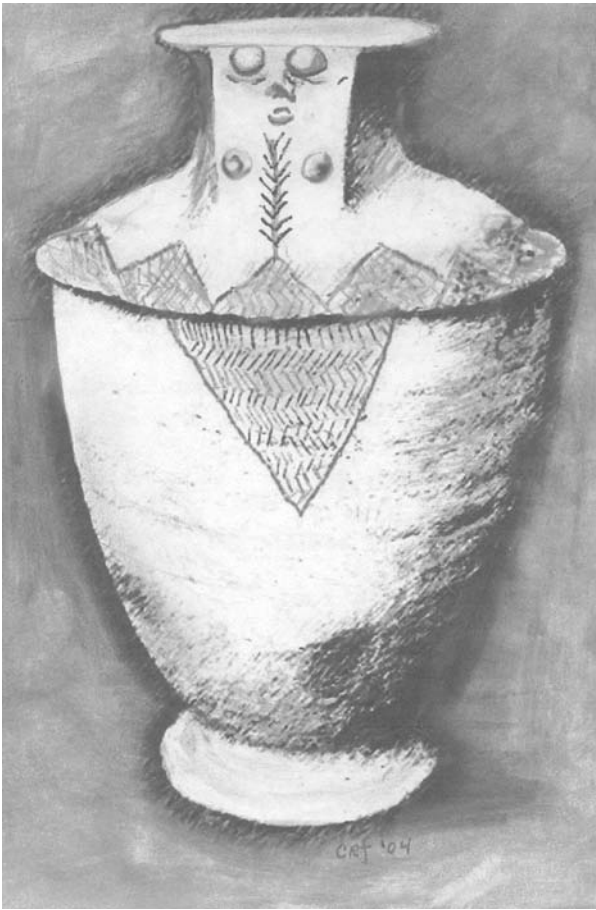
Fig. 1. Mother-goddess handled funerary jar (Type A) from Kish, Mound A; Early Dynastic IIIA–B. Oxford: Ashmolean Institute. Drawing by author.

der of the jar and the single handle, some of which are hollow (perhaps origi-nating from a more-typical "spout," whose neck had been closed to form a handle). In some cases the top of the handle does not meet and attach to the high neck of the jar, but in all cases the bottom of the handle is attached with considerable care to render it strong enough to aid in carrying something heavy in the jar (at least once!), usually presumed to be water. The small neck of the jars also suggests its use in holding and pouring. P. Delougaz has studied the range of handle decoration development in conjunction with the pottery forms of the Diyala region. The progression seems to have been from (1) short, geometric decoration on handles in Early Dynastic II (usually two diagonal lines crossing, creating two "open" triangles, mirroring the m u n u s/SAL sign

visually); to (2) taller geometric handles, sometimes decorated with a vegetal "sprig," perhaps a palm leaf, rendered by incision (ED IIIA); to (3) anthropomorphic figures modeled onto the handles (ED IIIB).[18] Decorations on the shoulder rim are made by a comb implement, creating a series of incised chevrons, forming upward-pointing triangles around the jar. Many jars contain two rows of triangle chevrons running around the shoulder; in some cases, similar incised designs were also found around the base of the jar.[19]

Our example of the Pottery Type A jar (Mackay's registration number 2133B, 1925 Season, 210)[20] combines all the most striking features of the type, and hence, helps us explicate an implied meaning for this ritually prescribed item. Because of the longer time needed to make the decorated and modeled jar, it is reasonable to assume that this version was more costly and desirable and was used in elite graves. Not only is the shoulder of the jar incised with triangles, but the *body* of the jar sports a m u n u s/SAL triangle positioned so that it clearly continues the figure of the entity modeled on the gynomorphic handle. Further, both breasts are present (markers of both female sex *and* female gender in ANE art) and are small but prominent.[21] They cannot be mistaken for anything other than breasts.[22] A sprig of vegetation rises from the "groin" area of the figure up between the breasts, emerging from a pointed triangle *above* the rim, smaller in size than the m u n u s/SAL triangle marked beneath it on the jar's body. This imagery is a forerunner of what may be seen on so much of the jewelry from Syria–Palestine, the so-called "Astarte" plaques (see fig. 2). Like most of the other handled figures, the jar's face has modeled, appliquéd brow ridges, large oval eyes with slight evidence of incised pupils but no inlays,[23] a prominent but narrow nose, and a relatively tiny mouth, indicated by modeled lips.

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18. P. Delougaz, *Pottery from the Diyala Region* (OIP 63; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) 87–89; Moorey, *Kish*, 67.

19. See Mackay, *Sumerian Palace*, pls. 48–50, for schematics of the incised designs.

20. One might think that, if we are equipped with drawings and registration numbers, we will find it a simple task to relate this artifact to a specific burial group, but not so! See Moorey's comments on the inadequacy of record keeping and publication, noted above (see nn. 13–14).

21. While not precisely of the "button"-breasted type (small, resembling buttons that have been appliquéd on), clearly they are more like this type than the generous, large breasts that are modeled out of the same lump of clay as the torso of the figure.

22. I was only able to examine this object behind its glass case in poor light, and so reference photographs do not permit certain identification of prominent, incised nipples, such as appear on other versions of the gynomorphic handles; see Mackay, *Sumerian Palace*, pl. 45, items 1984A, 2756A (2421B).

23. These are not, however, the "coffee-bean" eyes of other female figurines from Iraq.
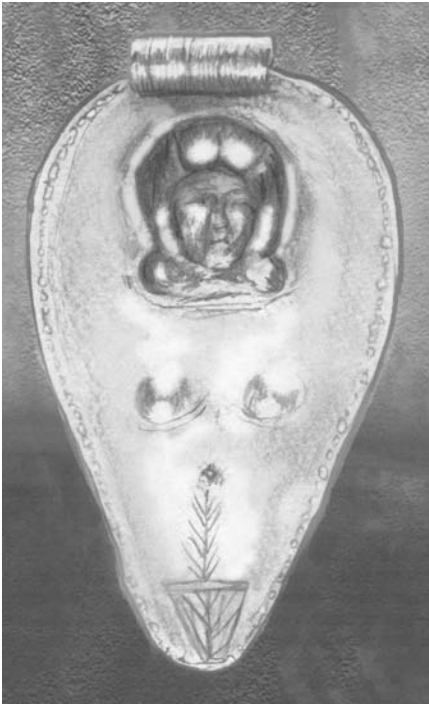
Fig. 2. Astarte Pendant: Ugarit, 1500– 1300 b.c.e.; gold (Aleppo Museum, #4576); drawing by author after Harvey Weiss (ed.), Ebla to Damascus: Art and Archaeology of Ancient Syria *(Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1985) pl. 131.*

This is, without a doubt, a jar, probably for water, that has been "gendered" as female. It incorporates markers of both biological sex and gendered culture in the form of modeled breasts and the m u n u s/SAL sign, which establishes a metonymy between Woman and woman's sex organs. This association comes to stand for her whole "meaning" to the culture that understands females this way, even though there are many times in an ordinary woman's life when she is acting neither as mother nor sexual partner. The jar's inclusion as a prominent and nonnegotiable element in any good high-end grave assembly and its connection to the female-gendered "fruit stand" suggest not so much a goddess giving birth or nursing—that is, a "mother" goddess engaged in mothering—as a female-as-earthen-partner and guarantor of fertility, the one whose womb supplies the water that causes plants to grow.

In this case, our female does not merely *hold* the pot, an instrumentality for the delivery of water to the arduously cut canals; she *is* the jar that holds its precious cargo, mirroring a woman whose womb is an implicit locus of blessing and fecundity. The m u n u s/SAL marker on the body of the pot leaves no

question about this identification between woman-who-is-womb and woman-who-is-jar. The sprig that runs from groin to neck between the breasts supports the conclusion that this is a divine figure and perhaps suggests why this image should appear on an item destined for use by the dead: is there hope here of some new life symbolized by the sprig that grows from the vulva of the jar-female? Yet this female has been "handled," made instrumental, and buried for the continuation of the human community, or so one must presume by this very intentional rendering of the female form as a "container" of something else. She is necessary but not *as* necessary as what she carries. Our jar cannot speak its full meaning to us, so we cannot say whether its primary use was for the living to bring water for lustration of the dead in the liminal zone of the grave or whether it was a source of drink for the dead in the realm of shadows. At any rate, it is nice to think that when the dead were laid in their grave they did not go alone or unprovisioned!

As might be expected from Kish's geographical placement, guarding the way south to the rich city-states of Sumer[24] and its mention as the first city to "make firm the lands" after the Flood—that is, exercise some sort of broader regional power—Kish carried its cachet of power for centuries after its heyday in the Early Dynastic period had come to a close. Perhaps because of the broad region included within its boundaries, Kish developed a so-called "secular" model for its rulership rather than the typical model of governmental power developing out of a tightly controlled temple/religious center. This form of social organization may have offered far greater possibilities for the expansion of civil power and territorial hegemony.[25]

Kish's probable first ruler after the Flood, Etana, whose myth is enshrined in the glyptic arts, is said to have flown up to heaven on a rescued eagle in order to beg the "plant of birth" from Ishtar, providing a mythic origin for the motif of a male figure mounted on an eagle in mid-air on seals. Although the earliest rulers of Kish all seem to have had Semitic rather than Sumerian names, by the time we see a king with a true Sumerian name, Enmebaragesi, rulers felt obliged to add the title "king of Kish" to their portfolio if they wished to highlight their role as regional rather than local ruler. In a Sumerian legend, either Enmebaragesi or his son Aka is said to have been forced to submit to Gilgamesh of Uruk. Moorey posits that the expansionist tendencies of Kish's rulers in the Early Dynastic period lent a powerful symbolic vehicle to kings of other prominent cities who wished to take up this aggressive program

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24. The Euphrates and Tigris lie only about 30 miles apart at Kish.

25. Petr Charvát, "The Kish Evidence and the Emergence of States in Mesopotamia," *Current Anthropology* 22 (1981) 686–88.

of conquest. This validating "king of Kish" tradition continued until the time of Naram-Sin, and well into the Neo-Babylonian period we find the great builder kings of many dynasties speaking proudly of their restorations at Kish and Hursagkalama.[26]

For our study, perhaps the most interesting literary survival of a tradition about or from Kish is the rather remarkable rulership of a woman, Ku-Baba (or Ku-Bau), at the end of the Early Dynastic period, precisely the time period to which our gynomorphic-handled jar is dated. Called a "woman of wine" in the Sumerian King List, she was apparently a barmaid from the city of Akshak. Given the association of Inanna-Ishtar with the tavern and the sweet (sexual?) wine to be drunk there, as well as female ownership of taverns and involvement with the process of brewery, we should not assume Ku-Baba to be some sort of prostitute but a successful business woman with divine associations herself. We need only think of Siduri, the wise ale-wife who counseled Gilgamesh on the meaning of life, to correct the impressions of "women of wine" left by the Bible's treatment of businesswomen such as Rahab of Jericho.[27] Little more is known of Ku-Baba than this brief resumé, but her name endured in later omen texts, where it was associated with evil for the land as a result of sexual identity "confusion":[28] "If an anomalous birth has both male and female genital organs, it is a case of the omen of Ku-Bau who ruled the land: the land of the king will become waste."[29] Clearly, with Ku-Baba's anomalous assumption of the title *lugal*, a term reserved for males, we have moved into the realm of ancient perceptions of gender and sex. While the rich burials of women rulers and administrators (an index of their power and prestige) were not unknown in the Early Dynastic period, women's ongoing disappearance from public life starting in the Akkadian period was underscored in the gender ideology of the male elites. A baby whose gender was unclear and a woman ruler: these were linked in the elite mind as a challenge and threat to the political hegemony of the king, a point to which we will return later.

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26. Moorey, *Kish*, 164–81.

27. See Julia Assante, "Sex, Magic and the Liminal Body in the Erotic Art and Texts of the Old Babylonian Period," in *Sex and Gender in the Ancient Near East* (ed. S. Parpola and R. M. Whiting; Helsinki: Neo-Assyrian Text Project, 2002) 1:27–52, for the tavern as a setting for Inanna-Ishtar's activities in OB erotica, some of which was produced at Kish in the 1600s.

28. T. Jacobsen, *Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939) 104–5 n. 201; Asher-Greve, "Decisive Sex," 19–20.

29. E. Leichty, *The Omen Series Summa izbu* (Texts from Cuneiform Sources 4; Locust Valley, N.Y.: Augustin, 1970) 8, quoted in William Hallo, "The Women of Sumer," in *The Legacy of Sumer* (ed. D. Schmandt-Besserat; Malibu, Calif.: Undena, 1976) 28.

Our gynomorphic Sumerian jar is in many respects a more primal exemplar of some of the ideas associated with the well-known motif of the "deity with flowing streams." This widespread image showed a deity, sometimes holding a small, handle-less pot (aryballos) from which two (or four, depending on how one counts) wavy streams flow, often filled with cavorting fish. In other examples, the flowing streams emerged directly from the deity him- or herself. Van Buren concludes that the original deity of the flowing streams was Enki/ Ea, god of sweet waters and wisdom, and his image is sometimes replaced by lesser deities, including goddesses with whom he was associated.[30] This imagery has often been connected to the important role of royal oversight of the cutting, digging, and maintaining of the canal system that was so critical to cultural development. The king "stands in" for the god, whose sweet waters give fish, irrigation, trade, and communication; in this way, the godlike portfolio of the king's duties and essences is conveyed in visual form (repeatedly). This in turn supports the ideology of a ranked and stratified society in which neither gods nor elites actually wish to be the ones who do the punishing work associated with irrigation! The king, in performing this duty, is powerful, effective, and godlike and might reasonably use this water association to shore up his claims to godly powers in other realms as well.

One of the most striking manifestations of the deity with flowing streams is to be found in the OB period in the kingdom of Mari (see fig. 3). Recalling the limestone basin of Gudea of Lagash,[31] which shows interlocking goddesses in the sky (or perhaps clouds) with flowing pots whose waters stream down to earth, we find this female form of the motif made concrete in a goddess who has quite literally *become* the fountain. Found at the foot of stairs leading up to dais in palace courtyard hall #64 (Plan III), the statue of an ornately dressed and elegantly coiffed minor goddess holds an aryballos that flows with streams, an effect also emphasized in the long lines of her robe, which teem with fish. The vase was connected to a pipe at the back of the statue which must once have been linked to a water tank at a higher level.[32] Here, the fountain-female openly dispenses her blessings in the palace of the king of Mari, in the liminal zone inhabited by those waiting to enter the king's audience chamber. The

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30. See E. Douglas Van Buren, *The Flowing Vase and the God with Streams* (Berlin: Hans Schoetz, 1933) for a full analysis of the variants on this motif. Enki/Ea is often shown as a hybrid figure whose male body ends in a fish tail. The rank of deities can easily be calculated by counting the number of horns on their crowns—the more, the better!

31. Henri Frankfort*, The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* (4th ed.; Pelican History of Art; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) 98; see also illus. 111.

32. A. Parrot, *Mari: Documentation Photographique de la Mission Archéologique de Mari* (Collection des Ides Photographiques 7; Neuchâtel: Ides & Calendes, 1953) pls. 119–22.

same motif is repeated in the famous "Inves-
titure of the King" wall painting found in
another palace courtyard #106 (Plan III).
This painting shows King Zimrilim before
Ishtar in the upper left register. Beneath that
scene, we find two goddesses with flowing
vases, flanked by trees and various animals;
the middle section is damaged but may also
have contained Zimrilim.[33] In a related
wall painting scene opposite, mythological
battles around water are recorded: Marduk
conquers Tiamat, the (salt) watery female
monster whose defeat marks Marduk's rise
to sovereign power above all the gods. Ex-
cavator Parrot writes of the goddess with the
flowing vase at Mari: "Statue miraculeuse,
elle s'animait à certaines heures, apportant
à l'Etat, donc aux sujets de Zimri-Lim, la
preuve matérielle de ses faveurs. D'elle on
aurait pu dire en lui appliquant une des
données de la dogmatique chrétienne,
qu'elle était 'le signe visible d'une grâce in-
visible'."[34] Indeed!

One might easily make the case that
Mesopotamian water imagery has greater
or lesser impact on gendered metaphors
found in Proverbs that were edited or com-
posed in the Persian or Hellenistic period,
depending on how one chooses to deal
with the scant evidence. The Babylonian
shape and influence on the Torah is indis-
putable and need not be argued here; later
Jewish communities continued living in the
region of Babylon, so continuous contact
with ancient traditions of this region may
be posited. However, our study must also

*Fig. 3. Goddess with a Flowing
Vase. Mari, OB period. Drawing by
author after A. Parrot,* Mari: Doc-
umentation Photographique de
la Mission Archéologique de
Mari *(Collection des Ides Photo-
graphiques 7; Neuchâtel: Ides &
Calendes, 1953) pl. 119.*

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33. Ibid., pl. 114.

34. André Parrot, *Mission Archéologique de Mari*, vol. 2/2: *Le Palais: Peintures Muralis*
(Paris: Geuthner, 1958) 10.

take into account the change in ecological environment—and concomitant mythology—between the Bible's two regional homes, the Levant and Meso-potamia. Given the Hebrew Bible's preoccupation with issues of land, we would expect to see conditions in the beloved land of promise reflected in its scripture as well as the environmental situation of some of its writers in the land of exile.

It is hardly possible to overestimate the significance of water in its real, ma-terialist sense in an arid region whose inhabitants engage mostly in subsistence agriculture for their survival. Indeed, the history of economic and political de-velopment in Syria–Palestine may be mapped along the trajectory of the situa-tion pertaining when there is *no* great river to serve as conduit for culture. In circumstances of that sort, it was not the flowing stream that held pride of place but the life-giving rainstorm whose waters were caught in cisterns, hewn into bedrock by hard labor. In the south (Arad, Beth-shemesh, Kadesh-barnea, Tel Sheva), cisterns (sing., *bôr*) were cut directly into bedrock in the shape of a bottle or bell and, where rock was porous, had to be plastered with lime in or-der to hold water successfully. In the north (Gibeon, Hazor, Gezer, Megiddo), engineers cut directly down into bedrock to reach the water table. By the Iron II period, most houses had their own private cistern, though the king or gov-ernor also maintained a public cistern within the city walls. Some cities were provided with man-made underground reservoirs. Management of one's water supply was a critical duty of kings who wished to survive a war or siege, as Hezekiah's work on the Siloam Tunnel and the outlets of the Gihon Springs shows (2 Chr 32:2–5).[35]

Mythology reflects these conditions and adaptations. The long-time associ-ation of the Weather- or Storm-God with the powerful thunderstorms that give life is attested in Levantine mythological epics, prayers, and historical documents. The ability to make rain or control water supply is equated with the raw power of life. In Ugaritic materials from the Late Bronze Age, we find that, along with loss of animal and human fertility, the parched furrow and dried up wadi pool is a sure sign that the Weather-God Baʿal has fallen to his enemy, Death. The return of the rains is a poignant moment of realized prom-ise and deliverance, as we find in the Epic of King Keret, yet another text about a king's quest for progeny:

> Unto the earth Baal rains,
>   and unto the field rains ʿAliyy.

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35. Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Library of Ancient Israel; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 126–290, esp. 210–23.

> Sweet to the earth is Baal's rain,
> and to the field the rain of ʿAliyy . . .[36]

Yet, when read against the climatological background of the ancient Levant, the story of the god who makes water from the sky—an atmospheric Storm-God—takes on a more nuanced history, especially with respect to subterranean waters as a source of fertility. Due to continued deforestation by ancient populations engaged in building projects, the water table of Anatolia, northern Syria, and Canaan continued to drop relentlessly, causing springs, rivers, and wells to dry up. This ecological change took place within the framework of the regular cycle of dry (death) and rainy (life) seasons, drought and fecundity. At the same time, we see earlier *terrestrial* water-gods, modeled along Mesopotamian mythological lines, recede in importance, often becoming the "disappearing" Storm-God so well known from mythology. In prehistoric Anatolia, a progression of imagery for this chthonic water deity can be seen by changes in the images taken to represent fertilization of the ground: a squatting female is later replaced by images of subterranean waters and finally evolves into a bull or its horns, often shown within a circle (an image of a well from which the god emerges). These earlier versions of the chthonic, water-giving deity in Syria–Canaan (Yam 'Sea' or Nahar 'Prince River', along with ʾEl, the great father who gives fecundity) represent, for some, the more available naturally occurring ground waters—springs, fountains, and wadi pools—of the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Early Bronze Ages.[37]

In the Levant, then, the dependence on rainfall and its collection rather than river irrigation and its maintenance has not only shaped the portrait of the dominant Weather-God but also added a signal dimension of uncertainty to the human socioreligious relationship to the environment. Most importantly, not only is rainfall unpredictable but, even when it does arrive, the necessary waters run away uselessly without considerable organized effort to restrain and contain them. While the data do not allow much speculation at present, it may also be that the dominant form of the goddess in ancient Israel, the "asherah," whether pole or tree in Yahweh's sanctuary, also bows gracefully to the testimony of cosmic groundwaters that must be present to nourish a tree's growth, thereby allowing it to feed the caprids so often seen nibbling at its fruit. Perhaps it is not without significance that Josiah desecrated the irrigated royal gardens on the terraces of the Kidron Valley, watered by the Gihon Spring, and

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36. "The Legend of King Keret," trans. H. L. Ginsberg, in *ANET* 148.

37. Alberto R. W. Green, *The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East* (Biblical and Judaic Studies 8; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 89–120, 151–52.

burned the Asherah from Yahweh's house there at the brook flowing from the spring (2 Kgs 23:4, 6). For Ezekiel, paradise will have been restored when these underground waters break out from beneath the restored Temple in Jerusalem and create trees whose fruit never falls or fails, along the banks of the saving stream (Ezek 47:12).

Turning to consider the gendered imagery found in Prov 5:15–20, we read:

> Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.
> Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets?
> Let them be for yourself alone, and not for sharing with strangers.
> Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.
>
> (Prov 5:15–18, NRSV)

The sage's address to the young man uses powerful images of water that is private, contained, and restrained, versus scattered and public. It fits nicely with the Iron II conditions in the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, where private cisterns in the home are contrasted with public cisterns or reservoirs accessible to the public. The differentiation between the two kinds of groundwater—water occurring naturally (fount, spring) and water that must be cultivated by human effort (cistern, well)—is accounted for by Fox as primarily a poetic distinction rather than an active element in the metaphor in question.[38] However, given our survey of artifacts and material culture related to ground water and its containers, one might raise the question of this distinction from a mythological point of view.

The fountain and spring connect us powerfully to the ancient deities often associated with wisdom and the secrets of the deep, such as Enki/Ea, who dispense the naturally occurring waters; the cistern and the well remind us of male effort in stabilizing the waters by providing a useful container—the canal, the jar, the cistern. The kings and sages of the ancient Near East certainly wanted water to flow reliably but only under close control—*theirs*! Whether as a funereal jar gendered as female and intimating primal growth or an awe-inspiring "state" monument of a goddess fountain whose flowing jar is maintained by a feat of male engineering, the female element in this metaphor is diminished into an instrumentality, a vehicle for the master's waters, and by extension, his sovereignty. The metaphor, when placed in material and mythological context, emphasizes male control more than female fecundity, and Fox is correct when he places the meaning of springs and streams within the realm of male procreativity. The springs and streams may refer to semen given shape

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38. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 199.

and held in its own rightful container, the wife, or to the offspring (!) them-selves.[39] Yet, the male waters are profoundly ambiguous, fluids having no shape of their own but the ones provided by culture. Left to themselves, they wander where they will and run the risk of coming to nothing or going where they should not. The well, the jar, and the cistern furnish a comforting, female solution: inert, made and maintained by male effort, they contribute stability to the flow as they encompass the male streams.

The metaphor found in Prov 5:15–18 reflects some elements typical in the gendering of visual imagery in the Hebrew Bible, where we often find male images to be "movable" (gazelle, ox, bull, eagle) and female images "station-ary" (tree, plant, flower, food). It does more, however, in that it reminds us that, even in the words of the poet, the hand of the ruler may be at work, in-scribing his own power on his subjects. Patriarchal organization, including sex-uality, is a *strategic technology* of social control that fosters territorial expansion and ranked stratification of social classes, in part by making one gender norma-tive and the owner of the other. Anomalous female sexuality, whether in desire for a forbidden partner or an aberrant birth in which the sex of the child is un-clear, was seen as a threat to the rule of kingship for precisely this reason. The ruler had to assure the populace that he ruled with godly authorization and could dispense the flowing streams of life with godlike potency. This he ac-complished by the harnessing the ideological power of the arts to convey the simple message of "king = blessing." But no king rules alone: in a world of constant competition, it was important to form trustworthy alliances, and this was best achieved by assuring loyalty through ties of kinship. In this context, control of female sexuality was every bit as important and laborious a strategy in the quest to stabilize power as was the ability to channel divine waters into useful and far-ranging channels. Where would kings—or sages!—be without the dutiful kinswomen they exchanged as pawns on the field of politics?

Three different artifacts from three successive millennia—yet all tell the same story in their imagery. Our sages are no Mesopotamian despots, but they have a strikingly similar goal in this little passage on sexual fidelity: to achieve a proper succession and transfer of power from one generation of men to an-other. Especially fearful is the liminal boundary where the sacred streams cross the limits of the male body, where private becomes public, the secure becomes the scattered; it required metaphorical reinforcement. To achieve this, the sages required a conduit, a stabilizing mold or "placeholder" for their semen and their connection to the future. The gendered image of the female body as

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39. Ibid., 200–201.

a receptacle,[40] whether as well or fountain, in clay, stone, or flesh, is indeed "locked" and loaded with patriarchal fantasies of control as woman's body gives shape to the gendered waters of life.

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40. Fox rightly notes that Lev 20:18 views "fount" as the source of menstrual flow (p. 201). Clearly, the image can be multivalent, but I would argue that menstrual fluid is seldom considered positively in official patriarchal ideology (for extensive discussion of genital fluids, see *Wholly Woman, Holy Blood: A Feminist Critique of Purity and Impurity* **(**ed. Kristin De Troyer et al.; Studies in Antiquity and Christianity; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2003).

The Instruction of Amenemope and Proverbs 22:17–24:22 from the Perspective of Contemporary Research

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The Instruction of Amenemope remained buried in the basement of the British Museum for approximately 40 years before its translation into English was published in 1923. Subsequently, the question of the relationship between the Instruction of Amenemope and the book of Proverbs has not ceased to occupy researchers. A variety of answers to this question were proposed, until in the 1960s the consensus was reached that the Instruction of Amenemope influenced the book of Proverbs, rather than the reverse.

This position was, however, challenged by the late R. N. Whybray. Whybray, a leading scholar of research on biblical wisdom literature who initially voiced support for this consensus, recently revised his opinion and, in a series of recent publications, cast doubt upon the direct connection between the book of Proverbs, particularly 22:17–24:22, and the Egyptian wisdom literature. Given Whybray's long, valuable contribution to the study of biblical wisdom literature, his view deserves serious consideration.

The purpose of this discussion is, therefore, to examine Whybray's arguments and to ascertain their plausibility. Because he relied on earlier research, I will begin with a brief survey of scholarship on the issue. Then I will present Whybray's argument, together with the opposing claims that have recently been raised from a biblical perspective by J. A. Emerton. In the following, I will examine Whybray's approach, with an emphasis on the Egyptological perspective: an analysis of the relevant Hebrew text in comparison with Egyptian wisdom literature, essentially a completion of Emerton's examination from a biblical perspective. Finally, I will attempt to answer the following question: does the Egyptian evidence confirm a specific relationship between the

Instruction of Amenemope and Prov 22:17–24:22, or should a relationship of this sort be rejected, in line with Whybray?

The first scholar to point to a connection between the third collection of the book of Proverbs, "The Words of the Wise" (Prov 22:17–24:22), and the Instruction of Amenemope was the Egyptologist Erman,[1] who, in 1924, reasoned that the Instruction of Amenemope was translated into Hebrew by a Jew living in Egypt in the Saite or the Persian period. The differences between the texts were explained by him as distortions on the part of the editors of the collection of Proverbs, who did not understand the composition translated from the Egyptian.

Gressmann[2] embraced Erman's assumption that the writer or editor of these chapters in Proverbs borrowed from the Egyptian composition, although in his opinion Proverbs was not a direct translation from the Egyptian source but rather a considered selection of suitable material adapted to the new framework. Both Gressmann and Sellin,[3] who also published two papers in the same year (1924), assumed that the word שׁלשׁום in Prov 22:20 relates to 30 sayings that can be found in Prov 22:17–24:22.

No more than three years later (beginning in 1927), both biblical and Egyptological scholars overturned these conclusions: the Egyptian composition is not the source for the Proverbs but vice versa. They argued that the book of Proverbs, or another Semitic composition, influenced the author of the Instruction of Amenemope; or alternatively, that the author of the Instruction of Amenemope and the author of the book of Proverbs borrowed from a prior Hebrew or Aramaic composition. The starting point for this proposition was the assumption that the Instruction of Amenemope was composed in the Late Period, that is, during the Persian period, probably in one of the Jewish colonies in Egypt mentioned in Jeremiah (44:1; 46:14). The major arguments of these scholars were as follows:

    a. Amenemope demonstrates a unique religious-moral standpoint regarding the conception of God and the relationship between humans and

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1. Adolf Erman, "Eine ägyptische Quelle der 'Sprüche Salomos,'" *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philologisch-historische Klasse* 15 (1924) 86–93.

2. Hugo Gressmann, "Die neugefundene Lehre des Amen-em-ope und die vorexilische Spruchdichtung Israels," *ZAW* 42 (1924) 272–96.

3. Ernest Sellin, "Review of A. Erman 'Eine ägyptische Quelle . . . ,'" *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 45 (1924) 1325–29 (cols.); idem, "Die neugefundene 'Lehre des Amen-em-ope' in ihrer Bedeutung für jüdische Literatur und Religionsgeschichte," *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 45 (1924) 1873–84 (cols.).

their fellow-humans. These thoughts have no parallel in the previous Egyptian wisdom texts but are to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures.[4]

b. The Instruction of Amenemope is replete with Semitisms reflected in its syntax, grammar, and terminology.[5]

This view was disproved with the redating of the Egyptian work on the basis of orthography and palaeography. During the 1960s, it became clear that Amenemope was, almost certainly, composed in the Ramesside period, the eleventh century B.C.E.[6]

Williams[7] stood at the forefront of the rejection of the theory in favor of Semitism in the Egyptian work, a theory which seemingly confirmed that the Egyptian instruction was translated from a Semitic composition. Williams pointed out that the Ramesside period was characterized by close contact with Egypt's northern neighbors, as a result of which many Semitic words penetrated the Egyptian language. Accordingly, the use of Semitic words is common to all works that were written in that period and is not unique to the Instruction of Amenemope.[8]

Thus, for approximately three decades, the majority of researchers were of the opinion that the Egyptian wisdom literature influenced the author of Prov 22:17–24:22, whether the source of the influence was the Instruction of Amenemope or other similar Egyptian instruction.[9] The key word in the

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4. W. O. E. Oesterley, "The Teaching of Amen-m-ope and the Old Testament," *ZAW* 45 (1927) 9–24; Robert Kevin, "The Wisdom of Amen-em-opt and Its Possible Dependence upon the Hebrew book of Proverbs," *JSOR* 14 (1930) 115–53.

5. Ibid.; Etienne Drioton, "Sur la sagesse d'Amenemopé," in *Mélanges biblique rédigés en l'honneur de André Robert* (ed. H. Gazelles; Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1957) 254–80.

6. For the dating of the composition of the Instruction of Amenemope, see Hellmut Brunner, *Die Weisheitsbücher der Ägypter: Lehren für das Leben* (Zurich: Artemis, 1988); Diethard Römheld, *Wege der Weisheit: Die Lehren Amenemopes und Proverbien 22,17–24,22* (BZAW 184; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989).

7. Ronald Williams, "The Alleged Semitic Original of the Wisdom of Amenemope," *JEA* 47 (1961) 100–106.

8. For comprehensive research on Semitic terminology in Egyptian literature in the New Kingdom Period, see James Hoch, *Semitic Words in Egyptian Texts of the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

9. See Irene Grumach for the theory that both the author of Proverbs 22–24 and the author of Amenemope borrowed from an earlier Egyptian instruction similar to Amenemope and other Egyptian instructions (*Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenope* [Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 23; Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972]). Grumach attempts to reconstruct this instruction, which she terms *Alte Lehre*. The *Jubilar* questioned the feasibility of reconstructing such an instruction; see Michael V. Fox, "Two Decades of Research in Egyptian Wisdom Literature," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 107 (1980)

establishment of this relationship between the Egyptian instruction and Proverbs 22–24 was שלשום (*Kethiv*; שָׁלִישִׁים *Qere*) which appears in Prov 22:20. Scholars assumed that this word was borrowed from its Egyptian parallel, found in the epilogue to the Instruction of Amenemope (27:6) and relates to the 30 chapters that make up the Egyptian work. They disagree, however, on the question of whether there are 30 chapters or instructions in Prov 22:17–24:22 and on the scope of these units.[10]

Recently, Whybray challenged this consensus. In his last publications, from 1990 onward, he argued that the author or editor of Prov 22:17–24:22 had no direct contact with the Instruction of Amenemope.[11] The main points of Whybray's research have been raised in previous research,[12] and they are as follows: only some of the subjects that feature in the Egyptian work can be found in Prov 22:17–23:11; additionally, the order of their appearance in the

120–35. Similarly, see John Ruffle, "The Teaching of Amenemope and Its Connection with the Book of Proverbs," *TynBul* 28 (1977) 64–65; also, Römheld's detailed and extensive research (*Wege der Weisheit*, 7–114).

10. Among those who maintain that Prov 22:17–24:22 contains 30 sayings or literary units are: Sellin, "Review of A. Erman"; idem, "Die neugefundene 'Lehre des Amen-emope'"; Gressmann, "Die neugefundene Lehre"; R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* (AB 18; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965); William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970); J. A. Emerton, "The Teaching of Amenemope and Proverbs XXII 17–XXIV 22: Further Reflections on a Long-Standing Problem," *VT* 51 (2001) 431–65; Victor Hurowitz, "'Shloshim(?) (Sayings) of Admonition and Knowledge': Formal and Exegetical Remarks to 'The Words of the Wise' (Proverbs 22,17–24,22)," in *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of the Bible* (ed. Z. Talshir et al.; Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press / Bialik Institute, 2001). Among the writers who hold that שלשום was written under the influence of the Egyptian parallel but doubt that Prov 22:17–24:22 contains 30 sayings are Erman, "Eine ägyptische Quelle," and my *Proverbs* (The World of the Bible; Tel Aviv, 1996 [Hebrew]).

11. Whybray expressed the opposite opinion in his earlier research. Thus, in his commentary on the book of Proverbs, he writes: "The Instruction of Amen-m-opet served directly as a basis for one section of Proverbs (22:17–24:22)" (*The Book of Proverbs* [CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972] 3; cf. p. 132). Further on, in his commentary on 22:17–24:22, he identifies 30 sections (pp. 133–41). For a rejection of the direct connection between the Instruction of Amenemope and the book of Proverbs, see his latest publications: R. N. Whybray, *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs* (JSOTSup 99; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990); idem, *Proverbs* (NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994); idem, *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs* (JSOTSup 168; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); idem, "The Structure and the Composition of Proverbs 22:17–24:22," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder* (ed. S. Porter, P. Joyce, and D. Orton; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 83–96.

12. Identical claims were made by Ruffle, "The Teaching of Amenemope"; see in particular pp. 55–56, 63, 65.

Hebrew work is not identical to that in the Egyptian work. Whybray focuses his discussion on the word שלשום (*Kethiv*; שָׁלִישִׁים *Qere*; Prov 22:20), which in his opinion should be interpreted in accordance with the *Kethiv* 'the day before yesterday', although this interpretation was mentioned in earlier research and rejected for reasons of hapax legomenon. Whybray finds support for this reading (like Ruffle who preceded him) in the appearance of the word 'today', also marking time, in the previous verse (v. 19). Whybray rejects the reading שָׁלִשִׁים 'thirty', arguing that the use of a number without a noun is unknown in biblical language; if the intention was to refer to 30 proverbs, the language employed would have been 'thirty words' or 'thirty sayings'. In addition, Prov 22:17–24:22 is not one homogenous literary unit made up of 30 sayings or chapters, like the Instruction of Amenemope, but rather a literary unit constituted from varied material relating to different sources.[13]

Whybray nevertheless admits that these chapters in Proverbs demonstrate an affinity to the Egyptian material,[14] although he maintains that there is a closer similarity in form and content to other collections in the book of Proverbs, particularly to the first collection, chaps. 1–9. From this perspective, he examines and interprets Prov 22:17–24:22, not in comparison with the Instruction of Amenemope but in connection with other sections of the book of Proverbs, particularly with chaps. 1–9.[15]

Emerton disputed Whybray's conclusions.[16] In his article, Emerton addresses each of Whybray's claims and refutes them one by one. Here I will restrict myself to the central issue raised by Emerton, specifically, the meaning of the key word שלשום (*Kethiv*; Prov 22:20). Emerton rejects the reading of the word in accordance with the *Kethiv* 'the day before yesterday'. He repeats arguments that have been presented in prior research and, in addition, finds support for his opinion in the versions as follows: the Septuagint renders 'threefold', namely, 'in a threefold way'; the Vulgate, which follows, interprets

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13. Whybray suggested (following Niccacci) that 22:17–23:11 constitute a separate instruction that contains ten units and a prologue at its beginning (22:17–21), and that 23:12–24:22 "is a miscellaneous collection of (probably) seven pieces mainly of an instructional character but having no common pattern and no connection with one another"; see Whybray, "The Structure," 90–96; idem, *The Composition*, 324–25.

14. In this issue too, Whybray follows Ruffle ("The Teaching of Amenemope"), who reasons that both the literary form and the subjects common to Prov 22:17–24:22 and the Instruction of Amenemope belong to the wider cultural tradition of the ancient Near East and are not indications of a dependency of one of the compositions on the other.

15. See Whybray, *Proverbs*, 324–25; idem, *The Composition*, 133–41; idem, "The Structure," 86–96.

16. Emerton, "The Teaching of Amenemope."

it as 'in a threefold manner', and the Syriac version is similar.[17] Emerton assumes that the *Qere* שָׁלִישִׁים is the basis of the Septuagint translation. If this is the case, the interpretation 'thirty' is closer to the versions and equals the Egyptian parallel. With respect to Whybray's claim that biblical language does not allow the use of a number without specifying its subject (which should have been 'words' or a similar term), Emerton cites examples from biblical literature in which a number is used without a subject (for example, the numeral sayings in Prov 30:18, 21). Moreover, Emerton argues that, even if Whybray's claim that 22:17–24:22 are constituted of varied material taken from different sources is accurate, it does not negate the existence of 30 sayings in these chapters. Indeed, Emerton identifies 30 sayings.

In the following, I will examine Whybray's claims from an Egyptological perspective rather than a biblical one such as Emerton's, in light of the publication of new Egyptian wisdom texts in recent years. This may be considered a fulfillment of Whybray's own request, as he wrote in one of his last studies: "That these may be here (in Proverbs 22:17–24:22) direct reminiscences of that work (Amenemope), as of other similar works, here remains possible—but this is a question to be decided by the Egyptologist."[18]

Before embarking on a discussion of the Hebrew text in relation to the relevant Egyptian material, I will briefly describe the Egyptian composition, the discovery of which 80 years ago was a turning point in the research on biblical wisdom literature. The Instruction of Amenemope, the full manuscript of which is to be found in the British Museum (no. 10474), was probably written in the Ramesside period, in the eleventh century B.C.E., by a scribe of this name who intended it for his youngest son. As with other Egyptian compositions of this genre, its goal was to provide a sort of guidebook for the reader to prepare him for a successful life and career. Both in its form and content, the Instruction of Amenemope resembles other Egyptian wisdom instructions, all

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17. Emerton raises a further argument against the interpretation of שלשום as relating to a period of time, but it does not withstand criticism. He argues that this interpretation infers that the speaker recently wrote a letter of wisdom (במועצת ודעת) to the reader. This interpretation is unlikely because there is no other instance in the Bible in which a letter of wisdom was written. However, the lack of reference to a letter of wisdom in the Bible does not mean that there was no such letter in reality. Letters connected to schools were abundant in ancient Egypt; see, for example, the Kemit, which is "a letter used in scribal training" (Richard Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture in Middle Kingdom Egypt* [London: Continuum, 2002] 322) or the satirical letter of Anastasi I and many other letters in the collection of Late Egyptian Miscellanies (see Ricardo Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* [Brown Egyptological Studies 1; London: Oxford University Press, 1954]).

18. Whybray, "The Structure," 96.

of which are constructed in a uniform pattern. Despite this similarity, it has a number of unique features with regard to both form and content: with regard to form—the organization of metrical lines and grouping of lines into 30 sections or chapters; with regard to content—an emphasis on the connection between humans and god on the one hand, and the supremacy of god on the other. God appears here as a supreme being who exercises exclusive governance over various aspects of human life, such as wealth and poverty, reward and punishment, and so on. It is important to note that, over time, the Ramesside work became a popular text and even formed part of the corpus taught in schools, as testified by copies of sections preserved on papyrus, wooden boards, and ostraca. Although most of these copies date from the middle of the first millennium B.C.E., a citation in a school text from the first century B.C.E. demonstrates that it remained in use even in a later period.

The parallels between "The Words of the Wise" (Prov 22:17–24:22) and the Instruction of Amenemope are concentrated in the first section, 22:17–23:11. The second part of this collection, 23:12–24:22, does not contain consecutive parallels to the Instruction of Amenemope. It does, however, include parallels to Egyptian wisdom literature in respect to content and even terminology, although they appear in a scattered, rather than in a concentrated, manner. The nature of the connection to Egyptian material differs, therefore, between the two parts of the collection, and I will discuss them separately.

A. The Connection between Proverbs 22:17–23:11 and the Egyptian Wisdom Literature

Appendix 1 demonstrates that the parallels in Proverbs to the Instruction of Amenemope (with the exception of 22:26–27, which has no Egyptian parallel) appear consecutively, while in Amenemope they are dispersed throughout the entire work (in nine different chapters!). Moreover, details found in the Egyptian instruction do not appear in the Hebrew composition and vice versa. However, these differences between the Hebrew and Egyptian texts do not necessarily lead to Whybray's conclusion that there is no connection between the two works. The conclusion of these findings is, rather, that the Hebrew author did not copy the text mechanically. The Egyptian material was adapted and modified in order to suit the new Hebrew framework; in this way, "casket of the belly" was replaced by "belly" (appendix 1, #2); the goose commonly found in the Nylotic habitat became the eagle, characteristic of the mountainous landscape of the land of Israel (app. 1, #11). So, too, Hebrew elements were added that have no analogy in the ancient Egyptian world; for example,

גאל ('redeemer', app. 1, #15), גבול עולם ('an ancient landmark', app. 1, ##8 and 15), and the name of God (app. 1, ##2 and 5).

Previous scholars who argued in favor of the influence of the Egyptian work on the book of Proverbs generally used two arguments: the similarity of the content and objectives of Prov 22:17–23:11 and Amenemope, and the predating of the Egyptian instruction in relation to the book of Proverbs. In the following, I would like to raise further arguments that have not yet received sufficient attention:

1. *The Hebrew text is difficult and incomprehensible unless illuminated by the Egyptian text, in which the verses are clearer and situated in their natural context.* For example, Prov 22:18–19 and the Instruction of Amenemope 3:11–16 (app. 1, #2), although different in scope (Hebrew—2 verses; Egyptian—6 verses), deal with an identical subject: a warning to treasure the instructions and to employ them only in a time of need. Both sources speak of safeguarding words in the belly. This image is foreign to Hebrew thought, which normally considers the heart to be the seat of thought and feeling. The belly rarely plays this role and then only in biblical wisdom literature (Job 32:18–20 and Proverbs; see below). Hence, this image is borrowed from Egyptian literature, in which the belly denotes a person's innermost soul. "Belly" in the Hebrew work is paralleled in the Egyptian work by "casket of the belly," which is based on the metaphor of a human's thoughts arranged, book-like, in one's belly casket. The word "casket" in Egyptian denotes a wooden box used for storing papyrus scrolls.[19] The Egyptian phrase "casket of the belly" is absent from Proverbs, although the collocation "chambers of the belly," which is strange and extraordinary in biblical language, appears four times in the second collection of this book (Prov 18:8; 26:22; 20:27, 30). This collocation is probably a result of the adaptation of the Egyptian expression to the Hebrew background: the chest of books belonging to the Egyptian scribe's craft was replaced by the "chamber" common to the Israelite environment. The mention of God's name (Yhwh) in the biblical verses (v. 19) again indicates the elaboration and adaptation of the Egyptian material to the Hebrew mentality.

In Prov 22:24–25 and the Instruction of Amenemope 11:11–12 (#6), the subject of both sections is also identical—a prohibition against befriending a hot-tempered man (Heb. איש חמות; Eg. *šmm/ḫmm*)—although there is a small

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19. For a detailed study of the concept of the belly and the phrase 'casket of the belly' (*ḥnw n ḫt* in Egyptian), see my *Where Can Wisdom Be Found? The Sage's Language in the Bible and in Ancient Egyptian Literature* (OBO 130; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1993) 293–97; idem, "Egyptian Idioms and Imprints in Biblical Wisdom," *Tarbiz* 54 (1985) 478–81 [Hebrew].

alteration: in Proverbs, one who befriends such a person brings tragedy upon himself, while in the Instruction of Amenemope, the hot-tempered person brings loss upon his fellow-human.

The terms איש חמה/חמות (in Prov 22:24–25 and 15:18), בעל חמה (29:22), and גדל חמה (19:19), and their synonyms בעל אף (in 22:24) and איש אף (29:22) appear as qualifiers of persons only in the book of Proverbs. The noun חמה derives from the Hebrew root חמם 'to be hot', and the collocation איש חמה is the semantic, phonetic, and etymological equivalent of the Egyptian adjective *šmm/ḥmm*, which represents the negative type of human being in Egyptian wisdom literature—irritable, an instigator of quarrel, a slanderer, and a heretic. The term איש חמה and other parallel terms in the book of Proverbs are, therefore, another instance of borrowing from the Egyptian usage and concept.[20]

In comparing Prov 23:4–5 and the Instruction of Amenemope 9:14–15 (app. 1, #11), the general meaning of the section of Proverbs is clear: wealth is ephemeral; it disappears the moment one looks away. However, the content of this section is difficult and surprising, because there are many sayings in the book that praise wealth and scorn poverty (see, for example, 10:15; 19:4; 22:7). Apparently, the section in Proverbs is distorted and needs to be understood in conjunction with the Egyptian parallel: it speaks of wealth that has been acquired by theft, and for this reason it will not remain in the possession of the owner. This is a further example of the adaptation of the Egyptian material by the Hebrew author, who took the opening and the conclusion of the Egyptian parallel but omitted the middle section by mistake. So, too, he exchanged the geese for an eagle in order to suit the image of the bird to the Israelite landscape.

These examples are sufficient to illustrate the manner in which comparison with the Instruction of Amenemope clarifies vague and incomprehensible details in Prov 22:17–23:11. Consequently, it is difficult to accept Whybray's hypothesis that there is no direct connection between Prov 22:17–23:11 and the Instruction of Amenemope and that these chapters should be interpreted in relation to other chapters of the book of Proverbs, particularly chaps. 1–9. The similarity between the first collection of Proverbs, chaps. 1–9, and the third

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20. The term *šmm/ḥmm* stands in synonymous parallelism with the adjective *t3*. These two terms are collocated with parts of the body: mouth, belly, heart. For a discussion of the Egyptian terminology that relates to the "hot-tempered man" and to the "hot-tempered man" as a type of human being in Egyptian literature, see my *"Where Can Wisdom Be Found?"* 117–18, 129–31. For parallels in Hebrew, see pp. 132–34, 137–38, 144–49; see also my "Positive and the Negative Human Type in the Egyptian School Writings and the Biblical Wisdom Literature" [Hebrew], in *Scribes, Schools and Libraries in Antiquity* (*Michmanim* 10; ed. Nili Shupak; Haifa: University of Haifa Press, 1996) 39–48.

collection of "The Words of the Wise" cannot be denied, even though this similarity is mainly expressed in its literary form, namely the genre of instruction from father to son and the call to listen and observe the wisdom words formulated in the imperative. Moreover, the differences between Prov 22:17–23:11 and Proverbs 1–9 in matters of detail do not exist between Prov 22:17–23:11 and the Egyptian instruction. (For example: the subject of the poor and needy person in 22:17–23:11 is not found in chaps. 1–9, and the image of Lady Wisdom appears repeatedly in chaps. 1–9 but is missing from "The Words of the Wise.")

2. *The assumption that the Instruction of Amenemope or a similar instruction influenced Prov 22:17–23:11 is also supported by concepts, terms, and images interwoven in these chapters that, though common to Egyptian wisdom literature, are foreign to the Hebrew context.* These details, some of which have been mentioned above, are abundant both in works that precede the Instruction of Amenemope and in works that follow it, as may be seen from the following list:[21]

(a) The belly as the seat of the mind, thoughts, and emotions of humans:[22] Amenemope 3:11–13; 22:11–16; 23:4; Ptahhotep 232–48, 265–69, 399–414; To Merikare 144–45; Kheti xxv:b–c; Eloquent Peasant B1 278–80; Khakheperre-sonb, recto 3.

(b) The 'hot tempered man' (Heb. אישׁ חמה; Eg. *šmm*/*ḥmm*) and its synonyms, as the negative type of human being (rather than the fool or the wicked man):[23] Amenemope 4:17; 5:10; 6:1–6; 11:13–12:9; 12:16; 15:13–14; Ptahhotep 350–52, 378–79; Admonitions 5:3; Ostracon Deir el Medina 1265 I 4, II 4–5; Chester Beatty V recto 6:7–12 = Anastasi V 6:5 = Sallier I 8:5–6; Hieratic Ostracon I 7:5.

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21. For a bibliography (text and commentary) of the Egyptian wisdom compositions mentioned in this list and in the remainder of the discussion, see Brunner, *Die Weisheitsbücher*; and my *Where Can Wisdom Be Found?* 21–28; Pascal Vernus, *Sagesses de l'Égypte pharaonique* (Paris: Imprimérie Nationale, 2001). For the dates of these texts, see appendix 2. For an English translation of most of them, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (3 vols.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975–80). A brief overview of the Egyptian wisdom texts is found in Jennifer Wegner, *Cultural and Literary Continuity in the Demotic Instructions* (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 2001) 19–37, 51–72; Günter Burkard and Heinz Thissen, *Einführung in die altägyptische Literaturgeschichte I* (Einführungen und Quellentexte zur Ägyptologie; Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003) 83–109, 119–37, 163–77, 191–93; Parkinson, *Poetry and Culture*, 297, 304–5, 308–9, 313–19, 322–25. For a recent publication and study of Pap. Brooklyn 47.218.135, see Richard Jasnow, *A Late Period Hieratic Wisdom Text (P. Brooklyn 47.218.135)* (SAOC 52; Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1992).

22. See n. 19 above.

23. See the discussion on p. 211 above.

(c) Table manners. This was a popular subject for the authors of wisdom literature in general and not just for the authors of the book of Proverbs and the Egyptian compositions. See, for example, Sir 31:12–16. Advice and instructions regarding dining and table manners, however, are particularly prevalent in Egyptian wisdom literature: Amenemope 23:12–20 (cf. Prov 23:1–3); To Kagemni I 3–11; Ptahhotep 119–44; Any 8:6–7; see also: Kheti xxviii:d–f; Insinger 5:12–6:24.

Other details, common to both Prov 22:17–23:11 and the Instruction of Amenemope, are also widespread in Egyptian wisdom literature. These include: the call to listen to the instruction of the father and words in praise of the act of listening,[24] acclamation for the efficient (מהיר) official (scribe?)[25] and the good messenger,[26] and a call to lend help and show generosity toward the weak and needy—the poor, the orphan, and the widow.[27] These motifs, however, are not exclusive to Egyptian wisdom and can also indicate an ancient Near Eastern wisdom tradition common to both the Hebrew author and his Egyptian colleague.

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24. See To Kagemni II 5 (Epilogue); Ptahhotep 30–32, 49 (Prologue), 199–200, 507–617 (Epilogue); Amenemhet Id; A Man for His Son 1, 5b; The Loyalist Instruction 8:7; Kheti XXIV:c; Amunnakht 2–4, 5–8, 50–51; Anastasi III 3,13–4,1; Anastasi V 23:5–6. See my *Where Can Wisdom Be Found?* 51–55.

25. See Kemit 14–17; Kheti XXI:h–XXII:a; Amunnakht 23–24, 51–52; Chester Beatty IV verso 2:5–3:10; 6:11–6:14; Anastasi V 9:4–5. The need for a 'skilled scribe' (*sš sš3wy*) in Amenemope (27:16) is replaced in Proverbs (22:29) by איש מהיר. The meaning of מהיר in biblical language is 'efficient', and it appears twice in the context of a skilled scribe who is proficient in his work (Ps 45:2, Ezra 7:6). The likely meaning of איש מהיר in Proverbs is, therefore, 'an efficient scribe'. The description of Ahiqar as 'a wise and efficient scribe' (*spr ḥkym wmhyr*) (Ahiqar 1; see Arthur Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* [Osnabrück: Otto Zeller, 1923; repr. 1967] 212) also confirms this interpretation. In the satirical letter Anastasi I 4, 18, the phrase *mhr* 'scribe' appears, and is traditionally interpreted in light of the biblical expression 'efficient scribe'. Recently, however, Egyptologists have shown that this phrase has no connection to the biblical phrase. In Papyrus Anastasi I the term has a military context, and its meaning is a scout or tracker who goes ahead of the army and prepares the way for the infantry and cavalry. For a detailed discussion of this issue, see Hans Werner Fischer-Elfert, *Die satirische Streitschrift des Papyrus Anastasi I* (Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 44; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1986) 159, 161, 244–45 and the bibliography there. See, too, Gressmann, "Die neugefundene Lehre," 295, and Reiner Hannig, *Grosses Handwörterbuch Ägyptisch-Deutsch (2800–950 v. Chr.)* (Kulturgeschichte der Antiken Welt; Mainz: von Zabern, 1995) 351.

26. See Ptahhotep 145–60, 249; Kheti XXVII:a–c; Any 2:7–8 (Prologue); cf. also Insinger 14:7; 21:22; Louvre 2414 III:6,5.

27. See Insinger 16:3–4, 13; cf. 16:14–17, 20–23; 17:8, 20; 18:19; cf. also Amenemope 26:8–27:5; Brooklyn 5:12–13.

The above discussion demonstrates that there are parallels in content, concept, and terminology not only with the first section of "The Words of the Wise," Prov 22:17–23:11 and the Instruction of Amenemope, but also with other Egyptian wisdom works, both earlier and later. However, the connection to the Instruction of Amenemope is of a different nature: no other Egyptian wisdom work, including works published in recent years, contains such a large number of parallels to the Hebrew composition. Moreover, the commonalities with the Instruction of Amenemope appear in Prov 22:17–23:11 in a concentrated and consecutive fashion, in a manner unparalleled in other sections of the book of Proverbs. There can be no doubt of the exceptional connection between this section of "The Words of the Wise" and the Egyptian instruction. Assuredly, the Instruction of Amenemope was before the eyes of the Hebrew author as he wrote these verses of the book of Proverbs.

B. The Connection between Proverbs 23:12–24:22 and the Egyptian Wisdom Literature

It has been shown above that the consecutive connection with the Instruction of Amenemope ends with Prov 23:11. This conclusion does not negate the possibility that the second section of "The Words of the Wise," Prov 23:12–24:22, was also influenced by Egyptian material. In fact, an examination of these verses in relation to compositions of Egyptian wisdom reveals a range of terms and concepts that are common in Egyptian wisdom literature (some of these are identical to those that may be found in the first section of "The Words of the Wise"). The following is an enumeration of these terms and concepts, in accordance with the order of their appearance in the book of Proverbs:

1. the call to listen and acquire instruction (23:12–13; cf. 22:17);[28]
2. the heart and ears as vessels for acquiring wisdom (23:12; cf. 22:17);[29]
3. whipping with a rod as an incentive for learning (23:13–14);[30]

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28. See n. 24 above. The term מוסר (23:12–13) is semantically parallel with Egyptian *sbȝyt* and has a double meaning of 'instruction', 'reproof', on the one hand, and 'beating', on the other. See my *Where Can Wisdom Be Found?* 31–34.

29. For a detailed discussion and for examples from the Egyptian and Hebrew wisdom literature, see ibid., 277–80, 299–302; idem, "The 'Sitz im Leben' of the book of Proverbs in the Light of a Comparison of Biblical and Egyptian Wisdom Literature," *RB* 94 (1987) 113–16.

30. See ibid., 109–11; cf. Ahiqar 80–82 (Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 214–15).

4. refraining from rejoicing at an enemy's misfortune and from responding to an adversary or injurer, knowing that God alone is in charge of inflicting penalty (23:17; cf. 24:29);[31]
5. warning against gluttony and guzzling wine (23:20–21);[32]
6. the dangerous results of slackness and idleness (23:21);[33]
7. demonstrating respect and obedience to parents, particularly to mothers (23:22);[34]
8. parental joy in a wise son (23:24–25);[35]
9. the danger posed by a prostitute illustrated by comparing her to a narrow well and a deep pit (23:28–29);[36]
10. admonition against drunkenness (23:29–35).[37]

Based on this enumeration we may infer that the primary affinity with the Egyptian material is to be found in Prov 23:12–35.[38] However, chap. 24 also contains concepts or images borrowed from Egyptian wisdom literature. For example, the appellation for God תנן לבות 'who measures the hearts' in 24:12 appears only in the book of Proverbs (see also 21:2 and compare with תנן רוחות 'who measures the spirits' in 16:2). This image of God relates to the role of Thoth, the Egyptian god of Wisdom, in the Judgment of the Dead. Thoth is positioned next to scales, upon which the heart of the deceased is weighed

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31. See Ptahhotep 476–80; Any 6:15–7:2; Amenemope 5:10–17; 22:20–23:11; cf. also Any 8:13–16.

32. See Ankhsheshonqy 15:20; cf. 15:10; Insinger 3:4; 5:12–13, 18, 23; 6:11–16, 19, 22; 7:10; Louvre 2377 verso 7.

33. See Eloquent Peasant B1 257; B2 109; Anastasi III 3:10, 12–13; V 23:1–2, 5; Brooklyn 5:9–10; Anakhsheshonqy 6:18–19; 23:17–18.

34. See Any 4:4–6; 7:17–8:1; Kheti XXVIII:a; XXX:f; Kemit 13; Ankhsheshonqy 6:6; 10:21; Insinger 2:14; cf. also Ahiqar 138 (Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 217); Sir 3:1–16.

35. See Ptahhotep 197–205, 534–74, 628–36.

36. See Ptahhotep 277–97; Any 3:13–17 (a very close parallel); Ankhsheshonqy 22:6; cf. Prov 2:18; 5:5; 6:32–33; 7:22–23, 26–27; 22:14; Eccl 7:26–28; Sir 25:13–26. See my *Proverbs*, 32–34. For an Akkadian parallel, see Hurowitz, "Shloshim(?) (sayings)," 155, 158–59.

37. See Anastasi IV 11:8–11:11, and Sallier I 9:11 (very close parallels); Anastasi V 1b:1–2; Any 4:6–11; Ankhsheshonqy 11:6; cf. 6:17; 16:16; Insinger 6:13; Sir 31:25–31.

38. Some scholars see a connection with Egyptian wisdom literature in Prov 24:11–12, which instructs a person to support his/her neighbor in a time of need. In substance, this verse is close to Amenemope 11:6–7, which warns against handing over an escaped man, and perhaps also to Ankhsheshonqy 8:9, which advises against distancing oneself from a scribe who has been taken to jail. See Römheld, who cites further parallels to Egyptian wisdom literature (*Wege der Weisheit*, 84–85).

against the goddess of Justice, Maʿat, and Thoth's role is to record the results of the weighing.[39] Furthermore, the word תחבלות 'wisdom saying', which appears in Prov 24:6 and is common in the Bible only in wisdom literature,[40] should be interpreted in the light of its Egyptian semantic parallel, the term *ṯs*. In the language of Egyptian wisdom, *ṯs* represents a well-constructed saying, a pithy maxim made like a series of knots and loops. Similarly, the word תחבלות is derived from the Hebrew word חבל 'rope' and in wisdom literature refers to wisdom words artfully expressed.[41]

There is no doubt that many of the admonitions and words of advice presented above as Egyptian imprints on Prov 23:12–24:22 are not unique to Egyptian wisdom literature. Instructions to respect parents, avoid prostitutes, encourage education through whipping, and so on, may be found in all ancient wisdom literature. However, the unique terminological affinity between these chapters of Proverbs and the vocabulary of Egyptian wisdom literature (reflected in the terms מוסר, תכן לבות, and תחבלות) and the mark of the Instruction of Amenemope on the first section of "The Words of the Wise," Prov 22:17–23:11 lead us to the conclusion that these are definitely Egyptian imprints.

An analysis of Prov 22:17–24:22 in comparison with Egyptian wisdom literature demonstrates that the first section of "The Words of the Wise" in 22:17–23:11 contains a concentration of topics, terms, and images common to Proverbs and the Instruction of Amenemope. This connection is exceptional and cannot be equated with the connection that exists between the second section of the collection, 23:12–24:22, and Egyptian wisdom literature.

Accordingly, it may be assumed that the author or editor of Prov 22:17–23:11 was familiar with the Instruction of Amenemope and borrowed from it. The borrowing was done in a careful and considered manner: the Hebrew author or editor made changes and adapted the instructions of the Egyptian sage to the world of monotheistic belief and to the geographical conditions of the land of Israel. There is no doubt that the key word שְׁלֹשִׁים 'thirty' in Prov 22:20 stems from the influence of the Egyptian parallel, whether 22:17–24:22 contains 30 sayings or not.

These conclusions refute Whybray's position that there is no connection between the Instruction of Amenemope and Prov 22:17–23:11.

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39. This Egyptian motif is reflected in the description of scales in Job 31:6. For תכן לבות as a fossilized remnant of the Egyptian motif in the Bible, see my "Egyptian Idioms," 476–78.

40. See Prov 1:5; 11:14; 12:5; 20:18; 24:6; Job 37:11–12.

41. For תחבלות and its Egyptian counterpart, *ṯs*, see my *Where Can Wisdom Be Found?* 313–17.

With respect to the nature of the connection between the second section of "The Words of the Wise," 23:12–24:22, and the Egyptian material, the picture is different. The use of subjects and terms common in Egyptian wisdom literature reflects a general connection, but there are no consecutive parallels between the Hebrew and Egyptian materials of the kind found in 22:17–23:11. Accordingly, it is likely that the author or editor of these chapters was influenced by the Egyptian wisdom tradition in general rather than by the Instruction of Amenemope.

In any event, the answer to the question posed by Whybray that opened this discussion is: Prov 22:17–24:22 is indeed reminiscent of Amenemope, as well as of other similar works!

Finally, the question also arises how the Egyptian wisdom material reached the hands of the author-editor of the collection "The Words of the Wise." Although any answer to this question is necessarily speculative, we can assume that the corpus taught in the educational framework in ancient Israel included instructions such as the Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope.[42] Furthermore, we may assume that a copy of this instruction—a subject of great popularity in Egypt that was still copied in schools a thousand years after its composition—reached the author-editors of the book of Proverbs (whether they were part of the educational framework in Israel or not), who used it in an intelligent and sophisticated manner. They succeeded in incorporating this foreign, Egyptian material into Hebrew wisdom, embedding it in such a fashion that even a renowned scholar such as Whybray was misguided by them!

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42. See my "Sitz im Leben," 98–119.

Appendix 1
Comparison of Proverbs 22:17–23:11 with
the Instruction of Amenemope

	Proverbs		Amenemope	
	Text		*Text*	
(1)	22:17	Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise and give your heart to my knowledge.	1,3:9–10	Give your ears, hear what is said; give your heart to understand them; it is profitable to put them in your heart; woe to him who neglects them!
(2)	22:18–19	For it will be pleasant if you keep them in your belly, if they be ready on your lips. That your trust may be in God, I have made them known to you today, also to you.	1,3:11–16	Let them rest in the casket of your belly; may they be a lock in your heart; when there rises a storm of words, they will be a mooring post for your tongue.
(3)	22:20	I have written to you (*Kethiv*: שִׁלְשׁוֹם; *Qere*: שָׁלִישִׁים) in plans and knowledge.	30,27:7	Look to these thirty chapters.
(4)	22:21	To cause you to know the truth of words of truth, to re-turn answer, truth to him who sent you.	Prologue, 1,5–6	To know how to answer one who speaks, to reply to one who sends a message.
(5)	22:22–23	Do not rob the poor, because he is poor, and oppress not the afflicted at the gate; for God will plead their cause and rob their robbers of life.	2,4:4–5	Beware of robbing a poor man, of attacking a weak man [liter-ally, 'a man of broken arm'].
(6)	22:24–25	Do not befriend a man given to anger nor go with a heated man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.	9,11:11–12	Do not befriend the heated man [*šmm*] or approach him for conversation. . . . Let him not cast his speech to catch you.
(7)	22:26–27	Be not one of those who give pledges, who become surety for debts. If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you?		
(8)	22:28 ‖ 23:10	Remove not the ancient landmark set up by your fa-thers.	6,7:12–15	Do not move markers on the borders of a field or alter the po-sition of the measuring line. Do not be greedy for a cubit of land or encroach on the boundaries of a widow.
(9)	22:29	Do you see a man skillful in his work? Before kings he shall stand; he shall not stand before obscure men.	30,27:16–17	The scribe who is skilled in his office—he is found worthy to be a courtier.

Appendix 1 (cont.)
Comparison of Proverbs 22:17–23:11 with
the Instruction of Amenemope

	Proverbs		Amenemope	
	Text		*Text*	
(10)	23:1–3	When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you and put a knife (שַׁכִּין) to your throat if you are a man of great appetite.	23,23:12–20	Do not eat a meal in the presence of a magistrate or set your mouth before him. If you are sated with your food fraudulently gained . . . look at the cup before you and let it suffice your need.
(11)	23:4–5	Do not toil to make yourself rich. Cease from your efforts [literally, 'your wisdom']. When your eyes light upon it, it is gone; for it (riches) makes itself wings as an eagle that heavenward flies.	7,9:14–15	Do not strain to seek increase, so your wealth will prosper for you. If riches come to you by theft, they will not stay the night with you. As soon as the day breaks they will not be in your house; their place is seen but they are not there. Earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up and made them sink into deep pits. They made a hole as big as their size and sank into the netherworld. They made themselves wings like geese and flew away to the sky.
(12)	23:6–7	Do not eat the bread of a niggard, and do not desire his delicacies, for it is a storm (שַׂעַר) in his heart. "Eat and drink," he says to you, but his heart is not with you.	11,14:5–8	Do not covet the property of the poor; do not hunger for his bread. The property of the poor is a storm in the throat. It makes the gullet vomit.
(13)	23:8	The morsel you have eaten you will vomit up, and you lose your pleasant words.	11,14:17–18	Whoever fills the mouth with too much bread swallows it and vomits it. So he is emptied of his good.
(14)	23:9	Do not speak in the ears of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words.	21,22:11–12	Do not empty your belly to everyone and thus destroy their respect for you.
(15)	23:10–11	Do not remove an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the orphans. For their redeemer is mighty; he will plead their cause against you.	Cf. no. 8	

Appendix 2
Chronological Table of the Cited Egyptian Wisdom Texts[a]

Period /Dynasty	Name of Composition
Old Kingdom (2707/2657–2170/2120)	The Instruction Addressed to Kagemni The Instruction of Ptahhotep
First Intermediate (2170/2120–2025/2020)	The Instruction Addressed to Merikare
Middle Kingdom: 12th Dynasty (1976–1794/93)	The Kemit (Early Middle Kingdom) The Instruction of Amenmhet I The Instruction of Kheti (Son of Duauf) The Instruction by a Man for His Son The Loyalist Instruction (The Stela of Sehetep-ib-Re) The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage (Ipuwer) The Eloquent Peasant The Complaints of Khakheperre-sonb
New Kingdom: 18th Dynasty (before the el-Amarna Period: 1550–1388)	The Instruction of Any
New Kingdom: 19th–20th Dynasty (1292–1070/1069)	The Instruction of Amenemope The Instruction of Amunnakht Pap. Chester Beatty IV Pap. Anastasi I Pap. Anastasi III Pap. Anastasi IV Pap. Anastasi V Pap. Sallier I Ostraca Deir el Medina 1265 Hieratic Ostracon I
Late Period	Pap. Brooklyn 47.218.135 (400) The Instruction of Ankhsheshonqy (400–300)
Ptolemaic	The Instruction of Pap. Insinger (300–200) Pap. Louvre 2414 (mid-2nd century) Pap. Louvre 2377 (mid-2nd century)

a. The dates given above follow Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*; Brunner, *Die Weisheitsbücher*; Shupak, *Where Can Wisdom Be Found?* Some of these dates are debated; see lately Vernus, *Sagesses de l'Égypte pharaonique*.

The Woman of Valor and A Woman Large of Head: Matchmaking in the Ancient Near East

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> For Papa make him a scholar;
> For Mama make him rich as a king;
> For me, well, I wouldn't holler
> if he were as handsome as anything.
> —Hodel, *Fiddler on the Roof*

The "Woman of Valor" (henceforth WV),[1] meticulously portrayed as a finale to the book of Proverbs (Prov 31:10–31), is no stranger to biblical scholars, who have examined her from head to toe in countless commentaries, articles, and books. One may think, in fact, that she is regarded as a woman with no rival, for she has rarely been compared systematically with any contemporary lady.[2] However, this lack of comparison may reflect not an absence

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1. I use 'Woman of Valor' as a translation of אשת חיל purely for convenience, indicating therewith both the woman and the pericope (Prov 31:10–31). This term has been translated 'Woman of Virtue'/'Virtuous Woman' (KJV, RSV), 'Woman of Parts' (William McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970]), 'Capable Wife' (NJPSV), 'Woman of Substance', among others. For a recent discussion of the nuances of חיל, see Alexander Rofé, who interprets the term as "successful woman" ("'A Virtuous Wife' [אשת חיל], γυνή συνετή, and the Redaction of the Book of Proverbs" [Hebrew], in *Homage to Shmuel: Studies in the World of the Bible* [ed. Z. Talshir, S. Yona, and D. Sivan; Jerusalem: Ben Gurion University Press / Bialik Institute, 2001] 382–90). My colleague Prof. Chaim Cohen is preparing a study of the term in which he suggests translating it 'A Woman who is a Treasure'. WV has often been taken as an allegory of things such as Wisdom, Torah, Sabbath, and Shekhinah. Such interpretations go back to ancient sources and still appear in contemporary scholarship. Nonetheless, I fully concur with the majority of modern scholars, who take her at face value as a flesh-and-blood woman (for example, Margaret Crook, "The Marriageable Maiden of Proverbs 31:10–31," *JNES* 13 [1954] 137–40; Rofé, "A Virtuous Wife").

2. Berend Gemser refers to the Egyptian proverbs of Any §54, Ankhsheshonq, and Papyrus Insinger 8,8–9 (*Sprüche Salomos* [HAT 16; Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1963] 109). These compositions in fact contain numerous adages of one or several lines concerning women of all sorts, but there is no extended depiction reaching the proportions of WV; for

of rivals but a dearth of competing descriptions.[3] This lack of candidates may now be filled by a Mesopotamian text recently published and edited, which is probably not well known to many biblical scholars. In this article, dedicated in friendship and esteem to Michael Fox, the world's foremost expounder of biblical wisdom literature in general and Proverbs in particular, I will briefly describe and discuss this relatively unknown text and subject it to comparative-contrastive investigation, attempting to determine what, if anything, it can teach us about WV and matchmaking priorities in the ancient Near East.

The Akkadian text is called *Šumma sinništu qaqqada rabât* 'If a Woman Is Large of Head' (henceforth WLH), as found in the partially preserved colophon to one of the exemplars.[4] This is a collection of physiognomic omens—that is, omens based on a person's anatomical features—in which the protasis describes some feature of the person's appearance and the apodosis either makes a prediction about the person or characterizes him or her on the basis of that feature. Unlike the 12-tablet series *Alamdimmû* that examines the male body for signs, this one tablet composition describes a woman. As a sample of

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those texts, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (3 vols.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973–80). For citations from these texts concerning women in general, see the appendix, pp. 231–234 below.

3. Christine Yoder adduces a wealth of archaeological and epigraphic sources to interpret WV against the background of the Persian period, but she does not mention any one text that describes a woman ("The Woman of Substance [אשת־חיל]: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 31:10–31," *JBL* 122 [2003] 427–47); see also idem, *Wisdom as a Woman of Substance: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31* (BZAW 304; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2001). Al Wolters ("Proverbs xxxi 10–31 as Heroic Hymn: A Form-Critical Analysis," *VT* 38 [1988] 446–57) states that WV is a "critique of the literature in praise of women which was prevalent in the ancient Near East" (p. 456), but the only ancient Near Eastern literature he mentions in his article is the Song of Deborah.

4. Barbara Böck, *Die babylonisch-assyrische Morphoskopie* (AfOB 27; Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 2000) 148–73 and the discussion on pp. 36–38. Böck lists the "'Lob der guten Hausfrau' Kap. 30,13" [*sic*] (p. 64) among verses in the book of Proverbs that deal with human physiognomy and characteristics (other verses according to G. E. Bryce, "Omen-Wisdom in Ancient Israel," *JBL* 94 [1975] 19–37) but offers no further discussion. See the review by Jo Ann Scurlock, "Review of Böck, *Die babylonisch-assyrische Morphoskopie*," *JAOS* 123 (2003) 395–99; she refers to our text as "the picture of the ideal woman" (p. 398). See as well Mark Geller ("West Meets East: Early Greek and Babylonian Diagnosis," *AfO* 48/49 [2001/2002] 50–75), who discusses Böck, *Morphoskopie*, on pp. 70–73.

A catchline to tablet 1 of the series of speech omens called *kataduggû* reads *šumma sinništu qaddada rabât išarru* 'If a woman is large of head, she shall prosper' (line 215A; Böck, *Morphoskopie*, 144). There is also a tablet of omens based on certain epidermal markings (*kittabru*) on women (ibid., 230–33).

what this text contains, lines 100−103 read: *šumma sinništum qātāša ba᾽lā bit dulli ippuš; šumma qattanā muštamriṣat; šumma arkā išarru ilānât; šumma karâ ulappan* 'If a woman's hands are abnormally large, she will build a house of labor/misery; if they are small, she is a hypochondriac; if they are long, she will be rich, she is divine; if they are short, she will be poor'.

The largest text, which can be reconstructed on the basis of four, partially preserved manuscripts, was originally an 8-column tablet, of which no less than 265 lines partially or fully survive. The preserved passages are divided by horizontal lines into 24 sections, each section relating to a different part of the body from head to toe, including:[5] hands (lines 100−118), fingers (119−42), chest (143−46), breasts (156−72), nipples (173−75), belly (176−81, 182−87), navel (188−96, 197−200), vaginal labia (208−12), toes (233−39). Each section contains individual omens of the type illustrated above, describing a particular characteristic of the pertinent body part, followed by what this particular trait signals.

Toward the end of this tablet (lines 250−61) there are two sections that deviate from the rest of the text in structure and details of content,[6] to which we turn our attention now. No longer are there individual lines describing single features of a woman, but two six-line composite views, each containing several different features of two women. The apodosis in each section begins with the resumptive words *sinništum šī* 'that woman (just described)' and is considerably more detailed than the one- or two-word statements in the single-line omens. Most importantly, the signs and prognoses in the protases and apodoses have no exact parallels in the previous omens.

These are the passages in normalized transliteration and translation:

> *šumma pūtu naglat   šinni aṣât   appa zaqpat*
> *šaptī qattana   suqtu ṣeprat*
> *qatē u šūpē zaqpat   ḫalê umṣāti malât*
> *sinništum šī   libba ṣabrat*[7] *ana ili qerbet   namrat*
> *še᾽û u kaspa iššakkanši   še᾽û u kaspa irašši   umāša irrikū*
> *maššû ana pānîša ul innašši*

If the forehead shines (?),[8] a "tooth" comes out, the nose is pointed,
the lips are very thin, the chin protrudes,

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5. I have listed here only the sections in which the initial signs that explicitly name the pertinent body part are preserved.

6. See Böck, *Morphoskopie*, 59−60.

7. Böck (*Morphoskopie*, 169 n. 603) reads *ṣa/za-ap-rat* and says the translation of the stative is uncertain. There is no reason not to read the /p/ as /b/, however.

8. So following Böck, *Morphoskopie*. The CAD N/1 107, s.v. *nagālu*, on the other hand, points out that the meaning 'to glow', based on its appearance in an astronomical text together

the hands and feet are pointed, the skin color is full of spots—
that woman twitters (?) in the heart, is close to the god, is radiant (happy?);
barley and silver will be placed before her, she will have barley and silver, her
    days will be long,
a signal will not be lifted up before her.[9]

[*šumma pū*]*tu išât   u šumēla appaša uššurat   ziqna išât*
[*x*] *kabrat   minâti banât   ḫaṭaʾʾat*
[*x*]-*in illik u   ina imnīša šakin   ina dabābīša nēḫat*
sinništum šī   libba namrat   ina ḫidâti ittanallak
[*x*]*x be iššakkan   šeʾâ u kaspa ul iḫaššaḫ*
[*x*]*x inammir   ašūḫu ulabbar   maššû ana pānīša ul innašši*

If she has a [fore]head, and her nose is detached to the left, has a beard,
[the x] is thick, is beautiful of limbs, is flawed,
[xx] goes and is found on her right side, and when she speaks she is calm—[10]
that woman is bright of heart (happy); she will walk constantly in happiness,
[x]xx will be placed, barley and silver she will not want,
[x] will shine (be happy ?), the pine will become old, a signal will not be lifted
    up before her.

Both of these passages describe a woman and then predict what kind of life
awaits her. There are elements common to both passages, and, in a certain
sense, they are parallel. Nonetheless, there is not a full one-to-one correspon-
dence between the elements of the two passages. The first one describes seven
physical features of the woman. The second, however, describes only six
clearly physical traits, while adding three behavioral aspects: something goes/
walks and is found by her right side, and she speaks softly. As for the apodoses,
both passages contain seven clauses, but they differ in content and grammatical
construction. The first one has three clauses predicting physical and mental
characteristics in stative-tense verbs and four describing future actions in
present-future forms. The second also contains seven clauses, but only the first
is a trait in the stative, while the other six are actions in the present-future.

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with *nenbuṭa* 'shining brightly', is a variant on that word and is not explained by it. It does
seem to have some association with coloration, however.

    9. Böck (*Morphoskopie*) has translated here and in line 255: 'wird sie den Korb vor sich
nicht tragen', referring to CAD M/1 390a, s.v. *maššû* A. I prefer rendering it according to
maššû B 'signal', because this noun only appears together with the verb *našû*, and all such us-
ages are in omen apodoses. Böck may have been deterred because AHw 619 (which ap-
peared in1972, five years before CAD M) lists all these occurrences under *massû* I 2 'Fürsten'.

    10. Compare Eccl 9:17: "The words of the wise (uttered) softly (בנחת), are obeyed bet-
ter than the shout of a foolish taskmaster."

The first woman is described more or less from head to foot, mentioning her forehead, teeth, nose, lips, chin, hands and feet, and skin. The "tooth" is obviously out of order, unless the lady is a freak, but it is possible that the word *šinni* does not refer to a tooth but to some sort of tooth-shaped mark on the forehead.[11]

The features of the second woman also are listed in order—forehead (?),[12] nose, beard, and limbs—indicating that the break in the tablet followed by the predicate adjective *kabrat* 'is thick/fat' was not a facial feature. A problem in this description appears in the word *ḫaṭa"at*, translated by Böck (*Morphoskopie*) as *Frevlerin* 'is sinful'. This creates a difficulty because this woman has a positive future, which we would not expect of a morally flawed person. It is possible, however, that this word means 'physically defective' and refers to the limbs.[13] In other words, she has beautiful limbs but they are somehow defective.

Is either woman attractive? At first glance it seems not. Cultural and personal prejudices make it difficult for a modern man to judge ancient Mesopotamian standards of beauty without a much broader study than can be undertaken here. Nonetheless, certain features seem to transcend the bounds of cultural conditioning. Moreover, were we to compare our text with descriptions of women in love poetry such as we find in the biblical Song of Songs and the Mesopotamian and Egyptian texts that have been adduced as parallels, texts stating explicitly that the women are comely, there would be no doubt in our minds that neither of the women in our passages is beautiful.[14]

If not beautiful per se, do these women have a "positive" appearance; that is, do their appearances augur well for them? Böck has gathered the omens with overtly positive apodoses from the complete text of WLH: *ilanât* 'she is divine', *išarru* 'she will become rich', *ālidat* 'she is able to give birth', *libba ṭībat* 'she is happy', *mušallimat* 'she is able to complete pregnancy', and so on, and

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11. I would think first of a marking shaped like the Aramaic letter *šin*. This should not be excluded (see Michael Jursa and Michaela Weszeli, "Der 'Zahn' des Schreibers: Ein aramäischer Buchstabenname in akkadischer Transkription," *ZA* 90 [2000] 78–84; Michael Jursa, "Weitere aramäische Buchstabennamen in akkadischer Überlieferung," *NABU* 2002 no. 13), but we must bear in mind that in *Alamdimmû* III 76–133 (Böck, *Morphoskopie*, 92–96), which lists graphic markings on the forehead, the marks are cuneiform signs rather than Aramaic letters. Furthermore, the verb used is *nadi* 'placed' rather than *aṣi*.

12. Böck (*Morphoskopie*) has restored the beginning of the line [DIŠ *pu*?]-*tu*, probably imitating the beginning of the previous section. But it is difficult to imagine what it means to have a forehead, as if a woman could be missing a forehead. If the reconstruction is correct, it may mean that the forehead is not marked and therefore not fully visible, unlike the previous section, in which the forehead is marked with a "tooth."

13. See AHw 337b–338a, s.v. *ḫaṭû* I 2; esp. *šīrē ḫaṭûti* 'bad entrails'; *ḫaṭû* II, G1c–d, 2a.

14. For an explicitly ugly woman, see *b. Ned.* 66b, discussed at the end of this article.

has come up with the following composite of a woman whose physical features (described in protases) individually augur well: a propitious woman can have a birthmark on the left ear, thick armpits, convulsing arm muscles, long hands and short fingers, thick fingers and toes, long toes, hand lines either opening or going right and left, broad chest, distorted pelvis, big breasts with pointed nipples, a longer left breast, small white nipples, white hair on the belly, a soft navel perhaps bending to the left, hefty buttocks, thick vaginal lips, and broad ankles. This woman may forecast a bright future for her man but, in this writer's humble opinion, can hardly be considered a heart-stopper. It becomes quite obvious that in WHL, appearance is all important, but beauty is of no significance.

In our particular passages, the features mentioned by Böck do not appear, so we are left to judge on our own, using information provided by the text itself. The first woman has motley skin, which is most likely not considered beautiful, and a mark on her forehead. The second woman is described explicitly as "comely of limbs," which is obviously a positive feature, but the addition, *ḫaṭa''at* 'is defective' (?) mars even that beauty. It is also hard to imagine that a woman with a nose displaced to the right would be considered attractive in any society, and the possession of a beard would obviously be unfeminine and, ipso facto, unattractive or repelling. It seems, therefore, that each woman may have certain attractive features, but neither would be a raving beauty, whatever the viewer's background is.

Only the behavior of the second woman is described in the protasis. She is specifically described as soft spoken, which is positive (compare Eccl 9:17).[15]

To determine whether the pictures are positive or negative on the whole, propitious or foreboding, we turn to the apodosis of each. Surprisingly, both are largely positive, and certain clauses are identical or synonymous. As for predicted behavior and attitude, the first lady is "close to the god" and "bright," a sign of happiness or cheery disposition.[16] It is hard to know what a "twittering heart" is, but it does not seem to be negative.[17] The second lady is also de-

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15. I could find no Akkadian usages of *nâḫu* describing speech.

16. See CAD N/1 214, s.v. *namāru* 2b.

17. Böck (*Morphoskopie*, 169 n. 603) comments that the translation is uncertain. To be sure, the verb *ṣabāru* is translated in CAD Ṣ 2 'to be voluble, to prattle (said of lips), to twitter (said of birds), to flit, move quickly, to squint, look askance, signal with the eyes'. The only place that this verb appears in some combination with 'heart' *libbu* is in a lexical text (Nabnitu X 88) where *ṣubb/ppuru ša libbi* occurs together with some gastrointestinal ailments such as diarrhea, but this can hardly be suitable for our text. I would venture a guess that it should be taken as the opposite of such verbs as *nakādu* 'throb', and *galātu* 'twitch', which, when describing the heart, are signs of fear. If so, a twittering heart, one that beats softly, may refer to calmness and contentment.

scribed as "bright of heart." In addition, she is to walk constantly in happiness, and something about her will be bright.

As for actions, including expected rewards, both women are promised that a signal will not be raised in front of them, an allusion beyond my comprehension. Both are also promised prosperity: the first that she will have barley and silver, and the second that she will not want these commodities. The first is to have a long life, and about the second it is said that the fir tree will get old. This statement is obscure but may be a metaphor for old age[18] and therefore synonymous with the first woman.

If we have interpreted these two passages in a reasonably proper manner, we learn that both ladies have good futures ahead of them, although neither is especially attractive. Bad looks do not necessary indicate a bad future.

We now turn to comparison with the biblical WV. What can the Akkadian passage teach us about the biblical paean? The compositions are obviously very different in just about every aspect and there is certainly no connection between them, but there are several common features nonetheless.

Before beginning, I must confess to comparing and contrasting texts with different geographical and chronological backgrounds and very different genres and life-settings; and one may legitimately question such an undertaking. This is to say nothing of the fact that the biblical passage describes the ideal wife, a woman after marriage, a wife the way she should be, with a well-established family and career.

It seems to me, however, that despite the differences the texts may serve similar functions and certainly may reflect similar ideas. The WV paean is a didactic piece, aimed at young men of marriageable age who are looking for an ideal mate, mindful of her promise and potential for the years to come.[19] It may share a school, family, or even court setting with the rest of the book of Proverbs. The Akkadian text, on the other hand, is a collection of omens with no perceptible didactic aim, belonging on the surface of things to the magical, cultic sphere of divination. Nonetheless, both have what can be called an advisory function. In Mesopotamian culture, omens of all types were consulted

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18. Possible symbolic meanings suggesting themselves for a fir tree include fertility, strength, and age. See CAD A/2 478, s.v. *ašūḫu*. In a symbolic self-imprecation from a treaty (KBo 1 3 rev. 29), the participant says, "just as a fir tree when it is cut down has no (further) shoots, so may I, RN, together with my wife (etc.), like this fir tree, have no offspring." This formulation implies that a fir tree that has not been cut down is recognized for its many offspring, making it a potential symbol of fertility. Other texts speak of fir trees as mighty (*paglūti*) and grown tall (*šīḫūti*).

19. Were a young lady to read it, she would certainly find it revealing with regard to what is expected when she is married.

for information in making proper decisions, and there is certainly no greater decision in life than choosing a partner. Consequently, both texts should be reliable indicators of what their respective societies considered desirable in a woman, regardless of where they originated, making the comparison worthy of pursuit. Böck has already made the plausible suggestion that the apodoses in the Akkadian text are relevant specifically for future marriage, and the text was in fact aimed at assisting in the selection of a desirable bride by indicating which of the woman's qualities boded well for the household she would enter.[20] In other words, a man seeking a woman who will give him what is found in the apodoses should look for a woman who looks like someone in the protases. Conversely, if a woman was marked by features described in the protases, she would behave as the wife described in the apodoses. As for the differences in the status of the women depicted—wife in WV and candidate for marriage in WLH—we should remember that a serious young man looking for a match should be interested, not only in what his intended is at the time of matchmaking, but what she will be ultimately as a wife, and it is this portrait that Prov 31:10–31 wishes to draw.

Bearing all this in mind, what can we learn from comparison? First of all, in the apodoses, an overview of WLH in its entirety shows that the major themes treated are: life expectancy, death, fertility and ability to complete pregnancy, behavior, attitude toward life, and life-style—all of which relate to the woman herself. In addition, there are predictions concerning the economic welfare and demeanor of the man who will marry her, the house she enters, and the house in which she lives. Finally, there are omen apodoses concerning her relationship to the gods, possessions, wealth or poverty, and eating habits.[21]

Some of these themes are found in WV. A long life (*balāṭa urrak*) seems to be presumed by Prov 31:12, "She is good to him, not bad, all the days of her life." Ability to complete pregnancy and bear children (*ālidat mušallimat*) in WLH is paralleled by the WV's sons and daughters (vv. 15, 28).[22] The favorable Mesopotamian woman is divine (*ilānât*) and righteous (*išarat*), while WV is a woman who fears the Lord (v. 30).[23] The Mesopotamian woman is suc-

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20. See Böck (*Morphoskopie*, 58–59) for a discussion of the function and Sitz im Leben of the omens about women. She concludes, "Somit stellt die Serie *Šumma sinništu qaqqada rabât* ein einzigartiges Zeugnis der Kriterien für eine Eheschließung dar."

21. For a synopsis of the apodoses, see Böck, *Morphoskopie*, 36–38.

22. Rofé ("A Virtuous Wife," 384) points out that motherhood is not mentioned in WV; but even he cannot deny the existence of children and the implied fertility of their mother.

23. Rofé argues that the Septuagint γυνή συνετή read originally אשה משׂכלת 'a successful woman', whereas אשה יראת יהוה is an editorial adjustment. If this is the case, then the parallel between the descriptions is based on a late emendation of the biblical text.

cessful in whatever her hand touches (*lipit qātīša iššir*), and the WV also has very enterprising and successful hands (v. 13: "sets her hands to them with a free will"; v. 16: "she plants a vineyard with her own palms"; v. 19: "she sets her hands to the distaff, her palms work the spindle"; v. 20 "she stretches out her palm to the poor"; and especially v. 31: "extol her for the fruit of her hands"). In the second WLH passage cited above in particular we can compare 'barley and silver she will not want' (*iḫaššaḫ*) with WV, whose trusting husband will not be missing anything (v. 11: "and lacks no good thing"). In general the Mesopotamian woman will be rich (*išarru*), see wealth (*mašrâ immar*) and profit (*nēmala immar*), and it is clear that WV is financially well off. The Mesopotamian woman eats regularly (*akala sadra ikkal*) and is sated by food (*akala išebbi*), while WV provides sustenance for her house and regular food to her lasses (v. 15: "she supplies provisions for her household, the daily fare for her maids"). The Mesopotamian lady is of happy disposition (*ṭub libbi šakinši*) and walks constantly in bright spirits (*namriš ittanallak*), while WV smiles to the last day, or "she looks to the future cheerfully" (v. 28). The second of the two ladies in the WLH texts examined here is soft-spoken (*ina dabābīša nēḫat*), while WV opens her mouth with wisdom, and kindly teaching is on her tongue (v. 26). It is clear, therefore, that what a Mesopotamian man looks for in a wife resembles the qualities recommended for the WV. The favorable Mesopotamian women and WV share many of the same blessings in life and offer them to their potential husbands. We should point out, however, that fertility and the ability to complete pregnancy are pronounced themes in WLH, while in WV they are simply implied by the reference to children.

A striking thing about WLH in general and the two passages examined here in particular is that the features auguring well for women, marking a woman as desirable or undesirable, are pointedly not beauty. In fact, as we saw above, a propitious woman can actually be quite homely or downright ugly. This reminds us, of course, of the penultimate verse in WV (v. 30): "Charm is a lie, and beauty is vane; a woman who fears the Lord, she will be praised." We may also mention in this connection Shimeon ben Gamliel's dictum at the end of *m. Taʿanit*:[24]

> There were no better days for Israel than the fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement, on which the Daughters of Israel went out in white, borrowed clothes so as not to embarrass those who had none. . . . And the Daughters of Israel would go out and dance in the vineyards. And what would they say? "Young man! Look and see what you choose for yourself. Look not at the beauty (נוי); look at the pedigree."

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24. I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Edward Fram for reminding me of this passage.

Although they share some themes and purposes, there is certainly no genetic link between the two texts from the biblical-Judaic tradition and the Akkadian composition. So one cannot say that one influenced the other. In fact, the view reflected is probably universal. But all reflect a view, each for its own reasons, that physical beauty is not important in choosing a bride. Beauty has a place in romantic love, as we find in Song of Songs and similar texts from the ancient Near East. But the texts involved in selecting brides not only ignore it but explicitly (WV, *m. Taʿan.*) or implicitly (WLH) reject it. All three texts make a most important statement for both men and women. On the one hand, they enable and encourage young men to look beyond their superficial perception to find a woman of quality, be it חיל, pedigree, or positively portentous features. From the feminine perspective, they liberate young women from the necessity and mental anguish of trying to be beautiful to catch a man as well as lack of self-esteem and other such woes. They make "the girl next door" as eligible a catch as a Hollywood starlet. Going back to the immortal words of young Hodel in the epigraph: young girl that she is, she dreams of physical beauty, but Papa and Mama realize that there are more important things in life than looks. And so it was in the ancient Near East.

The dependence on omens as a criterion in matchmaking raises a question: did not WHL, which was deterministic in nature, doom certain women to spinsterhood? Not every woman augurs favorably, and who would want to marry a woman whose very appearance presages family disaster? Such a woman would be the equivalent in the ancient mind of a known bearer of a hereditary disorder in present-day perceptions. This would be true, of course, if a mate was chosen blindly on the basis of a single sign. However, it is well known that in Mesopotamian divination, no individual omen was taken as an exclusive indicator but was always interpreted in combination with other signs pointing in various directions. Moreover, divination was essentially binary, answering yes or no, and omens were considered either positive or negative, so the details of a particular prediction were not very important. Most important, omens could be and often were manipulated in their interpretation, so an ancient Mesopotamian matchmaker working on the basis of WLH and personal interpretive skill would certainly be able to make any lady into a desirable catch, not unlike Yentel from *Fiddler*, who manages to find a saving grace even in the most dismal of her offerings.

I cannot adduce evidence of this kind of manipulation in Akkadian physiognomic omens, but a good example of "manipulating" a woman's appearance for good in order to enable marital relations appears in the Babylonian Talmud, *b. Nedarim* 66b:[25]

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25. This translation is taken from Geller, "West Meets East," 72–73. Geller does not relate it to WLH, but he points out that its examination of the woman from head to toe resembles descriptions in omens.

"A man once said to his wife, 'I vow that you will not benefit from me [i.e., have sexual intercourse] until you show something beautiful [יפה] in yourself to R. Ishmael, son of R. Jose.'

> "He said to them: 'Perhaps her head is beautiful?' 'It is round,' they replied.
> "'Perhaps her hair is beautiful?' '(It is) like stalks of flax.'
> "'Perhaps her eyes are beautiful?' 'They are bleared.'
> "'Perhaps her ears are beautiful?' 'They are folded over.'
> "'Perhaps her nose is beautiful?' 'It is obstructed.'
> "'Perhaps her lips are beautiful?' 'They are thick.'
> "'Perhaps her neck is beautiful?' 'It is stubby.'
> "'Perhaps her belly is beautiful?' 'It protrudes.'
> "'Perhaps her feet are beautiful?' 'They are as broad as those of a duck.'
> "'Perhaps her name is beautiful?' 'It is *Liklukit*' [a thick, nauseating substance].

"Said he to them, 'It is appropriate [יפה] that they call her *Liklukit*, since she is ugly [מלכלכת] because of her defects'; and so he 'untied' her [from her husband]" [that is, released him from his vow, thereby permitting him to resume relationships].

This woman is obviously as ugly as sin, with no redeeming physical charms. *Liklukit* is no Miss Babylonia.[26] Nonetheless, R. Ishmael is able to release her husband from his vow of abstinence by finding "beauty" in her name. Certainly the experienced Mesopotamian omen interpreters would have been able to do the same with their unsightly daughters, giving new meaning to Prov 31:30.

Appendix

I list here the passages from the Egyptian instructions concerning women in general and marriage in particular. They have been gleaned from Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, the volume and page numbers of which follow each passage.

Any (2:135–46)

Take a wife while you're young,
that she make a son for you;
she should bear for you while you're youthful;
it is proper to make people.
Happy the man whose people are many;
he is saluted on account of his progeny. (2:136, lines 1–6 of translation) 3,1ff.

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26. This name is used in Modern Hebrew for the fairy-tale character Cinderella.

Beware of a woman who is a stranger,
one not known in her town;
don't stare at her when she goes by,
do not know her carnally.
A deep water whose course is unknown,
such is a woman away from her husband.
"I am pretty," she tells you daily,
when she has no witnesses;
she is ready to ensnare you,
a great deadly crime when it is heard. (2:137, lines 4–13)

Do not control your wife in her house,
when you know she is efficient;
Don't say to her: "Where is it? Get it!"
when she has put it in the right place.
Let your eye observe in silence,
then you recognize her skill;
it is joy when your hand is with her;
there are many who don't know this. . . .
Do not go after a woman,
let her not steal your heart. (2:143, lines 7–20) 9,4ff.

Ankhsheshonq (3:159–84)

Do not take to yourself a woman whose husband is alive,
lest he become your enemy. (3:166) 8,12

Let your wife see your wealth;
do not trust her with it.
Do not trust her with her provisions for one year. (3:169) 12,13–14

If you find your wife with her lover, get yourself a bride to suit you.
Do not get a maidservant for your wife if you do not have a manservant.
(3:169) 13,12–13

Do not open your heart to your wife; what you have said to her goes to the
   street.
Do not open your heart to your wife or to your servant.
Open it to your mother; she is a woman of discretion.
A woman knows her own business.
Instructing a woman is like having a sack of sand whose side is split open.
Her savings are stolen goods.
What she does with her husband today she does with another man tomorrow.
(3:169–70) 13,16–22

Do not abandon a woman of your household
when she has not conceived a child. (3:170) 14,16

Do not let your son marry a woman from another town,
lest he be taken from you. (3:171) 15,15

Do not rejoice in your wife's beauty;
her heart is set on her lover. (3:173) 18,15

A woman lets herself be loved
according to the character of her husband. (3:175) 20,19

The waste of a woman is not knowing her. (3:175) 20,23

Do not violate a married woman.
He who violates a married woman on the bed
will have his wife violated on the ground. (3:176) 21,18–19

He who makes love to a woman of the street
will have his purse cut open on its side. (3:176) 22,6

If a woman loves a crocodile she takes on its character.
A woman at night, praise in midday.
Do not slander a woman who is beloved.
Do not praise a woman who is disliked. (3:176) 22,8–11

Do not make love to a married woman.
He who makes love to a married woman is killed on her doorstep.
                                                    (3:177) 23,6–7

Belly of woman, heart of horse. (3:177) 23,24

Do not marry an ailing woman. (3:177) 24,6

A woman is a stone quarry; the . . . exploits her.
A good woman of noble character is food that comes in time of hunger.
                                                    (3:178) 24,20–21

If [a woman is at peace] with her husband it is the influences of the god.
                                                    (3:178) 25,5

Do not take [   ] of a woman to your heart,
She is a harmful woman who does not leave a tree undamaged. (3:178) 25,8–9

May the heart of a wife be the heart of her husband,
that they may be free of strife. (3:178) 25,14

Do not marry an impious woman,
lest she give your children an impious upbringing.
If a woman is at peace with her husband they will never fare badly.
If a woman whispers about her husband [they will never] fare well.

If a woman does not desire the property of her husband she has another man [in her] heart.
A low woman does not have a life.
A bad woman does not have a husband.
The wife of a fool. . . . (3:179) 25,17–23

Papyrus Insinger (3:184–217)

Do not do what you desire with a woman by cajoling her. (3:187) 3,9

Do not consort with [a woman] who consorts with your superior.
If she is beautiful, place yourself away from her. (3:188) 3,16–17

A wise man is harmed because of a woman he loves. (3:191) 7,11

THE NINTH INSTRUCTION
The teaching not to be a fool, so that one does not fail to receive you in the house
Wrongdoing [occurs] in the heart of the fool through his love of women.
He does not think of the morrow for the sake of wronging the wife of another.
The fool who looks at a woman is like a fly on blood.
His [   ] attains the bedroom, unless the hand of another attains him.
The [fool] brings disturbance to [   ] because of his phallus.
His love of fornication does harm to his livelihood.
He who knows how to hold his heart has the equivalent of every teaching.
If a woman is beautiful, you should show her you are superior to her.
A good woman who does not love another man in her family is a wise woman.
The women who follow this teaching are rarely bad.
Their good condition comes about through the god's command.
There is she who fills her house with wealth without there being an income.
There is she who is the praised mistress of the house by virtue of her character.
There is she whom I hold in contempt as an evil woman.
Fear her on account of the fear of Hathor.
The fool who wrongs the mistress of the house, his portion is to be cursed.
He who is worthy before the god will have respect for them.
There is he who forgets a wife when he is young because he loves another woman.
She is not a good woman who is pleasing to another (man).
She is not the fool of the street who misbehaves in it.
He is not a wise man who consorts with them.
The work of Mut and Hathor is what acts among women.
It is in women that good fortune and bad fortune are upon earth.
Fate and fortune go and come when he (the god) commands them. Total: 23.
                                                              (3:191–92) 7,20–8,20

The Fly and the Dog:
Observations on Ideational Polarity in the Book of Qoheleth

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Qoheleth's canonical position was discussed among the rival schools of Hillel and Shammai, and its inclusion in the Hebrew canon was approved ex post facto by the former (*m. Yad*. 3:5, *ʿEd*. 5:3; *b. Meg*. 7a).[1] Two primary arguments against admitting Qoheleth into the canon, due to its perceived lack of divine inspiration, appear in rabbinic sources. The first is that the book is not internally coherent (*b. Šabb*. 30b), and the second is that the views expressed are too heretical (*Qoh. Rab*. 1:3; 11:9; *Num. Rab*. 161b).[2] It seems that the actual acceptance of the book among the canonical books of the Bible was due to the ancient Jewish tradition that the author of the book of Qoheleth was King Solomon, the son of David, king of Jerusalem (Eccl 1:1, 12; *Cant. Rab*. 1:1, 10), the archetype of the wise. Another no-less-important explanation for its inclusion may stem from the presence of the orthodox statement in the closing verses of the book (12:12–14; see *b. Šabb*. 30b).

Qoheleth's apparent lack of internal coherence that was not lost on the ancient rabbis, is a recurring issue in modern scholarship. Different voices are heard in the book: one voice, in which the author refers to himself in the first person, and another that refers to Qoheleth in the third person. But beyond the nonuniform style, a more serious literary problem concerns the dissonance between conservative statements with regard to various phenomena of life, on

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Author's note: This essay is dedicated to Michael Fox in recognition of his intellectual sensibility, unique integration of erudite philological analyses, intimate knowledge of ancient Near Eastern cultures, and attentiveness to the ideational aspects of biblical literature.

1. The school of Shammai pronounced the scroll of Qoheleth clean, and the school of Hillel pronounced it unclean according to the rule כל כתבי הקדש מטמאין את הידים 'All Holy Scriptures defile the hands [or render them unclean]'; thus the dispute over Qoheleth was considered one of the points on which the school of Shammai was more lax than the school of Hillel. See C. H. H. Wright, *Book of Koheleth* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1883) 3–27, 470–74.

2. See C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997) 3–4.

the one hand, and skeptical observations that contradict the traditional beliefs, on the other hand. The skeptical voice has been attributed to the original author, seen as the חכם 'sage', while the conservative views have been attributed to a חסיד, a pious glossator, or even to several glossators or editors.[3] Another approach that attributes the contradictory voices to the same author offers two main, different solutions for the above inconsistencies in the book: (a) The author creates a dialogue of debate by quoting traditional standard views in order to contradict them. The dialogue is conducted with either a genuine or a fictional interlocutor.[4] (b) The author expresses one person's reflections from the perspective of changing stages in his life and in accordance with the developing changes in his own world view.[5] It follows that the conflicting points of view in the discourses of the book express a dialogue between Qoheleth and himself.

Qoheleth formulates his ideas a priori. He sets up a wide variety of expressive modes for his personal observations and introduces his perceptions while sketching a procedure for investigation. For example, he writes, "I set my mind to study and to probe with wisdom all that happens under the sun" (1:13);[6] "and so I set my mind to appraise wisdom and to appraise madness and folly" (1:17); "for all this I noted, and I ascertained all this" (9:1). Qoheleth's confessional, monologue style is characterized by a string of sentences connected by means of coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions. For example, he uses the particle -שֶׁ along with אשר, not only as a relative particle as in the older biblical texts, but as a conjunction introducing the subject of an object clause, which is typical of late Biblical Hebrew.[7]

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3. See C. G. Siegfried, *Prediger und Hoheslied* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1898) 2–12. For surveys of theories concerning the search for a precise identity of the alleged glossator/glossators, see M. V. Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions* (JSOTSup 71; Sheffield: Almond, 1989) 23–25; R. E. Murphy, "The Sage in Ecclesiastes and Qoheleth the Sage," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 263; Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 38–43.

4. For different categories of quotations, see R. Gordis, "Quotations in Wisdom Literature," *JQR* 30 (1939–40) 123–47; H. W. Hertzberg, *Der Prediger* (KAT 17/4; Leipzig: Gütersloh, 1963) 174; J. A. Loader, *Polar Structures in the Book of Qoheleth* (BZAW 152; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979); M. V. Fox, "The Identification of Quotations in Biblical Literature," *ZAW* 92 (1980) 416–31; R. N. Whybray, "The Identification and Use of Quotations in Ecclesiastes," in *Congress Volume: Vienna, 1980* (VTSup 32; ed. J. A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 435–51.

5. J. L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987) 34.

6. All biblical citations in this article are from the NJPSV unless otherwise indicated.

7. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 17.

Scholars have tried to discern a well-planned composition divided into separate units.[8] It is difficult however, to demarcate the individual pericopes. Often we can observe a continuous flow of thought in the argumentation of a literary unit, whereas in other instances the thematic continuity appears to be forced. Taking into consideration the complexity of this issue, it seems to me preferable to read the relevant texts in their original order and to evaluate the contents of each pericope in its original place.

The main concern of this essay is to evaluate the rhetorical impact on Qoheleth's sermon of two figurative aphorisms that have been shaped by fauna imagery (9:4 and 10:1). An examination of the syntactical and thematic setting of these two sayings within their literary pericopes will stimulate further discussion regarding two well-known scholarly debates concerning Qoheleth:

    a. *Ideational aspect.* The possible sources of and explanations for Qoheleth's contradictory statements as noted briefly above.

    b. *Compositional-editorial aspect.* The identification of the limits or, alternatively, the extent of each thematic unit in the planned, inner structure of the book.

The demarcation of the literary unit provides a key for understanding it as a whole, as well as for assessing the role of the imagery contained within it. Stated differently, the identification of the thematic unit aids in understanding the reciprocal relationships between the whole and its parts, so that the functions of the component elements themselves contribute toward comprehending the form of the literary unit.[9]

Following Weiss's methodology, I will read Qoheleth in its accepted format, without committing myself to any of the scholarly hypotheses to resolve the internal contradictions of the book. For the division into thematic units, I will be guided by Qoheleth's own method of investigation: positing the thesis, moving to the antithesis or to a restrictive statement, and finally presenting the deduction. The thematic development is followed by an analysis of key terms and other literary features. The latter include catchwords, repetitions, and phrases

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8. For various methodologies in delineating a planned structure of the book, see ibid., 43–47.

9. I follow Meir Weiss, who applies the critical principles of the "Total Interpretation" method of the New Criticism (*Die Werkinterpretation* 'close reading') school to the understanding of the biblical text. See M. Weiss, *The Bible from Within: The Method of Total Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1984) 1–73; idem, "Die Methode der 'Total Interpretation': Von der Nowendigkeit der Struktur-Analyse für das Verständnis der biblischen Dichtung," in *Congress Volume: Uppsala, 1971* (VTSup 22; ed. H. S. Nyberg; Leiden: Brill, 1972) 88–112.

and concepts used by means of juxtaposition and contrast (such as youth and old age, Eccl 11:9–12:7), all of which bind the subject unit together.

We turn first to 9:13–10:1, which raises the question of the advantage of wisdom over foolishness. Despite its thematic unity, it presents a wide variety of literary patterns and stylistic features: the parabolic narrative (9:14–15), the proverbial metaphor (10:1); two "better proverbs" (9:16a, 18a), one "better proverb" without the characteristic, stylistic element טוב 'better' (9:17); and two formulas introducing the theoretical debate (9:13 and 9:16aα).[10]

With the words "this thing too I observed under the sun about wisdom, and it affected me profoundly" (9:13), the author introduces an instance of wisdom that appears as a great source of wonder to him. The illustrative background for this assertion is provided by the parable of the king and the poor wise man (9:14–15). The sense of amazement is echoed by the story of the poor wise man that has saved (or might have saved) the entire city through his wisdom and has overcome the great king and his warriors. But even more amazing is the fact that, in the final analysis, no one remembers the poor man who saved the city through his wise council.[11]

The thematic unit 9:13–10:1 consists of a parable (vv. 14–15) and a cluster of proverbial sayings (9:13, 16–18; 10:1b), whose main theme is the advantage of wisdom and counsel over both military might and foolishness.

The book of Proverbs, as well as Ecclesiastes, praises wisdom over military might, as in Prov 21:22, "One wise man prevailed over a city of warriors and brought down its mighty stronghold," and 20:18, "Plans laid in council will succeed; / Wage war with stratagems."[12] Moreover, Proverbs also indicates that it is more praiseworthy to overcome evil impulses than to exhibit bravery on the battlefield: "Better to be forbearing than mighty, to have self-control than

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10. On the delineation of the literary unit 9:13–10:1, see R. Gordis, *Koheleth: The Man and His World* (New York: Schocken, 1968) 309; R. B. Y. Scott, *Ecclesiastes* (AB 18; New York: Doubleday, 1981) 247; Fox includes the fool sayings in the literary unit 9:13–10:3 (*Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 261–62). Ogden compares subunits 9:17–18 and 10:1–4 and finds thematic parallels, such as wisdom versus folly; wisdom's superiority (9:17; 10:2–4) against wisdom's vulnerability (9:18b; 10:1). He also calls attention to stylistic parallels, such as repeated words, chiastic structures, antitheses (e.g., single error vs. much of value), and the keyword לב 'heart'. G. Ogden, *Qoheleth* (Readings; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987) 163–64. G. A. Barton includes 10:1 in the literary unit 10:1–20, entitled "Advice concerning one's attitude toward rulers," whereas the genuine portions are 10:4–7, 14b, 16, 17, 20, and the interpolations are the rest (*The Book of Ecclesiastes* [ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908] 169).

11. S. Japhet and R. B. Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel Ben Meir (Rashbam) on Qoheleth* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1985) 112–13 [Hebrew].

12. See also Prov 24:5–6; Eccl 7:19.

to conquer a city" (Prov 16:32). The collection of sayings in Eccl 9:16–18 thus proves to be an embedded cluster within a contemplative discussion of the value of wisdom in the literary section 9:13–10:1. The sayings share a common idea that assesses the relative value of wisdom vis-à-vis bravery on the battlefield. The opening clause of both sayings states the advantages of wisdom, whereas the closing clause declares that there are limitations to this truth. The structure of the pattern is a "better proverb" + oppositional *waw* + a restrictive saying. The *waw* actually precedes a circumstantial clause that limits the main assertion of the "better proverb" pronounced in the opening clause:

> *Eccl 9:16*: Wisdom *is better than* valor + *but* a poor man's wisdom is scorned, and his words are not heeded.

> *Eccl 9:18*: Wisdom *is better than* weapons of war + *but* one sinner destroys much good.[13] (RSV)

The middle saying of the triplet of sayings (9:17) expresses the logical paradigm of the "better proverb" without presenting the stylistic morpheme טוב 'better'. In contrast to the other two sayings, this saying declares an absolute appreciation of the gentle mode of expression pronounced by wise people: "The words of the wise spoken gently are heard more than the shout of a ruler among fools" (9:17).[14]

The ideational tension of the contradiction between the recommendation to be wise and the limits of wisdom's advantage provides a dialectical garb for the literary unit under discussion. Let us take a closer look at the distribution of the juxtaposed antonyms in the verses:[15]

> *Antitheses in the parable about the king (9:14):*
> > little city, few men ≠ great king, mighty siege works
> > poor wise man ≠ great king

> *Antitheses in the sayings unit (vv. 16–18):*
> > wisdom ≠ valor
> > poor man's wisdom ≠ scorned
> > wise men ≠ foolish ruler
> > spoken softly ≠ shouted
> > wisdom ≠ weapons of war
> > single ≠ much

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13. The *waw* of the adversative clause וחוטא 'but one sinner' functions as opposition. See JM 2: §172a.

14. The translation follows Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 261.

15. On the polarity paradigm in Qoheleth, see Loader, *Polar Structures*, 58–61.

The sayings in praise of wisdom (vv. 17, 18) can indeed be interpreted as in-dependent sayings juxtaposed by free association. However, their common feature of contrasting the relationship between wisdom and folly by employ-ing the stylistic pattern of the "better proverb" echoes the same ideational ten-sion conveyed through the parable of the king's siege of the town and its rescue by the commoner sage.

We can interpret the saying in v. 17 of the advantage of the sage's gentle words over the shout of a ruler among fools against the backdrop of the par-able of the mighty king and the clever counsel offered by the lowly commoner (vv. 14–15). The same arrogant attitude of a screaming ruler among fools is echoed by the conceited behavior of the great king who besieged the city and built great siege works against it (v. 14).

The opening clause of another saying declares wisdom to be superior to "weapons of war" (v. 18a). This assertion also elicits the story of the poor wise man who overcame the strong king. But the second half of the saying, "but a single error destroys much of value" (v. 18b), questions the categorical asser-tion that wisdom always prevails. Rashbam explicates חוטא אחד 'one sinner' as being linked to the lowly wise man of the parable in a relationship of opposi-tion: just as this poor wise man saves the city through his sagacity, so does one sinner destroy much good.[16] And indeed the חוטא 'sinner' is often evaluated in wisdom literature as one who assumes an errant attitude, specifically one who exhibits negative behavioral characteristics and a lack of social concern, such as overweening pride and self-confidence (Prov 14:21; 20:2) or haste and lack of consideration in action (Prov 19:2). The word חוטא 'sinner' (Prov 8:36) borrows its meaning from "missing the target" as expressed in the verse, "Every one of them could sling a stone at a hair and not miss" (Judg 20:16b).

A note is appended to the story of the wisdom of the common wise man that saves the little city. This touches on the position of the lowly wise man as seen by others in retrospect: "Yet no one remembered that poor man" (v. 15c). In fact, biblical commentators are divided regarding whether the verse refers to the wisdom of the poor man that was not taken advantage of to save the city because he was poor, or to the fact that the wisdom was forgotten later and was not appreciated enough. The past tense of the verb מלט 'saved' is evidence that the poor man did indeed save the city through his wisdom, which was subsequently forgotten by his fellow townspeople. In attempting to make the

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16. Rashbam also identifies the "fools" (v. 17b) in relation to the context of the "mighty siege works" of the ruler (v. 17b) in the parable of the little city: "For they are fools because they have no wise counsel to overcome the strategy of this man, who is poor and wise" (*Qoheleth*, 112–13).

oppositional stich suit the context, v. 16 ("a poor man's wisdom is scorned, and his words are not heeded") interprets the story as one in which the towns-people did not heed the poor man's advice, and his wisdom was of no use. The phrase ומלט הוא 'he who saved' is then explained in this context as a hy-pothetical condition: if only they had listened to his words, he could have saved the city.[17] This sober, realistic tone describing the poor unfortunate man's position in the eyes of society shows that there are limits to the advan-tage of wisdom. The appreciative words in the parable are formulated accord-ing to the pattern of the "better proverb," stated in first person: "So I observed: Wisdom is better than valor; but . . ." (9:16a). The continuation of these words overturns the appreciative tone by recognizing the scorned posi-tion of the poor wise man whose words are not heard: "A poor man's wisdom is scorned, and his words are not heeded" (9:16b). In both instances, the wise man does not get the recompense he justly deserves. Either society forgets the wise man in retrospect after following his advice that saved the city de facto, or the townspeople scorn his advice at the onset of the siege and refuse to heed his counsel (v. 15c).

The scales in the "better proverb" weigh in favor of "words spoken gently by wise men" over the "the shout of a ruler among fools" (see v. 17). On the surface, it seems unsuitable and does not fit well with the poor wise man's dis-appointment at not being given the reward he so richly deserves in the parable of the king: "but nobody thought of that poor man" (v. 15c). However, there is a contradiction between the wisdom saying and the parable of the poor wise man that expresses the dialectical tension between reality and ideal.[18] Although there is an ideal of wisdom, forces of reality operate against it. Although the counsel of the poor wise man is worthy of society's valuation without any con-nection to his very low socioeconomic level, the fact is that striving for a just reward does not always withstand the test of reality.[19]

Both parable and sayings share a similar dialectical tension that establishes a thematic unity. The adjacent sayings show an ideational association between the single error that destroys much of value and the "ruler among fools" (18b); both express support of wisdom (v. 18a) and its spokespeople (v. 17a); juxtaposed to

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17. This translation follows Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 261. For a discussion in regard to this passage, see pp. 263–64.

18. Or as Seow puts it: "It is a contradiction between the principle and the reality, the rule and the exception" (*Ecclesiastes*, 322).

19. Similar to the ungrateful attitude of society to the wise adviser (9:15b, 16b), com-pare the skeptical approach by Qoheleth to the material gains of the wise: "nor wealth by the intelligent" (9:11). For a discussion on the wise in Qoheleth, see Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 114, 207, 262.

these is the critical outlook on the damage produced by that "one sinner" and the "ruler among fools."

We must now consider the placement of the proverbial metaphor "dead flies turn the perfumer's ointment fetid and putrid" (10:1a), within the literary unit 9:13–10:1. The word זבוב 'fly' is the generic name for the insect species *Brachycera* and is the onomatopoetic noun mimicking the noise of the insect's flight.[20] The female of the species lays eggs that hatch into maggots, legless larvas that develop either into rotting materials or into parasites feeding on other living animals. Maggots weave cocoons from which a fly emerges after several days. Flies multiply extremely rapidly, especially under primitive health conditions and therefore are all the more injurious to human beings by carrying many, many germs.

The word זבוב appears in the Hebrew Bible twice: Eccl 10:1 and Isa 7:18. In the prophecy to Ahaz (Isa 7:10–25), Isaiah compares the Assyrian armies' onslaught to the flies and the bees that alight "in the rugged wadis, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in all the thornbrakes, and in all the watering places." The irksome nature of hordes of stinging insects seems to inspire the prophet's imagery.[21]

In some of the instances of maggots and worms in the Bible, flies' maggots are hinted at, so it seems that ancient peoples knew that flies emerged from the maggots.[22] The description of the manna, "So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered; and it did not turn foul, and there were no maggots in it" (Exod 16:24), describes the rotting process that can be attributed to the activity of flies' maggots.[23] In texts that describe meat rotting due to maggots, the latter may be identified as the larval stage of flies that destroy the flesh of

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20. For the זבוב 'fly' in Akkadian, see *zumbu* (*zunbu, zubbu*), CAD Z 155. The Aramaic denominative verb דבב (from the noun דודבא, דיבבא 'fly') expresses the idea of moving and shaking.

21. See J. Palmoni, "zebûb," *Encyclopaedia Biblica* 2:893–94 [Hebrew]; M. Dor, *Ha-ḥay bymêy Ha-mikra, Ha-mishna, ve-Ha-talmud* (Tel-Aviv: Grafor-Deftal, 1997) 200. The gathering of the gods over the performer of the sacrifice is compared both in the Gilgamesh Epic (XI 161) and in Homer's *Iliad* (2.469–73) to swarming hordes of flies.

22. Archaeological evidence that ancient peoples were aware of the fly's previous stage as maggots is attested by a papyrus found placed in the mouth of an Egyptian mummy: "The worms will not become flies within you." See F. S. Bodenheimer, *Ha-ḥay beʾarṣôt Ha-mikra* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1965) 1:116 [Hebrew]. On Aristotle's knowledge of the larval stage as an insect's form of procreation, see Aristotle, *Gen. an.* 3.9.758b. Aristotle states that the fly is created from the garbage (*Hist. an.* 5.721).

23. It may be that the verse meant the *drosophila* maggots, the "fruit flies" found in overripe fruit when it begins to turn sour. See M. Dor, *Ha-ḥay bymêy Ha-mikra*, 202.

the dead: "My flesh is covered with maggots and clods of earth; / My skin is broken and festering" (Job 7:5; cf. Isa 14:11; 2 Macc 9:9).

The fly appears in a wide range of talmudic sources as a loathsome creature, זבוב מאיסותא 'disgusting fly', that disseminates infectious diseases (*b. Ketub.* 77b). A case of a fly that falls into a dish can even serve as a sufficient pretext for divorce (*b. Giṭ.* 6b).

The proverbial metaphor in Qoheleth, "Dead flies turn the perfumer's ointment fetid and putrid" (10:1), appears as the plural construct זבובי מות 'flies of death' (10:1), that is, flies that deserve to die or are destined to die. However, the plural noun is not in agreement with the third-person singular verbs יבאיש 'will spoil' and יביע 'will bubble'. The disagreement in number is exacerbated by the comparison of "a little folly" in the second clause of the verse to "flies" in the opening clause.

The asyndeton יבאיש יביע has created syntactical and, thus, hermeneutic problems. Ibn Ezra defines יביע 'bubble' as a transitive verb: "and the stink shall not cease because the flies will continue to bubble up." Others read יביע as dittography with יבאיש or as an interpolation of an explanatory gloss of the linguistic difficulty. Therefore, they omit יביע entirely. Still others emend the verb יביע to גביע 'goblet', due to the asyndetic nature in the string of verbs יבאיש יביע.[24]

Luzzatto, in his commentary on Ecclesiastes in *Meḥqerey Ha-yahadut* from 1820, proposed a redivision of the existing possessive compound into a noun and a verb, זבוב ימות 'a fly will die'; this division is more compatible with the idea of the damage of 'a little folly'.[25] Others propose the reading זבוב מות 'mortal fly', designating someone who is destined to die, similar to the compound expression בן מות 'mortal' (1 Sam 20:31; 2 Sam 2:5).[26]

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24. Scholars' suggestion to omit יביע as dittography is supported by the ancient versions of Symm., the Aram. Tg., and the Vg. BHS suggests emending יביע to גביע 'goblet' or 'vessel'. The LXX reads as a noun, σκευασίαν 'preparation', as reflected also by the Syr. reading of תוקנא 'vessel' or 'container'. The word גביע 'goblet' or 'vessel' is also interpreted as a metonym for its contents; see R. Saʿadiya Gaon (Rasag), who translates it as a noun, a container of oil. See H. Louis Ginsberg, *Koheleth* (Tel Aviv: Newman, 1961) 119 [Hebrew]; Scott, *Ecclesiastes*, 248; Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 265.

25. Shmuel David Luzzatto (Shadal), *Meḥqerey Ha-yahadut*, vol. 1: *Divrey Qohelet* (Warsaw: Ha-zefira, 1913) 100 [Hebrew]. Ginsberg follows Luzzatto in proposing the reading זבוב ימות 'a fly about to die', similar to the pattern of אנוש ימות 'a mortal man' (Isa 51:12). See Ginsberg, *Koheleth*, 119; Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 261. C. F. Whitley supports the reading זבוב 'a fly', emphasizing its suitable counterbalance מעט סכלות 'a little folly' (*Koheleth: His Language and Thought* [BZAW 148; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979] 83).

26. The singular form is reflected by the Aramaic translation כדבובא 'as a fly' (cf. *y. Qidd.* 1.10 and *Qoh. Rab.* Ibn Ezra accepts the reading of the MT and claims that frequently in

The saying conjures up a picture of dead flies that fall into precious, high-quality oil, making it putrid and spoiling it. The concise formulation of the description provides it with the character of an aphorism. Consequently, the reader is not required to reexamine its empirical truth but to implement its cognitive pattern and take in its moral message by drawing the appropriate analogy. The term שמן רוקח indicates a concoction of oils and fragrant spices (cf. Exod 30:25), whose delicate qualities are ruined by dead flies falling into it.[27]

Closely connected to the proverbial metaphor is an additional saying that may be explained in relation to the analogy in a chiastic structure:

Dead flies turn *the perfumer's ointment* fetid and putrid (10:1a)
So *a little folly* outweighs *massive wisdom* (10:1b)

This second stich opens with the adjective יקר, which may be informed by the Aramaic epithet יקיר, meaning both 'honorable' and 'heavy'. The Targum renders ויקיר יתיר מן חוכמתא 'the value is heavier [or more honorable] than wisdom', thus keeping the pattern of the "better proverb."[28] Fox proposes adding

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the Bible the irregular singular verb plus a plural noun is used to denote each separate act of the singular. For example, בנות צעדה עלי שור 'its branches run over the wall' (RSV; Gen 49:22) and also Exod 31:14, Lev 17:14, Isa 2:18, and Eccl 2:7. Delitzsch decides in favor of the reading זבובי מות 'death-flies', 'poisonous flies' as described by the LXX μυῖαι θανατοῦσαι 'pestilent flies', emphasizing the intentional dramatic effect of the simile in analogy to damage caused by a little folly. See F. Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes* (trans. M. G. Easton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) 370–71. K. Budde compares זבובי מות with other compound expressions, such as: כלי מות 'deadly weapons' (Ps 7:14) and חבלי מות 'snares of death' (Ps 18:5) (*Die Fünf Megillot* [Freiburg: Mohr, 1898]) 155; cf. Wright, *The Book of Koheleth*, 417–18. Fox argues against the reading זבוב מות 'mortal fly': "But flies are not deadly . . . nor is it relevant that they are doomed" (*Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 264).

27. Ogden interprets רוקח as a participle "describing one who blends aromatic compounds, hence 'perfumer' (RSV)" (*Qoheleth*, 164). See יין הרקח 'spiced wine' (RSV; Song 8:2). The phrase שמן רוקח 'perfumer's oil' aided in the reconstruction of the Ug. lection *šmn rq*[*ḥ*] in UT 3:21 and *šm*[*n*] *rqḥ* in UT 120:5. That these readings are correct has been confirmed by the unpublished Ugaritic Tablet RS 24.643:21 with the phrase *lg šmn rqḥ* 'a log of perfumers oil'. See M. Dahood, "The Phoenician Background of Qoheleth," *Bib* 47 (1966) 278.

28. On יקר corresponding to כבד in Aramaic, see יקירה (Dan 2:11) as well as Ahiqar and Aramaic papyri (see A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* [repr.; Osnabrück: Zeller, 1967] 290, col. A [index]). Rashi and Rashbam compare יקר, in the sense of heavy property, to יקרות 'choice' [stones] (1 Kgs 5:31). For the association between כבוד and כבד as property, see Gen 31:1; Isa 10:3; 61:6; 66:11, 12; Nah 2:10; Ps 49:17, 18. The same antithesis between the borrowed meanings of כבד and קל appears between the antonyms כבוד 'honor' and קלון 'disgrace' (Prov 3:35) as well as אכבד and יקלו (1 Sam 2:30).

יקר as an accompanying epithet to שמן רקח and to emend from מכבוד to תכבד, as follows: זבוב ימות יבאיש גביע שמן רקח מחכמה יקר תכבד סכלות מעט 'a dead fly will make a vessel of precious perfumer's oil putrid, a little folly outweighs massive wisdom'.[29]

This parable compares dead flies to a little folly, and the fine ointment is compared to wisdom and honor. The damage caused by a small creature, valueless and scorned, such as a fly, to high-quality perfumer's ointment is compared to the severity of the damage of a little folly that overcomes wisdom and honor.[30]

The proverbial metaphor of the dead fly acts in close association with the closing stich of the previous saying, "but one sinner destroys much good" (9:18b); in other words, the degree of damage caused by one misdemeanor alone is compared to the damage caused by dead flies falling into a vessel of high-quality oil (cf. 10:1). Hence, the proverbial metaphor of dead flies falling into ointment is embedded as a kind of concretizing device that functions as fable and moral in illuminating the closing stiches of both sayings that surround it:

> One sinner destroys much good (9:18b)
> A little folly outweighs massive wisdom (10:1b)[31]

Both analogical sayings describe limitations of the "better" status of wisdom because they propose sober examination of reality, whereby sin and folly (wisdom's natural, primary enemies) are likely to prevail.

The picturesque image of the small flies that ruin an entire vessel of fine oil is intended to illustrate the disproportionate relationship between size and negative effect. Therefore, people should not underestimate how much damage "a single sinner" or "a little folly" may bring about.

The fable of the king and the poor wise man (9:14–15) and the fly parable (10:1) deal with precisely the same matter: evaluation of the influential power of wisdom on vital aspects of life. The appeal to all of the senses by both

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29. Fox's emendation breaks the asyndeton מחכמה מכבוד that shapes the closing stich in the paradigm of a "better proverb" (*Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 265).

30. On the variety of the analogy patterns of proverbial sayings see, for example, the comparative *waw* (Prov 22:1; 26:3, 8, 14) or the comparative morphemes כ . . . כן (Prov 26:1, 8; 27:18).

31. On the role of the proverb in its context, see J. L. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes*, 169; Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 264–65. Loader uses the term *tertium comparationis* to designate the common feature of the image and its analogue (*Polar Structures*, 60). In this case, the tiny size of the small flies and the smallness of the folly are compared.

parables successfully evokes the intensity of the confrontation between Wisdom and her adversaries.[32]

The proverbial metaphor contains antithetic terms, as demonstrated with regard to the parable about the king (9:14) and the sayings unit (vv. 16–18):

fetid, putrid ≠ perfumer's ointment
little ≠ heavy and precious
wisdom, honor ≠ folly

In addition to Qoheleth's method of juxtaposing two contradictory statements that evoke a speculative debate, Qoheleth fashions his proverbial narrative in a garb of intrusive and challenging vocabulary:

יבאיש: The root באש refers to fetid odor caused by the rot or spoilage of solid food (Exod 16:20) or liquids (Exod 7:21; Eccl 10:1). But the extended meaning of the root באש is disgraceful behavior: "A righteous man hates falsehood, but a wicked man acts shamefully and disgracefully" (RSV; Prov 13:5, and see Gen 34:30 and 2 Sam 16:21). Here באש unifies both levels: parable and lesson.

יביע: The verb is in the *Hiphil* form of the *primae nun* root נבע 'flow', although its context suits the ע″ו verbs and the ע″ע verbs בוע and בעע meaning to 'bubble up' and 'froth'.[33] The latter root would be appropriate for a description of foaming, that is, effervescence and foam on the surface of the liquid due to a fly falling into it. The infinitive of נבע expresses the bubbling up of springwater, as in the "torrid earth shall become a pool, parched land, fountains of water" (Isa 35:7a; cf. 49:10), but the root נבע is also a borrowed expression. Both meanings appear in this saying: "the words of a man's mouth are deep waters; the fountain of wisdom is a gushing stream" (RSV; Prov 18:4). The secondary use of נבע can be found in regard to negative types of people, fools and malicious people: "the tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly" (Prov 15:2); "the mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things" (Prov 15:28).

שמן רקח: The high-quality oil (שמן) is connected to the good reputation (שֵׁם) of the wise man, as the "better proverb" states using assonance שֵׁם, שמן: "a good name (שֵׁם) is better than precious oil (שמן)" (Eccl 7:1a). Anointing

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32. Rashbam (*Qoheleth*, 113) creates a hermeneutic link between the parable of the fly (10:1) and the fable of the king who mounts a siege against a little city with his army (9:14–15), expressing the application of the principle of divine retribution. He claims that the image of the flies, "insects good for nothing," is compared by Qoheleth with a sinful ruler who is not worthy of his throne.

33. Gordis, *Koheleth*, 315.

one's head with oil concretizes Qoheleth's call to celebrate and enjoy life: "let your clothes always be freshly washed, and your head never lack oil" (Eccl 9:8).[34] Thus the proverb states, "precious treasure and oil are in the house of the wise man, and a fool of a man will run through them" (Prov 21:20). The latter verse describes the oil as a desirable treasure that the wise man deems precious, while his polar opposite squanders it (cf. Prov 21:17). The use of the verb נבע in the proverb in relation to dead flies that pollute precious oils arouses the associative meaning of the archetypical fool, the evildoer, and the slanderer as depicted in wisdom proverbs. Included in this category are חוטא אחד 'one sinner' and כסיל 'the fool', who are compared to the fly that putrefies the ointment.

The rhetorical use of words that are polar opposites, backed up by double meanings and opposition between proximate proverbs in the unit, provides a very lively and exciting character to the dialectical discussion. The reader is required to delve into the contextual meaning of the key words. The careful reader must take a new look at the advantage of wisdom in light of the realities of human life.

My second discussion concerns the idea that it is better to be among the living than among the dead. The closing unit of chap. 8, vv. 16–17, discusses the limitations of human intelligence in understanding divine deeds, even when it is a wise person who attempts to understand God's works under the sun. The discussion of the limitations of human knowledge continues into the beginning of chap. 9, which opens with Qoheleth's first-person observation style, "I set my heart" (9:1a). This formula gives voice to inner reflections, ruminations, and experiential impressions from life phenomena, from which Qoheleth finally draws his conclusion.[35]

Chapter 9 opens with a general summarizing statement, כי את כל זה 'for all this', using the opening כי as a causal particle to introduce specific explanations. The infinitive construct לבור (9:1b), evidently deriving from the root ברר, expresses the process of the investigation and clarification of his conclusions.[36] Qoheleth declares that the conclusions have become clear to him after

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34. On the relation of oil and the qualities that produce enjoyment of life, joyousness and a good name, see Ps 23:5, 45:8, 92:11, 133:2; Prov 27:9; Job 29:6; Song 1:3.

35. For Qoheleth's procedure of discovery and argumentation, see Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 85–89.

36. The word ולבור indicates 'to examine', 'to discern', 'to select' as the roots בחן 'to observe' and בחר 'to select'. The word ולבור (9:1b) does not appear in the LXX. Its Vorlage, reading by retroversion, ולבי ראה את כל 'and my heart saw everything' forms a complete parallelism between the two stichs (followed by the Syr.) The philological principle of *lectio difficilior* supports the MT. For the meaning 'to select' for the root ברר in late biblical books,

a process of investigation: ולבור את כל זה 'and all this I ascertained' (9:1b). The wise and righteous are no different from other human beings with respect to knowledge of their final fate; hence, 'their actions' (ועבדיהם) are in the hand of God.[37] Even love and hate are not revealed in advance, as in a literal rendering of אין יודע האדם הכל לפניהם 'Human beings know none of this in advance' (Eccl 9:2d).[38]

The expression הכל כאשר לכל 'everything is like everything else' concerns מקרה אחד^T 'the same fate' that awaits all human beings.[39] This summarizing affirmation raises the issue of the principle of retribution with regard to the unpredictable outcome of actions and feelings in human life. Events are only within divine control. The view that death is the fate shared by all human beings, without regard to their moral qualities, blurs the distinction between the moral poles of righteous and wicked, the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, those who bring sacrifices and those who do not, and between the ones who swear and those who shun oaths.[40] Qoheleth's declaration that all

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see 1 Chr 7:40; 9:22; 16:41; and Neh 5:18. The root בור is an ע׳׳ו verb type for the geminate ברר (cf. גדד, גוד, Gen 49:19). See Gordis, *Koheleth*, 299; Ogden, *Qoheleth*, 144. Others emend ולתור 'to search out for', as in Eccl 1:13 and 7:25, following the Vg.

37. The Targum, followed by Rashi, renders ותלמידיהון 'their students' for עבדיהם, depicting an ideal picture of the subservient attitude of disciples toward the Torah. Ibn Ezra renders מעבדיהם 'their works' (Job 34:25). Ginsberg (*Koheleth*, 113) also renders עבדיהם (from עבדא) as an Aramaism equivalent to Hebrew מעשיהם 'their deeds'. Whitley (*Koheleth*, 79) claims that the retention of *qameṣ* under the second syllable in a plural noun with a heavy suffix indicates the Aramaic provenance of the word (cf. כנת, כנותהון 'colleague', 'their colleagues', Ezra 4:17). Fox questions why an author composing in Hebrew would chose a unique Aramaism instead of the frequent מעשה 'deed'; thus, he assumes that the translator misread it for עבדיהון 'their slaves', because he was misled by the conjunction with two nouns that refer to classes of people (*Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 256).

38. The LXX takes the opening word of v. 2, הכל 'everything', and reads it as הבל 'vanity' (ματαιότης ἐν τοίς πᾶσιν 'Vanity is in all') with the end of v. 1, obtaining the reading הכל לפניהם הבל, that is, humankind cannot see the logical consequences of events. Another datum that directs us to a deviation from the Masoretic division of the verses is evidenced by Rashbam's division of the commentary units, in which the closing phrase of v. 1, הכל לפניהם, appears as the opening phrase at v. 2, thus implying all the evils and punishments that may occur to human beings during their life (*Qoheleth*, 110).

39. Gordis (*Koheleth*, 300) offers parallel idiomatic expressions of the idea that one thing is just like the other (e.g., אהיה אשר אהיה 'I am whatever I am', Exod 3:14 and also 4:14).

40. The antitype for לטוב 'for the good one', missing in the MT, is attested in the LXX by the reading καὶ τῷ κακῷ 'and the bad', which is followed by the Syr. ܠܒܝܫܐ and the Vg. *et malo*.

share a common fate contradicts the accepted view, according to which there is some sort of correlation between a person's deeds and his end.

Within the textual flow that lists polar-opposite social types, the positive archetype is always presented first, except in the last pair, which opens with the negative type (the one who swears) followed by the positive type (the one who shuns oaths). The reverse order of the final pair in contrast to the preceding ones constitutes a concluding inversion, which marks the close of the literary unit. An additional stylistic variation in the unit may be seen in the substitution of the prepositional *kap* for the prepositional *lamed* and in the use of the word חוטא 'sinner' as the opposite of טוב 'good'.[41]

Qoheheth binds the הוללות 'madness' of human behavior and humans' wicked deeds "under the sun" together with the perception of death as the expected end of all human beings; hence, ואחריו אל המתים 'and afterward they join the dead'.[42] His deterministic world view wants to correlate moral behavior with human death. A similar critical statement of the distortions and defects

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41. The metathesis in the final hemistich and its lengthening form a "closing deviation" to the pericope. For the recognition of this phenomenon as an intentional esthetic structure, see M. Paran, *Forms of the Priestly Style in the Pentateuch* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1989) 179–88 [Hebrew]. Gordis attributes the inverted order to an ethical tendency "to end on a favorable note, בכי טוב as in 3:8." He considers the change of the prepositional *lamed* of the first three pairs into the comparative *kap* within the coordinate construction of two pairs to be a stylistic variation (Gordis, *Koheleth*, 300–301). The term הנשבע 'the one who swears' refers to one who does not take an oath seriously or even swears falsely (see Eccl 8:2; Zech 5:3–4; Sir 23:9–12). The participle הנשבע 'the one who swears' presents another stylistic variant that is probably the MT original reading. See Crenshaw, *Koheleth*, 160. On the positive type, the one "who shuns oaths," and denunciation of the one "who swears," see Sir 23:9–11 as well as Eccl 8:2–3. The Akkadian semantic equivalent to the Hebrew idiom ירא שבועה is *palāḫu māmīta* (see AHw 1317) which is also contrasted with "the one who swears (falsely)" (e.g., *BWL* 116, lines 2–4). See Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 299.

42. For a detailed discussion of the term אחריו and the peculiarity of the syntax ואחריו אל המתים, see Whitley, *Koheleth*, 79–80. Fox divides the understanding of the term אחריו into three kinds: (1) 'after him', with reference to what will happen to the individual after death; (2) 'after him', with reference to what will happen on earth after his life; (3) 'afterward', with reference to what will happen on earth in the lifetime of the individual. He opts for the third meaning, 'afterward' (*Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 199; cf. Barton, *Book of Ecclesiastes*, 160; Gordis, *Koheleth*, 301; Hertzberg, *Der Prediger*, 172). The LXX and the Vg. both render the Hebrew term אחריו as 'their end', while the Syr. reads ܡܒܬ݂ܪ ܣܘܦܗܘܢ 'and after their end'; Rashbam (*Qoheleth*, 111) reads אחריו as אחרית, "the end of each and every human being is to go with the dead, since death comes to all; this is why evildoers continue to do evil and do not repent." Ginsberg (*Qoheleth*, 113) renders אחריו 'his end', based on the parallelism between אחריו and חלק 'lot', 'share' (cf. Eccl 3:22; 6:12).

in the way God handles the world is even more sharply conveyed in Eccl 1:13b–15 through the following wording: "A twisted thing that cannot be made straight, a lack that cannot be made good" (v. 15).[43]

It remains for us to consider the placement of the proverbial metaphor "even a live dog is better than a dead lion" (9:4b) within the literary unit 9:1–6, where it is embedded in a series of similitudes:

> *Similitude (part I):* For he who is reckoned [*Qere*: is joined] among the living has something to look forward to (9:4a)

> *Similitude (part II):* since the living know they will die, but the dead know nothing; and they have no more recompense, for even the memory of them has died (9:5)

Qoheleth's gloomy observation of life is connected with the perception of mortality as humankind's inescapable fate. The figurative aphorism "even a live dog is better than a dead lion" (v. 4b) illuminates this dark reflection from a different perspective. The reason offered for the observation that it is better to be among the living than among the dead is that "the living know they will die" (v. 5a), while those who have died "know nothing" (v. 5b). The departed is not called upon anymore to deal with issues of reward and punishment, nor is he capable of experiencing love, hate, or envy.

Qoheleth introduces his arguments by using an independent relative clause that opens with the emphatic particle כִּי: כִּי מִי אֲשֶׁר 'for he who is'.[44] The *Kethiv* יבחר, based on the root בחר, denotes 'choice', hence 'to choose'.[45] Following the interpretation of the *Kethiv* makes the opening clause sound like a rhetorical question: 'who is the one who chooses?' The implicit response is that no one, no mortal has free choice.[46]

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43. The word הוֹלֵלוֹת 'madness', spelled with the plene *ḥôlem* in the final syllable (see Eccl 1:17; 2:12; 7:25), appears along with a *qibbûṣ* in Eccl 10:13, which is suspect. If the former vocalization is the authentic one, it may have arisen on analogy with the similar חָכְמוֹת 'wisdom' (Prov 1:20; 9:1) as the plural of majesty. See JM 1:265–66. The word הוֹלֵלוֹת reappears in Ecclesiastes in association with שִׂכְלוּת/סִכְלוּת 'folly' (1:17; 2:12; 7:25; 10:13). It implies madness and unbridled behavior (see Jer 25:16) as well as arrogant, vain, boastful speech (see Ps 75:5–6).

44. The phrase מִי אֲשֶׁר 'he who is' serves here as the beginning of the nominal clause and not just the beginning of the relative clause. A similar use of the particle כִּי is found in Num 23:23; Isa 15:1; Amos 3:7; Prov 30:2; Job 5:2; and 28:1. The LXX translates מִי אֲשֶׁר as an interrogative clause, while the Vg. reads it as a rhetorical question. The Syr. recognizes it as a relative equivalent to כֹל אֲשֶׁר 'he who is' (ܓܒ; see Exod 32:33; 2 Sam 20:11; Eccl 5:9), and this seems correct. See Gordis, *Koheleth*, 304.

45. Or vocalized as *yibbaḥer* (*Niphal*, 3rd-masc. imperfect) or as a *Qal* (3rd-masc. imperfect) 'will choose', meaning the one who chooses.

46. See Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 300.

The *Qere* suggests the metathesized reading of *yeḥubbar* from the root חבר as the *Pual* passive (3rd-masc. imperfect) 'be joined', rendering the opening clause: "for he who is reckoned among the living."[47] The *Qere* links better with a closing stich that speaks of בטחון 'confidence' and 'trust', as in the verse: מה הבטחון אשר בטחת 'What makes you so confident?' (2 Kgs 18:19 = Isa 36:4). Thus, it seems that the logical argument of the literary unit vv. 4–6 leads to the conclusion that participating fully in all spheres of human activity expresses humans' confidence in life.[48]

The metaphor "even a live dog is better than a dead lion" is embedded between the argumentative clause beginning with כי ("*for* he who is reckoned among the living [according to the *Qere*] has something to look forward to"), and the two additional motivational clauses provide further explanations: "since the living know they will die. But the dead know nothing; they have no more recompense, *for* even the memory of them has died" (v. 5). Skipping over the proverbial metaphor in v. 4b does not disturb the thematic continuity of vv. 4a, 5. The concept behind the reason for the hope and confidence of those who are living is explained by the words "since the living know they will die," while the reading of the metaphor in its context undermines the credibility of the declaration regarding the benefit of living. The favoring of life is expressed sardonically by appealing to the worth of the lowly live dog over a highly regarded but dead lion. The lion commonly accepted as 'the king of beasts' is linked to the exclusive promise of the awarded kingship to Judah: "the scepter shall not depart from Judah" (Gen 49:9). The royal portrayal of the lion and its intimidating power are applicable in three "royal sayings" in the book of Proverbs (19:12, 20:2, and 28:15).[49] The king's rage is likened to the roar of a lion, evoking terror and boldness; thus, the writer gives advice regarding one's behavior in light of the king's authority.

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47. The LXX, Vg., and Syr. reflect the *Qere*, thus also medieval commentators, for example Rashi and Rashbam. Crenshaw claims an ironic meaning of the *Kethiv* being juxtaposed to Qoheleth's denial of divine retribution in v. 3; thus the praise for life proposed by the *Qere* seems more plausible (*Qoheleth*, 161). Ogden opts for the root בחר of the *Kethiv*, which denotes choice, hence supporting the contrasting debate between the living and the dead (*Qoheleth*, 147–48).

48. The word בטחון is interpreted as 'hope' and 'expectation' by Ibn Ezra: "While there is life there is hope" (so also Ginsberg, *Koheleth*, 114). Whitley follows the talmudic meaning of בטחון in *y. Ber.* 9.13 (*Koheleth*, 80; cf. Wright, *Koheleth*, 408). For both meanings ('hope' and 'confidence'), see Delitzsch, *Ecclesiastes*, 359. Fox argues for the meaning 'hope': "knowing that one will die is not a 'hope'" (*Qohelet and His Contradictions*, 258).

49. T. Forti, "Animal Images in the Didactic Rhetoric of the Book of Proverbs," *Bib* 77 (1996) 57–59.

The dead lion in our discussion is ironically juxtaposed with the image of a living dog. The derogative epithet "dead dog" is commonly used as an expression for devaluation and self-abasement, as in the following desperate protest of David to Saul: "Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog, a single flea?" (1 Sam 24:15). The dog itself is associated with an attitude of scorn and disdain, even evoking feelings of disgust: "As a dog returns to his vomit, so a dullard repeats his folly" (Prov 26:11).[50] Therefore, placement of the metaphor constructed on the model of the "better proverb" seems puzzling. The choice of the image "living dog" to illustrate the advantage of life over death according to the "better-proverb" pattern adds a cynical, skeptical tone to the debate in place of the authoritative tone that usually characterizes this literary paradigm.

The "better proverb" (ṭôb-saying) is a form-variation of the wisdom saying. Its structure shapes a logical paradigm of the advantage of one strophe over the other: "better is x than y."

The inner structure of the "better proverb" measures and then determines מה טוב לאדם בחיים 'what is best for a man to do in life' (Eccl 6:12a). The anthropocentric orientation of this paradigm stems from its purpose of evaluating essential values and practical needs in the life of the individual.[51] The didactic authority of the "better proverb" is supported by its normative ethos

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50. The idiom כלב מת 'dead dog' expresses self-loathing. See 1 Sam 24:15; 2 Sam 9:8, 16:9; and 2 Kgs 8:13 (according to the LXX), and see D. W. Thomas, "Kelev, Dog: Its Origin and Some Usages of It in the Old Testament," *VT* 10 (1960) 410–27; G. W. Coats, "Self-Abasement and Insult Formulas," *JBL* 89 (1970) 14–26. On the idiomatic expression in Exod 11:7, "not a dog shall snarl (or: move his tongue) . . . at man or beast," see F. C. Fensham, "The Dog in Exodus XI, 7," *VT* 16 (1966) 504–7. For a link between dog and servant as a self-disparaging term, see 2 Kgs 8:13, "your servant (but) a dog"; and see *my ʿbdk klb* in Lachish Letters 2.4, 5.4, 6.3; *ANET* 322. For the same use *ardu*, *kalbu* 'servant', 'dog' and *kalbu* alone in various expressions of humiliation in the Amarna Letters, see, e.g., EA 129:4, 134:4, 201:2, 295:4; 320:22, 322:17 (W. L. Moran, *The Amarna Letters* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1992]). The image of the dog as an obsequious creature is used by Sargon, portraying the Manaean king and his nobles thus: *eli erbi rettīšunu iptaššilū kīma kalbī* 'groveling on all fours in obeisance before him' (TCL 3, 12:58). On the low status of the dog in the ancient Near East, see D. Marcus, "Animal Similes in Assyria Royal Inscriptions," *Or* 46 (1977) 94.

51. W. Zimmerli, "Concerning the Structure of Old Testament Wisdom," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom* (ed. J. L. Crenshaw; New York: KTAV, 1976) 175–207; H. J. Hermisson, *Studien zur israelitischen Spruchweisheit* (WMANT 28; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968) 155–56; G. E. Bryce, "Better-Proverbs: An Historical and Structural Study," in *SBL 1972: Seminar Papers* (SBLSP 108/2; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1972) 343–54; G. S. Ogden, "The 'Better' Proverb (Ṭôb-Spruch), Rhetorical Criticism and Qoheleth," *JBL* 96 (1977) 489–505; W. Baumgartner, "Die literarischen Gattungen in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach," *ZAW* 4 (1914) 165–98.

and empirical dimension, as well as the didactic authority of the Sage–Teacher that shapes the admonition genre.

 Our "better proverb," that "even a live dog *is better than* a dead lion" (Eccl 9:4b), forms a pattern that digresses from the usual paradigm.[52] Whereas the adverb טוב regularly stands at the head of a saying, here it is transposed to the end of the opening clause, where it appears in conjunction with the prepositional particle מן.[53] Hence, the ironic perception of the saying gains its rhetorical emphasis by means of the alternative form of the "better" pattern; thus: The (scorned) dog = is alive and the (glorious) lion = is dead.

The proverb "even a live dog is better than a dead lion" is woven through the thoughtful discussion (vv. 4–5) in order to illustrate the advantage of life over death.[54] Comparison of this speech to another contemplative monologue, in which a contradictory statement is expressed—"then I accounted those who died long since more fortunate than those who are still living" (Eccl 4:2)—invites a debate. Furthermore, the speaker here provides the same pretext for his praise of death in the evil deeds done under the sun (4:3–5) as he does in ennumerating the advantages of the living in the actual debate (9:3). The speaker chooses to concretize his cynical position toward life by juxtaposing a living dog and a dead lion to prove the advantage of life over the glorious dead.

The sage's pessimistic attitude toward human conduct does not contradict his admonitions to partake as fully as possible of the pleasures of life in כל עמלו 'all of his work'. In the confrontation between life and the netherworld, the balance is tipped toward life due to the existence of 'action, reasoning, learning and wisdom' (9:10) in life and their absolute absence in the netherworld.

The ideational tension between life and death in the literary unit of Eccl 9:1–6 is obtained by means of contradictory terms:

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52. For the use of the emphatic *lamed* elsewhere, see Isa 32:1; Ps 32:6. Fox argues that the particle *lamed* in לכלב is not emphatic, because an emphatic particle would come before the predicate; see Eccl 2:3; 6:12; 8:12 (*Qoheleth and His Contradictions*, 258).

53. Our saying resembles the ironic context of another "better proverb": "I say, the stillbirth *is more* fortunate *than* he" (Eccl 6:3). In both sayings the undesirable states (the "live dog" and the "stillbirth") appear in the advantageous position within the aphorism.

54. Another example of the way an idiomatic expression concretizes a general truth within a debate is conveyed by the laconic proverb: "skin for skin" (Job 2:4a). Here too, the proverb is embedded in the network of arguments to test Job anew after his trials: "But lay a hand on his bones and his flesh, and he will surely blaspheme You to Your face" (Job 2:5). On the stylistic device of quoting popular sayings in self-debates, see R. Gordis, "Quotations in Wisdom Literature," 123–47; idem, "Quotations as a Literary Usage in Biblical, Rabbinic and Oriental Literature," *HUCA* 22 (1949) 196–97.

> love ≠ hate
> righteous ≠ wicked
> good, pure ≠ impure
> the one who sacrifices ≠ the one who does not bring sacrifices
> the one who swears ≠ the one who shuns oaths
> while they live ≠ the end
> a live dog ≠ a dead lion

It seems that the use of polarity turns the dogmatic rules of the perception of divine providence and retribution on its head, and the moral opposites become partners in a shared fate. Qoheleth depicts a picture of chaos that serves to bolster his skeptical outlook on the commonly accepted belief system.

The figurative proverb is embedded in a literary unit defined by means of an inclusio: the opening of the speech describes the lack of knowledge by the righteous and the wise about their future in relation to feelings of love and hate (9:1), while the speech's closing section features the absence of all feelings and drives, such as love, hate, and jealousy, among the dead (9:6)

Introductory Unit
(1) For all this I noted and I ascertained all this: that the actions of even the righteous and the wise are determined by God. *Even love! Even hate!* Man knows none of these in advance.

Proverbial Metaphor
(4) For he who is reckoned [according to *Qere: yeḥubbar*] among the living has something to look forward to—even a live dog is better than a dead lion—
(5) since the living know they will die. But the dead know nothing; they have no more recompense, for even the memory of them has died.

Closing Unit
(6) *Their loves, their hates*, their jealousies have long since perished; and they have no more share till the end of time in all that goes on under the sun.

Summing up, the social types who represent moral opposites (poor wise vs. wealthy fools) share consciousness of their final fate. This perception strikes a blow at the principle of retribution, according to which God repays human beings according to their actions. Even the advice to live is exemplified through the advantage of a living dog over a dead lion, thus expressing an even more skeptical view of divine retribution.

Gordis includes the proverbial saying in the unit discussing the praise of life (9:4–12), while he defines the theme of the literary unit 8:10–9:3 as the failure of the principle of divine retribution. However, it seems that the figurative proverb with the metaphor taken from the realm of fauna (v. 4) functions as the concretizing device of a theoretical discussion and, therefore, is not appro-

priate for opening a new discussion. The figurative saying is linked to the sage's ongoing argument that humans are not capable of speculating on their fate. Nevertheless, the advantage of the living over the dead emerges from the saying. The conclusion to be drawn is that the very fact of being alive renders people masters of their own consciousness.[55]

Qoheleth juxtaposes contradictory terms and values that are seen as equal forces in the cognitive process of making the right choices. This is the way he chooses to express his ambivalent attitude toward life and to stimulate his audience into reflecting on contradictory phenomena in human life. Within the dialectical discourse, the vividness and figurative suggestiveness of animal metaphors help to illustrate the inherent polarities on both the conceptual and rhetorical levels.

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55. See Gordis, *Koheleth*, 188–89, 304–8.

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A Sense of Timing:
A Neglected Aspect of Qoheleth's Wisdom

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In his influential monograph, *Wisdom in Israel*, Gerhard von Rad treats "the doctrine of the proper time" as a significant wisdom theme.[1] In general, however, this theme has been associated more frequently with Proverbs and Sirach than with Ecclesiastes. To be sure, the structure and meaning of Eccl 3:1–8, which addresses this topic, have been the subject of much study, as have individual terms from the semantic field of time,[2] but with the exception of John Wilch's 1969 monograph, *Time and Event*, and Michael Fox's recent work, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up*,[3] Qoheleth's development of this theme has been largely neglected.

The purpose of this essay is to offer a preliminary synthesis of this theme within the book of Ecclesiastes. This will be achieved through a brief examination of all occurrences of the key terms related to time in their order of occurrence in the book of Ecclesiastes: 'time' עת, 'day' יום, and 'year' שנה, as well as 'fleeting' הבל, 'afterward' אחר, and 'eternity' עולם, seeking to determine whether they present a complementary or a diffuse development of this theme

1. Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972) 138–43. Although von Rad begins by quoting Eccl 3:1–8, he devotes only two brief paragraphs to the treatment of the subject of "the proper time" in Ecclesiastes, arguing that its author's significant contribution is in linking this "doctrine" with a theological determinism.

2. The most thorough treatment of individual terms and phrases is by Gershon Brin, *The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 39; Leiden: Brill, 2001), although few of his examples are taken from the wisdom corpus of the Hebrew Bible.

3. John R. Wilch, *Time and Event: An Exegetical Study of the Use of ʿeth in the Old Testament in Comparison to Other Temporal Expressions in Clarification of the Concept of Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1969) 117–28; Michael V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 194–206.

within the book. In addition, a number of texts in Ecclesiastes that address the relationship between time and human conduct will be noted: acting too hastily (5:2), acting too slowly (5:4, 8:11, 10:11), and discerning the proper action for a given moment in time (3:1–8, 11, 17; 8:5–6; 10:17). In the concluding section, I will argue for the foundational role of 3:1–8 in setting forth Qoheleth's "sense of timing" and seek to demonstrate that this unified thematic perspective can be traced through the book.

Qoheleth's view of time has sometimes been viewed as unique in the Old Testament. On the one hand, according to Henry Wheeler Robinson, Qoheleth is no longer rooted in history, showing "no concern with a redemptive past, and no vision of a Messianic future" and, as such, atypical for "Hebraic thought."[4] However, this could be viewed simply as typical of the wisdom genre as a whole, for Robinson's description would also fit the books of Proverbs and Job. Kurt Galling, on the other hand, credits Qoheleth with being the first biblical wisdom writer to discover and develop thematically the *geschichtlichkeit* 'authenticity, historical relevance' of human existence.[5] However, James Barr discovers no "drastic innovation" in Qoheleth's conception of time.[6] In any case, the goal of the present examination is not to compare Qoheleth with other canonical books, but, as it were, to compare Qoheleth with Qoheleth, given a history of interpretation in which scholars frequently have identified contradictory voices within the same canonical book.[7] Because Qoheleth's "doctrine of the right time" often has been portrayed as deterministic or even predestinarian, although this may result from interpreting Eccl 3:1–8 in isolation from the rest of the book, this claim also must be addressed.

Before summarizing Qoheleth's understanding of time as it relates to God and humanity, I find it helpful to survey briefly several previous studies of the topic.[8] According to James Barr, in his 1962 monograph, *Biblical Words for*

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4. Henry Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946) 121. Gerhard von Rad concurs with this view: "with him the Wisdom literature lost its last contact with Israel's old way of thinking in terms of saving history," *Old Testament Theology, Volume 1: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) 455.

5. Kurt Galling, "Das Rätsel der Zeit im Urteil Kohelets (Koh 3, 1–15)," *ZTK* 58 (1961) 1.

6. James Barr, *Biblical Words for Time* (SBT 33; London: SCM, 1962) 99–100.

7. A thorough survey of options is offered by Diethelm Michel, *Qohelet* (Erträge der Forschung 258; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988) 9–45. Michel concludes that the book lacks any progressive logical development of thought.

8. I am limiting this survey to several key voices in the recent discussion of this topic as it pertains to Ecclesiastes and excluding commentaries. Wilch in his survey of past scholarship

Time, עת means 'time', often designating the temporal setting of an incident, even referring to conditions prevailing over a longer period. In contrast, עולם refers to remotest time, or 'perpetuity', but rarely, if ever, 'eternity'. In his view, Qoheleth's emphasis is on "the stultifying and frustrating effect of time and change upon human effort."[9] John Wilch understands עת as designating an "occasion or a situation as a given opportunity" (in Qoheleth, a God-given one) for activity and experience. According to Wilch, עת does not refer to a *kairos*, that is, a critical or decisive occasion or, for that matter, even to a specific moment in time but, rather, to all situations that one encounters in the daily course of life, involving all possibilities.[10]

Here Wilch is questioning Carl Heinz Ratschow's view that the biblical concept of time involves a *Zeit-für* 'time for' as well as a *Zeit-sein-für* 'being time for' and a *Zeit-haben-für* 'having time for' concept, with עת having the basic meaning of 'the right time for'.[11] Ratschow, in contrast to other *kairos* proponents, does not see a "moment of decision" here but, rather, an "openness for every situation that comes upon a man."[12] In Wilch's view, however, this is reduced in Qoheleth to a passive acceptance of the "occasion-when" something occurs rather than the recognition of the "time-for" a specific activity.[13] Wilch rejects a deterministic interpretation of Ecclesiastes, since this would be indicated by the use of מעד. Rather, God has given ordered existence to nature so that individuals have the opportunity to lead an ordered life—which also includes waiting for the proper occasion. According to Wilch, Qoheleth's argument is "not directed against the man who does not recognize the right time for a certain matter, but rather against the man who is not content to accept the opportunity within its given limits." What is called for is an attitude of submission, not decisive action.[14]

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summarizes the work of 22 scholars published between 1871 and 1964 (Wilch, *Time and Event*, 2–17).

    9. Barr, *Biblical Words for Time*, 98.

    10. Wilch, *Time and Event*, 122.

    11. Carl Heinz Ratschow, "Anmerkungen zur theologischen Auffassung des Zeitproblems," *ZTK* 51 (1954) 380–84.

    12. Wilch, *Time and Event*, 123.

    13. Ibid., 124.

    14. Ibid., 127–28. For a systematic examination of determinism in the book, see Dominic Rudman, *Determinism in the Book of Ecclesiastes* (JSOTSup; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). A recent denial of determinism or predestinarianism in Ecclesiastes is offered by Tomás Frydrych, *Living under the Sun: Examination of Proverbs and Qoheleth* (VTSup 90; Leiden: Brill, 2002) 120–21. Fox now sees "a less rigid sort of determinism" in 3:1–7 than he claimed in an earlier publication (Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 197).

Michael Fox distinguishes two uses of עת: (1) "temporally defined: a segment of time of any duration," and (2) "substantively defined: events and their configurations," the latter being more important in Ecclesiastes.[15] Qoheleth's God can, but does not, "predetermine exactly what will happen and when." However, he "repeatedly and unpredictably intrudes and overrides human efforts," even through premature death.[16] According to Fox, Qoheleth claims: "Every *type* of event and deed has an *ʿet*, a set of circumstances (whether recurrent or unique) in which it is appropriate."[17] Fox's understanding of Qoheleth's message appears to differ from Wilch's only in degree: one should do things in their times and "not transgress the times." This does not involve trying harder to act at precisely the right moment but "adapting oneself to the constraints of reality" while seeking to produce a profit through one's toil.[18]

In light of these divergent understandings of Qoheleth's view of time, I turn now to an examination of the key terms referring to time in the book of Ecclesiastes.[19] The word עת is used 11 times in the book after 3:1–8, and I will begin with 3:1–8, despite the danger of reading my assessment of time in 3:1–8 into the following passages as well. Eccl 3:1 sets forth Qoheleth's foundational understanding of time, which he then refers back to throughout the book: "There is a specific time [זמן, its only appearance in Ecclesiastes] and occasion for every earthly matter or purpose." The sage then illustrates this premise with seven pairs (perhaps indicating representative completeness) of contrasting (or polar) activities in 3:2–7. This basic affirmation, along with the accompanying examples, is developed further in the course of the book. The next occurrence of עת is in Eccl 3:11 in the midst of the section (vv. 9–15) that draws conclusions from the "Catalogue of Times."[20] In view of the divine ordering of the times, one can pose the question of what can be gained through human toil (v. 9). In observing humanity's God-given task, one can affirm the beauty (that is, fittingness, יפה) of each divinely-appointed time (*kairo*, LXX). Alluding back to v. 1, hence translating 'its time' rather than 'his time',[21] Qo-

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15. Ibid., 195–96.

16. Ibid., 197.

17. Ibid, 200.

18. Ibid., 205–6.

19. Within the scope of a brief essay, it is not possible to discuss all of the widely-differing interpretations (or even translations) of the following texts. My goal is simply to summarize my understanding of each passage in an effort to argue that a unified perspective regarding time can be found in the book.

20. This heading is used by Fox, *Qohelet and his Contradictions* (JSOTSup 71; Sheffield: Almond, 1989) 191.

21. Contra Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (1869; repr., Minneapolis: James and Klock, 1977) 105.

heleth affirms that the rhythms of life are good, to the extent that one can discern them. Yet these times find their true significance against the backdrop of the sense of perpetuity that God has placed in the human heart. In 3:17, Qoheleth applies the principle of 3:1 to one of his most troubling issues, the lack of justice in the courts. Despite current observations to the contrary, he expresses his confidence that God will indeed judge both the righteous and the wicked, for an appropriate occasion (עת) for the purpose of assessing every deed will ultimately arrive.

In discussing the limited ability of righteous and wise behavior to guarantee a bump-free path, 7:7 also alludes back to chap. 3. If there is an appropriate "time to die" (which the elderly are rapidly approaching), then there must also be an inappropriate—or premature—time, in this case, precipitated by a life of excessive wickedness and folly.

Similarly, chap. 8, in discussing the role and limited success of government in maintaining justice, draws intertextually on chap. 3, using עת 3 times. According to v. 5, law-abiding citizens will not become entangled in a harmful conspiracy (compare v. 2), for their wisdom will help them to recognize, despite the suffering that bad government can inflict on them, that the present may not be the right time to act, because there is a fitting time and way to deal with this problem. Some interpreters, including Tremper Longman, translate משפט in vv. 5 and 6 as 'manner' or 'custom'.[22] However, in light of the use of משפט elsewhere in the book (3:16, 5:8, 11:9, 12:14), it is preferable to take the expression as a hendiadys, that is, an occasion for judgment, alluding back to 3:17, a text that similarly affirms that there is a time for this purpose. Presently, circumstances (literally, 'a time' עת, v. 9) may prevail in which one person rules over another to the latter's detriment, but a time for justice is coming. Abusive rulers will ultimately meet their match, being no more capable of mastering death (v. 8, literally, 'in the day of death', here probably the equivalent of the 'time to die' in 3:2) than the wind, unable to escape the consequences of their wickedness. (This development of thought is suggested by the fourfold use of the root שלט in vv. 4, 8–9.)

Chapter 9, which discusses how to live in the light of death, also builds on chap. 3, employing עת 4 times. Eccl 9:7–10 offers the climactic presentation of the refrain-like "eat, drink, and enjoy your work" motif in the book, for it is only here that imperatival verbs are used.[23] Qoheleth urges his addressees to

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22. Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 210, 213; NIV: 'procedure'; NLT and NRSV: 'way'.

23. Contra Roger N. Whybray, "Qoheleth: Preacher of Joy," *JSOT* 23 (1982) 87, who views 11:7–12:1a as the seventh and final passage recommending "the whole-hearted pursuit of enjoyment." This passage, however, makes no reference to eating and drinking.

be always in a celebratory mode, 'at every time' wearing white garments with plenty of oil on the head (v. 8). This appears to be contrary to the instruction found in chap. 3, namely, that there is an appropriate (and thus limited) time to laugh and to dance (v. 4). However, v. 10b explains the exceptional charge: in Sheol, where one is headed, there will be no more opportunities to enjoy the Creator's everyday gifts. Verse 11 records the sobering observation that the swift, mighty, and wise are not always the successful ones (perhaps an encouragement if one does not belong to one of these categories), because "time and chance" befall (קרה) all, perhaps here again a hendiadys: "time-related fate." One cannot know when it is "his time" (to win or to lose, perhaps, v. 12a): the gold-medal favorite can pull a muscle in the sprint final. If one sees here an intertextual link back to 7:17 ("Why die before your time?"), this text may present an argument from the greater to the lesser: how can one expect to know whether or not divine providence is on one's side in the various challenges of life, if one cannot even know when one's time on earth is up?[24] In any case, an evil time (including the ultimate evil time of one's death, v. 12b) can overtake one as suddenly as a fish is caught in a net or a bird in a trap. Given the major emphasis on death in this chapter, beginning with the affirmation that everyone and his/her deeds are in God's hand and that one fate (מקרה) awaits all (9:1–2), 9:11–12 cannot be speaking simply of good luck or blind fate when it refers to one's "time."[25]

The final appearance of עת is in 10:17, which also reflects the instruction in chap. 3 regarding the proper time. A country is fortunate if its princes eat at "the time." The time that is referred to here, as Michael Fox correctly notes, is "not merely non-morning" but, rather, "when circumstances are appropriate to feasting."[26] The verse's final phrase reinforces this: eating "for strength and not for dissipation." One can conclude, then, that nearly every passage in Ecclesiastes that employs the word עת can be understood as harking back to and further developing or illustrating "the doctrine of the times" set forth in chap. 3.

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24. There is no contextual basis for taking v. 11 as a denial that one is able to discern the appropriate time for a particular action. This is the claim of Alexander A. Fischer, who sees the same thought expressed in 8:6–7, as well (*Skepsis oder Furcht Gottes? Studien zur Komposition und Theologie des Buches Kohelet* [BZAW 247; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997] 222–23).

25. For a discussion of fate in Ecclesiastes in its connection with time, see Peter Machinist, "Fate, *miqreh*, and Reason: Some Reflections on Qohelet and Biblical Thought," in *Solving Riddles and Untying Knots: Biblical, Epigraphic, and Semitic Studies in Honor of Jonas C. Greenfield* (ed. Ziony Zevit, Seymour Gitin, and Michael Sokoloff; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995) 159–75.

26. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 200.

The word יום 'day' appears 26 times in Ecclesiastes. Most of these occurrences are in the plural, usually referring to the totality of one's days, often with כל 'all'. "Days" refers in Qoheleth to the succession of indistinguishable, often wearisome, units of time that one is apportioned by God (8:15). Sometimes the emphasis is on how few they are (literally, 'the number of days of their/his life', 2:3 and 5:17[18]), especially the days of one's youth (11:9 and 12:1). More often the point is that there is a dulling or painful uniformity to all of them; none of them is unique or remarkable. They are marked by sorrow (2:23), darkness (5:17), and הבל (6:12, 7:15, 9:9). Periods of time can be compared with one another as being better or worse than the present (7:10, 11:8, 12:1). Almost Kafkaesque, they can pass almost without notice when one is occupied with joy (5:20) or pass slowly when one is waiting for a return on one's investment (11:1). More importantly, one's days can be shortened by doing evil (8:13), and soon all of one's days will be forgotten by those who follow (2:16). Interestingly, however, 6 of the 7 occurrences in the singular are in the context of death: 7:1, which picks up the word pair from 3:2 ("the day of death is better than the day of one's birth"); 7:14, if it refers back to the opening 4 verses of the chapter ("day of good . . . day of misfortune"); 8:8 ("no one has mastery over the day of one's death"); and 12:3, which describes the breakdown of the body that culminates in death ("in the day which . . ."). This is in keeping with Qoheleth's obsession with death as the ultimate הבל. Eccl 7:14, which concludes a section that sets forth the benefits of adverse experiences, seems to suggest, in a manner similar to chap. 3, that both happy and unpleasant days are made by God and thus are good "in their time." Therefore, Qoheleth urges individuals to enjoy the simple pleasures of life as much as they can and learn from the difficult days.[27]

The word שנה 'year' is used only 5 times in Ecclesiastes. On the one hand, according to 6:1−6, many children and many years, which are often viewed in the Old Testament as indicators of divine favor, in themselves are unable to compensate when God withdraws from a rich person the ability to enjoy one's wealth—not even 100 children or 2,000 years. On the other hand, in 11:8 one is encouraged to enjoy as many years as one is given, while keeping in mind that many dark days will also follow. Soon enough, says Qoheleth, the unpleasant days will arrive, and the years will draw near when one is no longer able to enjoy life (12:1). This seems to be the only respect in which the words

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27. For a summary of the positive message of Qoheleth, see Martin A. Klopfenstein, "Kohelet und die Freude am Dasein," *ThZ* 47 (1991) 97−107; and Richard L. Schultz, "Ecclesiastes," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al.; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2000) 211−15.

for days and years contribute to Qoheleth's sense of timing. There is no sug-
gestion, for example, that one can do anything to prolong one's days (although
one can shorten them) or to make one particular day unique or memorable.

In addition, there are several texts that indicate that the proper time is
something that humans can discern rather than simply being something that
God determines. Eccl 4:17–5:6[5:1–7] is instructive in this regard. On the
one hand, with regard to a vow, one can act too hastily, conveyed by the use
of the verbs בהל and מהר, respectively: "Do not be quick with your mouth,
do not be hasty in your heart, in uttering a vow before God" (v. 2). On the
other hand, one can also act too slowly with regard to a vow, dragging one's
feet when it comes to paying up (v. 4, using אחר). The wise person discerns
the proper time both to vow and to fulfill a vow. Otherwise, consequences
will develop from bad to worse: "God has no pleasure in fools" (v. 4) . . . "Do
not let your mouth lead you into sin" (v. 6a) . . . why should God be angry
. . . and destroy the work of your hands?" (v. 6c)—all of this resulting from a
voluntary oath and a wrong sense of timing. Chapter 8 presents another two-
fold example. On the one hand, a citizen can abandon a loyalty oath to the
king too hastily (again using בהל) by joining in a conspiracy (literally, 'to stand
in a bad thing', v. 3). On the other hand, a government that acts too slowly in
executing criminal justice (using the negation of מהרה, v. 11) can provoke its
citizens to do evil! Neither text clearly advises against the action that it de-
scribes—whether making vows or abandoning one's loyalty to the king. The
problem is, rather, a matter of poor timing.

The most striking illustration of this principle is offered in chap. 10. In vv. 8
and 9, 4 hazardous actions are described: digging a pit, tearing down a wall,
quarrying stones, and chopping wood. However, Qoheleth's conclusion is not
that one should avoid these actions, because they are all necessary for con-
struction projects. Instead, he notes that help is available but only if one's tim-
ing is right. Taking up the hazards of vv. 9b and 8b in reverse order, the sage
notes in an ironic tone that one's skill and cunning are of no benefit if one's
timing is off! According to v. 10, if one fails to sharpen the axe blade before
chopping wood, one must exert more energy and thus, by implication, might
injure oneself. According to v. 11, if the poisonous snake strikes before being
charmed, there is no benefit to being a master charmer.[28]

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28. In addition, there are also some less-explicit examples of proper timing in the book.
For example, Eccl 10:18 suggests that further negligence after laziness already has caused
the house beams to sag may result in a leaky roof.

Michael Fox views 11:1–6 as offering a "reformulation" of the practical message of 3:1–9.[29] In some respects, this passage marks the confluence of a key emphasis on one's inability to know in the second half of the book with the theme of timing. Addison G. Wright has noted that the section 9:1–11:6 is distinguished by the repeated phrase and frequent closing refrain "one cannot know."[30] Eccl 11:1–6, then, gives advice on how to act in situations in which the proper time cannot be discerned. According to v. 1, one simply takes decisive, even risky, action and then waits for the results. Verse 2 suggests that one contribute generously to many causes, because one cannot know the bad times that might come upon the earth. Verses 3–4 suggest that one cannot simply wait for more propitious times to arrive, because then one might never take action. One is as incapable of knowing in advance the unpredictable and hidden work of God as it impacts one's work as one was incapable of understanding the process of fetal formation before the advent of ultrasound technology (v. 5). Thus one should sow one's seed both day and night, despite not knowing which seed will bear fruit (v. 6). Taken together with the previous group of texts, this passage asserts that even the lack of knowledge of the appropriate time does not exempt one from taking decisive actions.

A major problem for humans, with respect to time, is uncertainty regarding the future: according to 8:7 and 9:1, one knows neither what is coming nor when it will come. This is expressed in 3:22, 6:12, 7:14, and 10:14 in terms of one's not being able to know what will happen אחריו 'afterward', literally 'after him'.[31] This term may refer to the afterlife, given the context of 3:22 (that is, immediately following the question posed in 3:21); at the very least, it refers to the time following one's death (see the use of אחר in 2:12, 18; and 9:3), although it could simply mean 'later in life' in 7:14. The implications of this ignorance regarding the future are that one should enjoy the present (3:22), accept the unpleasant days (7:14), and not speculate on the reason for what occurs (6:12, 10:14).

Another term that denotes the future is עולם (traditionally, 'eternity'). Is an awareness of עולם a significant component of Qoheleth's sense of timing? The word עולם appears 7 times in Ecclesiastes. Although one may question the precise duration of עולם (for example, the idea of "eternity" in some absolute sense

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29. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 205.

30. Addison G. Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Qoheleth," *CBQ* 30 (1968) 326.

31. Frydrych (*Living under the Sun*, 112 n. 71) takes the 3rd masc.-sing. suffix as "purely adverbial."

certainly does not fit in 1:10), its juxtaposition with expressions of temporality and transience (especially in chap. 3) indicate that it more likely refers to some dimension of time than to 'darkness', 'hiddenness', 'world', or 'ignorance', as various commentators have suggested.[32] Instead, עולם expresses the fact that some things do endure in a world marred by transience.[33] In 1:4 עולם denotes the enduring earth in contrast to constantly changing nature.[34] In 2:16, 9:6, and 12:5, עולם refers to the period following one's death, without any indication that it will end.

More significant is its use in 3:11 and 14. One could understand the whole of chap. 3 as an assessment of time in its relationship to eternity. In response to the מה יתרון 'what is the gain?' question in 3:9 at the conclusion of the "Catalogue of Times," Qoheleth mentions the deity 6 times in 8 verses. God has both ordered the times (v. 11a) and implanted a sense of perpetuity in human hearts (v. 11bα). His work cannot be fully comprehended (v. 11bβ), in part because it lasts, unlike human work, which cannot even alter the divine work (v. 14). God enables humans to enjoy everyday activities in time as a gift (v. 13), which they should acknowledge, even while revering God for his sovereignty over time, as one who not only accomplishes that which endures but also is able to pursue the past (v. 15, literally, "and God will seek what is driven away"). In light of this discourse regarding the relationship between עת and עולם, it may be that Qoheleth's greatest problem is not that God constantly thwarts human efforts to accomplish something[35] but, rather, that all human achievement is utterly temporal (as expressed by הבל).

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32. See especially the detailed discussion by James L. Crenshaw, "The Eternal Gospel (Eccl. 3:11)," in *Essays in Old Testament Ethics* (ed. James L. Crenshaw and John T. Willis; New York: KTAV, 1974) 39–43. The translation 'eternity' is also supported by the versions.

33. Even more translation options have been suggested for הבל than for עולם. However, I consider 'transience' to be the primary thrust of הבל in Ecclesiastes, while acknowledging that 'senseless', 'meaningless', or 'absurd' may be an appropriate rendering for הבל in a given passage, thereby expressing a human response to the temporary value of achievement. As Thomas Krüger explains: "all convictions and wishes prove to be futile and absurd when they do not do adequate justice to the fleeting and transitory nature of human life" (Thomas Krüger, *Qoheleth* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 2004] 3). For a thorough discussion of the options, see Michael V. Fox, "The Meaning of *Hebel* for Qohelet," *JBL* 105 (1986) 409–27; Daniel C. Fredericks, *Coping with Transience: Ecclesiastes on Brevity in Life* (Bible Seminar 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993); and Douglas B. Miller, *Symbol and Rhetoric in Ecclesiastes: The Place of* Hebel *in Qohelet's Work* (Academia Biblica 2; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

34. Fox takes 'the earth' here as referring not to "the physical earth, but humanity as a whole," as in Gen 11:1, 1 Kgs 2:2, and Ps 33:8 (Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 166).

35. So Frydrych, *Living under the Sun*, 222–23.

I can return now to the question with which I began: how does 3:1–8 relate to the further development of the theme of timing in the rest of the book? (1) Eccl 3:1 introduces a basic thesis that is taken up, applied, and illustrated in various places throughout the book. This may even include 12:1: days will arrive late in life when there is seemingly no useful חפץ 'purpose' for them. (2) Although not every term from the semantic field of time is closely related to Qoheleth's "sense of timing," there are no obviously conflicting perspectives regarding this theme in the book. (3) Several passages in the book suggest that it is important both to discern and to act decisively at the right time, rather than passively accepting God's ordering of the times with moderation or resignation. (4) Thus it appears that the "Catalogue of Times" in 3:1–8 is presented so that, thus instructed, one can toil more profitably (v. 9). As Michael Fox has noted, most of the items in 3:2–8 (other than the initial pair "birth and death") involve actions whose timing humans can control "to some degree."[36] The examples of "proper timing" later in the book suggest that, in order to profit, one must recognize the appropriate time for a particular action and then proceed accordingly.

Qoheleth's attitude toward time has been characterized incorrectly as deterministic or fatalistic. Instead, Qoheleth counsels those who live amid the tension between transience (הבל) and perpetuity (עולם) "under the sun" to acknowledge God's sovereign ordering of the times and, whenever possible, using Michael Fox's expression, to act "when the time is ripe."[37]

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36. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 201; contra Loader, who views the list as descriptive and deterministic rather than as a prescriptive encouragement to seek to control life (James A. Loader, *Polar Structures in the Book of Qohelet* [BZAW 152; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1979] 29, 32). Most individuals are capable of determining when to stop embracing and get back to work or when to throw away their high school notebooks!

37. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 206.

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The Little Sister and Solomon's Vineyard: Song of Songs 8:8–12 as a Lovers' Dialogue

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Michael Fox has, for the past few years, been my most valued and constant conversation partner for the commentary I have been writing on the Song of Songs. Not the real Michael Fox, the real author of *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs*, with whom I have hardly discussed this text at all, but the implied author, the one I have constructed based on his commentary and with whom I have had numerous discussions and arguments, both in my mind and on paper. His analysis of the Song is so insightful, thorough, precise, and convincing that I am always pleased when I find a point on which we disagree, because I know it means an intellectual challenge, something like, I suppose, playing chess with a master, one whose every move is so well crafted that you cannot predict the outcome. For Michael's Festschrift it is an honor to be able to offer an essay on some verses of the Song on which we hold different views. I hope I might convince him (and readers of this article) but, at the very least, that I might give him something to ponder in return for the many interpretive issues and questions he has posed for me.

The text in question is Song 8:8–12, a pericope that is enigmatic but not particularly controversial.

> 8. We have a little sister
>   who has no breasts.
>   What shall we do for our sister
>   on the day she is spoken for?
> 9. If she is a wall,
>   we will build upon it a silver tier.
>   And if she is a door,
>   we will panel it in cedar.
> 10. I am a wall,
>   and my breasts are like towers.
>   So I have become in his eyes
>   like one who brings peace.
> 11. Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-hamon;
>   he gave the vineyard to keepers.

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> For its fruit one would give
> a thousand silver pieces.
> 12. My own vineyard is before me;
> the thousand for you, Solomon,
> and two hundred for the keepers of its fruit.

There is a wide range of opinion regarding the speakers in these verses and their precise meaning, but it seems to make little difference to the overall interpretation of the Song of Songs, because this section of the poem is not generally accorded much significance. Indeed, some find these verses anticlimactic or even out of place, coming as they do after the dramatic paean to love as strong as death in vv. 6–7.[1] But this is not the case, as I hope to show.

There are two different themes in 8:8–12, though they are not unrelated: the little sister and the vineyard. Verses 8–9 are about someone's little sister and the steps that will be taken when she is betrothed, and v. 10 belongs with vv. 8–9 as a response. Verses 11–12 are about vineyards, Solomon's as compared with the speaker's. It is generally agreed that the speaker of v. 10 is the female protagonist of the Song. Her words here fit both her relationship with her lover and her mode of speaking about herself (cf., e.g., "Black am I, and lovely," 1:5; "I am a rose of Sharon," 2:1; "I am my lover's and my lover is mine," 6:3). But who speaks in vv. 8–9 and in vv. 11–12? Is the woman who speaks in v. 10 the "little sister" of vv. 8–9? If so, what is the meaning of the exchange? If not, who is the little sister and why is she important? What is the meaning of the comparison in vv. 11–12? Is "my own vineyard" a vineyard or a metaphor for something else, and whose vineyard is it? Are these verses related to vv. 8–10 and, if so, how? The answers to these questions are, I propose, simpler and more straightforward than commentators have hitherto recognized.

The issue in vv. 8–9 appears to be the little sister's chastity, because these verses are about her person and the context is betrothal.[2] If "wall" and "door" are metaphors for the girl's virtue, are they antithetical (being a wall is good but being a door is bad) or complementary (parts of one and the same image, a walled city)? The wall metaphor suggests inaccessibility. The action that will be taken, building upon it a tier decorated in silver,[3] might be a measure to

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1. Murphy, for example, says of vv. 8–12: "These verses introduce a vignette that has no obvious connection with the immediate context" (Roland E. Murphy, *The Song of Songs: A Commentary on the Book of Canticles or the Song of Songs* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990] 198).

2. Compare 1 Sam 25:39; Francis Landy, however, maintains that betrothal is too narrow a context (*Paradoxes of Paradise: Identity and Difference in the Song of Songs* [Sheffield: Almond, 1983] 163), and Fox speculates that chastity may not be the issue; see below (pp. 274–75).

3. The word טירה refers to encampments in Gen 25:16; Num 31:10; Ezek 25:4; Ps 69:26[25]; and 1 Chr 6:39[54]; perhaps originally it referred to rows of stones used to mark

strengthen the wall, but the use of silver suggests that the edifice is for show—an adornment, presumably to enhance the young woman's appeal to potential suitors. The door, on the other hand, since it can be either closed or open, represents both inaccessibility and accessibility. The door is an important part of the metaphor in v. 9 for precisely this reason, though here the idea seems to be that it is closed: the word used is דלת, the door itself, whose function is normally to bar entry, rather than פתח, the doorway, which allows it.[4] To panel it in precious cedarwood would be a costly way to reinforce it but a most impressive form of ornamentation. It is difficult to think of this speech as anything other than playful; its cryptic, question-and-answer style makes it seem almost like a riddle. A moral lesson about the rewards of chastity and the punishment for sexual freedom, as some interpreters read it, or, worse, a warning or threat, would be out of place after the climactic paean to love in vv. 6–7, for if torrents cannot threaten the flame of love, how can social restrictions intimidate it?[5]

In vv. 8–9 the little sister, when she comes of age, is metaphorically described as a walled city, fortified and decorated. In v. 10 the speaker takes up the wall image and applies it to herself. She is a wall, but in contrast to what is said about the little sister, she requires neither reinforcement to protect her from suitors nor ornamentation to attract one. She possesses her own enhancement, an erotic one, her breasts. The phrase כמוצאת שלום in v. 10b is difficult. It is reasonable to assume that the comparison, '*like* (כ) one who brings/finds peace', because it too is a metaphor, continues the metaphor of the walled city and that, like the rest of the imagery in vv. 8–10a, this phrase too has a sexual significance. The woman is (like) a wall, her breasts are (like) towers, and she is like one who brings, or finds, peace (שלום is her answer to the military allusion). Whether we take מוצאת as the *Hiphil* of יצא 'one who brings' or as the *Qal* active participle of מצא 'one who finds' makes little difference. In the context of a city under siege, to bring peace signifies surrender,

off an encampment; see Marvin Pope, *Song of Songs: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 7C; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977) 680. In Ezek 46:23 it is applied to rows of masonry. The idea seems to be a course or tier decorated in silver crowning the wall, although it could be a structural feature; compare "parapet" (REB, NAB), "battlement" (NRSV, NJB, JPSV).

4. So Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) 173; Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs* (trans. Frederick J. Gaiser; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 279 [German original *Das Hohelied*; ZB 18; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1986]); Duane Garrett, *Song of Songs* (WBC 23B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004) 260; cf. Robert Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations: A Study, Modern Translation and Commentary* (rev. and augmented ed.; New York: KTAV, 1974) 100.

5. Society's reactions, however, are the topic in 8:1 and 8:7b; see below (p. 280 n. 43).

and to find peace is to have the offer of surrender accepted.[6] The significance of the door in v. 9, which could be opened or closed, now becomes clear. A city that surrenders does not have its walls besieged, because it opens its doors. The woman is both a wall and a door (like the little sister in v. 9), but in her case the door has been opened so that her lover can take possession of the city.

"In his eyes" can only refer to her lover; she speaks here about his perspective, the way he sees her. Throughout the Song he speaks about how he sees her;[7] here she describes how (she believes) he perceives her—like a beautiful fortified city offering peace, that is, as surrendering to him. There is a rather nice irony here because, whereas she speaks of surrender to him, he speaks of being captured by her (4:9; 7:6[5]).

If the woman is the obvious choice as the speaker of v. 10 (and there is no reason to posit anyone else as speaker), who speaks in vv. 8–9? Proposals for identifying the speakers of these verses include a group of suitors,[8] the woman in v. 8 and the woman's brothers in v. 9,[9] the brothers in v. 8 and suitors in v. 9,[10] one brother in v. 8 and another in v. 9.[11] Goulder, looking back to the previous verse, reads vv. 8–9 as the scorning words of those who in v. 7 ridicule the offer to buy love with money, "relatives of the (hypothetical) girl," who, in turn, are quoted by the woman.[12] Keel assigns vv. 8–9 to older siblings (including sisters) of a girl who has not yet reached puberty and proposes that their words are quoted by one of the sisters (but not the little sister) in v. 10.[13] Such proposals as these involve either bringing hitherto unidentified characters onto the scene or rather arbitrarily carving up this speech, or both.

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6. E.g., Deut 20:10–11; Josh 9:15; 11:19.

7. Looking at her and describing what he sees and its effect upon him is the man's primary way of talking about love; see my "Poetic Genius of the Song of Songs," in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs/Perspektiven der Hoheliedauslegung* (ed. Anselm C. Hagedorn; Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming); *The Song of Songs: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005) 14–15 et passim. Fox, however, reads the verse differently; see below (pp. 275–76).

8. Gordis, *The Song of Songs and Lamentations*, 75.

9. F. Delitzsch, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon* (trans. James Martin; Commentary on the Old Testament 6; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980) 151–52 (German original, 1872).

10. Helmer Ringgren, *Das hohe Lied* (ATD 16; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967) 291, though he observes that v. 9 may also belong to the brothers; similarly Wilhelm Rudolph, *Das Buch Ruth, Das Hohe Lied, Die Klagelieder* (KAT 17/1–3; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1962) 183.

11. Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Song of Songs and Coheleth* (New York: KTAV, 1970) 188–89 (originally published 1857, 1861).

12. Michael D. Goulder, *The Song of Fourteen Songs* (JSOTSup 36; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986) 64–66 (quotation from p. 66).

13. Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 278–79. It is not clear why, since he views vv. 8–10 as an independent poem, Keel thinks vv. 8–9 are a quotation and not simply dialogue. Though

Most interpreters opt for a simpler solution and assign vv. 8–9 to the woman's brothers (who were mentioned earlier in 1:6), and v. 10 to the woman, whom they identify with the little sister spoken of here. The brothers, so the argument goes, are concerned with their sister's chastity, as they were in 1:6, and they speak here about the measures they will take to protect it. It is, however, odd that the brothers would speak now, for the first and only time in the Song. It is also a bit strange that they would claim that their sister has no breasts, if, as she says, they are clearly observable. Have they simply failed to notice that she has grown up? A number of commentators get around these problems by proposing that the woman is quoting words that her brothers spoke in the past.[14] But when the woman is quoting—or, better, putting words in someone else's mouth[15]—it is obvious she is doing so. When she quotes her lover in 2:10–14, she introduces his words with, "My lover answered and said to me." Similarly, in 5:2–8 the context makes clear that his words in vv. 2–3, which seem to be spoken in the present, are part of a story that she is narrating, a story that blurs the distinctions between past and present. To assume that in 8:8–9 the woman is quoting her brothers, who appear only in one verse of the Song, involves explaining the poem by appealing to a "story" that lies behind the poem, outside the poem: at some time in the past the woman's brothers made a statement about her readiness for marriage, a statement so important that she responds to it now. Why now? one wonders.

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he rightly criticizes interpreters for postulating a situation between the woman and her brothers for which there is no evidence, Keel's conclusion that "the siblings lend their support to their younger sister, who is not ready to go too quickly into a union planned by the parents or assumed by some admirer" is similar in that it also creates a plot.

14. E.g., Karl Budde, *Das Hohelied* (KHAT 17; Freiburg i.B.: Mohr, 1898) 45–46; Rudolph, *Das Hohe Lied*, 183; Leo Krinetzki, *Das Hohe Lied: Kommentar zu Gestalt und Kerygma eines alttestamentarischen Liebesliedes* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1964) 248; Gillis Gerleman, *Ruth: Das Hohelied* (BKAT 18; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965) 219; Ernst Würthwein, *Ruth, Das Hohe Lied, Esther* (HAT 18; Tübingen: Mohr, 1969) 69; Murphy, *The Song of Songs*, 198; Jill M. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron: A Study in the Poetic Language of the Song of Songs* (JSOTSup 203; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 33–34, 77; Tremper Longman III, *Song of Songs* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001) 216.

15. To say she is quoting implies that someone said these words at some other time but we only hear of them now; in other words, a "story" behind the poem. But the woman in 2:8–17 and 5:2–8 is the narrator: the poet puts words into her mouth, creating her speech, in which she puts words into her lover's mouth, creating his speech. On the complexity of the narratorial voice, see my "'Voice of My Lover': Double Voice and Poetic Illusion in Song of Songs 2.8–3.5," in *Reading from Right to Left: Essays in Honour of David J. A. Clines* (ed. J. Cheryl Exum and H. G. M. Williamson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) 146–57.

It is not altogether surprising that commentators think of the woman's brothers when they read these verses, for the Song encourages us to make such connections by returning at the end to themes of the beginning. Vineyards (כרמים) and vineyard keepers (נטרים), about which the woman spoke in 1:5–6, are once again the subject of attention in 8:10–12, and, because the distinctive phrase 'my vineyard which is mine' (כרמי שלי) appears only in 1:6 and 8:12, it is tempting to think of it as the same vineyard in both cases. Solomon is mentioned in 8:11–12 and 1:5. Because it makes sense for the woman's brothers to be concerned with making marriage arrangements for her (especially because her father is never mentioned in the Song), are the sentiments of vv. 8–9 not likely to be theirs? Their anger in 1:6 was not explained. It is often assumed that it has to do with their sister's failure to guard her chastity, metaphorically expressed as not keeping her own vineyard (though, curiously, she does not present her failure to keep her vineyard and their anger as cause and effect). If that is the case, then here, as there, the brothers are concerned with their sister's chastity. It is worth noting, however, that there are no verbal correspondences between vv. 8–10 and 1:5–6; the correspondences are all between 1:5–6 and vv. 11–12.

That vv. 8–9 belong to the brothers is Fox's view, and the interpretation he offers has the merit of not requiring a story line according to which the brothers said something in the past and the woman now quotes it. Rather, the brothers speak directly here in vv. 8–9, offering reconciliation in place of their earlier rebuke in 1:6. They now consent "in principle" to their little sister's marriage and express their willingness to provide for her, but they tease her by suggesting she is still too young ("she has no breasts"). In v. 10, she counters their view by describing her breasts as towers. "She is," Fox concludes, "grateful for their consent and promise, and in v. 10 expresses pleasure at their assent to her marriage." The issue of her chastity "may simply be irrelevant to the verse."[16]

Fox finds in 1:5–6 and 8:6–12 a "loose narrative framework" within which the "basic love story repeats itself."[17] This framework "suggests a certain development in [the woman's] relations with her brothers," who, in the end, agree to give her in marriage in the face of her declaration of the power of love, though they still have doubts about her maturity.[18] It is unusual to find Fox engaged in a practice quite common among Song of Songs commentators, reading for the plot—interpreting the text as though some "story" lies

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16. Fox, *The Song of Songs*, 172–73.
17. Ibid., 225–26.
18. Ibid., 218.

behind it.[19] Indeed, Fox, more than any other commentator except perhaps Landy, is keenly aware that we are reading a poem and that the female and male lovers of the Song are personae created for us by the poet. There is no relationship, no "story," apart from that on the page before us.

Fox assumes that the brothers are the speakers in vv. 8–9 because, in ancient Israelite society, they would have been the ones responsible for caring for her needs at marriage. But it is nonetheless strange that they should suddenly take on an important role in the Song, where gender relations seem rather unconventional—and a speaking role at that.[20] Because he takes the woman to be the little sister, Fox needs to explain the discrepancy between the brothers' claim that she has no breasts and her claim that her breasts are like towers, which he does by concluding that they are teasing her. And since the brothers are talking about the Song's female protagonist in vv. 8–9, chastity (which seems to most commentators to be the subject of these verses) may not be the issue, apparently because the Song, which does not make a virtue of chastity, gives the audience every reason to believe that the woman has had sexual intercourse with her lover.[21]

But what leads Fox to conclude that the brothers consent to their sister's marriage in v. 9 and that she is pleased and grateful in response in v. 10, if not reading a presumed "story" of their relationship between the lines? Because he understands the brothers' words in v. 9 not as conditional ("if she is . . .") but as a promise to take care of their sister, Fox translates אם as interrogative: "Is she a wall? We'll build on it a silver turret. Is she a door? We'll panel it with a cedar board."[22] In the context of such a promise, MT's "in his eyes like one who finds good will" (v. 10) "makes little sense."[23] Because he assumes the

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19. Fiona C. Black sees its flirtation with a plot as an aspect of the Song's "amatory technique," by which it seduces its readers to ask, "What happens?" ("What Is My Beloved? On Erotic Reading and the Song of Songs," in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation and Biblical Interpretation* [ed. Fiona C. Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions; Semeia Studies; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999] 42–44). Commentators frequently speak of the woman and the man as though they were real people with a "history," when, in fact, the Song is perfectly understandable on its own as a lovers' dialogue (with an audience within the poem, with whom the lovers occasionally interact). If we take it on its own terms, as a lyric poem for three voices, it is easy to see how it "works" without supplying settings, background situations, and so forth. The only parts of the Song that have a plot are the "stories" told by the woman (2:8–3:5; 5:2–6:3). Telling stories in which she and her lover are characters is the woman's principal way of talking about love in the Song; see my "Poetic Genius."

20. See Fox, *The Song of Songs*, 295–315, for discussion of the Song's picture of the relations between the sexes in comparison to what we know of ancient Israelite social reality.

21. Ibid., 172.

22. Ibid., 171.

23. Ibid., 173.

woman is addressing a group in v. 10 (which, in turn, is because he assumes the brothers are the speakers in v. 9), Fox reads 'in your eyes' (בעיניכם) for MT's 'in his eyes' (בעיניו). For MT's כמוצאת he reads מוצאת, and, citing Jer 16:5, he takes שלום in the sense of 'friendly attitude' or 'favor.' Thus he renders v. 10b, "So now I've become in your eyes one who finds good will." He concludes, "The Shulammite says to her brothers: since you now assent to my marriage, I know that I am finally enjoying your favor, in place of your earlier unkind treatment of me."[24] Although Fox avoids the usual assumptions, his reading of vv. 8–9 rests upon others. In particular, having the brothers speak here, for the first and only time in the Song, is the most unsatisfactory part of Fox's interpretation. It gives the brothers an important role in the Song that the text does not warrant.

There are only three clearly identifiable speaking voices in the Song: those of the woman, the man, and the women of Jerusalem. Is it not possible, indeed likely, that these verses belong to one of them? Nowhere else except v. 9, in fact, does Fox ever assign a speaking part to anyone else.

As Fox notes, 8:8–9 would not belong to the man, who "is unlikely to refer to his beloved as '*our* sister' and who certainly would not say that she has no breasts."[25] They could, however (and Fox allows for this possibility), be the words of the women of Jerusalem.[26] Whereas the woman's brothers are incidental characters in the poem, like the watchmen (3:3–4) or queens and concubines (6:8–9), the women of Jerusalem are not. Like the female and male personae, whose voices the poet uses to explore the nature of love from both points of view, a woman's and a man's, the women of Jerusalem have a distinct and vital poetic function: they provide an audience within the poem whose presence facilitates the reader's entry into the lovers' seemingly private world of erotic intimacy, thereby making the Song less voyeuristic.[27] That the women of Jerusalem should speak in 8:8–9—at the very point when the Song has reached its climax in the affirmation of the strength of love (8:6–7)—is in keeping with the way they function elsewhere, to remind its audience, by their presence, that the Song is addressed to us.[28]

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24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 171.

26. So Theophile J. Meek, "The Song of Songs: Introduction and Exegesis," *IB* 5:144; J. Cheryl Exum, "A Literary and Structural Analysis of the Song of Songs," *ZAW* 85 (1973) 75–76; Garrett, *Song of Songs*, 258–59.

27. Exum, *Song of Songs*, 7–8.

28. For example, the woman reminds us of their presence at a moment of intimacy by addressing them directly in 2:5–7 and 3:5, and in 5:1 they encourage the lovers in their lovemaking.

If we view Song 8:8–10 as a dialogue between these women (vv. 8–9) and the woman (v. 10), there is no reason to assume that they are talking about her. They could be speaking, hypothetically, as it were, about a girl who has not reached sexual maturity, whom they refer to as their "little sister." The woman's reply in v. 10 contrasts her situation with that of the young girl—and the discrepancy between "she has no breasts" and "my breasts are like towers" no longer requires explanation (viz., the reference is to the past; the speakers are teasing). The tone, which appears to be playful, is reminiscent of what also seems to be banter at the beginning of the Song (1:7–8), where the speaker(s) with whom the woman interacts is also unidentified. It is also possible that the Jerusalem women are the speakers in 1:8, for the woman is addressed as "most beautiful of women," and elsewhere only they use this epithet for her (5:9; 6:1).[29] Despite the advantage that it does not require having someone speak who has neither spoken before nor been spoken to before in the Song, assigning vv. 8–9 to the women of Jerusalem is not altogether satisfactory. It seems a curious, and wholly unanticipated, exchange for them to be holding with the woman at this point in the poem.

This brings us to the woman, the female protagonist of the Song of Songs, in whose mouth the entire speech in vv. 8–10 makes perfect sense. There is no reason to identify the woman who speaks in v. 10 as the little sister of vv. 8–9 unless we assume that the speakers of vv. 8–9 are the brothers. Once we recognize that the speaker of v. 10 and the little sister spoken of in vv. 8–9 are not the same person, everything falls into place. There is no need to specify the identity of the little sister, as, for example, Landy does when he proposes that the woman is speaking about *her* little sister.[30] This proposal too involves supplying a context, another plot of sorts, in which the woman's family includes a little sister (whom we hear of for the first time), and a situation in which the woman speaks in the plural ("we") on behalf of the family. As Rudolph observes, the mention of another sister is without interest and has no point.[31] But not if the little sister is merely hypothetical, the subject of an example story that the woman tells in vv. 8–9 in order to make her point in v. 10. That this is the case becomes clear in the light of vv. 11–12.

Who is the speaker in 8:11–12? The phrase כרמי שלי appears in 1:6, where it is spoken by the woman, and this leads some critics to conclude that the

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29. Other reasons could also be adduced; see my "Literary and Structural Analysis," 71–72.

30. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 160; Delitzsch, *Song of Solomon*, 151, of v. 8 but not v. 9; cf. Albert Cook, *The Root of the Thing: A Study of Job and the Song of Songs* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968) 149.

31. Rudolph, *Das Hohe Lied*, 183.

woman is the speaker here.[32] These verses would thus be a continuation of her speech in v. 10, in which she speaks about herself.[33] But the context, where the speaker's vineyard is preferred over Solomon's vineyard, makes it more likely that the man speaks here. Moreover, the vineyard is "before me." 'Before me' (לפני) is often understood in the sense of "at my disposal" (as in Gen 13:9; 20:15; 24:51; 34:10; 47:6; 1 Sam 16:16).[34] Fox interprets it as "near at hand"; that is, in the man's care, in the center of his attention, as in Prov 4:3; Isa 53:2; and Gen 17:18.[35] I take "before me" literally to mean that the woman is in the presence of her lover as he speaks these words. In 1:6 the woman announces "my own vineyard I have not kept," which, among other things, may suggest that she has given herself to her lover or that she needs tending. Now the man declares that this vineyard belongs to him; he will tend it.

Landy rightly and astutely identifies these verses as a similitude or parable based on such features as its setting in an indeterminate time, its semilegendary protagonist, its formulaic opening, and its apparent triviality. Its enigmatic nature is part of its appeal: "the parable sets up a mystery."[36] Since "vineyard" is a loaded term in the Song, we may suspect that Solomon's vineyard is something more than a collection of grapevines in a place called Baal-hamon. Meanings of the name, 'owner of wealth' and 'husband of a multitude', suggest that it was chosen to emphasize Solomon's affluence—his vast riches, his holdings of land, his many wives. Two things are noteworthy about this vineyard: Solomon does not tend it himself, and its produce is very valuable. I take the second couplet in v. 11 in a general sense to mean its produce is worth (at least) a thousand silver pieces, a substantial sum (cf. Isa 7:23, where a vineyard with a thousand vines is worth a thousand shekels of silver). The alternative ("each [i.e., the keepers] would bring for its fruit a thousand silver pieces") seems less likely, both because it leaves us with a complicated business transaction to explain (the keepers pay Solomon a thousand silver pieces; he then

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32. E.g., Ginsburg, *The Song of Songs*, 190; Delitzsch, *Song of Solomon*, 150, 155; Meek, "Song of Songs," 146; Exum, "Literary and Structural Analysis," 76; Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 154; cf. Munro, *Spikenard and Saffron*, 41–42.

33. There is no reason to split the verses between the chorus (v. 11) and the woman (v. 12), as Goulder and Garrett do (Goulder, *Song of Fourteen Songs*, 68–69; Garrett, *Song of Songs*, 258–59). Garrett sees Song 8:8–12 as a canto of two stanzas, in each of which the chorus "sings" first (vv. 8–9, 11) and then the soprano (his term for the female voice) responds (vv. 10, 12). But he admits, "This canto is thus unusual for the fact that the majority of the lyrics are sung neither by the tenor nor the soprano but by the chorus" (p. 259).

34. See Pope, *Song of Songs*, 690.

35. Fox, *The Song of Songs*, 175.

36. Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 153.

pays them two hundred), and because in v. 12 the speaker tells Solomon he can keep his thousand (not a thousand from each keeper, though that could be implied).

In v. 12, the man compares his vineyard to Solomon's, and here the sexual referent of "vineyard" becomes apparent. He prefers his own vineyard (his lover) to Solomon's vineyard, which, because it belongs to the king, must be a very fine one, and, because it needs keepers, must be extensive. If Solomon's vineyard is his harem, v. 12 ("you can have the thousand, Solomon") may hint at its legendary size, a thousand women (1 Kgs 11:3). The man's vineyard means more to him than a royal harem. His vineyard is priceless; no other woman can compare with her (cf. 6:8–10). What is more, he has his vineyard to himself, unlike Solomon, who relies on vineyard keepers to tend his.

Because Solomon's vineyard works on two levels, literal and metaphorical, whereas the man's is clearly metaphorical (the woman), we should perhaps not expect the correspondences between the two vineyards to work completely. The motif of vineyard keepers allows the man to illustrate indirectly his sole responsibility for his vineyard. But whereas vineyard keepers could allude to harem guards (cf. Esth 2:3), for whose upkeep Solomon would have had to provide ("two hundred [silver pieces] for the keepers of its fruit"), they do not tend Solomon's vineyard in the way the man tends his vineyard (unless this is a sexual joke at Solomon's expense).

Does this vignette make fun of Solomon, who "possessed so many women that he could not keep their 'fruit' to himself"?[37] Might it be critical? Falk thinks these verses reject a view of woman as sexual object or sexual property (the relationship of Solomon to his harem) and advocate the kind of loving relationship the man has with his beloved.[38] Longman proposes that the lovers' exclusive relationship is implicitly favored over Solomon's polygamy.[39] I find it hard to believe that Solomon is the butt of a joke or the object of criticism here, for, if he were, then we would have here a very different treatment of Solomon and royalty from what we find elsewhere in the Song, where King Solomon is portrayed positively (3:6–11) and the man assumes a royal guise as "the king" (1:4, 12; 7:6[5]).

The man's speech is a similitude, an example story. So too, I suggest, is the woman's. Both example stories have an enigmatic quality, as if the speakers wished to engage the audience in solving a puzzle. Moreover, the two speeches

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37. Fox *The Song of Songs*, 175; cf. Keel, *The Song of Songs*, 283.

38. Marcia Falk, *The Song of Songs: A New Translation and Interpretation* (illustrated by Barry Moser; San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990) 195–96.

39. Longman, *Song of Songs*, 219.

in vv. 8–10 and vv. 11–12 are formally quite similar. Both begin as a story that seems to be irrelevant: "We have a little sister . . ."; "Solomon had a vineyard. . . ." The woman is not the "little sister," as most commentators think, nor is she putting words into her brothers' mouths, as many assume. She is the narrator of this vignette, and the little sister of whom she speaks is fictive in the same way that Solomon's vineyard in Baal-hamon is. Both the sister and Solomon's vineyard are foils that allow the speakers to say something about themselves. They say it metaphorically, and poetic metaphor is by its very nature plurisignificant, but the thrust is fairly clear. She says that, unlike the girl in her example, for whom preparations will be made when she comes of age, she needs no such attention, since she (a fortified city) has already offered herself to her lover. He says that his vineyard (the woman herself) is worth more than Solomon's and he alone will tend it.

We do not need a background explanation, especially if we think of Fox's proposal about the Song as entertainment,[40] and we do not need any other characters besides the woman, the man, and the chorus if "the singers represent personae before an audience."[41] In the dialogue format of the Song (which, in any event, lends itself to performance), if "my own vineyard is before me" in v. 12 suggests that the woman is in her lover's presence, so also "in his eyes" in v. 10 of her speech allows us to imagine that he is present and may even be looking at her as she speaks.

Both vignettes seem to have marriage arrangements as their backdrop,[42] not explicitly, since marriage is not the subject of the Song, but in a way that is lighthearted and at the same time leads to serious avowals of commitment. They are thus well suited to their context here at the conclusion of the Song. In what appears to be a detached, playful manner (detached because social conventions are pushed aside by the overwhelming power of love, vv. 6–7),[43] the woman speaks about preparations made when a girl reaches marriageable age, the time when she will be "spoken for" (vv. 8–9). As far as she herself is concerned, it is a moot question. She has already reached womanhood and she has surrendered herself to her lover (v. 10); in a sense, she has been spoken for

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40. Fox, *The Song of Songs*, 247–50 et passim.

41. Ibid., 256.

42. A wedding provides a context for entertainment too; compare Samson's cryptic riddle at his wedding feast and its answer, which is also a riddle, Judg 14:14, 18.

43. It is only partially true to say that society's values are not the Song's values or that social conventions are ignored; see Landy, *Paradoxes of Paradise*, 152–76. In 8:1, just before the paean to love in vv. 6–7, the woman wishes her lover were like a brother so that she could kiss him openly in the street without incurring social disapproval, and even the paean to love acknowledges society's judgment of one who would offer money for love.

(not necessarily formally, since that is not really the issue). The man confirms their mutual commitment by declaring that she belongs to him: she is his very own vineyard, worth more than any vineyard a king might possess (v. 12). As elsewhere in the Song, they speak along gender-determined lines.[44] She deals with a subject that can only have been of great concern for women. In a society where women were under the control of their fathers or other male relatives before marriage, where marriages were usually arranged, and where the virginity of the bride was an important issue, what role do matters of the heart play? He thinks in terms of competition with other men, and the imagery he draws on (vineyards, hired workers to tend them, and payment for the produce) belongs to the sphere of economic livelihood.

Perhaps the woman's speech contains an implicit criticism of the practice of paying a bride price,[45] and possibly the man's speech is critical of a man's having many wives, but the Song is not polemical. Rather, in their dialogue in 8:8–12 the Song's lovers define themselves against social concerns that do not, in their view, apply to them, as all lovers are inclined to do.

In Song 8:6–7 the poet placed a profound declaration of love in the mouth of the woman. Saying more on the topic of the strength of love would risk allowing the poem to slip into sentimentality. Moreover, the poet knows that showing is more effective than telling, for apart from Song 8:6–7 the poet reveals what love is like by having the lovers speak about love as they experience it rather than about love in general. After the woman's erotic imperative, "Set me as the seal upon your heart . . . for love is strong as death . . . ," the lovers offer further affirmations of their love in vv. 8–12. The tone becomes lighter, but the theme is still that of love's power.[46]

If we take as our clue the formal correspondences between these two vignettes, or similitudes, Song 8:8–14 can be most readily understood as a dialogue between the lovers in which, first, they each tell a story in which they speak metaphorically about themselves and their beloved (the woman in vv. 8–10 and the man in vv. 11–12).[47] Then, in a passionately serious and urgent vein, they express once again their desire for each other: he, by asking to hear

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44. I discuss this feature of the Song in detail in my *Song of Songs*, 14–24 et passim.

45. Rudolph, *Das Hohe Lied*, 184; Krinetzki, *Das Hohe Lied*, 250.

46. Cf. Gerleman, *Das Hohelied*, 219: "Wie im vorigen Gedicht [8:6–7] ist also auch hier [8:8–10] das eigentliche Thema die Macht der Liebe." For the view that 8:6–7 holds the key to the poem's raison d'être and that everything in the poem leads up to and converges upon these verses, see my *Song of Songs*, 2–13.

47. The fact that they do not address each other as "you" in vv. 8–12 is no obstacle to seeing these verses as dialogue; the lovers are always speaking to each other, even when they speak about the other in the third person (e.g., 2:2–3).

her voice (v. 13), and she, by answering in a way that does not allow the dia-logue to end, though the poem comes to its close (v. 14). Her speech thus moves from an urgent appeal to him ("set me as the seal upon your heart . . . for love is strong as death," vv. 6–7) to similitude (vv. 8–10), and his from si-militude (vv. 11–12) to an urgent appeal to her ("let me hear," v. 13).

The advantage of the interpretation of vv. 8–12 offered above is that it re-quires the least explanation from outside the text. As the similarities in both form (similitude) and theme (commitment, possibly marriage) between vv. 8–10 and vv. 11–12 confirm, like most of the Song, Song 8:8–12 is a lovers' dialogue.

Answering Questions, Questioning Answers: The Rhetoric of Interrogatives in the Speeches of Job and His Friends

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Interrogatives have always raised questions. The scant treatment of interrogatives in most elementary Hebrew grammars and the limited discussion provided in intermediate and advanced grammars leave the impression that there may be little to be said about them.[1] To suggest or to imply that there may be little more to be said about interrogatives is simply not true. Interrogatives are, indeed, the "little people" of Hebrew grammar. They are small. They do their job. They make things happen. But even when we have seen the results of their work, verbs and nouns and even prepositions and conjunctions continue to spur our interest. So this chapter will draw attention to the "little people" and will focus our attention in this case on interrogatives in the speeches of Job and his friends.

I certainly do not want to give the impression that there has been little or no investigation of interrogatives. There has been significant work done, particularly on rhetorical questions in the Hebrew Bible. Rhetorical questions

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1. Mark Futato, *Beginning Biblical Hebrew* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2003) 170–71; Allen Ross, *Introducing Biblical Hebrew* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 145–46; Duane Garrett, *A Modern Grammar for Classical Hebrew* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002) 174; Gary Pratico and Miles Van Pelt, *Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001) 75–76, 80; Bonnie Pedrotti Kittel, Vicki Hoffer, and Rebecca Abts Wright, *Biblical Hebrew: A Text and Workbook* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) 134; Choon Leong Seow, *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987) 64–67; Bruce Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 315–29; Cristo van der Merwe, Jackie Naudé, and Jan Kroeze, *A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar* (Biblical Languages: Hebrew 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 59, 321–28, 340, 360–61; JM 116–18, 323–33, 535–36; GKC 318, 473–77.

have been studied in specific biblical texts and within canonical books: J. Kenneth Kuntz's chapter in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah* entitled "The Form, Location, and Function of Rhetorical Questions in Deutero-Isaiah," Lénart de Regt's 1996 essay, "Discourse Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Job, Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets," Michael Fox's insightful article in 1981 entitled, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric," and Walter Brueggemann's 1973 article, "Jeremiah's Use of Rhetorical Questions"—to mention just a few.[2] But interrogatives are about more than "asking." It is, in fact, their versatility and utility that make them such valuable linguistic markers.

The purpose of this essay is twofold. First, I will identify and characterize the interrogative set found in the speeches of Job and his friends (Job 3–37), and second, I will describe the function of the interrogatives as a set in chaps. 3–37. I will demonstrate that the interrogatives in Job 3–37 work best when we allow them to work together. I have chosen to limit this analysis to the speeches of Job and his friends. I will not attempt to characterize the use of interrogatives in either the narrative prologue or epilogue, nor will I address the use of interrogatives in the divine speeches.

Twelve different interrogatives are found in the speeches of Job and his friends. The most common are the interrogative prefix ה (58×); the animate pronoun מי (41×); the inanimate pronoun מה (52×); and the particle אם (20×). The other interrogatives used are the interrogative adverbs למה (9×) and מדוע (6×); the locative adverbs אי (2×), איה (7×), and איפה (1×); the temporal adverb מתי (1×); the adverb אן (3×); and one occurrence of the particle אף.[3] In addition, there are six instances in these chapters (7:20, 11:3, 15:3, 17:16, 32:16, 37:18) in which an interrogatory is unmarked.

Interrogatives are found throughout the dialogue. Every one of the 23 speeches attests at least 3 interrogative clauses. Most have a minimum of between 5 and 8. The highest number of interrogatives appears in Job's speeches

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2. J. Kenneth Kuntz, "The Form, Location, and Function of Rhetorical Questions in Deutero-Isaiah," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig Broyles and Craig Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 121–41; Lénart de Regt, "Discourse Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Job, Deuteronomy and the Minor Prophets," in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J. Fokkelman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns / Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996) 51–78; Michael Fox, "Job 238 and God's Rhetoric," *Semeia* 19 (1981) 53–61; Walter Brueggemann, "Jeremiah's Use of Rhetorical Questions," *JBL* 92 (1973) 358–74.

3. Four interrogatives not found in the book: (1) איך 'how?'; (2) איכה 'how? where?'; (3) איכה 'where?' (elsewhere only in 2 Kgs 6:14); and (4) היך 'how?' (Dan 10:17, 1 Chr 13:12).

(perhaps not surprisingly), but particularly the speeches in the first cycle. Job responds to Eliphaz with 31 interrogative clauses (that is 31 clauses to Eliphaz's 9). Job responds to Bildad with 23 clauses (that is 23 to Bildad's 8). Job responds to Zophar with 28 interrogative clauses (that is 28 to Zophar's 10). Each of Job's friends uses at least 6 different interrogative pronouns and particles. Job uses all 12. Interrogatives are found in every chapter: 1 clause in chaps. 29, 30, and 32; 2 clauses in chaps. 5, 20, and 24; 3 clauses in chaps. 12, 16, and 18; and finally, 13 clauses in chap. 13, 14 clauses in chap. 21, and 15 clauses in chap. 6.

Of the 889 verses that constitute the speeches of Job and his friends, 182 verses contain interrogative structures. Over 20 percent (20.5%) of the dialogue between Job and his friends employ interrogatives. Embedded in these 182 verses are 265 interrogative clauses. But why? What is clear is that interrogatives constitute an integral part of the fabric of discourse between Job and his friends. The interrogatives are prominent. They are persistent. This is how the characters speak to one another. It is how they say what they have to say. And it is how the book communicates its meaning to us. The interrogative in chaps. 3–37 is a major literary device that gives structure, coherence, and movement within the dialogue and reinforces the issues that the book is probing. This brings us to a consideration of how the interrogatives are used. Here we will take into account the versatility of the interrogatives that enables them to function syntactically in ways other than to introduce a question. I will consider, first, non-question uses of the interrogative in chaps. 3–37. I will then give attention to the more-typical function of the interrogative—namely, marking questions.

Not all interrogatives in chaps. 3–37 mark questions. The animate and inanimate pronouns are used in ways other than to pose questions. For example, 8 times in chaps. 3–37, the inanimate pronoun מה is employed to mark the grammatical object.

(1) 6:24 (Job's response to Eliphaz)   הורוני ואני אחריש
ומה־שגיתי הבינו לי:

(2) 10:2 (Job's response to Bildad)   אמר אל־אלוה
אל־תרשיעני
הודיעני על מה־תריבני:

(3) 13:13 (Job's response to Zophar)   החרישו ממני ואדברה־אני
ויעבר עלי מה:

(4) 23:5 (Job's response to Eliphaz)   אדעה מלים יענני
ואבינה מה־יאמר לי:

(5) 26:7 (Bildad's reply to Job)[4]   נטה צפון על־תהו
                                                       תלה ארץ על־בלי־מה:
(6) 34:4 (Elihu's second speech)   משפט נבחרה־לנו
                                                       נדעה בינינו מה־טוב:
(7) 34:33 (Elihu's second speech)   המעמך ישלמנה כי־מאסת
                                                       כי־אתה תבחר ולא־אני
                                                       ומה־ידעת דבר:
(8) 37:19 (Elihu's fourth speech)   הודיענו מה־נאמר לו
                                                       לא־נערך מפני־חשך:

   Another interrogative found in these chapters is the collocation מי יתן,
which conveys a strong wish or desire on the part of the speaker. Nine times
the animate interrogative pronoun מי is collocated with the *Qal yiqtol* of the
verb נתן. Worth noting here is that 8 of the 9 occurrences are found in the
speeches of Job, and all but 3 of them express a yearning for God to respond,
to manifest himself in some way.[5]

(9) 6:8 (Job responding to Eliphaz)   מי־יתן תבוא שאלתי
                                                       ותקותי יתן אלוה:

Here (in 6:8), of course, Job is mocking Eliphaz's use of תקוה in 4:6 and 5:16.

(10) 13:5 (Job responding to Zophar)   מי־יתן החרש תחרישון
                                                       ותהי לכם לחכמה:
(11) 14:13 (Job responding to Zophar)   מי יתן בשאול תצפנני
                                                       תסתירני עד־שוב אפך
                                                       תשית לי חק ותזכרני:
(12–13) 19:23 (Job responding to Bildad)   מי־יתן אפו ויכתבון מלי
                                                       מי־יתן בספר ויחקו:
(14) 23:3 (Job responding to Eliphaz)   מי־יתן ידעתי ואמצאהו
                                                       אבוא עד־תכונתו:

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4. The identification of these words as belonging to Job is widely held (e.g., John Hart-
ley, *The Book of Job* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988] 24–26, 361–62). It is my
understanding, however, that the words of 26:7 are more likely those of Bildad than of Job
(e.g., Carol Newsom, "The Book of Job: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in
NIB 4:516). Bildad the Shuhite replies (25:1) in 25:1–6. Job, cutting Bildad off, replies
(26:1) in 26:1–4. Bildad then continues his speech in 26:5–14. And in 27:1–23 Job con-
tinues his discourse (27:1).

5. The collocation מי יתן is also found in 14:4 and 31:31, but the pronoun and verb are
not used as a fixed expression in these texts.

(15) 29:2 (Job) מי־יתנני כירחי־קדם
כימי אלוה ישמרני:

(16) 31:35 (Job) מי יתן־לי שמע לי
הן־תוי
שדי יענני
וספר כתב איש ריבי:

The other מי יתן appears in Zophar's first speech. This is the only time in the book that מי יתן is not in initial position.

(17) 11:5 (Zophar responding to Job) ואולם מי־יתן אלוה דבר
ויפתח שפתיו עמך:

The exclamatory use of the interrogative pronoun is found 5 times, always using the inanimate interrogative מה. What is of particular interest here is that 4 of the 5 exclamations using the interrogative are uttered by Job. The exclamatory use of the interrogative מה is first found in Job's response to Eliphaz, where it is paired with מה heading a rhetorical question:

(18–19) 6:25 (Job responding to Eliphaz) מה־נמרצו אמרי־ישר
ומה־יוכיח הוכח מכם:

The other occurrences are all in one chapter, chap. 26. This time Bildad, having just begun his speech (25:1–6), is interrupted by Job in 26:2. In back-to-back bicola, using מה, Job declares sarcastically:

(20) 26:2 (Job responding to Bildad) מה־עזרת ללא־כח
הושעת זרוע לא־עז:

(21) 26:3 (Job responding to Bildad) מה־יעצת ללא חכמה
ותושיה לרב הודעת:

He continues in 26:4 with a rhetorical question, a shift marked by a double-מי construction:

(22) 26:4 את־מי הגדת מלין
ונשמת־מי יצאה ממך:

The other appearance of an exclamatory מה is in Bildad's third speech:

(23) 26:14 (Bildad responding to Job) הן־אלה קצות דרכו [דרכיו]
ומה־שמץ דבר נשמע־בו
ורעם גבורתו [גבורתיו] מי יתבונן:

The interrogatives that serve a function other than inquiry, that is, the use of מה in object constructions, the use of מי יתן to convey a strong wish, and the exclamatory use of the inanimate pronoun are found predominantly in the words of Job.

Having considered the broader utility of the interrogative in Job 3–37, we now give attention to the principal role of the interrogative in the speeches of Job and his friends: introducing questions. The interrogative set that we have identified exhibits three basic types of questions: (1) questions of fact, or circumstantial questions; (2) exclamatory questions; and (3) rhetorical questions.[6] The vast majority of times, the questions (80.4% [213 out of 265]) are rhetorical. I have identified 23 information-seeking questions in the speeches, most of which are "why" and "where" inquiries, 6 of which are within embedded speech.

(24) 4:2 (Eliphaz responding to Job)	הנסה דבר אליך תלאה ועצר במלין מי יוכל:
(25) 13:23 (Job responding to Zophar)	כמה לי עונות וחטאות פשעי וחטאתי הדעני:
(26) 14:10 (Job responding to Zophar)	וגבר ימות ויחלש ויגוע אדם ואיו:
(27) 18:3 (Bildad responding to Job)	מדוע נחשבנו כבהמה נטמינו בעיניכם:
(28) 21:7 (Job responding to Zophar)	מדוע רשעים יחיו עתקו גם־גברו חיל:
(29) 24:1 (Job responding to Eliphaz)	מדוע משדי לא־נצפנו עתים וידעו [וידעיו] לא־חזו ימיו:
(30) 27:12 (Job responding to Bildad	הן־אתם כלכם חזיתם ולמה־זה הבל תהבלו:
(31) 28:12 (Wisdom Poem)	והחכמה מאין תמצא ואי זה מקום בינה:
(32) 28:20 (Wisdom Poem)	והחכמה מאין תבוא ואי זה מקום בינה:
(33) 31:2 (Job)	ומה חלק אלוה ממעל ונחלת שדי ממרמים:
(34) 33:13 (Elihu)	מדוע אליו ריבות כי כל־דבריו לא־יענה:

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6. One other type of question is attested in Biblical Hebrew, although not in these chapters: alternative questions (Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction*, 316).

In the remaining instances, the interrogative is found in embedded speech:

(35) 9:12 (Job responding to Bildad)   הן יחתף מי ישיבנו
מי־יאמר אליו מה־תעשׂה:

(36) 15:23 (Eliphaz responding to Job)   נדד הוא ללחם
איה
ידע כי־נכון בידו יום־חשׁך:

(37) 19:28 (Job responding to Bildad)   כי תאמרו מה־נרדף־לו
ושׁרשׁ דבר נמצא־בי:

(38) 20:7 (Zophar responding to Job)   כגללו לנצח יאבד
ראיו יאמרו איו:

(39) 35:10 (Elihu)   ולא־אמר
איה אלוה עשׂי
נתן זמרות בלילה:

Apart from these information-seeking questions, rhetorical questions dominate the literary landscape. I mentioned earlier the 182 verses that host 265 interrogative clauses. Of these 265 clauses, 213 are rhetorical questions. Robert Koops explains: "In an ordinary conversation . . . a question is assumed to be a request for information. When it becomes evident to the hearer that the 'information' in question is already well known to both of them, he understands that the speaker must be flouting the expected pattern, and thereby doing something else, namely emphasizing a point."[7] So these are questions not seeking information but seeking to make a point. So, are rhetorical questions questions or statements? Well, they are both or either! As Jürgen Schmidt-Radefeldt points out, the addressee, the other participant in the dialogue, "can 'answer the question' and/or 'contradict the statement.'"[8] It is up to the addressee whether he accepts the rhetorical question as an assertion or, contrary to the speaker's expectation, he capitalizes on the interrogative element in the rhetorical situation and takes issue with it, which is almost invariably what happens in chaps. 3–37. The effect is felt by both the addressee and the audience.

In these chapters two types of rhetorical questions can be identified. In the first type, the speaker puts forward a question but then immediately answers it himself. On 2 occasions in chaps. 3–37, an answer accompanies the rhetorical question. Again, this type of rhetorical question is found only in the speeches

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7. Robert Koops, "Rhetorical Questions and Implied Meaning in the Book of Job," *The Bible Translator* 39 (1988) 418.

8. Jürgen Schmidt-Radefeldt, "On So-Called 'Rhetorical' Questions," *Journal of Pragmatics* 1 (1977) 375.

of Job. In 14:4a Job asks,[9] מי־יתן טהור מטמא 'Who can make the clean out of
the unclean?' He immediately answers, לא אחד 'No one!' In 23:6 Job imagines
a direct encounter with God. Prior to this, God's overwhelming power has al-
ways been an obstacle to Job. But here Job sees things differently. Job's answer
to his own question makes this clear to us.

> (40) 23:6 (Job responding to himself)
> Would He contend with me by superior power?   הברב־כח יריב עמדי
> No, surely He would pay attention to me.   לא אך־הוא ישם בי:

The second type of rhetorical question is, as we have noted, an assertion in
interrogative form. The majority of these occur as a bicolon. The most com-
mon rhetorical interrogative structure in these chapters is the interrogative ה.
Thirty-three times the ה marks a single question or is followed by אם at the
beginning of the second half of the same verse. There are 15 instances in
which the interrogative ה heads the first colon, and the particle אם follows,
heading the second.[10] For example:

> (41) 6:5,6 (Job responding to Eliphaz)   הינהק־פרא עלי־דשא
>   אם יגעה־שור על־בלילו:
>   היאכל תפל מבלי־מלח
>   אם־יש־טעם בריר חלמות:
> (42) 6:30 (Job responding to Eliphaz)   היש־בלשוני עולה
>   אם־חכי לא־יבין הוות:
> (43) 8:3 (Bildad responding to Job)   האל יעות משפט
>   ואם־שדי יעות־צדק:

In 12 cases, the ה interrogative is prefixed to the negative particle לא.[11] An af-
firmative, but unspoken, answer is assumed. For example:

> (44) 4:6 (Eliphaz responding to Job)   הלא יראתך כסלתך
>   תקותך ותם דרכיך:
> (45) 4:21 (Eliphaz responding to Job)   הלא־נסע יתרם בם
>   ימותו ולא בחכמה:
> (46) 7:1 (Job responding to Eliphaz)   הלא־צבא לאנוש על [עלי־] ארץ
>   וכימי שכיר ימיו:

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9. Some treat the collocation מי יתן here as a fixed expression indicating strong desire,
that is, "O that a clean person could come from an unclean person. Not one can."
10. Job 6:5, 6, 30; 8:3; 10:4, 5; 11:2, 7; 13:8, 9; 21:4; 22:3; (27:9); 34:17; 37:20.
11. Job 4:6, 21; 7:1; 8:10; 10:10; 12:11; 13:11; 21:29; 22:5; 31:3, 4, 15.

Twenty-three times, the prefixed ה is present only in the first line, although the interrogation carries over into the second line. In one instance (10:3), the prefixed ה, present only in the first line, extends over three lines.

(47) 10:3 (Job responding to Bildad)

הטוב לך כי־תעשק
כי־תמאס יגיע כפיך
ועל־עצת רשעים הופעת:

Three times the interrogative ה prefixes the nominal יש:

(48) 5:1 (Eliphaz responding to Job)

קרא־נא
היש עונך
ואל־מי מקדשים תפנה:

(49) 6:30 (Job responding to Eliphaz)

היש־בלשוני עולה
אם־חכי לא־יבין הוות:

(50) 25:3 (Bildad responding to Job)

היש מספר לגדודיו
ועל־מי לא־יקום אורהו:

In each case of the double rhetorical question using the interrogative ה, the second line emphasizes or elaborates on the assertion that underlies the initial question.

The interrogative adverb למה is found 9 times but only in the speeches of Job. Job's fundamental complaints against God and his friends are given voice through these 9 questions: his wish that he had never been born, his confusion over why God is attacking him and hiding from him, and his deep disappointment in his friends for giving him everything but comfort.

(51) 3:11 (Job's curse)

למה לא מרחם אמות
מבטן יצאתי ואגוע:

(52) 3:20 (Job's lament)

למה יתן לעמל אור
וחיים למרי נפש:

(53) 7:20 (Job responding to Eliphaz)

חטאתי
מה אפעל לך נצר האדם
למה שמתני למפגע לך
ואהיה עלי למשא:

(54) 9:29 (Job responding to Bildad)

אנכי ארשע
למה־זה הבל איגע:

(55) 10:18 (Job responding to Bildad)

ולמה מרחם הצאתני
אגוע ועין לא־תראני:

(56) 13:24 (Job responding to Zophar)

למה־פניך תסתיר
ותחשבני לאויב לך:

(57) 19:22 (Job responding to Bildad)	למה תרדפני כמו־אל
	ומבשרי לא תשבעו:
(58) 27:12 (Job responding to Bildad)	הן־אתם כלכם חזיתם
	ולמה־זה הבל תהבלו:
(59) 30:2 (Job's lament)	גם־כח ידיהם למה לי
	עלימו אבד כלח:

Having considered the basic types of questions that constitute the interrogative set within chaps. 3–37, namely, questions of fact, exclamatory questions, and rhetorical questions, I will now turn our attention to their function.

First, the interrogatives in chaps. 3–37 contribute to the delimitaton of literary boundaries on all levels of the text. Almost half the speeches begin interrogatively. The effect is one of immediate engagement between speaker and the one spoken to, and between speaker and reader. Using either a rhetorical question (or questions) or an exclamation, 11 of the 23 speeches in chaps. 3–37 begin with an interrogative component. All five speaking characters do this. A well-placed rhetorical question in this book is worth a thousand words.

The first words we hear from the friends who have come to comfort Job— who upon arrival saw that his pain was so great that they did not speak a word to him for seven days and seven nights (2:13)—the very first words we hear are put to Job as a question. It is Eliphaz who asks in 4:2:

| If one ventures a word with you, could you bear it? | הנסה דבר אליך תלאה |
| But who is able to refrain from speaking? | ועצר במלין מי יוכל: |

The very first question posed by the friends focuses on Job and his inability to bear the burden of words. The second question turns back on Eliphaz and his inability not to utter them. As a matter of fact, each of the speeches that begins interrogatively draws attention to the futility and oppressiveness of words.

Bildad begins to build on this. In 8:2–3 he asks:

How long will you say these things,	עד־אן תמלל־אלה
and the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?	ורוח כביר אמרי־פיך:
Does God pervert justice?	האל יעות משפט
Does the Almighty pervert what is right?	ואם־שדי יעות־צדק:

Rhetorical questions come with inherent risks. One of the risks is that they can elicit the "wrong" response. For Bildad, it is inconceivable that God, Shaddai, could or would pervert what is right. But Bildad was not privy to chaps. 1 and 2, and Bildad did not hear God's admission in 2:3 that he has been unjust with Job for the sake of the test. Job also was not privy to God's admission in 2:3,

but Job is convinced that something is wrong. Job's argument in chap. 9 reveals that he believes that God does, in fact, pervert justice both in his personal life (9:17–20) and in the world (9:22–24). Job responds to Bildad's question with an unexpected affirmative answer. Rhetorical questions do not require a reply because only one answer is assumed. An unexpected contrary reply makes the key issue here regarding God's justice more prominent and serves to heighten the level of disagreement between Job and Bildad.

Zophar's first words in 11:2 bring us back to the problem of words:

Shall a multitude of words go unanswered,	הרב דברים לא יענה
And a talkative man be acquitted/found in the right?	ואם־איש שפתים יצדק:

In the opening speech of the second cycle (15:2–3), Eliphaz is not as sensitive when he speaks the second time. Moreover, he doubles his questions:

Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge,	החכם יענה דעת־רוח
And fill himself with the east wind?	וימלא קדים בטנו:
Should he argue with useless talk,	הוכח בדבר לא יסכון
Or with words which are not profitable?	ומלים לא־יועיל בם:

Bildad also increases his question quotient when he addresses Job the second time (18:2–4):

How long will you hunt for words?	עד־אנה תשימון קנצי למלין
Show understanding and then we can talk.	תבינו ואחר נדבר:
Why are we regarded as beasts,	מדוע נחשבנו כבהמה
as stupid in your eyes?	נטמינו בעיניכם:
O you who tear yourself in your anger—	טרף נפשו באפו
for your sake is the earth to be abandoned,	הלמענך תעזב ארץ
or the rock to be moved from its place?	ויעתק־צור ממקמו:

Job responds with an interrogative adverb this time, one of only 3 in chaps. 3–37. Bildad has just asked him in 18:2:

How long will you hunt for words?	עד־אנה תשימון קנצי למלין

Using the same interrogative adverb עד־אנה, Job replies in 19:2:

How long will you torment me,	עד־אנה תוגיון נפשי
And crush me with words?	ותדכאונני במלים:

When he speaks for the third time in 22:2–5, Eliphaz again begins with questions, even more than before:

Can a man be of use to God,	הלאל יסכן־גבר
or a wise man be useful to himself?	כי־יסכן עלימו משכיל:
Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous,	החפץ לשדי כי תצדק
or profit if you make your ways perfect?	ואם־בצע כי־תתם דרכיך:
Is it because of your reverence that He reproves you,	המיראתך יכיחך
that He enters into judgment against you?	יבוא עמך במשפט:
Is not your wickedness great,	הלא רעתך רבה
and (are not) your iniquities without end?	ואין־קץ לעונתיך:

Job's opening words in chap. 26 again make use of interrogatives; but this time (vv. 2–4) his speech is exclamatory, albeit sarcastic, and the singular verb forms indicate that he is unleashing his exclamations on Bildad specifically:

What a help you are to the weak!	מה־עזרת ללא־כח
How you have saved the arm without strength!	הושעת זרוע לא־עז:
What counsel you have given to one without wisdom!	מה־יעצת ללא חכמה
What helpful insight you have abundantly provided!	ותושיה לרב הודעת:
To whom have you uttered words?	את־מי הגדת מלין
And whose breath was expressed through you?	ונשמת־מי יצאה ממך:

What we have seen thus far is that interrogatives serve effectively in chaps. 3–37 to delimit literary boundaries of the text, with nearly half the speeches beginning with an interrogative component. The distribution of interrogatives in these chapters shows, too, that interrogatives are frequently used at the beginning of strophes within speeches.[12] In addition, one can observe that interrogatives are positioned throughout these chapters in order to conclude speeches and strophes.

Three speeches have interrogative closure. Job's first response to Eliphaz in chap. 7 ends with a barrage of interrogatives (vv. 17–21):

מה־אנוש כי תגדלנו וכי־תשית אליו לבך:
ותפקדנו לבקרים לרגעים תבחננו:
כמה לא־תשעה ממני לא־תרפני עד־בלעי רקי:
חטאתי מה אפעל לך נצר האדם למה שמתני למפגע לך
ואהיה עלי למשא:

___

12. Job 6:24–26; 7:1, 19; 10:18, 20; 11:5, 7, 10; 12:9, 11; 14:4; 15:14; 17:3; 19:23; 20:4, 7; 21:22; 22:15; 23:13; 24:1; 25:4; 28:12, 20; 31:31, 35; 34:7, 13.

<div dir="rtl">

ומה לא־תשׂא פשׁעי ותעביר את־עוני

כי־עתה לעפר אשׁכב ושׁחרתני ואינני:

</div>

Job's final response to Eliphaz in 24:25 ends with a simple interrogative bicolon.

<div dir="rtl">

ואם־לא אפו מי יכזיבני וישׂם לאל מלתי:

</div>

And the speech that draws to a close in chap. 26, whether one considers it to be the words of Job or of Bildad, ends (v. 14) with both an exclamatory use of מה and the use of מי in a simple two-word rhetorical question.

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הן־אלה קצות דרכו [דרכיו]

ומה־שׁמץ דבר נשׁמע־בו

ורעם גבורתו [גבורתיו] מי יתבונן:

</div>

Interrogatives also serve regularly to close off strophes and stanzas. There are, in fact, 91 strophes in chaps. 3–37 that begin with an interrogative, and 60 that are closed off with an interrogative. Sixteen strophes are composed entirely of interrogative clauses.[13] Only 9 of the 265 interrogative clauses in these chapters stand inside a strophe.[14]

A second function of the interrogatives in chaps. 3–37 is to maintain coherence within the speeches. The interrogatives help establish connection and progression within the speeches. Consider 9:2:

In truth I know that this is so,	אמנם ידעתי כי־כן
But how can a mortal be in the right before God?	ומה־יצדק אנושׁ עם־אל:

Job's interrogative response to Bildad bears considerable lexical and syntactical overlap with Eliphaz's words in 4:17a:

4:17a	האנושׁ מאלוה יצדק
9:2b	ומה־יצדק אנושׁ עם־אל

Both cola are rhetorical questions of the same length. Both cola use the noun אנושׁ for humankind. They both use the *yiqtol* form of the verb צדק, and both refer to God, although 4:17 refers to אלוה and 9:2 to אל. Job's rhetorical question at the beginning of his speech in chap. 9 alludes to Eliphaz's words in 4:17

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13. Job 13:7–9, 13–14; 14:13–14; 15:7–8; 26:2–4; 31:1–2, 3–4; 35:6–7.

14. Job 9:14; 10:10; 13:5, 11; 15:23; 21:17; 30:2; 31:14 (2×).

and serves to reintroduce one of the thematic issues in the book. Eliphaz's question, concerning whether or not a human may be considered righteous before God, clearly expects a negative answer. But Eliphaz did not read the prologue, where three times the narrator and God asserted that Job was upright. These similarly worded rhetorical questions occurring five chapters apart assist the reader in evaluating the positions that are emerging. According to Eliphaz, no human being, precisely because of being human, can be just before God. According to Job, God is just not being just! In this case, the wrong answer would be right!

A third function of the interrogatives in chaps. 3–37 is to sustain reflection on the events and issues introduced in the prologue. At key junctures in these chapters, the use of interrogatives prevails on the reader to think back, to remember what happened and what is happening and why. The prominence and pervasiveness of the interrogatives provides great assistance in reading the book. It is virtually impossible not to answer (along with the characters) the key questions as one reads. It is, in fact, the interrogatives that steer us from time to time back to chaps. 1 and 2.

(60; cf. 44) 4:6 (Eliphaz's first speech)

Is not your fear your confidence,	הלא יראתך כסלתך
your hope the integrity of your ways?	תקותך ותם דרכיך:

(61; cf. 43) 8:3 (Bildad's first speech)

Does God pervert justice,	האל יעות משפט
and does the Almighty pervert what is right?	ואם־שדי יעות־צדק:

(62) 22:2–5 (Eliphaz's third speech)

Can a man be of use to God?	הלאל יסכן־גבר
Indeed, the one who is wise is useful to himself.	כי־יסכן עלימו משכיל:
Is there any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous,	החפץ לשדי כי תצדק
or is it gain [to him] if you make your ways blameless?	ואם־בצע כי־תתם דרכיך:
Is it because of your fear that He reproves you,	המיראתך יכיחך
that He enters into judgment with you?	יבוא עמך במשפט:
Is not your wickedness abundant?	הלא רעתך רבה
There is no end to your iniquities!	ואין־קץ לעונתיך:

(63) 25:4 (Bildad's third speech)

How can a man be righteous with God?	ומה־יצדק אנוש עם־אל
And how can he be clean who is born of woman?	ומה־יזכה ילוד אשה:

It has been demonstrated elsewhere that rhetorical questions have a tendency to cluster as a means of achieving emphasis and underscoring a speaker's main point. I suggest that the distribution of interrogatives throughout the speeches of Job and his friends, what I would call the interrogative matrix, is anything but fortuitous. Interrogative clusters are present. With the full complement of interrogatives used and the careful placement of them at the beginning and end of speeches, sections and strophes, there is a broad pattern that emerges. Within chaps. 3–37, interrogatives cluster, predominantly in bicola occuring in alternating two, then three, and then four or more verse segments. For example, Job's lament in chap. 3 has no such cluster. Eliphaz's first speech has one two-verse interrogative cluster. Job's response has one three-verse interrogative cluster framed by two two-verse clusters and then concludes with a five-verse cluster. Bildad's first speech has two two-verse interrogative clusters. Job's response has one three-verse cluster at the beginning of chap. 10. Zophar's first speech has two two-verse clusters. Job's response has two three-verse clusters.

This alternation of interrogative clusters continues through the second and third cycles with a fairly even distribution. The four- and five-verse clusters appear at only three junctures: (1) at the conlcusion of Job's response to Eliphaz's first speech in 7:17–21; (2) at the beginning of Eliphaz's third speech in 22:2–5; and (3) in the latter part of Job's final speech in 31:1–4. This pattern dissipates almost entirely in the four speechs of Elihu. Elihu has one two-verse interrogative cluster in 36:22–23 and one two-verse cluster in 37:15–16.

Given the fact that interrogatives are so pervasive, is there any place in the book where interrogatives are conspicuously absent? There are 7 text segments between 20 and 29 verses long where no interrogatives appear at all. No questions. No interrogatives:

5:2–27	Eliphaz	26 verses
15:15–22, 24–35	Eliphaz	20 verses (8 + 12)
16:7–22	Job	16 verses.
18:5–21	Bildad	17 verses
20:8–29	Zophar	22 verses
29:3–25	Job	23 verses
30:3–31	Job	29 verses

The significance and effect of these interrogative gaps remains part of my ongoing work on the the rhetoric of interrogatives in the speeches of Job and his friends.

What contribution might accrue from a careful consideration of interrogatives—as a set, as a matrix—within the book of Job? How might further analysis of these "minor characters" present throughout the book contribute to our understanding of the book? In his essay, "The Arguments of Job's Three Friends," David Clines, decrying standard attempts to discriminate between the friends on psychological grounds, says, "what one really wants to see—and what one looks for in vain among the commentaries—is a set of notations of the distinctiveness, logical or theological, in their various argumentations."[15] Speech is a window to the soul of a character. Because speech tells us a great deal about a character, because the use of interrogatives is so much a part of the way that Job's friends speak, and because rhetorical questions tend to be a more revealing mode of speech, could the disposition of the interrogatives in Job, that is, the interrogative matrix, provide data regarding their character?

In this essay, I have identified the interrogative set that is found in the speeches of Job and his friends, and I have described the function of the interrogatives *as a set* in chaps. 3–37. We would certainly be remiss if we did not thank all the "little people" for making the book of Job possible.

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15. David Clines, "The Arguments of Job's Three Friends," in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* (JSOTSup 19; ed. David Clines, David Gunn, and Alan Hauser; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982) 209.

The Mysterious Disappearance of Zerubbabel

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One of the greatest historical mysteries in the Hebrew Bible is the disappearance of Zerubbabel. It is actually a mystery within a mystery. The first has to do with how and why the Signet of God disappeared. The second is equally profound: Why does the retrospective text yield no details?

Zerubbabel is well known to biblical scholars specializing in the Persian period yet of minor notice to today's average worshiper, be he Jewish or Christian. So clean is his disappearance that remarkably few modern adherents of Judaism and Christianity could articulate the major role he played in biblical history. Few people realize that (according to the prophet Haggai) Zerubbabel was God's messianic designate.

Haggai and the Postexilic Diarchy

According to the prophet Ezekiel, too much power vested in the monarchy brought about so many past ills that he could only envision the newly restored community led by a diarchy with the Davidide (a depoliticized נשיא rather than a מלך)[1] sharing power with the Zadokite priesthood.[2] Even the land was apportioned in such a way as to balance royal and priestly power (Ezek 45:1–5, 7; 48:9–14, 21–22).

Such a diarchical administration (yet only in the early postexilic period) is envisioned in the books of Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah. In particular we read of the shared rule of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua (Joshua), the son of Jozadak (Ezra 3:2, 8; 4:3; 5:2; Neh 12:1; Hag 1:1, 12, 14; 2:2, 4; Zech 3, 4; compare Sir 49:11). Yet immediately we are struck by the expression "in

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1. Ezek 34:24, 37:25 (yet cf. 37:24); see J. D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1976) 75–99.

2. Compare Jer 33:14–22 (especially vv. 17–18), which states that David will never lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel nor will the Levitical priests (הכהנים הלויים) ever lack a man to serve in Yahweh's presence. Contrast Ezek 44:15–27. Most scholars assign this passage from Jeremiah to the postexilic period. See, for example, W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989) 228–31.

the days of Zerubbabel" (Neh 12:47) that harks to a day when the royal half of the diarchy held more prestige.

Though short, the book of Haggai refers to the diarchy five times, always listing Zerubbabel's name prior to that of Joshua. In what builds to a crescendo, Haggai elevates Zerubbabel to messianic status.[3] He employs cosmic language in which Yahweh of Hosts, the divine warrior celebrated from of old, will again act to shake the heavens, earth, sea, and dry land (Hag 2:6). With apocalyptic fervor, all other nations will be shaken so that their treasures will pour into Jerusalem. The nations' gold and silver, Yahweh's possession not theirs, will be used to make Zerubbabel's rebuilt temple more glorious than Solomon's (Hag 2:7–9).

The crescendo is depicted in an oracle (Hag 2:20–23) dating to December 18, 520 B.C.E. Zerubbabel, here addressed as 'governor of Judah' (פחת יהודה), is given the following divine promise:

> I am about to shake the heavens and the earth,
> I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms;
> I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations,
> I will overthrow the chariots and their riders;
> horses and their riders shall fall,
> every one by the sword of his comrade.
> On that day, declares Yahweh of Hosts,
> I will take you, O Zerubbabel,
> son of Shealtiel, my servant,
> declares Yahweh,
> and I will make you like a signet ring (חותם);[4]

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3. It will become clear that I share this consensus view in contrast to the recent work of W. Rose, *Zemah and Zerubbabel: Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period* (JSOTSup 304; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000); idem, "Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. R. Albertz and B. Becking; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003) 168–85.

4. Rose ("Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period," 170–71) argues that this designation is "most crucial" for determining Zerubbabel's messianic status. For Rose, the word חותם designates not a signet ring (where the word טבעת is more appropriate) but "the seal itself, which is usually located either in a case as a part of a ring or on a cord." Therefore, the expression of God's making Zerubbabel "like a seal" implies only that "Yhwh has a special relationship with him . . . Yhwh personally guarantees his safety: he will protect him so that he will not suffer the same fate as other political leaders" (p. 173). He concludes, asserting "the absence of anything explicitly royal in this oracle" (ibid.). In the first instance, it is clear that חותם can indeed designate a signet ring and not just the seal itself. As most scholars recognize, Haggai is here consciously referencing (and reversing) Jer 22:24. There Yahweh declares that if King Coniah (= Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel's grandfather)

for I have chosen you,
declares Yahweh of hosts.

According to the Chronicler, Zerubbabel was of Davidic descent (1 Chr 3:17–19), although, in contrast to the lineage listed above, the Chronicler lists him as the son of Pedaiah, not Shealtiel. If Zerubbabel was indeed a Davidide,[5]

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were 'a signet ring *on his right hand*' (חותם על יד ימיני), he would tear it off. Compare the later tradition from Sir 49:11 that describes Zerubbabel (and Jeshua!) like 'a signet ring on the right hand' (ὡς σφραγὶς ἐπὶ δεξιᾶς χειρός). (For pictures of a signet ring with an attached engraved seal, see J. Elayi, "Name of Deuteronomy's Author Found on Seal Ring," *BAR* 13/5 [1987] 54–55.) Using a seal/signet ring conveys using the owner's authority and power. Compare 1 Kgs 21:8. Thus Zerubbabel, declares Haggai, is Yahweh's instrument, endowed with divine authority and power. As for Rose's second assertion, much more is going on in Hag 2:20–23 than just offering Zerubbabel personal protection. The context is one of cosmic (divine warrior) language. Yahweh, marching forth as a Storm-god (see 2:6 with even a mention of ים), will shake the heavens and the earth on his way to overthrow thrones and kingdoms. As a part of the process of bringing down kings, he will elevate Zerubbabel to a chosen position wearing his seal. How could this wording (destroying kingdoms and vesting a chosen leader bearing a divine insignia) be anything but royal? The use of divine-warrior imagery to legitimate kingship has a long pedigree in ancient Near Eastern royal ideology. One thinks of Adad, who let King Zimri-Lim use his divine weapons, the very weapons that Adad used to defeat Tiamat. (For a convenient text and translation, now see M. Nissinen et al., *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* [Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003] 21–22, with additional bibliography.) According to S. Japhet ("Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel," *ZAW* 94 [1982] 77–78), "this is a vivid and graphic description of the removal of political regimes and the putting to an end of the military might upon which they are built . . . Haggai sees Zerubbabel as a king, whose kingdom is made possible by a change in the political structure."

5. See B. E. Beyer ("Zerubbabel," *ABD* 6:1085), who comments on the two basic positions: "Some have suggested Shealtiel died childless and Pedaiah his brother fathered Zerubbabel, who then became the legal son of Shealtiel according to the principle of levirate marriage (Deut 25:5–10). Others have proposed that the text of Chronicles contains an error in transmission or refers to another individual by the same name." A third option (the Chronicler is revising history) is voiced by J. M. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) 456: "If Zerubbabel had been a member of the Davidic family line, it seems almost unbelievable that neither Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, nor Zechariah noted this. In all probability, therefore, Zerubbabel was a non-Davidic Jewish leader whom the Chronicler has made into a member of the Judean royal family in order to emphasize what he considered to be essential—the continuity of the leadership in preexilic and postexilic times." Accordingly, Miller and Hayes (p. 460) then suggest (based in part on Zech 12:10) that Zerubbabel was killed by "a pro-Davidic faction." A fourth option argued here is that Zerubbabel was indeed a Davidide. Yet due to the embarrassment of his ill fate (especially after such high messianic hopes were already penned), authors (or, more likely, ancient editors) may have consciously chosen not to underscore his Davidic lineage.

Haggai's use of the appellation "my servant" (Hag 2:23), a favorite designation used elsewhere for the house of David (e.g., Ezek 34:23–24, 37:24), would be telling.

Zechariah and the Postexilic Diarchy

Like Haggai, the book of Zechariah starts out envisioning a diarchy with shared leadership between Zerubbabel and Joshua, who is designated 'the great priest' (הכהן הגדול) in 3:1, 8.[6] The clearest expression is found in Zechariah 4, where the diarchy is depicted through the mention of two olive trees (שני הזיתים, 4:3, 11) with two branches (שתי שבלי הזיתים, 4:12). These, according to 4:14, are the "two anointed [rulers] (שני בני היצהר) who stand by the Lord of the whole earth." Of the two leaders, special emphasis is placed on Zerubbabel in Zechariah 4. It is Zerubbabel (not Joshua) who is singled out for laying the foundation of the temple (4:9). It is Zerubbabel's hands that will bring it to completion (4:9). He is the one who holds the plumb line that will occasion rejoicing among the people (4:10). It is Zerubbabel about whom the divine oracle announces:

> Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says Yahweh of Hosts. Whoever you are, O great mountain, before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; for he shall bring forward the top stone, amid shouts of "Grace, grace" to it! (Zech 4:6)

Here the book of Zechariah is similar to the book of Haggai in embracing a diarchy with more emphasis placed on the Davidide.

As for Joshua, a lengthy section is devoted to him in 3:1–5, yet its emphasis is on his cleansing. This "brand plucked from the fire" (3:2) (hardly an effervescent designation) is cleansed from sin and guilt (עון). His filthy garments are replaced by rich apparel. A conditional clause follows in 3:7, where he is exhorted that only if he is righteous will he then have charge over God's temple and courts.

What follows next is crucial. Joshua and his (priestly) colleagues are told that God is about to bring "his *servant*," the צמח (often translated 'branch' but more properly meaning 'sprout' or 'shoot'). Once again we have two terms for the Davidide.[7] In addition to the servant (עבדי) language (see above), the

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6. On this phrase, see C. L. Meyers and E. M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8* (AB 25B; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 180–81; and T. Pola, "Form and Meaning in Zechariah 3," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. R. Albertz and B. Becking; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003) 163.

7. It is curious to read the rationale underlying Pola's conclusion that עבדי צמח in Zech 3:8 "has nothing to do with Zerubbabel" ("Form and Meaning in Zechariah 3," 165). He bases this on the fact that Moses is called God's servant in Num 12:7–8. Yet Moses is never called a "shoot" or "branch." The royal (Davidic) association with the צמח language is clear.

imagery of the word צמח is certainly royal and filled with messianic overtones. For example, consider the following passages from Psalm 132 as well as from the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah.

> There (Zion) I will make a horn sprout (אצמיח) for David;
> I have prepared a lamp for My anointed one. (Ps 132:17)

> In that day the Branch of the Yahweh (צמח יהוה)[8] shall be beautiful and glorious. (Isa 4:2)

> There shall come forth a shoot (חטר) from the stump (גזע) of Jesse,
> A branch (נצר) shall grow out of his roots (שרשיו). (Isa 11:1; cf. 53:2)

> Days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch (צמח צדיק) and he shall reign as king and deal wisely. He shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. (Jer 23:5)

> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch (צמח צדקה) to spring forth for David. He shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. (Jer 33:15).

The Mysterious Disappearance of Zerubbabel

Zerubbabel disappears mysteriously from the pages of history. His fate is never articulated in any ancient text (biblical or extrabiblical).[9] If he was a minor figure, his absence could go unnoticed. However, his stature (at least for the authors of Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, and Nehemiah) was too prominent to let this mystery go unexplored. Three options are viable. One speculates:

1. Did Zerubbabel die a natural death? Our texts are silent.
2. Was he removed from office (and/or killed) by the Persians, who felt the need to stem a growing nationalism? Our texts are silent.
3. Was he removed from office (and/or killed) by a priestly party (the Zadokites?) in some type of struggle for power? Our texts are silent.

Ultimately, this is a mystery we cannot solve. Arguments from silence by definition are speculative. Yet perhaps the silence of one theory may be louder than the silence of another.

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8. The branch here may indicate the righteous remnant rather than the messianic Branch. See J. G. Baldwin, "*ṣemaḥ* as a Technical Term in the Prophets," *VT* 14 (1964) 93–97.

9. B. Beyer ("Zerubbabel," 1086) notes that the late-sixth-century C.E. *Seder ʿOlam Zuta* suggested that, "after completing the temple, Zerubbabel returned to Babylon to occupy a place of prominence."

The Second Mystery: Why the Silence?

The first mystery is perplexing enough. What happened to the historical Zerubbabel? How did he disappear or die? Yet the second mystery is more profound: why do our texts not tell us what happened to him?

Option 1

If Zerubbabel simply died, then why did not the author of the book of Zechariah simply say so? Royal figures commonly fall ill, are wounded in battle, and die. Even illustrious Davidides are not spared tragedy or misfortune, and such events are amply recorded. Consider the two Davidides about whom we read the "incomparability statements" that there never was a king like them (2 Kgs 18:5, 23:25),[10] yet this enthusiasm did not keep scribes from recording negative events.

Despite the overall positive assessment that our deuteronomistic editors have left us regarding Hezekiah, we read that his Judah was besieged, resulting in the humiliation of the king's handing over heavy tribute, including the gold stripped from the temple (2 Kgs 18:13–16). We read that Hezekiah was mocked and ridiculed by the Assyrians (2 Kgs 18:19–35, 2 Chr 32:9–19) and fellow tribes (2 Chr 30:10). At another time he falls gravely sick (2 Kgs 20:1–7, 2 Chr 32:24) and is even sanctioned for his pride (2 Chr 32:25). Hezekiah's death is recorded in 2 Kgs 20:21 and 2 Chr 32:33.

Certainly the abrupt killing of Josiah, at the height of his reform, must have come as an unexpected shock to his followers, especially the pro-Josianic editor Dtr1 (2 Kgs 23:29). Yet our ancient authors/editors did not shrink from relating the bitter death of the Davidide par excellence by Necho II at Megiddo.

In each of these cases, ancient scribes recorded the event. While writers and redactors presented the details in carefully crafted forms (and according to specific ideological criteria), no attempt at covering up the basic reality of royal misfortune and death can be detected. If Zerubbabel fell ill or was fatally wounded in battle, would it not have been likely to have the event recorded? If Zerubbabel were a nobody, then one could forgive his passing without notice.[11] The absence of any mention of what happened to such a prominent

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10. See G. N. Knoppers, "'There Was None like Him': Incomparability in the Book of Kings," *CBQ* 54 (1992) 411–31.

11. I am speaking, of course, of Zerubbabel's status among those (such as Haggai and Zechariah) who held him in the highest regard. It matters not that others (such as Olmstead) are of the opinion that Zerubbabel "was only a governor of third rank." See A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948) 139. On Zerubbabel's position of פחה and its relation to the Assyrian office of *bēl pīḥāti*, see K. G. Hoglund, *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria–Palestine and the Missions of Ezra and Nehemiah*

person, while it could be innocent, lends itself to suspicion. Zech 12:10, yet another bewildering text due to its lack of specificity, speaks of a prominent person who was killed. If this later remorse refers to Zerubbabel, then it would rule out the option that he died a natural death.

Option 2

It is certainly possible that the Persians removed Zerubbabel from office either by deporting him or murdering him. If Hag 2:7, 22–23 is any indication, there was a growing tide of nationalism that certainly could have piqued more than just mild interest within the Persian administration. R. Albertz suggests that Zerubbabel's sudden disappearance from the scene was "probably the result of Persian intervention."[12] Because Zerubbabel was "the main focus of national hopes, [he] was removed from the political stage."[13] As a result, "the high-flying nationalistic hopes had collapsed at a stroke."[14]

Some commentators go so far as to accuse Zerubbabel of rebellion. Olmstead, for example, speaks of "zealots" who "were grooming Zerubbabel for independent rule." Accordingly, writes Olmstead (relying on Tattenai's accusations in Ezra 5:11–16), "hints of the projected revolt came to royal attention."[15] Thus Zerubbabel, even if it was not of his own making, "might justifiably be accused of high treason against his royal benefactor."[16] W. F. Albright asserted this view as if there were a consensus among scholars: "As is well known, he [Zerubbabel] planned rebellion against Darius, and probably was punished with death."[17]

(Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992) 19, 79, 86. Compare also S. A. Kaufman, *The Akkadian Influences on Aramaic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) 82.

12. R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 2:454.

13. Idem, "The Thwarted Restoration," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era* (ed. R. Albertz and B. Becking; Assen: Van Gorcum, 2003) 8.

14. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion*, 2:454.

15. Other scholars, such as John Bright, suggest that certain nobles of Samaria whom Zerubbabel had previously rebuffed (Ezra 4:1–5) were responsible for bringing (misrepresenting?) such (seditious?) talk to the attention of the Persian authorities. See John Bright, *A History of Israel* (3rd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981) 371.

16. All three quotations come from A. T. Olmstead, *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948) 138–39 and are representative of many other scholars. A more recent example would be E. Stern (*Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, Volume 2: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods* [New York: Doubleday, 2001] 355), who suggests that "perhaps because Darius suspected that Zerubbabel was plotting an uprising, the governor—last heir of the Davidic line—disappeared suddenly, only a short time after construction work began."

17. W. F. Albright, "The Date and Personality of the Chronicler," *JBL* 40 (1921) 108.

A realist would recoil at the thought of such rebellious actions. As E. Meyers has wisely noted:

> such [monarchist] hopes were not grounded in any sense of realism, because the population of Yehud at this time was insignificant and would have made even the staunchest monarchist hesitate to advocate independence, let alone rebellion . . . it is highly unlikely that some sort of political rebellion took place under his [Zerubbabel's] leadership. The new colony of Yehud was tiny and not yet on its feet economically and would have stood no chance of challenging the might of Persia.[18]

And yet, when did zealots ever concern themselves with realistic assessments of their chances at success?

All these scenarios are speculative. We have no indication of hostile feelings on the part of the Persians toward Zerubbabel or vice versa. Every indication is that the opposite was the case (compare Ezra 5:1–17, 6:1–15).[19] As H. G. M. Williamson writes, "Darius confirmed Zerubbabel in his role as governor and temple builder despite the inquiry of Tattenai and his associates (Ezr. 6:6–12). Darius would not have granted this permission had there been any suspicion of seditious activity."[20]

If, for the sake of argument, one assumes that the Persians were in some way responsible for Zerubbabel's disappearance, then why do we have no mention of their culpability? Could it be that they were responsible, and yet authors like Haggai or Zechariah feared repercussions if they mentioned the fact or voiced objections? Such a scenario is a possible, yet not the most plausible, suggestion.

Option 3

The third option is the most attractive if we, to borrow a detective phrase, "follow the money." In other words: Who most benefited from Zerubbabel's disappearance? Or, more appropriately, who *thought* they would benefit from Zerubbabel's disappearance?[21]

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18. E. M. Meyers, "Messianism in First and Second Zechariah and the 'End' of Biblical Prophecy," in *"Go to the Land I Will Show You": Studies in Honor of Dwight W. Young* (ed. J. E. Coleson and V. H. Matthews; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 130–31.

19. Note also his title 'governor of Judah' (פחת יהודה) which, according to Beyer, ("Zerubbabel," 1085) "demonstrates the significance of Zerubbabel's role in the eyes of both the Persians and the biblical writers."

20. H. G. M. Williamson, "Zerubbabel," *ISBE* 4:1194. Note also later apocryphal traditions, such as 1 Esd 3:1–5:6, that celebrate how impressed Darius was with Zerubbabel's wisdom and therefore authorized and supported his work in Jerusalem. See Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.

21. Who historically held the most power in the post-Zerubbabel administration of Yehud is a different question. Scholars debate three viable options: (a) the priesthood together

From the books of Haggai and Zechariah it is clear that power (and all the economic and social advantages that power implies) was to be shared between Zerubbabel and the (Zadokite) priesthood with Joshua at its head. Of the two offices (from the evidence we have presented above), one would have to agree that at the outset the Davidic house was accorded the more power of the two.[22] In contrast, at the end of Zech 6:9–14 it is the priesthood (Joshua in particular) that ends up with not just 75 percent of the power but *all* of the power, both royal and priestly. A hierocracy rather than a diarchy is envisioned.[23]

Zechariah 6:9–14

Zerubbabel disappears in this pivotal passage, yet his absence is not without a trace. There are multiple clues left behind.

9 ויהי דבר־יהוה אלי לאמר:

10 לקוח מאת הגולה מחלדי ומאת טוביה ומאת ידעיה ובאת
אתה ביום ההוא ובאת בית יאשיה בן־צפניה אשר־באו מבבל:

11 ולקחת כסף־וזהב ועשית עטרות ושמת בראש יהושע
בן־יהוצדק הכהן הגדול:

12 ואמרת אליו לאמר כה אמר יהוה צבאות לאמר הנה־איש
צמח שמו ומתחתיו יצמח ובנה את־היכל יהוה:

13 והוא יבנה את־היכל יהוה והוא־ישא הוד וישב ומשל
על־כסאו והיה כהן על־כסאו ועצת שלום תהיה בין שניהם:

14 והעטרת תהיה לחלם ולטוביה ולידעיה ולחן בן־צפניה
לזכרון בהיכל יהוה:

Translations have been less than accurate. Note the NRSV's rendering, which is similar to many other translations:

> The word of the LORD came to me: Collect silver and gold from the exiles— from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah—who have arrived from Babylon; and go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make **a crown**, and set **it** on the head of the high priest Joshua son of Jehoza- dak; say to him: Thus says the LORD of hosts: Here is a man whose name is Branch: for he shall branch out in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he that shall build the temple of the LORD; he shall bear royal honor, and shall sit and rule on his throne. There shall be a priest by his throne, with peaceful understanding between the two of them. And **the crown** shall be in

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with the landed oligarchy; (b) Avigad's and Meyers' reconstruction (see n. 30 below), with Elnathan (another Jewish governor) replacing Zerubbabel and ruling together with (or at least with the support of) Shelomith, the daughter of Zerubbabel; and (c) E. Stern's view that Yehud was most likely controlled by Persian governors from their seat in Samaria.

22. This is in contrast to Ezekiel's plan of restoration which favored the priesthood.

23. What was envisioned and what actually resulted are distinct questions.

the care of Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah the son of Zephaniah, as a memorial in the temple of the Lord. (emphasis mine)

There are several clues that indicate that the text as we have it has been adjusted to fit a different reality from the one addressed by the original.

The most immediate clue (if one is reading the text in Hebrew) is the non-sensical notion in 6:11 of Joshua wearing (two) crowns (עטרות). While apologetic answers are readily at hand (e.g., the double crown of ancient Egypt worn by a single pharaoh uniting both lands), the solution is more likely to be found through textual criticism.

It is irresponsible of modern translations (such as the one above) not to give readers access to the primary information. Instead of translating the Hebrew (which reads the plural 'crowns'), an overwhelming number of commentators and translators render a singular noun ('a crown' עטרת), following the Greek and Syriac (for example, NRSV notes). (The word "it" is also supplied in 6:11 by translators, where no direct object appears in the Hebrew text.) Why any textual critic would prefer a clearly secondary reading (violating the basic rule of *lectio difficilior*) is perplexing. Surely the Greek and Syriac translators were faced with the difficulty of Joshua's wearing (two) crowns and read the singular to smooth out the problem.[24] The word עטרות must be the original reading, for it can account for the secondary production of עטרת. The reverse cannot be convincingly argued. (If original, why would a scribe change עטרת, a reading that makes good sense, into the difficult עטרות?) Thus, the original text referred to (two) crowns, seemingly one for each member of the diarchy, Zerubbabel and Joshua.[25]

The second clue is as apparent as the first. Zech 6:13 notes that there will be 'harmonious understanding between *the two of them*' (ועצת שלום תהיה בין שניהם). This comment only makes sense if both Zerubbabel and Joshua were once present in the text.

The third clue is to be found in 6:12, where the "Branch" language at first glance looks like it refers to Joshua, the immediate antecedent. Clearly, the הנה clause, as the predicator of existence,[26] has God saying to Joshua, "here is

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24. The singular verb תהיה in 6:14 would be a secondary reading as well, occasioned by the texts that read the singular עטרת. The MT's mixture of the plural עטרות and the singular תהיה represents a mixed tradition of original and variant readings.

25. See Meyers and Meyers (*Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 350), who argue that the reference to silver and gold also refers to two crowns, with Joshua wearing the more inferior silver crown and the Davidide the gold, "fully proper monarchic crown."

26. T. O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Scribner's, 1971) 168 (§135). Sometimes this usage of הנה is referred to as a "presentative particle." See, B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 675 (§40.2.1).

the Branch," namely, a person other than Joshua. This, together with the use of "branch" language elsewhere to denote the Davidides, again reveals (as did 3:8) that originally Zerubbabel, the Branch, was in this passage with the diarchy firmly envisioned. Zerubbabel was originally the figure in 6:13 bearing הוד 'royal honor' or 'majesty', sitting on a throne (כסא), and ruling (משל), all words that would not be fitting in regard to a priest. One might mistakenly associate the building of the temple mentioned in 6:13 as a priestly duty (and hence think of Joshua), were it not that the author just underscored Zerubbabel's major role in laying the foundation of the temple and bringing it to completion (4:9).

If a fourth clue were needed, it is available in the latter half of 6:13. At first glance, the text is again problematic, for it seems to state that there will be a priest (i.e., Joshua) seated *on* (Zerubbabel's) throne, which makes little sense when the Davidide is already sitting there. It makes more sense if the author intended על as a contingent locational preposition ('beside, by, next to') rather than as a simple locational preposition ('upon, on'). In other words, he was referring to (Joshua) the priest as sitting *next to* the royal throne. [27] Indeed, this is the understanding of the Greek translator, who rendered: 'and there will be a priest *at his* [i.e., Zerubbabel's] *right hand*'. Only if Zerubbabel were removed from the text would it take on the meaning of a priest sitting *on* the throne.

It seems apparent that the original text of Zech 6:9–14 was congruent with passages (such as Zech 3:8–9, 4:6–14) that underscored the diarchy with Zerubbabel as the primary party. What originally stood here was a text in which both Zerubbabel and Joshua were crowned.

A reconstructed text could be translated as follows:

> The word of the LORD came to me: Collect silver and gold from the exiles— from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah—who have arrived from Babylon; and go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. Take the silver and gold and make **(two) crowns** and set **(one)** on the head of the high priest Joshua son of Jehozadak; say to him: Thus says the LORD of hosts: Here is ⟨**Zerubbabel. Set (the other crown) on the head of**⟩ a man whose name is Branch: for he shall branch out in his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD. It is he that shall build the temple of the LORD; he shall bear royal honor, and shall sit upon his throne and rule. There shall be a priest **(Joshua) by** his throne, with peaceful understanding between the two of them. And **the (two) crowns** shall be in

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27. So too the NRSV. See Waltke and O'Connor, ibid., 216 (§11.2.13). Alternatively, as suggested to me personally by R. Westbrook, with an original diarchy in place, one could retain the translation "There shall be a priest Joshua on his throne." The reasoning would be that if there were originally two crowns (one for Zerubbabel and one for Joshua) then perhaps originally there were two thrones as well.

the care of Heldai, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Josiah the son of Zephaniah, as a memorial in the temple of the Lᴏʀᴅ. (emphasis mine)

Though I have noted the changes in translation in bold, please note that only the words marked by ⟨ ⟩ brackets in 6:12 would require a different Hebrew text. It would read:

הנה ⟨זְרֻבָּבֶל וְשַׂמְתָּ בְּרֹאשׁ⟩ אִישׁ צמח שמו ומתחתיו יצמח ובנה את־היכל יהוה:

This change could have resulted from haplography, with the similar endings ראש and איש occasioning the error. More likely, the change was a conscious decision resulting from historical reality.

Perhaps another hint is to be found in Zech 3:8–9:

Now listen, O Joshua, the high priest, you and your colleagues who sit before you! For they are an omen of things to come: For I am about to bring my servant, the Branch. For on the stone (האבן) that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone (אבן אחת) with seven facets, I am about to engrave its inscription (הנני מפתח פתחה), says Yahweh of Hosts.

The symbolism of the stone placed before Joshua has been debated, with scholars settling on two options. Either the stone refers to a monolith associated with rebuilding the temple (perhaps a type of cornerstone), or it refers to a gemstone associated with either priestly vestments or a royal diadem. If the stone represents Zerubbabel,[28] it signaled more power and influence being held in royal hands. If the stone (האבן) is associated with the rebuilding of the temple (cf. האבן הראשה 'the top stone' in 4:7), then once again we have a passage coinciding with Zech 4:9–10 that emphasizes Zerubbabel's prominence in the temple reconstruction.

Alternatively, if the stone is a gemstone, it too could have raised the ire of Joshua and his priesthood. The most obvious reference would be to the engraved stones associated with the priestly vestments in Exodus 28. In particular, Exod 28:36 (compare with 28:11) refers to a priestly golden plate being like 'engraved signets' (פתוחי חתם).

In light of the fact that Haggai called Zerubbabel God's Signet Ring (חותם 2:23), Zech 3:9 could imply that Zerubbabel is 'the single stone' (אבן אחת; cf. האבן האחת in Exod 28:10) with its 'engraving' (פתחה) (compare the engraved חותם in Exodus 28). In other words, once again we could have a reference to

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28. If the stone does not equal Zerubbabel, the phrase כי־הנני מביא את־עבדי צמח seems randomly placed here.

Zerubbabel's accumulating power (even priestly power) in a way that threatened Joshua and his priestly colleagues.[29]

Conclusion: A Cover-Up?

The disappearance of Zerubbabel must remain a mystery. Although we can conjecture, ultimately, we do not know his fate.[30] Of the speculations offered above, option 3 in my opinion remains the most likely.

As the above comments indicate, if we prefer option 3, we are implying a murderous plot by a power-hungry priesthood, followed by a cover-up. Whether this scenario is at all attractive will be conditioned by how one views Joshua's priesthood (positively or negatively) and the nature of the postexilic leadership. There are several passages that scholars have described as indictments

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29. Compare Meyers and Meyers' (*Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 421–422) comments about how, prior to the founding of the temple, "every one was set against the other" (Zech 8:10).

30. There are other factors to consider, yet it is questionable how much light they would shed on the mystery. For example, of what relevance is the continuation of Zerubbabel's family? According to 1 Chr 3:19–20, Zerubbabel had two sons (Meshullam and Hananiah) and one daughter (Shelomith), their sister, as well as five additional sons (Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, Jushab-hesed). Contrast Albright's ("The Date and Personality of the Chronicler," 108) unfounded assertion that "it is furthermore all but certain than [*sic*] the young Zerubbabel of Judah perished without children." What would (did?) Zerubbabel's children say about the cover-up if there was one? We know nothing of them or their service in the administration of Yehud from the biblical text. Yet in 1976, N. Avigad (*Bullae and Seals from a Post-exilic Judean Archive* [Qedem 4; Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1976] 11–13) published a seal that read "belonging to Shelomit, the ʾamah of Elnatan, the governor." The bulla of Elnatan is also attested in the same corpus. Avigad and many other scholars have equated this Shelomit with the one that 1 Chr 3:19 describes as the daughter of Zerubbabel. Some scholars see ʾamah as designating just a woman of high standing, while others prefer to see an additional marital connotation. Eric Meyers ("The Shelomith Seal and the Judean Restoration: Some Additional Considerations," *ErIsr* 18 [Avigad volume; 1985] 33*–38*), who builds on Avigad's work, argues that Elnatan, the secular leader who followed Zerubbabel as governor, married Zerubbabel's daughter, who could provide him with "a visible sign of the continuity of the Davidic family in the eyes of the public." He married her "to solidify his control over an office that was diminishing in fiscal power and which was being eclipsed by an ever-strengthening high priesthood." Such a scenario, while admittedly speculative, would fit well with our theory that the priesthood removed Zerubbabel from office. Other questions: Is it relevant that, despite his elevation in Zechariah 6, Joshua does not appear in any of the Chronicler's genealogies? Is it noteworthy that, though Zerubbabel is praised for his association with building the temple (e.g., Zech 4:9), he is not specifically mentioned (however, neither is Joshua) in the summary in Ezra 6:14–15?

of the postexilic religious establishment,[31] yet the majority of these texts are anonymous and their dating is debated. Certainty again escapes us, as the enigma remains.

Addendum: The Nature of the Text

While solving the mystery of Zerubbabel is impossible, perhaps we can gain a little more than just the pleasure of speculation. A closer examination of Zech 6:9–14 may be able to inform our understanding of the nature of transmission history. In the case of this passage, it seems that by the time the text was "doctored" it had already achieved a type of "sacral" status. In other words, the original text (that crowned both Zerubbabel and Joshua) was already (at a relatively early stage) "fixed"—but only to a degree.

It was "fixed" in the sense that the written oracle was known (and grouped together into a collection?) and could not simply be discarded when no longer apt. For that matter, the same could be said about the second chapter of the book of Haggai and the earlier portions of the book of Zechariah that celebrated Zerubbabel's future. After Zerubbabel suffered his ill fate, these texts could not simply be discarded. Even though discarding them would have kept these celebratory texts from turning into embarrassing reminders, such writings were kept. They had "sacral" status.

However, the text was not as "fixed" when it came to adjustment, or what M. Fishbane[32] refers to as "reinterpretations." Just as the book of Ezekiel could be updated to reflect Nebuchadnezzar's "revised" wages for his failed campaign against Tyre (compare Ezek 26:7–14 with 29:17–20), so too Zechariah 6 could be updated to reflect the new historical reality in which Zerubbabel was no longer on the scene. E. Meyers describes the way that our texts have been "purposely adjusted to suit larger theological aims and purposes." He is referring to what he calls the "muted messianism of First Zechariah" as well as the similar "quiescent, though triumphal, tone of the messianic oracle" of Zech 9:9–10.[33]

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31. See, for example, Malachi, Isaiah 56–66 and Zechariah 14.
32. M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985) 476–77.
33. Meyers, "Messianism in First and Second Zechariah and the 'End' of Biblical Prophecy," 134–35.

Textual Criticism of the Book of Deuteronomy and the Oxford Hebrew Bible Project

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The *Oxford Hebrew Bible* is a scholarly project that aims to produce a critical, eclectic edition of every book of the Hebrew Bible.[1] This has not, to my knowledge, been attempted before; the critical editions available of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) are diplomatic editions. That is, they rely on a single manuscript as their base text and only present variants from that base text in a critical apparatus. An eclectic text, on the other hand, attempts to reconstruct the best text possible from all known witnesses, along with a critical apparatus.[2] The parallel project to the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* in the field of Septuagint studies is the Göttingen Septuagint, which is producing a critical, eclectic edition for every book of the Greek Bible.

The impetus for the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* project was the publication of all the (so-called) biblical manuscripts from the Judean Desert finds,[3] which made available to the scholarly community the only large group of pre–70 C.E. biblical manuscripts. Thus an eclectic edition, as opposed to a diplomatic edition tied to a single manuscript, has become possible. Some may wish to argue that, even with the new texts from the Judean Desert finds, not enough manuscript evidence exists to produce a reliable eclectic edition. I will attempt to demonstrate in this article that, at least with regard to Deuteronomy, this is not the case.

Author's note: It gives me great pleasure to dedicate this article to my friend and colleague Michael Fox. Professor Fox and I have shared scholarly interests in several subjects over the years, especially the book of Esther; most recently I have had the privilege of collaborating with him in the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* project, the subject of this essay.

1. Professor Fox is the editor for Proverbs, while I am responsible for Deuteronomy. For a more complete introduction to the project, see Ronald Hendel, "The Oxford Hebrew Bible: Prologue to a New Critical Edition" (unpublished; see http://www.oup.com/us/oxfordhebrewbible).

2. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2nd rev. ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress / Assen: Van Gorcum, 2001) 20.

3. "So-called" because, at the time the scrolls were hidden in the caves (mid-first century C.E.) the Bible as a canonical collection did not exist, either in Judaism or in nascent Christianity.

When approaching the task of preparing a critical edition of the book of Deuteronomy, which I have been asked to do for the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* project, one must first question what evidence is available in the form of ancient witnesses to the text and immediately follow up with the corollary question of how to deploy that evidence (the question of method). In this essay I will concentrate on displaying the evidence available, while also touching on the question of deployment.

The discoveries in the Judean Desert have given us a wealth of manuscripts of Deuteronomy, all dating to before the second century C.E. The oldest of these manuscripts is 4QpaleoDeut[s], which dates to the second half of the third century B.C.E.[4] The total number of Hebrew Deuteronomy manuscripts from Qumran is 30 or 31, a number that includes the 4 excerpted texts identified by Julie Duncan and me.[5] There is also one Greek Deuteronomy manuscript from Qumran. In addition, there was one Deuteronomy manuscript recovered from Wadi Murabbaʿat, one from Naḥal Ḥever/Wadi Seiyal, and one from Massada. This gives a total of 34 or 35 manuscripts of Deuteronomy from the Judean Desert caves, certainly an impressive number and one surpassed only by the number of Psalms manuscripts. This is the good news for the textual critic.

The bad news, of course, is that all of these manuscripts are extremely fragmentary. The fragments remaining from these manuscripts contain an average of 2, 3, or 4 verses of text; some contain as little as a part of a single verse. Large sections of running text are quite rare. The largest preserved segment is found in 4QDeut[n], which contains Deut 5:1 through 6:1, for a total of 34 verses.[6] However, 4QDeut[n] is an excerpted text, and its text of the Decalogue has been expanded with material imported from the parallel text in Exodus. Therefore, it must be used very carefully for text-critical purposes. More typical is 4QDeut[a], which preserves a large fragment of text, from 23:26 through 24:8, for a total of 9 verses.[7] Long segments like these, however, are relatively rare.

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4. Patrick Skehan, Eugene Ulrich, and Judith Sanderson (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4, IV: Palaeo-Hebrew and Greek Biblical Manuscripts* (DJD 9; Oxford: Clarendon, 1992) 153.

5. On the varying counts, see Emanuel Tov et al. (eds.), *The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and an Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series* (DJD 39; Oxford: Clarendon, 2002) 169–70, 178, 180. Recently Émile Puech has identified some Cave 4 fragments as belonging to Deuteronomy ("Identification de Nouveaux Manuscrits Bibliques: *Deutéronome* et *Proverbes* dan les Débris de la Grotte 4," *RevQ* 20 [2001] 121–28).

6. Sidnie White Crawford, "4QDeut[n]," in *Qumran Cave 4, IX: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Kings* (ed. Eugene Ulrich et al.; DJD 14; Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 117–28.

7. Sidnie White Crawford, "4QDeut[a]," in ibid., 7–8.

Before we despair, let me hasten to add that the coverage provided by these 33 or 34 manuscripts is quite broad. In fact, every chapter of Deuteronomy is preserved, albeit fragmentarily, somewhere among these manuscripts:

Portions of chap. 1 are found in 1QDeut[a], 1QDeut[b], 2QDeut[a], 4QDeut[h], 4QpaleoDeut[r], and 11QDeut.[8]

Chapter 2 is represented by 4QDeut[d], 4QDeut[h], 4QDeut[o], and 11QDeut.

Chaper 3: 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[d], 4QDeut[e], and 4QDeut[m].

Chapter 4: 1QDeut[a], 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[d], 4QDeut[f], 4QDeut[h], 4QDeut[m], and 4QDeut[o].

Chapter 5: 4QDeut[j], 4QDeut[k1], 4QDeut[n], and 4QDeut[o].

Chapter 6: 4QDeut[j], 4QDeut[n], and 4QDeut[p].

Chapter 7: 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[e], 4QDeut[f], 4QDeut[m], and 5QDeut.

Chapter 8: 1QDeut[a], 1QDeut[b], 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[e], 4QDeut[f], 4QDeut[j], 4QDeut[n], and 5QDeut.

Chapter 9: 1QDeut[a], 1QDeut[b], 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[f], 4QDeut[g], 5QDeut, and XHev/SeDeut.

Chapter 10: 2QDeut[c], 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[i], 4QpaleoDeut[r], and MurDeut.

Chapter 11: 1QDeut[a], 1QDeut[b], 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[j], 4QDeut[k1], 4QpaleoDeut[r], 4QLXXDeut, and MurDeut.

Chapter 12: 1QDeut[a], 4QDeut[c], 4QpaleoDeut[r], and MurDeut.

Chapter 13: 4QDeut[c] and 4QpaleoDeut[r].

Chapter 14: 1QDeut[a], 4QpaleoDeut[r], and MurDeut.

Chapter 15: 1QDeut[b], 4QDeut[c], 4QpaleoDeut[r], and MurDeut.

Chapter 16: 1QDeut[a] and 4QDeut[c].

Chapter 17: 1QDeut[b], 2QDeut[b], 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[f], and 4QpaleoDeut[r].

Chapter 18: 4QDeut[c] and 4QDeut[f].

Chapter 19: 4QDeut[f], 4QDeut[h], 4QDeut[k2], and 4QpaleoDeut[r].

Chapter 20: 4QDeut[f], 4QDeut[i], and 4QDeut[k2].

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8. The critical editions of these texts and those in the list following are found in the following volumes: Dominique Barthélemy and J. T. Milik (eds.), *Qumran Cave 1* (DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon, 1955); Maurice Baillet, J. T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux (eds.), *Les 'Petites Grottes' de Qumran* (DJD 3; Oxford: Clarendon, 1962); Ulrich et al. (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4, IX*; Skehan, Ulrich, and Sanderson (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4, IV*; F. García Martínez, Eibert Tigchelaar, and Arie van der Woude (eds.), *Qumran Cave 11, II: 11Q2–18, 11Q20–31* (DJD 23; Oxford: Clarendon, 1998); P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and Roland de Vaux (eds.), *Les Grottes de Murabbaʿat* (DJD 2; Oxford: Clarendon, 1961); James Charlesworth et al. (eds.), *Miscellaneous Texts from the Judaean Desert* (DJD 38; Oxford: Clarendon, 2000); Shemaryahu Talmon (ed.), *Masada VI, Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965: Final Reports, Hebrew Fragments from Masada* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999). The sigla for the manuscripts are explained in those volumes.

Chapter 21: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^f, 4QDeut^i, 4QDeut^{k2}, and 4QpaleoDeut^r.

Chapter 22: 4QDeut^f, 4QDeut^i, and 4QpaleoDeut^r.

Chapter 23: 4QDeut^a, 4QDeut^f, 4QDeut^g, 4QDeut^i, 4QDeut^{k2}, and 4QpaleoDeut^r.

Chapter 24: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^a, 4QDeut^f, 4QDeut^g, 4QDeut^i, and 4QDeut^{k2}.

Chapter 25: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^f, 4QDeut^g, and 4QDeut^{k2}.

Chapter 26: 4QDeut^c, 4QDeut^f, 4QDeut^g, 4QDeut^{k2}, 4QpaleoDeut^s, and 6QpapDeut.

Chapter 27: 4QDeut^c, 4QDeut^f, and 4QDeut^{k2}.

Chapter 28: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^c, 4QDeut^g, 4QDeut^l, 4QDeut^o, and 4QpaleoDeut^r.

Chapter 29: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^b, 4QDeut^c, 4QDeut^l, and 4QDeut^o.

Chapter 30: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^b, and 4QDeut^{k3}.

Chapter 31: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^b, 4QDeut^c, 4QDeut^h, 4QDeut^l, and 4QpaleoDeut^r.

Chapter 32: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^b, 4QDeut^c, 4QDeut^j, 4QDeut^{k1}, 4QDeut^q, and 4QpaleoDeut^r.

Chapter 33: 1QDeut^b, 4QDeut^h, 4QDeut^l, 4QpaleoDeut^r, and MasDeut.

Chapter 34: 4QDeut^l, 4QpaleoDeut^r, and MasDeut.[9]

Let us pause to analyze this information. The fullest coverage is provided by 4QDeut^c, which contains 120 verses from 19 chapters.[10] There is no pattern of preservation among the various scrolls; some preserve fragments from widely scattered portions of Deuteronomy (e.g., 1QDeut^b preserves segments of chapters 1, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17, 21, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30 and 31), while others preserve fragments from a particular section of the book (e.g., 4QDeut^i contains verses from chaps. 20–24). The manuscripts that have been identified as excerpted manuscripts (4QDeut^j, 4QDeut^{k1}, 4QDeut^n, and 4QDeut^q)[11] contain portions of specific chapters (viz., 5, 6, 8, 11, and 32) that were of particular interest for study and meditation (they also consistently occur in the phylacteries and *mezuzot* from Qumran, as I shall discuss).

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9. For a complete list of the passages covered by these manuscripts, see Tov et al. (eds.), *Texts from the Judaean Desert*, 189–91.

10. Julie Duncan, "Deuteronomy, Book of," in *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. Lawrence Schiffman and James VanderKam; 2 vols.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 1:199.

11. Ibid., 1:201. "Excerpted" texts are manuscripts that, in antiquity, did not contain the entire text of, say, Deuteronomy, but only selected passages. These excerpted manuscripts were used for study or devotional purposes.

Because of the fragmentary nature of these manuscripts, it is difficult, if not impossible in most cases, to assign a textual affiliation to these manuscripts. Even for the 3 most extensively preserved manuscripts, 4QDeut[c], 4QDeut[f], and 4QpaleoDeut[r], the editors are rightly cautious. For 4QDeut[c], I stated, "it can be said with assurance that 4QDeut[c] is not a manuscript of the Samaritan tradition,"[12] while for 4QDeut[f] I remarked that "4QDeut[f] cannot be placed within any textual tradition."[13] The editors of 4QpaleoDeut[r], Sanderson and Ulrich, declare that "4QpaleoDeut[r] appears to have agreed with MG [the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint] in lacking the typological features of the Samaritan Deuteronomy. In minor variants the manuscript most often presents a unique reading, less often agrees with [Sam], and least often agrees with M."[14] There are only a few of the smaller manuscripts that one can argue, on the basis of the available evidence, are affiliated with one of the three major witnesses to Deuteronomy. I have argued that 4QDeut[g] is affiliated with the proto-Masoretic text;[15] Duncan has suggested that 4QDeut[b] and 4QDeut[q] are affiliated with the Septuagint text;[16] and Sanderson and Ulrich have stated that 4QLXXDeut is the Septuagintal Deuteronomy text.[17] What this means for textual criticism is that all the variants presented by these manuscripts must be carefully weighed, because it will be difficult to reconstruct stemmata in which to locate all the variants. However, these manuscripts do preserve variants that can lead to a reconstruction of the critical text.

The parade example of this is 4QDeut[j], which Duncan has identified as an excerpted text of Deuteronomy.[18] Column XII of 4QDeut[j] preserves Deut 32:7–8, and in line 14 contains the reading בני אלהים. This reading agrees with the Septuagint (G), and disagrees with the Masoretic Text (M), the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the daughter versions of M, which read בני ישראל. As early as 1971, Skehan argued that the Septuagint text reflected the original text of 32:8, and the M and Sam. reading was a "deliberate and tendentious modification."[19] 4QDeut[j] now supplies the original Hebrew from which the Greek was translated, and בני אלהים is bolstered as the preferred reading.

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12. Sidnie White Crawford, "4QDeut[c]," in *Qumran Cave 4, IX,* 17.

13. Idem, "4QDeut[f]," in *Qumran Cave 4, IX,* 46.

14. Skehan, Ulrich, and Sanderson (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4, IV,* 134.

15. Sidnie White Crawford, "4QDeut[g]," in *Qumran Cave 4, IX,* 56.

16. Duncan, "Deuteronomy, Book of," 199.

17. Skehan, Ulrich, and Sanderson (eds.), *Qumran Cave 4, IV,* 195.

18. Julie Duncan, "4QDeut[j]," in *Qumran Cave 4, IX,* 75–91.

19. Patrick Skehan, "The Structure of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy," in *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Bible Association, 1971) 68.

There is another set of manuscripts found in the Judean Desert that preserve portions of Deuteronomy but are not complete and/or separate manuscripts of Deuteronomy, which the text-critic must decide whether and how to utilize. First are 3 manuscripts from the group designated 4QReworked Pentateuch, 4Q364, 4Q365, and 4Q366.[20] These manuscripts were designated "reworked" by their editors because they display evidence of scribal intervention of a relatively extensive nature to their base text. In the case of 4Q364 and 365, that base text is the pre- or proto-Samaritan text (see below, pp. 323–24), demonstrated by the fact that we find the types of harmonizations or content-editing characteristic of that text group.[21] The Reworked Pentateuch texts move further along the spectrum of scribal intervention by inserting new elements into the base text.[22] Some scholars have maintained that these manuscripts, especially 4Q364 and 4Q365, are simply biblical manuscripts and should be counted as such.[23] Others have argued that these manuscripts go so far in their reworking that they have fallen out of the category "biblical."[24] I myself have argued elsewhere that these manuscripts, which display every evidence of scribal intervention and exegesis, occupy a gray area between the biblical and Rewritten Bible categories.[25] Whatever the final word is on these manuscripts, they do preserve some and even (in the case of 4Q364) relatively extensive portions of Deuteronomy.[26] I believe these manuscripts can be used for text-critical purposes with due caution, bearing in mind the possibility of scribal intervention in a previously existing text of Deuteronomy.

A more difficult case is the *Temple Scroll*, which also preserves large portions of the text of Deuteronomy in cols. 51–66, following the essential order of Deuteronomy 12–26.[27] However, the portions of Deuteronomy found in the

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20. Emanuel Tov and Sidnie White, "Reworked Pentateuch," in *Qumran Cave 4, VIII: Parabiblical Texts, Part I* (ed. H. Attridge et al.; DJD 13; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 187–352.

21. Emanuel Tov, "Rewritten Bible Compositions and Biblical Manuscripts, with Special Attention to the Samaritan Pentateuch," *DSD* 5 (1998) 339–41.

22. Ibid., 338–39; Sidnie White Crawford, "The 'Rewritten Bible' at Qumran: A Look at Three Texts," *ErIsr* 26 (Frank M. Cross volume; 1999) 2*.

23. Eugene Ulrich, "The Qumran Scrolls and the Biblical Text," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls Fifty Years after Their Discovery: Proceedings of the Jerusalem Congress, July 10–25, 1997* (ed. Lawrence Schiffman, Emanuel Tov, and James VanderKam; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000) 57.

24. E.g., Emanuel Tov, "Rewritten Bible Compositions," 339.

25. Crawford, "The 'Rewritten Bible' at Qumran," 3*–5*.

26. 4Q364: Deut 1:1–6, 17–33, 45–46; 2:8–14, 30–3:2, 18–23; 9:6–7, 12–18, 22–24, 27–29; 10:1–4, 6–7?, 10–13; 11:6–9, 23–24; 14:24–26. 4Q365: 2:24 or 36?; 19:20–20:1. 4Q366: 14:[13]–21; 16:13–14.

27. Yigael Yadin, *The Temple Scroll* (rev. Eng. ed.; 3 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983).

Temple Scroll have been extensively redacted by the redactor/composer of the *Temple Scroll* or his source, thus giving rise to the title "Deuteronomic Paraphrase."[28] For example, in keeping with the practice of the rest of the *Temple Scroll*, third-person divine speech is changed to the first person, although not consistently. Further, the *Temple Scroll* rearranges the biblical pericopes by topic, sometimes with nonbiblical additions.

A good example of the redactor's method comes from the beginning of the Deuteronomic Paraphrase, col. 51:11–18. In accordance with the scroll's practice, God is speaking in the first person.

11. שופטים ושוטרים תתן לכה בכול שעריכה ושפטו את העם

12. משפט צדק ולוא יכירו פנים במשפט ולוא יקחו שוחד ולוא

13. יטו משפט כי השוחד מטה משפט ומסלף דברי הצדק ומעור

14. עיני חכמים ועושה אשמה גדולה ומטמא הבית בעוון

15. החטאה צדק צדק תרדוף למען תחיה ובאתה וירשתה

16. את הארץ אשר אנוכי נותן לכמה לרשתה כול הימים והאיש

17. אשר יקח שוחד ויטה משפט צדק יומת ולוא תגורו ממנו

18. להמיתו

11. You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns, and they shall judge the people

12. with righteous judgment. And they shall not show partiality in justice, and they shall not take a bribe, and they shall not

13. pervert justice, for the bribe perverts justice, and subverts the cause of the righteous, and blinds

14. the eyes of the wise, and causes great guilt, and defiles the house with the sin of

15. iniquity. Justice, justice you shall pursue in order that you may live and come and inherit

16. the land which I am giving you as a possession forever. And the man

17. who takes a bribe and perverts righteous justice shall be put to death; you should not be afraid of him

18. to put him to death.[29]

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28. Wise suggests that the redactor/composer of the *Temple Scroll* did not use Deuteronomy directly but a source in which sections of Deuteronomy had already been selected and redacted. Michael Wise, *A Critical Study of the Temple Scroll from Qumran Cave 11* (SAOC 49; Chicago: The Oriental Institute, 1990) 35–36.

29. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, 2:227–29.

The segment begins with Deut 16:18, although the redactor omits the phrase
יהוה אלהיך נתן לך לשבטיך. It continues with 16:19 but weaves in part of Deut
1:17, converts the second-person verbs to third person, changes the order of
the clauses, and adds the phrase כי השוחד מטה משפט 'for the bribe perverts jus-
tice' to emphasize the point of the verse. Before the quotation from Deuter-
onomy continues in line 15 with צדק צדק (16:20), the redactor adds several
phrases punctuating the consequences of perverting justice, the climax of
which is defilement of the temple (הבית). Deut 16:20 is quoted nearly verba-
tim, although the text is expanded beyond the MT text, and the device of
first-person divine speech is maintained (line 16). Lines 17–18 draw on both
Deut 1:17 and 18:22 ("you shall not be afraid"); like the false prophet in
18:20, the unjust judge is to die, because his actions have polluted the land.[30]
Thus the point of this whole introductory section is the importance of צדק
'righteousness' in the land that is God's gift. This example, which shows the
strong hand of the redactor/composer at work, should suffice to demonstrate
that the Deuteronomy portions of the *Temple Scroll* can only be used for text-
critical purposes with extreme caution; they may only be helpful in supporting
a reading from another witness.

The final group of texts from the Judean Desert that preserves portions of
Deuteronomy is the phylacteries and the *mezuzot*.[31] Twenty-five phylacteries
and 8 *mezuzot* were recovered from the caves at Qumran, and 3 phylacteries
and one *mezuzah* were found in the other Judean Desert sites. These docu-
ments preserve only a limited repertoire of Deuteronomy passages: sections of
5:1–6:9 (the Decalogue and the *Shemaʕ*), 10:12–11:21, and 32 (the same
chapters preserved by the excerpted texts, which in some cases also preserve
chap. 8). Some of these phylacteries and *mezuzot* also preserve passages from
Exod 12:43–13:16. These texts exhibit signs that they have not been carefully
copied, and the passages they contain are often expanded; therefore they, too,
can only be used with extreme caution, mainly as support for the reading of a
more reliable witness.

The above list comprises almost all the evidence for the text criticism of
Deuteronomy available from the texts of the Judean Desert (barring quota-
tions; for example, Deuteronomy is cited eight times in the *Damascus Docu-*

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30. Ibid., 1:381; 2:227–29.

31. For the critical editions, see: Barthélemy and Milik, *Qumran Cave 1*; Roland de Vaux
and J. T. Milik, *Qumrân Grotte 4, II* (DJD 6; Oxford: Clarendon, 1977); Baillet, Milik, and
de Vaux, *Les 'Petites Grottes'*; Yigael Yadin, *Tefillin from Qumran* (Jerusalem: Israel Explo-
ration Society, 1969); Benoit, Milik, and de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabbaʕat*; Charlesworth
et al., *Miscellaneous Texts*; Yohanan Aharoni, "Expedition B," *IEJ* 11 (1961) 11–24.

ment[32]) but does not exhaust all the available evidence for Deuteronomy. We have not yet even discussed the three major witnesses to Deuteronomy: the Masoretic Text, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint.

The Masoretic Text is, of course, the canonical text in Judaism and readily available for study. The two oldest codices of the Masoretic Text are the tenth-century Aleppo Codex, published by Goshen-Gottstein in a facsimile edition, and the eleventh-century Leningrad Codex, published by Freedman, Beck, and Sanders in a facsimile edition, and also available in the Dotan edition.[33] The damaged Aleppo Codex preserves Deuteronomy only beginning with 28:17, while the Leningrad Codex preserves the entire book. Because both the codices are available in facsimile, they can be consulted directly; in addition, the current diplomatic critical editions of Deuteronomy are based on the Leningrad Codex: Biblia Hebraica in the Kittel and Stuttgart editions, as well as Biblia Hebraica Quinta, as it becomes available.

The daughter versions of the Masoretic Text will also be helpful, but not central, in determining patterns among the variants. These are, first, the Targums: *Targum Onqelos*, available in the Sperber edition; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, available in the Rieder edition; *Targum Neofiti I*; and the *Fragmentary Targums*, edited by Klein.[34] Second, we have the Syriac Peshiṭta, in the Leiden edition; and finally, the Vulgate, edited by Weber.[35]

The second complete ancient Hebrew witness to Deuteronomy is in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the canonical text of the Samaritan community. This text has a veneer of sectarian Samaritan editing, most notably making Mt. Gerizim the central place of worship and making a change to the past tense in the phrase "the place which the Lord will choose/has chosen (יבחר/בחר)."[36] Once this ideological veneer is removed, what remains is an ancient Hebrew

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32. Duncan, "Deuteronomy, Book of," 201.

33. M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, *The Aleppo Codex* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1987); David Noel Freedman et al. (eds.), *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (Leiden: Brill / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998); Aron Dotan, *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001).

34. Alexander Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic* (vol. 1; Leiden: Brill, 1959); D. Rieder, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch Copied from the London MS* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1974); Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Deuteronomy* (The Aramaic Bible 5A: Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1997); Michael Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch according to Their Extant Sources* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1980).

35. *Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy* (The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version, pt. 2, fasc. 1a; Leiden: Brill, 1972); Robert Weber, *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (vol. 1; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1969).

36. Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 94–95.

witness to the text of the Torah. This relatively recent insight is strengthened by the fact that, among the Qumran texts, manuscripts very close to the Samaritan Pentateuch were found, minus its ideological changes, a group now referred to as the pre- or proto-Samaritan texts. Although this group has been characterized as "harmonistic" by Eshel,[37] most of the harmonizing changes involve importing parallel sections of Deuteronomy into Exodus and Numbers, not the other way around.[38] Therefore, the pre-Samaritan text of Deuteronomy cannot be characterized as another "edition" of the book, as is the case with Exodus and Numbers,[39] but simply stands as another witness to the ancient text. The Samaritan Pentateuch is available in the editions of von Gall, Ṣadaqa, and Tal.[40]

The third major witness to the ancient text of Deuteronomy is the Septuagint (LXX), the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Torah is the oldest part of the Septuagint, its translation probably taking place in the mid-third century B.C.E. For the Greek Deuteronomy we have three very ancient exemplars: Papyrus Rylands 458, dating to the second century B.C.E., which includes fragments of chaps. 23–28; 4QLXXDeut, dating to the early or mid-second century B.C.E.,[41] which contains five fragments, one of which can be identified confidently as Deut 11:4; and Papyrus Fouad 266, dating to the first century B.C.E., which contains Deut 31:36–32:7.

Of course, these three manuscripts do not exhaust the evidence; there is a plethora of manuscript evidence for the Septuagint Deuteronomy, collated and divided into families by John Wevers in his critical eclectic edition for the Göttingen Septuagint project.[42] This edition is the first place the text critic will turn for the Greek witness. However, it is not the only place she should turn, for Wevers has a preference for the Masoretic Text that underlies all his text-critical decisions. As he himself states, "These Notes are based on the presupposition that the parent text being translated was in the main much like the

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37. Esther Eshel, "4QDeut^n: A Text That Has Undergone Harmonistic Editing," *HUCA* 62 (1991) 120–21.

38. Tov, "Rewritten Bible," 343–51.

39. Eugene Ulrich, "Multiple Literary Editions: Reflections toward a Theory of the History of the Biblical Text," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill / Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) 100.

40. August von Gall, *Der Hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner* (Giessen: Alfred Töppelmann, 1918); A. Ṣadaqa and R. Ṣadaqa, *Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuch* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1962) [Heb.]; A. Tal, *Samaritan Pentateuch* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1994) [Heb.].

41. Skehan, Ulrich, and Sanderson, *Qumran Cave 4, IV*, 195.

42. John Wevers, *Deuteronomium* (Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum, III, 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 14–15.

consonantal text of MT; . . . it seems only right to begin with the consonantal text of MT, and to accept change only after all other avenues of understanding have been explored."[43] It is very helpful of Wevers to share his presupposition up front, because it aids the reader in understanding the basis for his text-critical decisions. I, however, do not yet share his presupposition; I prefer to keep an open mind regarding what the parent text of the Septuagint Deuteronomy actually looked like, and so I will use the Göttingen edition with care and consult the apparatuses closely. In addition, I will take advantage of the different approach of the Cambridge Septuagint, edited by Brooke and Mac-Lean, which is a diplomatic edition based on Codex Vaticanus.[44]

The daughter translations of G, like the daughter translations of M, will be helpful in offering support for the place of a reading in the tradition. The daughter versions of the LXX are the Arabic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Coptic, Vetus Latina, Palestinian-Syriac, and the Syrohexaplar. Most of these translations are not available in critical editions, an exception being Melvin Peters's edition of the Coptic text.[45]

The remainder of the textual evidence for Deuteronomy includes quotations in New Testament and patristic sources, rabbinic quotations, and medieval manuscripts, both Christian and Jewish. These I will not collate and will use very sparingly; they are further removed from the ancient text and less helpful for text-critical purposes.

I have laid out all this evidence in order to demonstrate why I believe it is possible to produce a critical, eclectic text of Deuteronomy according to the canons of textual criticism. Fortunately for the text critic, the text of Deuteronomy is well preserved, but with a tendency toward expansion, a phenomenon explainable by the particular rhetorical style of the book.[46] Therefore, it should be possible to recognize cases of expansion as well as other types of common scribal errors and eliminate them from the text. Other variants, of course, will be harder to adjudicate, and in those cases the *Oxford Hebrew Bible* project has determined to use the Leningrad Codex as its copy text, while presenting the reader with the relevant data.

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43. Idem, *LXX: Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) xi–xii.

44. A. E. Brooke and N. McLean (eds.), *Numbers and Deuteronomy* (The Old Testament in Greek, I, III; London: Cambridge University Press, 1911).

45. Melvin Peters, *A Critical Edition of the Coptic (Bohairic) Pentateuch, Volume 5: Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 15; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983).

46. According to Duncan, the tradition that has escaped this expansionist tendency most consistently is the proto-Masoretic family, followed by the pre-Samaritan group (Duncan, "Deuteronomy, Book of," 199).

While I am under no illusion that my work will miraculously reveal the *Ur-*text of Deuteronomy, I do believe that the large amount of evidence means that, with hard work, a critical text will produce a better text. This task may be difficult; however, to quote Anneli Aejmelaeus on the subject of textual criticism, "what is difficult is perhaps still not entirely impossible and ought not to be given up."[47]

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47. Anneli Aejmelaeus, "What Can We Know about the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint?" in *On the Trail of Septuagint Translators: Collected Essays* (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1998) 115.

What's in a Name?
Contemporization and Toponyms in LXX-Isaiah

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Ever since Seelgimann divined within LXX-Isa allusions to the translator's historical and cultural setting, scholars have sought intimations of that milieu within the translation.[1] The rendering of toponyms has provided one quarry for investigations of this sort.

Seeligmann himself considered LXX-Isa's toponyms (including allied ethnic names) "eminently suited to giving one an impression of the translator's mental and spiritual horizons," inasmuch as they reveal the translator's "conscious or unconscious tendency to rediscover, in the text he was translating, the world of his own period."[2] For example, because the translator "replaces, on more than one occasion, the Assyrian king of the Hebrew text by the action of Antiochus Epiphanes, we may be justified in regarding the Greek translation of 10:24 (μὴ φοβοῦ ὁ λαός μου οἱ κατοικοῦντες ἐν Σιων ἀπὸ Ασσυρίων . . . πληγὴν γὰρ ἐγὼ ἐπάγω ἐπὶ σὲ τοῦ ἰδεῖν ὁδὸν Αἰγύπτου) as echo of the idea of a Jewish emigration from Palestine to Egypt to escape the religious persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes."[3] In this case, Ασσυρίων does not refer to the ancient Mesopotamian kingdom or its denizens but serves as a cipher for the Seleucids.

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1. I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (Leuven: Brill, 1948). In addition to Seeligmann, see J. C. M. das Neves, *A teologia da tradução Grega dos Setenta no livro de Isaías* (Lisbon: Universidade Católica Portuguesa, 1973); Jean Koenig, *L' Herméneutique analogique du Judaïsme antique* (VTSup 33; Leiden: Brill, 1982); Arie van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches* (OBO 35; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1981); Ronald Troxel, "Economic Plunder as a Leitmotif in LXX-Isaiah," *Bib* 83 (2002) 375–91.

2. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 76, 79. Cf. Henry Redpath, "The Geography of the Septuagint," *AJT* 7 (1903) 289–307, 291.

3. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 85. Cf. Koenig, *L' Herméneutique*, 45.

Van der Kooij endorses this inference and attempts to give it firmer grounding by pointing out that, in 10:5, אשור is translated as referring to a people (Ασσυρίων), not a country, and positing that the translator equated the Assyrian king addressed in the succeeding verses with a Seleucid ruler.[4] While van der Kooij disputes Seeligmann's assertion that 10:24 refers to a persecution under Antiochus IV, considering it more likely that "viel eher verband er damit das Unheil, das das Gottesvolk in Jerusalem vor allem 167 v.Chr. getroffen hat, und dieses Unheil scheint eine Flucht nach Ägypten ausgelöst zu haben,"[5] he still finds in it a reflection of an event affecting Jerusalem during the Hellenistic crisis of the early second century B.C.E.

Koenig similarly concludes that LXX-Isa applied Ασσύριοι "aux Syriens de l'époque séleucide" but expands the list of place-names that the translator considered surrogates for cities in his day to include the translation of תרשיש by Καρχηδόνος in 23:1, 6, 10, and 14, which Koenig labels "un indice oraculaire très visible."[6] Indeed, for Koenig, "l'interprétation oraculaire de noms géographiques, ethniques ou personnels établit sans conteste que le livre d'Is a été utilisé par G à des fins oraculaires contemporaines."[7]

The question is whether this perception is right; did the translator of LXX-Isaiah treat the toponyms of his Vorlage as references to political or ethnic entities in his own day? As a first step toward an answer, we must survey the translator's methods in rendering the 108 toponyms of Isaiah, which appear a total of 558 times. In only 4 instances would I conclude that the translator's Vorlage contained a variant vis-à-vis the MT, beyond merely orthographic variants. In 8:14 Ἰακώβ attests יעקב, in place of MT's ישראל; in 11:16 ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ surely reflects במצרים in contrast to MT's מאשור; and in 66:19 Φουδ attests פוד in the Vorlage, opposite MT's פול. More significantly, in 30:4 the LXX's μάτην suggests that its Vorlage read חנם rather than MT's חנס. This last case reduces the number of toponyms available to the translator by one, to 557.

Twenty-four of these occurrences lack a clear Greek equivalent, and (because my interest is in how the translator *represented* toponyms) it is unimportant whether each is due to an absence from the Vorlage or to omission by the translator. For this reason, I will deduct these 24 from the total, leaving 533 instances in which the translator represents a Hebrew place-name.

However, there are also instances when the translator seems to have found a toponym in his Vorlage that is not attested in the MT. The first is in 1:21,

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4. Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 35–36.

5. Ibid., 39.

6. Koenig, *L'Herméneutique*, 45.

7. Ibid., 45.

where corresponding to איכה היתה לזונה קריה נאמנה, the LXX reads πῶς ἐγέ-
νετο πόρνη πόλις πιστὴ Σιων. It appears that a scribe had already inserted ציון
as a gloss, because there is no reason to attribute it to the translator.

Two other instances are similar and adjacent to each other. In 22:1, parallel
to MT's משא גיא חזיון 'an oracle of the valley of vision', the LXX reads τό ῥῆμα
τῆς φάραγγος Σιων 'the word of the valley of Zion'. Similarly, in v. 5 the LXX
reads ἐν φάραγγι Σιων parallel to the MT's בגיא חזיון. Positing that the trans-
lator merely took advantage of graphic ambiguities simply is a cover for a prej-
udice against finding variants. The LXX's Vorlage read הציון in both places.

Two cases in which graphic confusion *was* a factor are 25:5 and 32:2, where
both times the LXX reads ἐν Σιων for the MT's בציון 'in the desert'. Even
then one cannot speak of the translator's "taking advantage" of the orthogra-
phy, inasmuch as these are the only occurrences of צָיוֹן in the Tanach, so that
he can be forgiven for reading the more common צִיוֹן, a reading likely tradi-
tional in his community.

In all 5 of these cases, then, the translator can reasonably be said to have
found in his Vorlage toponyms not attested in the MT. Accordingly, we must
increase the number of toponyms available to him to 538. Of this number, 22
(or 4.1%) are translated with common nouns. For example, in 15:8 we find
באר אילים rendered with τοῦ φρέαρτος τοῦ Αιλιμ '*well* of Elim', consistent with
the LXX's pattern of translating באר in compound names.[8]

On the other hand, the preponderance of toponyms in Isaiah—430 (or
79.9%)—are transliterated,[9] in accord with Seeligmann's observation that the
translator "shows a preference . . . for transcriptions from Hebrew names of
towns and countries above the Hellenistic nomenclature."[10] Moreover, the
transliterations used are typically standard throughout the LXX. Thus, ציון is
always rendered by Σιων and ירושלם by Ιερουσαλημ,[11] while דמשק is invari-
ably rendered by Δαμασκός, לבנון by Λίβανος, and בבל by Βαβυλών or Βαβυ-
λωνία. Not only are these place-names common in the LXX, but they are also
used by such Hellenistic authors as Strabo and Didorus Siculus.[12]

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8. Similarly, in 15:1 קיר מואב is translated τὸ τεῖχος τῆς Μωαβίτιδος, and in 16:11 לקיר
חרש is represented by ὡσεὶ τεῖχος ὃ ἐνεκαίνισας (the *reš* of חרש read as *dalet*).

9. "Transliteration" refers to Greek words whose characters correspond recognizably
to the Hebrew characters, whether the word has been adapted to Greek declension (e.g.,
Ἀσσύριος) or has been preserved indeclinable (e.g., Ασσουρ [Isa 31:8]). I include in the list
of place-names words that, in Isaiah's vocabulary, often designate the country's people,
such as ישראל and יהודה.

10. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 77.

11. The word ירושלם is not represented in 4:4 and 36:7 (part of a large minus).

12. For details of usage, see BDAG, s.v.

Equally noteworthy are the hapax legomena that the translator recognized as place-names and transliterated. For example, גלים is found in Isaiah only in 10:29, where it is transliterated Γαλλιμ.[13] The word מדמנה appears in the Bible only in Isa 10:31, where the LXX gives Μαδεβηνα (apparently reading מדבנה). The word חורנים is rendered Αρωνιιμ in 15:5 but Ωρωναιμ in Jer 31[48]:3, 5, and 34, its only other occurrences in the Bible. LXX-Isaiah represents לוחית with Λουιθ in 15:5, whereas Jer 31[48]:5 gives Αλαωθ, parallel to MT's הלחות (*Qere* הלוחית).

On the other hand, of the 538 Hebrew toponyms represented, for only 86 (or 16%) does the translator use Hellenistic equivalents. Setting aside the ubiquitous rendering of מצרים by Αἴγυπτος (34×) or Αἰγύπτιος (16×),[14] the 36 remaining instances are distributed among 16 words. For example, the 8 appearances of כוש are rendered by either Αἰθιοπία (3×) or Αἰθίοψ (5×), equivalents found throughout the LXX. צר appears 6 times, always renderd Τύρος, its most common equivalent in the LXX.[15] אדום is 3 times rendered Ἰδουμαία, a common LXX equivalent (but Εδωμ in 63:1, which is also found elsewhere in the LXX). In each of its 3 appearances, צען is rendered by Τάνις, a stock LXX equivalent. Both occurrences of אשדוד are rendered Ἄζωτος, a common LXX equivalent. As for words appearing just once, נף is rendered by Μεμφις (19:13), as it is throughout the LXX, while יון is rendered Ἑλλάς (66:19), an equivalent appearing elsewhere in the LXX.

In Isa 27:12 נחל מצרים is translated Ῥινοκορούρων to mark the southern boundary of the territory that the Kyrios will one day enclose within walls. Even though this translation stands within a utopian scene fashioned by the translator, the specification of the boundary by a Hellenistic toponym is no more remarkable than the previous examples.[16] As Ottley observes, "the Alexandrian translator *naturally* gives the Greek name for the 'brook of Egypt.'"[17]

This pattern of using standard Hellenistic equivalents makes the occasional

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13. In the word's only other appearance (1 Sam 25:44), the LXX reads τῷ ἐκ Ρομμα for the MT's אשר מגלים.

14. The only variation from this is Ῥινοκορούρων ‖ נחל מצרים in 27:12, on which see below (p. **000**).

15. While a linguistic relationship between צר and Τύρος is apparent, the transliteration is not as close to the Hebrew as the transliteration Σορ (cf. the characteristic Σιδων for צידון), which appears 9 times in Ezekiel.

16. Joseph Ziegler reports that "Rinokorura ist die Grenzstadt zwischen Ägypten und die Syrien" (Joseph Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* [Münster: Aschendorff, 1934] 203).

17. Richard R. Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah according to the Septuagint* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906) 2:236, italics mine. Cf. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 80.

deviation noteworthy. Most remarkable are the equivalents found in 9:11[10]–12[11]:

ⁱⱰוישגב יהוה את צרי	¹¹καὶ ῥάξει ὁ θεὸς τοὺς επανιστανομένους
רצין עליו	ἐπ᾽ ὅρος Σιων ἐπ αὐτοὺς
ואת איביו יסכסך	καὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτῶν διασκεδάσει
ⁱⱰⱰארם מקדם	¹²Συρίαν ἀφ᾽ ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν
ופלשתים מאחור	καὶ τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἀφ᾽ ἡλίου δυσμῶν
ויאכלו את ישראל בכל פה	τοὺς κατεσθίοντας τὸν Ισραηλ ὅλῳ τῷ στόματι

Immediately arresting is τοὺς ἐπανιστανομένους ἐπ᾽ ὅρος Σιων for MT's את צרי רצין, because elsewhere רצין is transliterated Ῥαασσων, both inside Isaiah (7:1, 8:6) and out (e.g., 4 Kgdms 15:37; 16:5, 6, 9).[18] Although Seeligmann posited that the translator merely took advantage of the orthography to find a reference to Zion,[19] the appearance of ציון as a gloss in the Vorlage in 1:21 and of הציון in place of חזיון in 22:1 and 5 more likely implies that the LXX's Vorlage read את צרי הר ציון, as Duhm posited.[20]

More striking is τοὺς Ἕλληνας ‖ פלשתים, the singular example of this equivalence in the Bible and the only place that Ἕλλην appears in LXX-Isa, which otherwise translates פלשתים as ἀλλόφυλοι (2:6, 11:14), its most common equivalent throughout the LXX and the one it uses for פלשת in 14:29 and 31.[21] Ἕλλην appears 5 other times in the LXX, each time corresponding to יון in the MT (Joel 4:6; Zech 9:13; Dan 8:21; 10:20; 11:2), a Hebrew toponym that appears in Isa 66:19, where it is translated Ἑλλάς. While a graphically anomalous substitution of ויון for ופלשתים in the Vorlage cannot be ruled out, we should at least note that the Syr., Tg., and Vg. attest ופלשתים, and the initial ופל and part of the ש are visible in 1QIsaᵃ. In this light, and given the fact that this is a singular equivalence within the book (similar to Ῥινοκορούρων in

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18. Note well: רצין is translated ἰάσομαι in Isa 7:4, on which see my "Isaiah 7,14–16 through the Eyes of the Septuagint," *ETL* 79 (2003) 1–22.

19. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 81. The Syriac, Vg., and 1QIsaᵃ = MT; Tg.: רצין סנאיה דישראל.

20. Cited by George Buchanan Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah I–XXVII* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1912) 185.

21. Redpath infers that "the translators of these books had some notion that the Philistines were not of the same blood, i.e., Semite, as the other inhabitants of Canaan, but of an origin akin to the Hellenic race" (Redpath, "The Geography of the Septuagint," 295). He adds that the use of ἀλλοφυλεῖν and ἀλλοφυλισμός "in 4 and 2 Maccabees respectively, also points toward the Greek world, for they are used of the Hellenizing party" (p. 295 n. 16).

27:12), it is likely that the translator interpreted פלשתים with an eye to the Hellenized coastal cities, which lay ἀφ' ἡλίου δυσμῶν (מאחור).[22]

The surmise that the translator equated the פלשתים with the Hellenistic coastal cities of his day finds support from another toponym in this passage, Συρίαν. At first blush this rendering of ארם seems unremarkable,[23] because it is a stock equivalence used throughout the LXX (134×).[24] However, 9:12 is the only place where Συρία is used in the LXX-Isa, although we find Σύρος for ארם in 17:3.[25] On the other hand, ארם is transliterated Αραμ in 7:1, 2, 5, and 8,[26] an equivalence found elsewhere in the LXX only in Gen 10:22, 23; 36:28 (MT ארן), and 1 Chr 2:10, 23; and 7:34. Although in each of these cases Αραμ refers to a person who became the progenitor of a nation,[27] in Isaiah 7 Αραμ designates the nation, as is evident from the rendering of מלך ארם by βασιλεὺς Ἀραμ. Wevers's speculation that "Αραμ was used to parallel the proper names Ισραήλ and Ιουδά of v. 1 and Εφράιμ of vv. 2, 8 and 9" does not amswer the question why the more frequently occurring proper name Συρία was not used.[28]

Notably, the translator renders another toponym distinctively in chap. 7. Rather than translating שמרון by Σαμαρεία, as elsewhere in LXX-Isa (8:4; 9:8; 10:9, 10, 11; 36:19) and throughout the LXX, he chose Σομορων, found elsewhere only in 2 Chr 13:4, Ezra 4:10, and Neh 3:34. Taken alongside Αραμ, this suggests that the translator archaized the names to lend an air of antiquity to a narrative expressly set in the time of Isaiah.

In contrast to this, and alongside τοὺς Ἕλληνας, the translator's use of Συρίαν in 9:12 evidently had in view the Syrians of his day, the Seleucids.[29] However, this example proves the rule: the translator did not, by-and-large, treat Isaianic toponyms as surrogates waiting to be unmasked; but when he regarded a place-name as relevant to events in his day, he was not shy about sub-

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22. As Seeligmann summarizes, in these verses "we are directly and unmistakably transported into the historical atmosphere of Palestine in Hellenistic times" (Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 81).

23. The Syriac reads ܐܕܘܡ for ארם, a common rendering in Syr. (Michael Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999] 49).

24. For an overview of the LXX's translation of ארם, see John Wevers, "Aram and Aramaean in the Septuagint," in *The World of the Aramaeans I* (ed. P. M. Michèle Daviau, John Wevers, and Michael Weigl; JSOTSup 324; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) 237–51.

25. Not surprisingly, Σύρος translates ארמי 8×, although 15× it corresponds to ארם.

26. The LXX lacks a clear equivalent for רצין וארם ובן רמליהו in v. 4.

27. See the conclusion drawn by Wevers, "Aram and Aramaean," 250.

28. Ibid., 245.

29. So also Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 81.

stituting a Hellenistic toponym, even if it was at variance with the Hebrew toponym. As a result, there is no prima facie case for taking a commonly occurring equivalent as a cipher for a political entity in the translator's day.

This conclusion applies to two instances noted in the survey of scholars' discussions of place-names above. While van der Kooij finds significance in the fact that the LXX translated אשור in 10:5 not as the name of a country but as the name of a people, he notes that this equivalence is typical for LXX-Isa (42×).[30] Ασσύριοι is also the most common equivalent for אשור throughout the LXX (138×). This undercuts the inference that Ασσύριοι is itself noteworthy. Although we will wait until we explore 10:5–14 to see whether the context signals that the translator perceived a Seleucid ruler behind the Assyrian king, we see here that one cannot base this argument on his use of Ασσυρίοις. Equally, in 10:24 Ασσυρίων, by itself, cannot be used to assert that the translator had in mind Seleucid action against Judea, as Seeligmann proposed.

Likewise, the translation of תרשיש as Καρχηδών in 23:1, 6, 10, and 14 is not proof that the translator engaged in mantic interpretation. Indeed, the substitution of a Hellenistic name for a Hebrew one may simply have been to identify an ancient location with a contemporary one, even as Gen 23:2 equates קרית ארבע with חברון. In fact, Καρχηδών coexists in the book with the transliteration Θαρσις (60:9, 66:19) and the translation of כל אניות תרשיש by πᾶν πλοῖον θαλάσσης in 2:16. Most likely, then, in choosing Καρχηδών the translator attempted to identify תרשיש in chap. 23 with a city recognizable to his readers, just as he used Ῥινοκορούρων for נחל מצרים in 27:12. There is no indication that Καρχηδών was chosen due to contemporaneous political circumstances.[31]

In sum, the translator's choice of Greek equivalents for Hebrew toponyms is, in general, too unremarkable to assume that he characteristically perceived Hebrew names as prefiguring political entities of his day. On the few occasions when he did so, he marked the equation clearly.

A set of connected passages in Isaiah 9–11 provides a case study to test this conclusion. The central passage is 10:5–14, which van der Kooij judges to reflect activities of the house of Seleucus, thereby establishing "the king of the Assyrians" as a cipher for a Seleucid ruler.[32] Among the more opaque equivalents in this passage is the translation of חמת as Ἀραβία (10:9) rather than

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30. Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 35–36.

31. Van der Kooij draws attention to *Targum Jonathan*'s equation of תרשיש with Africa in 1 Kgs 10:22, 22:49; Jer 10:9 (Arie van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah 23 as Version and Vision* [Leiden: Brill, 1998] 49).

32. Idem, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 36. For a recent affirmation of this view, see idem, "The Cities of Isaiah 24–27 according to the Vulgate, Targum and Septuagint," in *Studies in Isaiah 24–27* (*OTS*; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 183–98, 196.

Αιμαθ (as in 36:19, 37:13).[33] Although the LXX's Vorlage possibly contained a variant, the fact that the same equivalence appears again in 11:11 (καὶ ἐξ Ἀραβίας ‖ ומחמת) suggests that the variation was due to the translator.

Buttressing this inference is the observation that, in both of these passages, this equivalent is found among similarly striking equivalents for place-names. Thus we find the rendering of כרכמיש as τὴν χώραν τὴν ἐπάνω βαβυλῶνος in 10:9 (Χαρχαμις in Jer 46:2) as part of the Assyrian king's claim:

הלא ככרכמיש	οὐκ ἔλαβον τὴν χώραν τὴν ἐπάνω βαβυλῶνος
כלנו	καὶ Χαλαννη οὗ ὁ πύργος ᾠκοδομήθη
אם לא כארפד חמת	καὶ ἔλαβον Ἀραβίαν
אם לא כדמשׁק שׁמרון	καὶ Δαμασκὸν καὶ Σαμάρειαν

Seeligmann argues that, because the translator was unfamiliar with כרכמיש (a hapax legomenon in Isaiah), he spoke in general terms about "a country above Babylon."[34] Additionally, maintains Seeligmann, the translator identified כלנו with כלנה, a city mentioned in Gen 10:10 (Χαλαννη ἐν τῇ γῇ Σενναάρ), with which the translator correlated the story of the building of the tower in Genesis 11 (οὗ ὁ πύργος ᾠκοδομήθη).[35] This story exerts an influence again in 11:11, the same verse in which Ἀραβία once more translates חמת.

The absence of an equivalent for כארפד in 10:9 is also explicable by comparing 10:9 with 11:11, where the translator omits another toponym. Just as the story of the tower influenced the translation of כלנו in 10:9, so also the translator rendered ומשנער in 11:11 as καὶ ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν, due to the location specified for the tower in Gen 11:2 (ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν εὗρον πεδίον ἐν γῇ Σενναάρ).[36] The fact that the translator substituted this phrase for שנער, rather than transliterating it as Σεννααρ and appending the phrase ἀπὸ ἡλίου ἀνατολῶν (comparable to his qualification of Χαλαννη by ἐν τῇ γῇ Σενναάρ in 10:10), suggests that he was more concerned to locate the action generally than to identify the site with precision. Parallel to this, he might well have considered unessential a translation of ארפד in 10:9 (transliterated Αρφαθ in 36:19, alongside Αιμαθ for the MT's חמת).

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33. Throughout the LXX, Ἀραβία primarily translates ערב (LXX-Isa twice renders ערבי with Ἄραψ).

34. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 78. In the same passage, Seeligmann supports this contention by pointing out that the translator of 2 Chr 35:20 renders בכרכמיש על פרת by borrowing from 4 Kgdms 23:29 (ἐπὶ τὸν βασιλέα Ασσυρίων ἐπὶ τὸν ποταμὸν Εὐφράτην), indicating that he construed כרכמיש as the name of an Assyrian king.

35. Ibid., 47.

36. Ibid. Cf. Koenig, *L'Herméneutique*, 100.

Equally intelligible, in this light, is Βαβυλωνία ‖ פתרוס in 11:11, the only place where this equivalence appears.[37] Given the translator's insertion of Βα-βυλων as part of his rendering in 10:9 (τὴν χώραν τὴν ἐπάνω Βαβυλῶνος), where Gen 11:2 was again his pedagogue, his employment of Βαβυλων for פתרוס should occasion no surprise, especially because this provides a Mesopotamian power as companion to Αἰθιοπία, just as Ἀσσυρίων is companion to Αἰγύτου.[38]

Although the translator typically resorts to transliteration for unfamiliar toponyms, in these two passages he rendered some toponyms via associations with texts outside Isaiah and omitted others, all with the apparent goal of providing geographic bearings for his readers.

Van der Kooij, however, asserts that the toponyms of 10:9 can be identified with lands conquered by Seleucid rulers. Rejecting Seeligmann's assertion that the translator rendered כלנו in the light of the story of the tower, on the grounds that "in Gen 11 aber nicht von einem Turmbau in *Chalanee* die Rede ist," he notes that "in der etwas jüngeren jüdischen Exegese zu Kalne in Gen 10,10 wird diese Stadt in Babylonien ist."[39] Also citing Jerome's comment on כלנו in Gen 10:10 ("postea verso nomine a Seleuco rege est dicta Seleucia"), he concludes that by using Χαλαννη the translator possibly "mit dem Turm-bau in Chalanne auf den Bau der Stadt Seleucia . . . der Hauptstadt der seleu-kidischen Reiches, anspielt."[40]

Having posited this, van der Kooij equates the ruler's boast of having cap-tured τὴν χώραν τὴν ἐπάνω βαβυλῶνος with Seleucus III's recapture of the upper regions of the Seleucid empire, while noting Polybius's report that, in 218 B.C.E., "haben sich die Araber gemeinsam Antiochus III. unterworfen (Polybios, *Historiae* V. 71)."[41] Moreover, he asserts that οὐκ ἔλαβον τὴν χώραν τὴν ἐπάνω βαβυλῶνος implies "dass Babylon zum Reich der 'Assyrer' ge-hörte," because the oracle is directed against the Assyrians (v. 5).[42] Comparing a passage from the third *Sibylline Oracle* that equates the Seleucids with the Babylonians, he concludes that "der Verfasser der LXX Jes in Jes 10,9 . . . mit dem assyrischen König auf einen seleukidischen Herrscher anspielt."[43] Thus,

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37. The 4 remaining appearances (all outside Isaiah) are transliterated Παθουρης.

38. The only other place that βαβυλωνία (or βαβυλων) does not correspond to בבל in the MT is 14:23, where the LXX translates ושמתיה with καὶ θήσω τὴν Βαβυλωνίαν. How-ever, this clarification of the 3rd fem.-sing. suffix simply compensates for the translation of והכרתי לבבל שם as καὶ ἀπολῶ αὐτῶν ὄνομα in the previous verse.

39. Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 37.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 38.

42. Ibid., 36.

43. Ibid.

van der Kooij explains the toponyms of 10:9 as the translator's infusion of the text, not just with Hellenistic toponyms, but with allusions to the political realities of his day.

There are problems with this explanation, however. First, the assertion by the ἄρχων that he has taken τὴν χώραν τὴν ἐπάνω βαβυλῶνος does not necessarily imply that the ἄρχων himself was in Babylon, nor does it imply anything about the status of Babylon itself. Second, van der Kooij's objection to Seeligmann's proposal that the translator rendered כלנו by Χαλαννη with an eye to Genesis 11 overlooks the fact that Seeligmann builds his argument not simply by reference to Gen 11:2 but also by comparing the mention of Χαλαννη in Gen 10:10, which places it ἐν τῇ γῇ Σεννααρ, the same location given for the tower in Gen 11:2.

In fact, this perceived intertextual reading rests on more than the two verses in Genesis and Isa 10:9, because (as we have seen) Isaiah 11 also shows reflexes of the story of building the tower, as does 9:10[9],[44] where the LXX gives unusual equivalents for MT's vocabulary:

לבנים נפלו⁹	¹⁰πλίνθοι πεπτώκασιν
וגזית	ἀλλὰ δεῦτε λαξεύσωμεν λίθους
נבנה שקמים גדעו וארזים	καὶ ἐκκόψωμεν συκαμίνους καὶ κέδρους
נחליף	καὶ οἰκοδομήσωμεν ἑαυτοῖς πύργον

The correspondence between the LXX and the MT in the first line is transparent, and there are equally perceptible correspondences in lines two and three,[45] while the only Hebrew word without a clear equivalent is נחליף. Koenig suggests the translator transposed נבנה and נחליף, construing the latter in the light of an Aramaic homonym meaning 'to cut down'.[46] This merely trades one problem for another, however, because line three already has a recognizable Hebrew equivalent for ἐκκόψωμεν (גדעו).

The solution is more likely found in addressing the question of the LXX's plus, ἑαυτοῖς πύργον, which bears a striking resemblance to LXX-Gen 11:4a: καὶ εἶπαν Δεῦτε οἰκοδομήσωμεν ἑαυτοῖς πόλιν καὶ πύργον. The hypothesis

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44. As recognized by Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah*, 2:156; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta*, 63 and 109; Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 78; Koenig, *L'Herméneutique*, 98.

45. The idea of cutting stones is semantically related to גזית, while its prefixed *waw* has been rendered by ἀλλά. Ἐκκόψωμεν corresponds to גדעו, συκαμίνους to שקמים, and καὶ κέδρους to וארזים, while οἰκοδομήσωμεν corresponds to נבנה, even if its place in the sentence differs.

46. Koenig, *L'Herméneutique*, 94–95.

that LXX–Isa translated 9:10[9] under the influence of Gen 11:4 explains not only the plus but also why οἰκοδομήσωμεν stands at a later point than נבנה.[47]

The influence of Genesis 11 is apparent even earlier in 9:10[9], with λαξεύσωμεν λίθους, which is reminiscent of Gen 11:3: (δεῦτε) πλινθεύσωμεν πλίνθους. Like that phrase, this one is introduced by δεῦτε and is constructed of a volative + cognate external accusative. Given the clear impress of Gen 11:4 on the end of the verse, it is likely that the shape of this phrase similarly bears the impress of Gen 11:3.[48]

In this light, it appears that in 10:9 the translator was guided at least as much by the story of the tower as by contemporary geography.[49] Although Koenig disparages this conclusion on the grounds that it reduces the translator to "un amateur d'antiquités bibliques,"[50] it actually reveals that he drew on a variety of sources in clarifying his text, not all of which had to do with his historical/political milieu.

Of course, van der Kooij's identification of these toponyms with Seleucid conquests is bound up with his assertion that the translator equated the Assyrian king in chap. 10 with a Seleucid ruler.[51] However, this contention is difficult to support in the light of the translator's handling of vv. 5–14.

The translator interpreted this passage as an address to a ruler preoccupied with conquest. As Ziegler contended, the translator twice supplied ἔλαβον in v. 9, as well as λήμψομαι in v. 10, because "er an die Eroberung der genannten Länder durch den König von Assur dachte," which Ziegler concluded was an expedient forced on him "weil ihm der Satzbau von V. 9 nicht recht klar

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47. As already observed by Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta*, 63.

48. Even though I cannot agree with Koenig's conclusion that the translator infused 9:10[9] with reminiscences of the story of the tower so as to discredit the Samaritan community, he has correctly identified the influence of Genesis 11 here, thus showing the extent to which the translator was affected by that story (*L'Herméneutique*, 92). Van der Kooij has pointed out the fallacy in Koenig's assumption that "Samaria" would have univocally raised the specter of the Samaritan schism, noting that the Greek text of Sirach 50:26 distinguishes between οἱ καθήμενοι ἐν ὄρει Σαμαρείας and ὁ λαὸς ὁ μωρὸς ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν Σικιμοις. As van der Kooij also notes, Koenig fails to pay adequate attention to equally striking and significant differences with the MT in the context of v. 9 (Arie van der Kooij, "Accident or Method? On 'Analogical' Interpretation in the Old Greek of Isa and in 1QIsᵃ" [review of Koenig, *L'Herméneutique analogique du Judaïsme antique*] *BO* 43 [1986] 366–76, 370).

49. As Arie van der Kooij points out (in private correspondence), however, this does not relieve us of the question of what the translator understood as "the country above Babylon" or his conception of the location of Χαλαννη, although the evidence to answer questions of this sort is not readily at hand in this passage.

50. Koenig, *L'Herméneutique*, 101 n. 30.

51. Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 35–36.

war."[52] More likely, however, this translation is the product of a reasoned interpretation of vv. 5–14.[53]

Whereas the Hebrew text of v. 5 defines Asshur as שבט אפי and asserts that it wields the staff of the Lord's wrath, the LXX follows the announcement of woe to the Assyrians with:

שבט אפי	ἡ ῥάβδος τοῦ θυμοῦ μου
ומטה הוא בידם	καὶ ὀργῆς ἐστιν ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν αὐτῶν

The translation of ומטה as καὶ ὀργῆς creates an extended phrase modifying ἡ ῥάβδος, rather than introducing a phrase defining Asshur's role, as in the MT.[54] Although this restructured syntax keeps the "rod" of wrath in Assyrian hands, a change introduced in v. 6 gives this assertion a different meaning.

Rather than the Lord's sending the Assyrian(s) against an 'impious nation' (בגוי חנף), the Kyrios sends his *wrath* εἰς ἔθνος ἄνομον.[55] Still more striking is the translator's rendering of the next clause:

ועל עם עברתי אצונו	καὶ τῷ ἐμῷ λαῷ συντάξω

Although the first-person singular suffix of עברתי is recognizable in ἐμῷ, the lack of an equivalent for the noun is perplexing, until we compare this with the manner in which other versions finessed this form. For example, the Peshiṭta translates עם עברתי as ܥܡܐ ܕܚܡܬܐ 'a wrathful people', while the Targum elaborates: עמא דעברו על אוריתי 'the people who transgressed my instruction'. In this light we can perceive in the LXX an equally interpretive rendering. Given that the first half of the verse speaks of the Kyrios's intent to send his wrath on a 'lawless nation', the translator evidently perceived עם עברתי as meaning 'the people who execute my wrath' and collapsed it into 'my people'.

As a result of these interpretive ploys, the assertion that 'the rod of my anger and wrath' is in the hands of the Assyrians does not mean that they wield the Kyrios's wrath but, rather, that wrath is now resident with them (in other

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52. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta*, 63–64.

53. It is doubtful that the translator failed to understand the syntax. Compare the adept translation of והיה כעם ככהן as καὶ ἔσται ὁ λαὸς ὡς ὁ ἱερεύς in 24:2.

54. The probability that καὶ ὀργῆς is the translator's equivalent for ומטה is strong, given his rendering of ומטהו as καὶ ὁ θυμὸς αὐτοῦ in 10:26 as well as his use of ὀργή for atypical equivalents elsewhere (καὶ ὀργῆς ‖ ונאצה in 37:3; ἡ ὀργὴ παρὰ κυρίου ‖ רוח ה' in 59:19).

55. The translator read זעמי with v. 6 and took the 3rd masc.-sing. object suffix of אשלחנו as resumptive.

words, in their bosom) and executed by Israel.[56] As Seeligmann summarizes, with ἔθνος ἄνομον, "the translator apparently had in mind not Israel, but hostile Assyria . . . and he regarded it as a duty with which God had charged the Jewish people, to plunder towns and trample them under foot."[57]

As in the MT, v. 7 focuses on the ruminations of this bellicose ruler. However, whereas in the MT the ruler is ill disposed to acknowledge that he is merely a vehicle of the Lord's wrath against Israel, in the LXX he fails to consider that the Kyrios's anger is poised against him and his cities. Rather, he is intent on a course of destruction that will engulf numerous nations.

Noteworthy is the choice of ὁ νοῦς αὐτοῦ to translate בלבבו, because the more typical equivalents for לבב in LXX-Isa are καρδία (25×) and ψυχή (6×), as in the preceding clause: καὶ τῇ ψυχῇ ∥ ולבבו.[58] Because νοῦς appears for לבב outside this passage only in 41:22 (although διανοία translates it in 14:13[59] and 35:4), its reappearance in 10:12 makes this the only co-occurrence of this atypical equivalent within one passage.

Having detailed the bent of this νοῦς in 10:7–11, v. 12 announces judgment as follows:

$$\text{אפקד על פרי גדל לבב} \qquad \text{ἐπάξει ἐπὶ τὸν νοῦν τὸν μέγαν}$$
$$\text{מלך אשור} \qquad \text{τὸν ἄρχοντα τῶν Ἀσσυρίων}$$

Rather than judgment befalling 'the fruit of the haughtiness of the heart of the king of Assyria' (MT), it falls on 'the ruler of the Assyrians', designated in advance by the epithet 'the great mind', the same νοῦς that refused to consider what the Kyrios was plotting for him. Although the use of οἰκουμένη in v. 14 to describe the extent of "the great mind's" intended conquests may support the hypothesis that the translator had Seleucid rulers in mind (inasmuch as it

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56. This is preferable to das Neves's conclusion that τῷ ἐμῷ λαῷ refers to the "Assyrians," while ἔθνος ἄνομον designates Israel (*A teologia*, 202). Even if ἔθνος ἄνομον denotes Israel elsewhere, the characterization of the subsequent Assyrian ruler as haughty (10:7–11) and the Kyrios's resolve to judge his haughty mind (v. 12) make it difficult to imagine the translator's entertaining the idea that the Assyrians were the Kyrios's people.

57. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 88.

58. Although the LXX's Vorlage may have read ובלבבו, it is equally possible that τῇ ψυχῇ is the translator's reformulation. We encounter the same quandary in the Targum's ובלביה.

59. Van der Kooij argues that 14:13, even though translated literally, can refer to Antiochus IV, "denn er trifft sich mit Dan 8,10 und 2 Makk 9,10 in der Deutung des Verhaltens dieses Königs" (van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 42). This, on its own, is a weak argument and certainly could not be the basis for positing an association with 10:12 as a reference to Antiochus IV (van der Kooij posits no such connection).

transposes the passage "from the atmosphere surrounding the Assyrian claims to world sovereignty into the Hellenistic period"),[60] the designation of this figure as an ἄρχων is evidence against it.

Raurell has drawn attention to the importance of ἄρχων for the translator, who used it as an equivalent for 17 Hebrew words.[61] The use of ἄρχων for מלך in 10:12 is especially striking, because each of the other 25 times that מלך אשור appears in Isaiah it is translated βασιλεύς Ἀσσυρίων. Moreover, for the 80 occurrences of מלך, LXX-Isa always uses βασιλεύς (72×) or βασιλεύειν (3×), except in 10:12 and in 8:21.[62]

In 8:21 we read,

ועבר בה נקשה ורעב	καὶ ἥξει ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς σκληρὰ λιμός
והיה כי ירעב והתקצף	καὶ ἔσται ὡς ἂν πεινάσητε λυπηθήσεσθε
וקלל במלכו ובאהליו	καὶ κακῶς ἐρεῖτε τὸν ἄρχοντα καὶ τὰ παταχρα.

As Seeligmann notes, παταχρα is a transliteration of Aramaic פתכרא 'idol', which appears in the Targum's rendering of this verse.[63] LXX-Isaiah uses παταχρον again in 37:38 (its only other appearance in the LXX) in the description of the Assyrian king worshiping his god. Evidently, then, the translator perceived the deities of 8:21 as foreign, which suggests that he also regarded this ἄρχων as foreign.

The address of these words to a group (ἐρεῖτε) is attributable to the translator, who frequently assimilates the grammatical person and number of some pronouns to other pronouns in the context.[64] In this case, the second-person plural resumes advice addressed to those who have been urged by others to avail themselves of necromancy (8:19). The people who propound this advice are described as inexcusably violating the Torah (v. 20):

לתורה ולתעודה	νόμον γὰρ εἰς βοήθειαν ἔδωκεν
אם לא יאמרו כדבר הזה	ἵνα εἴπωσιν οὐχ ὡς τὸ ῥῆμα τοῦτο
אשר אין לו שחר	περὶ οὗ οὐκ ἔστιν δῶρα δοῦναι περὶ αὐτοῦ

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60. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 81.

61. Frederic Raurell, "'Archontes' en la interpretació midràshica d'Is-LXX," *Revista Catalana de Teologia* 1 (1976) 315–74. The majority of Hebrew lexemes for which it is used share its semantic range. Most frequent is שׂר, which is rendered ἄρχων in 13 of 18 occurrences.

62. The LXX gives no equivalent in the other 4 instances.

63. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 9, 50.

64. See my "Economic Plunder," especially n. 3.

With this rendering, the translator continues a theme that he had divined just prior to this.[65] After admonishing addressees to trust in the Kyrios so as not to confront him in judgment, the LXX speaks of the house of Israel falling into a snare and troubles (8:14–15) and concludes with the statement:

צור תעודה	τότε φανεροὶ ἔσονται
חתום תורה בלמדי	οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι τὸν νόμον τοῦ μὴ μαθεῖν

Clearly the translator is again concerned about a group that is opposing the Torah in some way.[66] Indeed, the translator seems to have been guided in the latter half of chap. 8 by his concern for the Torah and his conviction that Israel's leaders are disloyal to it.

However, it is important to note the distinction between the people said to inhibit Torah study (οἱ σφραγιζόμενοι τὸν νόμον τοῦ μὴ μαθεῖν, v. 16[67]) or to encourage necromancy (καὶ ἐὰν εἴπωσιν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, v. 19) and the ruler in v. 21. As is common in LXX-Isa, the ones who afflict the people are described as a group,[68] whereas v. 21 envisions a solitary figure whose foreign identity is suggested by his appeal to τὰ παταχρα.

This description's point of contact with 10:12, once again, is that to speak of this figure as an ἄρχων the translator deviated from his typical equivalents for מלך. However, aside from the possible assumption that the ἄρχων of 8:21 is a foreign ruler, the description in chap. 8 holds no similarity to the description of

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65. The middle phrase of this verse shows the closest correspondence to the MT, although the choice of εἰς βοήθειαν for ולתעודה may well derive from relating the word to עזר, just as the translation of שחר with δῶρα probably reflects the fact that it was read as שחד (so Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah*, 2:150). In each case the translator filled out the sense by supplying what he considered an appropriate verb.

66. The relationship of the second clause to the MT is discernible, despite enigmas, the most vexing of which is τότε φανεροὶ ἔσονται with צור תעודה. As Ottley suggests, the LXX's Vorlage may have read מלמדי for בלמדי (*The Book of Isaiah*, 2:150), and this may be the source of the divergence in the first half of the verse. In the light of his perception of the second phrase, the translator may have read תעודה as תעורה and related it to ערה, even as he renders יערה as ἀποκαλύψει in 3:17 and ונער as φανερὰ ἔσται in 33:9 (cf. ibid., 2:271). Although this still leaves τότε ‖ צור oblique, the translator interjects temporal conjunctions frequently enough that its presence here is best attributed to him (cf. τότε σπείρει ‖ והפיץ in 28:25; τότε ἔσται ‖ ונתן in 30:23; καὶ νῦν ὁ οἶκος Ιακωβ ‖ בית יעקוב in 2:5; νῦν δὲ εἰς ᾅδου ‖ אך אל שאל in 14:15).

67. It is not clear, however, whether this is to be taken literally (and as having to do with prohibitions during the Hellenistic reforms of the second century) or figuratively, as a characterization of "false teaching" of the Torah (so Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version*, 105–6).

68. See, for example, 3:12–15, on which see also my "Economic Plunder," 375–81.

the ἄρχων in chap. 10. Nor does the translator take the opportunity in 8:21 to construct a fuller picture of this ἄρχων or to link him with the violations of the Torah just described. This ἄρχων seems incidental to the problems affecting Jerusalem; he merely bears the brunt of popular displeasure. Thus, it is doubtful the translator chose to deviate from his typical equivalent for מלך in 8:21 in order to identify this ruler with a specific Hellenistic overlord. This, in turn, diminishes the likelihood that, in using ἄρχων for מלך in 10:12, the translator had in mind a specific Seleucid ruler or line of rulers.

We should also note that 10:12 is not the first occurrence of ἄρχων within the context of 10:5–14. Talk of a solitary ἄρχων appeared already in 10:8:

כי יאמר הלא שרי יחדו מלכים   καὶ ἐὰν εἴπωσιν αὐτῷ σὺ μόνος εἶ ἄρχων

Even though ἄρχων renders שרי (for which reason מלכים was perhaps passed over as redundant), the translator has overridden the plural form, against his prevailing pattern of rendering שרי with ἄρχοντες.[69] Moreover, the sentence has been reformulated as a question addressed to the ruler.[70]

Most striking is μόνος ‖ יחדו. Apparently the translator, construing vv. 9–11 as stating an intent to build a far-flung empire (τὴν οἰκουμένην ὅλην καταλήψομαι), perceived this question to concern the extent of the ruler's sovereignty.[71] This is the hubris that gives meaning to the epithet τὸν νοῦν τὸν μέγαν in v. 12.

Although this aspiration to sole mastery of the world might have been well suited to a Seleucid ruler, the title ἄρχων does not fit that hypothesis. In the contemporaneous works of 1 and 2 Maccabees, the title applied to Seleucid rulers is βασιλεύς. Moreover, while ἄρχων does not appear in 2 Maccabees, it occurs 22 times in 1 Maccabees, where the plural 10 times designates military commanders and 6 times, unspecified officials. It appears 6 times in the singular: 3 times to designate the commander of an army, once for a representative

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69. Each of the 4 remaining occurrences of שרי is translated ἄρχοντες, while the other 11 occurrences of שר in a plural formation are translated by plural forms in Greek. Even the lone singular form (שר) is translated τοὺς ἄρχοντας in 9:5.

70. Although Ottley implies that the translator's Vorlage may have read הלו for הלא (*The Book of Isaiah*, 2:160), it seems to me more likely that הלא is expressed via a question that expects an affirmative response, while the translator supplied the pronoun as indirect object. Compare v. 11, where the translator omits an explicit translation of הלא, casting the verse as an assertion.

71. The translator may have related יחדו to אחד, even as in 65:25 we find זאב וטלה ירעו כאחד rendered τότε λύκοι καὶ ἄρνες βοσκηθήσονται ἅμα, the characteristic equivalent for יחדו in LXX-Isa. Compare κατὰ μόνας for יחד in Ps 32[33]:15; 140[141]:10.

sent by Antiochus to collect taxes, and twice to designate, generically, the role of a leader (2:17, 12:53). The fact that 1 Maccabees never applies ἄρχων to a Seleucid ruler is relevant to Isaiah 10, especially because 1 Maccabees is also a translation into Greek from Hebrew.[72] If that translator consistently used βασιλεύς for Seleucid rulers and never applied ἄρχων to them, it becomes difficult to imagine that our translator, who everywhere else renders מלך אשור as ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ασσυρίων, chose ἄρχων in a text in which he perceived the Assyrian king to be a cipher for a Seleucid ruler.

Consequently, it seems fruitless to attempt to identify this ἄρχων with a Seleucid and equally fruitless to correlate Seleucid conquests with the LXX's toponyms in chap. 10, especially in light of the fact that those equivalents seem more likely to be determined by intertextual associations.

Returning to the question of whether the translator's fascination with "contemporization" is a likely explanation for his rendering of toponyms, my investigation suggests that we cannot correlate political or military events of the late third to early second centuries B.C.E. with LXX-Isa's toponyms without first considering other reasons that the translator might have chosen them. By turning first to political circumstances to explain toponyms of this sort, we risk falling prey to what Sandmel called "parallelomania": adducing parallels that seem to illuminate a text but fail the test of aptness.[73]

Consequently, the rationale for choosing Ἀραβία as the equivalent for חמת should be sought in the translator's desire to portray a recognizable place in 10:5–14, just as in 27:12 he chose Ῥινοκορούρων as a more precise designation for נחל מצרים and in 23:1, 6, 10, and 14 he rendered תרשיש as Καρχηδών, again choosing a toponym that his audience would recognize but without any evident interest in its political intrigues.

Noteworthy in this regard is Weitzman's report that the Syriac renders חמת as "Antioch" in 1 Chr 13:5, 18:9, and 2 Chr 8:4, in recognition of חמת as "the northern boundary of the promised land . . . but identif[ying] that border with the Taurus Mountains (as in Gen. Apocr. 21.16)."[74] Similarly, the translator of

72. Harold Attridge, "1 Maccabees," in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus* (ed. Michael Stone; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1984) 171.

73. Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania, " *JBL* 81 (1962) 1–13. Sandmel addresses literary parallels and their use to argue that one passage's ideas were derived from another. *Mutatis mutandis*, Sandmel's concerns apply to finding events that parallel, to some degree, peculiar phrases in LXX-Isa and suggesting that the translator was guided by them. While that scenario is possible, the factors influencing the translator in each passage must be considered before one concludes that he referred to contemporaneous events in rendering his Vorlage.

74. Weitzman, *Syriac Version*, 48.

LXX-Isa may well have chosen Ἀραβία for חמת because he was uncertain of its precise location, but he wished to identify it with a territory that his audience would know. As van der Kooij notes, the region of Lebanon was settled in the course of Arabian migration with the name Iturea.[75] Most likely it was this group that the translator had in mind when he referred to Ἀραβία. Although it is not possible to prove that this was his reasoning, this conjecture is more likely than the assumption that Ἀραβία reflects Seleucid conquests, given the translator's reliance on intertextual associations and his departure from the translation equivalent that would have most closely associated the king of 10:5−14 with a Seleucid ruler.

   Although the translator sometimes used Hellenistic toponyms that reflect the political map of his day (as is surely the case with τοὺς Ἕλληνας ‖ פלשתים in 9:12[11]), this was merely one of the contemporizing influences on his elucidation of Isaiah. In particular, the evidence renders it unlikely that he viewed Hebrew toponyms as stock ciphers for places in his day. Each case must be taken on its own, but the tendency to assume "contemporization" of toponyms in the light of political circumstances is unjustified.

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   75. Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 38. According to Josephus (*Ant.* 13.11.3), Iturea was incorporated into the Hasmonean state by Aristobulus I (ca. 105 B.C.E.).

Characterization in the Old Greek of Job

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The Septuagint is the product of an enterprise to translate the literary heritage of the Jewish people into Greek. The primary goal was not the introduction of new ideas but the exposition of these texts as they were understood within the Hellenistic Jewish community. Though various factors may have influenced the LXX translators' perception of the text's meaning, each translator faithfully and creatively sought to capture the sense of his Hebrew Vorlage.

Of the various translations in the LXX, the Old Greek of Job is especially fascinating, due to its frequent, and sometimes extensive, divergences from modern translations of the MT. Though some of these divergences are due to variant readings in the translator's Vorlage, many attest to unique interpretations of a text identical to the MT. Moreover, the paraphrastic nature of the translator's rendering of the Hebrew often discloses what he, and his religious community, considered implicit in the text—insights that would not be revealed in a more literal translation. The OG of Job is, thus, important because it reflects perhaps the earliest written interpretation of the book and because it illuminates, on a broader scale, the process of exegesis and translation within Hellenistic Judaism.

The interpretive aspect of the translation process is especially evident in the translator's portrayal of the characters in the book. Early studies of the OG argued that the translator intentionally toned down Job's criticism of God and altered the negative portrayals of Job so that Job appears more saintly.[1] Orlinsky, however, demonstrated that the ultraliteral approach of these earlier studies exaggerated the differences between the OG and MT.[2] Despite the lack of

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1. G. Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint: I, The Book of Job* (Lunds Universitets Årsskrift 43/2; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1947) 53–57; D. H. Gard, *The Exegetical Method of the Greek Translator of the Book of Job* (SBLMS 8; Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1952) 24; idem, "The Concept of Job's Character according to the Greek Translator of the Hebrew Text," *JBL* 72 (1953) 182–86.

2. Harry Orlinsky, "Studies in the Septuagint of the Book of Job: On the Matter of Anthropomorphisms, Anthropopathisms, and Euphemisms," *HUCA* 32 (1961) 249–68.

a formal correspondence between the OG and MT, the sense was generally the same. Orlinsky concluded, therefore, that

> there is nothing theological or tendentious in the Greek; there is nothing but the usual factors involved in turning the Hebrew into Greek: *the honest attempt on the part of the translator to interpret and translate the Hebrew correctly*; the possibility of different Hebrew readings in his *Vorlage*; and the temper of the translator in the matter of style.[3]

Orlinsky's comment on the exegetical component of the OG is extremely important. In several instances striking differences between the portrayal of characters in the OG and MT can best be accounted for on the basis of a unique understanding of the same Hebrew text preserved in the MT.

I will argue that broader exegetical concerns are behind the translator's handling of Job's speaking 'without knowledge'. A variant reading in Job 32:1, coupled with the Lord's commendation of Job in 42:7–8, led the translator to a significant deviation from the MT's portrayal of Job and his friends. In the OG Job is no longer guilty of speaking without knowledge but instead is guilty of trying to withhold his true thoughts and feelings from God. As a result, the Lord's final commendation of Job as a man who has spoken what is right (42:7–8) is realized in its fullest sense. Job's three friends eventually acknowledge the fact that their accusations against Job are unjust and insensitive, and they cease giving counsel. Elihu, who begins his criticism of Job just when the others realize that Job is right, is unreliable because he criticizes Job for speaking without knowledge, a charge that contradicts the presentation of Job in the rest of the OG.

Unlike the MT, the OG does not present Job as having spoken without knowledge. In the opening words of the Lord's confrontation of Job (38:2) the Lord sharply rebukes Job in the following manner:

Τίς οὗτος ὁ κρύπτων με βουλήν,	מי זה מחשיך עצה
συνέχων δὲ ῥήματα ἐν καρδίᾳ,	במלין בלי דעת
ἐμὲ δὲ οἴεται κρύπτειν;	
Who is this that hides counsel from me,	Who is this that darkens counsel
who withholds words in his heart	with words that <u>lack knowledge</u>?
and thinks he can hide (them) from me?	

Job says exactly the same thing about himself when he humbly offers his confession before God in 42:3.

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3. Ibid., 250. Italics mine.

τίς γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ κρύπτων σε βουλήν;
φειδόμενος δὲ ῥημάτων καὶ σε οἴεται κρύπτειν;

מי זה מעלים עצה
בלי דעת

For who is this that hides counsel from you,
who withholds words and thinks
    he can hide them from you?

Who is this that obscures counsel

<u>without knowledge</u>?

According to the MT, Job has obscured God's purposes by speaking about things he was incapable of understanding. This is why the Lord proceeds to test Job's knowledge in the verses that immediately follow. The error of Job's speech referred to in the MT is not, however, present in the OG text, where the Lord asserts that Job erred by trying to withhold his thoughts from God.[4]

    Although some scholars assume that this divergence is due to variant readings in the translator's Vorlage, the retroversions they propose do not adequately account for the details of the text. According to Dhorme, the translator's Vorlage read במלין בלב דעת 'with words in the heart, knowledge' and drew upon v. 2a ('Who is this that hides counsel from me?') in order to clarify the significance of the resulting disjointed reference to knowledge.[5] The natural correlation, however, between κρύπτειν 'hide' in 38:2b and MT בלי דעת 'without knowledge' casts serious doubt on the existence of the variant reading proposed by Dhorme. One should also note that, although καρδία 'heart' corresponds to לב/לבב 17 times in the OG, καρδία is added by the translator in 3 other passages (31:29; 33:23; 36:28b = MT 37:1), one of which includes the phrase νοεῖν τῇ καρδίᾳ 'to know/decide in the heart' (33:23). The addition of καρδία in 33:23 is comparable to συνέχων δὲ ῥήματα ἐν καρδίᾳ 'withholding words in his heart' (38:2). Moreover, the addition of <u>φειδόμενος</u> δὲ ῥημάτων 'withholding words' in Job 42:3 as an anaphoric recollection of <u>συνέχων</u> δὲ ῥήματα <u>ἐν καρδίᾳ</u> (38:2) seems to suggest that ἐν καρδίᾳ is a paraphrastic expansion rather than a formal translation. Heater, who follows Dhorme's explanation of the OG, assumes that there are additional variants in the Vorlage behind the OG. In his view, συνέχων stems from a semi-doublet in the translator's Vorlage: <u>עצה עצר</u> במלין <u>בלב דעת</u> 'restraining counsel with words in the heart'.[6] An examination of the translator's use of συνέχειν reveals, however, that this verb is a paraphrastic

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4. Τίς οὗτος ὁ κρύπτων με βουλήν does not mean 'Who is this that hides me with counsel . . .', a thought that would be close to the MT. Κρύπτειν 'hide' is used with a double accusative to indicate the object hidden and the one *from whom* it is hidden.

5. Eduard Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (ed. H. H. Rowley; trans. H. Knight; New York: Thomas Nelson, 1984) 574–75.

6. Homer Heater Jr., *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1982) 122.

though עצר is translated συνέχειν 13 times in the LXX, there are no such trans-
lations in Job (12:15 = κωλύειν; 29:9 = παύειν). It is far easier to suppose that
the translator had a Hebrew text identical to the MT, with exegetical factors
alone being responsible for his unique translation. The translator appears to have
interpreted the text to mean, "Who is this that hides (his own) counsel, with
words outside of (God's) knowledge"[7]—a reference to Job trying to hide his
true thoughts from God. From there it is fairly easy to account for the rest of
the verse. The translator's identification of מלין 'words' as words held within
the heart (συνέχων ἐν καρδίᾳ) is merely a clarification based on the first half of
the verse. The phrase itself may have been suggested by the opposite image in
Job 8:10, "from their heart they will bring forth words" (OG = MT). Borrow-
ing of this sort would be consistent with the translator's anaphoric style of trans-
lation.[8] The addition of οἴεται in v. 2bβ ('and *thinks* he can hide them from me')
highlights the futility of trying to hide one's thoughts from the knowledge of
an omniscient God.

Similarly striking is the OG translation of the second half of 42:3. In this
verse the Job found in the MT clearly states that he has spoken without un-
derstanding or knowledge, and yet this too is different in the OG.

τίς γὰρ ἐστιν ὁ κρύπτων σε βουλήν;	מי זה מעלים עצה
φειδόμενος δὲ ῥημάτων καὶ σε οἴεται κρύπτειν;	בלי דעת
τίς δὲ ἀναγγελεῖ μοι ἃ οὐκ ᾔδειν,	לכן הגדתי ולא אבין
μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἃ οὐκ ἠπιστάμην;	נפלאות ממני ולא אדע

For who is this that hides counsel from you, who withholds words and thinks he can hide them from you.	Who is this that obscures counsel? without knowledge?

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7. Support for this explanation of the OG is found in Sir 37:10, where one is advised to
'hide counsel from those who are jealous [of you]' (וממקנא העלים סוד). The phrase העלים
סוד 'hide counsel' is virtually identical to מעלים עצה 'hide counsel' (42:3) and demonstrates
how both this phrase and מחשיך עצה 'darken counsel' (38:2) could be interpreted as refer-
ences to Job's hiding his own thoughts. It is interesting to note that Sir 37:10 (like Job 38:2;
42:3) is translated with the phrase κρύπτειν βουλήν.

8. Similar phrases appear in other literature from this period: διατηρεῖν ἐν καρδίᾳ (Luke
2:51; *T. Levi* 6:2), συμβάλλειν ἐν καρδίᾳ (Luke 2:19), and κρύπτειν ἐν καρδίᾳ (Ps 118:11 =
MT 119:11, צפן בלב). The phrase צפן בלב 'hide in the heart' appears in Job 10:13 as well,
but unfortunately the OG translator employs an anaphoric translation from 42:2 to translate
this verse. The translator's choice of συνέχειν was no doubt determined by the fact that Job
was withholding his thoughts rather than receiving external information and treasuring it
up (διατηρεῖν/κρύπτειν).

Who will tell me what I do not know,	For I have spoken, but <u>I have no understanding</u>,
great and marvelous things that I do not understand?	things too wonderful for me, but <u>I have no knowledge</u>.

It is possible that the translator had a variant reading in his Vorlage (e.g., הגדני 'tell me' in place of MT הגדתי 'I have spoken'). But there is no other evidence of such a variant, and it is once again possible to explain the OG on the basis of the MT. The translator could easily have viewed ולא אבין as an expression of Job's present circumstances ('I have spoken [just now] and <u>I *do* not know</u>') rather than a description of his speech during the dialogues ('I spoke, but <u>I *did* not know</u>'). As a result, the OG paraphrases the text and presents Job as appealing for instruction ('*Who* will tell me what I do not know?') in a manner that anticipates his appeal for God to teach him (42:4) and highlights the emptiness of the advice of Job's friends.

As we have seen, the unique translation of Job 38:2 and 42:3 in the OG cannot be explained on the basis of variant readings. It is possible, however, to account for both texts as a paraphrase of a Hebrew text identical to the MT. In each case the OG reflects an interpretation of the Hebrew text that is significantly different from our own. The critical question then is what motivated the translator's unique approach.

It is nearly impossible to account for the OG translation of 38:2 and 42:3 on the basis of what we know about Job from the earlier part of the book. Given the tenor of Job's speeches in Job 3–31, it is difficult to imagine what Job could have left unsaid. In fact, Job specifically states in 7:11 that he will *not* restrain his speech: "So then, I will not restrain my mouth" (OG = MT).

There is, however, a variant reading in the OG of Job 32:1 that plays an important role in the translator's perception of the character of Job. In the MT this verse states that Job's three friends fell silent because they realized the futility of arguing with a man who was righteous in his own eyes (בעיניו). In the OG, on the other hand, Job's three friends ceased responding to him because he was righteous before them (ἐναντίον αὐτῶν). This departure from the MT, attested again by Symmachus (ἐπ' αὐτῶν) and the Peshiṭta, reflects the variant בעיניהם 'in their eyes'. In the Vorlage of the OG, Job's discourses were eventually effective in convincing the friends that Job was indeed righteous and had done nothing to merit the disastrous circumstances that befell him. In short, they concluded that Job had spoken right. I doubt that this means that Job's friends approved of all that Job said. Indeed, in the OG Job himself acknowledges that he has spoken rashly (19:25). But Job's vindication in the eyes of his friends would certainly have raised serious questions about whether Job had actually spoken without knowledge.

The translator's failure to reproduce the Hebrew references to Job as speaking without knowledge in 38:2 and 42:3 also suggests a connection with Job 42:7–8. In these verses the Lord declares that Job's three friends "have not spoken toward me what is right (נכונה) as has my servant Job." This commendation of Job's speech in the MT is surprising when viewed against the poetic dialogues in which Job's accusations against God (Job 3–31) result in a sharp rebuke from the Lord for speaking without knowledge (Job 38:2). As a result, modern scholars attempt to resolve this tension by interpreting 42:7–8 on the basis of the poetic dialogues. For example, Job's accusations against the Lord in the dialogues lead some to assume that נכונה must refer to Job as speaking honest words (Hartley) or that the correctness of Job's statements pertains only to his claim of innocence and to his objection to the view of divine providence and retribution advocated by his friends (Delitzsch, Pope). Others who contend that Job's dialogues could never be classified as right assume that נכונה refers only to Job's confessions in 40:4–5 and 42:2–6 (Fohrer) or that the conflicting characterization of Job stems from the redaction of once independent and contradictory accounts of the experiences of Job (Tur-Sinai).[9]

The OG translator, on the other hand, seems to have reversed the direction of exegesis and interpreted the poetic dialogues on the basis of 42:7–8, rather than the other way around. Given the fact that the Lord himself is the speaker in both 38:2 and 42:7–8, the translator has tried to produce a sense of harmony between these passages.[10] In other words, Job 42:7–8 created the exegetical parameters within which the translator interpreted Job 38:2 and the related passage in 42:3. Since Job spoke what is right, it was not conceivable in the translator's mind that Job could speak without knowledge. He therefore interpreted the Hebrew text of 38:2 and 42:3 in a way that was consistent with this presupposition. He was not trying to alter the text. He reflected what he believed the text meant.

It is interesting to note that the OG does preserve one verse that states that Job spoke without knowledge. This accusation is leveled against Job by Elihu in 34:35:

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9. J. E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) 539 (also citing Fohrer); F. Delitzsch, *The Book of Job* (vol. 4 of the *Commentary on the Old Testament*; trans. F. Bolton; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 386; M. H. Pope, *Job* (3rd ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1973) 350; N. H. Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1967) 579, 582.

10. Such a harmonization would accord well with the translation technique of the OG. For example, in Job 1:10 the reference to God's protection of Job and his possessions was translated solely as a reference to Job's possessions in order to conform the verse with the theme of the first chapter of the prologue (i.e., taking away all that Job has). After all, Job himself is not attacked until chap. 2.

Ιωβ δὲ οὐκ ἐν συνέσει ἐλάλησεν,	איוב לא בדעת ידבר
τὰ δὲ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐν ἐπιστήμῃ.	ודבריו לא בהשכיל
Job has not spoken with knowledge,	Job speaks without knowledge,
And his words lack understanding.	And his words lack insight.

The literal translation of this verse stands in marked contrast to the OG translation of Job 38:2 and 42:3.[11]

The fact that the OG translator reproduces Elihu's charge that Job spoke without knowledge and without insight could lead one to conclude that the OG of 38:2 and 42:3 is due solely to the translator's misinterpretation of these individual verses rather than broader exegetical concerns or impressions about Job. After all, if the translator was sensitive to the notion of Job's speaking without knowledge, then why would he provide a literal translation of Job 34:35? However, for the translator, Job 34:35 differs from 38:2 and 42:3 in one important detail. Whereas the Lord and Job were viewed as reliable characters, Elihu was not.

The character of Elihu in the OG is, to a large degree, shaped by the variant reading attested in the OG of Job 32:1. As the narrator introduces Elihu's speeches, we are told that Job's three friends ceased responding to Job because he was 'righteous before them' (32:1). The conclusion reached by Job's three friends anticipates the Lord's own statement made in the OG of Job 40:8, where the Lord tells Job that his sole purpose in afflicting him was to prove that Job was righteous.

μὴ ἀποποιοῦ μου τὸ κρίμα.[12]	האף תפר משפטי
οἴει δέ με ἄλλως σοι κεχρηματικέναι	תרשיעני למען תצדק
ἢ ἵνα ἀναφανῇς δίκαιος;	
Do not reject my judgment.	Will you indeed frustrate my judgment?

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11. Elihu's second reference to Job as speaking without knowledge (35:16) has no correspondent in the OG. This verse was either absent in the translator's Vorlage or simply omitted in keeping with the translator's frequent excision of synonymous words and phrases or his omission of recurring ideas (especially in Elihu's speeches). The absence of 35:16 is thus inconsequential to the interrelationship of the three passages under discussion.

12. In keeping with the translator's style, the rhetorical question in the Hebrew text has been transformed into an imperative conveying the same idea as the parent text. The verb פרר is translated ἀποποιεῖν again in Job 15:4.

> Do you think that I have dealt with you[13]   Will you condemn me so that
>   for any purpose other than that you   you may be justified?
>   may prove yourself righteous?[14]

As a result, the righteousness of Job is affirmed by the prologue, recognized by Job's three friends (32:1), and affirmed by the Lord both in 40:8 and in his commendation of Job at the end of the book (42:7–8).

It is within this context that one must assess Elihu's criticism of Job. The narrator informs us that Elihu was angry with Job "because he asserted that he was righteous before the Lord" (32:2). Elihu himself articulates this view in 35:2 when he says, "Who are you that you say, 'I am righteous before the

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13. In the LXX and New Testament, χρηματίζω is predominantly used in reference to God's communication with men (Jeremiah 8 times; New Testament 6 times; note also χρηματισμός in Prov 31:1; 2 Macc 2:4; Rom 11:4) or human communication (New Testament 3 times; note also χρηματισμός in 2 Macc 11:17). C. Thomson thus translates the OG in this sense: "Do you think that I have *spoken to you* . . . ?" (*The Septuagint Bible* [ed. and rev. C. A. Muses; Indian Hills, Colo.: Falcon's Wing, 1954]). But because the OG of 40:8a apparently alludes back to Job's verbal responses in Job 3–31 (it certainly does not refer to 40:3–5), the context suggests that 40:8b should be translated, "Do you think that I have *dealt with you* for any other reason than that you may prove yourself to be righteous?" (thus also Gard, *Exegetical Method*, 24; Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint*, 54; L. C. L. Brenton, *The Septuagint with Apocrypha* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1986] ad loc.). This latter sense accords with the use of χρηματίζω in 1 Kgs 18:27 and of χρηματιστήριον 'council chamber, place of business' in 1 Esd 3:14.

14. The explicit reference to Job's condemning God in the MT is lacking in the OG. Moreover, the translator interpreted למען תצדק 'so that you can be righteous' as the motive behind God's treatment of Job rather than what prompted Job's criticism of God. Though substantially different on the surface, a closer examination reveals that the implication of the verse is the same as in the MT. It appears that the translator has attempted to capture an important nuance that he believed was present in the verse. Job 40:8b can be interpreted in at least two ways. Some commentators assume that Job's desire to maintain his righteousness was wrong. After all, no man can be righteous before God—not even Job (cf. 5:17). However, the OG translator interpreted the Hebrew text as though God recognized the legitimacy of Job's claim to righteousness. God himself had commended Job for this very thing in Job 1:8 and 2:3. With this perspective in mind, one could essentially paraphrase the Hebrew text to mean, "Do you (have to) condemn me so that you can be righteous?" The answer to this question is a resounding "No." Just as Job's suffering led his friends to assume that Job was guilty of sin, so too Job assumed that his innocence presumed an error in the meting out of God's justice. However, as we know from the prologue, God's purpose in allowing Job to undergo this suffering was to demonstrate that Job was a righteous man. It is this thought that the OG translator has captured in his dynamic translation of Job 40:8.

Lord'?" The Greek phrase δίκαιος ἐναντίον κυρίου 'righteous before the Lord' that appears in these verses is a translation of צדק מאל/מלהים 'righteous from God'. Modern scholars are divided over whether the idiom צדק מן indicates that someone is righteous *more than* another or that he is righteous *before* some-one.[15] The translator adopts the latter position. In each occurrence of צדק מן, the OG translates δίκαιος ἐναντίον/ἔναντι κυρίου 'righteous *before* the Lord' (32:2; 35:2) or καθαρὸς ἐναντίον κυρίου 'pure *before* the Lord' (4:17). The OG also adopts this rendering when translating the less-ambiguous phrase צדק עם אל 'righteous *with* God': δίκαιος παρὰ κυρίῳ (9:2) and δίκαιος ἔναντι κυρίου (25:4). In Job 32:1, the Hebrew phrase צדיק בעיניהם 'righteous in their eye' (MT צדיק בעיניו) was likewise translated δίκαιος ἐναντίον αὐτῶν.[16] As a result, it is clear that the Elihu of the OG was angry with Job because he claimed to be righteous.[17]

Because of the interplay between the OG of Job 32:1–2 and 40:8, Elihu is thus portrayed as though he is wrong. Elihu begins his criticism of Job's claim to be righteous just when the OG text asserts that the others came to realize that Job was righteous. He also concludes his discourse just as the Lord rises up to affirm the fact that Job is righteous (40:8). Elihu, in his youthfulness (32:6), has failed to perceive the true nature of Job's trials.

One should also notice that the OG's literal translation of Job 34:35 contributes to the negative impression of Elihu. In the MT, Elihu's accusation that Job has spoken without knowledge is confirmed both by the Lord's own criticism of Job (38:2) and by Job's final confession (42:3). But due to the OG's unique translation of 38:2 and 42:3, Elihu's perspective receives no confirmation and, instead, is flatly contradicted by the Lord's statement that Job spoke what is right (42:7–8). Elihu has clearly embraced a viewpoint that is wrong.

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15. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible it is consistently used to indicate someone who is 'righteous *more than*' another (Gen 38:26; Ezek 16:52; Jer 3:11). Moreover, one could argue that being 'righteous *before* God' is expressed in a different way (ומה יצדק אנוש עם אל, Job 9:2; 25:4). However, the context seems to support the meaning 'righteous *before* [someone]' (cf. Job 4:18–19; 5:7a and compare Eliphaz's nearly identical statements in Job 4:17–19 and 15:14–16). Note also the nearly parallel constructions in Num 32:22 נקיים מיהוה ומישראל 'innocent before God and Israel') and Jer 51:5 ארצם מלאה אשם מקדוש ישראל 'their land was filled with guilt before the Holy One of Israel').

16. Passages elsewhere in the LXX in which צדק מן is interpreted to mean 'more righteous than' someone else are translated δικαιοῦν ἀπό (Jer 3:11), δικαιοῦν ὑπέρ (Ezek 16:52), or δικαιοῦν ἤ (Gen 38:26).

17. This is underscored in the rest of Elihu's discourses as well. Elihu begins each of his speeches with a quotation of Job's own words that he wants to challenge. In each case, Elihu raises the issue of Job's righteousness (Job 33:8–13; 34:5–9; 35:2–3).

The unreliability of Elihu's words may also be reflected in Job's final confession. In 42:3 Job asks,

τίς δὲ ἀναγγελεῖ μοι ἃ οὐκ ᾔδειν,	לכן הגדתי ולא אבין
μεγάλα καὶ θαυμαστὰ ἃ οὐκ ἠπιστάμην;	נפלאות ממני ולא אדע
Who will tell me what I do not know,	For I have spoken without understanding,
great and marvelous things that I do not understand?	things too wonderful for me without knowledge.

Although one should probably interpret the rhetorical question in the OG primarily as an indirect appeal for knowledge from God, Job's statement also hints at the inadequacy of the counsel offered by his friends. Elihu and the other three friends were evidently unable to contribute to Job's knowledge of God and his ways among men.

I do not think that the translator deliberately tried to recast Elihu as unreliable. If that had been his goal, one might have expected the translator to include a reference to Elihu in the Lord's rebuke in 42:7–8 or, as in the *T. Job* 42:12, to include some sort of rebuke of Elihu at the outset of the Lord's speech. The absence of a closing reference to Elihu is certainly significant, especially in a translation where even minor characters such as Job's wife are subject to midrashic expansion (2:9a–d).

It is interesting to note, however, that the negative portrayal of Elihu that can be inferred from the OG eventually led to an even more critical assessment of Elihu's character. Elihu's inability to perceive the righteousness of Job that was recognized by the other three friends (32:1) and the absence of Elihu from the Lord's rebuke in the epilogue (42:7–8) led the author of the *Testament of Job* to identify Elihu as more evil than Job's other three friends. According to the *Testament of Job*, Elihu was inspired by Satan (41:5; 42:2) and was not considered by God to be worthy of grace (43:1).

As we have seen, the OG of Job can shed much light on the exegesis of the book of Job during the first and second centuries B.C.E. The translator did not work in a mechanical fashion, moving from verse to verse with little recourse to the larger context or issues of the book. He was extremely sensitive to the cohesiveness of the narrative and grappled with the significance of phrases in a way that is vastly different from our own. Because the three friends came to realize that Job was right all along (32:1) and because the Lord commended Job as one who spoke what is right (42:7–8), the translator did not think that the Hebrew text of Job 38:2 and 42:3 could be talking about Job as speaking without knowledge. Instead, Job tried to withhold his thoughts from God.

The translator's unique approach to these verses also has negative ramifications for the characterization of Elihu. Because he insisted that Job did speak without knowledge, Elihu becomes more blatantly negative than in the translator's Vorlage, and the OG becomes the springboard for even more critical assessments of Elihu in the *Testament of Job*.

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On the Influence of Job
on Jewish Hellenistic Literature

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> Make everything known to your son,
> Methuselah, and show to all your children
> that no one of the flesh can be just before
> the Lord. (*1 En.* 81:5)
>
> Indeed I know that this is so; but how can a
> mortal be just before God? (Job 9:2)
>
> And Thou hast fenced me off from all the
> snares of the pit. (1QH II 21)
>
> Have you not put a fence around him and
> his house and all that he has, on every side?
> (Job 1:10)

It has long been noted that parallels exist between Jewish Hellenistic literature and the book of Job.[1] On becoming blind, Tobit's prayer—"For it is better for me to die than to live, because I have had to listen to undeserved insults, and great is the sorrow within me" (3:6)—at once makes Tobit's plight analogous to Job.[2] Ben Sira's search for the "root" of wisdom (1:1–10) evokes the sentiments of the wisdom poem in Job 28.[3] I am struck by the connection to the language of Job in these apocryphal texts; however, the very fact that they, like Job, by definition belong to the genre of wisdom literature causes me to question how much emphasis we should give to their similarities to Job, arguably the wisdom text par excellence.

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1. The Jewish Hellenistic literature discussed in this article consists of the Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. On parallels see, for example, the introductory notes to *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*, *4 Ezra*, *Testament of Job*, and *Apocalypse of Elijah* in James Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (vol. 1; New York: Doubleday, 1983). Abbreviations in this essay are according to the *SBL Handbook of Style* (ed. P. H. Alexander et al.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999).

2. A parallel can also be seen with Jonah 4:3, "And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

3. An analogy to Prov 8:22–31 can also be drawn.

In the Pseudepigrapha, Joban parallels assail us in the first *Sibylline Oracle*'s revelation of the coming of the Titans, whose plot "to fight in opposition against the starry heaven" will be thwarted by the power of the surging waters, whose very boundaries, as in Job 38:8–11, were established by God (*Sib. Or.* 1:320). Establishing the "boundaries of the sea" is likewise essential to *2 En.* 28:4 and the *Prayer of Manasseh* 3 and is said to be worthy of recollection when contemplating the majestic powers of God in the *Hell. Syn. Pr.* 3:9. Again, the Joban scholar may be inclined to seek out a more-precise explanation for these parallels. Are the parallels due to more than the author's need to enrich the aesthetics of the text by drawing on some of the most powerful and prominent biblical imagery, in this particular case the Lord's speech from the whirlwind?

Among the Dead Sea Scrolls the same situation prevails. The Master's Hymn concluding the *Community Rule* implores the congregants to bless God for "His exceedingly wonderful deeds" (1QS XI 20), reminiscent of thoughts expressed in Job 42:1–6:

> My eyes have gazed on that which is eternal,
> on wisdom concealed from men,
> on knowledge and wise design
> (hidden) from the sons of men.

Reading further in 1QS (XI 21–22), we see that language reminiscent of Job continues:[4]

> What shall one born of woman
> be accounted before Thee?
> Kneaded from the dust,
> his abode is the nourishment of worms.
> He is but a shape, but molded clay,
> and inclines towards dust.
> What shall hand-molded clay reply?
> What counsel shall it understand?

Further contemplation by anyone familiar with the book of Job might lead him/her to view parallels of this sort as being more than coincidental. Based on the fact that approximately one hundred parallels with Job are found in Jewish Hellenistic literature, this pursuit *seems* to be worthwhile.[5] Finding one

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4. See Job 14:7, 15:14, and 25:4 for parallels with "born of woman"; 4:10 "dust"; 7:5, 21:26 "worms"; 10:9, 33:6 "clay"; 20:11, 34:15 "inclines towards dust"; and 38:2, 42:3 "counsel."

5. Joban parallels are found in Tobit (3:6 [bis], 13:2), Sirach (1:1, 6), and the Wisdom of Solomon (7:22; 18:1, 20, 21). In the Pseudepigrapha, parallels are most noteworthy in *1, 2, 3 Enoch* (see n. 24 below); *Sib. Or.* 1:320 (Job 38:8–11), 8:95 (Job 1:21); *4 Ezra* 3:34 (Job

hundred parallels to Job in this vast literature might seem daunting if it were not for the fact that 60 percent are found in the *Hodayot* and 19 percent in Enochic texts.[6] The concentration of these parallels in the *Hodayot* spurs anew the desire to explore the value of Joban influence. The Enochic parallels, on the other hand, must also be considered because (1) they serve as an excellent source for comparison with the parallels in the *Hodayot*, and (2) the well-documented (and controversial) significance of *Enoch* at Qumran warrants further thought with respect to its relationship with the *Hodayot*.[7]

The timeliness of this endeavor coincides with the plea of Florentino García Martínez regarding the main problems facing Qumran research on sapiential texts:

> Specific to the wisdom texts seems to me the acute need to analyse their relationship with Biblical wisdom compositions (in terms of ideas, vocabulary, compositional techniques, literary patterns, etc.) and with the larger continuum of the Near Eastern wisdom tradition. There is also the specific problem of the historical context in which these texts originated and their function there, as well as their function in the Qumran context which they transmitted, in which they were almost certainly used, and to which they may have been adapted. And finally, there is the specific problem of the relationship of these texts to the Wisdom of the Rabbis and the Christian Wisdom.[8]

Martínez's plea, though clearly directed at sapiential texts proper, is certainly applicable to the relationship between Joban parallels in these texts and the biblical text of Job, and the relationship of these passages to their immediate and

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31:6), 5:35 (Job 3:11), 6:49 (Job 7:12, 26:12); *Jub.* 2:2 (Job 37:4); *L.A.E.* 15:3 (Job 37:4), 36:2 (Job 25:5); *Prayer of Manasseh* 3 (Job 38:8–11); *Pss. Sol.* 17:43 (Job 5:1); and *Hell. Syn. Pr.* 3:22 (Job 38:11), 4:5, 12:17 (Job 26:7), 4:27 (Job 38:10), 4:34 (Job 28:25); and naturally in the *Testament of Job*. Among the DSS, besides the Master's Hymn (1QS X) and the *Hodayot*, parallels can also be found in CD VI, XI; 1QM X, XIV; and 11QPsᵃ XIX, XXII(2), XXVI. Fragments of additional manuscripts also preserve parallels (see, for example, 4Q504 frag. 6; 1Q27; 4Q185 i; and 4Q511 frags. 28–29, 30.

6. The Enochic texts referred to here are *1 Enoch*, *2 Enoch*, *3 Enoch*, and the Appendix to *3 Enoch*. Given the range of dates for these Enoch texts, viewing them as a single entity would be tenuous.

7. On the significance of *Enoch* at Qumran, beyond the discovery of the earliest *Enoch* manuscripts in Cave 4 and more recently Greek fragments in Caves 7, 8, and 12, see J. T. Milik and M. Black (eds.), *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976); and Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

8. Florentino García Martínez, "Wisdom at Qumran: Worldly or Heavenly?" in *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition* (ed. F. García Martínez; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003) 4.

greater sociohistorical context. In this paper, then, I will evaluate the Joban parallels in these two bodies of literature and illuminate their value with respect to ideology expressed elsewhere in Jewish Hellenistic literature, including the ways that this ideology is reshaped in the *Hodayot* and the Enochic texts.

The research of Schwarz, Davies, and Campbell on scripture in the *Damascus Document* as well as Kittel's research on the *Hodayot* will serve as a benchmark for determining the nature of Joban parallels.[9] Ideological criticism, as advanced by Gale Yee, will be applied to the Joban parallels to explain how and why Joban thought was drawn upon during the Hellenistic era, in the *Hodayot* and *Enoch* in particular.[10]

As early as 1961, Menahem Mansoor recognized the "echo" of biblical language in the *Thanksgiving Hymns*.[11] He applied the term "mosaic" to the interweaving of biblical language and style in the composition of the hymns, which "imitate Biblical psalms to such an extent that most Essene hymns are patchworks of phrases from the Psalter and, notably, from the Prophets."[12] While no discussion of Joban influence ensued, scholars continued to explore the way that biblical passages help form these "mosaic" hymns.[13]

In 1985 Davies pointed out that the term "mosaic" does not do justice to the potential value that the biblical passages held for the community at Qumran.[14] In 1995, Campbell revisited Davies's conclusion, finding it insufficient; he also challenged Schwarz's typology,[15] finding an intriguing contradiction among the scholars who see biblical allusions and quotations in CD as either "a clever, but superficial, web of scriptural borrowings which can otherwise be passed over" or valuable for discerning the background and ideology of the group who produced CD.[16] Because the "group behind the document must

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9. O. J. R. Schwarz, *Der erste Teil der Damaskusschrift und das alte Testament* (Diest, 1965); P. R. Davies, "Eschatology at Qumran," *JBL* 104 (1985) 39–55; Jonathan Campbell, *The Use of Scripture in the Damascus Document 1–8, 19–20* (BZAW 228; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995); Bonnie Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran: Translation and Commentary* (SBLDS 50; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1981).

10. Gale Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003).

11. Menahem Mansoor, *The Thanksgiving Hymns* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961) 25.

12. Ibid.

13. See, for example, Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, 9–10.

14. Davies, "Eschatology at Qumran," 44.

15. Schwarz had delineated three kinds of biblical-text usage in the *Damascus Document*: *Die Erzahlenden Text, Die Exegetischen Texte, Die Gesetzlichen Texte*. The second genre used the biblical text either to mark the climax of a particular situation (*Schriftbezug*) or to interpret a text (*Damaskuspescher*) (Schwarz, *Damaskusschrift*, 74–136).

16. Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, 27–28.

have had an origin and early history" and was religious in nature, biblical language would naturally have been employed.[17]

Campbell then posited three types of scriptural usage: quotation/explicit citations, allusions to the Scriptures, and "the employment of a general style of vocabulary and phraseology which sounds 'biblical' or simply 'imitation.'"[18] Even though the latter two are the most difficult to define and discuss, they will be of concern in this study.

In "allusions to Scripture," the author of the text does not explain why he has chosen what he has; he relies on readers to infer its significance, although this leaves us with little evidence regarding his own motivations. Similarly, in the case of biblical-sounding phraseology, we can determine neither authorial intent nor authorial ideology.

Bonnie Kittel's study *The Hymns of Qumran* sheds light on the ways and reasons that Joban passages are used. Although Kittel's primary concern is the poetic structure of the *Hodayot*, she also discusses the hymns' use of biblical language. Drawing especially on the research of Holm-Nielsen,[19] she delineates four types of "borrowing" from the Bible that, in general, parallel the categories later developed by Campbell.[20] Kittel's distinct contribution, however, is a criterion for determining whether an expression is used deliberately: one can assume that it is deliberate when the suspect phraseology "is not a frequently employed idiom in the OT," making it a readily recognizable reference to a specific biblical composition.[21]

Campbell's threefold classification (quotation, allusion, imitation) together with Kittel's criterion are useful for our inquiry into the nature of Joban parallels in Jewish Hellenistic literature. Campbell's terminology of allusion and imitation most readily describes the Joban parallels in the *Hodayot* and Enochic texts. More specifically, in the *Hodayot* we find allusions, whereas in Enoch imitation is the appropriate classification. Consider hymn 7 in the *Hodayot*:

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17. Ibid., 28.

18. Ibid., 29, 32.

19. Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot: Psalms from Qumran* (Aarhus: Universitetsforlaget, 1960).

20. Kittel's categories are: (1) quotation or allusion that is used to recall a specific passage to the reader/listener's mind; (2) biblical literary forms that are imitated by the use of standardized phrases in appropriate places; (3) biblical imagery and metaphors that are characteristic of certain types of literature or certain theological ideas; and (4) thoughts that are expressed in a manner consistent with biblical language and terminology (*The Hymns of Qumran*, 48–52).

21. Ibid., 50–51.

> For Thou hast given me knowledge
> through Thy marvelous mysteries,
> and hast shown Thyself mighty within me
> in the midst of Thy marvelous Council.[22]

This passage immediately evokes Job 42:1–6, where Job acknowledges the mystery and incomprehensibility of divine wisdom, which dwarfs human wisdom. Yet the allusion in hymn 7 has a new twist. Set within the larger context of the Teacher of Righteousness, who propounds these words and prefaces them with "Through me Thou hast illumined the face of the Congregation and has shown Thine infinite power," they now allude *not* to the Job who in the biblical text has just come to this realization but to the "Qumran Job," who is privy to the wisdom of the entire Joban drama and serves as an exemplar for the *Yaḥad*.

Consider two brief parallels in *1 En.* 18:2–3, during Enoch's first tour of Sheol: "I saw the *cornerstones of the earth. . . . These are the very pillars of heaven.*" This is reminiscent both of a question that the Lord poses in Job 38:6, "On what were its [the earth's] bases sunk, or who laid its *cornerstone?*" and of Job's response to Bildad in 26:11, "*The pillars of heaven* tremble."[23] Unlike Joban parallels in the *Hodayot*, these do not seem to evoke Joban ideology; this parallel corresponds to Campbell's third category of imitation.

Kittel's criterion for allusion becomes helpful in the distinction between allusion in the *Hodayot* and imitation in *Enoch*. Allusion (like quotation) is used to call a specific passage to the reader's mind, *intending* to evoke the expression's meaning in its original context. Hence, the *Hodayot* author wants the reader/listener to "connect" with the biblical Job, albeit with added significance. The *Enoch* author, by contrast, imitates biblical imagery and language simply to create and amplify his story.[24]

Campbell's conclusion on the use of scripture in the *Damascus Document* revealed two additional findings relevant to our question: (1) in the case of CD, the author returned time and again "to a distinct corpus of scriptural passages," and (2) the passages drawn on represent a particular ideology, in the case of

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22. For an English translation of the *Hodayot*, see Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (3rd rev. ed.; London: Penguin, 1987); for the Hebrew text, see F. Garcia Martínez and Eibert Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scroll Study Edition* (New York: Brill, 1999).

23. Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 1:22–23.

24. Further examples of imitation in *Enoch* are *1 En.* 18:5 (Job 36:29, 37:16), 42:1–2 (Job 28:20–28), 81:5 (Job 9:2), 93:14 (Job 38:5); *2 En.* 5:1 (Job 38:22), 28:4 (Job 26:10, 38:11), 40:10 (Job 38:22), 42:11 (Job 4:8), 47:5 (Job 36:27); *3 En.* 5:10 (Job 1:6), 6:2 (Job 14:1), 14:1 (Job 1:6), 26:12 (Job 1:6), 38:3 (Job 38:7); Appendix to *3 En.* 22:3 (Job 38:22), 23:14 (Job 1:19), 48:8 (Job 40:15, 41:4).

CD, "rebellion par excellence."[25] Similarly, both the *Hodayot* and the Enochic texts return time and again "to a distinct corpus of scriptural 'passages' from Job,"[26] namely passages from Job 28, 36, 37–38, 40, and 42 (the poem on wisdom, the Elihu speeches, and the Lord's speeches from the whirlwind) and occasional phrases from chaps. 1, 3–6, 13, 14, 17, 26, and 30, in which dramatic imagery, especially creation terminology, is present.[27] The question is: were these passages selected in order to embody a particular ideology?

Gale Yee's application of ideological criticism to the biblical text may provide the means by which to answer this question. Ideological criticism, as defined by Yee, is a method "that understands literature as an ideological production of social praxis, which itself is governed by ideology."[28] Drawing on Eagleton (and Marx), Yee explains that ideology, the production of ideas, beliefs, and values in social life, is borne out in the material world. Moreover, ideology can refer to (true or false) ideas and beliefs that symbolize the circumstances and life experiences of a particular socially significant group or class. This ideology promotes that group's interests and legitimizes them against rivals. It can also be deceptive, in that it may represent the ideas of a powerful minority rather than the majority. The potential is also present that an ideology will leave some things unsaid, especially ideas that are contradictory.

How is a literary text a production of ideology? The "text reveals something about its relationship and that history."[29] Yee well notes, however, that a text is not simply a window into another world, a mirror reflection of it, but rather, "the literary text becomes an ideology of an ideology."[30] The text may

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25. Campbell, *Use of Scripture*, 206.

26. Ibid. This is not to say that these texts do not draw on other biblical texts, but in the present study I will only treat them in a general way, in contrast to Joban passages.

27. The discovery of the *Targum of Job* at Qumran (Caves 4 and 11) may lend support to the idea that Job was influential on the ideology of the *Yaḥad*.

28. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve*, 9. Note that, although Yee is interested in an ideological approach to elicit a fresh understanding of gender in the Hebrew Bible, her specific strategies for applying this method to gender studies comes after delineating the basic ideological strategies. Yee follows the strategies as described by Terry Eagleton (*Ideology: An Introduction* [London: Verso, 1991]) and acknowledges that her approach is influenced by Marxist literary criticism, which has been most successful in bringing together the text and its social world. I will use the terminology "intrinsic" and "extrinsic," following Yee's understanding of "intrinsic" as referring to an analysis that focuses on "how the text reworks the ideologies that produce it" (p. 26)—in other words, the rhetorical devices and semantic choices utilized. An "extrinsic" analysis attempts to uncover "the social and historical conditions of the text's production" (p. 25).

29. Ibid., 19.

30. Ibid.

be "a complex reworking of an already existing ideological discourse" with absences or silences of the minority or conflicting ideologies.[31] In the case of Joban passages in the *Hodayot* and Enochic texts, it is essential to ask not only which passages are used to present ideology, but also which are not and to consider whether these passages reflect the voice of the majority. As noted, the poem on wisdom (Job 28), Elihu's speeches (Job 36–37), the Lord's speeches from the whirlwind (Job 38–41), and Job's recant (42:1–6) are drawn upon the most. In our examination of the *Hodayot* and Enochic texts, the use of these passages (over against the dialogues between Job and his three friends) will become evident.

The *Hodayot* are a collection of individual hymns of thanksgiving, numbered at 25 by Vermes,[32] that emphasize salvation and knowledge, two themes prominent in the book of Job. Authorship of some (if not all) of the hymns has been ascribed to the Teacher of Righteousness, and certain hymns (1, 2, 7–11) reflect the abandonment and persecution that were a part of his life, with details paralleling the biblical Job.

For the current study it is important to remember that these hymns do not develop a sequential plot line or develop an ideology; they are independent of each other. Because each hymn is written in the heightened style of poetry, they lack the components of plot construction (exposition, conflict, climax, resolution) and consistently embrace the climactic level of discourse. With these factors in mind, we can examine one hymn, the first, as an exemplar of the use and significance of Joban parallels, drawing comparisons with other hymns as needed.

The extant opening of hymn 1 has the author extolling God in creation. The language used alludes to, not only the Lord's speeches from the whirlwind, but also Job's recant (42:1–6):

> By Thy wisdom [all things exist from] eternity,
> and before creating them Thou knewest their works forever and ever.
> [Nothing] is done [without Thee]
> and nothing is known unless Thou desire it.

In the whirlwind speeches Job has been enlightened regarding the work of the Creator and the insufficiency of his knowledge (38:2). Post-whirlwind Job recants that he did not understand "things too wonderful for me" (42:3). The opening of hymn 1 echoes these very details: it is God who possesses this knowledge, not Job and not the author; Job and the author must accept their

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31. Ibid., 19–20.
32. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, 165.

humble position. The hymn confesses that it is God who has "spread the heavens" and all that pertains to them: the hosts of heaven, the mighty winds, the heavenly lights, "the stars in their paths," "the thunderbolts and lightnings to their duty," and "the treasuries (of snow and hail)." We similarly find these heavenly features in Job 37–38.

Hymn 1 continues with praise to God for the creation of man, his dominion over the earth, and the destiny established for humanity. Then follows what might be called a jubilant outburst:

> These things I know
> by the wisdom which comes from Thee,
> for thou has unstopped my ears
> to marvelous mysteries.

The reader is at once reminded of Job's confession (42:3), with its acknowledgment of the source of wisdom, and reminded of the earlier opening to the whirlwind speech (chap. 38). The Lord "unstopped" Job's ears when he revealed his wisdom in his speeches.

The "I" of hymn 1 proceeds to describe himself as "a shape of clay," "a ground of shame," "a melting-pot of wickedness," and "an edifice of sin," each descriptor evoking for the reader the character of Job.[33] The author then turns to a Joban style of questioning:

> What shall a man say concerning his sin?
> And how shall he plead concerning his iniquities?
> And how shall he reply to righteous judgment?

We immediately recognize the allusion to Job 9:2–3:

> Indeed I know that this is so;
> But how can a mortal be just before God?
> If one wished to contend with him,
> One could not answer him once in a thousand.

Hymn 1 turns to the most delicate creations, "breath for the tongue" and "the flow of breath from the lips."[34] Why do lips have such potential? "That they may tell of the glory and recount Thy wonders," writes the hymnist. The response to these creations again draws us back to Job: "But O that God would speak, and open his lips to you" (11:5).[35]

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33. See Job 10:9, 33:6, "shape of clay"; 11:3, 36:14, "shame"; 22:5, 35:8, "wickedness"; 7:20, 10:6, 13:23, "sin."

34. See Job 7:7, 12:10, 27:3, 32:8, 33:4, and especially 33:14.

35. See also 33:3, 20.

If the allusions thus far seem too general to be convincing, let us progress to col. II of hymn 1, where a rapid succession of succinct terms and phrases make stark allusion to Job's plight: "strengthening my loins" (Job 21:24, 38:3, 40:7), "a snare to those who rebel" (Job 18:9), "to traitors Thou hast made me a mockery and scorn" (Job 12:4, 16:20, 30:9), "a byword to traitors" (Job 17:6, 30:9).

Hymn 1 then closes:

> They have cast towards the Pit the life of the man
> whose mouth Thou hast confirmed,
> and into whose heart
> thou hast put teaching and understanding,
> that he might open a fountain of knowledge
> to all men of insight.
> They have exchanged them for lips of uncircumcision
> and for the foreign tongue
> of a people without understanding,
> that they might come to ruin in their straying.

Herein is the culmination of Joban allusion,[36] although this is not the biblical Job who challenged, questioned, and called on God to explain. Rather, we see the post-whirlwind Job, the Job who has recanted, the enlightened Job with newfound wisdom. This Job closes the first hymn by juxtaposing the biblical Job with the Qumran Job, replete with all the knowledge that his archetype, the biblical Job, had so painstakingly acquired. The Qumran author relates to Job because, not only as the leader of the Yaḥad, but also as a Jew in the late Second Temple period under Roman domination, he suffered; he also drew on the strength of Job to continue.

Consider just a few additional allusions from the *Hodayot*. In hymn 2 "mighty men have pitched their camps against me" and in hymn 7 "all my friends and brethren are driven far from me" at once connect the hymnist's suffering with the suffering of Job and his friends (19:13). A sense of being trapped like Job is alluded to in hymn 2: "I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast placed my soul in the bundle of the living, and has hedged me about against all the snares of the Pit" (Job 1:10, 33:28). The physical suffering of the biblical Job is also alluded to in the *Hodayot*: "They have let fly arrows against which there is no cure" (hymn 2 // Job 6:4); "as for me, shaking and trembling seize me and all my bones are broken" (hymn 7 // Job 4:14); "anguish [seizes me] like the pangs of a woman in travail" (hymn 9 // Job 3:24); "[groaning] and sorrow encompass me" (hymn 9 // Job 23:2); "for my sore

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36. See Job 17:14 and especially 33:18, 22, 24, 28, 30.

breaks out in bitter pains, and an incurable sickness impossible to stay" (hymn 14 // Job 34:16); "and Hell is upon my bed, my couch utters a lamentation" (hymn 4 // Job 7:13).

However, the *Hodayot* also redirect the Joban allusions to suit their needs. In hymn 2 the Teacher states:

> And the net which they spread for me,
> has taken their own foot;
> they have themselves fallen
> into the snares which they laid for my life.

Used originally for Job's suffering (Job 18:8, 22:10), the allusion is now re-directed to the Teacher's/*Yaḥad*'s enemies.

These Joban parallels, thus, reveal that the author of the *Hodayot* wanted his congregants to connect with Job, his story, and its rich imagery on a number of levels. First, the author (and congregants) of these hymns, like Job, have suf-fered. Second, unlike Job, the author (and congregants), though suffering, have benefited from the wisdom of the biblical Job; they are like the post-whirlwind, richer and wiser Job, privy to the wonders of God's wisdom; because of this knowledge, they can persist despite persecution from their enemies all about. They know their suffering is not of their creation. Unlike the biblical Job, they know the details of the prologue, as well as all that transpires before the epi-logue. Last, due to this wisdom acquired from the biblical Job, they too can endure and triumph. Ultimately, like Job's friends, their oppressors will fall into the snares laid for them.

This intrinsic analysis of select Joban allusions in the *Hodayot* suggests that the author of these hymns, whether the Teacher of Righteousness or not, wished that in the *Yaḥad*'s conversation with or songs to God the members would relate themselves to Job.[37] However, the particular passages chosen sug-gest a unique ideology informed by these Joban passages. This ideology em-braces the creation theology emphasized elsewhere in Qumran texts and the doctrine of dualism. The world of the biblical Job clearly draws on creation terminology to relate the mysteries of the universe and divine wisdom. The dualistic notion of good under siege by evil so prevalent at Qumran could be seen as played out in the very drama of Job. Job represented an inherent good that needed to be awakened and enlightened by the divine wisdom of creation theology to fight the forces of evil, the theology embraced especially by the three friends of Job, Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad.

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37. For the terminology "intrinsic" and "extrinsic," see above, n. 28.

As for Elihu, though seemingly playing the role of the young upstart in the Joban drama, in the greater scheme of this drama his words serve as a portent for the divine wisdom in the whirlwind speeches. Although the biblical Job does not recognize their value, the Teacher of Righteousness, guiding the *Yaḥad*, sees Elihu as offering as much wisdom and guidance as the mysterious poem on wisdom or the whirlwind speeches.

And so, specific passages of Job have been selected because they embrace two prominent doctrines of the *Yaḥad*: creation theology and dualism.[38] But where might *Enoch* fit into this ideology? The Joban passages "imitated" in *Enoch* point to the wonder of creation in recounting the revelatory journeys of the mysterious Enoch, drawing on them for aesthetic purposes. However, when read among the *Yaḥad*, given the significance of creation theology for them, the "imitations" of Job in *Enoch* might have been seen as embodying the ideology of kindred spirits.[39] To the *Yaḥad*, the Joban passages in *Enoch* may have provided an exemplar for the reader. In other words, the reader of *Enoch* was not only to consider Enoch, but also Job, when Joban "imitations" evoked his person. As such, the mysterious world of *Enoch* becomes part of the world of the *Yaḥad*, united by a similar association with the biblical book of Job, more specifically with its creation theology.

It is well to recall Yee's warning, however, that, although the text inscribes an ideology, this ideology may very well be that of the minority, not the majority. Whether or not this ideology was widely embraced among the *Yaḥad* may prove unanswerable. However, it is also well to recall that an intrinsic analysis of the text should connect with "the socio-historical circumstances of the text's production."[40] An extrinsic analysis of the *Hodayot* (and Jewish Hellenistic literature in general) does not discount the potential for the *Yaḥad*'s ideology to be embraced more widely, to a certain degree. As discussed in the opening of this essay, Joban parallels are found within other Jewish Hellenistic works, even if not to the extent they are in the *Hodayot* and Enochic texts. It is noteworthy that, while such parallels are infrequent elsewhere, the same corpus of Joban passages is used: primarily the Elihu speeches, the whirlwind speeches, and Job's recant. This evidence implies that Judaism of the late Sec-

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38. On these doctrines and the Yaḥad, see, for example, Peter Flint and James Vander-Kam, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper, 2002) 255–74; Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (1987) 36–57; and Alex R. Deasley, *The Shape of Qumran Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002).

39. Most Joban parallels in *Enoch* contain creation terminology. See n. 13 above for parallels.

40. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve*, 5.

ond Temple period embraced, to some degree, an ideology that included creation theology and the doctrine of dualism. These ideological elements drawing on Job would accord with the "sociohistorical circumstances" of this period, which was marked by sectarianism, a reaction to foreign domination, first by the Greeks and then the Romans. Sadducees, Pharisees, Hasidim, Zealots, Sicarii, Essenes, and the *Yaḥad* each would have experienced degrees of oppression in accordance with their doctrines in respect to how to continue their religious observance yet survive amidst foreign domination. Those more inclined to synthesize, tolerate, or adapt (Sadducees and Pharisees) may have still related to the suffering to Job but not nearly as much as sects that spiritually (Ḥasidim, Essenes, *Yaḥad*) or even physically (Zealots, Sicarii) sought to fight the opposing Roman forces.

At the intrinsic level of analysis, the use of Joban passages to promulgate creation theology and dualism is a prominent feature of the *Hodayot*. At the extrinsic level of analysis, set within the backdrop of the Hellenistic age, the *Yaḥad*'s use of Joban parallels connects it with other ideologies of late Second Temple Judaism; however, it is a connection of amplification. A modest element of Second Temple Judaism ideology (the influence of Job) has been magnified many times in the *Hodayot* and within the *Yaḥad*.

The perception that the *Yaḥad* embraced an ideology emphasizing creation theology and dualism *as evidenced by* Joban allusions in the *Hodayot*; that this use of Job suggests that the *Yaḥad*, or at least the Teacher of Righteousness perceived themselves as aligned with Job; that the *Yaḥad* looked to the author(s) of *Enoch* like kindred spirits; and that the ideology present in the *Hodayot*, embodied in Joban parallels, can be connected to some extent with ideology in the Hellenistic era generally may all very well remain in the realm of theory. However, what becomes noteworthy from this study of Joban parallels is that (1) two texts predominate in their use of Joban allusions or imitations: the *Hodayot* and *Enoch*; and (2) most significantly, both draw on the same corpus of Joban passages. These details cannot be ignored.

Martínez spoke of an "acute need to analyse" sapiential texts in order to understand their relationship to the biblical texts, their historical context, and the greater genre of wisdom literature.[41] Job 28:12 asks, "But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" Accommodating Martínez's plea and providing the answer to this eternal Joban question may jointly be found in dissecting the "mosaic" within the texts, not only at Qumran, but within other Jewish Hellenistic literature. While this study was confined to Joban parallels, exploring the influence of individual biblical books

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41. García Martínez, "Wisdom at Qumran: Worldly or Heavenly?" 4.

following the same methodology employed here and then conjoining these results might contribute to developing at the least a theoretical ideology of not only the *Yaḥad* but also of Judaism in the late Second Temple period.

Becoming Canon:
Women, Texts, and Scribes in Proverbs and Sirach

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When I first met Michael Fox many years ago, during some reception or other at the annual Society of Biblical Literature meeting, we talked about his disagreement with my interpretation of the Strange Woman in Proverbs as a symbol of evil. To Michael's mind, the figure remained in the social world of young men and their elders, an effectively stylized form of persuasion against the dangers of sexual adventures outside the boundaries of wife and home. Did this (patriarchal?) interpretation suggest that Michael himself was a patriarch? We shared a laugh at this self-mockery on his part. Certainly he seemed too young for the role. For me (younger yet, of course!), his interest in my work was well worth his disagreement. He further honored me sometime later with a suggestion that we coauthor an article in which we would dialogue about our different readings of the Strange Woman. I regret greatly that my own circumstances prevented this, and thus I was all the more delighted when, in his remarkable commentary on Proverbs 1–9, he did his utmost to hold up both ends of the conversation. I remain honored by his close attention to—including even his continuing disagreement with—both the whole and many of the particulars of my work on the female imagery in Proverbs.

I would like to use this happy occasion of honoring Michael Fox to pursue this conversation. My purpose is not rebuttal but entrée into more-recent interests of my own, centering on the book of Sirach. This book has not been a major focus of Michael Fox's published work; nonetheless, in his *Proverbs 1–9*,[1] many comments and footnotes provide a running comparison between the earlier and later wisdom books. A number of these touch on points of interest to me, relating both to my long-standing work on women and wisdom and to my more-recent musings about the development of the biblical canon.

Ben Sira stands, if not at a crossroad, then at a hard bend in the road to a biblical canon. While he has no singularly causal role in the process, his book, I believe, provides a denser coding of important developments than is generally

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1. Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000).

recognized. Preceding him we speak of an increasingly written, increasingly authoritative, increasingly closed set of religious traditions. With and after him we speak, if only in hindsight, of more or less open-ended interpretive traditions—whether the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Oral cum Written-Oral Torah, the Pseudepigrapha, or the New Testament. These traditions have or had their own various forms of authority, mainly insofar as they extend or comment on that consolidating and, finally, fully closed body of written work that we now conceive as the Tanak, to which we ascribe the designation "canon."[2]

But use of the term *canon* already presupposes a commonly understood definition, whereas in fact there is currently much debate on the matter, especially in regard to how "closed" a body of literature must be in order to qualify for the designation.[3] I shall take up elements of this debate in the course of my

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2. David Carr cites the fact that Ben Sira, while promoting a variety of writings, "talks exclusively of the Torah as holy Scripture"; this to him is one piece of evidence that "a broad canon had not yet achieved enduring recognition by this point" ("Thinking Socially about Canon: Implicit and Explicit Community Paradigms," paper presented to the Society of Biblical Literature, 2001). Lester Grabbe, on the other hand, observes that Ben Sira's praise of the ancestors poem could be seen as an outline of the narrative and prophetic literature now comprised by the Tanak, suggesting that the sage had this material in front of him in more or less its present form ("Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period," in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period* [ed. Lester Grabbe; ESHM 3; JSOTSup 317; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001] 142–48). The Dead Sea Scrolls, though beyond the scope of this essay, also provide prime evidence, partly contemporary with Ben Sira, of this process of canonizing and may be seen to some degree in counterpoint to his work. In both cases, the line between *canon* and *interpretation* is not yet clearly drawn: the production of authoritative books is still under way and the accepted rules for their use still being developed. Yet hierarchies of preferred writings are also evident. Ben Sira studies the wisdom of the world but glorifies only Torah, while writing in the tradition of Proverbs and Psalms. There are also important nonbiblical documents from Qumran as well as a tradition of reworked or rewritten Scriptures that blur the line between biblical text and biblical interpretation (James VanderKam, "Authoritative Literature in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *DSD* 5 [1998] 382–402; idem, "Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Canon Debate* [ed. Lee McDonald and James Sanders; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002] 91–109). Given the relatively narrow range of Ben Sira's composition, despite his wider studies, it is tempting to speculate that his sense of canon had progressed further than the thinking at Qumran.

3. The line between *scripture* (as a possibly open-ended body of sacred writings) and *canon* (as a closed or almost closed list) is especially fuzzy. The historical process has been typically dependent "upon the pressure of defining one 'orthodoxy' against one or more competing interpretations of faith'; and yet it is still finally determined not by fiat but by "usage of the majority" (William Graham, "Scripture," *ER* 13:142). Efforts to theorize about the problem include: James Sanders ("Canon," *ABD* 1:839), who distinguishes between canon as "the

discussion but for the most part will use the term for a body of authoritative, identity-shaping literature that, while not necessarily fully closed, is moving in that direction. We can, I think, speak of a canon-consciousness—a sense that the number of canonical books is finite, even if the exact number is not yet determined; that there is a "list" to which some books belong and others do not, even if books are still being added. It is in this betwixt-and-between state on the road to a closed canon that Ben Sira can be located, a location reflected in the ethos of his work.

The question I am interested in is how canon-consciousness emerges as part of the production of books and lists. My question is not so much a literary-historical one—hypothesizing developments regarding oral traditions, early writings, and redactions—as it is a sociocultural one. What I would like to understand better is how written texts gain authoritative status and, in particular, how they do this in a largely oral culture. Consideration of the processes of canon-formation thus needs to be contextualized in a wider study of orality and literacy.[4] In the present essay, I shall take up some of Fox's observations about speaking, writing, and women in Proverbs, with an eye to the question of "what changes?" in Sirach, and what the significance of these changes is for the growing authority of a book.[5]

Woman Wisdom and the Strange Woman are slippery characters in the book of Proverbs, and much less so in Sirach. A host of goddesses have been

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shape of a limited body of sacred literature" and its (antecedent) "function"; Gerald Sheppard (*ER* 3:65, 66), who distinguishes between Canon 1 (canon as "rule, standard, ideal, or norm") and Canon 2 ("a list, chronology, catalog, fixed collection, and/or standardized text"). But compare the different employment of these labels by Kendall Folkert, for whom Canon I and Canon II are distinguished by their "vectoring," "the means or mode by which something is carried." Canon I is vectored by "some other form of religious activity," while Canon II, closed and complete, is its own vector, a carrier of religious authority in its own right ("The 'Canons' of 'Scripture,'" in *Rethinking Scripture: Essays from a Comparative Perspective* [ed. Miriam Levering; Albany: SUNY Press, 1989] 173). This formulation leads Folkert to the conclusion that there is no Canon II until the Reformation.

4. I received William Schniedewind's important new book *How the Bible Became a Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), as I was (I thought!) finishing this essay. His question about canon formation in an oral context is very similar to mine, as is his turn to theories of orality and literacy. The historical scope of his work is much broader, however, and our findings sometimes concur and sometimes do not. Although I cannot give his book the attention it deserves in the present essay, I have tried to take account of it to some degree. As will become apparent, I have found his notion of "textualization" very useful.

5. For a comprehensive comparison of the female imagery for Wisdom in the two books, see Judith McKinlay, *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink* (GCT 4; JSOTSup 216; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

postulated in the search for female Wisdom's origin. It is difficult to imagine, given the ubiquity of polytheism in the ancient world, that some reemergence of the repressed female divine is not at work in the figure, although I agree with Fox that there is no intention here to reconstitute a goddess for Judaism. The questions, then, are why the sages first invented and then developed this exalted female character, what made her effective, and what is to be made of her pairing with what Fontaine calls her "evil twin" in Proverbs 1–9.[6] There are two basic considerations that drive my interpretation of both female figures and underlie my sense that the Strange Woman expresses an incipient ancient perception of ontological moral dualism. The first—and here Fox and I are on common ground—is that, in important ways, Proverbs' female imagery is grounded in men's experience with human women. Second, however, is what seems to me the inescapable rhetorical effect of the woman-versus-woman binary created in Proverbs 1–9 by the collocation of these poems.

Fox's proposal about the literary development of Proverbs 1–9 posits that the Prologue (1:1–7) and what he calls the Ten Lectures were composed by a single author as an introduction to chaps. 10–29, with the Five Interludes (all but one a Wisdom poem: 1:20–33; 3:13–20; 6:1–19; 8:1–36; 9:1–6+11, 13–18) added later.[7] To what end this latter and highly innovative development? The goals, Fox argues, are rhetorical, but with both moral and intellectual ramifications. Woman Wisdom provides an alternative to the Strange Woman's seduction by embodying in "the mythos of a woman" the attractions of "the perfect and transcendent universal, of which the infinite instances of human wisdom are imperfect images or realizations."[8] By means of this figure the authors of Proverbs "insist on an emotional commitment, a desire for learning."[9]

Seduction, attraction, emotional commitment, desire. Beyond mere precepts, the authors of Proverbs attempt to communicate and inculcate "wisdom as a power" that guards against the temptations presented by sinful men and women: "seduction is the main (indeed, almost the only) peril warned against in the lectures." The antidote to seduction is not just discernment of right and wrong but "*desire* to pursue the right."[10] The language, however, is irreducibly tropological. Seduction and desire may describe intellectual or moral experiences, but the terms are also inherently sexual. It is not surprising, then, that

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6. Carole Fontaine, "Proverbs," in *Harper's Bible Commentary* (ed. James Mays; San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 502.

7. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 322–29.

8. Ibid., 356.

9. Ibid., 275.

10. Ibid., 348–49, emphasis in original.

one reason Wisdom *must* be female (as opposed to personifying a masculine-gender word such as *sekel*) is the need for an erotic counterweight to the "explicitly sexual pull" of the Strange Woman or female Folly.[11]

I want to stress here the tight bonding of the discourse of sexuality to the discourse of the sages' teachings. While it is true, as Fox points out, that Proverbs 1–9 is concerned with evil men as well as evil women,[12] construing the problem as seduction and the solution as desire clothes evil in female garb. This is not to minimize the problem of actual adultery; far from it. But the problem only becomes a problem when men are unable to control women's sexuality, and fear of this uncontrollability governs an important strand of religious language in the Hebrew Bible. Proverbs' gendering of the discourse cannot be dissociated from the way in which adultery/fornication becomes virtually a dead metaphor for worship of other gods in narrative and prophetic literature—texts that were surely familiar to the sages of the late Persian and Hellenistic periods. It seems to have been for all intents and purposes impossible to think about Israel's problematic relationship with Yahweh without using the terminology of marital infidelity—that is to say, the choice of Woman Israel to do what she wills with her own sexuality-cum-religiosity. We might also then imagine that imprecations against adultery in Proverbs meant the moral sin, as Fox insists, but also more than this. This interpretation does not mean that the editor of Proverbs was concerned, as were the prophets, with actual foreign worship; I do not believe they were. But it does take seriously the conceptual power of the bad-sex/bad-religion equation that pervades much biblical thought.[13]

One of the most obvious features of human cognition is our tendency to think in binaries.[14] Even if the authors of the individual poems in Proverbs 1–9

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11. Ibid., 339.

12. Ibid., 259.

13. See my *Wise, Strange and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible* for an extended discussion of the varied manifestations of this rhetoric in biblical narrative (GCT 9; JSOTSup 320; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000).

14. I agree with Fox that Proverbs does not present the virgin-whore binary so often remarked in feminist literature (*Proverbs 1–9*, 260; compare my *Wise, Strange and Holy*, 17–18). The ethos is not anti-sex, as the erotic poem in 5:15–19 makes clear. This does not mean there are not other binaries at work, however, the most obvious of which is good woman/bad woman. Cast in the human dimension, the dividing line between the two is not sex versus no sex but rather married (= male-controlled) sex versus extramarital (= female-controlled) sex. This human experience provides the affective grounding for the projection of female-embodied goodness and evil into the ontological realm of life and death (see my *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* [BLS 11; Sheffield: Almond, 1985] 228–31,

did not intend to cast the Strange Woman's evil as a symbol of Evil itself, this is surely the effect of these chapters taken as a whole, once the Wisdom poems are added. The suggestion of a supra-social dimension to female strangeness appears already in 2:17, where the covenant language connects the marital relationship to the divine realm.[15] Fox further distinguishes what he regards as a "pathetic" depiction of the adulteress in 7:10–23 from the development in vv. 24–27, where we find "the strange woman in the abstract, the paradigm of all adulterous tempters."[16] Fox cautions that "[t]he hyperbole of the warning in the conclusion does not override the verisimilitude of the characterization in the lesson."[17] I would urge, however, by the same token, that the internalization of such a hyperbolic abstraction communicates a danger that transcends all its many living exemplars. The ultimate formulation of a direct semantic opposite to Wisdom—Lady Folly, who appears at the conclusion of the introductory chapters—culminates and absolutizes the binary opposition: insofar as the Woman who offers life *is* Life (8:35), it is hard to apprehend the Woman whose house is the mouth of death as anything other than Death herself.

I have reviewed my reading of the Strange Woman as a symbol of evil in Proverbs in order to highlight the real differences in the use of gender imagery, both for Woman Wisdom and her counterpart, when we turn to the book of Sirach.[18] Here the power of the Strange Woman is markedly diminished by means of a counteracting rhetorical strategy. Whereas Proverbs magnified the particular evil of adultery through the abstraction of female Strangeness, Ben Sira deflates the power projected through this unified image by reducing the problem to a list of particulars: the ʾiššâ zarâ who entraps with snares (compare Prov 7:22–23) is but one form of dangerous woman, alongside the singing girl, the prostitute, the shapely woman, and of course another man's wife (Sir 9:1–9). The adulteress is not the mysterious stranger on a darkened street who cajoles with erotically charged language but simply the wife of another man,

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for a model, drawn from anthropologist Clifford Geertz, of religious symbols as nodal points of ethos and world view, affect and intellect, morality and belief system). Notably in this poetry, there is no male binary, no figure of the "good man" developed to counter that of the evil men. The plural form is not insignificant, leaving the latter characterization in the social world rather than the symbolic one, as are the wise men who are the subjects (and hoped-for products) of the book as a whole.

15. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 121.

16. Ibid., 253–54.

17. Ibid., 254.

18. A fuller form of the argument of this section is found in my "Honor and Shame in Ben Sira: Anthropological and Theological Reflections," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (ed. Pancratius Beentjes; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 171–88.

who might inappropriately join the men in a banquet (9:9; compare 23:22–27)—presumably allowed to do so by her husband![19]

The gender relations depicted by Ben Sira are strongly marked by the cultural system of honor and shame, most obviously so in his instructions concerning women's shamelessness and the danger it presents to men.[20] Prostitutes or even other men's wives are not the heart of the problem, however; a man's own wife and daughters are! Thus his poem of caution on women begins, not with the outsider women, but with a warning against "the wife of your bosom" (9:1), an insidious evil within a man's house that the sages of Proverbs never imagined but that Ben Sira magnifies to monstrous proportions. The magnification is not produced by abstraction, however, but, as with the strange women, by reference to concrete details. The sage heaps vicious and specific invective on the evil wife's angry, querulous manner, her wickedness-darkened features, her refusal to obey her husband, her drunkenness, her jealousy, her untrustworthiness with money, and her lack of chastity—which she will likely pass on to her equally untrustworthy daughter (25:13–26; 26:4–12; 42:6, 9–14).

Woman Wisdom undergoes a different rhetorical transformation in Ben Sira's book. In Proverbs there is a mutually authorizing, dialectical relationship between the cosmic elevation of the female Wisdom figure and the positive and varied human female imagery that constitutes her.[21] The female imagery grounds universal Wisdom in an apprehensible form, while the figure's power and cosmic origin reinforce the status of the "house-building" wife with her wise instruction. Ben Sira is also capable of envisioning a good wife, who shares with her sister in Proverbs the ability to add substance to her husband's household (Prov 31:10–31; Sir 26:13b). In both books, furthermore, the wife's charm is surpassed by another quality. In Proverbs it is the same fear of the Lord that characterizes the pious man (Prov 31:30). In Sirach, however, the preferred quality is the wife's proper sense of shame, which entails both silence and chastity (26:14–15).[22]

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19. Far more threatening is the description of the male fornicator and adulterer, which employs the rhetorical style (for example, embedded speech) as well as the imagery of Proverbs' Strange Woman (Sir 23:16–21).

20. Camp, "Honor and Shame," and see also my "Understanding a Patriarchy: Women in Second Century Jerusalem through the Eyes of Ben Sira," in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. A.-J. Levine; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991) 1–39.

21. Idem, *Wisdom and the Feminine*, 79–147.

22. The imagery of the closed mouth is intimately tied to that of the closed vagina (idem, "Honor and Shame," 179–80).

Woman Wisdom cannot, of course, be silent. Ben Sira thus ruptures the bond between her characterization and the characterization of the ideal wife as silent. This rupture finds expression in three other ways as well. One of these hints at the lurking threat of female unchastity, while the other two neutralize the problem. Somewhat surprisingly, there are numerous links in words and imagery between the depiction of the adulteress in Sir 23:22–27 and the self-praise of cosmic Wisdom that immediately follows in chap. 24.[23] The adulteress in her "disgrace" (ὄνειδος; 23:26) provides an "heir" (κληρονόμος) by a stranger (23:22), while Yahweh, Wisdom, and Torah are the "inheritance" (κληρονομία; 24:12, 20, 23) of the antithetically "honored" (δεδοξασμένος) Israel (24:12); those who inherit Wisdom will not be "put to shame" (αἰσχυνθή-σεται; 24:22). The adulteress's children will not "take root" (διαδώσουσιν εἰς ῥίζαν; 23:25), though Wisdom did so (ἐρρίζωσα; 24:12). The woman's memory (μνημόσυνον) will be a curse (23:26); Wisdom's, sweeter (γλυκύ) than honey (24:20). Nothing is sweeter (γλυκύτερον) than following the commandments (ἐντολαι) of the Lord, the antidote to the adulteress (23:27). Wisdom, of course, is finally identified with this self-same law commanded (ἐνετείλατο) by Moses (24:23).

Ben Sira's neutralizing rhetorical solutions to this intimated sexual danger in personified female Wisdom are to masculinize her and to depersonify her. As striking as his praise of Wisdom at the center-point of his book may be, all the more noteworthy is the erasure of the cosmic feminine at the book's end and its replacement by an ideal cosmos constituted entirely of men.[24] In Ben Sira's climactic poem, the high priest Simeon in all his ritual splendor replaces Woman Wisdom as the one who ministers before Yahweh in the holy place (24:10; 50:14, 19), assuming her sensual imagery of plants and fragrant incense (24:13–17; 50:8–10, 12) along with her honor/glory (24:1–2; 50:4, 11). Nor does Simeon stand alone. Wearing "garments of splendor," he is encircled by a "crown of sons," "all the sons of Aaron in their honor/glory" (50:13), who have displaced Woman Wisdom's "crown of splendor" (6:31; compare 15:6).

Although Ben Sira sometimes casts Wisdom in specifically female terms, "her" main role outside chap. 24—as a rigorous disciplinarian—sounds more like the role of a father/teacher than a loving wife or mother (for example, 4:11–19; 6:18–31). This masculinization of Wisdom is complemented by her depersonification. Sir 14:20–27 begins with animal imagery, shifts to Wisdom as house (though not without sexual innuendo!), then concludes with the metaphor of the tree. Chapter 24 also increases the level of abstraction by re-

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23. Ibid., 183.
24. Ibid., 184–86.

ducing Wisdom's personal qualities. Instead of the dramatic metaphor of Wisdom being brought to birth by Yahweh, as in Proverbs 8, Ben Sira has her come forth, mist-like, from the mouth of the Most High. Most importantly, however, in Sirach 24 Woman Wisdom becomes a book. In this transition from Wisdom represented as (female) person to Wisdom as written text we may find an emblem of the transition from orality to textuality that undergirds the rising canon-consciousness of the second century B.C.E.

As Michael Fox argues, the content of wisdom as understood by the ancient sages undoubtedly went far beyond the book of Proverbs, beyond even the larger body of written Jewish sacred traditions.[25] Yet the early Hellenistic (or perhaps late Persian) period that Fox adduces for the addition of Proverbs 1–9 to the proverb collections[26] was, for Judaism, a time of books. But books do not slip easily into largely nonliterate cultures, for authority and power are at stake. As long as ancient Israel and Judah had monarchies, there were people who, of political and economic necessity, were trained to read and write. It is possible that in addition to these practical purposes writing was also understood to have a magical power, although how culturally pervasive this presumably priestly lore was is uncertain. As far as the biblical canon is concerned, however, William Schniedewind argues that it is not simply literacy that needs to be accounted for but "textualization." Whereas orality and literacy may exist on a continuum of use and interaction, "orality and *textuality* compete with each other as different modes of authority."[27]

I would like to return at this point to an earlier proposal of my own, namely, that one crucial function of Proverbs' female Wisdom figure, drawing on the authority of her universal purview and the persuasive appeal of her female embodiment, is both to constitute and to authorize the text that she introduces.[28] Evident here are the dynamics of orality and textuality characteristic of the context in which she emerges. I want to highlight two features of this interface: first, the formation of literary collections and, second, the tendency to associate these collections with human figures. Both features connect us with the larger issue of canonization.

Philip Davies argues that "copying and archiving are the very stuff of canonizing." Having been copied long enough for its status as a classic to be ensured, a work is finally

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25. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 358.

26. Ibid., 6, 48–49.

27. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 13.

28. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine*, 179–222.

classified as belonging to a collection of some kind. Scrolls *can* be canons in their own right, but multiple scrolls need to be archived: that means labeling and storing in some sort of order. . . . The result is various canons, groups of classic texts or classic collections on scrolls.[29]

The book of Proverbs, Davies goes on to suggest, is representative of this process of canonizing. Here "we have an example of a set of collections, some ascribed to Solomon, copied together onto a single scroll for obvious archiving reasons, and stored with the label 'Proverbs' or 'proverbs of Solomon.'"[30] While there is some degree of randomness in the way the smaller collections are patched together, there is also some intentionality in framing the collections of bilinear proverbs with the longer instructional poems that appear in chaps. 1–9 and 31. Especially notable is the prominent female imagery in these poems, which has led me to argue that this imagery was deployed as a means of providing a beginning and end to the book, in effect constituting it *as* a book[31]—which is to say, in Davies's terms, a canon and, indeed, a closed one.

It may well be that the "classic" status of Proverbs was the result of a long history of copying, but I think there is more to it than this, for a second feature of textualization in the postexilic period is the association of collected texts with authorizing persons.[32] I suggest that this move was specifically designed to meet an oral culture's expectation that the anonymous springs of hoary tradition flow through the mouth of a particular human mediator.[33] What was necessary for authoritative oral instruction—both its claim to antiq-

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29. Philip Davies, *Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 9.

30. Ibid., 136.

31. Scott Harris resists my emphasis on the feminine as the major structuring device of the book, citing (1) the presence of negative *male* imagery corresponding to the Strange Woman and (2) what he sees as a lack of feminine traits ascribed to Wisdom in Proverbs 1 (*Proverbs 1–9: A Study of Inner-Biblical Interpretation* [SBLDS 150; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995] 157–62). This criticism ignores, I think, the hermeneutical effect of reading the (MT) book as a whole, with its clear correlation of chap. 31's woman of worth and Woman Wisdom. Further, although negative male imagery does appear in 9:7–12, it appears only *in the mouth* of Woman Wisdom. According her the role of speaking subject is an extraordinary move for a patriarchal text, highlighting the structural importance of the feminine in the book's final redaction.

32. In connecting the mention of important figures to textual authorization, I move beyond Davies, who sees this first as a matter of classification (*Scribes and Scrolls*, e.g., p. 136).

33. Compare Adiel Schremer's analysis of "the book revolution" at Qumran, in which "text-based observance" displaces "tradition-based observance" as the primary mode of religiosity, one in which "the influence of teachers and educators increases dramatically ("'[T]he[y] Did Not Read in the Sealed Book': Qumran Halakhic Revolution

uity and its delivery in a contemporary voice of authority—must have been true all the more for writing.

The Bible, however awkwardly, constantly personalizes and thereby authorizes its texts in this way. The prophets provide a case in point: the abyss between their fully oral characterizations and their fully literary appropriation usually leapt (with the exception of Jeremiah's Baruch) with cavalier confidence. The authority of Moses, the legendary leader, was likely a tradition of long-standing at the time Deuteronomy was written, but it is this book that first channels his authority to the written word, an innovation that was then retrofitted into Exodus 24 as well.[34] The narrative flow suggests that the Tetrateuch was once of a piece with Joshua through Kings,[35] with Deuteronomy later dropped in, in my view precisely for the purpose of providing the authority of Moses, not to the story but to its *writtenness*. The book of Psalms, of course, must come from David and much of the so-called wisdom literature from Solomon. But these later scribal framings are either anticipated or justified, or both, by the stories told about texts and their spokenness, whether in the form of prophetic revelation or of covenant ceremonies. Thus text and ritual intertwine in the stories of Moses (Exod 24:2–8; cf. Deut 30:15–21), Joshua (Josh 24:1–27), Josiah (2 Kgs 23:1–3; 2 Chr 34:29–32),[36] and Ezra (Neh 8:1–8).

Wisdom literature presents a problem, however, in that it fits neither the revealed word nor the narrative-law-ritual patterns that govern the other texts. The dubious religio-sexual choices of its self-ascribed patron, Solomon (for all his purported wisdom), also undercut a neat covenantal packaging. Proverbs 1–9 meets the latter problem head on—on the one hand foregrounding Solomon's nemesis, the Strange Woman and, on the other, drawing on a multifaceted experience and tradition of wise women to provide an authoritative female countervoice. Wisdom's female form and voice disclose the complex

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and the Emergence of Torah Study in Second Temple Judaism," in *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kochba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* [ed. David Goodblatt et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2001] 105–26, esp. 107). Ben Sira is obviously also representative of this development. My proposal here is that one way earlier canon formations struggle with this shift from orally conveyed traditions to text-based observance is by appeal to authoritative speakers either embedded in the text or identified with it.

34. Schniedewind, *How the Bible*, 122–28.

35. See David Gunn and Danna Nolan Fewell, who refer to Genesis through Kings as "the primary story" (*Narrative in the Hebrew Bible* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993] 3).

36. It is perhaps noteworthy that, while 2 Chronicles identifies Josiah's Torah with Moses, 2 Kings does not. Is Moses-the-writer a development later than the time of Josiah, even if the teachings of Deuteronomy are Josianic?

interplay of the oral and the written in a way that prophetic texts (with their divinely-called messenger) and narrative texts (with their omniscient narrator) do not. In the wisdom literature, the scribes who are hidden behind most of what became canon come forward to show their own faces.

These faces remain at first masked by the façade of an older man instructing a younger, nominally, at least, a father to a son. It was not always thus. The "men of Hezekiah" who copied the "proverbs of Solomon" made no pretense of being anything other than royal scribes with literary interests (Prov 25:1). The book of Proverbs, however, while nodding briefly to Solomon at the outset (1:1), cedes immediately to the voice of the father and, secondarily, the mother as well. Fox wishes to retain the real social connection of Proverbs to the family setting, while acknowledging that its presentation in chaps. 1–9 may be fictive, indeed, possibly a "disguise" for a school setting.[37]

It is this disguising rhetoric of the home that interests me here as a mark of the transition from orality to textuality and its related shift of authority. As Fox notes:

> The Wisdom tradition is self-consciously *literary*, but it uses a genre setting (*Sitz im Leben*) that was originally oral, namely, parental advice, the most fundamental form of education. That does not mean that *these* texts were ever declaimed by the authors to their children, but that this setting is the way the authors want their teachings understood.[38]

At the same time, Fox observes, "[t]he Prologue regards the sayings as *text* that must be studied and interpreted, not just heard and obeyed. . . . [T]he *me-shalim* are viewed as Wisdom *literature*, not just wisdom."[39] Indeed, the same might be said of the instructions in chaps. 1–9 themselves, for it is questionable whether their oral "genre *setting*" involved an actual oral *form*. Parental advice is the most fundamental form of education, but did parents teach in parallel bicola? Indeed, did even schoolteachers teach in parallel bicola? Yet the family setting persists.

The reason, I would suggest, is not simply to disguise a school but to provide the semblance of traditional, oral, family-based authority to the literary products and producers of the new educational institution. The ostensible father-to-son *oral* discourse camouflages, even as it manifests itself in, the *written* texts. Thus, the dialectic of the oral and the written, so well described by Fox, accounts for more than the writing down of the fundamentally oral enterprise of instruction: it represents the more profound movement toward textualiza-

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37. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 9, 75, 80.
38. Ibid., 75.
39. Ibid., 76.

tion, vesting authority in books rather than voice, scribes rather than fathers. It also yields the considerable irony of the written text's initially acquiring authority by appeal to the family/oral context that it will eventually supplant.

The irony persists in the shaping of the book itself. The prologue to Proverbs, as Fox notes, "regards the sayings as *text* that must be studied and interpreted," and directs its address to adults ("the wise") as well as youth (1:5−6). Yet the prologue presumes the family-centered and family-sourced instructional poems that both open and close the book (chaps. 1−9 and 31), poems that shape it *as a book* and indeed, as I have noted, a closed book. Now, while the canonical *process* is one of copying and archiving, it is closure that marks the final canonical product and further intensifies the need to persuade the readers that authority lies within the text itself. At the same time, as it approaches closure, the book increasingly demands interpretation. As Jonathan Z. Smith observes,

> the formal requirement of closure . . . generates a corollary. Where there is a canon, it is possible to predict the *necessary* occurrence of a hermeneute . . . whose task it is continually to extend the domain of the closed canon over everything that is known or everything that exists *without* altering the canon in the process.[40]

If Fox is correct, it is in this latest, canonizing moment of the literary history of Proverbs that Woman Wisdom makes her appearance.[41] To what end? Fox makes two proposals that relate to Smith's point about the interface of canon and interpreter.

First, "[t]he book of Proverbs is one precipitate of the primeval, universal wisdom, as this is transmitted by and filtered through individual sages."[42] This universal wisdom is embodied in Woman Wisdom herself, "a single principle that comprehends all sagacious teachings and astute thoughts"[43]—an extended domain indeed! Second, the choice to personify Wisdom as female has implications for the kind of authority that is envisioned for her. In contrast to a masculinized *sekel*, whose "antiquity, wealth, and power would make his authority *institutional*, a derivative of social and political relationships,"[44] Woman Wisdom's

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40. J. Z. Smith, "Canons, Catalogues and Classics," in *Canonization and Decanonization: Papers Presented to the International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religion (LISOR) Held at Leiden, 9−10 January 1997* (ed. A. van der Kooij and K. van der Toorn; Leiden: Brill, 1998) 306, citing his own 1979 work, *Imagining Religion*.

41. Fox, *Proverbs 1−9*, 326−28.

42. Ibid., 358.

43. Ibid., 359.

44. Ibid., 339.

influence is verbal, working through persuasion and appeal to affection, not through exercise of office and power. Her power and appeal come from the just workings of the universe and the good sense of individual minds rather than from the constraints and compulsions of political institutions.[45]

If, then, the personification of Wisdom makes it universal, the *female* personification makes it personal.

The manifestation, however, is textual. Woman Wisdom embodies the complete wisdom of the universe, articulated in replaceable but sufficient form by the sage—best represented as a father—who teaches orally but also writes a book. The literary instructions of the book may have been re-oralized with speech in the father/teacher's own declamation. Within the text, however, this "paternal" declamation comes forth in conjunction with the (en-texted!) re-oralizing of female Wisdom.[46] Fox argues that the father/teacher's voice is not merged with Wisdom's but is heard in counterpoint to hers.[47] It is not, however, the counterpoint of equals: "The teacher is wise, but wisdom itself transcends any human's wisdom."[48] This difference matters, in my view, as comparison with Ben Sira will show. The anonymous writer of Proverbs—however much authority he may have had in giving oral instruction—must offer as authorization *for his writing*, not only the mask of the speaking father, but also the voice of Wisdom, who both shapes and transcends the book. The Wisdom figure, then, embodies the dialectic of orality and textuality that constitutes the interpretive process required by the canonically delimited book, both to authorize and to point beyond itself. Woman Wisdom is the quintessential "hermeneute," already embedded in the text itself.

Once the scribe names himself and asserts his office, however, books will never be the same. Ben Sira represents a new moment in the development of

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45. Ibid., 340.

46. Compare with Schniedewind: "even the written word is relational," and his citation of William Graham: "A text becomes 'scripture' in active, subjective relationship to persons. No text, written or oral or both, is sacred in isolation from a community" (*Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987] 5). "Likewise," comments Schniedewind, "even after an oral tradition is textualized, it never completely escapes a fundamental orality" (*How the Bible*, 196). Beyond even this, I argue, is the conscious *re*-oralization that marks the persistent attribution of texts to persons in the Bible and generates the *parole* that is essential for a book to "invit[e] both a sense of plausibility and conviction" (Smith, "Canons," 299).

47. This against Carol Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1–9," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989).

48. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 359.

canon-consciousness, and the shift in his use of gender imagery corresponds to this change. Fox points to two developments in regard to personified Wisdom. First, Ben Sira represents but one "decoding" of the complex "mythos" of female Wisdom: Wisdom becomes Torah.[49] At the same time, whereas in Proverbs Wisdom speaks her own words, in Sirach—precisely as Torah—"she conveys [God's] word to the world by her very being."[50] She becomes a mediator between the divine and human worlds.

There is, however, more than one way to think of "mediation." It is true that Woman Wisdom in Proverbs speaks no verbal message from God, as a prophet would. She does, however, mediate divine *power*—more like a king would—in her offer of life, prosperity, security, and political authority. Her mediation is iconic—the communication of presence—rather than cognitive. Ben Sira's identification of Wisdom with Torah, surprisingly, does not change this. Although we might expect this textualization of Wisdom to produce text-based teaching, it does not obviously do so—not, at least, in the way we might expect of a wisdom teacher, with his traditional concern for moral guidance.[51] One curious aspect of Ben Sira's book is that, for all his elevation of Torah, he hardly ever cites or interprets its laws.[52] Just as Proverbs' Wisdom mediates iconically, so too does Ben Sira's Torah, embodied in precisely this same form.

This does not mean, however, that there is no content to be authoritatively appropriated. While Wisdom in Proverbs points beyond the text to universal wisdom (while also including the text *in* universal wisdom), Ben Sira brings Wisdom/Torah into close and authorizing alignment with his very own book, as the parallel imagery for Torah and his own inspired instruction clearly demonstrates (24:23–34). Just as "the book of the covenant of the Most High

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49. Ibid., 243.

50. Ibid., 334.

51. In contrast, Schremer cites passages from the *Damascus Document*, the *Manual of Discipline*, the *Temple Scroll*, and 4QMMT (see also *Jubilees*) as evidence for "Qumran's tendency to halakhic strictness and its bibliocentricity, that is, the crucial role that Scripture plays as a source for the sect's self-definition and its unique halakhic norms" ("[T]he[y] Did Not Read," 112).

52. One exception to this generalization may appear in 3:1–16, where Ben Sira offers a detailed commentary on the commandment to honor parents. I thank George Nickelsburg for pointing this out (among many helpful comments) in his response to an earlier version of this paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the SBL, 2003. But compare Jack Sanders, who argues that even this teaching is assimilated to a sapiential logic ("When Sacred Canopies Collide: The Reception of the Torah of Moses in the Wisdom Literature of the Second Temple Period," *JSJ* 32 [2001] 123–24).

God" overflows like the rivers of Eden, Canaan, and Egypt, he too flows like a canal, watering his garden before becoming a river and then a sea. He pours forth prophecy as the book pours forth wisdom. And, though "the first man did not know wisdom fully, nor will the last one fathom her," this sage will "make instruction shine forth like the dawn, and . . . make it clear from far away." As Ben Sira's grandson clearly perceives, his predecessor's purpose was, despite his sparse citation of it, to help people "live according to the law" (Prologue, two times).

At the same time, this identification of Wisdom with text effectively *de*-personifies her, a shift that corresponds to Ben Sira's attenuation of the connection between Wisdom and the good wife. The authority with which Wisdom speaks, both divine and personal, is co-opted by the male teacher to be written down in his book and preserved for future generations (24:33; 50:27). The scribe who hides behind Woman Wisdom in Proverbs here asserts his own textualized voice and his authority, through his interpretation, over her. To do so, Ben Sira does not turn to the emerging method of midrashic *halakah* evident at Qumran, a fundamentally literary form, but continues a long tradition of non-legal moral teachings that echo the oral mode, the quasi-oral form effectively mediating the authority of written texts—his own as well as Moses'—to an oral world.[53]

If chap. 24 supercedes female Wisdom's voice with the voice of the male scribe, chap. 50 masculinizes as well her iconic quality of powerful presence. Her glory is transferred to the high priest: Simeon displaces her as minister before Yahweh in the holy place (24:10; 50:14, 19) and assumes her sensual embodiment imaged as plants and fragrant incense. Although Ben Sira is often credited with identifying Wisdom and Torah in a new, or at least newly explicit way, his identification of Wisdom with cult is equally important.[54] And

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53. G. W. E. Nickelsburg notes the similarity between Sirach and *1 Enoch* in their use of sapiential forms rather than *halakah* as the means of ethical instruction, suggesting the sensibility that, despite Moses' rising star in the second-century literary world, his unique authority was not uniformly established (*1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of Enoch* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001] 58–59; see also Sanders, "When Sacred Canopies Collide," 121–36). I thank Prof. Nickelsburg for these references. With Nickelsburg, Sanders, and others, I imagine "Moses" and "Enoch" to be mouthpieces for competing constituencies. My contribution to the discussion would be to propose that at least part of the battle involved the process of textualization itself, with Ben Sira's willingness to show his authorial hand constituting a unique and innovative strategy.

54. See my "Honor and Shame"; and Benjamin Wright III, "'Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest': Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (ed. P. Beentjes; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 189–222.

yet in each case the apparent identification elides a more tensive relationship. For Ben Sira clearly, if diplomatically, represents his own scribal office as the source of an alternative, though complementary, authority to that of the priests (38:31–39:11). For all the glory of Simeon in the temple, the sage in the end calls his readers to his own house, the *bêt midrāš* (51:23).[55] Through his scribal work, moreover, Ben Sira hopes to achieve the eternal memory and honored name accorded to the list of famous men whom he praises in chaps. 44–50 (39:9–11; 44:8–15). It is here—in narrative rather than in law—that Ben Sira engages directly with the authoritative writings of his tradition. On his own authority he adds Simeon to the list of Israel's identity-defining heroes—a roster that he also wants to make himself. And for this to occur, his book will also have to make the list of the emerging canon, his scribal interpretation of Torah taking its place alongside Torah. As Michael Fox has so astutely noted, while Ben Sira's invitation to his *bêt midrāš* presumes the known reality of a school, in his final poem this fundamental home of both heart and mind is "a metaphor for his book."[56]

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55. For an analysis of competing spaces in Sirach, see my "Storied Space, or, Ben Sira 'Tells' a Temple," in *"Imagining" Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan* (ed. David Gunn and Paula McNutt; JSOTSup 359; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 64–80.

56. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 7 n. 7.

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Translating Biblical Words of Wisdom
into the Modern World

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Of Michael Fox's manifold contributions, none is more significant or of more enduring value than his work on wisdom literature within the Hebrew Bible and, more broadly, throughout the ancient Near East. Because only a handful of specialists command all of the languages in which this ancient wisdom was committed, translation is a necessity. In this essay, I look at Fox's renderings (and suggestions for rendering) of a select group of words and phrases within Song of Songs, Qoheleth (or Ecclesiastes), and Proverbs, comparing them with a selection of contemporary English-language versions. In analyzing these selections, we will, I believe, come to recognize the abiding value and validity of Fox's insights.

Before proceeding, I need to make several points that serve to define and delimit the present study. The translations of Fox that I analyze are for the most part not the primary purpose of the works in which they are found but ancillary to his analysis of passages. For this reason, Fox does not follow a consistent pattern of or approach to translation. Nonetheless, he reveals at least the broad contours of his preferred method of rendering Biblical Hebrew in statements such as these:

> The translation is fairly literal. It seeks to suggest the rather baroque style of the book (rather than simplifying, as some translations do), and it tries to reflect the quality of the syntax, which is often convoluted. . . . The translation also tries to maintain consistency in the rendering of key words that constitute motifs. . . . I do not, however, aim for strict correspondence.[1]

> In conjunction with the comments on each unit I give a literal translation. A periphrastic rendering follows the commentary. . . . The literal translation is not on the extreme of the scale of literalness . . . and does not aim at strict English-Hebrew concordance. It does attempt to render the theme words consistently,

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1. Michael Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Studies on Personalities of the Old Testament; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991) 13.

but not even this can always be achieved without violence to the meaning. In the
literal translation I usually maintain ambiguities present in the Hebrew text.[2]

In my opinion, the description of his style as "fairly literal" and "not on the
extreme of the scale of literalness" accurately defines his renderings and,
moreover, produces a version that is serviceable in many contexts. In addition
to revealing, as I see it, Fox's preferences, these quotations also serve as a re-
minder that the term "literal" does not describe a monolithic phenomenon;
rather, it defines a range of options at one end of what I would term the
literal–free continuum.[3]

The contemporary translations that I have selected are broadly representa-
tive of the stylistic and theological options available in the ever-growing Bible
market of today. I provide here only the briefest of descriptions in order to
identify my reasons for selecting each.

I begin with the two primary translations available to English-speaking
Jews: the Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (NJPSV) and
the *ArtScroll Tanach*. The NJPSV, of which the Torah appeared in 1965 and the
last revision in 1999 (with the publication of an English–Hebrew edition), fol-
lows closely the traditional Masoretic Text (MT), especially in its Torah, and
embodies rabbinic interpretation on occasion. Its most distinctive feature,
however, is stylistic rather than exegetical, in that it exemplifies the dynamic
or functional equivalence espoused by one of its chief editors, Harry M. Or-
linsky, who shares this preference with the American Bible Society teams re-
sponsible for the Good News Bible and the Contemporary English Version.

The *ArtScroll Tanach*, often called the Stone edition (after its benefactor), is
a product of Mesorah Publications, which has positioned itself firmly in the
Orthodox wing of Judaism, combining a wide array of traditional sources
with very high production values. Its rendering of the Hebrew Bible fre-
quently prefers the interpretations of Rashi and other exegetes over the *peshat*
or plain meaning of the text. Additionally, it brings into its English texts all
sorts of midrashic material.[4]

I turn next to the King James Version (KJV) and some of its descendants. In
spite (or perhaps because) of the passage of almost four centuries, the King

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2. Michael Fox, *Qohelet and His Contradictions* (BLS 18; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic
Press, 1989) 165.

3. For interesting observations on this phenomenon, see James Barr, *The Typology of Lit-
eralism in Ancient Bbilical Translations* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979).

4. For Jewish versions, including the NJPSV and the *Tanach*, see my "Jewish Translations
of the Bible," in *The Jewish Study Bible* (ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler; New York:
Oxford, 2003) 2005–20.

James retains a central, for some unique, status among Protestants. Even though (or, again, because) much of its language is barely comprehensible today, its phrasing and cadence define, for millions of English-speakers, what the Bible is. Although rarely noted, it is demonstrable that the King James translators, Protestants all, were deeply imbued with knowledge and a keen sense of the Hebrew language and more than a smattering of Jewish exegesis, especially the exegesis associated with David Kimḥi (Radak).[5]

I have not included here any of the revisions, which I collectively term "sons of King James," such as the New King James or the 21st Century King James, that add little to (and subtract much) from the original. I turn instead first to the New American Standard Bible (NASB), which traces its ancestry to the King James through the Revised Version of 1885 and its American corrections in the American Standard Version. Its stated goal is to reproduce the original languages with as strict fidelity as possible; the results have often been criticized as wooden.[6]

My placement of the New International Version (NIV) next is deliberate, even though it is not, according to its creators, in the King James mode. But it does share with the New American Standard the desire to appeal to conservative Protestants, for whom the Revised Standard Version and New Revised Standard are perceived as too liberal. The New International Version has, in this regard, enjoyed unparalleled market success. In literally dozens of editions aimed at every conceivable niche, it is by far the number-one-selling Bible in the United States. Along with a style that most would define as quite readable, it is not reluctant to incorporate traditional Christian interpretations at many points, sometimes preferring to translate the Septuagint rather than the Masoretic Text when this strategy is perceived as achieving this goal.[7]

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5. Recent scholarship on the King James Version includes Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible and How It Changed a Nation, a Language, and a Culture* (New York: Doubleday, 2001); Benson Bobrick, *Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution It Inspired* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001); and Adam Nicolson, *God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2003). For the debt owed to Jewish exegetes by the translators of the King James Version, see my "KJV and the Jews," *Religious Studies News/SBL Edition* (online: October 2003).

6. For more information on the New American Standard Bible, see Steven M. Sheeley and Robert N. Nash Jr., *The Bible in English Translation: An Essential Guide* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997) 38–41.

7. For more information on the New International Version, from the perspective of insiders, see Kenneth L. Barker, *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).

The Old Testaments of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) have been and continue to be the most widely used in academic circles. Although the RSV Old Testament was treated with scorn by many conservative Protestants on its appearance in 1952, it soon won wide acceptance among Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Its translation team was the first—and, along with the NRSV, only—mainstream (that is, Christian) one to include a Jewish scholar, Harry M. Orlinsky. The NRSV, which was first published in 1990, is more gender-sensitive than the RSV and tends to be less literal than its predecessor as well.[8]

The New American Bible (NAB) and New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) are the two English-language versions for Roman Catholics. They represent the first Catholic translations of the Hebrew Bible, as opposed to the Vulgate, into English. The NAB, in its initial editions, favored functional equivalence, but its successive revisions tend toward the formal. This is also the case for the NJB. The texts of both of these versions are in accord with Catholic doctrines and teachings.[9]

The Revised English Bible (REB) is a product of British scholarship and is intended to replace the New English Bible, whose stylistic and other infelicities were widely noted. The REB aims at a high level of literary quality, coupled with a greater willingness than more-conservative versions to part company with the MT.[10]

The Living Bible (LB) was a periphrastic rendering, undertaken by an individual with no knowledge of Hebrew or Greek. Its idiosyncrasies were well documented, as was its ability to attract a wide audience. The New Living Translation (NLT), undertaken by conservative researchers with linguistic and other requisite expertise, aims to retain the LB's distinctiveness, harnessed to more-responsible scholarship.[11]

The Contemporary English Version (CEV) is a translation prepared by the American Bible Society, which earlier produced the Good News Bible. It is an

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8. For more information on the New Revised Standard Version, from the perspective of insiders, see Bruce M. Metzger et al., *The Making of the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

9. For Roman Catholic versions, including the New American Bible and the New Jerusalem Bible, see John Stevens Kerr, *Ancient Texts Alive Today: The Story of the English Bible* (New York: American Bible Society, 1999) 181–84.

10. For more information on the Revised English Bible, see Bruce M. Metzger, *The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001) 153–55.

11. For more information on the New Living Translation, see Sheeley and Nash, *The Bible in English Translation*, 79–82.

excellent example of a functional-equivalence version. Although its New Testament portion often breaks new ground in Jewish-Christian relations, it is traditionally Christian in its Old Testament.[12]

For the book of Ecclesiastes, I have chosen two closely related passages, 1:9 and 3:14–15, that are at the heart of this book's message. For the most part, these two passages can be discussed together, because Fox's primary concern and major contribution in this connection involves the rendering of a common but crucial root: היה. As Fox states,

> "to happen" (or "occur") is the better rendering when the author is not speaking of simple existence. In Qoh 1:9, the Hebrew usually translated "That which has been is that which shall be" does not mean that a certain entity will once again come into existence, a notion quite foreign to Qohelet. It means that *types of events* recur *ad infinitum*. The types of events he has in mind are illustrated in 3:1–8, the "Catalogue of Times," whose idea is recapitulated in 3:15. The rendering of *hayah* as "to be" could lead to misunderstandings, as it has in 3:14, where the translation "whatever God has made will be forever" may be read to imply the eternity of the created world, a notion unparalleled in Qohelet and not relevant to context.[13]

For forms of עשה in 1:9b: 'happens' (Fox actually uses 'occurs') is preferable to the other common meaning of this root ('to do'; that is, 'is done').[14]

As Fox observes, the most common translation of one of the most common Hebrew verbal roots (היה) risks serious misrepresentation of what the book is all about. Interestingly, almost all English versions follow, consciously or not, the wording of the KJV at 1:9, as can be seen in the listing just below. The exceptions are striking: NJPSV, REB, NLT, and CEV. In general, these versions have little in common, representing as they do diverse styles and differing theological perspectives. Nonetheless, they unite here with each other, and with Fox, to provide the correct understanding of Ecclesiastes' thought.

> *Fox*   That which happens is that which shall happen,
> and that which occurs is that which shall occur,
> and there is nothing at all new under the sun.

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12. For more information on the CEV, from the perspective of insiders, see Barclay M. Newman et al., *Creating and Crafting the Contemporary English Version: A New Approach to Bible Translation* (New York: American Bible Society, 1996).

13. Fox, *Qohelet*, 151–52.

14. Ibid., 173.

NJPSV   Only that shall happen
         Which has happened,
         Only that occur
         Which has occurred;
         There is nothing new
         Beneath the sun!

Tanach   Whatever has been is what will be, and whatever has been done is
         what will be done. There is nothing new beneath the sun!

KJV   The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and what is done *is*
         that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

NASB   That which has been is that which will be,
         And that which has been done is that which will be done.
         So, there is nothing new under the sun.

NIV   What has been will be again,
            what has been done will be done again;
            there is nothing new under the sun.

NRSV   What has been is what will be,
            and what has been done is what will be done;
         there is nothing new under the sun.

NAB   What has been, that will be; what has been done, that will be done.
         Nothing is new under the sun.

NJB   What was, will be again,
         what has been done, will be done again,
         and there is nothing new under the sun!

REB   What has happened will happen again, and what has been done will
         be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

NLT   History merely repeats itself. It has all been done before. Nothing
         under the sun is truly new.

CEV   Everything that happens
            has happened before;
         nothing is new,
            nothing under the sun.

In Eccl 3:14a, "*l^{e}ʿolam* does not indicate duration, as if Qohelet were assert-
ing the eternality of everything God creates or makes happen; that is a notion
both untrue and irrelevant. . . . Rather, it is a sentence modifier placed as an
afterthought. In other words, it is always the case that what happens is only
what God has made happen."[15]

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15. Ibid., 194–95.

Fox objects to the usual translation of 3:14b, "and God caused people to fear him," inasmuch as

> all Qohelet's statements about human wickedness show that Qohelet does not believe that God has caused mankind in general to fear him. Rather, God intends for people to fear him, but he does not impose that fear. By enforcing human ignorance and helplessness, God *occasions* fear but does not directly cause it.[16]

As Fox notes, 3:15b is a crux:

> The sentence means, approximately, "God seeks what has already been sought." Of the ancient Versions, only the Vulgate understands the sentence in this way. . . . It is not clear what "seeking" or "pursuing" has to do with divine causation of events, but the gist of the sentence seems to be that God seeks to do things he has already done."[17]

None of my selected versions has a rendering of *lᵉᶜolam* in keeping with Fox's interpretation. In this instance, however, it is not clear that Fox's own rendering reflects his preferred interpretation; that is, "I know that whatever God makes happen will always occur" does not seem to rule out the fact that other things, which God did not make happen, might also always occur.

In v. 14b, Fox's distinction—between God's occasioning fear and his causing it—is a subtle one but one that, on the whole, is worth maintaining. In this context, the first observation I make is that none of the selected versions, including the KJV, has the rendering that Fox characterizes as the usual translation. In fact, the KJV appears to agree with Fox, as do several others. Moreover, "fear" has been banished from most of the modern translations, replaced by "reverence" and "awe." But Fox's observation, nonetheless, remains valid: God is no more likely to impose or directly cause reverence than he is fear or dread.

It is not surprising that there are a variety of renderings and underlying interpretations of 3:15b. It is appropriate that a number of versions signal the uncertainty here in one way or another, as Fox does with the question mark. It also seems useful to alert the user of a given version that it is the root 'to pursue' that appears in the Hebrew.

> *Fox*   I know that whatever God makes happen will always occur. It is impossible to add to it, and impossible to take away from it. And God has done [this] so that people will fear him. [15] Whatever happens already has happened, and what is to happen already has happened. Thus, God seeks what is pursued [?].

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16. Ibid., 195.
17. Ibid., 195–96.

NJPSV   I realized, too, that whatever God has brought to pass will recur
                        evermore:
               Nothing can be added to it
               And nothing taken from it—
            and God has brought to pass that men revere Him.
               [15] What is occurring occurred long since,
            And what is to occur occurred long since:
            and God seeks the pursued.

Tanach   I realized that whatever God does will endure forever: Nothing can
         be added to it and nothing can be subtracted from it, and God has
         acted so that [man] should stand in awe of Him. [15] What has been
         already exists, and what is still to be has already been, and God
         always seeks the pursued.

KJV   I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can
         be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men
         should fear before him. [15] That which hath been is now; and that
         which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is
         past.

NASB   I know that everything God does will remain forever; there is noth-
         ing to add to it and there is nothing to take from it, for God has so
         worked that men should fear Him. [15] That which is has already
         been, and that which will be has already been, for God seeks what
         has passed by.

NIV   I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can
         be added to it and nothing can be taken from it. God does it so that
         men will revere him.
               [15] Whatever is has already been,
            and whatever will be has been before;
            and God will call the past to account.
                        [Note: Or *God calls back the past*]

NRSV   I know that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be
         added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all
         should stand in awe before him. [15] That which is, already has been;
         that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.
         [Note: Heb *what is pursued*]

NAB   I recognized that whatever God does will endure forever; there is no
         adding to it, or taking from it. Thus has God done that he may be
         revered. [15] What now is has already been; what is to be, already is;
         and God restores [the meaning is probably that God allows no part
         of his creation to dropout of existence] what would otherwise be
         displaced.

NJB   I know that whatever God does will be for ever.
            To this there is nothing to add,
            from this there is nothing to subtract,
            and the way God acts inspires dread.
        What is, has been already,
        what will be, is already;
    God seeks out anyone who is persecuted.
    [Note: 'persecuted' as the word, lit. 'pursued', is interpreted in the
    Midrash Qoheleth Rabba]

REB   I know that whatever God does lasts forever; there is no adding to it,
        no taking away. And he has done it all in such a way that everyone
        must feel awe in his presence. [15] Whatever is has been already, and
        whatever is to come has been already, with God summoning each
        event back in its turn.

NLT   And I know that whatever God does is final. Nothing can be added
        to it or taken from it. God's purpose in this is that people should fear
        him. [15] Whatever exists today and whatever will exist in the future
        has already existed in the past. For God calls each event back in its
        turn. [Note: Hebrew For God calls the past to account]

CEV   Everything God has done will last forever; nothing he does can ever
        be changed. God has done all this so that we will worship him.
            [15] Everything that happens
            has happened before,
        and all that will be
            has already been—
        God does everything
            over and over again.

The examples I have selected from the Song of Songs are very different from Qoheleth. Here Fox exhibits a finely honed sensitivity to the evocative nature of the poetry he is rendering. In these instances, even slight differences can add to, or subtract from, the effect experienced by the English-language reader.

I turn first to Song 4:3, about whose second colon, 'and your mouth is lovely' (ומדבריך נוה), Fox comments:

Except for the opening and closing generalizations, all the other predications in this Praise Song [4:1–7] are nominal and metaphorical. *Umidbareka naʾweh* alone is an adjectival predication, and a rather pale one at that, in a series of vivid sensual metaphors. Furthermore, the poet, who elsewhere uses common words for parts of the body, here chooses a strange word for mouth, *midbar,* a hapax legomenon apparently meaning "speaking place" or the like. Both these peculiarities are explained when we recognize a double pun here. *Midbar* can be taken as

"wilderness," and *naꜣweh* can be heard as *naweh,* "habitation," an area contrasted with *midbar.* In conjunction with *midbar, naweh* refers to an oasis. . . . Thus the youth is saying, in playful hyperbole: you are so lovely, so flawless, that whatever part of you might in comparison with the other parts be reckoned a wilderness, as somehow defective—even that "wilderness" is an oasis, fresh and refreshing. . . . Thus her mouth, her "*midbar,*" is indeed like an oasis.[18]

Regarding the next colon, "Like a slice of pomegranate is your cheek" (רקתך), he writes: "*Raqqah* appears only here and in Judges, and its precise meaning is not clear there either. The comparison is more understandable if we take *raqqah* as including the cheeks, for most of the temple would be covered by hair."[19]

Fox's analysis of the phrase *umidbareyk naꜣweh* is superb, placing it as he does within its immediate poetical context and within a much larger, and completely relevant, literary, linguistic, and even geographical environment. That said, it would have been valuable to attempt an English rendering that would open up at least some of the richness concealed in the Hebrew. Perhaps Fox felt that such an effort, as laudable as it might be in principle, would be forced in practice. In any case, "mouth" is the preferred rendering in all selected versions except for the KJV ("speech") and the NJB ("words"). ("Word" is also found in the expanded, Midrash-like rendition of *Tanach,* which continues through the second half of this verse.)

Fox's "cheek" (or cheeks) is favored in several versions that would not usually be associated with each other: the NIV, NRSV, NAB, NJB, NLT, and CEV. Given the anatomical uncertainty of the underlying Hebrew, it is somewhat surprising that only the CEV notes "the difficult Hebrew text"; the NAB, with its seemingly unnecessary explanation ("The girl's cheek is compared, in roundness and tint to a half-pomegranate"), appears to have little confidence in its readers' imaginative or agricultural sensibilities.

In Song 5:8 the female speaker appeals to "the daughters of Jerusalem," "I ask you to promise . . . do not tell him," about which Fox writes:

> As far as I can tell, this verse has invariably been understood as a request by the Shulammite that the girls of Jerusalem inform her beloved that she is love-sick. This translation is based on the understanding of *mah taggidu lo* as a rhetorical question that the Shulammite herself immediately answers. . . . But the adjurations elsewhere in Canticles, which begin in precisely the same way as this one, are indisputably negative. . . . In our verse too *mah* is a substitute for negative *ꜥim.* The verse is a request that the girls *not* tell her beloved how she has behaved.

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18. Michael Fox, *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) 130.

19. Ibid.

She has acted in a distraught manner, running about the city at night half-dressed, and she is embarrassed over her behavior.[20]

And thus Fox translates v. 8,

> "I ask you to promise, girls of Jerusalem:
>   if you find my beloved
> do not tell him
>   that I am sick with love."

 I am convinced by Fox's argument that his understanding and rendering of v. 8 are correct. At least on the basis of our selected versions, Fox is also correct in his contention that elsewhere this verse "has invariably been understood as a request . . . that the girls of Jerusalem inform her beloved":

NJPS	I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem! If you meet my beloved, tell him this: That I am faint with love.
Tanach	I adjure you, O nations destined to ascend to Jerusalem, when you see my Beloved on the future Day of Judgment, will you not tell Him that I bore all travails for love of Him?
KJV	I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I *am* sick of love.
NASB	"I adjure, O daughters of Jerusalem, If you find my beloved, As to what you will tell him: For I am lovesick."

NIV	O daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you—
	     if you find my lover,
	 what will you tell him?
	     Tell him I am faint with love.

NRSV	I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
	     if you find my beloved,
	 tell him this:
	     I am faint with love.

NAB	I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem,
	     if you find my lover—
	 What shall you tell him?—
	     that I am faint with love.

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20. Ibid., 146.

NJB	I charge you,
	daughters of Jerusalem,
	if you should find my love,
	what are you to tell him?
	—That I am sick with love!

REB	Maidens of Jerusalem, I charge you,
	if you find my beloved, to tell him
	that I am faint with love.

NLT	"Make this promise to me,
	O women of Jerusalem! If you find
	my beloved one, tell him that I am
	sick with love."

CEV	Young women of Jerusalem,
	if you find the one I love,
	please say to him,
	"She is weak with desire."

In Song 7:7[6], Fox ("delightful girl") opts for a text at variance with the MT, noting that "Aquila and the Peshiṭta have 'daughter of delights', which renderings evidence the reading *bt tʿnwgym* for MT *btʿnwgym*."[21]

The two Jewish versions, admittedly each in its own way, provide a reflection of the MT, as do the KJV and contemporary Protestant renderings that are conservative (i.e., the NASB, NIV, NLT). The NRSV and NJB, with text-critical notes, and REB, without, work with the same Vorlage as Fox. The inclusion of a text-critical note here, as with Fox, the NRSV, and the NJB, is appropriate for versions parting company at this point with the MT.

| *Fox* | How beautiful you are, how pleasant, |
| | O love, ⟨delightful girl⟩! |

| NJPSV | How fair you are, how beautiful! |
| | O Love, with all its rapture! |

| *Tanach* | How beautiful and pleasant are you, befitting the pleasures of |
| | spiritual love. |

| KJV | How fair and how pleasant art thou, |
| | O love, for delights! |

| NASB | "How beautiful and how delightful you are, |
| | *My* love, with *all* your charms! . . ." |

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21. Ibid., 161.

NIV	How beautiful you are and how pleasing O love with your delights!
NRSV	How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, delectable maiden! [Note: Syr: Heb *in delights*]
NAB	How beautiful you are, how pleasing, my love my delight!
NJB	How beautiful you are, how charming, my love, my delight! [Note: lit. 'daughter of delights' Syr. and Aquila; 'in the delights' Hebr]
REB	How beautiful, how entrancing you are, my loved one, daughter of delights!
NLT	"Oh, how delightful you are, my beloved; how pleasant for utter delight! . . ."
CEV	You are beautiful, so very desirable!

For Proverbs, I have chosen to emphasize Fox's careful distinctions be-tween and among the many wisdom terms that are used positively as well as those that have a negative connotation. Although a number of these are closely related, they are far from being synonymous. Rather, they each point to a par-ticular aspect of wisdom, or its opposite, that is held up for approbation or condemnation. As Fox indicated in his comments on Esther, he does not feel bound to use the same English term for each occurrence of a Hebrew root. Prov 2:7 avers, תושיה וצפן לישרים, about which Fox comments:

> *Tušiyyah* is an inner power that can help one escape a fix. It is not an inherently intellectual faculty, nor is it a moral virtue; in fact, many honest people lack the gift. . . . But the sage insists that God himself imbues the upright with the useful endowment of mental dexterity.[22]

In his introduction, Fox renders this term "competence" and "wits."[23] Here in 2:7 he translates 'resourcefulness'.

Accepting Fox's explication of the unique characteristics of the term תושיה puts us in a position to criticize the many renderings we find in contemporary versions. Particularly problematic are the two most common: 'sound wisdom', and 'counsel' or 'advice'; the former, because it suggests an intellectual and/or moral element that the Hebrew root lacks; and the latter, because it fails to

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22. Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1–9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 114.

23. Ibid., 38.

"endow" the upright with a unique characteristic. 'Ability' and 'good sense' seem closer to the mark as defined by Fox and by Proverbs.

Fox	For the upright he stores up resourcefulness
NJPSV	He reserves ability for the upright
Tanach	He has secured the eternal Torah for the upright
KJV	He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous
NASB	He stores up sound wisdom for the upright
NIV	He holds victory in store for the upright
RSV	he stores up sound wisdom for the upright
NRSV	he stores up sound wisdom for the upright
NAB	He has counsel in store for the upright
NJB	He reserves his advice for the honest
REB	Out of his store he endows the upright with ability
NLT	He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly
CEV	God gives helpful advice to everyone who obeys him

The word תושיה appears again in Prov 3:21, which in Fox's rendering begins with 'let not (my words) escape your eye' ("my words" is added in the translation). As Fox notes,

> The verb "escape" (*yaluzu*) lacks a subject. . . . An exordium [such as the one that begins here] must start with a command to listen or remember. It is likely that a verse was skipped in copying, and we should restore a couplet along the lines of 4:20: "My son, hearken to my words, incline your ear to what I say."[24]

The proverb continues with נצר תושיה ומזמה. The word תושיה is translated 'resourcefulness' in 2:7 and is here rendered 'competence' by Fox. 'Sound wisdom' and 'advice' again predominate in English-language versions, along with 'sound judgment' and 'good planning'. The NJPSV alone reproduces Fox's rendering from 2:7; the CEV, with 'common sense', strikes just the right balance as well.

For מזמה, Fox uses 'shrewdness' here; it is "private, unrevealed thought, hence 'circumspection or discretion.'"[25] Its connotations in Proverbs (as else-

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24. Ibid., 163.
25. Ibid.

where) can be negative or (as here) positive.[26] 'Discretion' is indeed found as early as the KJV and in a variety of later English versions. 'Foresight', 'insight', 'discernment', and 'prudence' all seem on target as well, especially in this verse, where the connotation is positive. Consequently I wonder about Fox's 'shrewdness' here. Although it is undoubtedly an ideal equivalent for מזמה in general, because both the Hebrew and the English terms carry both positive and negative connotations, here where the sense is undoubtedly positive 'shrewdness' seems to inject an unnecessary element of ambiguity.

None of the selected modern versions reflects any awareness of the difficulty Fox detects at the beginning of this verse; Fox's suggestion at this point is possible, though far from persuasive.

Fox	My son, let not (my words) escape your eyes; retain competence and shrewdness.
NJPSV	My son, do not lose sight of them; Hold on to resourcefulness and foresight.
Tanach	My child, do not let them stray from your eyes; safeguard the eternal Torah and [its] wise design.
KJV	My son, let not them depart from thine eyes: keep sound wisdom and discretion.
NASB	My son, let them not depart from your sight; Keep sound wisdom and discretion.
NIV	My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight.
NRSV	My child, do not let these escape from your sight: keep sound wisdom and prudence.
NAB	My son, let not these slip out of your sight: keep advice and counsel in view.
NJB	My child, hold to sound advice and prudence, never let them out of sight.
REB	My son, safeguard sound judgment and discretion; do not let them out of your sight.
NLT	My child, don't lose sight of good planning and insight. Hang on to them.
CEV	My child, use common sense and sound judgment! Always keep them in mind.

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26. Ibid., 34.

Prov 6:32 propounds נאף אשה חסר לב, which Fox would render literally, 'one who commits adultery with a woman lacks heart'. As he expounds, "The flaw in focus here is not the adulterer's sin but his stupidity, his lack of 'heart,' as evidenced in his self destructiveness."[27] As for the Hebrew expression חסר לב, Fox comments:

> This expression is unique to Proverbs and Sira. In this phrase, *leb* always refers to faculties we would consider cognitive, namely, the ability (or willingness) to make a prudent, sensible decision. Hence *leb* is better translated "mind" in this phrase [so Fox has as one of his renderings, "mindless"]—or even "head," since the expression means the same as the English "empty-headed." . . . The imprudence of the *ḥasar leb* may involve an immoral or vile act, as here, but it may also reveal itself in lesser types of indiscretion and mindlessness, such as pursing vain things (Prov 12:11), guaranteeing a loan (Prov 17:18), and being lazy (Prov 24:30).[28]

In this verse Fox chooses not to introduce a literal translation, preferring instead the *ad sensum* 'lacks sense'. This same expression, or very similar wording, recurs frequently in Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic versions. The KJV's "lacketh understanding" and NIV's "lacks judgment" are also reflective of the cognitive faculties to which Fox points. This is probably also the case with 'fool', 'senseless fool', and 'utter fool' elsewhere. Only *Tanach*, with its "lacking an [understanding] heart," has the literal translation of *leb*, but even here the addition of "understanding" points the reader away from emotion and towards cognition.

Fox	An adulterer lacks sense; a self-destroyer—he's the one who does this.
NJPSV	He who commits adultery is devoid of sense; Only one who would destroy himself does such a thing.
Tanach	But he who commits adultery with a woman is lacking an [understanding] heart; a destroyer of his soul will do this.
KJV	*But* whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he *that* doeth it destroyeth his own soul.
NASB	The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it.
NIV	But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself.

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27. Ibid., 235.
28. Ibid., 39–40.

NRSV   But he who commits adultery has no sense;
          he who does it destroys himself.

NAB   But he who commits adultery is a fool;
          he who would destroy himself does it.

NJB   But the adulterer has no sense;
          he works his own destruction.

REB   So one who commits adultery is a senseless fool:
          he dishonors the woman and ruins himself;

NLT   But the man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys
          his own soul.

CEV   But if you go to bed
            with another man's wife,
          you will destroy yourself
            by your own stupidity.

    In honoring Michael Fox through this essay, I have not uncritically reproduced his renderings of various wisdom passages from the Old Testament. Rather, I have attempted to put his work within the context of modern Bible translation. Although Fox is not primarily known as a Bible translator, it is clear that his contributions in this area are manifold. This is not surprising. Because all translation involves interpretation, and Fox is an interpreter par excellence of wisdom literature, it follows quite naturally that he has singular contributions to make to Bible translation.

    I have uncovered a number of Fox's interpretations of the biblical text. In all of these cases, I judge them to be at least probable, often persuasive, typically convincing. At the same time, I am not equally convinced that he has consistently managed to convey his distinctive interpretations through his choice of renderings. On occasion, no doubt, this is due to the fact that his translations are often in the service of another goal. Elsewhere, I feel certain, I simply disagree with his rendering. In every case, I marvel at his ability to combine rigorous investigation with literary sensitivity. This combination is indeed rare, and we are all enriched by Michael Fox's abilities in this regard.

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The Text-Critical Value of the Septuagint of Proverbs

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Michael Fox can surely be regarded one of the chief wisdom teachers as far as the ancient Near East is concerned. Few scholars are competent in such a variety of areas in this field. In addition to having firsthand knowledge of the ancient Egyptian and Hebrew wisdom traditions, he has published expertly and extensively on the Septuagint. He is one of the few scholars who actually takes into account this important first commentary on the Hebrew Bible. Hence in his commentary on the first nine chapters of Proverbs in the Anchor Bible series, he takes the MT as his point of departure but also deems other readings (mainly from the ancient translations) to be significant.[1] He actually has a nuanced view on the LXX, because "(it) is by far the most valuable of the versions for text criticism, for the history of interpretation, and for the transmission history of the book of Proverbs."[2]

However, as far as LXX Proverbs is concerned, we have a difference of opinion. According to Fox, "LXX-Prov is primarily a *translation*, one aiming at a faithful representation of the Hebrew, and it is best understood in terms of that goal." Later on the same page he continues in the same vein: "When the exegetical and tendentious features are accounted for and the expansions are set aside, the LXX proves to be, on the whole, a fairly faithful rendering of a Hebrew original, and it can be used for textual variants."[3] Thus, according to Fox, the text-critical value of this unit is high. In my opinion the opposite is the case. This text has been translated so freely that I would not feel comfortable retroverting its Hebrew Vorlage. By this I am not saying that it is impossible to do so, but it seems to me almost an impossible task; the main problem, in addition to the translation technique, is that primary external textual evidence is lacking.

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1. Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000).
2. Ibid., 361.
3. Ibid.

Michael Fox and I have had many a discussion of this issue; in the abovementioned commentary, he also engages with my views. In this essay I therefore will continue our ongoing debate as a tribute to him. I will briefly demonstrate to what extent the person(s) responsible for this compilation rendered the parent text creatively. Then I will discuss a representative number of examples to underpin my case. Most of these will be taken from the writings of Fox that I mentioned above.

I have demonstrated that the approach of the person(s) responsible for LXX Proverbs should be defined as one of *diversity* and *unity*.[4] This definition is based on studies of the way that the parent text was rendered on a micro, lexical, level as well as on a macro level. As far as the micro level is concerned, some individual lexical items are rendered consistently, but many are varied. This consistent attitude did not, however, prevent the translator from interpreting in individual instances, even when a generally consistent manner of translation has been followed with respect to a specific Hebrew word. Furthermore, this translation exhibits unique features on the macro level. The order of chapters toward the end of the book, which differs from the MT and other versions, should be ascribed to the translator(s), as should the removal of the names of Agur and Lemuel, who are mentioned as authors of some proverbs in the Hebrew.

I will return to these issues below, but it is clear to me that this translator was a creative stylist with an exceptional knowledge of Jewish and Greek culture. This is observable on various levels. As far as his creative approach is concerned, he made ample use of hapax legomena from the Greek world. There are also a number of neologisms; moreover, he used a rather large number of words that appear exclusively in Proverbs.[5] As can be expected, he interpreted extensively in some instances.

This interpretive character of the book makes retroversion to the Semitic parent text practically impossible, in my view. There is a compounding factor: the Old Greek of this unit has not yet been determined. I have addressed this issue with regard to a number of chapters,[6] but the others still need to be ex-

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4. Johann Cook, "Ideology and Translation Technique: Two Sides of the Same Coin?" in *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint: Proceedings of the IOSCS Congress in Helsinki, 1999* (ed. Raija Sollamo and Seppo Sipilä; Publications of the Finnish Exegetical Society 82; Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society / Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001) 197.

5. See my "Translator(s) of LXX Proverbs," *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 7 (2002) 1–50.

6. Johann Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* (VTSup 69; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

amined.[7] Because the differences in the order of chapters from chap. 24 onward is one of the striking characteristics, I will commence with this topic, after first dealing with a few methodological issues.

In an innovative book by Emanuel Tov entitled *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, a whole chapter is devoted to the issue of methodology in retroversion.[8] According to him, there are five criteria that need to be taken into account in retroversions: (1) Greek–Hebrew equivalents, (2) intuition, (3) textual probability, (4) linguistic probability, and (5) external support.[9] As usual, Tov is extremely nuanced and careful in dealing with textual issues. The quotations from Margolis ("in passages wanting in Hebrew, all attempts at retroversion are unscientific") and Goshen-Gottstein at the beginning of Tov's chapter are already evidence of his position:[10] clearly, he is opposed to what he calls mechanical retroversion.[11] Moreover, he takes contextual information seriously when he decides to retrovert.[12] However, Tov is also a champion of using translation technique as a basis for determining elements in the Vorlage, which we can deduce from his point that "[t]echnique and vocabulary are the major source of information for the identification of details in the translator's *Vorlage* when the translation is literal; but when it is paraphrastic or free, they are of little help in reconstructing its parent text."[13] A prime characteristic of Tov's approach is that he regards internal considerations of great importance for the evaluation of retroversion.[14]

In my own evaluation of LXX Proverbs, including its text-critical value, I was influenced by a number of the criteria that Tov suggested. I also maintain that arguments based on internal considerations are of primary significance. This contextual approach should be basic to a text as complicated as the Septuagint, even though in some instances external support could be considered. I discovered a number of Jewish exegetical traditions in LXX Proverbs that bear witness to the fact that the person(s) responsible for the translation did in fact use external data. Appropriate examples are the nuanced application of the rabbinic idea of good and bad inclinations in Proverbs 2 (see my discussion

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7. Peter Gentry has been allocated the task of preparing this book for the Göttingen edition.

8. Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1981) 97–158.

9. Ibid., 99.

10. Ibid., 97.

11. Ibid., 112.

12. Ibid., 109 n. 5.

13. Ibid., 117–18.

14. Ibid., 287.

below, p. 413) and the rabbinic view of the *torat Moshe* as a surrounding wall in 28:4.[15] I also think that the translator used well-known Greek traditions concerning the river Styx that must be traversed in Prov 9:18d.[16] So at the least the possibility of external data should be taken into consideration.

Fox has not clearly formulated the criteria that he used to decide which Hebrew readings actually represent a different *Vorlage* for the book of Proverbs. In fairness it must be said that one cannot expect exhaustive discussions in a commentary in which the emphasis is on the Hebrew text. Moreover, Fox does mention careful examination of the context as one criterion.[17] However, he tends to discuss passages and/or individual readings without providing the necessary theoretical background.

With these considerations of methodology in mind, I commence with the difference between the LXX's order of chapters and the MT's. There are a number of theoretical possibilities to consider when we reflect on the origin of these conspicuous textual differences.[18] First, Tov's view that these differences result from a deviating recension of a Hebrew text is well known.[19] Second, it is possible that these major differences were brought about during the transmission of the book by copyists, who inadvertently displaced leaves.[20] Finally, it is possible that the translator deliberately reshaped these chapters because of special considerations.

In light of the theoretical discussion above, it seems appropriate to consider the possibility that a translator who was very paraphrastically minded brought about these changes deliberately. This is actually one of the problems that I have with the work of Fox on LXX Proverbs. He never engages in a systematic analysis of the translation technique of the translator. Hence, even though he puts forward excellent arguments in some instances, he can in the final analysis only speculate about what happened. Having said this, I am not implying that a free translation technique should be taken as one's exclusive guid-

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15. Johann Cook, "The Law of Moses in Septuagint Proverbs," *VT* 49 (1999) 448–61, 465.

16. Idem, "אִשָּׁה זָרָה (Proverbs 1–9 in the Septuagint): A Metaphor for Foreign Wisdom?" *ZAW* 106 (1994) 474.

17. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 364.

18. It should be remembered that there are numerous smaller differences in order (see Emanuel Tov, "Recensional Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins* [ed. Harold Attridge, John Collins, and Thomas Tobin; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990] 43–56).

19. Ibid.

20. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 364.

ing principle. As Fox has indeed done, we must analyze each case individually before drawing conclusions.

I have argued that there is no primary Hebrew evidence that the differences in order should be ascribed to a deviating Hebrew recension.[21] The main problem in this regard is that the only evidence we have is the Septuagint text, and using this as the determinative text seems to me to be circular reasoning. Unfortunately, there were only a handful of readings at Qumran, none of which is related to the issue under discussion. Moreover, the other textual witnesses are of no assistance in this regard. The Peshiṭta does show some dependence on the LXX,[22] but not in respect to the order differences. In any case, this relationship is much more nuanced than Fox suggests.[23]

Another possibility mentioned by Fox is that chaps. 24 through 31 actually circulated as independent collections that were assembled differently in the LXX and MT.[24] However, Fox rejects this view and argues that the sequence in the adapted order of chaps. 24–25 and 30–31 is basically the same as the MT's. In his view this would not have been the case if these collections had actually circulated independently.

I need not repeat my arguments in detail that the translator indeed brought about these changes deliberately. In short, 31:1–9 was moved by the translator in order to place 31:10 adjacent to 29:27 for purposes of contrast. In this way the translator deliberately contrasts an unjust man (ἀνὴρ ἄδικος) with a courageous wife (γυναῖκα ἀνδρείαν). Fox disagrees with my interpretation;[25] however, the point that he does not take into account is that this is indeed in line with the translator's general approach to create contrasts even where there are none in the Hebrew text. I have actually defined this as a translation technique by this translator in the Festschrift for James Sanders.[26] One relevant example must suffice.

In Prov 11:7 the Hebrew contains no contrast. The Hebrew mentions only the wicked and the godless (synonyms), whereas the LXX changes the wicked man (אדם רשע) to a righteous (ἀνδρὸς δικαίου) one.

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21. Cf. Tov, "Recensional Differences"; Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 363.

22. Cook, "אִשָּׁה זָרָה," 459.

23. I differ from Fox's view that the Peshiṭta was "heavily influenced by the LXX" (Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 365). It is only possible to find a rather small number of correspondences between the LXX and Peshiṭta (Johann Cook, "On the Relationship between the Peshiṭta and the Septuagint," *Textus* 17 [1993] 125–41).

24. C. H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1904) xxxiii; Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 363.

25. Fox, ibid.

26. Johann Cook, "Contrasting as a Translation Technique," in *Quest for Context and Meaning* (ed. Craig Evans and Shemaryahu Talmon; Leiden: Brill, 1997) 403–14.

במות אדם רשע תאבד תקוה ותוחלת אונים אבדה

When the wicked die, their hope perishes,
and the expectation of the godless comes to nothing.

τελευτήσαντος ἀνδρὸς δικαίου οὐκ ὄλλυται ἐλπίς
τὸ δὲ καύχημα τῶν ἀσεβῶν ὄλλυται

When a *righteous person* dies hope does *not* perish;
but the *boast* of the impious perishes.

The inclusion of the negative particle οὐκ, which has no equivalent in the Hebrew, is another deliberate endeavor to interpret this passage. In v. 16 in the same chapter another contrast appears in the Greek without an equivalent in the Hebrew and should also be taken to have been introduced by the translator.[27] As a matter of fact, similar creations are found throughout this book. In these cases it is not possible to reconstruct an underlying Semitic text.

In the passages under discussion, other adaptations were brought about by the translator on account of thematic considerations. Prov 29:27 and 31:10 were aligned because in the context of both passages the theme is the king. Fox seems to agree to some extent with my interpretation but argues that it is difficult to be certain that it was done by a Hebrew scribe rather than a later Greek copyist.[28]

Finally, looking at the book as a whole and not just at individual verses and lexemes, it is clear to me that these differences in order should be ascribed to a creative translator. In the Festschrift for Tov, I conceded that not all of the differences seem to fit this picture.[29] This applies to the beginning of Proverbs 30, which is not as clear-cut as the other examples. However, chap. 30 does contain one interpretation: the name Agur is deliberately removed. On this issue I find it difficult to understand Fox's position. On the one hand, he concedes that these changes are the result of deliberate adaptations: Agur and Lemuel "were contorted midrashically [*sic*]."[30] On the other hand, he maintains that it is possible and indeed necessary to reconstruct the Vorlage. The most that I would be willing to argue in this instance is that the Hebrew text from which this translation was made actually did not differ extensively from the MT.[31]

27. Tov, "Recensional Differences," 46.
28. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 363.
29. Johann Cook, "The Greek of Proverbs: Evidence of a Recensionally Deviating Hebrew Text?" in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom Paul, Robert Kraft, and Lawrence Schiffman; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 614.
30. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 57.
31. Cook, *Septuagint of Proverbs*, 334.

The LXX of Proverbs contains numerous examples of additions that had no equivalent in the translator's Vorlage. To determine the origin of these additions is a complicated matter. The rules of thumb formulated by de Lagarde are helpful, but they need to be applied circumspectly.[32]

Some of these larger additions appear in connection with the strange woman, for whom the translator followed a rather interpretive and, I would argue, a systematic mode of translation.[33] In his systematic dealing with this strange woman, the translator commences in 2:16–20 and ends in chap. 9.[34] The addition of υἱέ μή σε καταλάβῃ κακὴ βουλὴ 'My son do not let bad counsel overtake you' in Prov 2:17 has no equivalent in Hebrew and represents an interpretation. Hengel understood this "bad counsel" as a reference to a contemporary "evil counsel," namely, Hellenistic wisdom.[35] I concur with this point of view,[36] and to me the primary argument is the fact that the Greek concept κακὴ βουλὴ actually represents the rabbinic concept of the יצר הרע. I have argued that in v. 11 the counterpart of this bad counsel (i.e., 'good counsel' יצר הטוב)—at least the adjective καλὴ—has been deliberately added by the translator.[37] Fox disagrees with my metaphorical interpretation, and he prefers to understand this addition internally from the perspective of the chapter as a whole.[38] The "internal approach" can certainly not be faulted; however, I do not find his counterarguments compelling. For instance, I do not think that Ben Sira can explain what the inclinations here in Proverbs actually mean, because Ben Sira refers to only one of these inclinations and does not distinguish between the two mentioned above. This was a development that came later in Judaism. I would not expect the translator to have closely similar views on, for example, the evil inclination, as Fox does. I accept the fact that, even though the translator used known exegetical traditions, he in fact interpreted creatively and hence created an additional level of abstraction.

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32. Paul de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1863) 3.

33. This represents another of the differences between my view and Fox's. He finds evidence of "a variety of interpretations of the Strange Woman converging in the LXX" (Michael V. Fox, "The Strange Woman in Septuagint Proverbs," *JNSL* 22/2 [1996] 32).

34. See my "אִשָּׁה זָרָה."

35. Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2.Jh.s v.Chr.* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1973) 281.

36. Cook, "אִשָּׁה זָרָה," 474.

37. Johann Cook, "Hellenistic Influence in the Book of Proverbs (Septuagint)?" *BIOSCS* 20 (1987) 40.

38. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 376. To him "the Strange Woman is another man's wife; she is not a foreigner or a mythological or allegorical figure" (p. 118).

As far as the issue of the retroverting of this passage (and more specifically, the additions) are concerned, I therefore argue that it was the result of interpretation by the translator and not of a differing parent text.

Fox's and my different stances become clearest in our divergent interpretations of the large additions to Proverbs 9. I agree with Fox that the Hebrew text already was an expanded text; however, this has no bearing on the LXX, because I think that the person(s) responsible for chap. 9 had a Hebrew text similar to the MT. Hence, I argue that all of the added passages are to be ascribed to the translator. All of the Greek words in these pluses were indeed part of the general vocabulary of LXX Proverbs.[39] Both sets of pluses, moreover, are aimed at contrasting the wise and the foolish. In the first set of pluses the translator depicted the foolish by, for example, applying farming terminology.

Fox, on the other hand, finds three strata of development: "(1) the earlier, leaner text, maintained in the MT, (2) the addition with a Hebrew source, 12a–12b, and (3) further augmentations in Greek (12c [?] and 18a–18d)."[40] As I have stated already, we are lacking clearly formulated criteria by Fox. However, as will become clear, he and I do not differ dramatically as far as the issue of interpretation in the LXX is concerned but with regard to the possible Vorlage. Fox does suggest the retroversion of some Greek passages into Hebrew.

The first concerns the additions to v. 12, beginning with 9:12a:

ὃς ἐρείδεται ἐπὶ ψεύδεσιν οὗτος ποιμανεῖ ἀνέμους
ὁ δ᾽ αὐτὸς διώξεται ὄρνεα πετόμενα

He who relies on deceits—he will shepherd the winds.
Such a one will pursue a flying bird.

The following retroversion is suggested by Fox:[41]

תומך שקר ירעה רות וירדוף צפור מעופפת

He who grasps deceit he will shepherd winds and he will pursue a flying bird.

I do not understand why Fox has reconstructed ἀνέμους as רות. I presume this is a printing error, because רוח fits the picture. With this adjustment, it is surely possible to reconstruct the Greek to the Hebrew phrase above. All the lexemes appear in the book of Proverbs. However, methodologically, this can hardly be used as primary evidence.

The second addition is 9:12b.

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39. Cook, *Septuagint of Proverbs*, 287–88.
40. Fox, "The Strange Woman," 34.
41. Ibid., 38.

ἀπέλιπεν γὰρ ὁδοὺς τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ ἀμπελῶνος
τοὺς δὲ ἄξονας τοῦ ἰδίου γεωργίου πεπλάνηται.

For he has abandoned the roads of his own vineyard,
and has neglected the paths of his own field.

The retroversion reads:

כי עזב דרכי כרמו ומעגלי שדהו טעה

For he has abandoned the ways of his vineyard and has neglected the axles of his field.

This reconstruction is a theoretical possibility as far as most of the lexemes are concerned, such as מעגל, which appears in Prov 2:9, 15, 18; 4:11, 26; 5:6, and 21. However, there is one conspicuous exception: טעה does not appear in Proverbs and found only in Ezek 13:10. Fox has an ingenious argument from the Aramaic language. First he considers ἄξονας (as in Prov 2:9, 18) to be an etymologizing translation of מעגלי (or מעגלות) and understands it as 'axles', specifically (*pars pro toto*) 'wagon'. According to him, this word is one indication of a different Hebrew Vorlage; so is the awkward phrase πεπλάνηται + accusative, which he feels also indirectly reveals a Hebrew origin. In order to explain the problem surrounding טעה, he refers to Aramaic טעי + accusative, which means 'forget, neglect'. Consequently, he thinks that the Vorlage must have been טעה מעגלי, which resulted from the more-natural ממעגלי טעה 'stray *from*' by haplography.

It is certainly acceptable to revert to Aramaic in an endeavor to understand problematic Hebrew passages in Proverbs. However, as in the case of the differences in the order of chapters, the problem is that there is unfortunately no primary evidence that this Semitic parent text indeed existed. Hence this interpretation can at most be regarded as a creative possibility. To me, a better and more elegant solution is to accept the fact that the whole Greek phrase comes from the hand of the translator, who deemed it necessary to interpret because of his specific religiopolitical context. [42]

The second set of additions, in v. 18, can also in my view be ascribed to the translator. Fox ascertains that it is impossible to be decisive about the origin of this addition. [43] In the final analysis he uses an external datum, the fact that this passage was apparently aimed at the diaspora community, for concluding that it was composed in Greek. According to him, however, this composition was made by an "inner-Greek glossator." [44]

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42. Cook, "The Law of Moses in Septuagint," 460.
43. Fox, "The Strange Woman," 41.
44. Ibid., 41.

Again, it appears that the disagreement between Fox and me is not extensive, even though we differ on the details. He considers the addition to be based on allegorical exegesis. The foreignness that predominates in these passages is treated as foreign culture or, more generally, as the experience of life in foreign lands. Where we do indeed differ rather extensively is that he has an overtly literalistic understanding of these passages, whereas I interpret them only symbolically, as a reference to foreign wisdom.[45] The interpretations of course have little bearing on the issue of retroversion, except of course that I discern no Hebrew Vorlage in these instances. As should be abundantly clear, I am not convinced by the arguments put forward by Fox in this regard. This also applies to some extent to his interpretation of individual readings.

As I have stated above, it is necessary to deal with each case as objectively as possible. For the record, I must state that I do not regard all retroversions to Semitic parent texts to be impossible. In individual cases it is possible, for example, to relate a Greek word directly and unequivocally to a Hebrew word that was understood differently without vowels. Two examples must suffice, even though similar examples abound in this section.

In Prov 10:15, the Hebrew noun רישם 'poor' is translated 'the impious'. Clearly the interpretation is based on a different reading of the Hebrew. The same applies to Prov 19:6, which contains a reference to kings instead of the generous. In addition, the noun הרע 'friend' is connected with 'an evil person'. The point to make in these instances is that it is possible to refer to an existing Semitic text that is not just a hypothetical possibility.

Returning to the issue of individual cases for the purposes of this contribution, I will be discussing a small number of examples only. Fox argues that the reading ἀρετὴ instead of ἀρχὴ that appears in A of 1:7 actually came from a different Hebrew Vorlage that did not have the word ראשית 'beginning'.[46] I suppose this is possible; however, I maintain that the translator actually interpreted in this instance. I would put forward the same argument (contrary to Fox) with respect to v. 12b, which seems to be a quotation from Ps 34[33]:17b and/or 109[108]:15b. Hence I have argued that ἄρειν is an exegetical rendering introduced in connection with תמם.[47] I think Fox is correct in the third example, from 1:21, in arguing that the Vorlage had חמות or חמיות and not המיות. He refers to convincing extrabiblical cognates from Amarna, Ugaritic, and Phoenician in this regard.[48]

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45. Cook, "אִשָּׁה זָרָה," 474.

46. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 368.

47. Cook, *Septuagint of Proverbs*, 72.

48. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9*, 370.

As I stated above, Fox holds a nuanced view on the issue of retroversion in some instances. He is well aware of the fact that retroverting the parent text of the LXX is a highly problematic issue. In connection with 2:19, which has three strophes in comparison with the MT's two, he concedes that it is difficult (impossible) to reconstruct this third strophe.[49] He is also open minded enough to accept the fact that the translator indeed interpreted freely in some cases. In Prov 3:9 the LXX has two significant additions compared with the MT: '*your just* (σῶν δικαίων) labors' and 'your firstfruits *of righteousness*' (δικαιοσύνης). He correctly concludes that these additions are the work of the translator and points out that "the translator is paraphrastic and moralistic, teaching that you may honor God only from honest earning."[50] The difference between my position and his is that I have demonstrated that this translator consistently used what I have called "religionizing" terminology.[51] In these instances it is not profitable to seek for possible underlying parent texts.

In Prov 3:16 Fox follows Tov's retroversion of the two added strophes.[52] He correctly indicates that the second strophe is based on Prov 31:26[25]. I am not convinced, however, that the Greek actually shows an affinity with the Hebrew rather than with the Greek in that passage and that therefore the couplet stems from a Hebrew Vorlage. What Tov and Fox failed to observe is that there is also a relationship of sorts between Prov 31:25 and 28, witnessing to intratextual activity in the Greek. Moreover, 3:16 does not agree in detail with the Hebrew of 31:26, which reads:

<div dir="rtl">

פיה פתחה בחכמה ותורת חסד על לשונה
</div>

> She opens her mouth with wisdom
> and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

The Greek of 3:16a reads:

> ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῆς ἐκπορεύεται δικαιοσύνη
> νόμον δὲ καὶ ἔλεον ἐπὶ γλώσσης φορεῖ

> Out of her mouth righteousness comes forth,
> and she carries law and mercy upon the tongue.

To me it is clear that the translator is here interpreting, or as I argued earlier, religionizing. He interprets wisdom as a religious category, 'righteousness'

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49. Ibid., 375.
50. Ibid., 378.
51. In the Festschrift for Mittmann, I discussed this issue extensively ("Exegesis in the Septuagint," *JNSL* 30/1 [2004] 1–19).
52. Tov, "Recensional Differences," 49.

(seen this way, it is not necessary to revert to Isa 45:23a, as Fox does), and then he uses two more religious terms, law and mercy, which are taken from the Hebrew (ותורת חסד). The interpretation of two categories occurs elsewhere in Proverbs; for instance, in 6:23, where the opposite process took place, and the two Hebrew words מצוה ותורה are interpreted as a genitive construction (ἐν-τολὴ νόμου). This is in line with what this translator usually does, as in 31:25, where wisdom is interpreted as προσεχόντως καὶ ἐννόμως 'cautiously and le-gally', also based on ותורת חסד. A similar trend is followed in v. 28, where wis-dom is rendered σοφῶς καὶ νομοθέσμως 'wisely and lawfully'. The point is that this translator is interpreting in these cases. I would therefore argue that the translator is responsible for these interpretations and that they are not the result of a different parent text.

I think that the same argument could be put forward to account for the ad-dition that appears in 3:22a. I agree with Fox that it is based on v. 8; however, in my view there is no indisputable evidence that the Greek actually is the re-sult of a different Hebrew text. To me it seems clear that the translator is re-sponsible for this addition. The difference in the Greek wording is typical of the creativeness of this translator. Instead of the particle τότε he used δὲ, and σάρξ is used for σῶμα. It is difficult to make a final decision, because of the limited use of these nouns in the book of Proverbs. The noun σάρξ is used in Prov 3:22 (–); 4:22 (בשׂר); 5:11 (בשׂר); and 26:10 (–). In two instances it is an addition, and in the other two cases it represents the noun בשׂר. The word σῶμα also appears in a few instances only in Proverbs: in 3:8 (–); 5:11 (שׁאר); 11:17 (שׁאר); and 25:20 (–). It is significant that in 5:11 the two nouns are re-lated to one another. In Hebrew the relationship is paratactic (בשׂרך ושׁארך), whereas in the LXX a genitive construction is the result (σάρκες σώματός σου). As I have demonstrated above, this translator often interprets grammar freely. In the final analysis I think it is more likely that the difference in word-ing was deliberately brought about by the translator.

From the above it should be clear just how skeptical I am of retroversions in LXX Proverbs. In practically all of the instances discussed by Fox (and some by Tov), I have put forward internal arguments that obviate or at least rela-tivize the search for underlying Semitic texts. As I have demonstrated abun-dantly, because of the rather free way that this translator approached his parent text, I am compelled to retain this view. Due to the lack of primary textual evidence, there are unfortunately too many uncertainties. What is needed are clear-cut retroverting criteria in each case, such as the criteria formulated by Tov; yet, as I demonstrated above, even these need to be handled carefully. I have decided to use the translation technique followed by the translator as a determining principle. The fact that this person interpreted extensively seems

to be an appropriate guideline. Many, if not all, of the differences between the MT and the LXX that I discussed above can be considered interpretation.

I want to make it clear, finally, that the retroversion of parent texts as suggested by Fox and Tov is, in principle, a laudable and legitimate exercise. I have made extensive use of this principle in my research of the Septuagint version of Genesis, where there is fortunately some external textual evidence available in the Dead Sea Scrolls.[53] It should, however, be remembered that the person(s) responsible for Genesis had a different attitude toward the parent text from the attitude of the translator of LXX Proverbs. It should therefore be clear that I regard the text-critical value of LXX Proverbs as extremely low.

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53. Johann Cook, "The Septuagint of Genesis: Text and/or Interpretation?" in *Studies in the Book of Genesis* (ed. André Wénin; BETL 155; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001) 315–29.

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Christian Aramaism:
The Birth and Growth of Aramaic Scholarship in the Sixteenth Century

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Since the mid-nineteenth century, Jewish historians have marveled at the vigorous growth and vitality of Christian Hebrew scholarship in early modern Europe. Ludwig Geiger and Moritz Steinschneider chronicled parts of this astonishing and unexpected phenomenon.[1] During the past 50 years, Karl-heinz Burmeister, R. Gerald Hobbs, Bernard Roussel, Gerard Weil, and Jerome Friedman have provided biographies and analyses of the achievements of some of the most important Christian and Jewish scholars who made this possible.[2] In my own research I have sought to quantify the growth of Hebrew learning among Christians through analyzing the Christian Hebrew printing industry as it developed. To honor my teacher Michael V. Fox, however, I wish to write, not on Christian Hebraism, but on the growth of Aramaic learning among Christians during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[3] The Christian study of Aramaic literature illustrates even more sharply than Christian Hebraism the religious and philological barriers that hindered the study of Jewish literature by non-Jews and the often-surprising ways that these barriers were surmounted.[4]

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1. Ludwig Geiger, *Das Studium der Hebräischen Sprache in Deutschland vom Ende des XV bis zur Mitte des XVI Jahrhunderts* (Breslau: Schletter'sche Buchhandlung, 1870); and Moritz Steinschneider, *Christliche Hebraisten: Nachrichten über mehr als 400 Gelehrte, welche über nachbiblisches Hebräisch geschrieben haben* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1973).

2. Stephen G. Burnett, "Christian Hebrew Printing in the Sixteenth Century: Printers, Humanism, and the Impact of the Reformation," *Helmantica* 51/154 (April 2000) 13–42.

3. I will not discuss developments in the study of either Biblical Aramaic, which has always been taught with Biblical Hebrew, or Syriac, which was encouraged primarily by contact with eastern Christians rather than Jews. See Werner Strothmann, *Anfänge der Syrischen Studien* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1971).

4. I chose this topic, in part, because postbiblical Aramaic was the most difficult class that I had with Michael. I hope that my most-recent foray into Aramaic scholarship will please him more.

Postbiblical Aramaic literature was forbidding to the would-be Christian reader for a number of reasons. First, it was fundamentally Jewish literature. Christians could justify the study of Biblical Hebrew and the Hebrew Bible text because the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) was a part of their own biblical canon. Biblical humanists and theologians, Protestant and Catholics alike, could point to St. Jerome, Nicholas of Lyra, Paul of Burgos, and other predecessors in the Christian study of Hebrew. Jewish Aramaic literature, however, included the Targums, the Talmud, and the Zohar, all of which had been written by Jews for Jews after the close of the New Testament canon. Assuming Christian scholars could overcome the religious barrier, very few of them were able to overcome the lack of Latin-language Aramaic grammars and lexicons and the rarity of the texts themselves. While the patronage of secular or church officials could and did enable Christian Aramaists to make impressive strides, the assistance of Jewish converts and professing Jews was essential for the growth of this new field. By 1600, Aramaic study had found a home within the world of Christian learning, as attested both by the number of Aramaic-related titles printed and also by the Aramaic library holdings of both individual scholars and universities.

Why should Christians devote time to reading Jewish Aramaic books? During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such Christian Aramaic learning as existed was largely devoted to anti-Jewish polemics or proselytizing. The Christians scholars who pursued it, many of them Jewish converts, combed the Talmud, kabbalistic literature, and the Targums for passages that appeared to support Christian doctrines and perspectives.[5] The theological need to use Jewish Aramaic texts for Christian polemics was sufficient motivation for a few scholars to devote themselves to the study of Aramaic, but only a few. Only when Christian scholars came to believe that these texts could benefit Christian theology and academic life in a constructive way by providing information useful to Christians would Aramaic literature find a larger niche within the Christian world of learning.[6]

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5. Gershom Scholem, "Beginnings of Christian Kabbalah," in *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and Their Christian Interpreters* (ed. Joseph Dan; Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1997) 27–30; David Ruderman, "Italian Renaissance and Jewish Thought," in *Renaissance Humanism: Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, vol. 1: *Humanism in Italy* (ed. Albert Rabil Jr.; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) 395–96; and Jeremy Cohen, *Friars and the Jews* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982) 131–56.

6. The prime example of a book that Christian scholars came to accept as useful for their purposes was Maimonides' *Guide to the Perplexed*. See Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 382–83.

For Christian scholars, finding a satisfactory motive for studying Aramaic literature was simpler for some genres than for others. By the late fifteenth century, the Christian case for Targumic study had long been clear. Not only had polemicists such as Raymundo Marti found the Targums useful, but so had biblical commentators. Nicholas of Lyra, for example, discovered that the Targums contained much information that Christian exegetes could use, not only to refute Jewish interpretations of passages, but also to bolster Christian ones.[7]

While other Christian scholars, some of them Jewish converts, had put kabbalistic literature to use in the cause of Christian missionizing by the early fifteenth century, it was Count Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) who first saw another, quite different benefit for kabbalistic study. He believed and taught that "non-biblical Jewish sources were meaningful and relevant to Christianity itself."[8] Pico's own understanding of Kabbalah was shaped both through the Latin translations of the sources and through his own Platonic and Pythagorean philosophical framework. Although Pico himself did not read the Zohar, either in translation or in the original, he justified its study by Christians.[9]

The most difficult Aramaic book to justify for Christian study was the Talmud. Through the work of Peter the Venerable of Cluny (1094–1156), the idea that the Talmud was a "heretical" work had entered Christian theological tradition. The earlier medieval theological understanding of Judaism (and the predominant one throughout the Middle Ages) was that Jews had functioned as witnesses to the truth of Christianity by continuing to live according to the laws of the Pentateuch, serving as "living letters" of the biblical text. Jeremy Cohen has argued that Peter and other later theologians believed that the Talmud was "heretical" because it represented a new law whose authority among Jews was greater than that of the Bible. Peter also understood the Talmud to be "sinister, insane, blasphemous, diabolical Jewish doctrine."[10] Christian authorities justified Talmud-burnings in the fourteenth century because the work contained "blasphemies, errors, curses, and lies."[11] Yet, despite the Talmud's

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7. Frans van Liere, "The Literal Sense of the Books of Samuel and Kings: From Andrew of St Victor to Nicholas of Lyra," in *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture* (ed. Philip D. W. Krey and Lesley Smith; Studies in the History of Christian Thought 90; Leiden: Brill, 2000) 77–81.

8. Joseph Dan, "The Kabbalah of Johannes Reuchlin and Its Historical Significance," in *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and Their Christian Interpreters* (ed. Joseph Dan; Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1997) 56.

9. Chaim Wirszubski, *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) 20–21, 187.

10. Cohen, *Living Letters*, 260–64.

11. Ibid., 330.

evil reputation within Christian scholarship, by the early sixteenth century even Talmudic study could be justified on humanist grounds.

Johannes Reuchlin is best known as the author of the first Latin-language Hebrew grammar and for his devotion to the Kabbalah. But Reuchlin also was the author of an *Opinion about the Books of the Jews* written for the imperial commission that was summoned to study Pfefferkorn's proposal to confiscate Jewish books.[12] When he discussed the Talmud, Reuchlin asserted that it contained information valuable to the most important university-level disciplines (that is, theology, law, and medicine). He wrote:

> For it contains many good medical prescriptions and information about plants and roots, as well as good legal verdicts collected from all over the world by experienced Jews. And in theology the Talmud offers in many passages arguments against the wrong faith. This can be seen from the bishop of Burgos's books concerning the Bible, which he has written in a praiseworthy and Christian manner and in the *Scrutinium Scripturarum*, in which he clearly protects our faith on the basis of the Talmud.

Indeed, Reuchlin found no fewer than 50 passages in which Paul of Burgos quoted Talmudic passages in the latter book.[13] Reuchlin's argument was less important for its immediate effect on imperial policy than as an important legal opinion and precedent that established a rationale for allowing Christians to use—and to print—the Talmud. The two opinions submitted by the theology faculty of Basel and Ambrosius Froben to defend the propriety of printing the Basel Talmud in late 1578 or early 1579 reflect and note Reuchlin's arguments.[14]

Around 1635, Johannes Buxtorf the Younger wrote a letter with advice on how to begin the study of postbiblical Aramaic. The student, he wrote, must first attain a good knowledge of Aramaic dialects, consult a variety of study aids, and above all, purchase any Latin translations of these books, because by comparing the original text with the Latin, the student would be able to make rapid progress.[15] In the days of Pico and Reuchlin, almost none of these tools was

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12. The original opinion was submitted on October 6, 1510, and was subsequently printed with annotations in Reuchlin's book *Augenspiegel* (Tübingen, 1511), as a part of his pamphlet war with Pfefferkorn. Erika Rummel, *The Case against Johann Reuchlin: Religious and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 88.

13. Ibid., 92.

14. Stephen G. Burnett, "The Regulation of Hebrew Printing in Germany, 1555–1630: Confessional Politics and the Limits of Jewish Toleration," in *Infinite Boundaries: Order, Disorder, and Reorder in Early Modern German Culture* (ed. M. Reinhart and T. Robisheaux; Kirksville, Mo: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1998) 339–40.

15. Peter T. van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship and Rabbinical Studies in the Seventeenth Century: Constantijn L'Empereur (1591–1648), Professor of Hebrew and Theology at Leiden*

available to Christians. The creation of a philological apparatus of Aramaic grammars, dictionaries, and bilingual text editions (some with annotations) was one of the greatest achievements of sixteenth-century Christian Aramaists.

The very first Aramaic grammar composed in Latin for Christian students was written by Sebastian Münster, a professor at the University of Heidelberg, and was printed in 1527. Münster learned Hebrew from Conrad Pellican, his superior in the Franciscan order, and Matthaeus Adrianus, a Jewish convert from Spain who taught a number of the most important Protestant Hebraists of the early sixteenth century.[16] Most of his Aramaic education, however, involved personal study, with occasional help from professing Jews.[17] Münster's grammar was intended to help students learn not only Aramaic but also enough medieval Hebrew (including abbreviations) to read Jewish biblical commentaries.

Münster's pioneering grammatical work would find few emulators, at least during the sixteenth century. Only seven authors composed Aramaic grammars. Four of these were at least nominally Catholic (Theseus Ambrosius, George Amira, Angel Caninius, and Jean Mercier), and three were Protestant (Sebastian Münster, Cornelius Bertram, and Immanuel Tremellius). Two of these authors, Amira and Ambrosius, lived and worked in Italy, while the other four lived and worked in the French-speaking world. Both Caninius and Mercier taught Hebrew at the Collège Royale of the University of Paris, the former during the 1550s, and the latter from 1547 to 1570, while Bertram was one of Mercier's students. Bertram taught Hebrew at the Academy of Geneva from 1567 to 1586, and Tremellius taught Hebrew at the University of Heidelberg from 1561 to 1575, though like Bertram he had his grammar printed in Geneva. Mercier and his colleagues at the Collège Royale played a critical role in providing both grammatical helps and annotated Aramaic texts for other would-be Aramaic scholars.

(trans. J. C. Grayson; Studies in the History of Leiden University 6; Leiden: Brill, 1989) 119.

16. Stephen G. Burnett, "Reassessing the 'Basel-Wittenberg Conflict': Dimensions of the Reformation-Era Discussion of Hebrew Scholarship," in *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe* (ed. Allison P. Coudert and Jeffrey S. Shoulson; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) 183.

17. According to Prijs, Münster's usual way of indicating Jewish help in his works was to use the formula *a docto quodam Iudaeo* (Münster, *Chaldaica Grammatica*, f. a3r; Joseph Prijs, *Die Basler Hebräischen Drucke (1492–1866)* [ed. Bernhard Prijs; Olten and Freiburg i. Br.: Urs Graf, 1964] 43). Self-study was frequently the only way for Christians to learn Hebrew in the early sixteenth century. See Karl Heinz Burmeister, "Johannes Campensis und Sebastian Münster: Ihre Stellung inder Geschichte der Hebräischen Sprachstudien," *ETL* 46 (1970) 443–47.

Providing serviceable Aramaic lexicons for Christian students proved to be a far greater challenge than grammars. Apart from the Hebrew-Aramaic dictionary of Alfonso de Zamora in vol. 6 of the Complutensian Polyglot Bible (1514–17), all scholarly attempts to write an Aramaic dictionary would be based to some degree on Nathan ben Yehiel's *Sefer Aruk* (ca. 1100).[18] Nathan ben Yehiel wrote his lexicon for advanced students of the Talmud, the Targums, and the Midrash and focused his attention on explaining foreign and difficult words while leaving out more common ones. Moreover, he did not organize his dictionary according to the principle of trilateral roots (which he either did not accept or was perhaps unaware of) but used an alphabetical order.[19] While some Christian Hebraists had the ability to use *Sefer Aruk* as it was written, most needed a much smaller, Latin summary of it.

Jewish author Elias Levita wrote the first Aramaic dictionary specifically intended for Christian readers at the request of his patron, Cardinal Viterbo. Viterbo may have learned the rudiments of Hebrew as early as his stay in Florence during 1497, and throughout his career he was keenly interested in kabbalistic learning and the Targums, as well as in oriental studies generally.[20] He hired Elias Levita to serve as his personal tutor in Hebrew and Aramaic from 1515 until 1527. At Viterbo's initiative Levita took on the unenviable task of compiling the first Targumic dictionary, combing through Nathan ben Yehiel's *Sefer Aruk* for information, and providing further references to Latin and Greek loanwords in the Targums. Levita organized his work alphabetically and used the trilateral root as his organizing principle.[21] Levita was forced to leave Rome and move to Venice because of the sack of Rome in 1527, but Viterbo provided further financial support for Levita, which allowed him to complete the dictionary between 1528 and 1530. Levita's work, entitled *Meturgaman*, or "Interpreter," was finally printed by Paul Fagius in Isny during 1541.[22]

In 1523, Santes Pagninus wrote *Enchiridion expositionis vocabulorum Haruch*, the first Aramaic dictionary actually to appear in print. Pagninus learned Hebrew in Florence from Clemente Abraham, a Spanish-Jewish convert.[23] He

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18. Zamora, *Vocabularium Hebaicum*, in *Biblio Polyglotta*, vol. 6, f. ir–clxxii r.

19. Shimeon Brisman, *History and Guide to Judaic Dictionaries and Concordances* (vol. 3/1; Hoboken, N.J.: KTAV, 2000) 16.

20. Francis X. Martin, *Friar, Reformer and Renaissance Scholar: Life and Work of Giles of Viterbo 1469–1532* (The Augustinian Series 18; Villanova, Pa.: Augustinian Press) 163.

21. Ibid., 169–71; and Gérard E. Weil, *Élie Lévita Humaniste et Massorète (1469–1549)* (Studia Post-Biblica 7; Leiden: Brill, 1963) 116.

22. Ibid., 115–17. On the philological character of the work, see pp. 271–79.

23. Santiago Garcia-Jalon de la Lama, *La gramática hebrea en Europa en el siglo XVI. Guiaa de lectura de las obras impresas* (Salamanca: Publicaciones Universidad Pontífica, 1998) 115.

served as a professor of Hebrew in Rome while Leo X was pope, enjoying his patronage and the patronage of three of his successors. Pagninus based his dictionary, not on *Sefer Aruk* directly, but on a Jewish summary, the *Sefer Aruk ha-Qizzur*.[24] Pagninus's work was reprinted twice in expanded form, once in the sixth volume of the Antwerp Polyglot (1568–72), edited by Guy le Fevre de la Boderie, and as the *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae sive Lexicon hebraicum* with annotations by Jean Mercier, Cornelius Bertram and Pierre Chevalier, printed in Lyons, 1575 and reprinted in 1577.

Sebastian Münster also wrote an Aramaic dictionary, which he had printed in 1527, the same year as his grammar. He based his work on both a manuscript copy of the *Sefer Aruk ha-Qizzur*, which he found in a Dominican monastery library in Regensburg, and upon Pagninus's *Enchiridion*.[25] His old teacher, Pellican, also gave him his notes on Talmudic vocabulary to include in the dictionary.[26] David de Pomis, a Jewish physician, composed the final Postbiblical Hebrew/Aramaic dictionary for Christians that appeared in the sixteenth century. His *Zemah David* (Venice, 1587) was also based on the *Sefer Aruk* and provided glosses in Italian as well as Latin.

While Latin-language Aramaic grammars and dictionaries were essential for Christian students to learn the language, translations of Aramaic texts were an important aid to study as well. Because the Targums were valuable to Catholic, Reformed, and Lutheran theologians alike, and both the Zohar and Talmud had far fewer Christian readers, it is no surprise that only targumic texts were published in Latin translation during the sixteenth century. But these translated Targums appeared in two distinctly different kinds of publications, polyglot Bibles and small annotated editions, usually of single books for use as textbooks.

The earliest Targum to appear in a Christian printing with Latin translation was published as part of Agostino Giustiniani's *Psalterium hebraeum, graecum, arabicum et chaldaeum* (Genoa, 1516). Giustiniani provided not only the targumic text of the Psalms but also a Latin translation. The patronage of Cardinal Sauli was essential for the printing of this pioneering work, and Sauli's arrest in 1517 (as well as the poor sales of the Psalter), frustrated Giustiniani's ambition

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24. Samuel Krauss provided an extensive evaluation of one manuscript of the *Aruk ha-Qizzur*, which had been owned by Italian Jewish grammarian Abraham de Balmes (1440–1523), in "Aruch ms. Breslau," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 73 (1929) 385–402, 451–65.

25. Joseph Perles, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Hebräischen und Aramäischen Studien* (Munich: Thjeodor Ackermann, 1884) 20–30.

26. Karl Heinz Burmeister, *Sebastian Münster: Versuch eines biographischen Gesamtbildes* (Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft 91; Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1963) 47.

to continue the project until he had published an entire polyglot Bible.[27] The two best-known polyglots, the Complutensian polyglot (1514–17) and the Antwerp Polyglot (1568–73), were successfully completed because of their more secure patronage and funding.

The Complutensian Polyglot was the brainchild of Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros. Cardinal Jiménez assembled a first-class team of scholars to prepare the text of the polyglot Bible, including two Jewish converts, Pablo Coronel and Alfonso de Zamora. The editors provided *Targum Onqelos* in Aramaic and a facing Latin translation. Cardinal Jiménez spent about 50,000 gold ducats on preparing the text for printing. As Giustiniani had done with his *Psalterium*, Cardinal Jiménez dedicated the polyglot Bible to Pope Leo X. Unfortunately, the distribution of the Bible went far less smoothly than its printing. Although production of the polyglot was completed by 1517, its distribution was not sanctioned until papal authorization was given in March of 1520. Of the 600 sets printed, many were lost in a shipwreck.[28] It was a handsome, monumental Bible printing, whose size and distribution troubles limited its influence.

The Antwerp Polyglot Bible was meant both to update and to surpass the older Complutensian Polyglot Bible. It was edited and produced under far different circumstances, however, from its predecessor's. While its publication was justified primarily on the basis of its usefulness to the Catholic Church and the luster that it would add to the reputation of King Philip II of Spain, it was also intended to be a philological weapon of war against Protestantism.[29] In contrast to the older Complutensian Polyglot, the Antwerp Bible contained Targums to nearly every book of the Hebrew Bible, with facing Latin translation by Benito Arias Montano, the editor-in-chief himself.[30] It also featured an Aramaic dictionary and brief grammatical sketch written by Guy le Fèvre de la Boderie, one of Guillaume Postel's best students form the University of Paris.

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27. R. Gerald Hobbs, "Agostino Giustiniani of Genoa," in *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* 2 (ed. Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher; 3 vols.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985–87) 2.102–3. In 1517, Cardinal Sauli plotted with several other high-churchmen against Pope Leo X, and his arrest on May 19, 1517 effectively ended his career in the church hierarchy. See D. S. Chambers, "Bandinello Sauli, of Genoa," in *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, 3.198–99.

28. Erika Rummel, *Jiménez de Cisneros: On the Threshold of Spain's Golden Age* (Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 212; Renaissance Masters 3; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999) 58–65.

29. Leon Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp* (2 vols.; Amsterdam: Vangendt, 1972) 1:63.

30. B. Rekers, *Benito Arias Montano (1527–1598)* (Studies of the Warburg Institute 33; London: The Warburg Institute / Leiden: Brill, 1972) 48.

Volume 8 also included Franz Raphelengius's collation of variant readings in the Targums.[31] King Philip II provided an initial subsidy of 12,000 guilders to underwrite the costs, which ultimately would grow to 21,000 guilders.[32]

The final Polyglot Bible to appear in the sixteenth century was the work, not of a group of well-connected Catholic scholars, but of an extraordinarily persuasive Lutheran, Elias Hutter.[33] Hutter can probably best be understood as an educational visionary and entrepreneur. In 1597, when he arrived in Nuremberg, Hutter planned to found a school for languages and sought the support of the city council to publish multilingual books, a monumental multilingual dictionary, a New Testament edition in twelve languages, and then his enormous Hexateuch printing in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, Latin, German, Slavonic, French, and Italian. To finance the printing of these complicated works, Hutter borrowed an enormous amount of money from the city council, 14,000 Gulden for the Hexateuch alone in 1600.[34] Sales of Hutter's books were too slow to repay his loans to the city council, and Hutter was forced first to turn over his remaining stock of books in 1604 and then to leave town in early 1605, never to return.[35] His polyglot Hexateuch would be only an odd footnote in Targum studies, except that the Nuremberg city council was desperate to recoup some of their losses. They used several different strategies to sell off the remainder of Hutter's stock, and these books were fairly easy to find on the book market.[36]

The generosity of wealthy or powerful patrons was only one factor in the circulation of Aramaic texts. The foundation of chairs of Hebrew in northern European universities meant that the potential existed for regular Aramaic classes and therefore textbook sales. Jean Cinqarbres and Jean Mercier, both professors of Hebrew at the Collège Royale of Paris were among the first to print Aramaic readers for their students.[37] Between 1550 and 1562, Mercier

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31. Ibid., 53.

32. Voet, *The Golden Compasses*, 1:61, 63 n. 2.

33. Another Lutheran scholar, Johannes Draconites, also published selections from Genesis Psalms, and Isaiah and the complete books of Proverbs, Joel, Micah, Zechariah, and Malachi in a polyglot format that included Targums. The books were printed individually in Wittenberg and Leipzig between 1563 and 1565 (Johannes Schilling, "Johannes Drachs Marburger Gedenkrede auf Martin Luther," in *Dona Melancthoniana: Festgabe für Heinz Scheible zum 70. Geburtstag* [ed. Johanna Loehr; Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Fromman-Holzboog, 2001] 391–93).

34. Lore Sporhan-Krempel and Theodor Wohnhaas, "Elias Hutter in Nürnberg und seine Biblia in etliche Sprachen," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 27 (1986) 158–59.

35. Ibid., 160.

36. Ibid., 161.

37. The first to do so was Paul Fagius, who published a translation of *Targum Onqelos* in Strasbourg, 1546. Richard Raubenheimer, *Paul Fagius aus Rheinzabern: Sein Leben und Wirken*

prepared seven different student editions of books of the Targum, mostly the Minor Prophets but also the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. His colleague, Jean Cinqarbres, printed another three Aramaic readers with the texts of Lamentations (1549) and Hosea (1554–56).[38] Other Targums for biblical books were published by Erasmus O. Schreckenfuchs (Song of Solomon, Basel, 1553), Pierre Costus (Ecclesiastes, Lyons, 1554); Gilbert Genebrard (Joel, Paris, 1563), and Arnauld Pontac (Obadiah, Jonah, Zechariah, Paris, 1566). Immanuel Tremellius published a Latin translation, without the Aramaic text, of the twelve Minor Prophets (Heidelberg, 1567).

Although neither the Zohar nor the Talmud was published in Latin translation, either in part or in their entirety, during the sixteenth century, they were objects of enthusiastic study by at least some Christian scholars.[39] Among Christian students of the Zohar, Guillaume Postel stands out, because he translated the entire work into Latin and prepared it for publication. Postel first acquired a manuscript copy of the Zohar in Venice during 1547, and he began his first translation of it the following year. In addition to his considerable linguistic skills, Postel brought to the task of translation his idiosyncratic understanding of a universal salvation, which he derived from the Zohar as interpreted by the "Venetian Virgin," Mother Johanna, his spiritual mentor.[40] After the Zohar appeared in print for the first time (Cremona, 1558–59), Postel acquired a copy of it and translated the Zohar a second time into Latin.[41] He tried unsuccessfully a number of times between 1553 and 1580 to convince various Basel printers to print his Zohar translation.[42]

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als Reformator und Gelehrter (Veröffentlichungen des Vereins für Pfälzische Kirchengeschichte 6; Grünstadt [Pfalz]: Emil Sommer, 1957) 62–65.

38. Sophie Kessler Mesguiche, "L'enseignement de l'hébreu et de l'araméen a Paris (1530–1560) d'après les oeuvres grammaticales des lecteurs royaux," in *Les origins du Collège de France (1500–1560)* (ed. Marc Fumaroli; Paris: Collège de France/Klincksieck, 1998) 366–70.

39. For literature on sixteenth-century Christian Kabbalism, see Francois Secret, *Les Kabbalistes Chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris: Dunod, 1964); Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalistes Chrétiens* (Cahiers de l'Hermétisme; Paris: Albin Michel, 1979). See also Giulio Busi, "Francesco Zorzi: A Methodological Dreamer," in *The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books and Their Christian Interpreters* (ed. Joseph Dan; Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1997) 102 and 120 n. 26.

40. Marion L. Kuntz, *Guillaume Postel: Prophet of the Restitution of All Things. His Life and Thought* (International Archives of the History of Ideas 98; The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981) 83–84.

41. Ibid., 137.

42. Ibid., 138. See also Carlos Gilly, *Spanien und die Basler Buchdruck bis 1600: Ein Querschnitt durch die spanische Geistesgeschichte aus der Sicht einer europäischen Buchdruckerstadt* (Basler Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft 151; Frankfurt/Main: Helbing / Basel: Lichtenhahn, 1985) 77–78.

Talmudic study was by far the most difficult branch of Aramaic literature that a Christian could pursue. During the sixteenth century (and also the seventeenth), Christian students normally needed a Jewish tutor to make any progress at all. Wolfgang Capito owned a Talmud, but he gave it to Conrad Pellican in Zurich in 1526 because he had no tutor to help him learn. Pellican would ultimately make substantial use of Capito's gift. From 1538 to 1540, Pellican had the help of Michael Adam, a Jewish convert, as he translated portions of the Talmud into Latin. At first the work went very slowly, because Adam knew no Latin and also could not read German. The two men spent half an hour a day reading Talmud, Adam explaining a given passage in German, while Pellican wrote down the Latin translation.[43] Ultimately Pellican, with Adam's help, translated 17 tractates, drawn from both the Babylonian and the Palestinian Talmuds, all of which remained unpublished. Pellican's motive for devoting decades to the work, however, was apologetic rather than humanistic. He wrote to a colleague in 1550, "Why should anyone devote themselves to these Jewish unworthy things? Only to prevent the Jews, who alone master it, from creating confusion among Christians." Pellican believed that combing Jewish literature for valuable information and insights was like "looking for gemstones in heaps of manure."[44] Christian scholars did not begin to make serious use of the Talmud as a historical source for understanding the Bible until the early seventeenth century, when Johannes Coccejus and Constantijn L'Empereur began their careers.[45]

Apart from Pellican's motive of "knowing one's enemy," another use for Talmudic learning among Christians was preparing censors to read Jewish books. While the majority of Hebrew censors in Italy were Jewish converts, there were a few both in Italy and in Germany who were non-Jews. In order to gain the knowledge necessary to evaluate the Talmud at all, these Christian censors had to have instruction from Jews or Jewish converts. For example, three different men censored portions of the Basel Talmud between 1578 and 1580: Immanuel Tremellius, a Jewish convert; his former student from the University of Heidelberg, Pierre Chevalier; and Marius Marinus, the papal inquisitor of Venice. Marinus had first learned Hebrew from Pablo Veneto, a Jewish convert and a fellow Augustinian monk in the Congregation of S. Salvator of Brescia. Later Marinus would receive further instruction from Samuel Archevolti in Venice at the same time that young Leon Modena studied with him.[46]

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43. Christoph Züricher, *Konrad Pellikans Wirken in Zürich, 1526–1556* (Zürcher Beiträge zur Reformationsgeschichte 4; Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1975) 169–74.

44. Ibid., 190–91.

45. Van Rooden, *Theology, Biblical Scholarship, and Rabbinic Studies*, 119–30, 179–82.

46. Fausto Parente, "The Index, The Holy Office, The Condemnation of the Talmud and Publication of Clement VIII's Index," in *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern*

By the 1560s, the basic philological tools for Aramaic study had been forged, and a workable rationale for studying the Targums, the Zohar, and the Talmud had been worked out. But how widespread was the study of Aramaic among sixteenth-century Christians? Was it the hobby of a very few or a more-established, intellectual pursuit? That Aramaic study was no mere hobby is clear from an analysis of the places in which Christian Aramaic books were produced and from an examination of the records of Christian libraries in which Jewish Aramaic books found a home.

While knowledge of Biblical Hebrew was not uncommon among Christian theologians of the sixteenth century, they were seldom proficient in postbiblical Aramaic. A comparison of printing statistics for Hebrew and Aramaic philological books written for Christians suggests different markets for each kind of book. Over the course of the century, 852 philological books on Hebrew-related topics were printed for Christians, while only 61 were printed that contained substantial information on Aramaic. Of the books that were produced, only three of the authors, Elias Levita, Santes Pagninus, and Jean Mercier had their works reprinted, which implies a lack of demand for the titles.

Because the demand for Aramaic books was not particularly high, patronage was essential for both the scholars who wrote them and for the printers who produced them. Some of the very earliest scholars were beholden to generous benefactors of many kinds. Elias Levita lived for more than a decade in the household of Egidio de Viterbo and was strongly encouraged not only to provide language instruction but also to publish in the fields of Hebrew and Aramaic studies. Both Agostino Giustiniani and Santes Pagninus also enjoyed the patronage of high Catholic churchmen, in Pagninus's case the support of no fewer than four popes. Cardinal Jiménez and Agostino Giustiniani both dedicated their works to Pope Leo X. David de Pomis dedicated his *Zemach David* to Pope Sixtus V. The monumental polyglot Bibles would not have appeared in print at all without the help of generous patrons, a cardinal and a king, who helped to defray their production costs.

Before we conclude that Christian Aramaism was an oddity, the pursuit of devoted hobbyists, we should remember that the true harvest in terms of Christian translation and study of these Jewish classics could only come after the dogged scholarship of Johannes Buxtorf the Elder and Younger produced the monumental *Lexicon Chaldaicum Talmudicum et Rabbinicum* (1639–40). Yet between the days of Münster, Pagninus, and Buxtorf there were a sufficient number of Christians interested in Aramaic that a measurable number of Jewish Aramaic books began to form part of their libraries.

Inventories of two university and seven private libraries, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, provide remarkable insights into the progress of Aramaic studies among Christians.[47] All of the scholars, except Joseph Scaliger, were German, as were the university library catalogs. Five of the seven libraries owned by individual scholars contained complete Babylonian Talmuds, and three also contained Palestinian Talmuds, while Reuchlin had only a manuscript copy of *b. Sanhedrin*. The Strasbourg University Library owned both Talmuds. Lucas Edenberger, Wittenberg University's librarian, tried to purchase a Talmud in Venice during 1541 but was deterred by its high cost.[48] In 1593, Johannes Piscator, the rector of the newly founded Herborn Academy, solicited the gift of a Babylonian Talmud from Count Wilhelm Ludwig, *Stadholder* of the Dutch province of Friesland and oldest son of Count Johann VI of Nassau-Dillenberg, for the library.[49] These library lists and the wishes of Edenberger and Piscator to acquire Talmuds for their institutions all underscore its importance for Christian thinkers by 1600.

The Targums are represented in every one of these lists in a wide variety of formats. The *Biblia rabbinica*, printed in Venice by Daniel Bomberg, was strongly represented. Only Georg Siegel did not own one. Martin Bucer, Conrad Pellican, and Sebastian Münster each owned two different printings, as did the Strasbourg library. Several leading Wittenberg scholars including Melanchthon, Caspar Cruciger, and possibly even Luther himself also owned copies of either the 1517 or 1524–25 editions of the *Biblia rabbinica*.[50] Each library has at least one other Targum text, whether in the form of a Pentateuch with Targum (Strasbourg, Reuchlin, Scaliger), a polyglot Bible (Pappus), or Giustiniani's *Psalterium* (Wittenberg, Bucer, Pellican, Pappus, Scaliger).

The Zohar appears in only one copy in the library of Joseph Scaliger. However, it is worth remembering that kabbalistic study of any kind among Protestants and Catholics tended to be a private rather than a public or academic

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47. The libraries' catalogs under discussion are the university libraries of Wittenberg (1540) and Strasbourg (1572?), and the scholarly libraries of Johannes Reuchlin, Martin Bucer, Sebastian Münster, Konrad Pellican, Georg Siegel, Johannes Pappus, and Joseph Scaliger. See the appendix (pp. 434–36).

48. Ernest Schwiebert, "Remnants of a Reformation Library," *Library Quarterly* 10 (1940) 525.

49. Stephen G. Burnett, *From Christian Hebraism to Jewish Studies: Johannes Buxtorf (1564–1629) and Hebrew Learning in the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) 6.

50. Idem, "Reassessing the 'Basel-Wittenberg Conflict,'" 187. The indistinct notation in Paul Fagius's will, written in 1549, of a "Magna biblia cum commentarijs hebraicis" from Venice should probably also be understood as a Bomberg *Biblia rabbinica* (E. S. Leedham-Green, *Books in Cambridge Inventories: Book-Lists from Vice-Chancellor's Court Probate Inventories in the Tudor and Stuart Periods* [2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986] 1:109).

pursuit. The number of Christian imprints of kabbalistic texts of any kind during the sixteenth century was very small, only 9 of the 912 Hebraica books.[51] Even among Jews the Zohar was not widely available until after it appeared for the first time in print in Cremona in 1558–59. Guillaume Postel, Francesco Zorzi (both living in Italy), and other Christian Kabbalists were able to find copies of the Zohar to read before it appeared in print, but its diffusion and study among Christian Hebraists was slower than the Talmud or the Targums.[52]

These reflections on the Aramaic holdings of a group of predominantly German Protestant Hebraists illustrate one other trend in Aramaic scholarship. These books, which were sponsored and produced in Catholic Europe, found avid readers among Protestants. Because of its large number of universities with professors of Hebrew, Germany formed one of the largest markets for Hebrew textbooks, reference books, and for source collections such as the *Biblia rabbinica*.[53] In the seventeenth century, Protestants scholars would take the lead in Aramaic scholarship, but even before this happened they were avid consumers of it.

Christian Aramaism, then, was born in late-fifteenth-century Italy and Spain and grew up north of the Alps during the early years of the Reformation. In its early stages it was influenced more by patronage and Jewish assistance than by the tensions of the Reformation. By the end of the sixteenth century, Christian scholars had formulated rationales for studying Jewish literature and had forged a rudimentary apparatus. They had begun the process of translating and excerpting it, especially portions of the Targums, to integrate the information they found into a Christian framework. Taken together, the growth of Christian Aramaism was a remarkable scholarly achievement.

Appendix:
Aramaic Books of Sixteenth-Century Libraries

I.   University Libraries
     Wittenberg University Library, 1540[54]
         Biblia rabbinica (Bomberg, 1524–25)
         Giustiniani, Agostino, *Psalterium* (Genoa, 1516)
         Münster, *Dictionarium Chaldaicum* (2 copies)

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51. Burnett, "Christian Hebrew Printing," 21.
52. Busi, "Francesco Zorzi," 102.
53. Burnett, "Christian Hebrew Printing," 32–34.
54. Sachiko Kusukawa, *A Wittenberg University Library Catalogue of 1536* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995) 1–3.

Münster, *Grammaticum Chaldaicum*

Strasbourg University Library, [1572?][55]

    Pentateuchus cum Targume com: R. Sal & R. Chiskum

    Biblia in 2 tomis cum Targum & Peruschim R. Sal: & Abenezrae

    Biblia in 2 tomis cum Targum & Com R. D. K. Perisol, Rav Venaki

    Levita, *Meturgeman*

    Aruch autore R. Nathan Bar Jehiel

    Thalmud Ierusolymitanum tribus tomis

    Thalmud Babylonieum quinque tomis

II. Scholars' Libraries

Reuchlin, Johann (1455–1522)[56]

    B. Sanhedrin (MS)

    Biblia rabbinica (Bomberg, 1517)

    Pentateuch with *Tg. Onqelos* (Bologna, 1482)

    Prophets of *Targum Jonathan* (MS)

Bucer, Martin (1491–1551) [R. Gerald Hobbs, personal communication]

    Biblia rabbinica (1517)

    Biblia rabbinica (1524–25)

    Giustiniani, Agostino. *Psalterium* (Genoa, 1516; quotations from it)

Münster, Sebastian (1488–1552) [Burmeister, *Münster*, 200–201]

    Babylonian Talmud

    Biblia rabbinica (1517)

    Biblia rabbinica (1524–25)

    Pagninus, *Enchiridion*

Pellican, Konrad (1478–1556) [Züricher, *Konrad Pellikans Wirken*, 231–36]

    Babylonian Talmud

    Palestinian Talmud

    Biblia rabbinica (1524–25)

    Biblia rabbinica (1548)

    Giustiniani, Agostino. *Psalterium* (Genoa, 1516)

Siegel, Georg (donated to Altdorf UB in 1598) [Erlangen UB MS 2436,
       ff. 81r–83v] Theology Professor at the University of Altdorf

    Basel Talmud

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55. Johannes Pappus wrote the catalog in the flyleaves of his copy of *Meturgemann: Lexicon Chaidaicum Authore Eliia Levita* (Isny: Fagius, 1541), Wolfenbüttel, HAB Sig. 205.1 Th. 2o (2). Professor Adam Shear of the University of Pittsburgh discovered this manuscript catalog and kindly informed me of it.

56. Karl Christ, *Die Bibliothek Reuchlins in Pforzheim* (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1924; repr., Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus Reprint, 1968) 36–51.

Hutter, *Biblia Sacra, Ebraice, Chaldaice, Graece*
Targum Chaldaicum
Pappus, Johannes (1549–1610) [Herzog August Bibliothek, ᴍs 42 Aug. 2o]
  Taught Hebrew at Strasbourg University, 1569–75
Antwerp Polyglot
Babylonian Talmud (Basel)
Biblia rabbinica
Ambrosius, *Introductio in Linguam Chaldaicam Syriacam et Armenicam* &
  etc.
Bertram, *Grammaticae Hebraicae et Aramaicae comparatio*
Giustiniani, Agostino, *Psalterium* (Genoa, 1516)
Hutter, *Biblia Sacra, Ebraice, Chaldaice, Graece*
Levita, *Meturgeman* (Isny, 1541)
Münster, *Dictionarium Chaldaicum*
Münster, *Grammatica Chaldaica*
Pagninus, *Thesaurus Lingua Hebraica* opera Joh. Merceri (Lyons:
  Vincentium, 1575)
Schreckenfuchs, *Cantica canticorum et Ecclesiastes Salomonis paraphrasticos*
  [1553]
Thargum Onckeli, Jonathan ben Uzielis et Hierosolymitanum (in fol)
Tremellius, *Grammatica Chaldaea et Syra*
Scaliger, Joseph Juste (1540–1609)[57]
    Professor at Leiden University
Babylonian Talmud
Jerusalem Talmud (ᴍs)
Biblia rabbinica (Bomberg, 1524–25)
Pentateuch with Targum and Commentries of Rashi and Rambam (?)
Pentateuch with *Targum Onqelos*
Ambrosius, *Introductio*
Caninius, Angel, *Institutiones linguae Syriacae Assyriacae atque Talmudicae*
Giustiniani, Agostino, *Psalterium* (Genoa, 1516)
Levita, *Meturgeman*
Mercier, *Tabulae in Chaldaeam grammaticen* (Paris)
Mercier (ed.), *Chaldaea interpretatio sex prophetarum Hoseae, Ioelis,
  Amos & etc.* (1559)
Pomis, David de, *Dictionarium*
Zora [Zohar] (Cremona)

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57. *Catalogus Bibliothecae Publicae Lugduno-Batavae* (Leiden: Elsevir, 1636) 159–63.

Spying out the Land:
A Report from Genology

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Biblical studies has a natural affinity with genology, the study of genres but has had a strangely on and off again relationship with that discipline. For biblical studies the investigation of genres largely took shape as part of the development of form criticism. Although Gunkel was in conversation with several disciplines (e.g., classics, Germanics) that were concerned with the nature of genres, he did not apparently read literary theory.[1] Despite this, or more likely because of it, early form criticism included some elements that made it among the most progressive developments in genre criticism of the time. Form criticism, of course, was not primarily interested in literary genres but in the oral *Gattungen* that came to be recorded in written texts. In this regard form criticism might be seen as an early investigation of issues similar to those that intrigued Mikhail Bakhtin in his reflections on "speech genres" and their function in discourse,[2] though form criticism's focus was primarily on the reconstruction of oral *Gattungen*. More significantly, form criticism's attention to the Sitz im Leben of speech forms was a significant contribution to the sociology of genres. Indeed, this contribution was acknowledged in the work of Robert Jauss, a leading figure of the Konstanz school of "reception aesthetics," which emphasizes the function and reception of literary genres in their historical and social contexts. Jauss contrasts the relative neglect of attention to these aspects of genre in many strands of literary studies at the turn of the century with the development within biblical studies of "a concept of genre that is structural as well as sociological," describing briefly the work of Gunkel, Dibelius, and Bultmann.[3]

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1. See Martin Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism in Its Context* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 227–28, for a discussion of influences on Gunkel.

2. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; University of Texas Slavic Series 1; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

3. Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (trans. Timothy Bahti with an introduction by Paul de Man; Theory and History of Literature 2; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) 100–101.

Despite its accomplishments, however, early form criticism was marked by a tendency toward rigidity in its assumption that oral forms were "pure forms," with a tight connection between their life settings and their structures.[4]

A new interest in the potential of genre theory for biblical studies was part of the "literary turn" of biblical studies in the 1970s and was reflected in the SBL Genres Project, initiated by Robert Funk. Groups were established to investigate the genres of parable, pronouncement story, miracle story, letter, and apocalypse. Results from some of the groups were published in various issues of *Semeia* and have been quite influential in shaping the discussion of these ancient genres.[5] Since that time, of course, various individual scholars have used genre theory in their research,[6] but the conversation between biblical studies and genre studies continues to be sporadic.

In this essay I wish to make a brief and selective review of some of the trends in genre theory and their possible usefulness in biblical studies. In order to organize this discussion I will examine the approach and findings of the Apocalypse Group of the SBL as published in *Semeia* 14, *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (1979), noting how more-recent developments in genre theory might change the assumptions, approaches, and questions to be posed in a study of the genre of apocalypse. My comments are in no sense a criticism of the work of the Apocalypse Group. To the contrary, even some 25 years later, the quality of the analysis of this deservedly influential work remains impressive and its results valuable. But not surprisingly, the framework of genre studies has changed significantly, so that now one would probably approach the issues somewhat differently.

Characteristic of genre studies of the time, the Apocalypse Group frames the task primarily as one of definition and classification, so that the authors describe their purpose as that of identifying "a group of written texts marked by distinctive recurring characteristics which constitute a recognizable and coherent type of writing."[7] The metaphors and images that appear in the description refer to the "members" of the genre, to texts "belonging" to the genre, and to the genre's "boundaries." In several of the chapters, grids are presented that list the various features of form and content on one axis and the names of the apocalypses on the other axis. Each feature attested in the apocalypse is

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4. Buss, *Biblical Form Criticism*, 251, 255, 259.

5. See *Semeia* 11 (1978), 20 (1981), 22 (1981), 29 (1983), 36 (1986).

6. E.g., Richard A. Burridge *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also the review by Adela Yarbro Collins, "Genre and the Gospels," *JR* 75 (1995) 239–46.

7. John Collins, "Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre," *Semeia* 14 (*Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre*; 1979) 1.

marked with an *x*. Over the past quarter-century, however, genre theorists have become increasingly dissatisfied with an approach that defines genres by means of lists of features. The objections are of several sorts. Definitional and classificatory approaches are now seen as not representing well the functions of genre in human communication. As Alastair Fowler remarks, genre primarily has to do with communication. "It is an instrument not of classification or prescription, but of meaning."[8] Moreover, classificatory schemes are by their very nature static, whereas genres are dynamic. Thus Fowler memorably objects that the classification approach tends to treat genres as though they were pigeonholes, when in fact genres are more like pigeons.[9] "Mere" classification obscures the way in which every text—however it relates to similar texts— whether "by conformity, variation, innovation, or antagonism" will change the nature of the genre and indeed give rise to new genres.[10]

The objections from poststructuralists such as Derrida are, not surprisingly, even stronger. In characteristically paradoxical fashion, Derrida claims that while "a text cannot belong to no genre" he would rather "speak of a sort of participation without belonging—a taking part in without being part of, without having membership in a set."[11] In my opinion there is much to be said for following Derrida's lead and thinking of genre in relation to a text's rhetorical orientation so that rather than referring to texts as belonging to genres one might think of texts as participating in them, invoking them, gesturing to them, playing in and out of them, and in so doing, continually changing them. With respect to apocalypses, this shift in how one thinks about texts and genres accommodates better not only the multigeneric nature of many apocalypses but also their irreducible particularity. It also allows one to think more flexibly about apocalypses and the penumbra of related kinds of texts.

Classification continues to have its defenders in genre theory but often in a way that quite changes the nature and purposes of classification from a descriptive enterprise to that of a critical category devised by the critic for the purposes of the critic. Thus Adena Rosmarin, in *The Power of Genre*, argues that genre can be seen as a kind of intentional category error in which two things that are not the same are brought together "as if" they were the same. Drawing on art historian E. H. Gombrich's dictum that "all thinking is sorting, classifying," she

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8. Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982) 22.

9. Ibid., 36.

10. Ibid., 23.

11. Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," in *Modern Genre Theory* (ed. David Duff; Harlow, Essex: Longman, 2000) 224, 230.

argues that it is the critic who draws together different texts for productive purposes. This is how we

> can explain texts that are different—"Composed upon Westminster Bridge" and "The Windhover"—as if they were the same kind of thing, namely, a sonnet. . . . We can always choose, correct, invent, or define a class wide enough to make the desired [category] mistake possible. . . . The initial thesis of a rhetorical and pragmatic theory of explanation, then, is that the inevitability of making mistakes is not the bane of criticism but, rather, its enabling condition. It makes classification possible, and classification enables criticism to begin.[12]

Thus for the neopragmatist genre critic such as Rosmarin, the "validity" of a genre category has to do with its potential for creating new critical insight rather than with its correspondence to the author's own sense of genre.

The authors of *Semeia* 14 initially appear to have some sympathy for a pragmatic approach to genre of this sort because they observe that the use of the term *Apokalypsis* in ancient manuscripts is "not a reliable guide to the genre." Rather "an 'apocalypse' is simply that which scholars can agree to call an 'apocalypse.'"[13] If this is the case, then there would be little objection to a classificatory approach that defines the genre of apocalypse in terms of a clustering of features of form and content. Nevertheless, it does not seem to me that the authors of *Semeia* 14 intended their clarification of the genre apocalypse simply to function as a convenience for critics but in some sense to make explicit the tacit assumptions held by ancient writers about how one composes an apocalypse. That is to say, I judge that their critical act was not intended so much as a constructive act as a reconstructive one. If this is the case, then the limitations of the classificatory approach have to be addressed.

Even if one wishes to move beyond classification, however, the fact remains that genre recognition involves some sort of mental grouping of texts on the basis of perceived similarity. Many of the recent discussions have struggled to find more-apt ways of describing this process. One of the most popular of these explanations is developed from Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance. In *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein posed the question of what is common to the various things we call games: "board games, card games, ball games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? . . . If you look at them you will not see something that is common to *all*, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. . . . We see a complicated net-

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12. Adena Rosmarin, *The Power of Genre* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985) 21–22. For a similar approach, see Ralph Cohen, "History and Genre," *New Literary History* 17 (1986) 203–18.

13. J. Collins, "Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre," 2.

work of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail.—And I shall say: 'games' form a family."[14]

Adapted and popularized by Fowler as a means of thinking about genre,[15] the notion of family resemblance does seem to get at aspects of the perceptual processes by which the mind sorts things that belong together from those that seem not to belong together. One might, of course, argue that classification by means of features is simply the systematic and self-conscious application of a model of family resemblance, but this is not usually the way in which genre theorists invoke the model. Fowler insists that it is neither "as an inferior substitute for a class" nor "a mere preliminary to definition."[16] Instead, it makes the "blurred edges" of genres of the essence. Indeed, among its more radical proponents, the family-resemblance model appears to dissolve category boundaries in a fairly decisive manner. But for this very reason the approach runs into problems of its own. For example, texts in Group A might exhibit features a, b, c, Group B might exhibit features b, c, d, and group C might exhibit features c, d, e, and so forth. One is left with the uncomfortable conclusion that the family-resemblance model could produce a genre in which two exemplars in fact shared no traits in common! As John Swales remarks, "family resemblance theory can make anything resemble anything."[17]

Another attempt to describe how genre recognition and genre competence take place invokes the notion of intertextuality. Jonathan Culler describes the way in which readers make sense of texts as follows: "A work can only be read in connection with or against other texts, which provide a grid through which it is read and structured by establishing expectations which enable one to pick out salient features and give them a structure."[18]

One of the appealing aspects of this account is that it suggests the tacit and unselfconscious way in which people acquire a sense of genre by reading many texts. Culler's account also attends to the communicative function of genre as establishing "a contract between writer and reader so as to make certain relevant expectations operative and thus to permit both compliance with and deviation from accepted modes of intelligibility."[19] In many respects the practice

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14. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958) 31–32.

15. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 41–42.

16. Ibid., 41.

17. John Swales, *Genre Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 51. See also the extended examination of the family-resemblance model by David Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993) 53–68.

18. Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975) 139.

19. Ibid., 147.

of the Apocalypse Group could be described as a highly intentional form of intertextuality, because they read texts closely in relation to one another in order to cultivate a disciplined sense of genre recognition. But they did so with a much more limited purpose than that which Culler ascribes to intertextuality. Culler's model is not only about genre recognition but also about the dynamics of genre deviation as part of the text's communicative purpose. Culler does not, however, draw the implications for the history of genres that Fowler does in his reference to an author's practice of "conformity, variation, innovation, or antagonism," by means of which the very body of intertexts is changed with each new instance, so that ultimately the very genre itself may be transmuted into something else.[20] While the Apocalypse Group did not include an attempt to establish a diachronic map of the changing nature of the apocalypses, the intertextual approach described by Culler and Fowler could well be adapted for purposes of this sort.

As helpful as the invocation of intertextuality can be, it is based on a hypothetical sense rather than an empirical finding of how readers actually acquire a sense of genre, and in fact it is in some ways mistaken about the nature of this process. One of the most promising recent developments in exploring how people do recognize and engage genres emerges from cognitive science and its radical overturning of our understanding of how mental categories are formed and function. Because genres are categories of speech or literature, they function in much the same way as other mental categories. The key insight of the cognitive theory of categories is that conceptual categories are not best thought of as defined by distinctive features possessed by every member of the group but, rather, by a recognition of prototypical examples that serve as templates against which other possible instances are viewed. In a series of experiments in the 1970s, Eleanor Rosch showed that this is how categorical structures function.[21] For instance, even though robins, ostriches, swallows, eagles, and penguins are all birds, people tend to treat robins and sparrows as "typical" members of the category birds and ostriches and penguins as "atypical." Thus robins and sparrows are the prototypes for the category "bird." The category can be extended to cover other birds that do not conform to the prototype (e.g., those that are large or do not fly or do not sing), but the birds that do not closely resemble the prototypes have a marginal status. Categories

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20. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 23.

21. Eleanor Rosch, "Cognitive Representations of Semantic Categories, *Journal of Experimental Psychology (General)* 104 (1975) 192–233; idem, "Principles of Categorization," in *Cognition and Categorization* (ed. E. Rosch and B. Lloyd; Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1978) 27–48.

are thus structured with central and peripheral members. Indeed membership in a category may be a matter of degree.[22]

One of the advantages of prototype theory is that it provides a way for bringing together what seems so commonsensical in classificatory approaches, while avoiding their rigidity. At the same time it gives more discipline to the family-resemblance approach, because not every resemblance or deviation is of equal significance.[23] As applied to genre categories, prototype theory would require an identification of exemplars that are prototypical and an analysis of the privileged properties that establish the sense of typicality.

How would this approach compare with the project of the Apocalypse Group? In fact, it appears that they intuitively worked with something like a prototype model. Consider the following statement:

> There is a general consensus among modern scholars that there is a phenomenon which may be called "apocalyptic" and that it is expressed in an ill-defined list of writings which includes (on any reckoning) the Jewish works Daniel (chaps. 7–12), 1 Enoch, 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch and the Christian book of Revelation. The list is generally agreed to be more extensive than this but its precise extent is a matter of dispute.[24]

The apocalypses named are clearly recognized as "prototypical," though a prototype theory of genre would find the dispute about the extent of the genre category not to be a problem that requires solving by recourse to a strict definition. Also similar to prototype theory is the distinction made by the Apocalypse Group between "a few elements [that] are constant in every work," a larger number that may or may not be present, as well as elements distinctive to particular works.[25] Thus there is a distinction between central or privileged properties and those that are more peripheral.

To this point, prototype theory may sound as though it is not much different than a slightly chastened form of definition by features. But there are other aspects of prototype theory that differentiate it from traditional forms of category definition. Categories are not simply collections of features but also involve cognitive models or background framework schemata. The difference between the two approaches can be illustrated by a classic example.[26] By definition, the concept "bachelor" means "an unmarried adult male." But no one

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22. Michael Sinding, "After Definitions: Genre, Categories, and Cognitive Science," *Genre* 35 (2002) 186.

23. Swales, *Genre Analysis*, 52.

24. J. Collins, "Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre," 3.

25. Ibid., 9–10.

26. Sinding, "After Definition," 193–94.

really thinks of the Pope, Tarzan, or a Muslim with three wives as a bachelor. The category is implicitly related to a script-like semantic frame that understands the course of a typical man's life as beginning with childhood, progressing to a period of sexual maturity, and involving (or not) marriage to one woman. Only in relation to that "idealized cognitive model" does the category "bachelor" make sense.[27]

The significance of this analysis of cognitive models for genre is that "elements" alone are not what trigger recognition of a genre; instead, what triggers it is the way in which they are related to one another in a *Gestalt* structure that serves as an idealized cognitive model. Thus the elements only make sense in relation to a whole. Because the *Gestalt* structure contains default and optional components, as well as necessary ones, individual exemplars can depart from the prototypical exemplars with respect to default and optional elements and still be recognizable as an extended case of "that sort of text."[28]

The members of the Apocalypse Group seem to have anticipated something like the gestalt notion as essential to genre recognition in their discussion of what they called "the inner coherence of the genre." As they noted, "the different elements which make up our comprehensive definition of the genre are not associated at random but are integrally related by their common implications."[29] Specifically, they note "transcendence" as the key to the relationships, linking the manner of revelation, the existence of a heavenly world, the nature of its beings, and the function of apocalyptic eschatology. "There is, then, an intrinsic relation between the revelation which is expressed in the apocalypse as a whole and the eschatological salvation promised in that revelation."[30] Thus an element like pseudepigraphy, which is surely a central category for the genre apocalypse, may nevertheless be absent even from one of the prototypical exemplars (the book of Revelation). Certain "default" features characteristic of prototypical apocalypses (e.g., resurrection of the dead) do not, however, appear in all of the Jewish apocalypses (e.g., the *Apocalypse of Weeks* and *Testament of Levi* 2–5) and may be represented by different content in others (e.g., the way in which revealed knowledge conveys present salvation in Gnostic apocalypses). The gestalt structure (or idealized cognitive model) organizes and authorizes the extension from the prototypical cases to those that are atypical.

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27. The term "idealized cognitive model" is from George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 68.

28. Sinding, "After Definition," 196.

29. J. Collins, "Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre," 10.

30. Ibid., 11.

Prototype theory, however, challenges the classificatory approach in a more fundamental way. Classification, no matter how nuanced, tends toward a binary logic. Does a text belong or not belong? Does it belong to this genre or to that one? Thinking in terms of prototype exemplars and a graded continuum challenges this artificial manner of assigning texts to generic categories.[31] In a witty analogy, Marie-Laure Ryan describes the existence of both "highly typical" and the "less typical" texts of a genre as encouraging one "to think of genres as clubs imposing a certain number of conditions for membership, but tolerating as quasi-members those individuals who can fulfill only some of the requirements, and who do not seem to fit into any other club."[32] Though it may seem to be a mere quibbling over metaphors, metaphors are quite important in how we think. Thus the prototype and family-resemblance approach to genre seems to me to offer advantages for how one would think about *Jubilees* or the *Temple Scroll* or revelatory discourses in relationship to the genre apocalypse in contrast to a classificatory approach that talks of the boundaries of the genre and the problem of borderline cases.

One final aspect of prototype theory remains to be noted, and it is one that raises the issue of the limits of this approach. Michael Sinding, one of the strong advocates of prototype theory, argues that, in contrast to the historically oriented family-resemblance approach as developed by Fowler, prototype theory operates ahistorically. That is to say one can read the prototypical exemplars out of historical order and thus without a sense of how one text influences or imitates another "and still have as good a grasp of the genre, *as a genre*, as anyone."[33] Here, too, the Apocalypse Group works with a similar perspective in that they define their concern as that of "phenomenological similarity, not historical derivation."[34] For the purposes of genre recognition, this ahistorical approach can certainly be justified. But developing a sense of the genre is not the only matter to be pursued. Some of the most interesting issues in genology are precisely those of genealogy.

The recognition of the historical nature of genres was a surprisingly late development in genre theory. Until the emergence of Romanticism, most genre criticism treated genres as transcendent or "natural" forms that were valid, descriptively and prescriptively, across historical periods.[35] This explains various

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31. Sinding, "After Definition," 192.

32. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Introduction: On the Why, What, and How of Generic Taxonomy," *Poetics* 10 (1981) 118.

33. Sinding, "After Definition," 193. Sinding argues against Fishelov and Fowler, who stress the role of literary tradition.

34. J. Collins, "Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre," 1.

35. For an excellent, succinct review of the history of genology, see David Duff, "Introduction," in *Modern Genre Theory* (ed. D. Duff; Harlow, Essex: Longman, 2000) 1–22.

attempts to identify biblical compositions in terms of classical genres, such as, for instance, Theodore Beza's comparison of Job with classical tragedy. Romanticism's new recognition of genres as dynamic entities historically and culturally conditioned was given its classic expression in Hegel's lectures on aesthetics. Not surprisingly, this new historicist understanding of genres soon found an intriguing model in Darwin's theory of evolution, developed most fully in Ferdinand Brunetière's *L'évolution des genres*, published in 1890. Although the evolutionary model has been criticized, it has received a recent defender in David Fishelov, who argues that a more careful use of Darwinian analogies can be of significant use in understanding why some genres are productive at particular periods and then become extinct or "sterile," as Fishelov would prefer to describe them.[36]

For reasons that should be evident, this is an extremely important issue for understanding the genre of apocalypse, because it is possible to date the emergence of apocalypses (sometime in the third century B.C.E.) and to date their demise within Judaism (in the aftermath of the Bar Kochba revolt), though they continued to be composed in Christian circles, including the Gnostics. Moreover, most of the Jewish apocalypses and many of the Christian ones can be dated with reasonable certainty, and patterns of influence often can be traced. The relationships among these documents have frequently been explored with respect to ideas, motifs, or theological perspectives, but rarely has the focus been on describing the evolution of the genre as such.

Another aspect of the historicist perspective on genre has to do with the relationship of different genres to one another in succeeding historical periods. The Russian Formalists, in particular, took up the question of the evolution of genres not as isolated developments but in relation to the genre system as a whole.[37] Whether or not one could describe a hierarchy of genres within the Second Temple period, as the Russian Formalists proposed for various epochs in Western literature, is a difficult question. But it is worth asking how one might describe the relationships among the narrative, historiographical, poetic, paraenetic, apocalyptic, halakic, and other genres that flourished during the Second Temple period. Were some more dominant than others? Are certain genres absorbed into others? And how might one describe the radical restructuring of the genre system in the period after the destruction of the Temple and especially after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt? Shklovsky drew at-

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36. Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 35–52.

37. These ideas are developed by Viktor Shklovsky, *Theories of Prose* (trans. Benjamin Sher; Elmwood Park, Ill.: Dalkey Archive, 1990); and Yuri Tynyanov, "The Literary Fact," in *Modern Genre Theory* (ed. D. Duff; Harlow, Essex: Longman, 2000) 29–49.

tention to the fact that genre change is not simply continuous development but often discontinuous or, as one might say, that it requires not only evolutionary but revolutionary models.[38]

Even though Shklovsky rightly challenged the simple linearity of the nature of genre change, his own metaphors—the knight's move in chess or an inheritance that proceeds from uncle to nephew rather than from father to son—suggest a rather schematic sense of motivated directionality. While this may be adequate for an investigation of large-scale changes in genre systems, the change that takes place in particular genres is generally much less tidy. Fowler describes a process of continuous metamorphosis in which "every literary work changes the genres it relates to. This is true not only of radical innovations and productions of genius. The most imitative work, even as it kowtows slavishly to generic conventions, nevertheless affects them, if only minutely or indirectly."[39] Fowler's observation might be recast in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of texts as utterances in dialogical relationship to one another.[40] Not only is every utterance unique but also it must be conceived of as a reply to what has gone before. Thus every instance of a genre can be understood as a reply to other instances of that genre and as a reply to other genres, whether or not self-consciously conceived of as such. The dialogical relationship carries forward the ever-changing configuration of the genre.

Bakhtin, however, recognized not only the continuous transformation of genres but also their profound conservatism. In a paradoxical formulation he asserted that "a genre is always the same and yet not the same, always old and new simultaneously."[41] This paradox was contained in what he referred to as genre memory, the fact that new iterations of a genre always contained archaic elements. "A genre lives in the present, but always *remembers* its past, its beginning. Genre is a representative of creative memory in the process of literary development."[42] Bakhtin's formulation thus brings together the synchronic and diachronic elements of genre.[43]

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38. Duff, "Introduction," 7.

39. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 23.

40. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (ed. Michael Holquist; trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist; University of Texas Slavic Series 1; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 281.

41. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (ed. and trans. Caryl Emerson with an introduction by Wayne Booth; Theory and History of Literature 8; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 106.

42. Ibid.

43. Clive Thompson, "Bakhtin's 'Theory' of Genre," *Studies in Twentieth Century Literature* 9 (1984) 35.

With respect to the problem of the genre of apocalypse, this perspective may be of particular use for understanding the internal dynamics of late Christian and Gnostic apocalypses, which stand chronologically far from the beginnings of apocalyptic. But it may also be a fruitful approach to the issue of the multigeneric nature of apocalypses. Many apocalypses contain paraenesis, historical resumés, dream reports, and a variety of other small genres. These, too, have genre memory and retain archaic elements even as they are newly contextualized and transformed by being incorporated into apocalypses.

As so often, Bakhtin is more suggestive than systematic. To understand better the issues posed by the origin of the genre of apocalypse, its multigeneric quality, and its relation to what the Apocalypse Group terms "related texts" one might turn again to the intersection of cognitive theory and genre theory. Cognitive theory has concerned itself extensively with the mechanisms of mental creativity, particularly the notion of "conceptual blending" in the work of Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner.[44] Although this is a highly complex and subtle theory to which I cannot begin to do justice in this short essay, it understands certain forms of creative thinking as occurring when two or more mental schemata are brought together and integrated in networks of "mental spaces." This is, in essence, how we think by means of metaphors or the way we integrate a figural scenario and a political scenario in political cartoons. The extension of this theory to genre is only in its initial stages, and its usefulness remains to be demonstrated.[45] Nevertheless, it might well provide a more rigorous way in which to investigate, for instance, how late prophetic vision accounts, parabiblical narrative, historical resumés, and other such forms are creatively blended to produce what we recognize as apocalypses. Or, one might use an approach of this sort to understand the way in which apocalypses and testaments are brought together to create novel types of texts that occupy the periphery between genres.

A final perspective on genres that holds particular promise for the investigation of apocalyptic literature comes from the work of the Bakhtin circle. For Bakhtin and his colleagues, genre is not simply a literary form but a mode of cognition. The metaphor invoked by Pavel Medvedev was genre as a means of seeing: "Every genre has its methods and means of seeing and conceptualizing reality, which are accessible to it alone. . . . The process of seeing and concep-

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44. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities* (New York: Basic Books, 2002).

45. Michael Sinding, "Conceptual Blending and the Origins of Genres" (paper presented at the Cognitive Approaches to Literature Session, Modern Language Association Convention, Philadelphia, December 28, 2004).

tualizing reality must not be severed from the process of embodying it in the forms of a particular genre. . . . The artist must learn to see reality with the eyes of the genre."[46] Medvedev compares the different ways of conceptualizing reality that are accessible to a graph as opposed to a painting, or to a lyric poem as opposed to a drama or a novel. Genres are thus ideological instruments in that they are the expressions of mental structures or world views. Thus the exploration of the genre apocalypse needs to include the question of what kind of *thinking* is performed by the genre qua genre.

But how might one approach this question? Bakhtin's own work on the genre of the novel led him to privilege the particular configurations of space and time, the chronotope, as he called it, as that which defines and distinguishes different genres.[47] Thus the adventure novel of ordeal has a repertoire of characteristic physical settings (journeys, voyages, exotic locales, marketplaces, etc.) as well as a repertoire of characteristic ways of handling time (abrupt meetings and partings, coincidental arrivals, a series of episodes that are largely interchangeable in sequence, etc.). By contrast the *Bildungsroman* has a quite different repertoire of privileged places and constructions of temporality. These differences have implications for the kind of characters who can inhabit these different worlds. Indeed, they are very different ways of construing reality itself.

Although the chronotope has mostly been explored in relation to narrative structures, there is no reason why it would not be fruitful for other types of literature. Apocalypses, in particular, are deeply concerned with the nature and significance of time and with the relation of certain privileged spaces to one another and to time. The distinctive character of the apocalyptic seer and the privileging of apocalyptic knowledge as a moral and religious virtue are integrally related to the chronotope characteristic of apocalypses. To go beyond superficial observations would require considerable, detailed work, but the aptness of Bakhtin's conception of the chronotope for research on apocalypses should be evident.

One could, of course, go on and on, but I hope in this short essay to have shown ways in which the conversation between biblical studies and genology can continue to be highly productive. Although it is always hazardous to attempt to predict the future of an intellectual inquiry, I suspect that the most creative work in genology in the next decade will take place at the intersection

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46. Pavel N. Medvedev, *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics* (trans. A. Wehrle; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) 133.

47. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 85.

of the Bakhtinian understanding of genre and the understanding that is developing in conversation with cognitive theory. Not only can cognitive theory help refine the intuitive insights of Bakhtin and Medvedev concerning the cognitive force of genre, but the Bakhtin circle's emphasis on the social and historical dimensions of genres can also prevent cognitive theories from becoming too abstract. Given the rich tradition of the study of oral and written forms in biblical studies, there is every reason to think that this discipline can play an important role in the developing discourse concerning genre.

What's in a Calendar?
Calendar Conformity, Calendar Controversy, and Calendar Reform in Ancient and Medieval Judaism

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I propose to address the question when and how a difference of opinion between diverse echelons of a society is prone to harden into a schism that eventually leads to the establishment of a sociopolitical or religious *corpus separatum*. In other words, where exactly can the borderline between "dialogue," "legitimate disputation," and socioreligious schism be drawn. It is my thesis that in respect to Judaism, a nonconformable calendar was often the decisive factor in such a process. The centripetal effect of a shared ephemeris on the one hand, and of the centrifugal impact of calendrical nonconformity on the other hand, can be illustrated by bringing under review reports and documents that bear witness to the pivotal role recurrently played by a "calendar-event" in the emergence of dissenting factions in various periods in the history of ancient Judaism. I do not aim at exhausting the topic. Rather, I intend to highlight the centrality of "calendar" as a unifying element or, in contrast, as a divisive factor, by focusing attention on the effect that calendar-controversy had on Jewish society. I would maintain that this phenomenon has not been subjected to the comprehensive scholarly investigation it deserves.

Let me begin my predominantly descriptive review by paraphrastically quoting Emile Durkheim's appreciation of the impact of a shared time-schedule on societal life, as I did in previous publications.[1] The French sociologist rates the calendar as a most important factor of socialization, which "expresses the rhythm of the collective activities while at the same time its function is to assure their regularity."[2] By putting the stress on "collective

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1. See, inter alia, my "Calendar of the Covenanters of the Judean Desert," in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. C. Rabin and Y. Yadin; *ScrHier* 4; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1958) 162–99 = idem, *The World of Qumran from Within* (Jerusalem: Magnes / Leiden: Brill, 1989) 174–85.

2. E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (trans. J. S. Swain; London: Allen & Unwin, 1915) 11.

activities," Durkheim correctly identified the "calendar" as a time-schema that regulates societal life, the life of a structured "body politic."

I venture to say that the characterization of calendar as a societal instrument emerges already in the biblical traditions preserved in the first chapters of the book of Genesis. In the "constitutive era" of the history of humanity, the days of Adam, Eve, and their descendants, time is not yet seen as a social phenomenon. The concept of time has solely a cosmic application. It is tied to the creation of the great luminaries, the sun and the moon, of day and night (Gen 1:14–19). In the ensuing traditions that pertain to antediluvian humanity, in reference to the number of "years" ascribed to a patriarch, at the birth of his first son and at his death (Genesis 5), time takes on an "anthropological" dimension. However, a breakdown of the year into natural seasons or into days and months in the life of humans is never given. These data do not apply in an era of a not-yet fully stabilized cosmos.

The primeval creation came to an end, dissolved, so to speak, in the cosmic flood. That universe was supplanted by a new creation, the intrinsically different postdeluge world of Noah, the second "first man," and his descendants. Calendrical data according to days, months, and years are first introduced in the account of the "Great Flood" (Genesis 7–8), which marks the termination of the cosmic "constitutive era" and the onset of the "history" of humanity. In this "historical" world is set the forever-fixed revolution of the sun and the moon, the natural phenomena that rule "time" and are the bases of all refined calendrical computations: "while the earth lasts, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall never cease" (Gen 8:22; compare Jer 33:25–26). The incipient "historical" world is characterized by the progressive differentiation of humanity into discrete societal structures: families, clans, and peoples that occupy severally diverse areas of the earth (Genesis 10–11).

In the "historical" world the societal propensities of "time" and "calendar" are brought into full light. When applying Durkheim's definition of the signification of calendar to specific political and/or religious organisms, we must pay attention to the function of a common calendar as an indispensable instrument for securing the internal unity of a given body politic and/or a religious community, whereas calendrical nonconformity amounts to the most tangible declaration of schismatic intention, which eventually hardens into the establishment of a sovereign sociopolitical and/or religious entity.

Some well-known instances exemplify the significance of a nonconformist calendar as a symbolic and, at the same time, a tangible indicator of political and/or religious independence: from their inception, faith communities tend to inaugurate a particular time schema and to perpetuate it in their ensuing history. For such a community, its idiosyncratic calendar becomes a most con-

spicuous rallying point, serving at one and the same time internally as a centripetal unifying instrument, and externally as a centrifugal factor that sets it off against other communities.

In the Western world, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam prove the point. Each one in the past established its own peculiar calendar and adhered to it continually, without fail. It will suffice to illustrate the point by drawing attention to the introduction by Church authorities in the early second century of a "*heidenchristlich(e)* version of Pesaḥ/Easter aimed at accentuating the segregation of Christianity from Judaism."[3] The separation was further underpinned by the decision of the Council of Nicea in 375, which forever riveted the date of Easter to the 1st Sunday after the full moon in the first month, never before March 22 nor after April 25, thus effectively cutting it off from Pesaḥ,[4] observed in the Jewish tradition on the 14th of the first month (Nissan), which can fall on any of four days—Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Saturday but never on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday.

In the course of history, both Judaism and Christianity were subject to internal diversification and were affected by calendar schisms. In the sphere of Judaism, it will suffice to mention the Samaritans and the Karaites. To this day, the Samaritans gear their communal and individual pace of life to a particular lunar calendar that effects an unbridgeable chasm between theirs and the Jewish community. This is a demarcation line that cannot be crossed. Because of the different calendars, the Samaritan sacrifice of the paschal lamb seldom coincides with the Jewish Pesaḥ, although both communities observe the festival on the biblically prescribed date the 14th of the first month. Similarly, the Orthodox and Eastern churches celebrate Christmas, Easter, and Palm Sunday at times that differ from those that obtain in the Western churches, although all depend on the dates fixed in the hallowed Scriptures. As aforementioned, in the past, believers saw Muhammad as the founder of a new world order, just as the faithful interpreted Jesus' singular mission on earth as the onset of a new creation.

A comparable situation can be observed in the political arena. The nineteenth-century French revolutionaries made the foundation of their "new regime" the launching pad of an equally new calendar, commencing on the

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3. B. Lohse, "Ostern," *RGG* 4.1735–36: "Nach Irenius (Eusebius, h.e.V, 24,14 ist O(stern) seit der Zeit Sixtus I (um 115) in Rom gefeiert worden. Es gibt kein Zeugnis, dass O(stern) anderswo früher gefeiert wurde, Demnach ist das O(ster)fest wahrscheinlich Anfang des 2. Jh.s in Rom geschaffen worden. Der Grund dafür dürfte gewesen sein, dass man sich stärker als die Q(uartadezimaner) es taten von der Verbindung mit dem Judentum lösen und ein rein heidenchristliuches Fest feiern wollte. . . . Während die Q. wie die Juden den 14. Nisan einhielten, beobachtete man bei den Heidenchristen den auf diesen folgenden Sonntag."

4. Compare ibid., 1737.

18th Brumaire 1798. In the twentieth century a similar attempt was made after the Russian Revolution. In both instances, the initiators of the novel political structures conceived of them severally as new beginnings in history. In all these cases the introduction of a time scheme was called for to set the "old" world apart from the intrinsically "new."

In modern times, the introduction of a new calendar as a symbol of "otherness" is no longer feasible. Therefore, the quest for distinctive sociopolitical separateness generated surrogate measures involving "time." Let me mention two recent cases. Before the reunification with West Germany, the East German government consistently maintained a difference of one hour between their daylight saving time and West Germany's. Similarly, during the "Intifada" uprising, the Palestinian leadership signaled "independence" from the Jewish state by introducing daylight saving time in East Jerusalem at a date that differed from its introduction in the western part of the city and also by imposing on the Arab population a midday closing of shops at hours that did not coincide with the "siesta" kept in the Jewish sector. These examples illustrate the impact of calendar nonconformity on contemporary societies that base their ephemeris on fixed, objective astronomical observations and calculations that exclude any possibility of deviation. In antiquity, premeditated dissent had an even harsher and more acute effect on social entities. At that time calendrical computations in the framework of a solar ephemeris were dependent on the cycle of seasons and, in the lunar calendar, on direct observation of the moon's revolution. Those "practical" systems are prone to be affected by changing natural conditions, such as rainfall or clouded skies.

In the orbit of Judaism, the inquiry regarding the calendar pertains to several issues: (a) adherence to a solar, as against to a lunar calendar; (b) the impact of the abidance by a solar or a lunar ephemeris on the reckoning of the day, whether from morning to morning or from evening to evening; (c) the synchronization of a lunar calendar with a solar one by systematic intercalation; (d) regular periodic intercalation in a societal framework in which both the Jewish lunar year of 354 days and the Qumran solar year of 364 days are employed, because neither dovetails with the true solar year of 365 days and about six hours.

The unifying propensity of a common calendar on the one hand, and the disruptive impact of calendrical nonconformity on the other hand, can be illustrated by bringing under scrutiny relevant instances in the history of Israel. This leads to a short discussion of the calendar controversy between the "Community of the Renewed Covenant"[5] and mainstream Judaism at the

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5. This is the most appropriate designation of the community predominantly called "Qumran Sect," "Essenes," "Qumran Essenes," and so on. See my "Community of the

height of the Second Temple period, to which many texts from the Qumran caves give eloquent testimony.

1. The earliest example of the disruptive effect of calendar divergence in Israelite history is the cult and calendar reform carried out in ca. 900 B.C.E. after the death of King Solomon by Jeroboam I ben Nebat, the founder of the Northern Kingdom of Ephraim: "He observed the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkoth) in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like that in Judah [which was observed there on the fifteenth of the seventh month] . . . and sacrificed upon the altar in Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in a month of his own choosing" (1 Kgs 12:32–33). The accusation that Jeroboam invented the date of the prominent pilgrimage festival patently does not hold water. Rather, it reveals the Judean author's polemical interpretation of his rebellious action. The very fact that ten out of twelve tribes unhesitatingly accepted the apparent deferment of the major festival (1 Kgs 11:31) proves beyond doubt that Jeroboam reverted to time sequels with which they were comfortable and which David's and Solomon's "unifying" administrative measures had thrown out of kilter. Jeroboam readjusted the date of that autumn festival of the grape harvest to the climatic and the agricultural conditions that obtained in the North of the land, where grains and fruits ripen approximately one month later than in the South. Jeroboam actually reverted to tradition, as reformers are wont to do; to quote Karl Marx, "The revolutionary is the greatest consumer of precedents." The different timing of the Festival of Booths capped Jeroboam's other actions, namely the reestablishment of the ancient cult places in Bethel and Dan (1 Kgs 12:28–33; 13:32) as rival shrines of the Temple of Jerusalem[6] and the installation there of priests of his own choice from the 'elite of the people' מקצות העם (1 Kgs 12:31–32; 13:33), whom the Chronicler disparagingly designates 'priests from the (common) people' כהנים[7] כעמי הארצות (2 Chr 13:8–9). These procedures caused the Ephraimites to turn north in their annual pilgrimages instead of to the Jerusalem Temple situated to their south (1 Kgs 12:26–28). Thus, Jeroboam effectively severed the political and religious union of Judah with the Northern tribes that David and Solomon had achieved.

Renewed Covenant: Between Judaism and Christianity," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant: The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. E. Ulrich and J. VanderKam: Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1993) 3–24.

6. Part of the *hieros logos* of the twin sanctuaries at Dan and Bethel (= *har Ephraim*) is preserved in the tale of the Danites' migration to the north of the land in the period of the settlement in Canaan (Judges 17–18).

7. The LXX's ἐκ τοῦ λαοῦ τῆς γῆς reflects the reading מעמי הארצות.

Jeroboam's calendar reform did not cause only a onetime deferment of the Sukkoth Festival. Rather, in the wake of his reform, all festivals in the cultic year, foremost the pilgrimage festivals, were actually observed in the Northern Kingdom one month later than in the Southern Kingdom. The different timing was in force until the days of Hezekiah of Judah—that is, for at least one century and a half. The Chronicler reports that in his effort to reunite the territory of the defunct Northern Kingdom with the realm of Judah, Hezekiah "wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the house of the Lord in Jerusalem to keep the Passover" (2 Chr 30:1). However, the local population treated his messengers "with scorn and ridicule" (30:10), presumably because according to their calendar the invitation came much too early, actually one month before the appropriate time. Therefore, in order to persuade the northerners to acclaim Jerusalem as the central and exclusively legitimate place of Yhwh worship, Hezekiah made an important concession to them. The Chronicler reports that he decided to defer the Passover celebrations in Jerusalem by one month: "The king and his officers . . . agreed to keep the Passover in the second month" (30:2), which in fact was the first month in the Ephraimites' calendar. As a result, "some men of Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun submitted and came to Jerusalem. . . . There was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, the like of which had not been known there since the days of Solomon" (30:11–26), after whose death Jeroboam's cult and calendar reform had dissolved the unification of Judah and Ephraim.

Only three generations later, Josiah of Judah imposed by force the Judean schedule of holy seasons on the population in the Northern territories and realigned the Northern calendar with the Southern one: "Josiah kept Passover . . . in Jerusalem . . . on the fourteenth (day) of the **first** month. . . . The people of Israel who were present (in the land) kept the Passover at that time and the Matzoth festival for seven days . . . none of the kings of Israel had ever kept such a Passover as Josiah kept" (2 Chr 35:1–18).

2. It appears that in the Middle Ages, a shared calendar at times was considered a factor that outweighed discordant basic tenets of faith over which Rabbanites and Karaites were divided. In his description of the seventh-century Karaite sect, led by Abu 'Isa al-Isfahani, the tenth-century historian al-Qirqisani relates: "I asked (the Rabbanite) Jacob ibn Ephraim al-Shami, 'Why do you encourage association with the followers of 'Isa and intermarry with them, although they attribute prophecy to men who are not prophets?' He answered me, 'Because they do not differ from us in the keeping of the festivals.'"[8] Qirqisani himself then mocks the Rabbanites who attach greater importance to the

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8. See Z. Ankori's comment on the passage in *Karaites in Byzantium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957) 274: "This could not have been possible, so it seems, if the

observance of the festivals on the basis of a shared calendar than to profound disagreements over issues of fundamental religious significance.[9]

3. A special clause in medieval matrimony contracts between Rabbanite men and Karaite women, as recorded, for example, in a marriage contract from the Cairo Genizah (Cambridge T-S fragment 24.1),[10] highlights the importance of a common timetable of the holy seasons by which both parties abide.[11] In addition to the routine economic stipulations listed in the document, the Rabbanite bridegroom, David Hanasi, son of Daniel Hanasi, evidently a man of distinction, "also takes upon himself not to force his wife Nasia to sit with him by the (light of the) Sabbath candle,[12] or to eat the fat covering the rump,[13] or to desecrate her festivals," which she is wont to keep in accordance with the Karaite calendar, "under the condition that she (also) observes with him the [viz., his] festivals." The wife's right to celebrate the festivals according to the Karaite calendar and her duty also to observe her husband's holy seasons on the dates fixed in the Rabbanite cultic calendar are seen as conditions which guarantee that peace will reign in their home.[14] In contrast, the member of a community who from the outset does not observe the festivals in accord with the schedule to which the community adheres will be considered an outsider, nay a heretic. Equally, by not joining in the celebration of the hallowed seasons at the times ordained in his community, an originally full-fledged, bona fide member is bound to forfeit his membership.

ʿIsunians should indeed have kept a solar calendar. Or, shall we say that, like the Mishawites . . . they, too, adhered theoretically to a solar calendar, but resigned themselves to the Rabbinic system as far as actual practice was concerned?"

　9. See L. Nemoy's translation of Qirqisani's *Kitab al-Anwar wa-l-Maraqib* I 52, *HUCA* 7 (1930) 382.

　10. S. Schechter cited the item erroneously as T-S 241 ("Geniza Specimens. A Marriage Settlement," *JQR* 13 [1899] 218–21). See also C. Adler ("Ketubah," *JE* 7.476), who cited it as T-S 141. Cf. also A. Gulak, אוצר השטרות הנהוגים בישראל (Jerusalem: Hasolelim, 1926) 33–34.

　11. For a concise discussion of this matter with extensive references to pertinent publications, see Z. Ankori, "Some Aspects of Karaite-Rabbanite Relations in Byzantium on the Eve of the First Crusade," *PAAJR* 25 (1956) 25–38.

　12. In strict adherence to the biblical commandment "you shall not light a fire in all your homes on the sabbath day" (Exod 35:3), Karaite, like Samaritan law, forbids the use of candles on the Sabbath even if they were lit before the onset of the holy day, in distinction from rabbinic law, which allows it.

　13. Forbidden by Karaite law but allowed by rabbinic law. See J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (AB 3; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 21–23.

　14. My thanks are due to Drs. S. C. Reif and C. Baker of the Cambridge Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit for bringing this specific document to my attention.

4. In a tradition variously ascribed to Sages of the first, second, or third generation,[15] the adherence to a solar calendar is held up as a crucial criterion that separated non-Jews from Jews: "Once a pagan asked R. Johanan ben Zakkai [end of first century C.E.]: 'we have *kalenda*, *saturnalia* and *kartosis*; and you have *Pesaḥ*, *aʿseret* [Pentecost] and *Sukkot*. [When you rejoice we do not rejoice; and when we rejoice you do not rejoice.][16] When do we both together rejoice?' Said R. Johanan ben Zakkai to him: 'On a day on which rains fall.'"[17]

5. Communities that are deprived of political sovereignty, as Judaism was at the height of the Second Commonwealth and after its destruction, are especially apprehensive of the danger, lest the adherence to an unconformable calendar would trigger religious schism and societal secession. Lacking coercive instruments for safeguarding national unity and effective punitive measures for dealing with recalcitrants, internal cohesion depended upon the voluntary submission of all members of the community to the rulings of the socioreligious authorities and on the unconditional submission to the rules of the established communal institutions. The cultic and civic authorities in Jerusalem rightly considered the acceptance of their decisions regarding the fixing of the dates of the sacred seasons throughout the year a sine qua non affirmation of membership in the community and an indispensable instrument of self-government.

This matter is the intrinsic subject of a controversy between two sages of the second generation of Tanna'im, the president of the Sanhedrin, Rabban Gamaliel the Elder, and the highly esteemed Rabbi Joshua (*m. Roš Haš.* 2:8–9). At that time the dating of the annual holy seasons was officially determined on the basis of the actual sighting of the new moon,[18] especially in the month of Tishre, considered the first month of the year, although astronomical computations of the moon's orbit were already known and practiced (ibid.; cf. *b. Roš Haš.* 25a). The discovery of an astronomical measuring instrument at Qumran proves that computations of the revolution of the sun were also known.[19] Rabban Gamaliel had officially proclaimed the beginning of the month and

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15. Slight textual differences between the versions do not affect the gist of the matter.

16. The bracketed reading is found in *Genesis Rabbah*, where the episode is attributed to R. Joshua (probably: ben Korḥah, middle of second century C.E.). See *Genesis Rabbah* (ed. J. Theodor and C. Albeck; Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1965) 116.

17. *Deuteronomy Rabbah, ky tabo'* 7 (ed. S. Liebermann; Jerusalem: Bamberger-Wahrmann, 1940) 121. In *Mid. Ps.* 117:1 (ed. S. Buber; New York: Om, 1947) 479, the episode is attributed to R. Joshua ben Ḥananiah (early second century C.E.).

18. See B.-Z. Wacholder and D. Weisberg, "Visibility of the New Moon in Cuneiform and Rabbinic Sources," in *Essays on Jewish Chronology and Chronography* (ed. B.-Z. Wacholder; New York: Ktav, 1976) 59–74.

19. See: U. Glessmer and M. Albani, "An Astronomical Measuring Instrument from Qumran," in *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Technological Innovations,*

with it the onset of the new cultic year on the strength of the affirmation by two men that they had espied the new moon. Rabbi Dosa ben Horkinas, another prominent sage, declared these men to be false witnesses because his own observations indicated that the moon was still full. He used a simile to prove them liars: "How can one say (today) of a woman that she has given birth, and on the next day she is still visibly pregnant?" R. Joshua also invalidated their claim and presumably demanded that the proclamation of the new moon be deferred. But Rabban Gamaliel stood by his decision, evidently apprehensive that his acquiescence in R. Joshua's dissenting opinion might cause a rift in the community, with one party abiding by his ruling, the other fixing the dates of the holy seasons in accord with R. Joshua's opinion. In order to forestall such a possibility, he ordered R. Joshua to present himself in Jabneh on the day on which, according to his computation, the Day of Atonement would fall, ostentatiously carrying his staff, his food bag, and his purse, thus publicly desecrating his Yom Hakkippurim, the holiest day in the cultic year. R. Joshua bowed to Rabban Gamaliel's authority, acted as ordered, and thus the unity of the community was preserved.

The above report vividly illustrates the appreciation of decisions pertaining to the calendar as a signal manifestation of the power invested in the Sanhedrin and its president. It shows that the decrees of this body in respect to the progress of the cultic and the civic year were not necessarily dependent on accurate astronomical computation. Rather, they were understood as expressions of the commonly acknowledged sovereign status of this institution in decisions regulating the life of the individual and the community. The High Court's rulings concerning private and public conduct were final and binding, irrespective of whether they were accordant or discordant with cosmic data. Even if it should transpire after the fact that the court had erred in its judgment, its decree was still upheld: "if they [the members of the Sanhedrin] hallowed the new moon, and subsequently the witnesses were found to have been in conspiracy [to have intentionally misled them], it is still hallowed . . . or if they erred, it is still hallowed" (ibid.; cf. *t. Roš Haš.* 2.1).[20]

6. All of the episodes and traditions reviewed above revolve around the lunar calendar. The issue of calendar conformity and calendar controversy assumed an added dimension in the confrontation between dissidents who adhered to a

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New Texts, and Reformulated Issues (ed. D. W. Parry and E. Ulrich; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 407–42.

20. Cf. *Tosefta Seder Moed* (ed. S. Lieberman; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1952) 1.322; *Sipra, Emor* 10,2–3; and see M. D. Herr, "The Calendar," in *Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum: The Jewish People in the First Century* (ed. S. Safrai et al.; Assen: Van Gorcum / Philadelphia: Fortress, 1990) 835–64, esp. p. 848.

solar calendar and the mainstream community, which abided by a lunar calendar. The books of *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* witness the vehement solar-versus-lunar-calendar dispute in Judaism at the height of the Second Temple period. The authors of the apocryphal books never cease to propagate the exclusive legitimacy of the 364-day solar calendar, nor do they tire of disavowing the 354-day lunar calendar by which mainstream Judaism abided. However, since the *Sitz im Leben* or *Sitz in der Geschichte* of *1 Enoch* and *Jubilees* could not be unequivocally identified, the calendar controversy was viewed as a theoretical or scientific-astronomical issue rather than as a practical, down-to-earth discord, which in fact caused a profound rift in Jewry of the time. Only after the discovery of the Qumran scrolls did the presumably historical reality of the dispute come into full view. The overriding importance that attaches to "proper chronology" in the world of ideas of the "Community of the Renewed Covenant" is evinced by fragments of over 20 calendrical works (4Q317–330, 335–337; 6Q317), the tailpiece of a calendar preserved as the suggested opening of *Miqṣat Maʿaśe-Hatorah* (4Q394); calendar-related references in the Covenanters' foundation documents: *Rule of the Community* (1QS), *Damascus Document* (CD), *Pesher Habakkuk* (1QpHab), *Psalms Scroll* (11Psᵃ), *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* (4Q400–407; 11Q17), a more-detailed exposition in the *Temple Scroll* (11Q19–20); and other works, such as *Otot* (4Q319) and the *Commentary on Genesis Apocryphon* (4Q252; 4QcommGenA), all presuppose this calendrical system. The *yaḥad*'s messianic-millenarian expectations depended on a divinely appointed sequence of periods in history, defined by the term קץ/קצים, as in קצי עולמים 'world' or 'eternal periods' (*Hodayot* 1QH IV 16; *War Scroll* 1QM 33 I 8–9); קצי אל 'divine(ly determined) periods' (*Pesher Habakkuk*, 1QpHab VII 12–13); קצי נצח 'eternal periods' (1QH I 24–25), and similar phrases, culminating in the 'cut-off period' and the establishment of the fervently awaited 'new (age)' קץ נחרצה ועשות חדשה (1QS IV 25).[21] In this schema of periods, the disappointing present is totally rejected, and the memory of an idealized past is injected into the vision of a projected ideal future.

The considerable number of calendrical records and statements attest to the exceeding significance of matters calendrical in the Covenanters' everyday life, and even more so in the life of the members of the priestly hierarchy, because the efficacy of ritual acts and the correct execution of legal rulings are subject to precise timing. From early on in the study of the Qumran documents, I have maintained that the adherence to a 364-day solar calendar was the crucial factor that precipitated the final break-away from mainstream Judaism of the "Community of the Renewed Covenant," whose members deposited these documents in the caves.

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21. Cf. Isa 10:29, 28:22, 43:19; Dan 9:26–27, 11:35–36.

Competing Commentaries

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In his book *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes*, Michael Fox mentioned his preparations for a commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, to be published by the Jewish Publication Society.[1] Because the book in which that statement appeared already contained a substantial commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes, one could not help wondering how the projected work would differ.[2] As if anticipating this question, Fox explained that the new book would include "a deeper engagement with traditional Jewish exegesis, as well as some thoughts on the significance of the book to the modern Jewish reader."[3] This essay explores the role of commentaries within the contemporary Jewish community. I am honored to dedicate it to Michael Fox, with deep gratitude for his friendship and support, which have extended over many years.

From 1929 to 1936, Joseph Hertz, who was then Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire, published an edition of the Pentateuch for synagogue use.[4] Hertz intended his book to be a practical aid with which worshipers could follow the Torah as it was being read in the synagogue.[5] The text was, therefore, divided according to the Sabbath morning

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1. *Ecclesiastes* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2004).

2. The format is similar to Fox's works on other biblical books, such as *The Song of Songs and the Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); *Qohelet and His Contradictions* (Sheffield: Almond, 1989); and *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1991; 2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). His Anchor Bible volume on *Proverbs 1–9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000) is a freestanding commentary.

3. Michael V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) xiii.

4. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* was initially published in five volumes from 1929 to 1936 by Oxford University Press. A one-volume edition appeared in 1938 at the instigation of Soncino Press; see Harvey Meirovich, *A Vindication of Judaism: The Polemics of the Hertz Pentateuch* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1998) 168.

5. Ibid., 28–29; Hertz wanted the commentary to be "brief, popular, and homiletic in the highest sense, yet instructive and interesting."

lections, each of which was followed by the traditional prophetic selection (*haf-tara*). Alongside the Hebrew text was an English translation (although the earliest printings used the Revised Version, that was soon replaced by the Jewish Publication Society's 1917 edition[6]), with explanatory notes underneath. These often responded to the views of contemporary biblical scholarship, which the Chief Rabbi thought undermined the authority of Jewish Scripture.[7] To accomplish this, Hertz drew on the work of numerous scholars, both Christian and Jewish; however, his message throughout was clear: the teachings of the Jewish Bible are equal to the very highest values of Western culture and far better than scholars usually suggest.[8]

For over five decades, Hertz's edition of the Pentateuch was *the* commentary on the Bible among English-speaking Jews, many of whom did not always distinguish the rabbi's notes from the words of Scripture. However, with the dramatic changes that have taken place in Jewish life over the half-century since it was published, Hertz's comments began to seem dated. So in 1981, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the umbrella organization for the American Reform movement, published a commentary of its own.[9] Compiled by W. Gunther Plaut, a leading figure in the Reform rabbinate, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*[10] included contributions from Rabbi Bernard Bamberger[11] and an introductory essay to each book of the Torah by William Hallo, an eminent Assyriologist from Yale who had taught at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College from 1956 to 1962.[12] The commentary's format was

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6. Meirovich, ibid., 169 and 234 n. 16.

7. Thus Hertz's observation in the preface to the first edition: "the criticism of the Pentateuch associated with the name of Wellhausen is a perversion of history and a desecration of religion" (*Pentateuch*, vii).

8. "Israel's Vision of the Divine is different not only in degree *but in kind* from that of any other nation" (ibid., 403, emphasis in original); cf. Harvey Meirovich, "Reclaiming Chief Rabbi Hertz as a Conservative Jew," *Conservative Judaism* 46/4 (1994) 4–6 (cf. Hertz, *Pentateuch*, 404–6). For Hertz's views on the Bible's contribution to Western civilization, see p. 929 and the note on p. 42.

9. Although his commentary was not denominationally identified, Hertz himself was a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; cf. Meirovich, "Reclaiming," 3–23.

10. W. Gunther Plaut, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981).

11. Bamberger, who wrote the commentary on Leviticus, died shortly before the book was published; Rabbi Dudley Weinberg was also to have contributed but died after having barely started the commentary on Deuteronomy. I am grateful to Leonard Schoolman for having shared with me this and other details pertaining to the volume's publishing history.

12. David Weisberg, "William W. Hallo: An Appreciation" in *The Tablet and the Scroll: Near Eastern Studies in Honor of William W. Hallo* (ed. Mark Cohen, Daniel Snell, and David Weisberg; Bethesda, Md.: CDL, 1993) ix.

much the same as that of Hertz: each page contained both the Hebrew text and an English translation as well as a set of comments. At the end of each section, Plaut offered extended discussions on topics of particular interest or relevance.[13] These were followed by a selection of "Gleanings," which provided quotations from a wide range of sources (both Jewish and non-Jewish) relating to the contents of that section.

Plaut's volume differed from Hertz's in several notable respects. The most conspicuous of these were matters of form. Where the earlier commentary had been bound like a Hebrew book, opening from the right, Plaut's volume was made available in both a Hebrew and an English format that began at the left. In addition, the Hebrew text was printed with only consonants and vowels, but not the accent marks ("trope") that indicate the melody to be used when chanting the Torah during Jewish worship. Both of these characteristics corresponded to Reform practice. The movement's newly published prayer books had also been published in both English- and Hebrew-opening formats, while the Torah was more often read than chanted in Reform synagogues.[14] (Tellingly, the accent marks were added in a subsequent printing.)

On a more substantive level, the text itself was divided into "topical" units, based on the subjects covered in a particular passage, rather than in accordance with the traditional weekly portions (*parashot*), although these were identified both within the text and in the running heads. Thus, a single *parasha* might extend over several sections, even as individual sections could include passages from more than one *parasha*.[15] (Remarkably, the Ten Commandments were actually divided into several sections.[16]) This feature, too, reflects typical Reform practice, in which only a selection from each week's lection is usually read in the synagogue.[17] Further weakening the visibility of the traditional lections, the *haftarot* were gathered at the end of each biblical book rather than being printed after the Torah portion with which they are read, as Hertz had done; moreover, these were given only brief introductions, describing the biblical books from which they were taken, rather than the full set of comments provided for the Torah.[18] As a result, the *haftarot* appear to be something of an

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13. Hertz had appended a series of "additional notes" to each book of the Pentateuch.

14. As acknowledged in Plaut (*Torah*, xxxv), perhaps to justify omitting the trope marks; however, there are several comments that take note of them (e.g., pp. 262, 1163, 1366, 1558).

15. See ibid., 91, 448, 508, 566, 632, 798, 957, 1043, 1075, 1194, 1215, 1333, 1379, 1508, and 1537.

16. Ibid., 531–60.

17. See Plaut, where these are compared with the triennial divisions (ibid., xxvi n. 10).

18. A full commentary on the *haftarot* has since been published (W. G. Plaut, *The Haftarah Commentary* [New York: UAHC, 1996]).

afterthought, as, indeed, they often are in Reform worship, where they are typically read only during Bar or Bat Mitzvah services.

The commentary's contents also fit the community that produced it. As a product of the most worldly and most Americanized of the major Jewish movements, these draw extensively and explicitly on non-Jewish sources. For example, the homiletical excerpts that offer meanings one might draw from various passages include quotations from Virgil, John Bunyan, and Roger Williams, as well as the *Protevangelium of James*, the Qurʾān, and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.[19] The comments themselves draw connections between Jewish and non-Jewish culture. Thus, they compare rabbinic law to American law,[20] trace the origins of Thanksgiving to Sukkot,[21] find biblical roots for an image in "The Battle Hymn of Republic,"[22] and note allusions to the Bible's *Urim* and *Tummim* in both the Yale University seal and the name of an Israeli kibbutz.[23] Equally reflective of its readership is the commentary's concern to distinguish premarital sex from adultery[24] and its several references to mixed marriage.[25] Perhaps out of deference to its audience, the commentary describes the biblical story about Zimri and Cozbi (Numbers 25) as warning against ritual prostitution rather than mixed marriage.[26] Christianity serves as a point of reference throughout the book.[27] In addition to distinctively Christian interpretations of several specific passages,[28] there are comments about its shifting the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday,[29] its attitude towards the Jewish dietary laws,[30] and an observation about rabbinic and ministerial remuneration.[31]

Unlike Hertz, Plaut does not hesitate to criticize halachic principles.[32] He is also far more entranced with contemporary scholarship than his predecessor,

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19. Plaut, *Torah*, 64–65; cf. pp. 114 and 176.

20. Ibid., 1474; cf. pp. 1458 and 1475.

21. Ibid., 1452 and 1512.

22. Ibid., 1561.

23. Ibid., 624.

24. Ibid., 554.

25. E.g., ibid., 660.

26. Ibid., 1191 and 1195.

27. E.g., ibid., 109, 149, 422, 457, 469, 638, 874, 879, 1060, 1117, and 1157–58.

28. See ibid., 19, 143, 1066, and 1148–49.

29. Ibid., 23.

30. Ibid., 811.

31. Ibid., 1137.

32. E.g., ibid., 1142; cf. p. 1426. Interpretations that are at odds with Jewish tradition can be found on pp. 203, 459, and 1083 of David Lieber, *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 2001). Plaut (*Torah*) also makes numerous references to halacha, for example, on pp. 20, 223, 232 and throughout Leviticus, where the "Gleanings" are divided into "Halachah" and "Haggadah."

who tried to defend the Bible from its conclusions. This is immediately evident in Plaut's free use of such terms as "Heilsgeschichte"[33] and "Tetrateuch,"[34] as well as his numerous comparisons of Hebrew and German grammar.[35] He clearly accepts the approach of contemporary biblical scholarship and endeavors to inform his readers of its conclusions. Thus, he routinely identifies the hypothetical sources to which individual passages in the Pentateuch are attributed. He also describes many findings of modern archaeology. In conformity with the scholarship of the day, these are typically said to support the biblical account, albeit with occasional qualifications. This perspective is extended to the relationship between the Bible and the ancient Near East in general, which is most often invoked to demonstrate the superiority of biblical values. This is especially noticeable in the essays that precede each biblical book, where the Bible is portrayed as part of the world from which it emerged but with teachings that are superior to those of contemporary cultures.[36] To do all this, Plaut draws on numerous Christian scholars, including Rudolf Otto[37] and Gerhard von Rad, placing the latter's interpretation alongside that of the fifteenth-century Jew Isaac Abarbanel.[38]

In 1993, ArtScroll, an Orthodox publishing venture that had already produced popular editions of several religious texts,[39] issued a *ḥumash* of its own.[40] Unlike the other commentaries discussed here, this was not the project of an established religious organization but of the independent, albeit Orthodox, Mesorah Heritage Foundation. However, among the people involved were several leading figures of the "modern Orthodox" establishment. For example, Immanuel Jakobovits, who occupied the position once held by Joseph Hertz, served as a trustee. In addition, the editors acknowledge the support of former Yeshiva University president Norman Lamm, and Pinchas Stolper, Executive Vice President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

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33. Plaut, ibid., 1013.

34. Ibid., 366.

35. E.g., ibid., 1356 and 1550. Although German was Plaut's native tongue, it was also the linguistic norm for much of biblical scholarship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

36. E.g., ibid., 568 and 1409. This is the same as Hertz's position (*Pentateuch*, 404–6); see Meirovich, *Vindication*, 7.

37. Plaut, *Torah*, 890.

38. Ibid., 145.

39. For an assessment of other ArtScroll ventures, see B. Barry Levy, "Artscroll: An Overview," in *Approaches to Modern Judaism* (ed. Marc Lee Raphael; Chico, Cal.: Scholars Press, 1983) 111–40.

40. Nosson Scherman, *The Chumash: The Torah, Haftaros and Five Megillos* (Brooklyn: Mesorah, 1913).

They also mention having had access to the notes of Rabbi Joseph Soloveit-chik, spiritual leader of the modern Orthodox community in America, where he is known as simply the Rav.[41]

The ArtScroll format is essentially the same as the format of both Hertz and Plaut, with an English translation and commentary alongside the Hebrew text. In addition, each page includes the Aramaic Targum and Rashi's Hebrew commentary, both in their original languages.[42]

Unlike the other editions considered here, which incorporate the 1985 Jewish Publication Society rendering, this volume uses its own translation, presumably on account of the Orthodox community's discomfort with that version.[43] Among the hallmarks of its translation is the use of "HaShem" to render the Tetragrammaton, in accordance with widespread Orthodox practice.[44] Equally distinctive is the reproduction of words in transliteration whose meanings are considered uncertain. Most often these are technical terms, such as *tzaraas*, which the translators take pains to point out is not the disease that is today called leprosy.[45] Similar treatment is accorded several of the forbidden species listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.[46]

According to its introduction, the "translation in this volume attempts to render the text as our Sages understood it,"[47] in other words, to follow rabbinic tradition with regard to the text's meaning. This approach is apparent throughout. For example, ארמי אבד אבי (Deut 26:5), which is generally understood as meaning 'my father was a wandering Aramean', is instead rendered, 'an Aramean tried to destroy my forefather'.[48] Likewise, the commandment that a harvest offering be brought, beginning ממחרת השבת (Lev 23:11, literally, 'from the day after the Sabbath'), is translated 'on the morrow of the rest day'.[49] Other idiosyncratic renderings include the treatment of רחם (Gen

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41. Ibid., xvi–xviii.

42. Rashi's commentary is printed in Rashi script, albeit with vowels.

43. See Eugene Borowitz, "Theological Issues in the New Torah Translation," *Judaism* 13 (1964) 337–45.

44. The word "God" is printed whole, without a hyphen.

45. Scherman, *Chumash*, 609; among the terms in this passage that are treated the same way are *se'is*, *sapachos*, and *baheres* (p. 611); see *dudaim* (p. 55), *se'ah* (p. 79), and *shoham* (pp. 13 and 445).

46. Ibid., 601 and 1013.

47. Ibid., xiv.

48. Ibid., 1069; a note identifies this translation as midrashic, offering "my forefather was a lost Aramean" as the plain sense.

49. Ibid., 685; cf. Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 1301. The 1985 Jewish Publication Society version renders "on the day after the sabbath."

20:18) as 'orifice' rather than 'womb'[50] and חיות (Exod 1:19) as 'experts' rather than 'lively'.[51]

The commentary is also based on traditional Jewish interpretations. Moreover, its sources, which span Jewish history, are consistently identified. As a result, the book gives the impression of being a veritable digest of Jewish understandings, with Rabbi Nosson Scherman less the "author" of this work, as he describes himself,[52] than its "editor."

Unlike both Hertz and Plaut, in ArtScroll no Gentile sources are named. Nor, for that matter, are there any modern liberal scholars, however highly respected.[53] Especially conspicuous is the absence of any reference to either the Hertz or the Plaut volumes, although it is hard to believe that the compilers were unaware of these widely used works. In fact, there is no reference to modern biblical scholarship.[54] Nor are prevailing scholarly views about the Bible, such as the presence of two creation stories or the relationship between the story of Noah and the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, either challenged or described. Even the occasions on which classical Jewish commentators, such as Abraham Ibn Ezra (whose works are frequently cited in the commentary), present similar ideas are utterly ignored.[55]

Predictably, this *ḥumash* entertains no doubt about the historicity of the events recounted in the Torah in the way that both Plaut and *Etz Hayim* do. Instead of saying this in so many words, the commentary makes the same point by routinely offering the dates on which the various events described in

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50. "The punishment for the abduction of Sarah was that the bodily orifices of all Abimelech's people became closed. They could not relieve themselves or give birth until Abraham prayed for them" (Scherman, *Chumash*, 95); so *Gen. Rab.* 52:13, cf. *b. B. Qam.* 92a.

51. Scherman, *Chumash*, 295; so Rashi; cf. *Targum Onqelos*, ad loc.

52. Scherman, *Chumash*, xvii–xviii. In this, the commentary resembles *The Soncino Chumash* (ed. A. Cohen; London: Soncino, 1947), which was a result of the popularity of the Hertz commentary, which had been published by the same house, thereby, co-opting the need for a contemporary commentary in that series.

53. B. Barry Levy notes the absence of references to Abraham Heschel and Martin Buber, as well as Orthodox authorities such as Abraham Kook, Nehama Leibowitz, and Menahem Schneerson ("Judge Not a Book by Its Cover," *Tradition* 19 [spring, 1981]) 91.

54. The only exceptions are its description of David Zvi Hoffmann as having "refuted revisionist Bible Criticism" in the list of authorities (Scherman, *Chumash*, 1298) and the observation that "the attitude of one who approaches a book as the immutable word of God is far different from that of one who holds a volume that was composed by man and amended by others over the years" in the preface (xviii).

55. As in Abraham Ibn Ezra's hints about the authorship of the Pentateuch and Rashbam's interpretations that contradict *halakah*; the one exception to this is the reference to Ibn Ezra's comment on Gen 36:31 (Scherman, *Chumash*, 196).

the text took place.[56] There is even a chart, which collates all this data as it pertains to the various accounts.[57] To be sure, the fundamental historicity of the biblical account was also a key tenet for Hertz;[58] but for him, this was a position to be defended, whereas in ArtScroll it is simply assumed.

In fact, the commentary itself is studiously nonmodern. Even a map illustrating the boundaries of Israel is attributed to medieval and early modern rabbis rather than modern geographers.[59] Likewise, the topics addressed appear most often to be of antiquarian rather than contemporary interest. Thus, there are illustrations of the Tabernacle and its various implements,[60] as well as innumerable charts and diagrams cataloging the various sacrifices required by the Torah.[61]

The comments themselves lean toward the midrashic. For example, one points out that the words for 'male' (אִישׁ) and 'female' (אִשָּׁה) differ in that the former has the letter י in the middle while the latter ends with the letter ה, noting that these letters together spell out the name of God. This is said to demonstrate what man and woman can become together. Conversely, the two letters that these words share spell out the Hebrew word for 'fire' (אֵשׁ), signaling what is left when God is absent.[62] Elsewhere, the mnemonic summaries of the masoretic reports about the number of words and verses in each *parasha* are glossed with comments drawing homiletical lessons from those data.

A similar homiletical interest can be discerned in the comments' predilection for drawing moral and theological lessons from the biblical tales. Thus, the pair Israel and Amalek, like Jacob and Esau, is said to epitomize good and evil.[63] In the same spirit, the story of Jacob's sons is used to demonstrate the dangers of playing favorites[64] and to illustrate the fact that liars are never believed.[65] In doing this, the commentary presents these stories in an almost

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56. E.g., Scherman, *Chumash*, 45; see also the notes on pp. 25 and 45.

57. Ibid., 53.

58. See Meirovich, *Vindication*, 66–67.

59. Scherman, *Chumash*, 923; cf. p. 801. Levy offers a similar observation about earlier ArtScroll books in "Artscroll," 124.

60. Scherman, *Chumash*, 447–63.

61. E.g., ibid., 899 and 1291–95; see also the diagram of the layout of a Levitical city on p. 927.

62. Ibid., 13.

63. Ibid., 126, 391; the comment on the latter page extends the point to David, whose personality is said to be like that of Esau, except that it was used for good.

64. Ibid., 199.

65. Ibid., 257.

ahistorical light, lifting them out of the ancient Near Eastern world in which they took place and which has become the focal point of so much of contemporary scholarship.[66]

Of special note is the commentary's pervasively benign tone, especially given Orthodoxy's reputation for triumphalism. Although the comments express repeated concern with assimilation,[67] at no point do they explicitly criticize any of the (non-Orthodox) modern Jewish movements. Indeed, the only group that is overtly challenged is the Karaites, a primarily medieval, antirabbinic sect.[68] As noted above, even biblical scholarship, which served Hertz as a frequent target and which Plaut enthusiastically embraced, is largely ignored. In fact, other than its underlying orientation, there is very little about this book that marks it as being Orthodox. Rather, its most consistent bias is simply Jewish, as in its observation that "Jews have always been ready to make sacrifices to raise their children among people of high moral caliber"[69] or its explanation about the dietary laws being required because "the Jewish people have the capacity for spiritual life."[70] However, most often even this bias is subtle. The only time it becomes explicit is when the comments complain about the chapter numbers having been improperly placed by non-Jewish printers;[71] the translation is nonetheless structured in accordance with those very same divisions.

The most recent of these commentaries was published by the Conservative movement in 2001. Its title, *Etz Hayim*[72] ('tree of life'), is a phrase from Prov 3:18, which has come to be associated with the Torah scroll through its use in Jewish liturgy.[73]

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66. An isolated exception can be found on ibid., 43.

67. E.g., ibid., 175, 269, 407; see also p. 649 and the preface's note about "the horrors of the Holocaust and the ravages of assimilation" (p. xvi) as well as the references to intermarriage on pp. 182 and 977.

68. Ibid., 517; there are also comments about the Sadducees (p. 441) and a reference to "blasphemers [who] raised their heads against the Oral Law" (p. xxv).

69. Ibid., 208 and 699; but compare p. 705.

70. Ibid., 597; a similar tone emerges in Plaut's comment that "no people gave as much long attention to the overriding importance of law equitably administered and enforced as did Israel" (*Torah*, 1461).

71. Scherman, *Chumash*, 426 and 1007, to which the comments in Plaut, *Torah*, 1135, 1215, and 1495 should be compared. Jews have frequently characterized biblical scholarship as Gentile.

72. David Lieber, *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001).

73. This association is found already in *Sipre Deut* §47.

Of the three commentaries considered here, *Etz Hayim* is by far the most explicitly denominational. There are frequent references to Conservative practice in its section on Jewish practice, which often cites the decisions of the Conservative movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. The historical comments are abridged from a much larger commentary, written by leading academics under the auspices of the Jewish Publication Society of America. However, the Conservative movement has itself long been characterized by a markedly academic orientation.[74] Moreover, all the authors in this section have some formal connection with the Conservative movement.[75] Even its literary editor, novelist Chaim Potok, was a graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

The most conspicuous feature of this volume is its presentation of three, ostensibly separate commentaries, printed one above the other on each page. These present a straightforward (*p'shat*), a homiletical (*d'rash*), and a practical (*halakah l'ma-aseh*) interpretation of the text. (Although Plaut and Hertz contain similar material, they generally present it in the form of excurses to specific passages.) These separate commentaries do not always agree with one another.[76] Even more dramatic are the differences to be found among the 40 short essays that close out the volume.[77] These explore a broad array of topics, ranging from the academic (for example, "Biblical Archaeology" and "Ancient Near Eastern Mythology") to the pragmatic (for example, "Education" and "Ecology"). It is here that one finds far more "radical" views than those expressed in the actual comments, although content of this sort is the exception rather than the rule. The underlying diversity is also a hallmark of the Conservative movement, whether it be viewed positively or negatively.

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74. See Baila Shargel, "The Texture of Seminary Life during the Finkelstein Era," in *Tradition Renewed: A History of the Jewish Theological Seminary* (ed. Jack Wertheimer; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1997) 1:540; see also p. 537, and Mel Scult, "Schechter's Seminary," in ibid., 59 and 67.

75. Nahum Sarna, who wrote the commentary on Genesis and Exodus (1989, 1991), taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary from 1957 to 1965, while Baruch Levine (Leviticus, 1989), Jacob Milgrom (Numbers, 1990), and Jeffrey Tigay (Deuteronomy, 1996) are all JTS graduates.

76. Sometimes the comments disagree with the translation (e.g., Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 466, 486, 797, 807, and 1226), as does Plaut (*Torah*, 194, 211, 422, 451, 460, 479). They are also willing to acknowledge reliance on the Septuagint (e.g., Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 106, 938, 944, 1062; cf. 275, 1179, 1186, 1193, and 1228), which the translators claim to ignore.

77. Thus one essay states that "women, as a rule, did not play political roles" (ibid., 1356), whereas on the preceding page one reads that "at least two queens ran the government" (p. 1355); see also p. 1363.

The appearance of these three volumes within a span of barely 20 years is truly remarkable.[78] After all, the Hertz commentary had been almost universally accepted within the Jewish community for over half a century. As a result, what once served as a unifying force has now come to be a point of contention, with each of American Jewry's three major religious movements having a commentary of its own. Thus, synagogues can now choose the one that best matches their own affiliation and ideological orientation.

Each of these commentaries reflects its respective community. Even their choice of authors is telling. As we have already seen, the main commentators in *Etz Hayim* are university professors,[79] whereas W. Gunther Plaut is a pulpit rabbi, although the introductory essay to each book in the Reform commentary is by an academic. And the ArtScroll editors, though Orthodox, are generally affiliated with yeshivot rather than individual synagogues.

The content of these commentaries also mirrors their respective communities. Thus, the Reform movement emerges as fully engaged in the "larger" world, the existence of which Orthodoxy strives mightily to ignore; on the other hand, Conservative Judaism embraces an academic approach that tolerates a high degree of internal disagreement. With the publication of these volumes, it seems that the Jewish community's common commitment to Torah has come to serve the interests of polarization and fragmentation that are so widely decried within contemporary American Jewish life. It is, thus, surely no accident that during the very years that these commentaries were being published both the Conservative and the Reform movements changed the names of their congregational unions in order to emphasize their denominational identities, with the United Synagogue of America becoming the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (1992) and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations becoming the Union for Reform Judaism (2003). (Their Orthodox counterpart has long been the "Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America," with even its nickname—"the O-U"—alluding to its denominational identity.) Now the commentaries used during worship reinforce these organizational titles in emphasizing their ideological differences.

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78. There have been several others as well, for example, Aryeh Kaplan, *The Living Torah* (New York: Maznaim, 1981); Avrohom Davis, *The Metusdah Chumash* (Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav, 1991); and Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, *The Jewish Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

79. However, the homiletical section was edited by Conservative congregational Rabbi Harold Kushner, who is best known for pastoral works, such as *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Schocken, 1981; 2nd ed., 1989) and the halachic commentary by Elliot Dorff, the rector of the movement's University of Judaism, and Susan Grossman, a congregational rabbi.

At the same time, these volumes share several features that, although possibly less dramatic, are more fundamental than their differences. The most conspicuous of these is their liturgically-based structure. Where worshipers in Christian churches and an earlier generation of Reform synagogues would typically be provided a complete Bible, all three of these volumes contain only the Pentateuch (Torah). Moreover, none of them presents that text whole, but each divides it according to the units traditionally assigned to be read on each Sabbath. In *Etz Hayim* these Torah units are interspersed with the prophetic selections (*haftarot*) that accompany them, just as they were in Hertz.[80] The ArtScroll commentary gathers these at the end of the volume, while Plaut puts them after each of the Pentateuchal books; however, both volumes mark their presence at the end of the appropriate Torah sections. Thus, all three identify the *haftarot* in sequence along with the ones that are read on special Sabbaths (along with an indication of the accompanying Torah portions).[81] To these, ArtScroll has even added the Five Scrolls (*Megillos*), which are read on various holidays.[82] In the end, then, none of these is an actual Bible but, rather, the Bible as it is used in the synagogue. Reinforcing their liturgical character, all three volumes include the blessings that are to be recited both before and after Scripture is read.

Layout is another feature that these volumes share. In all three, the Pentateuch is printed in both Hebrew and English with explanatory comments on the same page. This commonality should not be minimized, for it stands in stark contrast with Christian practice, which provides only a translation. However, Jewish tradition has consistently honored the original text, whether or not it is understood. As if to emphasize their recognition of the Bible's Hebrew character, all three of these works are printed as Hebrew books, proceeding from right to left, though the Plaut commentary is also available in an English-opening format. Paradoxically, this Jewish commitment to Hebrew may have contributed to the need for volumes of this sort in the first place: because in many synagogues the Torah is simply read in Hebrew without translation, these books provide the only way for worshipers to know what it actually says.

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80. Further minimizing the importance of the *haftarot* is the fact that each is given only a brief introduction in the Plaut and ArtScroll volumes, typically identifying its source and explaining its connection with the relevant Torah portion (but see n. 18 above). The commentary to these *haftarot* in *Etz Hayim* is much more abbreviated than those for the Torah itself.

81. According to the publisher's introduction (Hertz, *Pentateuch*, viii), these *haftarot* were added in the second (1960) edition.

82. Hertz had initially intended to include these (Meirovich, *Vindication*, 29–30).

Given this orientation, the use of English as the primary language for the commentary is a noteworthy feature. Especially significant is the presence of an English translation in the ArtScroll volume, where it tacitly acknowledges the linguistic limitations of Orthodox Jews.[83] Moreover, the translation in this volume generally adopts conventional English nomenclature, such as "Moses" and "Isaac," although there are occasional Hebraisms (for example, "Malchizedek," "Issamar," and "Yoshiahu.")[84]

The inclusion of a commentary also sets these volumes apart from their Protestant counterparts, which enshrine that tradition's preference for unadorned Bibles in conformity with its principle of *sola scriptura*. In all three Jewish works, the comments serve conspicuously didactic ends, describing and explaining a wide range of Jewish practices. This is particularly visible in *Etz Hayim*'s *halachah l'ma-aseh* section; however, didacticism is also evident in the Plaut and ArtScroll volumes, which use biblical verses as a kind of springboard for excurses on Jewish concerns and, especially, Jewish observance. In Plaut, these usually appear after the comments on an individual section, whereas ArtScroll offers extended notes to specific verses. However this material is presented, all three volumes strive to educate their audience about topics that are of specifically Jewish import. These range from the calendar[85] (for example, Passover[86] and the Sabbath[87]) to worship (for example, *tefillin*,[88] *tsitsit*,[89] and the *Shemoneh Esrei*[90]) and ritual practices (for example, *kashrut*[91] and *ḥevra kaddisha*[92]). That these are addressed to a Jewish audience is clear from the occasional use of the first-person plural ("we").[93] Sometimes ArtScroll even refers

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83. The preface describes the book's purpose as being to present "the ancient wine of Sinai in the vessel of today's vernacular" (Scherman, *Chumash*, xiii).

84. Ibid., 105, 443, and 645; the spelling "Menasseh" appears on p. 243, though more often it is printed as "Manasseh" (e.g., p. 271). See my "How Jews Translate the Bible," in *Biblical Translation in Context* (ed. Frederick Knobloch; Bethesda, Md.: University Press of Maryland, 2002), 49.

85. Scherman, *Chumash*, 349; Plaut, *Torah*, 919–26 and 1217.

86. Scherman, *Chumash*, 263, 319, and 1021; Plaut, *Torah*, 427, 457, and 464.

87. Scherman, *Chumash*, 409; Plaut, *Torah*, 279, 635, 659, and 1118.

88. Scherman, *Chumash*, 365; Plaut, *Torah*, 472–74; cf. Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 1464–66.

89. Plaut, *Torah*, 1123; Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 1468–70.

90. Scherman, *Chumash*, 400 and 576; cf. Plaut, *Torah*, 109.

91. Plaut, *Torah*, 808–13 and 972–73; Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 1460–64.

92. Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 286–87, 293; cf. Scherman, *Chumash*, 261, and Plaut, *Torah*, 142, 315, 669, 1039, 1083.

93. E.g., Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 6 and 649; Scherman, *Chumash*, xiii, 205, 367, 376, and 576.

to the ancient Israelites as "Jews,"[94] and all three volumes incorporate Hebrew terminology, albeit typically in transliteration[95] and sometimes even translation, in a way that presumes that Hebrew words will be recognized. Plainly, the editors of all three works believe that their Jewish readership needs the kind of basic Jewish education that these comments seek to provide.

Another commonality among these three books is the fact that all of them include a variety of commentaries rather than a single, "correct" interpretation. To be sure, only *Etz Hayim* actually prints several separate commentaries on each page. (These are not as distinct as the format implies; comments in one section frequently take approaches that are more appropriate to another.[96]) Although ArtScroll provides just one set of notes, these routinely present multiple interpretations for each verse, explicitly noting disagreements among traditional authorities.[97] These are further distinguished by their identification as "the plain sense" and "homiletical" or midrashic interpretations.[98] Plaut also incorporates a multiplicity of approaches, albeit not usually on the same page.[99] Instead, his notes, which provide a straightforward explication of the text, are followed by "Gleanings," which take a more "homiletical" approach. In recognizing and tolerating this kind of diversity, all three volumes reflect the traditional Jewish openness to the possibility that Scripture can have several meanings simultaneously.[100]

Also common to all three commentaries is their reliance on a range of sources that extends from antiquity to the present day. Moreover, in so doing, all three give preference to Jewish over non-Jewish sources. This is most conspicuous in the case of ArtScroll, which cites only Jewish authorities; however, a similar tendency can be discerned in the commentary (though not the es-

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94. Scherman, *Chumash*, 407 and 922.

95. E.g., Plaut, *Torah*, 271. All three commentaries occasionally use Hebrew font (e.g., Plaut, *Torah*, 1388); the lemmata in the ArtScroll *Chumash* are routinely printed in Hebrew.

96. For example, the *p'shat* commentary contains homiletical interpretations on pp. 102, 442, and 697 and halachic notes on pp. 393, 471, and 1106 (Lieber, *Etz Hayim*). For straightforward interpretations in the *d'rash* commentary, see pp. 129, 258, 804, 954, and 1020, and pp. 80, 137, 140, 293, 294, 297, 393, 418, 528, and 1063 for halakic comments.

97. Note Rashi's disagreements with Ibn Ezra as cited in Scherman, *Chumash*, 389; with Nachmanides on pp. 209, 271, and 753; and with the Vilna Gaon on p. 816. Nachmanides' disagreement with Maimonides is noted on p. 54, and with Ibn Ezra on p. 820. In this same spirit, the map on p. 923 shows two different delineations of the borders of Israel, one according to R. Eshtori ha-Farhi (fourteenth century) and the other according to R. Yehoseph Schwartz (nineteenth century).

98. E.g., Scherman, *Chumash*, 10, 17, 89, 139, 145, 148, 165, 171, 376, 721, and 847.

99. But see Plaut, *Torah*, 99 n. 2.

100. E.g., *Num. Rab.* 13:15.

says) in *Etz Hayim*.[101] Even the comments that are based on the work of Gentiles do so without identifying their source.[102] As for Plaut, although he does invoke figures from all manner of religious backgrounds, extending to both pagan and Muslim sources, one can discern a preference for Jews here as well. For example, he incorporates a wide variety of Jewish interpretations, ranging from *gematria* to David Zvi Hoffmann.[103] More significantly, he is clearly sensitive to Jewish concerns and scholarship, such as when he defends Yehezkel Kaufmann's understanding of the documentary hypothesis, which dates the Priestly source prior to Deuteronomy, over the more prevalent view of Julius Wellhausen, in which the sequence is reversed.[104]

Further evidence of these books' Jewish orientation is evident in the topics they address. Besides their interest in Jewish practice, there are numerous references to anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.[105] Plaut even provides an overview of the history of usury.[106] So too is the modern State of Israel repeatedly mentioned[107] and alluded to more often, as in Plaut's reference to Keren Kayemet when explaining the Hebrew term קרן.[108] This interest in contemporary Israel may also be responsible for the use of Sefardic norms when transliterating Hebrew. Even the ArtScroll volume, which is written for an audience that generally prefers Ashkenazi pronunciation, renders vowels according to the

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101. The only non-Jews named are Jean Astruc (Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 800 and 899), Heinrich Heine (p. 1088), both of whom were partially Jewish, John Milton (p. 20), and John Steinbeck (p. 25)—all in the *d'rash* section.

102. For example, Lieber (*Etz Hayim*, 294), where the story of the elevation of Ephraim and Manasseh is attributed to an effort to maintain a total of 12 tribes, a view that derives from Martin Noth, *Das System von der zwölf Stämme Israels* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1930).

103. E.g., Plaut, *Torah*, 197 and 782.

104. E.g., ibid., xxii–xxiii and 1294; Kaufmann is also cited on p. 89.

105. Scherman, *Chumash*, 293, 298, and 315; cf. 923. Plaut's *Torah* mentions the Nazis on p. 413; they are implicitly referred to on p. 293 of Scherman, *Chumash* (regarding "the 'Jewish problem'"), which expresses concern with Jews' appearance before hostile rulers on p. 240.

106. Plaut, *Torah*, 1501.

107. Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 584 ("the inalienable right of the Israelite people to its land"); Scherman, *Chumash*, 55 ("the eternal patrimony of the Jewish people") and p. 180, which speaks of the Jewish purchase of a field at Shechem as establishing "an inalienable right to the land by means of purchase." See also Plaut, *Torah*, 103, 254, 522, 557, 610, 688, 1031, and 1511; and the reference to Jewish military ability in Scherman, *Chumash*, 985. Contemporary issues may also be reflected in the ArtScroll *Chumash*'s reference to the talmudic comment that "the sages fault [Abraham] for using Torah sages to wage war" (p. 64, based on *b. Ned*. 32a) and Plaut's statement that Mt. Nebo "provides a good view of most of central Israel" (*Torah*, 1582).

108. Plaut, *Torah*, 610.

Sefardic (that is, modern Israeli) pattern, despite the fact that this sometimes leads to rather odd forms.[109] But the other volumes are not entirely consistent on this, with forms such as *Abib*, *Sukot*, and *Negeb* in Plaut[110] and *y'shiva*, *m'norah*, *g'nizah*, *k'tubbah*, *m'zuzah*, and *seider* in *Etz Hayim*.[111]

Alongside their particularistic concerns, these commentaries find a universal element in the Bible's message. The result can be paradoxical, as in the juxtaposition of ArtScroll's belief that God's rules extend to all humanity[112] with its repeated interest in the messianic return to "Eretz Israel."[113] The authors support this position by explaining that "the Torah is not a history book"[114] but "the eternal living monument of God's rendezvous with Israel."[115] Thus, the exodus from Egypt is described as "a seminal event in world history because it demonstrated God's mastery over nature . . . the textbook lesson for humanity that God is not an aloof Creator."[116] Plaut echoes this sentiment when he states that "the Torah is a book about humanity's understanding of and experience with God,"[117] which "doesn't propose to teach antiquity as such but to give religious instruction."[118]

Surprisingly, all three commentaries tend to downplay their denominational identities, despite their institutional origins and intended use. To be sure, these identities are not entirely absent. As we have already observed, *Etz Hayim* repeatedly refers to Conservative practice, while Plaut notes several Reform practices[119] and frequently cites scholars from this movement's Hebrew Union College.[120] For its part, the ArtScroll commentary is full of cross-references to related passages in other ArtScroll books.[121] However, the titles

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109. Consonants are transliterated in accordance with Ashkenazi pronunciation (see Scherman, *Chumash*, xiv), thus *Eretz Yisrael* (p. 55) and *tzaraas* (p. 307), though *Shabbos HaGadol* (p. 351), *Adonoy* (p. 304), and *Akeidas Yitzchok* (pp. 11, 183, but *Akeidas Yitzchak*, pp. 27–29 and 165, cf. xiv), *Chofetz Chaim* (pp. 40, 175, 564, 641, 665, 790, 800, 1075, 1088), and *Shabbos* (pp. 498, 816, and 365). For names, see n. 84.

110. E.g., Plaut, *Torah*, 921, 1451, 1107; see also Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 1202.

111. Ibid., 560, 798, 1128, 1467.

112. See Scherman, *Chumash*, 2 and 54.

113. E.g., ibid., 268, 348; cf. 997 and 1035.

114. Ibid., 3, 121, and 192.

115. Ibid., xiii.

116. Ibid., 341.

117. Plaut, *Torah*, xviii; therefore, it is to be characterized as "ancient Israel's distinctive record of its search for God" (p. xix).

118. Ibid., 89.

119. Ibid., 858, 881, 889, 926, 1401, 1535, and 1548. Significantly, most of these occur in sections dealing with Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

120. E.g., ibid., 1425.

121. E.g., Scherman, *Chumash*, 68, 90, 146, 205, 225, 241, 357, 486, 637, and 838.

of all three of these books are denominationally vague, albeit explicitly Jewish (*The Torah: A Commentary*; *The Chumash*; *The Torah, Haftaros and Five Megillos*; *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary*). This is particularly notable in light of the increasing visibility of denominational identities; moreover, all three of these books tend to avoid explicitly denominational terms when referring to matters of disagreement. We have already observed the absence of partisan attacks in the ArtScroll commentary. Likewise, *Etz Hayim* usually distinguishes the Conservative position from "traditional," rather than "Orthodox" Judaism,[122] even as it is "very traditional"[123] and "liberal" practice that Plaut sets against one another.[124]

Finally, it should be emphasized that, whatever their own points of view, all three are, in fact, acutely aware of the issues raised by modern biblical scholarship. As one would expect, this is most explicit in Plaut's volume, with its frequent references to the documentary hypothesis[125] and discussions of both historical problems[126] and textual difficulties.[127] Given the bluntness with which these are expressed, it is remarkable that it was the publication of *Etz Hayim*, which is typically more careful in raising questions about the presence of both contradictions[128] and anachronisms[129] within the Bible, that attracted far greater attention.[130] It does, in fact, speak of the biblical text as being composite[131] and alludes to the documentary hypothesis.[132] It also characterizes the Bible's statement about the number of Israelites in the desert as being "impossibly large,"[133] describes the duration of their sojourn in Egypt as likely to have been much less than the Bible's 400 years,[134] makes frequent reference to ancient Near Eastern practice,[135] and is willing to use ancient versions to

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122. But see the essay in Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 1403–4.

123. Plaut, *Torah*, 926 and 1118.

124. Ibid., 1426, where liberals are contrasted with "Orthodox" Jews; however, note p. 1569, where the categories are Reform, Ashkenazic, and Sefardic. Note the linkage of Orthodox Judaism with fundamentalist Christianity on p. xviii.

125. E.g., ibid., 62–63, 736–37, and 1294.

126. E.g., ibid., 89, 179.

127. E.g., ibid., 289, 295, 1523.

128. E.g., Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 840, 1047, 1064, 1194.

129. Ibid., 71–73, 287.

130. E.g., "New Torah for Modern Minds, Abraham and Moses Fantasy? The Exodus Fiction? Jewish Experts Publish Their Doubts," *New York Times* (March 9, 2002) 15, 17.

131. E.g., Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 230 and 282.

132. E.g., ibid., 230.

133. Ibid., 773; cf. Plaut, *Torah*, 1034.

134. Lieber, *Etz Hayim*, 925.

135. E.g., ibid., 114 and 129.

address textual problems, even noting cases in which the new Jewish Publica-
tion Society translation on which it comments may have done likewise, in op-
position to the translators' stated mandate.[136]

What is most remarkable is the fact that even ArtScroll, which, as we have
seen, seems to skirt these sorts of topics, is plainly aware of their existence;
however, it justifies dealing with them by attributing its insights and solutions
to rabbinic precedent.[137] For example, like *Etz Hayim*, it concludes that the
Israelites spent significantly less than 400 years in Egypt but bases this conclu-
sion on rabbinic tradition.[138] It typically resolves chronological problems by
appealing to the rabbinic principle that Scripture is not arranged chronologi-
cally (אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה).[139] A similar approach is used for contradic-
tions.[140] For example, the fact that the name spelled Reuel in Num 2:14
appears as Deuel in Num 1:14 is resolved in conformity with a statement by
R. Moses ben Nahman[141] and the Bible's inconsistent terminology for God by
noting the rabbinic view that these terms allude to different aspects of the
deity.[142] Familiarity with modern scholarship can also be seen in its reference
to the body of water that the Israelites crossed as the Sea of Reeds rather than
the Red Sea.[143] Finally, Elijah's apparent violation of a pentateuchal regulation
is attributed to a prophet's right to override a commandment if circumstances
warrant.[144] If the solutions to these problems are drawn from Jewish tradition,
the problems themselves stem from contemporary biblical scholarship.

Overall, whatever their distinctively Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform
characteristics, these commentaries have much in common, including their
preference for Hebrew terminology and their concern with questions of his-
tory and consistency. Like these books' reliance on English and pedagogical
interests, these features suggest that their readerships are quite similar. This
should not be entirely surprising, inasmuch as the contemporary American
Jewish audiences to which these three are directed have all now had at least one

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136. Ibid., 26, 283, 938, 1179, 1186, 1193, 1228, 1284; for disagreement with the NJPSV,
see above, n. 76.

137. Levy notes ArtScroll's modern appearance, scientific format (manuscripts), and
scholarly apparatus ("Judge Not a Book," 89).

138. Scherman, *Chumash*, 325 and 359; cf. 232.

139. Ibid., 3, 400, 444, 581, 728, 820; cf. 442, 643, 839, and 948.

140. Ibid., 5.

141. Ibid., 735, based on Nachmanides, ad loc.

142. Ibid., 33, 301, and 304; so too modern scholars, e.g., U. Cassuto, *The Documentary
Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch, 8 Lectures* (Jerusalem: Magnes,1983) 31.

143. Scherman, *Chumash*, 367; cf. 807.

144. Ibid., 1007.

full generation in which to assimilate. This, after all, is the reason for these books' pedagogical concerns, just as it is the basis for the Orthodox commentary's including an English translation and just as the updating of the Reform volume to incorporate the cantillation marks reflects the return to tradition that also spans the late-twentieth-century American Jewish community.

In the end, whatever their denomination, Jewish worshipers are now likely to find an elaborate and lavishly produced *ḥumash* at their pew in almost any American synagogue. Although these *ḥumashim* may have different publishers, their structure and layout are likely to be strikingly similar, with the Hebrew text at the top of the page alongside an English translation, while footnotes to individual words and verses contain comments drawn from the Jewish tradition. As a result, these books can barely be distinguished on the basis of their appearance. In this, all three movements now conform to the Jewish tradition that the Bible should be read with a translation and interpretation, even if these are not the targum and Rashi that the tradition calls for.[145]

This format, too, has a noble lineage within Jewish tradition, for it is the same as the layout of the rabbinic Bibles (*Mikra'ot Gedolot*), which were among the earliest Jewish books printed.[146] These also bring several, often conflicting, interpretations together on the same page, with Rashi and Ibn Ezra, for example, presenting totally different interpretations of the same word. Thus, these seemingly competing commentaries share in both format and, to some extent, purpose with each other and with numerous Jewish precedents. In this, they are profoundly Jewish in ways that say much about the contemporary American Jewish reality.

In the end, whatever differences these volumes may have, it is doubtful that worshipers familiar with any one of them would be uncertain about how the others should be used or would find them without value. If the Reform community sits at the interface between Jewish tradition and the secular world, which Orthodoxy has chosen to ignore while Conservatism strives to blend both, the evidence gathered here suggests that the American Jewish community's much-vaunted "polarization" may be more a matter of style than of substance, of rhetoric rather than reality. These three commentaries are plainly engaged in the same endeavor and even addressed to audiences that seem to

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145. See *b. Ber.* 8a and Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan ʿAruch*, *ʾOraḥ Ḥayim* 285:2.

146. See Nahum Sarna, "The Authority and Interpretation of Scripture in Jewish Tradition," in *Understanding Scripture: Explorations of Jewish and Christian Traditions of Interpretation* (ed. Clemens Thoma and Michael Wyschograd; Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1986) 11. Hertz attributed his format to Gaster's High Holiday prayer book and S. Herxheimer's 1841–48 edition of Genesis (Meirovich, *Vindication*, 29).

have more in common than what divides them, whether in language or the longing to find meaning within their own tradition.

Remarkably, all three movements have chosen to meet this need in the same way—through the vehicle of a Hebrew-English commentary—something that was not always available even a generation ago, when Orthodox synagogues provided only the Hebrew text (albeit typically with Rashi's commentary and the Aramaic targum), and some Reform congregations provided their worshipers an English Bible. In this commonality, these volumes demonstrate the point made by Gershom Scholem decades ago, when he observed that commentary is "the characteristic expression of Jewish thinking about truth."[147] And so the very desire to create commentaries also reflects a traditional Jewish approach that spans the American Jewish community, further demonstrating that American Jews may not be not as different as they claim to be.

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147. Gershom Scholem, "Revelation and Tradition," in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken, 1971) 290.

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