Short abstract

S.D.E. Weeks, Balliol. D. Phil. Thesis Trinity Term 1991

Early Israelite Wisdom

The thesis is an examination of the wisdom literature preserved in the book of Proverbs, and of evidence pertinent to the nature and historical setting of this material. The first section examines the arrangement of sayings in the sentence literature, reviews the comparative Near Eastern material and its significance for the exegesis of Proverbs, and discusses the claims that early wisdom was secular, rejecting them. The second section concentrates upon the setting of the literature, with studies of 'wisdom' and 'wise men' in the Old Testament, the internal evidence for associating Proverbs with the royal court, the nature of the Joseph Narrative, Solomon's wisdom and the influence of Egypt on his administration, and, finally, the biblical and epigraphic evidence for formal education in Israel. On the basis of these studies, it is concluded that conventional views of the wisdom literature as scribal and pedagogical are ill-founded and in need of revision. It is suggested that indications within Proverbs itself are a better guide to the nature of the material, and that early wisdom literature should be viewed as an integral part of the literary culture within Israel, not as the product of an international movement or specific professional group.

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The purpose of the thesis is to examine the nature and setting of the wisdom literature preserved in the biblical book of Proverbs, and in particular the proper approach to the study of that material. Two main sections contain a series of interconnected studies examining evidence, assumptions and methods which have played an important role in previous scholarship. The first is concerned with issues relating primarily to the nature and study of the sources, the second with the evidence adduced for the setting of early Israelite wisdom literature in the royal court, the state administration, and scribal education.

The first section begins by examining the arrangement of sayings in the two main collections of sentence literature, Prov. $10\text{-}22^{16}$ and 25-29. An analysis of the links often noted between adjacent sayings is shown to be useful in the identification of sub-collections and additions to earlier collections, and, more importantly, serves to demonstrate the interest of the redactors in formal and verbal flow more than in the expression of themes. There follows a discussion of attempts to identify more sophisticated structures within

the material. The assumptions, methods, and usefulness of such attempts are questioned.

Chapter 2 turns to the comparative material from other ancient Near Eastern nations, which is listed and described. The chief intention here is to underline the diversity and sheer number of relevant texts. Recent research and new sources for each text are noted, and a general bibliography, along with information on publication and editions, is provided in the notes to the chapter. The uses to which such material may be put, and the issues which it raises for the study of Proverbs, are outlined in the next chapter, where it is also stressed that the texts must be understood in the context of the national cultures to which they belong, and not as reflections of some distinct international or supranational movement. Finally the section ends, in chapter 4, with the application of some of the results to a specific issue, that of secularism within early wisdom. It is shown that, contrary to the arguments advanced by some scholars, there are no grounds for supposing there to have been an early, non-religious tradition which underwent later Yahwistic reinterpretation, and that the existence of such a tradition is most improbable.

The second section begins with a brief introduction to the question of the historical setting of the wisdom literature.

The superficial evidence of Proverbs itself and the common views expressed by scholars in the 19th and early 20th centuries are contrasted with the opinions which have dominated scholarship since the recognition of a link between Proverbs and Amenemope in the 1920s. The evidence adduced for such opinions, favouring an association between wisdom literature and the concerns of the royal administration, is the subject of the rest of the section. Chapter 5 examines the issue of 'wise men', whether any group known by this name can be identified in the OT, and if so whether they are to be identified with the wisdom literature on the one hand and the political establishment on the other. A review of the uses of HKM in the Old Testament shows that it has a number of applications, generally denoting intelligence and skill, while it is rarely associated with literary activity. Equally, it is doubtful that any use of 'wise men' to describe a professional class involved in administration can be identified except in relatively late references to Babylonians. No compelling evidence is found to suggest the existence of a class of 'wise men' distinguished by anything other than intelligence.

Chapter 6 turns once more to Proverbs, and specifically to the internal evidence for a setting in the royal court, or for the redaction of wisdom literature in such a milieu. It

is suggested that the superscriptions to sections within Proverbs, which attribute the material to Solomon reflect later ideas, and not an original association with the court. Prov. 25^{1}, an obscure reference to Hezekiah, is discussed in some detail, and it is argued that this verse should not be relied upon as an historical note about the transmission of the following collection. Turning to the sayings themselves, it is pointed out that sayings which refer to the king need not have originated in the court, and may represent a conventional theme taken up from non-Israelite wisdom literature or traditions. 'Courtier' sayings, dealing with behaviour in the king's presence, may have had a similar origin, and are, anyway, very rare. The position of such king and courtier sayings within the sayings collections is not such as to suggest that they represent a particular concern of the redactors.

Chapter 7 examines the proposition that the Joseph Narrative in Genesis was composed as a didactic wisdom narrative, reflecting beliefs and themes specific to the wisdom tradition, in which the hero exemplifies wisdom ideals of behaviour. It is shown that correspondences with the wisdom literature are infrequent, and when they do occur, that they lack the emphases and do not reflect the same interests as that literature. Furthermore, the ideas of divine action in the narrative are found in many parts of

the Old Testament, and do not correspond to sayings about the divine disposition of events in Proverbs and Egyptian literature.

Chapter 8 reviews the evidence for linking wisdom literature with the reign of Solomon and with the establishment of a state administration along Egyptian lines at that time. Biblical and archaeological evidence are taken to indicate that no such system was established, and that Solomon is unlikely to have looked to Egypt for inspiration. Particular official posts and the system of provisioning attributed to Solomon's reign are investigated, and it is shown that there is no good reason to view them as imitations of Egyptian prototypes. On the other hand, it is accepted that Egyptian influence underlies the system of numerals employed, and probably also certain weights and measures, but this influence is associated with the earlier Egyptian domination of Canaan and the continued requirements of trade. There is nothing to suggest that such things represent a general imitation of Egyptian administrative and other practices. Overall, there is no reason to assume that wisdom literature should be associated with some establishment of a national administration, influenced by Egypt, at the time of Solomon or later.

The last study, in chapter 9, turns to the question of schools and scribal training. In part because of a somewhat misleading analogy with Egypt, Israelite wisdom literature is commonly associated with formal education, and especially the education of scribes for the state administration. It is argued, however, that there is no reason to suppose that any system of formal education existed in Israel, nor any grounds for assuming such a system in the absence of evidence. Key biblical texts, taken by some as evidence for schools, are reviewed briefly, before a detailed examination of the epigraphical evidence adduced by Lemaire. It is accepted that there is some evidence for formal instruction in the use of numerals at Qadesh-Barnea, but the evidence is generally found wanting, and Lemaire's arguments demonstrably false in places. After a general discussion of the significance of abecedaries, it is argued that the acquisition of literacy in Israel would not have required the existence of schools or the reading of literature. The evidence for fairly widespread literacy, and the absence of evidence for schools may well suggest that writing was taught outside a formal educational context. The chapter ends with some brief remarks on matters concerning scribal training more specifically, the association of scribes with literature and the training of scribes in foreign languages. It is accepted that that last may have played some role in the transmission of non-Israelite literature to Israel, but

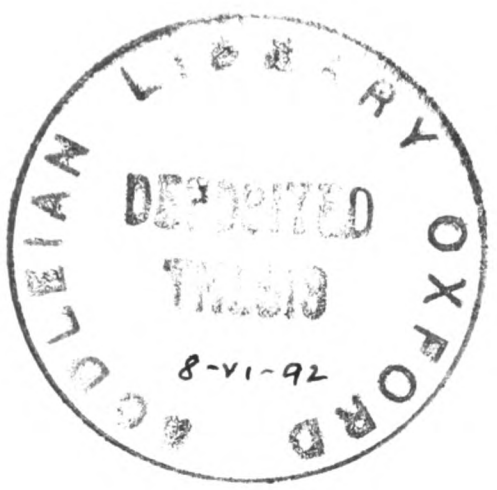
stressed that it is only one of a number of possibilities. The chapter concludes that there is no evidence to suggest that Israelite wisdom literature might have originated in an educational system. A brief summary of the second section as a whole concludes that the association of wisdom with the court and administration is based upon very weak evidence indeed. While accepting that scribes or courtiers might conceivably have been involved in the composition or transmission of wisdom literature, that literature cannot be taken to represent their professional ethos or activity.

Finally, some of the more general implications of the thesis are drawn out, and suggestions made for the most profitable approaches to the subject in future study. In particular, it is suggested that the social background to Proverbs is probably to be sought among the more prosperous classes in the towns and countryside of the nation, but that the wisdom literature ought not to be identified as the literature of a particular group or school of thought. Indeed, it seems possible that 'wisdom' should be viewed simply as a literary classification. The growing tendency to understand Israelite thought in the broader context of ancient Near Eastern ideas, leaves the wisdom literature less isolated in its affinity with non-Israelite material. At the same time, claims for wisdom influence in the Old Testament reveal the

extent to which it is associated with other Israelite thought and literature.

E A R L Y I S R A E L I T E W I S D O M

by Stuart Weeks



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Abbreviations

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ÄAT	Ägypten und Altes Testament
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
ANET^3	J.B. Pritchard (ed.), Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, third edition with Supplement (Princeton, 1969)
AnOr	Analecta Orientalia
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
BA	Biblical Archaeologist
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Oxford, 1907)
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BJPES	Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BWL	W.G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature (Oxford, 1960)
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CB	Coniectanea Biblica
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ET	English translation
ET	Expository Times

GK	E. Kautzsch, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, second English edition revised by A.E. Cowley (Oxford, 1910)
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HSS	Harvard Semitic Studies
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JA	Journal Asiatique
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JCS	Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JEA	Journal of Egyptian Archaeology
JN	Joseph Narrative
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JTS	Journal of Theological Studies
LSJ	H.G. Liddell, R. Scott and H.S. Jones, A Greek-English Lexicon, ninth edition with supplement edited by E.A. Barber et al. (Oxford, 1968)
LUÅ	Lunds Universitets Årsskrift
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic text
OA	Oriens Antiquus
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis

OMRO	Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden
PEQ	Palestine Exploration Quarterly
RA	Revue d'Assyriologie
RB	Revue Biblique
RdÉ	Revue d'Égyptologie
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAK	Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SSEA	Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities
StANT	Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
StTh	Studia Theologica
SVT	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
TA	Tel Aviv
ThLZ	Theologische Literaturzeitung
UF	Ugarit-Forschungen
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WZKM	Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ZA	Zeitschrift für Assyriologie
ZÄS	Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZDPV	Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins

Introduction

The 'Early Israelite Wisdom' which is the subject of this study is not the folk wisdom which probably existed in Israel from the earliest times, but the wisdom literature which has found a place in the book of Proverbs. Nor is 'early' intended to suggest an absolute date for any of this material, merely that it is almost certainly earlier than the rest of the canonical wisdom literature. The object of this study is to examine the ways in which we should approach the interpretation of this material, with regard especially to its historical setting, and to lay down some principles for future study.

The greater part of the work falls into two sections. The first (chapters 1 to 4), is concerned with two separate issues of importance for an understanding of the wisdom literature: the nature and arrangement of the major sayings collections, and the significance of the comparable Near Eastern material. In the first chapter I shall discuss the various attempts that have been made to uncover the organisational techniques and intentions of the redactors in the sentence literature sections of Proverbs, which are of importance for an understanding both of the individual sayings, and of the nature of the collection.

The second chapter moves on to a wholly different subject, the non-Israelite wisdom literature, and I have assembled as comprehensive a list as I can of the relevant materials, with comments on each. The purpose of this chapter is threefold: firstly, a number of these texts will be cited in subsequent chapters, and the list serves as an introduction to those; secondly, the list is intended to provide historical and bibliographical information for all of the texts, a large proportion of which is little-known in biblical scholarship. The third purpose is associated with the second, but is also the reason why this list is presented as a chapter, rather than as an excursus or appendix. In the course of my research I have gained the strong impression that the Near Eastern material is perceived by some scholars as being much of a muchness, with the Egyptian instructions, for instance, all presumed to be cut from the same cloth as Ptahhotep or Amenemope. This has been reinforced by the tendency of most commentators to refer only to a handful of the relevant texts. This has led to some curious attitudes. The demotic instruction of Ankhsheshonqy, for example, is probably as typical as any of the numerous Late Period texts which have been recovered from Egypt, but is generally regarded as some sort of exception; Amenemhet and the "Loyalist Instruction", from an earlier era, are among the most important of the texts, but barely ever receive a mention. Mesopotamia has fared, if

anything, rather worse. I hope that, if nothing else, the list will indicate both the quantity and the diversity of the texts available for comparative study.

Chapter 3 is a more general attempt to assess the significance of these works for our understanding of Proverbs, to highlight some of the methodological problems which are involved, and to question some of the assumptions about, and descriptions of wisdom literature in the Near East. Some of the issues raised are illustrated in the next chapter, when I examine a number of studies relating to the question of secularism in early wisdom. The importance of the observations made in chapter 1 will also, I hope, become clear.

The second section of the work (chapters 5-9) is rather different. It sets out to examine the evidence, internal and circumstantial, which has been adduced in support of some of the most popular theories about the setting and origins of early wisdom in Israel. These are well-known, and in my introduction to the section I have tried to concentrate more upon the way in which they arose than upon their detail. The precise issues will become clear, I hope, in the chapters which follow, and I shall not attempt to summarise them here either. Essentially, the section is a series of studies on subjects linked by little more than their previous

employment in theories about wisdom. Again, I have been anxious to present the evidence in detail whenever this is practical. I fear that the section as a whole is almost consistently negative, as I find the great majority of the arguments presented rather unconvincing. This came as something of a surprise to me: in my initial plans, this section was to have occupied little space, and to have been merely a qualified description of the 'facts' about wisdom, as generally recognised. It grew in proportion to my disillusionment with those facts, and has, in the end, come to take up about half the study.

The last part of this work is an attempt to muster the more positive aspects of the preceding chapters, and to indicate the way in which I think we should understand wisdom literature in Israel, and in the Old Testament. It is, therefore, part conclusion and part epilogue.

Except where otherwise indicated, I have assumed throughout the conventional divisions of the material in Proverbs. I have not, however, attempted to rank the various sections chronologically. The conventional, late dating of chs. 1-9 rests principally upon form-critical and stylistic assumptions which are now generally acknowledged to be false. Other grounds for such a dating are very slight, and it seems to have been maintained through a mixture of

conservatism and intuition. Although I share that intuition, I can see no strong evidence for placing those chapters, or any other part of the book, substantially later than the rest. For comparative and other purposes, I have tried to take account of the fact that the material may be as early as the tenth or as late as about the fourth century BC. We can probably be more precise than this, but not certainly so.

Section I Sources

Chapter 1 Context in the Sayings Collections

One of the most useful results of research over the last few decades has been the distinction drawn between 'instruction' and 'sentence literature' in Proverbs, credit for which must go to McKane and Kayatz [1]. McKane describes the difference thus:

> "... the most important formal distinction between Instruction and the wisdom sentence is that the imperative is proper to the first and the indicative to the second. The Instruction commands and exhorts and gives reasons why its directives should be obeyed. These reasons are contained in subordinate clauses of which the most typical is the motive (kī) clause, but final and consecutive clauses are also common. The Instruction is marked by direct address and its aim is to command and persuade. The wisdom sentence is an observation with an impersonal form which states a truth but neither exhorts nor persuades" [2].

The distinction and the terminology derive from the observation that the 'instruction' material is analogous to material in the Egyptian instruction genre, an observation which strongly contradicts the earlier idea that such material developed within Israel as an expansion of the shorter sentence form [3]. This is, of course, important for the issue of dating, and for a more general understanding of the material. However, it would be unwise to push the

distinction too far. McKane regards instruction as a 'genre', defined syntactically, but, as we shall see later, such a definition cannot be applied absolutely to the Egyptian instructions, which vary considerably in style and mode of address. More practically, the two types of material are often found together in the same works, Israelite (e.g., Prov. 25-27) and non-Israelite. It would be unwise to claim that a strong distinction was drawn between them at the time such works were compiled. Short pieces of instruction, and I am thinking in particular of the bipartite prohibition, are often found in sentence-literature contexts, or effectively treated as sentences in collections.

We should not, then, let the instruction/sentence distinction become a rigid dogma, or expend too much energy on attempting to differentiate between the two. When I refer to 'sentence literature' below, I am speaking of works or collections which consist wholly or predominantly of short, independent statements without subordinate clauses, while 'instruction' employs units which are longer and generally formed around a piece of direct advice. This should not be viewed as a strict definition, but as a broad description.

It is the 'sentence literature', of which the largest collections are to be found in Prov. 10-22[16] and 25-29, which poses the greatest methodological difficulties when we

try to study the nature of the major sections in Proverbs. Some scholars have, in fact, been inclined to disregard altogether the fact that the sayings are presented in collections; McKane, for instance, declares that

> "While it is important to pay attention to the principles which determine the association of sentences, it is none the less true that these are secondary groupings which do not significantly alter the atomistic character of sentence literature" [4].

At the other extreme, as we shall see below, some scholars perceive in the collections intricate and subtle patterns which are vital indications of a deeper meaning. Most often, the analysis tends to be an unsystematic combination of both these approaches, where the position of sayings is taken into account when it makes some convenient point, but otherwise disregarded. In view of this confusion, it seems important to examine the whole question of what constitutes a 'collection' in Proverbs, and how significant such a concept is for the interpretation of sayings and understanding of the tradition.

Unfortunately, we know nothing and can deduce little about the materials which preceded and underlie the present collections. Doublets, along with the evidence for the demotic and Sumerian collections, may suggest that a number of smaller collections coexisted and interacted, and, as I shall show, we do have some grounds for identifying two

large sub-collections within each of the major collections. However, those sub-collections show a broad formal consistency, and if many earlier collections were indeed employed in their creation, they seem to have been thoroughly redacted. In any case, our ignorance of the sources makes our study of the redaction that much more difficult, and by excluding any assessment of the redactor's selectivity, it forces us to concentrate upon his arrangement of the material. This is not quite so restrictive as it sounds, and in the first part of this chapter I shall try to show just how much information can be garnered through an analysis of the links between sayings; in the second part, on the other hand, I shall review some of the limitations.

1. Nearest-neighbour analysis

The approach which I have taken here is not new, and is based upon a phenomenon often noted, that sayings are frequently linked in some fashion with one or both of the sayings adjacent to them. It has an appearance of objectivity which is slightly misleading, as certain judgements have to be made about the more doubtful links, and, more importantly, about what constitutes a 'theme'. Despite this and other drawbacks, however, I think that it is probably the closest that one can get to an objective and controlled method, and, as will become clear, it offers

greater insights than have previously been appreciated. I shall treat the two main collections separately.

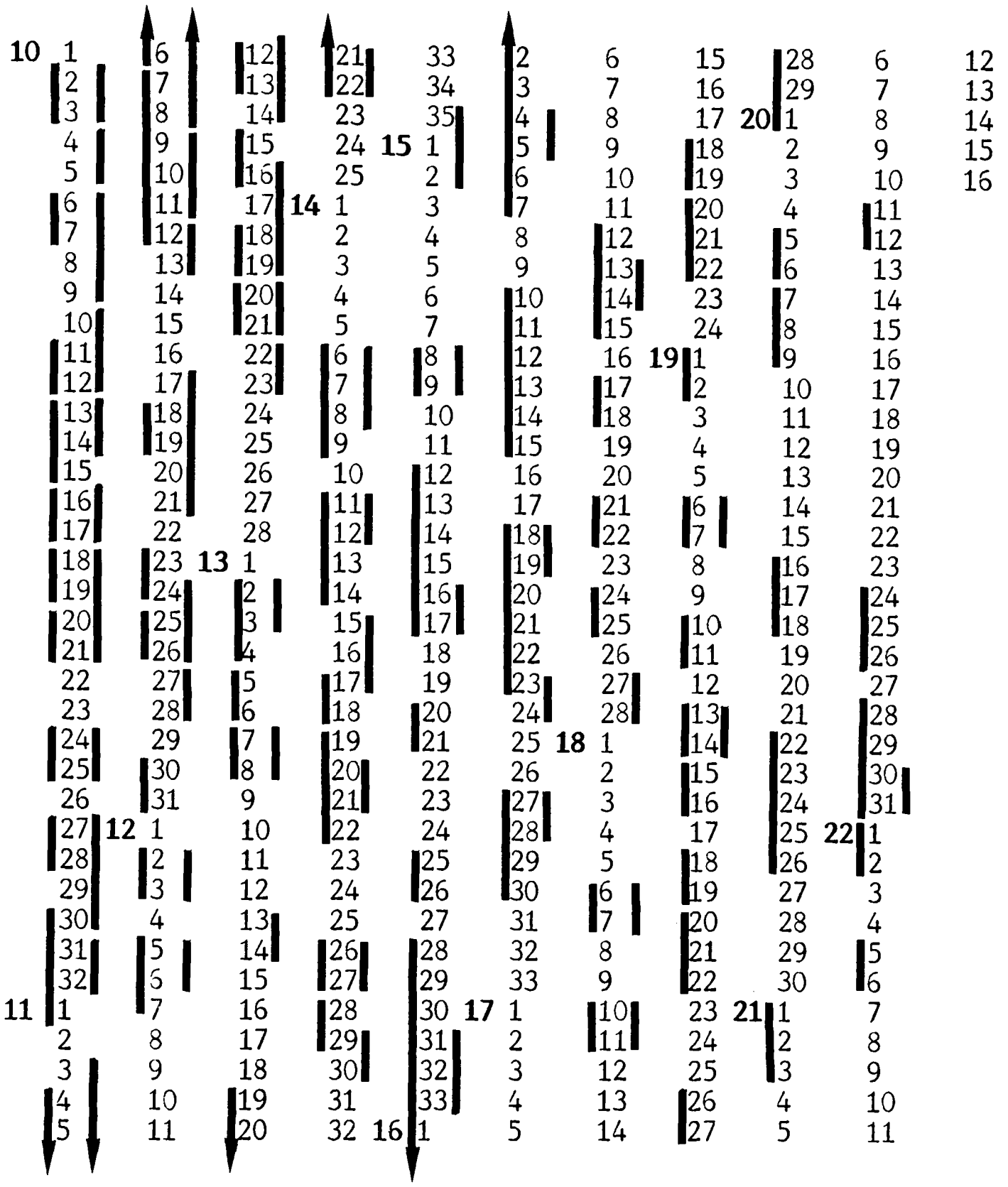
a. Chapters 10-22[16] This section contains 375 sayings, all but one of which (19^{7}) consist of a single line divided into two stichs. The sentences thus formed are predominantly statements, and most employ parallelism. Many are linked to an adjacent saying, or to sayings on both sides, by one of three methods:

(i) Thematic linking: adjacent sayings deal with the same subject or theme; eg. all the sayings in 14^{6-8} deal with the fool's lack of wisdom.

(ii) Verbal linking: adjacent sayings employ the same or similar items of vocabulary; eg. in the same passage, 14^{6-8}, wĕda'at in v. 6 is picked up by yāda'tā and dā'at in v. 7, kĕsîl in v. 7 by kĕsîlîm in v. 8. The chain extends, in fact, to v. 9, where 'ĕwilîm picks up wĕ'iwwelet from v. 8.

(iii) Literal linking: adjacent sayings share the same initial letter, or a sequence of initial letters is repeated; eg. all the sayings in 11^{9-12} begin with the letter beth.

The main links formed in these ways are indicated in the following diagram:



In many cases more than one of the methods is employed, and sometimes more than one method is represented by the same features, as when a catchword is also the initial word,

or embodies the theme. Verbal and literal links are closely related and frequently indistinguishable from each other. In the diagram above, I have, therefore, treated them as a single method, and represented the presence of both verbal links and literal links by a line to the left of the references. Thematic linking is indicated by a line to the right. As the representation here is intended to be minimal, and to include only those links which are reasonably certain, I have excluded literal links which join only two sayings, since there is some scope for coincidence in this area [5]. The list of links might be greatly increased by including not only these shorter literal links, but more general thematic and verbal resemblances [6].

Altogether, some 219 sayings out of the 375, over 58%, are clearly joined to an adjacent saying by verbal, literal or thematic links, sometimes forming lengthy chains of sayings. The distribution of links is as follows [7]:

Chapter:	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Total
verb/lit. only:	1	4	2	5	7	11	16	8	3	15	14	10	4	100
thematic only:	6	7	4	2	5	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	29
both:	21	14	11	6	10	7	7	2	6	4	0	2	0	90
total linked:	28	25	17	13	22	20	24	12	9	19	14	12	4	219
linked as % of all sayings:	88	81	61	52	63	60	73	43	38	66	47	39	25	58

The proportion of each may be expressed as a percentage of the total linked sayings in each chapter:

Chapter: (%)	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	Total
verb/lit. only:	4	16	12	38	32	55	67	67	33	79	100	83	100	46
thematic only:	21	28	24	15	23	10	4	17	0	0	0	0	0	13
both:	75	56	65	46	45	35	29	17	67	21	0	17	0	41

It is clear that verbal/literal links predominate overall; links which are thematic only are rare from ch. 15 onwards, and there are none at all in chs. 18-22 [8]. Except in ch. 18, where there are very few linked sayings anyway, sayings linked only verbally or literally are the most common linked sayings in chs. 15-22, while sayings linked both verbally/literally and thematically are the most common in 10-14. In other words, there is a clear difference between chs. 10-14 and 15-22 in the preferred method of linking sayings.

Also noteworthy are the significantly higher proportions of linked sayings in chs. 10-11 and, to a lesser extent, ch. 16. Even in these chapters, however, there is no evidence of an attempt to link all the sayings together as a single chain. Though chs. 11 and 15-16 include some lengthy chains, most of the chains are short, often simply pairs of sayings. Large gaps appear often between one chain and the

next (e.g. 16^{31}-17^{11}, 22^{7-16}); indeed, half the unlinked sayings are found in groups of five or more. The linked sayings are, correspondingly, often concentrated together, even when there is no chain linking them all (e.g. 10^{2-21}, 12^{12-23}). Distribution is, then, somewhat uneven.

Setting these links aside for the moment, we may turn our attention to a very striking feature of the material, which has been remarked upon by many scholars: the distribution of antithetical sayings. Sayings which employ antithetical parallelism are fairly common throughout the section, but whereas they compete with similar numbers of sayings employing synthetic or synonymous parallelism in 16-22^{16}, they are far and away the most common type of saying in chs. 10-15. The actual number of antithetical sayings depends on the definition adopted [9], and many scholars, in my opinion, somewhat overstate the case by including 'better than' sayings (e.g. $15^{16f.}$), 'how much more' sayings (e.g. 11^{31}, 15^{11}) and other sayings which include an antithesis but are clearly different from the basic form, in which the second stich presents an antithesis for contrast, rather than comparison, with the first. Other problems arise from interpretative difficulties (e.g. in 10^{18} [10]) or text-critical considerations (e.g. in 11^{16}, where the LXX contains an antithesis absent from MT). In a number of sayings, moreover, the antithesis is far from precise (e.g.

10[13]). These difficulties do not, however, make any real difference to the basic point, that the proportion of antithetical sayings falls dramatically after ch. 15.

By my own reckoning, the number and proportion of antithetical sayings in each chapter is [11]:

chapter 10:	30 (94%)	15: 22 (67%)	20: 9 (30%)
11:	26 (84%)	16: 5 (15%)	21: 12 (38%)
12:	26 (93%)	17: 4 (14%)	22: 4 (25%)
13:	23 (92%)	18: 4 (17%)	
14:	29 (83%)	19: 6 (21%)	Total: 200 (53%)

The change in proportion from ch. 16 onwards has led most scholars to divide 10-22[16] into two sections, 10-15 and 16-22[16]. The problem with doing so is that the break is by no means clean: ch. 15 has a significantly lower proportion of antithetical sayings than the preceding chapters, but it is still much higher than in the chapters which follow. This cannot be explained by a sudden influx of non-antithetical sayings at the end of the chapter, since there are as many in the first half of the chapter as in the second. The actual number of sayings involved is fairly small, and might be disregarded were it not that the end of ch. 15 and the beginning of 16 are also joined in a lengthy verbal chain. If the section is to be divided into two parts on the basis

of the antithetical sayings, there appears to be a third part, a grey area, in between them.

It is interesting to compare the result with our observations about the change in the type of linking used. Here too we saw consistency of usage in ch. 10-14, with a marked change taking place in ch. 15. For a division of the text according to its formal elements, the method of linking suggests 10-14, 15-22[16], while the antithetical sayings suggest 10-14, 15, 16-22[16]. The sections cannot be precisely delineated: there is no particular reason to suppose that they follow the chapter divisions imposed much later on the text, and there is no really satisfactory way of slicing up the text so as to determine the exact limits. Among the last few verses of ch. 14 and the first part of 15, where the end of the first collection is most probably to be sought, there are relatively few linked sayings. It is impossible, therefore, to use the switch from thematic to verbal/literal links as a pointer to the precise end of the first main collection. Since this preference for verbal/literal links is shared by the second collection, it is equally useless as a guide to the end of the grey area.

At the same time, the first collection, in its present form, is not composed entirely of antithetical sayings, and one cannot take the appearance of non-antithetical sayings

as a sign in itself that the grey area has begun. Furthermore, there is no reason to assume that the grey area, which still boasts a majority of antithetical sayings, must begin with one which is non-antithetical, an error implicit in Skehan's argument that the area begins at 14^{26} [12]. At most it appears probable that we are in the grey area by the time we reach the three non-antithetical sayings in 15^{10-12}, which are followed by a high proportion of both non-antithetical sayings and verbal/literal links. It is equally difficult to pinpoint the end, since the formal characteristics are identical to those of the second main sub-collection after about 16^{2}; the chain of 'king' sayings in 16^{12-15}, for instance, includes not a single antithetical saying, and such sayings are pretty infrequent in the chain of Yahweh sayings which precedes it. The latter is a part of the unusually long verbal [13] chain which runs from 15^{28} to 16^{7}. This lengthy chain includes a series of four sayings linked by 'hearing' (15^{29-32}), the first of which speaks of Yahweh, and is followed by eight sayings in 15^{33}-16^{7} which all mention the divine name. The two series are linked by mûsār / mûsar in $15^{32,33}$, and the first series to the preceding saying by the righteous/wicked contrast. It seems possible that the purpose of this chain was to link ch. 16 with the preceding material. A proper description of the grey area cannot, however, be attempted on the basis of formal elements alone. For the time being, then, we must

suspend judgement, and profess ignorance of the points at which the 'antithetical collection' ends and the other main collection starts. Nor, of course, can we say whether there is any other material lying between them.

Anyway, it is clear that there are good reasons for seeing 'sub-collections' within the material. It is possible that a single redactor has been at work, sorting out antithetical from non-antithetical sayings, but the presence of many antithetical sayings in 16-22[16] and the shift in the method of linking tell against this. It is more probable that the collection has been formed from the amalgamation of independent collections, and it is possible that these were in turn formed by the amalgamation of still earlier collections, although the general formal consistency within the major sub-collections makes this unlikely.

It is, on the face of it, likely that the collection and its sub-collections would have been liable to addition, textual corruption and other minor changes. Certainly there are many occasions when versional or textual evidence suggests that a verse has been corrupted; it may be, for example, that the obscure third stich in 19[7] is the remnant of an original distich, if it, or the whole saying, is not an addition. The repetition of single stichs may arouse similar suspicions: the slightly implausible 10[6b], for

instance, looks as if it may well have come from 10^{11b}. On the whole, this is merely a text-critical rather than a redactional matter. However, textual disruption does make a very considerable difference to the interlinking of sayings. The insertion of a single saying into a linked pair may leave three unlinked sayings, and the transposition of two verses may turn a chain of four sayings into four unlinked sayings. It is, therefore, a factor to be reckoned with in an analysis of the structure. More importantly, in the case of additions to the text, even small changes are undoubtedly a part of the process of collection. The identification of such additions is not, however, an easy matter. The presence of links to an adjacent saying is not, in itself, a reliable guide, since there is no reason why an addition should not have been placed so as to form such a link. On the other hand, the apparent disruption of a link is, without other evidence, at best a slender and somewhat subjective basis for analysis. At worst, the analysis can spin rapidly out of control; we can hardly, for instance, excise 10^{6-25} simply because $10^{4f.}$ could then be linked with 10^{26}. The nature of the material makes the identification of additions much more difficult than in any other part of the Old Testament.

Nevertheless, we are not entirely helpless: the formal features which allowed us to identify sub-collections are also, in a strictly formal sense, strong enough to provide a

'context' against which individual sayings may be judged. Thus the fact that the overwhelming majority of the sayings in chs. 10-14 are antithetical may allow us reasonably to suppose that at some level of redaction there existed a collection composed entirely of antithetical sayings, and that the seventeen non-antithetical sayings are later additions to this collection. Their removal leads to the loss of some links, and to the creation of others; most strikingly, the removal of 11^{7} does not only leave verbal and literal links between vv. 6 and 8, but reveals a literal (and verbal) chain in vv. 5, 6, 8, immediately preceding the literal chain in vv. 9-12. The removal of 11^{29} leaves a verbal link between vv. 28 and 30, which share a similar and very distinctive imagery. Two of the non-antithetical sayings resemble each other closely ($14^{10,\ 13}$), and their removal leaves a chain of verbal and thematic links between vv. 9 and 14. Without going into all the details, we may tabulate the effect on the overall distribution and proportion of links after the removal of non-antithetical sayings:

Chapter:	10	11	12	13	14
verb/lit. only:	1	2	2	6	3
thematic only:	6	6	3	0	4
both:	21	14	11	6	10
total linked:	28	22	16	12	17
linked as % of all sayings:	93	88	62	52	59

Expressed as a percentage of linked sayings:

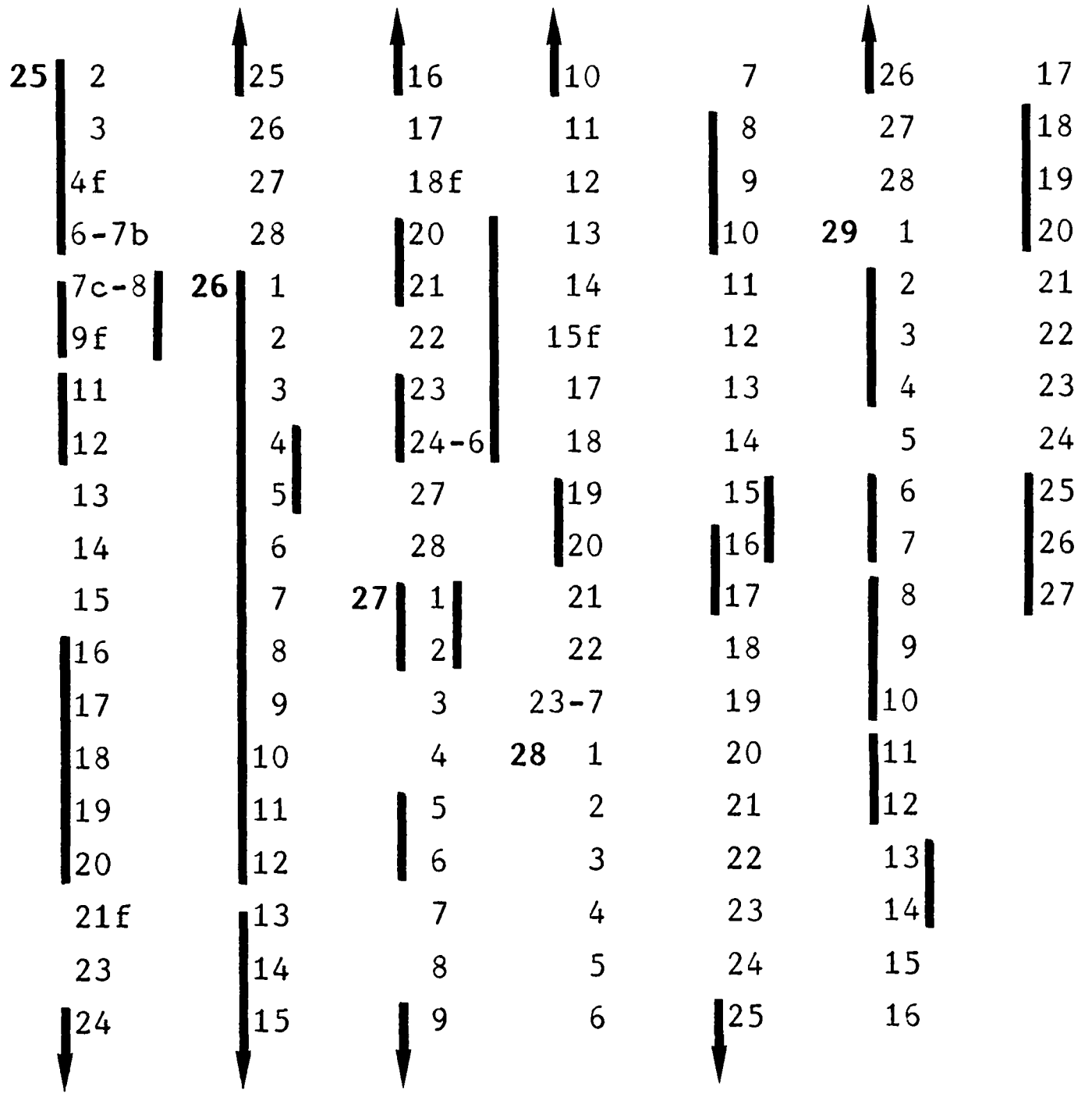
Chapter: (%)	10	11	12	13	14
verb/lit. only:	4	9	13	50	18
thematic only:	21	27	19	0	24
both:	75	64	69	50	59

If this is compared with the previous figures, it becomes clear that the removal of non-antithetical sayings from chs. 10-14 results in the reinforcement of formal characteristics which were visible previously, most notably the high proportion of linked sayings in ch. 10-11, and the high proportion of links formed both verbally/literally and thematically. This is what we should expect if the sayings were indeed additions, and gives strong support to the idea that they are.

b. Chapters 25-29

The one-line saying still predominates in the second collection of sentence literature in Proverbs, but chs. 25-29 include several sections of instructional wisdom (25^{6-7b}, $7c-8$, $9-10$, $21-22$, 26^{24-26}, 27^{23-27}) and a number of other lengthy sayings, including one ($25^{4f.}$) formed by the juxtaposition of distichs. There are higher proportions

of admonitions and of sayings which lack parallelism than we found in chs. 10-22[16]. If the instructional sections are counted as single sayings for our present purposes, the total number of sayings is 125. Verbal, literal and thematic links are still employed, and we may show these as before [14]:



The number of sayings linked by these methods in each chapter is as follows:

Chapter:	25	26	27	28	29	Total
verb/lit. only:	13	14	8	6	16	57
thematic only:	0	1	0	1	2	4
both:	2	6	2	1	0	11
total linked:	15	21	10	8	18	72
linked as % of all sayings:	65	84	45	29	67	58

Overall, the proportion of sayings linked thus is almost exactly the same as in chs. 10-22[16]. The preponderance of verbal/literal links is very marked - more so even than in chs. 16-22[16]. Other methods of linking are apparent, though most of these play a minor role (e.g. the use of similar imagery which links 25[5] and 26[1] to the sayings which follow them). The exception is linking by form, where sayings of the same basic form are juxtaposed (e.g. 27[3-4]). This appears to play a major role in the arrangement of the material here, but is difficult to quantify, as we do not know how precisely the original redactors distinguished between the different forms. At a rough estimate, around 70% of the sayings are placed next to a saying of similar form. This sort of juxtaposition is much rarer in chs. 16-22[16], but it is, of course, broadly the same sort of thinking

which drove a redactor to collect together antithetical statements in chs. 10-14.

Overall, no single form predominates overwhelmingly, but two forms, the antithetical saying and the similitude, are far more common than any other [15]:

Chapter:	25	26	27	28	29	Total
similitudes:	13	16	7	2	0	38
antithetical:	1	0	4	18	12	35

Expressed as a percentage of total verses:

Chapter: (%)	25	26	27	28	29	Total
similitudes:	57	64	32	7	0	30
antithetical:	4	0	18	64	44	28

It is clear from this that similitudes form the largest single group of sayings in chs. 25-27, and antithetical sayings in chs. 28-29. The distinction is very marked, except in ch. 27, where it is still, however, clear. The situation is clearly analogous to that which pertains in chs. 10-22[16]: there seems to be a clear division within the collection between chs. 25f. and 28f., with a somewhat blurred area in between. The problems which surround the grey area in the other collection do not, however, trouble

us here. In the first place, we are not dealing in the virtual absolutes which characterise the distinction there: chs. 25f. do not consist almost entirely of similitudes, nor 28f. of antithetical sayings. At the same time we have other evidence to hand: the distribution of instructional material and of simple admonitions [16] is also striking. All of the former and more than 80% of the latter are to be found in chs. 25-27. Of the statements which lack parallelism, on the other hand, 75% are in chs. 28-29 [17]. Although the matter is not clearcut, the distribution of these distinctive forms seems to support those scholars who favour a division of the material into two sub-collections: 25-27 and 28-29. The appearance of a long and unusual piece of instruction at the end of ch. 27 may mark this break.

c. Nearest-neighbour analysis: summary and conclusions

The distribution of links and forms supports the conventional view that Prov. $10\text{-}22^{16}$ and 25-29 each contain two major sub-collections with their own characteristics. In the former, the bulk of each sub-collection lies in chs. 10-14 and $16\text{-}22^{16}$ respectively, but the precise boundaries cannot be determined from the evidence assessed so far. In the latter, the sub-collections correspond to chs. 25-27 and 28-29. The present collections have, then, been created by

the amalgamation of at least a few smaller collections. In addition, there is evidence for the existence of secondary insertions in chs. 10-14, and they may occur elsewhere. It cannot be held that the present collections each came into being as the result of a single redaction of independent sayings.

Except in the first sub-collection, the content and theme of the sayings seems to have had little influence on the juxtaposition of sayings. Even in that sub-collection the most obvious redactional interest is in the collection of antithetical sayings. The organisation of the material, so far as it can be determined from this approach, is geared much more to the use of catchwords and the juxtaposition of sayings which are formally similar: in the vast majority of cases, a saying shares with at least one of its neighbours an initial letter, a catchword or a form. The effect of this is to give a sort of flow to the reading or recitation of the material. The purpose of this flow may be mnemonic, but is more probably aesthetic.

2. Broader approaches

a. Larger structures

The limitations of the nearest-neighbour approach are obvious: at the very least its somewhat statistical nature

makes it inappropriate for the consideration of small portions of the text. More importantly, it certainly tells only part of the story. For example, even when two almost identical sayings are separated by only a single saying, the analysis is forced to assume that they are unconnected. Anyone familiar with the sayings collections and the numerous possible associations between the sayings within them, will realise that this is a considerable disadvantage. However, the problems involved in determining and understanding such links are formidable, perhaps insuperable.

These problems are illustrated clearly by a comparison between two recent and independent studies of the sayings in Prov. 26 by scholars who have attempted to find an explanatory structure. In the first of these, Kenneth Hoglund has studied 26^{1-12} as a "literary unit" or "pericope", which consists of five separate components, linked in different ways [18]: the first, 1-3, is held together by verbal and structural links, and corresponds to the third, 6-8, where 6 is linked to 3, 7 to 2 and 8 to 1; this structure envelopes the second, central unit 4-5, a paradoxical pair of sayings. The fourth, 9-11 is internally linked, but 9 and 10 both refer back to 6; the fifth, 12, is a summary, and also refers back (to 5). The unit as a whole is intended to create cumulatively a picture of the fool,

and of his virtual inability to change his nature, though he is not so far gone as the man 'wise in his own eyes'.

Jutta Krispenz, on the other hand, in a book which deals with the sayings collections as a whole, takes the main unit here to be 26^{1-16} [19]. This, she claims, consists of three 'strophes' (1-5, 6-12, 13-16); the last saying of each includes the expression 'wise in his own eyes'. The first two strophes are bipartite: 1-5 consists of two pairs (1-2, 4-5), with 3 attached to the first; 6-12 consists of a pair (11-12) preceded by a 'concentric' structure, where 6 corresponds to 10 and 7 to 9, so that 8 is emphasised. A link between 8 and 1 binds the two strophes together. The third strophe has only catchword linking in 14-16, while 13 is introductory. The first strophe is about the danger of becoming like a fool and the danger to the fool of becoming 'wise in his own eyes'; the second picks up the theme of becoming foolish through contact with the fool, while the third deals with the sluggard, a hopeless case who is already wise in his own eyes. The unit as a whole is optimistic about the possibility of improvement for the fool, so long as he makes an effort.

Broadly speaking, then, Hoglund and Krispenz come to much the same conclusion about the overall meaning: since, however, they each rest their case heavily on v. 12, this is

not surprising, and it hardly vindicates the approach. It is, incidentally, worth noting that the variant in 29^{20} must cast some doubt on the ranking of 'types' which Hoglund proposes. Of more significance are the differences between them in their analysis of the structure, which demonstrate the degree to which each has selected only some of the possible links. Since both perceive some sort of 'concentric' structure, though in different places, it can hardly even be said that they are looking for different things. Furthermore, the very selection of the units for consideration is essentially arbitrary: a case could certainly be made for links between vv. 1-2 and $25^{25, 26}$, a little before, and for links between 10 and 18f. or 11 and 17, just after.

Nearest-neighbour analysis is by no means free of subjectivity, particularly in the area of determining thematic links, but it compares well in this respect with the approach taken by Krispenz and Hoglund. On the level of method, the problem is that there is no way of determining who is right and who is wrong about the structure. I am myself inclined to suspect that the sort of associations which they seek to explain result, at least in part, from a much simpler sort of redaction, in which the redactor casts back over his page for inspiration, or to give a general coherence to his work. If the redactor was in fact an

author, creating sayings, then it is difficult to understand why he did not make his supposed point more clearly. On the other hand, if he was using sayings which were already in existence, as is generally (and probably rightly) assumed, I think that scholars who seek complicated structures are greatly underestimating the difficulties involved. The only clear example of sentence literature with a systematic arrangement of its material, grouping by theme and drawing out paradoxes or contradictions, is the demotic Papyrus Insinger: in this the structure is very much simpler. Even taking account only of nearest-neighbour links, it is a wonder that the redactors of the material in Proverbs achieved the degree of arrangement and coordination that they did. In general then, I would suggest that straightforward association of sayings with those which have preceded them immediately, or shortly before, is probably to be viewed as at least the principal method of organising the sayings. The very large number of nearest-neighbour links, and the possibility of an oral counterpart to the process, tell in favour of this. If there are larger and more complicated structures to be found, I suspect that we have no satisfactory criteria for identifying them at all, let alone beyond reasonable doubt.

b. Structures and sources

Having observed that Hoglund speaks of his structure as a

"pericope", it seems worth saying a few words about the question of sources, as it relates to the identification of structures within the collections. In the earlier analysis, we noted that changes in the formal characteristics of the collections might be used as evidence for the existence of sub-collections within them; since these changes are fairly subtle, I suggested that the sub-collections were probably independent collections (with different original redactors). Such distinctions within the text are a basic criterion in source criticism, and if a unit of material is broadly congruent with the material around it, this is a strong indication that it is not an independent source. Simply to show that such a unit forms a coherent structure is quite inadequate as a demonstration, even if the structure is analogous to that of another, complete text. Indeed, it seems to me extraordinary that anyone should assume the demonstration of a structure to be the same as the demonstration of a source.

This is where an argument advanced by Glendon Bryce, and since accepted by some scholars, falls down badly [20]. Bryce argues that Prov. 25^{2-27} is a "wisdom-book" in itself, and describes its structure using an approach similar to that of Krispenz and Hoglund, and open to similar criticisms. I do not intend to discuss that aspect of his article here. The structure which he finds consists of two

major sections, each dealing with a different theme, which are preceded by a bipartite introduction and joined by a pattern of 'rubrics'. This structure is, he claims, paralleled by that of the Loyalist Instruction, an Egyptian work which I shall describe later. Since that work differs from his "wisdom-book" in some important respects, not least because it is not sentence literature, Bryce also seeks a parallel for the content in the Egyptian Kemit, an educational work which bears no resemblance to anything in Proverbs, but does contain miscellaneous short units [21]. The resemblance to neither work is close, and one must question the validity of analogies which depend upon the cross-breeding of two quite different works. Further, the unit which Bryce identifies lacks such features as a prologue, characteristic of the non-Israelite instructions, while his supposed introduction is, so far as I am aware, unparalleled. Be that as it may, what Bryce quite fails to do is demonstrate any good reason why these verses should be regarded as a section quite distinct from the rest of the sub-collection within which they lie. In fact, as we have seen, the formal characteristics of Prov. 25^{2-27} appear to be very close indeed to those of the following chapters.

c. Themes

In all of the studies just discussed, and in a number of others [22], the authors work on the assumption that thematic considerations are of great importance to the redactor. This is not unreasonable, but it is an assumption which needs more justification than it is normally given. After all, of all the literary forms found in the OT, the short sayings in these collections are probably the least suited to the discussion of complex ideas or the development of themes. This is an area which deserves discussion at much greater length than is possible here, but I shall try to point out some of the major problems which seem to be involved.

It is not generally possible to identify some single possible theme in an individual saying, even when the broad meaning and interrelationship of the elements is clear. This is because, as often noted, the point of such sayings may vary according to the context in which they are assumed to apply [23]. If we take each to be entirely separate, and view the collections as essentially atomistic, then any judgement about the context must be based on assumptions about the original Sitz im Leben. On the other hand, if we take the concept of a collection seriously, we may try to view the sayings which are adjacent, the section in which it lies, or the collection itself as an interpretative context

against which a saying may be understood. We could, of course, do this purely on a 'reader' level, in a way analogous to canonical criticism, but here I am concerned particularly with establishing the intention of the redactor.

Attempts to find a context in the collection as a whole, or in substantial sections of it, seem to be the least satisfactory. Essentially, when we are seeking thematic associations between different sayings, we are looking for the overlap between their different possible themes. If the sayings in question are a small group with broadly similar concerns, the association between them may be fairly specific: thus, as we have seen, the three sayings in 14^{6-8} may be associated by the appearance in each of a character who is lacking in wisdom. When, however, we consider a group in which the sayings are more diverse, and this is inevitably the case with large sections of the material, it becomes correspondingly difficult to find common ground, and it becomes less clear that the association is significant. Reverting once more to Hoglund's article for an example, we might note that in passing he describes 25^{2-27} as relating to "matters of social relations" [24]. Actually, I am not sure how vv. 2, 3, 13, 16 and 25 are supposed to suit this, but even supposing that they did, has anything useful actually been said? This sort of description could readily

fit almost any part of Proverbs, and, arguably, it says more about the wisdom tradition than about Prov. 25. More to the point, it seems unlikely either that the redactor set out to illustrate something so vague, or that it is important for an understanding of any of the sayings. In general it is possible to find some 'theme' which will cover almost any group of sayings, as long as one does not mind it being rather unspecific.

As with the structure, however, I suspect that it is more profitable to look at associative links between individual sayings than at larger structures or blocks. For instance, we could say that 14^{35}-15^{2} are all to do with the interaction of different people, or something similar. This would, however, miss what seems to be a much more precise way of linking the sayings thematically. 14^{35} tells us that the king favours those of his servants who act wisely, but is angry with those who act reprehensibly; 15^{1} tells us that a soothing reply averts anger, while rough speech provokes it; finally, 15^{2} claims that the tongue of the wise gives(?) knowledge, but the mouths of fools foolishness. In other words, 15^{1} seems to be linked to the preceding saying by the theme of anger, and to the next saying by that of speech. This is not a thematic block, since the first and third sayings are not associated except via the second, but a thematic chain. The method is analogous to that used in the

verbal links, but where the saying there may be linked to any word in the saying which precedes it, here the link is forged with one of the possible themes. For similar chains, see 12^{12-14} and 15^{31-33}.

All this tends to suggest that, even when a series is linked throughout by the same theme, the redactor is more interested in associating the sayings than in bringing out the proper meaning of each, as he understands it, through its position. Such a suggestion is wholly consonant with the redactional interest in verbal links and literal links. Again, though, I would not wish to claim that the arrangement or juxtaposition of sayings is never thematically significant: in, e.g., 25^{4-5}, there is clearly more than simple association at work. I am concerned simply to emphasise that we cannot start to make broad assumptions about the collections as a whole, and should not neglect explanations for the arrangement which are at once simpler and more interesting.

3. The sayings collections: conclusions

Given the many difficulties involved, it is odd that so little discussion has been devoted to the question of how we should approach the sayings collections. Where scholars have taken the trouble to justify their assumptions at all, it

has usually been in a few lines. Here Jutta Krispenz is an honourable exception, and though I disagree with many of her conclusions, I do share some of her impatience. However, the issue is not an easy one, and my own remarks constitute no more than an introduction to some of the problems.

The nearest-neighbour examination undertaken in the first part of this chapter showed that this method gave results which conformed in certain important areas to the conclusions reached by scholars on different grounds. Used in conjunction with other data, moreover, it seemed to be a useful way of approaching several aspects of the collections. Unfortunately, it is a method with some serious limitations also, and the most serious of these were discussed in the second part. Of course, the greatest objection to it, and one that Krispenz has raised against earlier assessments of such links, is that it may be simply the wrong way to approach material which is structured in much broader patterns [25]. However, attempts to discern these broader structural arrangements run into considerable difficulties, and are highly selective. Furthermore, they suggest a complicated explanation for phenomena which can be explained, on the whole, more simply.

Bound up to some extent with such attempts is the assumption that the redactor is concerned principally with

providing a context within which themes may be treated, and against which the sayings may be understood. However, since we can describe a theme to suit almost any group of sayings, the identification of broad themes seems to say little of any significance about either the sayings or the collections. Moreover, among the few close thematic links which exist between adjacent sayings, there are some which suggest that theme was merely another associative method employed in the redaction, rather than a central concern.

In general, I believe that the analysis of the many links between adjacent sayings is probably the only reasonably controlled approach that we can take to the collections, whatever its drawbacks. It is not, however, merely a last resort: to my mind, the best explanation for the arrangement of the sayings is that associative links, especially but not exclusively between adjacent sayings, represent the usual method of arranging the sayings. I would, of course, allow that there are probably exceptions. If this is indeed the case, then the collections are, broadly, atomistic: an understanding of the individual sayings is neither dependent on, nor necessarily enhanced by, a consideration of their place in a collection. This is close to the position of McKane, as quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

If the 'collection' is of limited use for an understanding of the sayings, it is, however, of the utmost importance for an understanding of wisdom, as will become clear in later chapters. More immediately, I shall try to point out the use of similar techniques when we turn to the non-Israelite sources. The associative technique, and especially the verbal/literal methods of linking sayings, seems to have been used very widely in the arrangement of Near Eastern sayings collections.

Chapter 2 The Non-Israelite Sources

Introduction

The selection and presentation of texts for this introductory chapter has proved difficult. Ideally, any list would include all the material comparable in some way to Proverbs and, in addition, all the material which in turn sheds light on that. To consider, say, the instructions but not the discourses from Egypt, or the sayings but not the riddles from Mesopotamia, is to present the material in a distorted and misleading way. On the other hand, however, a list which included all relevant material would comprise much of the Near Eastern literary corpus, and be impractically long. The list which follows is, finally, a sort of compromise. Instructional and sentence literature, as discussed in the last chapter, are the dominant types of material in Proverbs, and I have included all the material which falls broadly into one or other of these categories. The selection is not based entirely, however, on close similarity to the biblical material: for Egypt I have tried to include also all those texts which properly belong to the genre 'instruction', not just those which resemble material in Proverbs; for Mesopotamia, where some of the distinctions are less clear-cut, I have attempted to include all those texts which belong to the tradition of sayings-collection.

Though the texts have been torn from their cultural context, I hope that I have retained at least some indication of their literary context.

In my treatment of the individual texts, I have been constrained by the information available and by the limits of my own competence in the languages. For texts which are unpublished, and for demotic and Mesopotamian material available only in facsimile or transcription, I have been entirely dependent on the secondary literature. When, on occasion, even the most basic details appear to have been omitted, this is generally because I cannot discover them. Where many translations, studies and bibliographical reviews are available for the Egyptian texts, this is generally not true for those from Mesopotamia [1]: my fuller coverage of the former should not be taken in itself to mean that I regard the Egyptian sources as more important.

Other unevenness is deliberate. In particular, I have devoted, where possible, proportionately more space to texts which are relatively inaccessible or, in my opinion, undervalued. For practical reasons, moreover, I have only summarised in detail the contents of texts which are short or limited in their scope: a proper summary of, say, Šuruppak, would be almost as long as the original text, and much less interesting. Finally, I have noted controversies

where they exist, but avoided lengthy discussion of issues which are of little relevance to the biblical material. The date of Ptahhotep, for instance, is an interesting and important question, but is at best peripheral to the broader concerns of this study.

Egyptian sources have been arranged by period and then, where relevant, by language or script. For Mesopotamia, where dating is often more difficult, the sources are arranged by language.

A. Egypt

1. Before the New Kingdom

(i) Hardjedef (=Djedefhor)

This work claims to have been composed by the famous Fourth Dynasty prince for his son [2]. It is more probably, however, pseudonymous, and, in line with recent opinions about the development of Egyptian literature [3], a date after the Old Kingdom seems likely [4]. The extant text advocates the establishment of a household and careful preparations for the treatment of one's body after death.

(ii) Kagemni

The beginning of this work is lost; our only copy precedes Ptahhotep on Papyrus Prisse [5]. Attributed to a vizier under the Third Dynasty, it too is most probably later and pseudonymous. The instruction commends silence and respectfulness, the avoidance of gluttony, and discreet behaviour at the table of the glutton or drunkard. It concludes with the advice to let one's reputation spread without resort to self-advertisement or bragging, lest one arouse opposition and divine punishment. A narrative epilogue describes the grateful acceptance of the vizier's instruction by his children, and the accession to office of Kagemni, who is among them.

(iii) Ptahhotep

Several copies of this work are extant [6], but the only complete one, Papyrus Prisse, differs from the others in important respects, and we must reckon with divergent textual traditions [7]. This must have occurred early in the transmission, since Pap. Prisse and P. London 10371/10453 are little later in date than the likely time of composition. This was probably in the Twelfth Dynasty, despite the claim of the work to be that of a Fifth Dynasty vizier: the language is Middle Egyptian and other evidence points to a Middle Kingdom date [8]. In a long prologue, the vizier describes the onset of his old age, and receives royal permission to instruct his son, that he might "make a staff of old age". Thirty-seven maxims follow, which typically give advice on the proper behaviour if the reader should find himself in particular positions. This behaviour is marked by self-restraint and discretion, and is intended to win prosperity and respect. None is appropriate only to a vizier in particular, nor even to any official, and different maxims address men in different positions. Special admiration is reserved for the self-made man, who has raised himself up from poverty. The maxims extend into family life and other non-professional areas, although it is made explicit in the epilogue that the instruction is to be understood in the context of officialdom. This epilogue extols in general terms the value of teaching and of

hearing, of fine speech and of self-control. The value of instructions, it claims, lies in their truth (sp n m3ʿt) (Devaud's l. 509); their memory is, and should be, passed on, because of the excellence of their maxims. An instruction is written for the benefit of posterity: "It is good to speak to the future: it will listen to it" (l. 519).

(iv) Merikare

The royal authorship of this text [9] is probably a fiction, and so may be the First Intermediate Period date. The beginning is fragmentary, and the more legible text starts with a long section in which the king is admonished by his father to act with wisdom and justice, and to avoid oppression. This is quite detailed, and looks at, for example, the proper treatment of rebels and of officials, the organisation of defence, and the fulfilment of religious duties. It is, however, generalised, in contrast to the next section, in which the king draws lessons from his own past actions, with reference to specific names and events. Finally, the instruction examines the office of kingship itself, before ending with a hymn in praise of the god's actions for mankind [10], and an admonition to follow the instruction, as it lays down the principles for kingship.

(v) King Amenemhet

An unusually large number of extant texts reflects the later popularity of this work [11]. Though it claims to be the instruction of a Twelfth Dynasty king for his son, the pseudonymity of the work is certain, since the assassination attempt which it describes appears to have been successful [12]. Later acknowledgement of this may be reflected in the ascription of the work to Khety in Pap. Chester Beatty IV [13]. Hardly a didactic text at all, the only advice given by the work is to trust nobody: a pessimism justified by a description of the cowardly assassination. After a list of his own achievements, the king's thoughts turn to his son and successor Sesostris (Senwosret), and he affirms the right of the latter to the crown. This reinforces the impression that the work is party political in intent, and Posener suggests that it was promulgated to consolidate the position of Sesostris I and the Twelfth Dynasty, still shaky after the assassination [14].

(vi) Khety, (=Dua(f)-Khety and "The Satire of the Trades")

Even more widely copied, this work is not so much didactic as an advertisement for the scribal profession [15]. It is supposedly the instruction given by Khety [16] to his son as he took the boy South to be enrolled at school, and most of it is devoted to a systematic, and probably lighthearted, denigration of professions lowlier than that of the scribe,

who can look forward to a fine career and comfortable working conditions. This has, of course, a biblical counterpart in Sirach 38^{24}-39^{11}. Khety does, however, include a section of 'instruction' proper, formally quite distinct from the other material, which deals with behaviour and speech when at table, visiting important men, or in other situations conventional for the élite.

(vii) "The Loyalist Instruction"

A version of the first part of this instruction is attributed on his stela at Abydos to the senior official Sehetepibre, who lived in the late Twelfth Dynasty [17]. However, it has been recognised for some time that this belongs to a longer instruction, parts of which are represented on a writing-board, several papyri and numerous ostraca. These were collated by Posener in his 1976 edition [18]. The surviving titles in the NK versions of the preamble are appropriate to a vizier [19], but the original name of the protagonist is now lost. The instruction falls into two parts, explicitly separate (cf. 9.1-4). The first demands loyalty to and veneration of the king, who can discern thoughts and who will punish his opponents, but nourish and protect his supporters. The second concerns the importance of a good workforce for the landowner: he should treat his workers well and not overburden them with dues, lest they up and leave, ruining him. It is these workers who

are the real creators of wealth. Towards the end, this is expressed in more conventional terms: the generous and silent man will win respect. The workers will, it is claimed, prove useful even after one's death, and this provides a link with the closing advice, that one should gain the assistance of a dead noble by tending to his body. Again, Posener has suggested that this work is royal propaganda from the Twelfth Dynasty, following the disruptions and demographic changes of the First Intermediate Period [20].

(viii) The Instruction by a Man for his Son

Not yet reconstructed in full from the many fragmentary copies [21], this instruction shares certain features with the last, and may also have been disseminated as propaganda for the Twelfth Dynasty. The anonymity of the piece is deliberate, and makes explicit, perhaps, the universal aspect of its wisdom [22]. The preamble is followed by four short and general sayings (I 3-6), which seem to serve an introductory purpose, and then a short section on speech. A lengthy discourse next praises the king: he makes the ignorant wise, the hated loved, the lowly great and the last first; the poor man becomes rich, and the landless a householder; he causes one who is adrift to become moored, teaches the dumb to speak and opens the ears of the deaf. Obviously, his favour is to be sought. The remainder of the

work, too fragmentary to be read in places, includes exhortations to impartiality, silence and discretion; one should not involve oneself in disputes, nor argue with members of one's family.

(ix) Amherst Papyrus III

All that remains of this Twelfth Dynasty papyrus are five tiny fragments. sb3:ỉ tw, "I shall(?) instruct you", appears on fragment J, and suggests that the work may have been an instruction, but there is little else left to read [23].

(x) Pap. Ramesseum II

Two sizeable strips of papyrus from the Ramesseum collection, which was dated by Gardiner to the Thirteenth Dynasty, appear to contain a work consisting of short maxims, set out one to a line until, near the end, the scribe resorted to writing them continuously, separated only by red punctuation [24]. Even where it is not fragmentary, the text is frequently incomprehensible, but the sayings appear to vary considerably in both form and theme. Especially in the first four sayings, which all seem to concern servants, there seems to have been some attempt to juxtapose sayings on similar topics. More obviously, catchwords link the same four sayings: h3b:tw ... sỉkr (rt. i, 1)/sỉkr ... h3b (i, 2); wsfw (i, 3)/wsf:f (i, 4). Elsewhere, note also ḫprw ... ỉb (rt iii, 2)/ḫpr ... sb3 ...

ỉb (iii, 3)/sb3w (iii, 4) and rḫ-ḫt in both the sayings of vs. ii, 4. The extent to which this device is used should not be exaggerated, but it is a feature which the text shares with biblical, demotic and Mesopotamian sentence literature. Similar devices are used in other Egyptian texts. Also worthy of note are the mixture of statements with admonitions, and the 'cast list': the wise man, the fool, the silent man and the ignoramus all appear. In general, the text has strong affinities with the more conventional instructions and other wisdom literature, while the lament over the state of wisdom in vs. ii, 4 is particularly reminiscent of the more pessimistic Egyptian wisdom literature.

(xi) Oxford Wisdom Text (Ashmol. 1964.489 a,b)

This text is found on the pieces of plaster which are all that remain of a plastered wooden writing board, probably from Thebes. The copy seems to date from the Hyksos period. If one takes the 'god' of the text to be the king, the theme seems to be similar to that of the 'king' sections in the Loyalist Instruction and the Instruction by a Man for his Son: the benefits accruing to those who are loyal to the king [25].

2.The New Kingdom

(xii) Any

Its preamble describes this text as the 'educational' or 'testimonial' instruction composed for his son by a scribe in the funerary temple of Queen Nefertari [26]. We have no reason to doubt this attribution, and the instruction does seem to reflect the milieu of the 'middle class' of scribes to which such a man would belong. There is, however, no explicit address to any group in particular, and the reader is, indeed, advised to guard his position "be it lowly or high" (viii, 10). The instruction itself, probably composed in the Eighteenth Dynasty, covers a range of themes from daily life, which include religious observance, the treatment of one's family, sobriety, adultery and the avoidance of quarrels. In general, each of the sections expands on an initial maxim. The instruction itself is followed by an epilogue in which the son fails to accept his father's instruction with the expected gratitude, but protests that he cannot take to heart so many maxims. In the ensuing debate the father insists that a capacity for learning and virtue need not be innate, and he quotes examples of animals which can be trained, humans who can be taught and objects which can be reshaped, in such a way as to change them or make them go against their original

nature. The point at issue seems, then, to be the possibility of human improvement.

(xiii) Amenemope

Probably composed in the Ramesside period, this work [27] is most famous for its links with the book of Proverbs, an issue I shall discuss in the next chapter. A lengthy prologue, which describes the instruction, its author and the son for whom it was composed, is followed by thirty chapters, the first and last of which commend the work to the reader. Again, there is no reason to doubt the attribution to Amenemope, who seems to have been a middle-ranking government official, responsible for the administration of land, agricultural produce and revenues in a region of Egypt. The chapter divisions are to some extent artificial, and do not always reflect a change of theme; the chapters vary in length, and though many begin with a vetitive, they follow no pattern which is readily discernible. As a whole, the work commends a self-restraint and trust in god which verges on passivity. The future is unforeseeable, resting wholly in the hands of god, who will protect and punish as he sees fit. Trusting in him, one must not react to provocation, seek human protection or try to advance oneself without divine aid: god does not help them who help themselves. One must be discreet and generous to the less fortunate, and though respect should be shown to

elders and betters, one should not kowtow to the rich. The instruction stresses honesty above all, and prohibits cheating others through fraud or perjury. Such attempts to gain advantage to the detriment of others incur condemnation, confuse the plans of god, and lead inexorably to disgrace and punishment. The advice in Amenemope, then, is set in a world where the supernatural intrudes constantly, and somewhat unpredictably, into human life, and it is motivated by an intense personal piety, characteristic of the New Kingdom.

(xiv) Amennakhte

Only the prologue is extant from this instruction by the scribe Ammenakhte for his apprentice, but we do possess several copies [28]. One of these affirms that the author was a scribe of the House of Life, apparently an academic and educational centre attached to a temple [29]. Posener's desire to connect this prologue with the material on Pap. Chester Beatty IV is conjectural, but the work may indeed have been a 'miscellany', rather than an instruction proper.

(xv) The Instruction According to Ancient Writings

Petrie Ostracon 11 contains a distinctive series of bipartite sayings, each consisting of a prohibition with ỉmỉ:k, "do not", followed by a motive clause [30]. So, for

example, verso 1 may be translated: "Do not look after your body (too much) when you are young: food comes into being through his hands, sustenance through feet". Though vs. 3f. and 6f. seem to be pairs of sayings, most are independent, and the overall arrangement is loose. The advice is not addressed to specific situations, but is general in its applicability. It has long been acknowledged that a relationship exists between this ostracon and several others on which similar sayings appear [31]; it is now clear that some in fact overlap with it, showing that O.Petrie 11 does not stand alone, and allowing the reconstruction of a substantial, if somewhat fragmentary, portion from the original collection of which it is a copy [32]. Given the distinctive nature of the sayings, it is reasonable to suppose that some other fragments in which they appear are from the same work, even when there is no overlap [33]. One such, the verso of O.BM 5631, is of particular interest, since it contains a preamble, declaring that the text is the sb3yt mtrt, the "educational/testimonial instruction", which is "according to ancient writings". The only other line consists of a prohibition with ỉmí:k, and although this lacks a corresponding motive clause, it is not unreasonable to suppose that we possess here the title of the work found on the other ostraca. Anyway, Lichtheim's suggestion that O.Petrie 11 was either a scribal exercise or draft notes for a more conventional instruction, must be rejected [34].

Despite the title, incidentally, there is no evidence beyond the usual literary archaisms for a date earlier than the New Kingdom.

(xvi) Pap. Chester Beatty IV verso

This is a 'miscellany' or anthology of texts, which includes passages of instruction interspersed with other material [35]. It probably served some educational purpose, and the instructional sections may have been gleaned from other works no longer extant. The famous eulogy of literature and ancient sages is preceded by a section of instruction, broken up into seven parts. The beginning of the first is lost: what remains seems to consist of two sayings, the first prohibiting encroachment on the boundaries of another, the second apparently advising on the transfer of property to one's children. The following four parts deal with speech and paying one's way, the value of perseverance over sloth, acting properly to win respect, attaching oneself to a magistrate in order to win favour, and avoiding the proximity of women. The last two are directed to the man who has already attained success: they admonish against pretending not to know acquaintances, and urge him to protect the defenceless. The eulogy of literature, beginning in 2, 5, is followed by praise of the scribal profession. At 4, 6 the text bursts once more into five sections of instruction. The first of these consists of

miscellaneous sayings: do not sit in the presence of one greater, respect that you may be respected, love that you may be loved, do not speak too much and avoid ostentation. The next four sections concern dealings with one's god: one must praise and make offerings to him, avoid presumption and questioning of him, avoid stealing from him, and pay respect to his servants. A section on the miseries of the soldier's life follows; like the previous praise of the scribal profession, this is from a well-represented tradition, going back to the Satire of the Trades and popular in the New Kingdom. After this, the value of the instruction is guaranteed, and the reader urged to follow it. A separate section urges the reader not to claim that instruction is futile, since a man's character and destiny are already determined by god. This protest is similar to that observed in the epilogue to Any. Finally, our text ends with a blessing and the beginning of a eulogy of the scribe Akhthoy (=Khety), in which he is described as the author of the instruction attributed to Amenemhet I. Posener associates this text with the instruction of Amennakhte.

(xvii) Ostracon IFAO 1250

This ostracon from Deir el-Medinah [36] preserves fragments of seven lines from an unknown text, apparently an instruction, since at least some of the sayings are admonitions: "Give him provisions(?) ..." (l. 2), "Trust

in ..." (l. 6, lit. "Fill your heart with ... "). The single word left on l. 7, ...i].m3ʿ[..., is probably an imperative: "Do right ...".

(xviii) Ostracon Berlin P.14371

This short fragment of an unknown instruction has been edited by Hintze, who notes certain affinities to the vocabulary of Any [37]. On the basis of his suggestions, one might translate:

"... Look with your eye, speak [with your mouth]...
... if you hear second-rate speech you should not understand(?) it...
... he loves it not if another looks after...
... prepare..."

(xix) Ostracon Oriental Institute 12074 (='Instruction' of Men(e)na; "Letter to a Wayward Son")

A literary letter written by a draughtsman to his son, this text lacks any prologue describing it as an "instruction", but seems nevertheless to be related to the genre [38]. There are good grounds for supposing that the father, the son and the general situation described are all historical, but the text is poetic in character. This sheds an interesting light on the other New Kingdom instructions: it seems probable that in this period we should certainly reckon with a practice of addressing literary 'instructions' to one's son, perhaps with a view to wider circulation also. Here Menna laments the decision of his son to go to sea, and

chides him at length for disregarding his father's advice and maxims, declaring at one point "If a son obeys (his) father, instruction (sb3yt) is great for eternity, it is said: but look, you heeded no warning which I spoke to you formerly". The ostracon is from the Ramesside period.

3.The Late Period

(a) Hieratic

(xx) Pap. Brooklyn 47.218.135

Publication of this text is still awaited, but a description by G. Posener and J. Sainte Fare Garnot has long been available, and the text has more recently been viewed by Lichtheim [39]. The extant text is quite long, consisting of five pages reconstructed from numerous small fragments of a papyrus from about the fourth century BC. The actual composition may have been somewhat earlier, and there is evidence to support a date in the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty (seventh/sixth century). Herein lies the chief importance of the work: it is the only witness to developments within the genre for the several centuries which lie between the New Kingdom and the demotic examples. This is a period for which we possess few literary remains at all. The beginning and end of the work are lost, and with them, most probably, the

name of the author. Judging by the descriptions of it, the text represents something rather closer to the classical than the demotic type of instruction, with themes treated in integrated sections [40]: it is not clear, however, to what extent the sentences are independent of each other, i.e. whether this is basically sentence or instructional literature. Many of the themes and sayings are also reminiscent of the earlier works, e.g. "Property acquired honestly does not perish, but the thief will leave no heritage to his son". Posener and Garnot recognise two themes as most predominant in the extant text, the importance of leadership and the value of agricultural workers. On the first, the sayings which they cite emphasise the god-given authority and inherent value of the leader, and the respect or loyalty which is due to him. It is the leader who maintains order and punishes where necessary: "Do bulls roar when they have a herdsman who subdues them?". His role is vital: "Millions of soldiers are beaten when they do not have a valiant captain(?)" and "An army is mediocre when it does not have its captain with it". Thus the man without a leader is like "a dog without a master". Yet it is the agricultural worker whose profession is "the chief of all the trades: the rest work for him (because) his hands are their breath of life". The concentration on the good labourer's life in a substantial section of the instruction seems to be a response to the more common praise of the

scribal profession in other literature. This emphasis on the themes of leadership and labourers is rather reminiscent of the Loyalist Instruction. Very characteristic of the sayings cited is the use of figurative speech and similes to make the point, and at one point, indeed, the text seems to contain a metaphorical passage, perhaps on the subject of wisdom itself. This figurative language, and the forms of saying employed, suggest some close similarities to the biblical material, but no firm conclusions may be drawn until the text is properly published.

(b) Demotic

(xxi) Ankhsheshonqy

Glanville's publication of B.M. Pap. 10508 appeared shortly after his death in 1955. It was followed swiftly by Stricker's annotated Dutch translation and an influential study by Gemser [41]. The last decade has seen a new German translation by Thissen, and a major study by Lichtheim [42]. The text is some 28 columns long, but fragmentary in places. The individual sayings which make up the introduction are introduced by a lengthy story [43], which describes how Ankhsheshonqy is imprisoned after failing to report a conversation with his old friend, the chief physician Harsiese, in which he had tried to dissuade the latter from joining a conspiracy against the king. When every other

prisoner is amnestied but Ankhsheshonqy left in prison, he requests a palette and papyrus roll: "I have a boy <whom> I have not yet been able to instruct. I shall write an Instruction for him and have it taken to him in Heliopolis to instruct him thereby" [44]. Allowed the palette but denied the papyrus, Ankhsheshonqy is forced to write his instruction on the shards of wine jars, and each day's work is reported to Pharaoh and his great men. The instruction proper is preceded by a lament, rather artificially linked to the story, about the fate of a land with which Pre is angry. The report that Ankhsheshonqy was forced to write daily on potsherds may reflect, perhaps, a certain self-consciousness about the form and arrangement of the sayings. These are mostly monostichs, occasionally combined to form longer sayings, and frequently organised into chains by the use of verbal and formal links: thematic links are less common [45]. The range of topics is tremendous, and it is unfortunate that a small proportion of sayings on agricultural matters have led to the description of the work as "agricultural wisdom" [46]. The date of the work is disputed. Early commentators put the composition as early as the Saite period [47], but the most comparable Egyptian texts are, like the extant text of Anksheshonqy itself, Ptolemaic.

(xxii) "Papyrus Insinger" (="The Demotic Wisdom Book")

This long work, probably composed in the late Ptolemaic period, is in many respects the most remarkable of all the instructions [48]. At some time between the refusal of the principal copy by the Louvre and its subsequent purchase by the Leiden Rijksmuseum in 1895, the beginning of the papyrus roll seems to have been removed. Some has since been recovered, and a description of the text thus regained is available [49]. Significant variants of content and order are found in other copies. The work is divided into twenty-five numbered chapters or 'instructions', each containing a series of sayings on a particular theme; the number of sayings is given at the end of each chapter. The sayings are generally independent of each other grammatically and syntactically, and the work is thus 'sentence literature', but there is a consistent attempt to impose a thematic structure on the material within each chapter, and even to achieve some logical development in the thought. Thus not only are the sayings grouped by theme, but also by sub-theme, and general conclusions are drawn at the end of each chapter. It can hardly be said, however, that the writer is trying to prove a point about each topic: towards the end of each chapter he introduces sayings which wholly undermine what has gone before, and thus creates a paradox. This paradox exists because the way things turn out is wholly in the hands of god, and cannot be predicted

according to normal ideas of the rewards for proper behaviour. So, for example, after numerous sayings in Instruction 10 pointing out the benefits of education and discipline, the writer declares that there are those who have not been instructed who are yet capable of giving instruction, and those who have been instructed who are incapable of living accordingly: intellect and character are determined and preordained by the god (an idea which, as we have seen, is vigorously disputed in Any and Pap. Chester Beatty IV). Similarly, Instruction 8 is devoted to the commendation of abstemiousness and financial prudence as the path to avoiding poverty, but then changes tack altogether to declare that it is not the financially prudent wise man who stays in the black, nor the spendthrift who falls into destitution: wealth and poverty are the gift of the god. Touching on some profound theological problems, this employment of paradox, a technique used elsewhere in Egyptian literature, is also rather enjoyable, and is reminiscent of Qoheleth. The patient self-control and faith in god which are advocated hark back to the ideas of Amenemope, but there are possibly some links also with Hellenistic moral philosophy. With a view to Proverbs, the most striking feature is probably the consistent classification of people into types, especially the 'wise man' and the 'fool'.

Short and Fragmentary texts

In addition to these two major works, we possess a number of fragments, apparently from similar instructions. Many still await publication. For a reasonably up to date list see the article by M.J. Smith in the Lexikon der Ägyptologie [50].

(xxiii) P. inv. Sorbonne 1260

This is a small fragment of text, broken into three even smaller and badly stained fragments, which was published by Pezin in 1982 [51]. It is probably to be dated to about the third century BC. Pezin notes that "le découpage - habituel pour les papyrus Lille-Sorbonne, puisqu'ils proviennent de cartonnages de momies - n'a laissé subsister qu'une semi-colonne de texte", but believes that traces on the edge of the papyrus show that there was at least one more column originally. The fragment is, therefore, possibly part of a significantly longer text. Only a few words are legible on fragments b and c, notably mw, "water", and m-ỉr dd, "do not say". On fragment a Pezin reads [52]:

1. Do not consult a fool..[
2. it is him that you can consult.
3. Do not consult in the village...[
4. Do not consult a wise man...[
5. fire...[
6. If your brother...[
7. My son, hear [my] word...[
8. Do not do...[
9. Do not say a word....[
10. you will give water to the man...[
11. The master of the cow is he who
12. ......

The first four lines are, as Pezin notes, strongly reminiscent of Ankhsheshonqy 6. 13-15 [53]:

> "Do not send a wise man in a small matter
> when a great matter is waiting.
> Do not send a fool in a great matter when
> there is a wise man you can send
> Do not send into town when you may find
> trouble in it.

The order is, of course, different, and sty, "fire", in line 5 rules out any exact equivalence. The 'cow' saying in line 11 is identical to the beginning of Ankhsheshonqy 9. 23. Line 7 is, of course, reminiscent of much biblical and Egyptian wisdom, and gives the text some connection with the earlier, classical instructions. In view of the close similarities with Ankhsheshonqy, Pezin wonders whether this text might not be from a personal collection of sayings drawn from various other instructions, or even a witness to a different recension of Ankhsheshonqy.

(xxiv) Pap. Louvre 2377 verso.

First published in 1865, this text has been examined more recently by R.J. Williams, and Lichtheim has added some useful observations [54]. The rectangular papyrus upon which it is written has been used as a palimpsest, and there are drafts of Greek memoranda to the right of the column of Demotic. This Greek is in the same hand as that on Pap. Louvre 2380 (see below), and can be dated to the period 163-159 BC. The dating of the annotations on this and other

papyri indicate, of course, only a terminus ad quem for the copy, not an absolute date for the papyrus or the composition. The end of a line of Demotic, which is visible on the right of the papyrus, shows that the extant text is part of a longer piece. The sayings are a mixture of statements and admonitions, including three vetitives with m-ỉr (lines 6, 7, 11), and are written in an extremely concise style. The themes are varied, and include some familiar from other material, but there are no especially close correspondences. Loose thematic linking is visible in lines 2-3 (willingness to listen to others), 6-7 (avoiding oppression of others), 8-9 (overcoming nervousness by prayer: a pair of very similar sayings) and 12-13 (crime). Rather more obvious is the arrangement of sayings by form in 3-4 (cf. 1), 6-7 and 8-10.

(xxv) Pap. Louvre 2380 verso.

This text is closely associated with Pap. Louvre 2377 verso: the two were found together, published together and written on in the same Greek hand (the papyri are probably, therefore, of much the same date). More recently, they have been studied together by Williams [55]. This text is, however, much more fragmentary than the other, and none of the sayings in the 21 lines which survive is complete. Some of the legible words and phrases indicate the affinities of the text with other wisdom material: e.g., "love of

wo[rk..." (i, 3); "instruct him (mtr:f)" (i, 4); "...foolish of his heart for his master, he will serve his wife(?)" (i, 5); "The mind of a wise [man]..." (ii, 3); "The wicked is swift(?)" (ii, 4); "...teaching of a foolish mind" (ii, 6). R. Jasnow has restored line i, 6 to read "As for the one who does not] carry the wheat belonging to those of his house, he shall carry the [ch]aff of (other) households", a parallel to Ankhsheshonqy 24.18 [56].

(xxvi) Pap. Dem. Louvre 2414.

"The Instruction of P3-wr-dl for his son"

This text is rather longer than the others, and is probably the most important of the minor Demotic instructions. Written in three columns, it too shares the papyrus with other material; this material suggests a date in about the middle of the second century BC. The script is generally neat, and the photographs in Volten's 1955 publication of the text show it to be laid out tidily on the page [57]. Nevertheless, a number of solecisms in the orthography and grammar, as well as the very loose organisation of the material, have led to suggestions that it is a poorly copied extract or early and incomplete draft [58]. The work is described in the first line as "The instruction of P3-wr-ḏl, <which> he gave to his beloved son". Volten's attempt to read p3-wr-ḏl as a title, taking ḏl to be a writing of ḏl', "district", leads him to

translate it as "Distriktvorsteher"; Hughes, followed by Lichtheim, rejects this in favour of the view that it is a personal name. The description of the material as a mtr.t employs the same term as Ankhsheshonqy, and the two texts are very similar in their style and approach [59]; there are also some more specific correspondences [60]. Various themes, such as the admonishments to avoid evil and foolish company, adultery and slander (I 3; II 2; III 11; I 7; I 9; II 1, 14), give the text a general resemblance to the sentence literature in Proverbs. There are, perhaps, rather closer correspondences between I 10, "It is to him who has <something> in his hand that a household is open" [61], and Prov. 18^{16}, as well as between II 10, a lengthy saying about the man "who reports property to the god but does not give it", and Qoh. $5^{3ff.}$ (ET 4ff.). As in the other fragments, the basic unit of the material is the monostich. There is considerable variation in the length of the sentences, which are sometimes juxtaposed to form longer sayings. The organisation of the material is rather haphazard, but the use of catchwords to form verbal links is apparent in places [62], while there is a broad arrangement by form also, with the first column made up principally of statements, and the other two of vetitives. There is very little thematic arrangement.

A number of sayings relate to the family (I 12; II 8f.; III 1, 2, 4, 7f.) and to the building of one's house (II 5; III 9, 10). The advice is essentially to Everyman, and deals with everyday matters in a way which is eminently practical, but not wholly secular (cf. I 2; II 10).

(xxvii) Pap. Michaelides I

This is another fragment from a longer text, the original length of which is unknown. It seems to date from about the first or second century BC. The fragment was published in 1963 by Bresciani, who notes that, from what little remains of it, the text appears to be composed of practical advice set beside more elevated exhortations [63]. There are only two sayings which can still be read in their entirety: "Do not be far from the way of god for the human word" (l. 10), and "He who hastens (?) to find much does not find (even) a little" (l. 12) [64]. With the latter one might compare Prov. 13^{11} LXX, but it is a common enough thought. Establishing the meaning of the other sayings is complicated by the unusual way in which all the sayings follow straight on from one another, on the same line, separated only by a blank space. Nevertheless, the general sense is clear in some cases: a saying in line 8 urges the reader to associate with the rmt-rḫ, the wise man; line 13 cautions against becoming indebted to the overseer of one's pasture(?) land, and line 15 against covetousness. Isolated words in other

lines mention cursing and speech, while the common appearance of m-ỉr shows that a number of the sayings were vetitives. Some phrases hint at a connection with other texts: Bresciani compares the beginning of a sentence in line 10, "Do a deed..." with Ankhsheshonqy 19. 10, "Do a good deed and cast it in the flood; when it dries you will find it" [65]; this is, of course, very close to Qoh. 11[1]. Also noted is the importance of "the way of god" in some earlier Egyptian instructions, and of the "wise man" in Papyrus Insinger.

(xxviii) P.Dem.Cairo 30672

This Ptolemaic text is extremely fragmentary: barely enough remains to confirm that it was indeed a wisdom text [66].

(xxix) P.Dem.Cairo 30682

H.S. Smith has noted that the four lines of text on this fragment [67] are very close to lines in Ankhsheshonqy [68]. Thus lines 1 to 3a correspond to Ankhsheshonqy 7. 16-20, l. 3b to 9. 10 and l. 4 to 9. 14. On palaeographical grounds, Smith dates the copy slightly later than that of Ankhsheshonqy, in the first century BC, and assumes that it is either a copy of Ankhsheshonqy itself, with omissions or changes in order, the explanation which he prefers, or a copy of an unknown wisdom book, on which the compiler of

Ankhsheshonqy drew. In either case, the relationship is interesting.

(xxx) OBM 50627

"The Instruction of a 'Scribe of the House of Life'(?)"

In his examination of this text from Deir El-Bahri [69], which probably dates from the first century BC or AD, Williams was obliged to rely on a 1902 hand copy of the ostracon by Hess, the whereabouts of the ostracon itself being unknown; it has subsequently been traced [70]. Only seven lines are preserved, but they are very striking. I reproduce Williams' translation:

1. Here is a copy of a teaching that a 'scribe of the House of Life'(?) gave them
2. For a little child who is very, very young.
3. Do not sleep with a wife who is not yours,
4. that no fault may be found with you because of it.
5. Here is another one: Those who are...are not women in the street (to)
6. create your bad odour in(?) [...]
7. Here is another one: Do not listen [...]

It should be pointed out that the reading "scribe of the House of Life" is uncertain. As regards the form, it seems that the sayings are, unusually, distichs. On the character of the piece, Lichtheim has drawn attention to the extraordinary way in which the writer prefaces his sayings with k.t ʿn t3y, "here is another one", and suggested that the gleaning of sayings here is "playful" [71]. Perhaps there is also a certain humour evident in the nature of the sayings addressed to the "little child who is very, very

young": this tiny tot is apparently admonished to avoid adultery and disreputable women! Such an extraordinary juxtaposition throws into relief a contradiction apparent in earlier instructions: the apparent disparity between the nature of the admonitions and the supposed age of the addressees. Given the emphasis on the child's age and the general tone of the text, it is tempting to suppose that what we have here is a sort of pastiche.

(xxxi) Pap. Tebtunis Tait 15

Finally, it is worth mentioning this very late text from the second or third century AD, if only to indicate that the copying of Demotic instructions survived this long. Some fifteen fragmentary lines survive on a papyrus fragment, which is torn on all sides and probably part of a longer text. Although it does seem clear that this is a wisdom piece, Tait's reconstruction shows little indication of traditional themes and vocabulary, and it is hard to make sense of any of the surviving bits of sayings [72].

Other "instructions"

I do not discuss in detail here a number of texts which have been described as, or themselves claim to be "instructions". Foremost amongst these are the omnivorous "miscellanies". Khety is perhaps a prototype of these works,

and Pap. Chester Beatty is certainly one, but both of those texts include distinct passages which are clearly didactic, employing forms and style characteristic of the instruction genre. The same is not true of the works attributed to Kageb, Pentwere and Nebmaranakhte, better known, perhaps, as papyri Anastasi IV, Sallier I and Lansing [73]. The last of these may, incidentally, have absorbed a similar work, attributed to one Pyay on O.Cairo 25771 recto [74]. Each of these texts is described as a sb3yt š^{c}(w)t, an "instruction in letter-writing", and this should, perhaps, be regarded as quite distinct from the classical instruction genre. These miscellanies gather together material of widely differing types, some literary, some not, and their apparent purpose is the provision of material for educational exercises in writing and composition. It seems likely that the initial lines scrawled on the Ramesseum ostraca 3 and 4 belonged to similar works; they are attributed to a scribe whose name is lost, and to the treasury-scribe Setekhmose, respectively [75]. The instruction of Hori (O.Gardiner 2) is called a sb3yt mtrt, like, eg., Any, but its advice to the recipient, that he should follow in his father's footsteps and become a scribe identifies it with the "Be a scribe" literature, beloved of the miscellanies, but represented only by Khety among the classical texts [76].

An old and close relationship exists between the instructions and Egyptian tomb inscriptions, some of which include, indeed, the term "instruct(ion)". As we have seen, the inscription of Sehetepibre goes so far as to appropriate a section of the Loyalist Instruction for its own use. I do find it difficult to accept, however, the view of a few scholars, who see the 'instruction' on certain other inscriptions as genuinely didactic [77]. Still, it is hardly to be denied that some relationship exists between many of the declarations made in what Miriam Lichtheim calls the "moral self-presentation" of the dead [78], and the advice given in the instructions. There is a considerable resemblance between both the language and the outlook in each: broadly speaking, what the instructions advise that one should do, the dead man claims to have done, and there is often extensive reference to the high reputation that he enjoyed thereby. On the literary level, it is highly unlikely that the instructions can be said to have influenced the form of the tomb inscriptions [79], and though the opposite is possible, we must more probably reckon with a complicated interrelationship between the two, stretching back to pre-literary times [80].

B. Mesopotamia

1. Unilingual Sumerian

(xxxii) The Instructions of Šuruppak

Several versions of this work are known, of which the archaic text from Abu Salabikh and the OB 'classical version' are most complete [81]. These date from the mid-third and early second millennia respectively [82]. The classical version, which was translated into Akkadian (see below), seems to be an expansion of the earlier one. Much less is preserved of another archaic version from Adab. The prologue to the work describes it as the instructions given by Šuruppak to his son, the legendary Ziusudra, an association with the far distant past which is emphasised in the classical version. The prologue concludes with a paternal exhortation to heed the instructions. Restatements of the prologue occur later in the work, dividing it into parts, or, in the classical version, three separate 'instructions'. In all versions, the first of these parts is a series of bipartite prohibitions, in a few of which the motive clause is expanded to form a longer saying [83]. Elsewhere, the short sayings which make up the work are more diverse, but adjacent sayings or whole series are often linked by the associative methods - formal, verbal or

thematic - already observed in the biblical and Egyptian sentence literature.

(xxxiii) A Sumerian preceptive work

The date of this work [84] is uncertain, but it is unusual among the Sumerian texts in presenting advice through integrated units of varied length, rather than individual short sayings. Although there are clear links with other Sumerian works, especially Šuruppak, the units are longer and more complex than in Šuruppak or the sayings collections; essentially, the work is 'instruction' rather than sentence literature. The content may be summarised [85]:

rev. 5.1: Obey your mother as you obey your god
2-3: Don't go to the mighty, but provide for yourself with your own work.
4-7: Respect for your elder brother and sister
8-10: Do not let your advice be influenced by enmity, and put the man of strife in his place.
11-13: Do not trust in prayers; the god will do what he has decided for you on the appointed day, when you should celebrate with a party.
14-16: Men swoop like an eagle on party after party; do not be too proud to hold one.
17-20: Do not show irritation where there is strife, but learn to calm the angry and to ignore insults.
rev. 6.1a: Vows are dangerous
1: Do not let your judging be prejudiced by hatred.
2-6: Know how to be generous: it pays dividends.
2-12: If approached by a poor foreigner, feed him and give him a bed: if he becomes rich in the future he will remember.
12b-12c: Do not harm, but rather befriend strangers and new arrivals.
13: The vengeance(?) of someone hurt by you.
14-22: The advantages of keeping local children on your side when things have gone wrong.

(xxxiv) The Farmer's Instruction

This long text [86] gives direct and practical advice on farming: it is almost a manual. However, it seems improbable that many farmers would have been able to read it, and it should be regarded as evidence for an early literary interest in agriculture. The work is portrayed as the instruction once given by a farmer to his son. The farmer is not named in the prologue, but appears to be identified with Ninurta in the epilogue.

(xxxv) Collections of Sayings

With most of the collections still unedited and many tablets unpublished, the information available is often rather limited. However, a general description of each collection was published by Gordon in 1960, to which the reader is referred for further information [87]. Of the 24 collections which Gordon originally identified, several have now turned out to be different parts of the same collection: coll. 20 is the continuation of coll. 8, and coll. 19 of coll. 11 [88]. Hence the apparent jumps in numbering below. Further such relationships may well be uncovered by future textual discoveries.

Collection One: C. 200 sayings on a great variety of themes, mostly arranged in groups of sayings which share the same initial sign, but with some thematic links also. The text has been edited by Gordon [89].

Collection Two: 166 sayings, mostly in initial-sign groups, but 119-138 are antithetical sayings grouped by form. The collection begins with a section about destruction, which bears little relationship to what follows: part of this precedes coll. 7 also [90]. Coll. 6 may be a continuation of coll. 2. This collection has also been edited by Gordon [91].

Collection Three: 201 sayings, many of them well-preserved. Gordon finds no overall principle of arrangement.

Collection Four: 62 sayings, no apparent principle of arrangement. Edited by Gordon [92].

Collection Five: 125 animal sayings and fables arranged in groups: each saying in the group begins with the same animal's name. Edited by Gordon [93].

Collection Six: Possibly a continuation of coll. 2. The sayings are grouped by initial sign or internal key word.

Collection Seven: 114 sayings, many of which are found also in colls. 1-3 and 6. One of the Neo-Assyrian bilingual collections (K4327 etc.) is apparently based on this collection, which has been edited by Alster [94].

Collection Eight + Twenty: Animal sayings and fables, grouped as in coll. 5.

Collection Nine: The first 8 sayings also begin coll. 10, where Alster believes them to be a poem on the subject of the ideal society [95]: this interpretation seems rather forced. In the present context, they form a series with the next 5 sayings, each linked by a key word, but this arrangement is then abandoned.

Collection Ten: On the first 8 sayings, see on coll. 9 above. Sayings 9-12 are found with variants in the Dialogue between a king, an old man and a maiden (ll. 28-31), and also in colls. 11+19 and 17 [96].

Collection Eleven + Nineteen: C. 300 sayings with no apparent ordering: many appear to have been excerpted from other collections.

Collection Twelve: Arranged in groups by initial word (lugal, 'king', in the first group).

Collection Thirteen: Arranged in groups by initial word.

Collection Fourteen: C. 43 sayings, arranged in groups by initial word. Gordon believes one group to have been arranged by its final word, but Alster sees this section as a separate work [97].

Collection Fifteen: C. 50 sayings, some found also in colls. 3, 14 and 15, and in the bilingual collections. No apparent ordering.

Collection Sixteen: C. 30 sayings, some also in colls. 3, 14 and 15 and in the Neo-Bab. bilingual BM 38283. No apparent ordering.

Collection Seventeen: Gordon suggests a relationship with colls. 10 or (11+)19, with which this shares a group of 4 sayings; 5 others are found also in colls. 2 or 3. No apparent ordering.

Collection Eighteen: 15 sayings; the last appears to underlie the introduction to the Assyrian Dream Book.

Collection Twenty-one: Well-attested. Includes a section of sayings and fables grouped by initial word or internal key word, and also a lengthy 'parable', "The Fowler and his Wife" (also in coll. 24).

Collection Twenty-two: 3 sayings only: barely legible, but all beginning with the same (obscure) name of a bird.

Collection Twenty-three: No apparent ordering, and only slight links with other collections.

Collection Twenty-four: 11 sayings, including "The Fowler and his Wife" (cf. coll. 21), and one saying also in coll. 23.

2. Bilingual Sumerian/Akkadian

(i) Collections of sayings

Most of these texts are edited in Lambert's Babylonian Wisdom Literature [98], to which the reader is referred for

more detailed discussion and bibliography. Almost all were probably composed originally in Sumerian, but Gordon notes that in two of the texts the Sumerian may be late and perhaps even secondary [99].

N-3395: A poorly preserved fragment from Nippur, either OB or a Cassite copy [100]. Apparently animal sayings.

UM 29-15-330: Confusingly, Lambert and Gordon disagree as to which side is the obverse of this small fragment [101]. (Lambert's) obv. 3-4 seem to be saying 42 of Sum. coll. 1 [102], and the traces in obv. 1 may reflect saying 41. The meaning of these sayings, which take the form "If his food be ..., then his ardour will be ...", is obscure: Gordon suggests that the series of them in Sum. coll. 1.40-43 refers to oral sex, but note that the surrounding sayings refer to more conventional food. The other side of the tablet is obscure, but does not reflect the Sum. coll. 1.

BE (unnumbered): An exercise tablet from Babylon [103], on which 2 sayings are preserved: the first is found in Sum. coll. 3.149 and elsewhere, including BM 38283 (below). The second is found in Sum. coll. 3.179 and 7.77: a man exclaims as disasters happen to his boat, but reaches shore safely [104].

"The Assyrian Collection": Gordon suggests that the Sumerian of this well-attested text [105] may be late. Much is obscure, but there seems no good reason to accept

Landsberger's suggestion that the piece is a discourse between the role-swapping Amorite and his wife who appear in the first saying [106]. Overall, there seems to be little connection between the sayings, although some associative links are visible: a series in ii 23-32 concerns the god (cf. 42-45), while ii 33-37 concern friendship, 38-41 profit and iv 9-26 the king; iii 13-18 seem to confront a situation of disaster.

VAT 10810: Most of the Sumerian is lost, and little of the Akkadian unbroken [107]. Of the 2 sayings translated by Lambert, one concerns ignorance, the other the relations between a bride and her mother-in-law.

R.S. 25.130; 23.34 (+) 494+ 363; 25.434: I include here 3 closely related texts from Ras Shamra, which share much of their material in common but differ substantially in matters of orthography and presentation [108]. These differences are of a sort which tend to tell against Nougayrol's suggestion, that the texts are by different school pupils attempting an exercise in composition, though some such background seems likely. In that case they should, strictly speaking, perhaps, be described as 'Syrian' texts, despite their language. The subject matter of each is the terrible state of the world: men know neither themselves nor their actions, and the meaning of their lives lies with the gods who have ordained events.

K4160+13184: 2 sayings are legible [109], both about the king: in the power of his word and in his righteousness he is comparable to Anu and Šamaš.

K4207: The sense and interrelationship of the few sayings preserved is unclear [110]

K4327+4605+4749 and K15227, 80-7-19.130: Apparently a bilingual version of Sum. coll. 7 (above) [111].

K4347+16161: A long text [112], in which the Sumerian may be late, though Gordon notes that iv.30 is very close to Sum. coll. 1.157 [113]. The subject matter is varied and the arrangement loose, though formal and thematic links are apparent in places.

K5688: The only saying preserved [114] is a bilingual version of Sum. coll. 4.61, where a chattering mouth is compared to an anus breaking wind [115].

K7654: 3 sayings are preserved. 2-5 = Sum. coll. 1.89, about the wreckage of a ferry [116].

K7674+11166+13568: Lambert translates only ll. 19-24 of this badly broken text: "Long life begets for you a sense of satisfaction; concealing a thing - sleepless worry; wealth - respect" [117].

K8216: Most of the Sumerian is lost, but 4 sayings can be read in the Akkadian [118]. Although Lambert suggests that 10-11 may be a riddle, it seems more likely that all the sayings are ironic comments on the claims of a braggart.

K8315: 2 sayings are preserved. The first = Sum. coll. 2.46, an obscure comparison of something with lapis lazuli; the second = Sum. coll. 3.189: the reaction of a proletarian to an aristocrat on fire [119].

K8338: 3 sayings are preserved. 11-14 is similar to Sum. coll. 1.153, but different in meaning; on other links, see Lambert's comments [120].

K9050+13457: 2 sayings can be read in part, but their meaning is obscure [121].

K11608: The Akkadian is lost. 2 sayings are preserved in the Sumerian: 7-10 , 11-13 = Sum. coll. 4.11, 12 [122].

K16171: The Akkadian is lost, and too little of the Sumerian left to establish the meaning [123].

Sm 61: Several sayings are preserved [124]: 2-4 has a number of parallels [125], while the pair 9-11, 12-15 occurs also in Sum. coll. 3.17, 18. 5 and 6 are variants, differing only in their second half: "Giving pertains to a king, doing good to a cupbearer / showing favour to a steward" (Lambert); the first occurs alone in Sum. coll. 3.85. In 19, the scribal art is praised as the "mother of orators and father of scholars".

BM 98743=Th 1905-4-9.249: 1 saying: the unprecedented event of a young girl breaking wind in her husband's embrace. Lambert compares an Akkadian saying, and there is probably some connection with Sum. coll. 1.12 [126].

BM 38283=80-11-12.165: All of the sayings preserved [127] have parallels or equivalents in the unilingual Sumerian literature: obv. 1-5 = Sum. coll. 2.69; 6-11 = Sum. coll. 1.3,4,5; 12-16 = Sum. coll. 14.1 [128]. Rev. 1-3 and 4-8 are of a type found in Sum. colls. 14, 15 and 16, while 9-10 has equivalents in Sum. colls. 15 and 16; 11-14 occurs in Sum. coll. 3.149 and elsewhere, including the OB bilingual BE (unnumbered) [129]. Finally, 15-17 occurs in Sum. coll. 15.

BM 38486=80-11-12.370: Lambert translates 2 sayings [130], obv. 8-9 on the impotence of mighty men in the face of flood and fire, and rev. 7-8 on the unknowability of divine will.

BM 38539=80-11-12.480: Lines 4-7 lament thriftlessness in the family, incorporating 2 sayings found in Sum. colls. 1 and 14: Sum. coll. 1.151 has a line lacking in 4-5 here and the Sum. coll. 14 version. Lines 12-13 comment ironically on an eternal truth, that when you find something you always lose it immediately, but when you mean to throw something away, it tends to hang around for ever [131].

BM 38596=80-11-12.480: The tone of the extant sayings is unusual [132]. I 2-9 complains of Enlil's treatment of a woman who has carried out the ordinances of the gods and multiplied the rules of kingship (?); 12-15, where the Akkadian differs somewhat from the Sumerian, lists 3

actions which are not properly humane: 13-15=rev. 2-3 of SU 1952, 15+91+186+350 etc., see below. III 5-7 wonders who will oppose single-minded warriors, and 8-12 seems to commend grovelling to those who are present, and slandering those who are not. On the relationship of this apparently somewhat cynical text to other Akkadian material, see Lambert's notes.

BM 56607=82-7-14.989: The 3 sayings in A 7-13 may be linked by some vague association of ideas - beer, river, malt - but those in B 8-18 are clearly linked by theme: when prosperous, be generous to your family (8-15), for "flesh is flesh, blood is blood. Alien is alien, foreigner is indeed foreigner" (Lambert) [133]

(xxxvii) Hymn to Ninurta (VAT 10610)

Lambert describes this as a "preceptive hymn" [134]: while the reverse addresses the god entering his shrine, the obverse condemns the man who does certain things, all of which are common bugbears in wisdom literature: adultery, slander, malicious gossip and charges, oppression of the poor and surrender of the weak to the powerful. Such ethical material is found in some other Sumerian hymns (see also the Akkadian hymn below). It is not really preceptive, since the listener here is not addressed, nor is it expressed in a "wisdom literature" form. Stretching my own criteria for

inclusion somewhat, I have placed it in this list as an excellent illustration of the extent to which "wisdom" themes and opinions may be found outside wisdom literature and even in the cult. Though found in Assur, the tablet probably originated in Babylonia during the Cassite period.

3. Unilingual Akkadian

(xxxviii) Instructions of Šuruppak

The Akkadian text VAT 10151, published by Lambert [135], seems to be a direct translation of the classical Sumerian work discussed above. Alster has reported the recent discovery by Lambert of a similar text from Sippar, which is apparently larger and better preserved [136].

(xxxix) Counsels of Šube'awilum

Fragmentary unilingual copies of this lengthy work have been found at Ras Shamra (R.S. 22.439) and Emar (Nos. 778-780); a bilingual fragment from Boghazköy (KUB 4.3) has an incomplete Hittite translation [137]. In the prologue to the Ras Shamra text, Nougayrol reads the names Šube'awilum and Zurranku for the father who is giving the instruction and his son; Arnaud, however, does not take these to be proper names in his edition of the Emar text. The latter has made it possible to reconstruct much more of the text than previously, and it now seems that the instruction is in two

parts: the father's instruction, and the son's reply. This is, of course, rather reminiscent of Any. The contents of the first part may be summarized from Nougayrol's translation:

I.1-8 : Prologue
9-16: Take a companion on journeys
17-20: Do not hang around in bars
21-25: Do not make enemies in a busy street
26-33: (broken) Embezzlement(?) and its penalties
II.1-5 : The abnormal or retarded son
6-10: Do not eat with a slanderer, humiliate others, mock a god or confront a powerful man
11-15: (obscure) Fear at jumping a ditch and other matters.
16-27: Preserving one's goods: keep your seal and money from your wife, and keep your house shut
28-31: Do not spread gossip
32- : (broken) Parents.
III.1-4 : (broken) Problems in a strange place
5-9 : Do not dig a water basin (or well) on one's land, lest it attract destructive crowds of strangers (Hittite: "the enemy")
10-14: Do not buy an ox in the spring or marry a girl at a feast, when each looks unusually good
14-19: Do not buy a man who laughs, but one who gives good advice and will prove better value
20-22: (broken) Strife

The son's reply appears to be much more pessimistic wisdom, stressing the vanity of toiling for wordly wealth and the inevitability of death. The mixture of pessimistic and didactic wisdom in a text is not uncommon, but the apparent confrontation of the two here is notable. Like Šuruppak, the work begins some sayings "My son ..." (I.9, II.6; cf. Prov. 1-9 and "Counsels of Wisdom", below), and sets the whole within a framework of paternal instruction. However, the sayings are typically much longer than those of

Šuruppak. III 5-9, indeed, appears to be a much expanded version of the saying found in Šuruppak 17, and III 10-14 of Šuruppak 217 and 213 (cf. also 220) [138].

(xl) "Counsels of Wisdom"

Lambert suggests that this work was composed in the Cassite Period [139]. The beginning is probably lost [140], but in view of "my son" in l. 81, it seems likely that it is supposed to be viewed as paternal instruction. The advice is as follows:

8-21 : (broken)
21-30 : Do not associate with talebearers, but guard your speech
31-40 : Avoid disputes
41-48 : Disarm your adversary with kindness
50-55 : (broken)
56-65 : Do not insult the unfortunate, but be charitable
66-71 : Do not honour a slave girl
72-80 : Do not marry a prostitute
81-94 : If put in a position of trust by the prince, do not defraud him
96-126: (broken)
127-134: Do not slander or speak carelessly
135-147: Worship and sacrifice to your god
148-166: Do not break trust with a friend

Typically, the sections are composed of commands or vetitives followed by motive clauses, though no strict pattern is followed.

(xli) "Counsels of a Pessimist" (K1453)

This short text is probably from a longer work, the date of which is uncertain [141]. The first eight lines of the obverse are fragmentary, but seem to refer to the

transitoriness of human achievement, clearly the theme of lines 9f. This is apparently the basis for Lambert's title. Lines 11-13 contain injunctions to religious observance: pray to your god, make offerings to the god who created you, and bow down to the city goddess that she may grant you offspring. Line 14 suggests that one should remember one's agricultural responsibilities, and 15f. concern one's eldest son and daughter, though their meaning is obscure. Finally an extended saying about the effect of misery on one's sleep begins in l. 17, and continues to the end of the text on the reverse: it seems to advocate banishing discontent and being happy. The text thus contains three long sayings in 1(?)-10, 11-13 and 17-22. It is not clear whether some thematic connection should be perceived between 14, 15f. and the previous section; on the whole it seems likely that the link is verbal: 13-15 all begin with the preposition ana, and 14 shares with 15 the same third sign also.

(xlii) "Advice to a Prince" (DT 1, ="The Babylonian Fürstenspiegel")

I include this piece [142] because it is relevant to the king-sayings in Proverbs, and of interest in the light of Egypt's 'royal' instructions. The genre and nature of the text are, however, quite unclear. Phrased in an apparent imitation of omen texts (the first line seems to be a virtual quotation from the series šumma ālu), it consists of

conditions in the form "If a king (does something bad) then ... ". The first few conditions are very general, but the text becomes very precise and refers to the treatment of major cities. Various attempts have been made to place either the events or the composition of this literary text in a particular historical context [143].

(xliii) Collections of Sayings

SU 1952, 15+91+186+350, SU 1952, 23: Lambert gives only a description of this badly broken text [144]. In the opening section of c. 30 lines, the sayings are all of the form "to do x is an abomination to Nammu"; after this the text consists of ethical admonitions. Rev. 2-3 of the first fragment is about human nature, and is found also on BM 38596 (I.13-15, Akk.) and the school tablet Leiden 853; rev. 4-5 = Dialogue of Pessimism 32f., which is itself broken and obscure.

K9908: A small fragment, which Lambert suggests may be part of an ethical text [145].

CBS 14235: Several sayings are more or less complete in ll. 5-15 of this text from Nippur, which is either OB or a Cassite copy [146]. Line 5 mentions the actions of someone in the king's presence, perhaps linked with the anointing in 6f. Lines 8-11 assert that a man must toil for a living, and cannot expect to be given one; 12 concerns vain acts, while 13-15 asks "He who has not king and

queen, who is his lord? He(?) is either an animal or one who lies ... " (Lambert).

BO 3157: There are several legible sayings on this fragment of a prism found at Boghazköy [147]. Lines 4-6 appear to consist of bipartite sayings: the first part stating something good, the second something bad which qualifies it, rather like a good news/bad news joke. Lines 7-8 are quite different: the speaker expresses his total lack of concern at the actions of another.

(xliv) Hymn to Šamaš

For a discussion of date, sources and other issues, see Lambert's comments [148]. The work as a whole is not comparable to Proverbs, but substantial parts are, and these justify the inclusion of the piece: between lines 85 and 129 we find condemnation of false oaths, coveting one's neighbour's wife, calculated villainy, corrupt judgement, false trade (especially, the use of false weights), and hypocrisy. At the same time, praise is reserved for those who champion justice and the weak, trade honestly and act straightforwardly. The fate of all is entrusted to Šamaš, who makes plain everything that is obscure.

4. Bilingual: Akkadian with Hittite or Hurrian

(xlv) Counsels of Šube'awilum

A partially bilingual (Akk./Hitt.) fragment of the Akkadian work, discussed above [149].

(xlvi) R.S. 15.10

This Akkadian/Hurrian text from Ras Shamra [150] includes extended sayings about the swearing of false oaths (1-4) and prayer by the guilty (10-13).

(xlvii) BO4209+4710

Little is preserved of the Hittite version on this text from Boghazköy [151]. Lambert translates 2 sayings from the Akkadian, one concerning prematurely ripe fruit (7f.) and the other irrigation (9f.); if, however, the obscure saying in 11f. is indeed about male prostitution, the 'collection' as a whole is not exclusively agricultural.

C. Syria

(xlviii) Aramaic Sayings of Ahikar

The 5th cent. Aramaic text of Ahikar found at Elephantine is the earliest known version of a work found, with substantial variations, in many other languages [152]. A collection of sayings is framed by a story, and this is one

of many features shared with Ankhsheshonqy, suggesting some relationship between the two. The scribe Ahikar, senior advisor to the Assyrian kings Sennacherib and then Esarhaddon [153], adopts and educates his nephew Nadin. When Ahikar retires, Nadin takes his place but turns the king against his uncle, convincing him that Ahikar has undermined the royal authority in the land. Infuriated, Esarhaddon sends an officer, Nabusumiskun, to kill Ahikar. However, the latter had once saved this officer's life under similar circumstances, concealing him until the king had been persuaded to regret his earlier command. Now, when Ahikar suggests that the same be done for him, Nabusumiskun and his men acquiesce: the execution is faked, and a slave killed to provide a body, while Ahikar is concealed at Nabusumiskun's home. At this point the Aramaic version begins, without warning, the lengthy collection of sayings: the end of this and of the story is lost. In the other versions, Ahikar is restored and performs miraculous acts for the king; Nadin is imprisoned and tortured, expiring horribly after a long series of reproaches by Ahikar.

The variations between versions indicate that neither the story nor the collection are entirely fixed, and a study of the changes, impractical here, would doubtless give many insights into the transmission of such material. As it stands, the Aramaic collection is incomplete, but still contains well over a hundred sayings. Some of these are

fables or other relatively long units, but most are short and pithy; there is considerable variety in both form and theme, but paronomasia within the sayings and associative, especially verbal, links between them are obvious and very common [154]. The date and provenance are uncertain. The narrative framework sets the piece in Mesopotamia during the 7th cent., and can hardly, in its present form at least, be earlier than that. However, despite possible references in the collection to the story [155], it is by no means certain that the two were composed together: that they appear to be written in different Aramaic dialects suggests that they were not [156]. Equally, the fictional setting in the court of a famous king need hardly be taken as evidence for the place of composition, even of the story. Chiefly on linguistic grounds, but taking account also of the divine names employed, Lindenberger has argued persuasively that the sayings-collection originated among the Arameans of N. Syria, not later, and possibly earlier, than the 7th cent. Similar conclusions have now been reached by Kottsieper in his much fuller treatment of the language, although he prefers a S. Syrian provenance [157]. At the very least, there is little to suggest that the collection was composed in Akkadian: puns and other word-plays tell strongly against the Aramaic being a translation [158]. I have, therefore, placed this work under a separate heading 'Syria', since this seems to be the most likely origin of the Aramaic

version. It does show many indications of influence from the Mesopotamian wisdom tradition, but it is not clear whether this reflects the existence of an earlier Mesopotamian version: certainly it would be wrong to presuppose that there must have been such a work.

Chapter 3 Proverbs and the Near Eastern Sources

Having fiercely reviewed a book on Ben Sira and the demotic literature by a scholar who knew neither any Egyptian, nor it seems, most of the relevant texts, Miriam Lichtheim expressed her own view of biblical scholars who meddle in these matters: "Can a bible scholar who is not also a full-fledged Egyptologist deal adequately with the interrelations of Israelite and Egyptian wisdom literature? I think the answer is, No" [1]. Uncomfortably conscious of my own shortcomings in this area, I wish to say only a little about the non-Israelite texts, and to avoid detailed discussion of parallels. The last chapter was intended to introduce the nature, number and variety of those texts; this one is intended to explore, very generally, some of the ways in which we can and cannot use them to gain a better understanding of Proverbs and of Israelite wisdom.

It is important to avoid lumping the various materials together, and talking of wisdom literature as though it were a unified, international phenomenon, with the texts mere ambassadors to the particular nations. The Egyptian texts are wholly a part of the literate culture of Egypt, and the same is true for Mesopotamia. Correspondingly, the texts must be viewed within the cultural context and history of those regions [2]. That is not to say, of course, that there

was no literary influence across national boundaries: this clearly happened in the later periods, and probably in the earlier ones too [3], but this does not constitute some international 'movement', straddling the Near East for two thousand years.

Nor, indeed, can we usefully speak of a wisdom movement within either Egypt or Mesopotamia. On Egypt, Michael Fox has pointed out that:

> "Wisdom literature is the product of the scribal class, i.e. the educated class, but so are most other forms of Egyptian literature. There is no point in calling the scribal class the 'wisdom school'. We could just as well label the scribal class the 'magical school' because some of its members produced magical texts ... These considerations argue against an attempt to fragmentize intellectual life in ancient Egypt, in particular by isolating a special class of 'wisdom teachers'" [4].

The situation is somewhat different for Mesopotamia, but the principle much the same, and W.G. Lambert's dictum is well-known: "'Wisdom' is strictly a misnomer as applied to Babylonian literature" [5]. Again, there is no reason to isolate wisdom literature there except on grounds of genre.

Consequently, wisdom literature is a part of 'scribal literature', like much other literature, but this does not make it special. Coming from a field where the existence of a scribal élite, with a virtual monopoly over non-cultic literature, is not generally recognised, biblical scholars tend to pounce on the term 'scribal', and to see it as a

distinctive description in the way that 'prophetic' might be for literature in Israel. In doing so, they ignore the mass of non-wisdom literature which was produced by the scribal elite and reflects their outlook. For neither Egypt nor Mesopotamia can we equate 'wisdom' with 'scribal', or isolate wisdom as a distinct movement.

It follows that, whatever its links with other texts, the Israelite wisdom literature cannot, as I have said, be placed within some Near Eastern wisdom movement. Almost certainly it lies instead within an undirected web of specific influences across a large area and a very long time. The full extent of these influences, and of the wisdom traditions in the various countries, is unlikely ever to be known, and this creates considerable difficulties.

1. The Nature of the links

In presenting at such length the non-Israelite material, my chief purpose was to show not only the nature, but also the sheer quantity and diversity of such material, and to counter the tendency in biblical scholarship which views it all as something closely akin to Amenemope. Nevertheless, it is Amenemope which provides the clearest example of the problems which can arise when we are assessing the links between different works, since it is the only work generally accepted to have some direct or close literary link with

Proverbs. The actual nature of that link has, however, been debated, on and off, ever since Adolf Erman first recognised it in 1924 [6].

Going much further than scholars who had recognised a general similarity or scattered parallels, Erman suggested that the third section of Proverbs actually drew on the Egyptian text, albeit indirectly, and claimed that a series of close parallels in 22^{17}-23^{10} demanded such an explanation and precluded coincidence. In the Saite or Persian period a Jew living in Egypt must have become familiar with the instruction, then being used as a schoolbook, and adapted it to produce a Hebrew work compatible with Jewish ideas. This book was in turn taken up by the collectors of Proverbs, who cannibalised it, showing little understanding of or sensitivity to the original structure and features. They did, however, unwittingly preserve clues to its origin, most notably an obscured reference to '30 sayings', reflecting the 30 chapters of Amenemope, which can be recovered from 22^{20} [7].

In pursuit of his case, Erman made a number of emendations to the Hebrew text, bringing it more closely into line with the Egyptian. Many subsequent studies adopted this course vigorously, adding more parallels to Erman's original seven, but making numerous further emendations, often of

questionable value or propriety. Others cast doubt upon the priority of the Egyptian, or upon the very existence of a close relationship. Much of this debate is well-known, and its history has been recorded several times, most thoroughly by Glendon Bryce [8], so I shall not repeat it all here. At the present time, the nature of the relationship remains problematic. General consensus on an early date for Amenemope, recognition of its place in the thought of the New Kingdom, and thorough refutation of arguments for the presence of non-Egyptian expressions or ideas, have rendered more or less untenable any notion that Amenemope depends on an Israelite source. Most scholars incline to the view that Proverbs drew upon either Amenemope or some work itself based on Amenemope, but there is still a great variety of current theories. Irene Grumach's argument for a common source, underlying both Amenemope, which builds upon it, and Proverbs, which preserves more closely its order, has received little acceptance [9]. A recent work by Diethard Römheld is strongly critical of Grumach's theory, and suggests that the Israelite writer used a copy of Amenemope itself, much the same as the work we possess, but chose to reject elements of it as unsuited to the ideas of Israelite wisdom [10]. Helck suggests that an epitome of Amenemope was used [11], Ruffle that an Egyptian scribe in Solomon's court was writing from memory [12]. Bryce, finally, argues

persuasively for a process of adaptation and assimilation, perhaps involving some intermediate text [13].

In view of the difficulties involved even when we know that there was a close relationship between two texts, it seems almost impossible to say anything useful about the numerous parallels between Proverbs and other works where there are no grounds for assuming such a relationship, and the commentaries are littered with these. We simply lack the data for establishing what traditions actually existed, and how they interacted with each other. So if, for instance, a saying in Proverbs is identical to one in an Egyptian text except for some particular detail, we cannot generally know that this detail has been changed in the Israelite tradition: it may have been received in this form from another, lost text, which may itself have been Egyptian, or the product of some intermediate Semitic tradition. This is not merely fanciful, as there is good evidence for textual change and development in, e.g., Ptahhotep, and for the cultivation of wisdom among Israel's neighbours [14]. The temptation to force the pieces together is very great, but we probably possess only a few pieces of the jigsaw.

2. Formal features

One area in which the non-Israelite material is of great

potential value is in the identification of formal and stylistic features in Proverbs. The distinction drawn by Kayatz and McKane between instruction and sentence literature, which I have mentioned already, is a good example. As a useful rule of thumb, it may be held that distinctive stylistic features should not be interpreted as inner-Israelite developments if they are already attested in non-Israelite texts. On the other hand, the incomplete attestation of non-Israelite wisdom literature means that we should be wary of necessarily assuming unparalleled features to be Israelite in origin.

More complicated problems arise if we wish to assume that formal features always indicate the same thing, e.g. that there is a prologue 'form' which can only ever stand at the beginning of a work, and must therefore mark such a beginning. This is an assumption in R.N. Whybray's early work on Prov. 1-9, when he argues that formulaic 'introductions', underlying $1^{8ff.}$, $2^{1ff.}$, $3^{1ff.}$, 21ff., $4^{1ff.}$, 10ff., 20ff., $5^{1ff.}$, $6^{20ff.}$, $7^{1ff.}$, are derived from a common basic form [15]. These introductions "so strongly resemble the introductions to the pedagogical instructions in Egyptian (and to some extent Babylonian) wisdom literature that the resemblance can hardly be accidental" [16], and Whybray goes on to conclude that they mark the beginning of separate 'discourses'. The whole 'Book of the

Ten Discourses' is a handbook for use in schools, addressed to individual pupils and comparable to the Egyptian instructions.

Whybray has subsequently modified his views on the wisdom literature considerably, but this work provides a useful example of the way in which formal features are sometimes used. I would not disagree that the exhortations isolated here are very similar to the prologues in some of the non-Israelite texts, although I see no good grounds for emendation to uncover a basic form which is closer still. Where I take issue with Whybray is over his implication that, because of such parallels, they must mark the beginning of separate discourses. In the first place, he does not take account of the resumptive 'prologues' in Šuruppak, which do not seem to segregate independent, coherent units: these are important not least because, as we shall see, there seem to be other 'Mesopotamian' features in this section. More generally, Whybray plays down too much in this respect the autonomy of the Israelite text. In almost all the aspects of the section which have parallels in non-Israelite texts, not least the admonitory, instructional style, Prov. 1-9 shows an inclination to vary from the attested norms. Whether this reflects the redactor's freedom or the influence of unknown traditions, there is certainly no slavish dependence on Egyptian usage. We cannot assume

that he was following some rule-book here, even if he is deliberately evoking the prologue form.

This is an area in which Kenneth Kitchen has made a considerable contribution, producing two ambitious articles on the formal classification of the texts, which are based on his research for an unfinished book [17]. Prologues are, again, prominent in the discussion. It is Kitchen's intention to classify all the known texts according to their formal, structural features, and to outline a history of development within the genre which they represent. This is a formidable undertaking, and Kitchen's studies are valuable if only for the mass of data which they assemble. One of the most important things to emerge form these data is the great variety which exists among the texts in every region and period.

In an earlier chapter I touched on some of the difficulties involved in selecting significant formal features for an analysis of Israelite texts, and we saw the degree to which arbitrariness and over-generalisation can creep in. This is a difficulty of which Kitchen seems unaware, and his apparent conviction that he is analysing simply the important features suggested by the texts themselves seems to blind him to it. The principal classification is into two 'types', A and B, which are

defined respectively by the absence or presence of a prologue between the title and the main text. Since other structural elements seem to be variable, there are no other major criteria for distinguishing between the types. Both are found in all periods, with no particular geographical bias. In that case, one may well ask, as Kitchen does not, what is it about the presence or absence of a prologue which is so significant for understanding the nature of these texts? Why is a work with a prologue a different 'type' of work from one which lacks a prologue? No proper justification is given for classifying the texts in terms of this particular feature, and many others surely have just as good a claim.

The difficulty is compounded by Kitchen's desire to lump together as 'prologues' anything that precedes the main text in the various works. Thus the narrative in Ahikar is classified not merely with that of Ankhsheshonqy, but with all the exhortatory prologues from other texts. This is perfectly valid as a classification for certain, limited purposes, but Kitchen goes far beyond the limits, and uses the classification in ways which are quite inappropriate. By his reckoning, Prov. 1-9 is the prologue of a longer work, "Solomon I", which extends to ch. 24. It is largely exhortatory in content, and thus comparable to the short exhortatory prologues in many compositions. It is, however,

very much longer, and in this respect is comparable to the late narrative prologues in Ahikar and Ankhsheshonqy. Therefore, Kitchen claims, it is to be seen as 'transitional', and this may be taken to indicate its date [18]. This is an extraordinary conclusion, with no foundation whatsoever. There is no reason to suppose that exhortatory prologues somehow developed into narratives, though they may have been replaced by them. If some transitional form could be found, then such an improbable suggestion might at least be entertained, but it takes more than the length to demonstrate that Prov. 1-9 lies somewhere between a series of exhortations and a continuous narrative of the Ahikar type. The full list of unjustified assumptions contained in just this one argument is rather long, and for the sake of brevity I shall leave them to the reader's own common sense. Doubtless the lack of such justification is due in part to the preliminary nature of both Kitchen's articles.

I do not wish to labour this, particularly since I have found the articles very useful in certain respects, and some of Kitchen's observations very acute, but there are a couple of other points which merit discussion in our present context. The first of these concerns the use of comparative material for dating. It is always tempting to assume that an 'early' feature marks one of our texts as early itself: it

does not. At most, such a feature indicates that the text has been influenced by an early text or texts. Kitchen makes this assumption with regard to parallelism, among other things, suggesting that since parallelism is found primarily in the early non-Israelite texts, its use in Proverbs implies an early date [19]. This particular issue is complicated by both the possible influence of Hebrew poetic techniques, and the presence of parallelism in some of the late non-Israelite texts, but the basic assumption is anyway wrong. In looking at comparative materials we must always reckon with the continued circulation of texts long after their initial composition, and this goes for formal as well as thematic elements. If used cautiously the materials may provide some evidence for a date *post quem*, although this is complicated by our ignorance of prior traditions; they can never, however, be used to establish a date *ante quem*.

Equally important is the problem of deciding what actually constitutes a particular structural feature, and what does not. In dividing Proverbs into separate works for the purpose of his classification, Kitchen decides to treat the superscriptions in 10^{1} and 24^{23} as 'sub-titles' rather than titles: he justifies this on the grounds that they are too short, when compared to other titles, ever to have stood independently. Consistent with my own remarks above, I would be the first to deny that a title form must have stood at

the beginning of a work, however probable it may be, and on other grounds, which will be discussed in a later chapter, I should not wish to claim that either of these titles was ever itself the heading of an independent work. However, I do not think that they can be singled out in this way from the other titles, and do not agree with the criteria chosen for their exclusion. His inconsistency in this matter, incidentally, makes Kitchen seem rather disingenuous when he claims that his division of the material is "simply a matter of direct observation, taking due note of the explicit titles of the works themselves" [21]. There are some things which are indeed standard features of titles in the material, Israelite and non-Israelite. Of those preserved, for instance, few lack the name of the protagonist, or at least a description of him. If there is one wholly variable feature, though, it is the length, and this would seem to be an entirely inappropriate criterion for determining whether something is a title or not. There is nothing, moreover, to suggest that the superscriptions in question resemble any sub-title form. If we have to justify our selection of formal elements which are taken to define, or allow classification, of a text, we have also to justify our selection of features within those elements for similar purposes.

3. Themes and motifs

Certain themes crop up again and again in the texts. In part this is probably to do with the general area of interest, which is one of the ways in which we tend to define wisdom texts. There are some constants in human life, and concern with, say, wealth or poverty, is likely to be shown by any text which is interested in human life and social relations. Equally, as is generally acknowledged, certain ethical attitudes and themes were widespread in the Near East, and are reflected in non-wisdom literature also. Nevertheless, there are certain motifs, themes and ways of expressing themes which almost certainly travelled with the wisdom literature along with the strictly formal features. For this reason, as with those features, we must be wary of assuming that a particular interest developed in Israel, especially if it is attested elsewhere. In practice, this is a point which crops up most often in the consideration of religious ideas in Israelite wisdom, and we shall return to it in the next chapter.

Similarly of great relevance to religious ideas, is the whole issue of assimilation. The universality of so much in wisdom literature is certainly one of the key reasons why it was disseminated internationally to a much greater extent than other literature, and many of the sayings or themes could readily be adapted to suit a new context. The chief

problem for us is that assimilation of foreign material does not always require any change in its wording beyond actual translation. Thus a declaration that, say, the wicked will perish, may have originated in a nation where it had connotations of a belief in inherent causation; transferred to a different culture where inherent causation was unknown and divine judgement an expectation, the text would merely be read against this different background of ideas, with which it remained compatible. Again, elements which originally had some much greater significance might remain in a text as mere poetic metaphors, stripped of mythological or ideological meaning [22]. For this reason, the presence of certain themes or motifs need not say anything significant about the ideology or background of wisdom in Israel, merely the broad acceptability of such things when they were read in the context of Israelite society and belief.

Of the many possible examples, I shall take just one, which principally affects the interpretation of Prov. 1-9, and ties in with some of my earlier observations. In 1^{8} and 6^{20}, the mother of the addressee appears in parallel with the father as a source of teaching. On a general level, this may be associated with the section's broader interest in women, with the teaching by Lemuel's mother (cf. 31^{1}), and with the poem of the Good Wife in 31^{10-31} [23]. References

to the mother as teacher have, however, been regarded as 'unique' [24], and employed in discussions of 'family wisdom' or the authority of women in Israel [25]. Certainly, I think, they do show that 'father' here is not a cipher for 'schoolmaster' or some such, and that the section is intended to be seen as parental instruction, not formal education. However, it would be unwise to overemphasise their unusualness or historical importance, as Lemuel's mother is not the only evidence to suggest that the motif did not arise independently in Israel.

We saw above that the possible recurrence of 'prologues' had a counterpart in Mesopotamian wisdom; so also does the occasional direct address to 'my son', which has no parallel in Egyptian texts [26]. These features justify the suggestion that Prov. 1-9 may have been influenced in some respects by texts from Mesopotamia, or representing, like the Aramaic Ahikar, a tradition itself influenced by Mesopotamia. In fact, we do find also in Mesopotamia admonitions to obey both parents and apparent reference to the mother as a source of teaching or guidance [27], and it seems quite reasonable to suppose that these influenced in some way Prov. 1-9. It is, then, historically useful to know that such an idea was acceptable in Israel, and its presence illuminates the intentions of the redactor, but it would be wrong to assume that references to the mother as a source of

guidance are unparalleled, or that they necessarily suggest some peculiarly Israelite situation.

The fact that the redactors might choose to reject only what was intolerable to their own ideas, and to incorporate what was assimilable or wholly neutral, makes it difficult to say anything useful about the function of wisdom literature as a conduit for foreign ideas, or about the specifically 'Israelite' aspects of Israelite wisdom literature. The problems are exacerbated by the likelihood that many of the other materials upon which Proverbs might have drawn are now lost. In view of this, it seems most sensible to evade the issue altogether, and to seek not what is borrowed or original in Proverbs, but what is characteristic. Equally, though, we should avoid seeing Israelite wisdom literature as some sort of fly-paper to which bits have become attached from all over the place, bringing with them unassimilated foreign ideas. We are dealing with Israelite literature which has been influenced by and employed a now indeterminable amount of material from other nations, but which must be examined in the context of Israelite thought, and in terms of its own structures and characteristics. Though Israelite wisdom literature may possibly have served as a vehicle for some new ideas, the literary influence of foreign wisdom literature should not

be regarded as qualitatively different from, say, the influence of Egyptian hymns [28].

If we are looking for what is characteristic in Proverbs, then comparative material still has some role to play, and if we cannot say that a feature is unique or original, we can at least say that it seems unusual, or is unattested elsewhere. So, for example, Prov. 1-9 is concerned very largely with wisdom and instruction in general, rather than with specific, practical advice on day-to-day matters. It is, therefore, surprising that one very specific topic, the dangers of seductive but bad women, should come so to dominate the second half of the work. The theme is familiar from other texts, but in none of those which we possess does it take on the strikingly important role which it has here. Both the general tone of the text itself and the available comparative material suggest that the dominance of this theme is significant in some way. If the redactor is not simply a full-blooded misogynist, it seems likely that the theme has been endowed with some special meaning or relevance. This must be determined from the text itself, and is somewhat tangential to our present concerns. My own suspicion is that the deliberate contrast in ch. 9 and the nature of the seductions [29] are to be tied in with other important motifs in the work, and the woman viewed as a deliberate counterpart to the figure of personified Wisdom.

Where wisdom represents the path of life, and her invitations are to be accepted, the woman represents falling away from that path: her invitations are to be resisted, as deadly. Thus sexual seduction is used in contrast to the call of wisdom, and the theme takes on a symbolic significance not attested elsewhere [30]. Here, then, the witness of the non-Israelite texts to the conventionality of the theme, but the lack of any attested parallel to the emphasis, combine with other evidence to suggest that there is a special significance to be sought.

Moving on from Prov. 1-9, the first sub-collection of sentence-literature (10-14(?)) is marked by an interest in the contrasting fates of the righteous and the wicked. Of the 91 occurrences of forms from the root ṢDQ in Proverbs, more than half lie in this section, usually in antithesis to a corresponding form from RŠ^{c}. In chs. 10-12, indeed, righteousness or the righteous man appear in more than 40% of the sayings. This makes a substantial contribution to the thematic linking in the early chapters. As we shall see in the next chapter of this study, there are no good grounds for assuming that such sayings are rooted in, as opposed to compatible with, late Yahwistic piety, and their origin may well have been outside Israel. But if they are not necessarily Israelite in origin, they are certainly a key characteristic of this sub-collection. In this case the

comparative material, which is very slight, warns us among other things against assuming that the sayings are necessarily a reaction against other material in the section.

4. The 'purpose' of wisdom literature

Finally, I wish to touch on a matter which will occupy us at some length in the next section. It is widely assumed that early Israelite wisdom literature was composed for use in education, perhaps specifically the education of future state officials, and one of the many props for this theory is the belief that this was the purpose of the Egyptian instructions.

There are two issues involved here, the propriety of drawing such conclusions on the basis of comparative evidence, and the actual purpose of the instructions. The former is the more important, and the latter, indeed, almost irrelevant. Whatever the intention of their authors, the Egyptian instructions arose fully within the context of Egyptian society and culture and represent some purpose which is appropriate to that culture, arising from its needs, structures and history. All these factors would have been different in Israel, and, as Talmon pointed out some time ago, we violate all the basic tenets of modern

anthropology if we start picking and choosing parallels from quite different societies in order to elucidate phenomena within Israel [31]. The proximity of Egypt means that it may have exercised influence on Israel, and it may well be that Israelite wisdom literature arose, at least in part, under the influence of the Egyptian literature. There is a world of difference, however, between the recognition of influence and the drawing of analogies. Whatever its 'purpose' in Israel, the wisdom literature would have met some need or responded to some pressure that arose within Israelite, not Egyptian society.

In fact it is most unlikely that the instruction genre in Egypt was a pedagogical one. Various purposes have been suggested, as we have seen, for particular instructions written in particular historical circumstances. Most probably the genre belongs properly in the category of 'high literature' or '<u>belles lettres</u>' [32]. Instructions were used in schools, to be sure, along with other, non-wisdom literature, much of which was certainly never written specifically for such a purpose. This use was, however, something comparable to the use of Shakespeare, Dickens or Chaucer in a modern English school. The instructions were not textbooks but set texts, among the classic works of Egyptian literature and recognised as such [33]. The reader may have noted in the last chapter, incidentally, that among

the texts most widely attested in school copies are Amenemhet and Khety, neither of which is primarily didactic, but both of which are classic instructions. In addition to familiarising pupils with such works, the use of the older instructions in New Kingdom schools would also have been in the teaching of Middle Egyptian, already an archaic language by the end of the Middle Kingdom, and certainly very difficult for a pupil by the Late Period. It seems incredible that such works could be supposed to function as "guide-books to success" [34], when the student's principal difficulty would have been in understanding them.

Before returning to such matters in a later chapter, let us, then, be clear. If Israelite wisdom was originally composed specifically for use in formal education, it is analogous in neither nature nor origin to the Egyptian instructions. Even if it were, the Egyptian usage could not properly be used as evidence of the Israelite usage by analogy. We should avoid such analogies altogether. It is very possible, on the other hand, that Israel deliberately imitated the Egyptian use of wisdom literature in schools for its own educational purposes. This is a quite different matter, and one which will be examined below.

5. Conclusions

I have done little more than run through a few examples

here, in the hope of ilustrating through them some of the issues involved. In many respects this is one of those areas where common sense is of more value than a complicated, formal methodology. One thing which should be clear is that the greatest problems arise when scholars either attempt to view all the texts as some sort of whole in order to draw historical conclusions, or use them for literary critical purposes in ways which overlook both the creativity of the redactors and the influence of their native cultures. Proverbs is neither a completely original Israelite work nor a hotch-potch of non-Israelite material compiled without any influence from or regard to Israelite ideas. Rather, it is an Israelite work which draws to some indeterminable extent either directly or indirectly on the literature and traditions of some other nations. It does so for its own purposes.

It follows that we can probably assume everything in the book to have been acceptable to the redactors when they read it in the light of their own ideas, but cannot say with certainty that anything actually originated in Israel. The extant non-Israelite literature, used properly, can indicate many of the features which almost certainly should not be regarded as Israelite, but cannot be used rigidly to explain the ways in which the redactors understood or employed what they had borrowed. On the other hand, used in conjunction

with features of the text itself, they can give some insights into what may be regarded as characteristic of the sections in Proverbs, and hence into the literary methods and the intentions of the redactors.

Chapter 4 A Case in Point. Was Early Wisdom Secular?

Discussion of early wisdom in Israel has been influenced for some years by the claim that it was a fundamentally secular tradition, in which theology played no part. This claim is associated especially with the work of William McKane, although some similar ideas had been advanced earlier, most notably by Johannes Fichtner [1]. It is the counterpart of earlier claims about the nature of Egyptian wisdom, and although McKane bases his arguments largely on prophetic material, there is also some superficial continuity with conclusions reached by students of the wisdom literature in the last century. Ewald, for instance, asserted in 1867 that "schools" of anti-religious sceptics existed under the early monarchy, and sought to control the lives of the people [2]. A few years later Franz Delitzsch similarly described the rise of "free-thinking", "Freigeisterei", during the reign of Solomon [3].

For both Ewald and Delitzsch, however, the sceptics were not the wise men themselves, but the "mockers" attacked in the wisdom literature: early wisdom was not secular or sceptical of religion, but was the response to the rise of scepticism. Cheyne comes closer to McKane, when he says that the wise men, "whatever their inward religion may have been ... were outwardly utilitarians" [4], since McKane himself

stresses not that the wise men were necessarily irreligious personally, but that religious piety was not "a constituent part of the *ʿēṣa* which regulated their approach to statecraft" [5]. Yet for McKane, wisdom was not merely utilitarian, but basically secular, a "disciplined empiricism" in which religious idealism had no place, and the elements of which were drawn from a commitment to administration and government. Where Cheyne sees wisdom and prophecy as complementary traditions, McKane sees a bitter conflict between the two, until wisdom finally underwent a reinterpretation which brought it into line with Yahwistic piety, and led to the introduction of religious sayings into the originally secular wisdom tradition.

McKane's opinions are to be distinguished, furthermore, from those of many scholars who share his view that the *Sitz im Leben* of early wisdom was in the royal administration. Gerhard Von Rad, for instance, believes Yahwism to have been inherent in wisdom from an early stage. Where McKane sees Prov. 16^{9}, 19^{21}, 20^{24} and $21^{30f.}$ as "a rejoinder to the claims of old wisdom", Von Rad sees them as a recognition by old wisdom of its own limits, when confronted with the incalculable factor of divine intervention [6]. Where for McKane, moreover, the early wisdom tradition is geared to practical ends only, for Von Rad it represents also an attempt to find man's place in the world. These two views

derive from very different understandings of the wisdom literature, and in particular of the book of Proverbs.

The idea that early wisdom was secular is not, then, merely a more radical development of long-cherished scholarly opinions about wisdom. The clear connection with older, humanistic ideas about the Egyptian instructions may provoke some suspicion that, like those theories, it depends more on modern ideas than on the texts [7], and McKane's own application of his results to modern political problems does nothing to quieten such doubts. The theory, however, cannot simply be dismissed as anachronistic. Unlike, say, Delitzsch, who betrays by his choice of vocabulary his anachronistic importation of "free-thinkers" into Israel, McKane has never strayed beyond the bounds of strict historical possibility. He does not attempt to view early wisdom as a sort of philosophical humanism, which would be quite improbable, but claims that it is a tradition of Realpolitik, which is eminently plausible.

If McKane is correct, the implications for the study of early wisdom are obviously important, and the question is, therefore, worthy of discussion in its own right. It is also, however, one of several issues that bring into focus many of the questions examined in the last few chapters, and it provides an opportunity for me to pull together the

various strands of the study so far, before we turn to the rather different questions raised in the next section.

1. Yahwistic Reinterpretation in Proverbs.

In his commentary on Proverbs, McKane divides the individual sayings of the 'sentence literature' into three classes: class A is those sayings which he believes to be "concerned with the education of the individual for a successful and harmonious life", set in the framework of old wisdom, B is those concerned with the community, and C those characterised by "the presence of God-language or by other items of vocabulary expressive of a moralism which derives from Yahwistic piety" [8]. From this, he goes on to argue that the third class is to be seen as a later, Yahwistic reinterpretation of the empirical and non-religious old wisdom represented in the first class. Thus McKane, along with other scholars, takes the view that interpretative activity perceived in the proverbial literature supports the notion of development within the wisdom tradition, from a secular to a religious viewpoint.

As evidence of such reinterpretation in the material, McKane points to different attitudes and usages in the A and C class sentences. The positive uses of <u>mĕzimmôt</u> in 8^{12b}, 14^{17b}, and of <u>taḥbûlôt</u> in 11^{14a}, as compared to the

pejorative use of these terms in the 'C class' 12^{2b} and 12^{5} respectively, are cited as instances of such reinterpretation. More generally, McKane points to 19^{21}, 20^{24} and 21^{30}, as Yahwistic condemnations of the intellectual aspirations of old wisdom, a development which he finds also in ch. 1-9. The "fountain of life" is no longer the instruction of the wise, as claimed in 13^{14}, but the fear of Yahweh, according to 14^{27}. Where 17^{8}, 18^{16} and 21^{14} indicate the advantages of bribery, it is loftily condemned by 15^{27} and 17^{23}.

These observations show, at the very least, the element of variety present in the sentence literature, but there are methodological problems involved in their use as evidence for systematic reinterpretation in the wisdom tradition. I have expressed above my agreement with McKane that the sayings collections may properly be regarded atomistically: however, this does not mean that the existence of the collections may be disregarded altogether. Presumably McKane believes the collections to be later than the composition of the 'reinterpretative' sayings, else we would be looking at the insertion of such sayings into a text, and structural features would indeed be important. In that case, the coexistence of the early, secular sayings, and the later, reinterpretative sayings needs some explanation: why did the redactor not simply omit those sayings with which he, as a late, and presumably therefore 'Yahwistic' wise man,

disagreed? The collections may not be integrated wholes, but there is no good reason to suppose that they were simply catch-alls for whatever sayings the collectors happened to know.

Furthermore, McKane's own classification is imposed upon the material, not drawn from it, and rests on presuppositions about the development of wisdom, which are then justified with reference to the classification. This leads to a degree of subjectivity, but also to an alarming circularity in the argument. So, for example, 15^{27} condemns bribery, and is thus classed as a C sentence; 17^{8}, 18^{16} and 21^{14} all acknowledge the expediency of bribery and are thus class A. Clearly there are two different points of view here, but the different views have been used as the criterion for classification of the sentences: they can hardly, then, be used themselves as evidence of the distinction between the classes. That would be to use an assumption to prove itself. In this instance the problem is highlighted by the fact that 15^{27} may, on other grounds, be related to sentences which McKane classifies as A or B: the use of root BṢ‘ (cf. 28^{16} 'B'), the unusual expression ‘ôkēr bêtô (cf. 11^{29} 'A'), and the condemnation of greed (which McKane attributes to A class, e.g. 13^{11}, and to Egyptian literature). Pre-empting the next section, we may note, incidentally, that the taking of bribes to corrupt justice

is already condemned in Amenemope (21,1ff.): it is hardly, then, necessarily late and Yahwistic.

Such methodological considerations apart, problems are raised by McKane's specific examples of reinterpretation. Certainly mĕzimmôt is used pejoratively in Prov. 12^2 and 24^8; it is also used in this way in Job (21^{27}), Jeremiah (11^{15}) and certain psalms ($10^{2, 4}$, 21^{12}, 37^7, 139^{20}). A more positive sense is found in Prov. 1^4, 2^{11}, 3^{21}, 5^2, 8^{12} and 14^{17} (if MT is amended in accordance with LXX [9]), but also, again, in Job (42^2) and in Jeremiah (23^{20}, 30^{24}, 51^{11}), where it is used of Yahweh's purposes. If it is McKane's contention that the use of both a positive and a pejorative sense for the term in Proverbs is evidence of later reinterpretation, the same must, logically, be held to be true of the examples in Job and Jeremiah, where both senses are found also. It is manifestly simpler to assume that the term could be used in either sense contemporaneously, perhaps deriving its moral content from its context. Something similar is probably true also of tahbûlôt which is only once found in a pejorative sense (12^5), when the sense is not inherent, but derives from the adjacent 'wicked' [10].

Setting aside for the moment the verses which are cited by McKane for evidence of a Yahwistic condemnation of the aspirations of early wisdom (Prov. 16^9, etc.), We may turn

finally to the apparent substitution in 14^{27} of 'the fear of Yahweh' for the instruction of the wise in 13^{14}. This point has been picked up and enlarged upon by R.B.Y. Scott, whose analysis leads him to support McKane on this issue [11]. Scott finds a number of variants in which, he argues, specifically religious terminology has been introduced into an earlier saying. The most noteworthy groups of such sayings are:

1. 13^{14a}, 16^{22a}, 10^{11a}, 14^{27a}.
2. 16^{8}, 15^{16}.
3. 28^{21}, 18^{5}, 17^{15}.
4. 10^{15a}=18^{11a}, 18^{10}.
5. 27^{21}, 17^{3}.

Reasonably, Scott argues that, "these examples suggest that couplets using 'religious' or 'wisdom' terms sometimes were composed on the basis of traditional sayings in which these notes were lacking". In other words, it is suggested that 'religious' wisdom in some way recycled older 'secular' sayings. Yet Scott has himself noted a very great number of variants, most of which show no introduction of religious terminology (eg. 10^{1} cf. 15^{20}). Moreover, 'religious' variants are found on sayings which are already 'religious' (eg. 16^{2} cf. 21^{2}). Surely the multiplication of variants on sayings is not to be attributed to systematic reinterpretation, but is rather a feature of the composition, transmission and collection of sayings. We have

seen a number of such variants in the non-Israelite sources, and many examples are to be found: Prov. 27^{3}, for example, has counterparts not only in Sirach $22^{14f.}$, but also, in varied forms, in the versions of Ahikar (Aramaic 111f., Syriac 45f.). In some instances, variation may be due simply to the popularity of a particular simile or figure of speech, and the 'fountain of life' examples may be one such. There seems no good reason to take 'religious' variants as a special case, and to isolate them as an interpretative stage. No doubt some were deliberate variations, but this is a long way from saying that they exemplify later, Yahwistic developments in the wisdom tradition.

In general, then, the observations of McKane and Scott shed much light upon the variety within, and vitality of the proverbial tradition. They do not, however, constitute evidence of an historical dimension to this variety. That is to say, they do not in themselves imply the reinterpretation of an early, wholly secular wisdom by a later, Yahwistic wisdom. Evidence that 'secular' and 'religious' sayings belonged to different groups at different times cannot be adduced from these observations.

A different approach has been made to the problem, albeit rather tentatively, by R.N. Whybray, who takes far greater account of the present arrangement of the material [12]. In contrast to that of McKane, his is explicitly an attempt to

examine redaction and addition within the collections. Whybray chooses to examine the 'Yahweh-sayings' in $10\text{-}22^{16}$, that is, those which mention the divine name, emphasising that this is for the sake of convenience, and is not meant to imply that they form an exclusive 'religious' group. The concentration of such sayings, alongside 'royal' sayings, in $15^{33}\text{-}16^{9}$, he argues, indicates a deliberate intention to set a theological kernel in the centre of the book. More than half the other Yahweh-sayings, he believes, appear to reinterpret one or more adjacent sayings, and only three stand as single verses unconnected to their context or to other Yahweh-sayings. Whybray concludes, therefore, that the arrangement of sayings

> "was made in order to reinterpret older 'secular' wisdom sayings by the juxtaposition or inclusion in the group of Yahweh-sayings which assert the absolute primacy of Yahweh, his righteous will, his omniscience, his active and personal intervention in human affairs".

Many of those sayings which McKane places in his class C are not, however, from the same stage of development as the Yahweh-sayings, but rather represent an intermediate theological stage, in which righteousness is its own reward, and the source of moral consequence is not, therefore, explicitly divine.

The most obvious problem for this hypothesis is the transfer of the argument from a redactional to an historical context: even if Whybray is correct in detecting an

editorial tendency to reinterpret material by the juxtaposition and insertion of Yahweh-sayings, this only implies that an editor felt his material needed reinterpretation. It cannot subsequently be assumed that the material represented 'old' wisdom, and the editor a later, Yahwistic wisdom, unless it be presupposed that the wisdom tradition underwent a linear development from secularism to Yahwism, remaining at every stage entirely coherent and unified. Further, Whybray undertakes to examine the Yahweh-sayings as sayings which are separable from others by the objective criterion of the use of the divine name. Yet this is not really as objective as it sounds, since it becomes clear that Whybray believes all but a couple of these sayings to belong together as a group. His choice of the criterion of the divine name in fact contains another presupposition, that the presence of the divine name makes a sentence fundamentally different from sentences where it is absent, and fundamentally similar to other sentences where it is present. Such an assumption requires justification from another source, and Whybray seeks such justification in what he perceives to be a distinctive use of the Yahweh-sayings. As I shall argue below, however, the placing of the Yahweh-sayings in their context appears distinctive only because the Yahweh-sayings alone have been studied in this respect. If the use of the sayings is not distinctive, the whole schema collapses.

Whybray's analysis is usefully compared with that of Skehan in this area, already mentioned in an earlier chapter [13]. Skehan recalls that the number of proverbs in 10^{1}-22^{16} corresponds to the numerical value of the Hebrew name 'Solomon' in the superscription (375), and that the second half of the material differs from the first in its strikingly lower proportion of antithetical sayings. He suggests that this shift away from antithetical sayings in fact occurs after 14^{26}, noting that around a quarter of the verses from there to the end of ch.15 lack antithetical parallelism, and that these verses mark for the first time a much greater concentration on Yahweh, and an interest in the king. Skehan argues, therefore, that between 14^{26} and 16^{15} one may discern the work of an editor seeking to join two collections of roughly the same size, one composed predominantly of antithetical sayings, and expanding these collections to bring the total length up to his target of 375 sayings. The central, editorial section contains a high proportion of the duplicates and variants found in the work as a whole, and Skehan believes these to have been composed ad hoc to round out the work. Also included among the expansions are sayings about hearing, about Yahweh and about the king.

Thus Skehan and Whybray are essentially in agreement that the central section of 10-22^{16} is editorial, but their views on the nature and extent of the editorial work are very

different. For Whybray, the central section is deliberately positioned to emphasise certain religious ideas, which are found also in editorial insertions throughout the work; for Skehan, the central section is essentially padding, a necessary addition to make up numbers.

Skehan's conclusions are, of course, similar to those reached in the 'nearest-neighbour' analysis undertaken in an earlier chapter, although he goes further in seeking to define the nature and extent of the central section, my 'grey area'. Whybray does not discuss the problems raised by the sudden switch from antithetical parallelism, and thus does not confront the obstacle it raises against his own theory. If, as Whybray suggests, the Yahweh-sayings are essentially secondary to the material in which they are embedded, it is surely improbable that they should follow the same structural patterns as that material. Yet, if we do the sums, we find that in chs. 10-14 some 73% of the Yahweh sayings are antithetical, as compared to 50% in ch. 15 and 23.5% in chs. 16-22[16]. In other words, the Yahweh-sayings also display a dramatic shift from the antithetical to the non-antithetical, and the figures compare well with those of 88.7%, 67% and 23% for all the sayings, especially in view of the small numbers involved. Unless we assume conscious, but not consistent, imitation of the style by the editor, this fact must raise considerable doubts about the secondary but unified nature of the Yahweh-sayings. If the two parts

were originally separate collections, the secondary insertions must have taken place independently in each, and it is difficult to maintain that the insertions in each are related to each other and also to the central section.

It is, incidentally, interesting to look in this connection at the seventeen non-antithetical sayings of chs. 10-14, which we earlier suggested might well be later additions to the basic sub-collection. Only 3 of these are Yahweh-sayings (10^{22}, $14^{26, 27}$), and, indeed, only 7 are described by McKane as class C sayings. Again, this is broadly comparable with the 36% C sayings which he finds in these chapters as a whole. Clearly, the only group of sayings for the secondary nature of which a strong case can be put on formal grounds, is not a Yahwistic layer but consists of much the same mixture as the sub-collection itself.

Whybray's argument that the Yahweh-sayings appear in most instances to correct or modify other sayings is itself questionable. He isolates 25 Yahweh sayings outside the 'kernel', which he believes to be clear reinterpretations of adjacent sayings ($10^{3, 22, 27, 29}$; 11^{20}; $12^{2, 22}$; 14^{2}; $15^{3, 8, 9, 11, 16}$; $16^{20, 33}$; 17^{3}; 18^{10}; 19^{21}; $20^{10, 12, 22, 23, 24, 27}$; 22^{12}) and eight other possibles (11^{1}; $15^{25, 26, 29}$; 19^{3}; $22^{2, 4, 14}$). None of the latter eight seems particularly convincing: 11^{1}, for example,

appears to stand out from its context like the proverbial sore thumb. The basic 25 represent a little over half the Yahweh-sayings outside the kernel. The problem here is to determine the extent to which the juxtaposition of Yahweh-sayings and non-Yahweh-sayings results from a deliberate attempt to modify the meaning of the latter, rather than from the exercise of principles of arrangement used more generally in the text for the positioning of sayings. In other words, does, say, 10^3 follow 10^2 for a reason which is qualitatively different from the reason that 10^5 follows 10^4?

In his discussion of 10^3, Whybray notes that it

> "...picks up the vocabulary of verse 2, with the terms <u>saddîq</u>, 'righteous', and <u>rᵉšāʿîm</u>, 'wicked men'...The general sense of these two sayings is very similar: the wicked man's greed will not be allowed to go unchecked, while the righteous man will be preserved from starvation. The difference between them lies in the definition of the source of the moral power which will ensure that this occurs: in verse 2 it is his own righteousness which will protect the righteous man, whereas in verse 3 it is Yahweh who will do so" [14].

Certainly the theme here is similar, as is also the vocabulary and the structure: both verses begin with <u>lô</u> + verb, and both have a chiastic arrangement. If we look further on, we find that verse 4 is also linked formally with verse 3, having a chiastic arrangement itself, and, strikingly, a similar singular/plural antithesis (a type of link not picked up in our earlier analysis of verbal/literal

and thematic links). Its thematic link, however, is with the next verse, verse 5, which also deals with laziness, but lacks the structural similarity, replacing chiasmus with a bold juxtaposition of nouns and alliteration; the use of the 'sons' imagery provides a link with verse 1, and with other passages in Proverbs. In other words, these verses show the associative linking typical of the sentence literature, and it is entirely reasonable to suppose that verse 3 is placed next to verse 2 because of its verbal, thematic and structural similarities to that verse, just as it is probably followed by verse 4 because of the structural similarities with that verse. There is, therefore, no reason to believe that the position of the verse represents deliberate insertion to make a theological point: such a claim is not, after all, made for the juxtaposition of verses 4 and 5. On a different note, we may well ask why some Yahwistic editor decided to place his saying here, where its theme does not entirely match that of the previous verse, while 13^{25}, for example, which is much closer in its imagery, is left entirely uncorrected.

To take another example, this time from the 'possible' list, 15^{29} has no real thematic connection with its context, but is linked to 15^{28} by the righteous/wicked antithesis, and with the series 15^{30-32} by the use of root ŠM^ʿ. Again, these links provide a more convincing explanation for the position of the verse than does the supposition of Yahwistic

insertion. I cannot cover all the examples here, but it should be clear that juxtaposition for the purpose of reinterpretation is hardly the only plausible explanation for the juxtaposition of the sayings. Of course it is not improbable that some verses are positioned to modify or elucidate their neighbours, that is, perhaps, part of the point of arranging materials thematically; however, there is no evidence of such modification as a consistent and secondary process. This is an issue which I have, of course, examined in general terms above.

None of these attempts by McKane, Scott and Whybray succeeds, then, in demonstrating a reinterpretation of an early secular wisdom by a later, more Yahwistic wisdom. That is not, logically, to say that such a reinterpretation did not happen, but rather that the particular approaches are unsuccessful. Is it, however, probable that such a process occurred? The answer to this question must be sought in other material.

2. The non-Israelite sources.

If the description of early wisdom as 'secular' implied a total lack of any reference to God, it would be almost impossible to defend in the light of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature, since both make frequent reference

to the divine, and their close relationship to Israelite wisdom is generally acknowledged, as we have seen. However, reference to the divine is not what McKane and others take as their criterion of secularism, and the Egyptian instructions have themselves been characterised frequently as 'secular' or 'pragmatic': McKane himself asserts that the moral instruction of these texts is grounded not in piety but in power. I shall discuss the validity of such a claim shortly. First, however, we may note that there is a contradiction involved in accepting 'god-sayings' as integral to the material in, say, Amenemope, while rejecting them as secondary in the Israelite material. Is there a qualitative difference between the sayings in each book sufficiently great to justify this difference in treatment?

In some important cases, there is no clear difference perceptible. So, for example, Prov. 16^{9}, 19^{21}, 20^{24} and $21^{30f.}$, which contrast the power and success of divine and human action, and which McKane views as "a rejoinder to the claims of old wisdom", find counterparts in several non-Israelite sources, including Amenemope, where we find, e.g., "The words which men say are one thing, but that which the god does, another" [15]. McKane recognises the difficulty of his position, noting the parallels to 16^{1} in Ahikar and to 16^{9} in Amenemope, yet he places both these verses in his class C: "I would maintain this thesis of a Yahwistic reinterpretation, even though thoughts not

dissimilar to vv. 1 and 9 are found in extra-Israelite wisdom" [16]. Yet it surely strains credulity to claim that Israelite wisdom, in imposing a Yahwistic reinterpretation upon its earlier, secular manifestation, quite coincidentally chose to express this reinterpretation in sentiments so very similar to those of non-Israelite wisdom. Given the close relationship between Amenemope and Proverbs, moreover, it is tantamount to suggesting that Israelite wisdom originally rejected the sentiments before later, coincidentally re-expressing them. In making such a suggestion, incidentally, McKane is contradicting the logic of his own claims about the instruction literature, where the existence of formal parallels is, as we have seen, used to deny the development of the form independently within Israel. It is surely simpler to conclude that early wisdom accepted such statements about the relationship of human and divine actions from foreign sources, along with so much else. It should be recalled, we may add, that the verses under consideration here are not merely examples of McKane's class C, but are used by him as important evidence for both the viewpoint and the very existence of such a class.

To take another example from Amenemope, 9. 5ff. corresponds to an idea found several times in Proverbs:

> "Better is poverty in the hand of the god
> Than riches in a storehouse;
> Better is bread, when the heart is happy,
> Than riches with grief" [17].

This we may compare most directly with Prov. $15^{16f.}$:

> "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord
> than great treasure and trouble with it.
> Better is a dinner of herbs where love is
> than a fatted ox and hatred with it".

Amenemope 16. 11ff. is similar, as are Prov. 16^{8}, 28^{6} and Ps. 37^{16}. In view of the juxtaposition of the 'god' and 'non-god' sayings in the Egyptian, it would be hard to justify any assumption that the similar juxtaposition in the Hebrew indicates Yahwistic reinterpretation by means of a variant. Further, as G.E. Bryce recalls, Prov. 15^{16} has strong verbal links with the Egyptian, and is unlikely, therefore, to be a late variant of the next verse [18].

It is possible to multiply examples [19], but I think the important point to bear in mind here is that where Proverbs draws upon non-Israelite traditions, it is drawing upon traditions which are themselves grounded in the religious beliefs of other nations. The Egyptian texts, for instance, operate against a background of m3ᶜt, that is to say that they assume a social order, and an order in the world more generally, which has been perfect since the creation, and is maintained by gods, kings and men. Thus, as Frankfort has argued, the success of the individual indicates his 'attunement' to m3ᶜt, and advice on how to succeed is in effect advice on how to behave in accord with m3ᶜt, the

divine order. To suppose that such advice is wholly secular is, therefore, fallacious, and Frankfort characterises such supposition as the 'Pragmatic Misinterpretation' [20]. By the New Kingdom in Egypt, we must, moreover, reckon with the development of an intense personal piety, as reflected in Amenemope. Again, the Mesopotamian texts show a strong interest in religion and divine action. The non-Israelite texts, then, give no grounds for supposing that Israelite wisdom was 'secular', rather the opposite. Their correspondence with the Hebrew texts, moreover, is frequently very precise, despite McKane's extraordinary complaint that criticisms based on the non-Israelite material are too general [21]. When we find a tradition with close links to non-secular traditions and apparently dependent upon them for some religious sayings, this is strong evidence for supposing that tradition not to have been secular itself.

3. The Righteous and the Wise

Even among the 'religious' sayings more characteristic of Israelite than non-Israelite wisdom, it is usually difficult to assume an origin which is specifically Yahwistic. Pre-eminent among the sayings assigned by McKane to his class C, for example, are those which contrast the righteous with the wicked. McKane says that he finds it "hard to resist the conclusion that the antithesis of ṣaddīq and

rāšāʿ is a dogmatic classification and that it is expressive of a premise of Yahwistic piety, namely, the doctrine of theodicy" [22]. Certainly these sayings are marked out by their number and distribution, and it is possible that they are the vehicle for a specific body of ideas. It is not at all clear, however, that these ideas are either late or specifically Yahwistic.

The most important objection to McKane's assessment of the sayings is the appearance of the righteous and wicked in the Aramaic Ahikar (sdyq in lines 126, 128, 173 and probably 167, ršyʿ in line 171 and ršyʾn in 168). Very similar ideas seem to underlie the sayings in this text, where the righteous are again assured of divine protection, and punishment is promised for the wicked. The most striking parallel is in lines 168-169a, which follow an exhortation to support the righteous: "[...] of the wicked will be swept away in the day of storm, and its gates will fall into ruin; for the spoil [..]" [23]. Compare Prov. 10^{26} and 12^{7}: "When the storm has passed, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established for ever", "The wicked are overthrown and are no more, but the house of the righteous will stand", and also the similar 12^{12} and 14^{11}. Though the form of the Aramaic saying is somewhat different, the imagery is so similar that it is only reasonable to suppose that it is related in some way to the biblical material. Since, whatever its date and place of origin, Ahikar is

clearly neither a Yahwistic work nor a text influenced by Proverbs, I cannot, myself, resist the conclusion that the righteous and wicked sayings in Proverbs represent a type of saying known also outside Israel, and cannot readily be judged specifically Yahwistic.

In connection with these sayings, it is interesting to note that on the only two occasions when the noun ḥkmh, "wisdom", appears in the mass of Semitic inscriptions collected by Donner and Rollig [24], it is in association with ṣdq(h), "righteousness". Thus in the late 8th or early 7th century bilingual inscription of Azitawadda, from Karatepe in S. Anatolia, the ruler declares that "every king treated me as a father on account of my righteousness and on account of my wisdom and on account of the goodness of my heart" (KAI 26 A (I) 11. 12f.). On the late 8th century statue from Zenjirli, set up for Panammuwa II, it is said that "on account of his wisdom and on account of his righteousness, he grasped the hem of the robe of his lord, the king of Assyria (KAI 215 l. 11). One should not make too much of these texts, one in Phoenician, the other in Aramaic, and neither from Palestine. Nevertheless, unless it is an extraordinary coincidence, it does seem likely that the terms "wisdom" and "righteousness" may have been regularly associated in the 8th/7th centuries, and this in itself tells against any idea of "righteousness" as a late, Yahwistic entrant to the vocabulary of wisdom.

4. Prophets and Wise Men

Finally, we may return specifically to the central thesis of McKane's Prophets and Wise Men. There it is argued that the reflection of wisdom in other traditions in the Old Testament demonstrates its secular nature and separation from the prophetic tradition. In this study of non-wisdom, mainly prophetic, texts, McKane's theory seeks the external validation of which it is clearly in need. Much of the material which he discusses is to be examined in the next section of this study, and I do not wish to pre-empt my conclusions there. Let us for the moment, then, accept McKane's view that there was a class of 'wise men' in Israel, associated with the wisdom literature, but set aside his internal evidence from Proverbs for secular wisdom, as being unproven or false: on the basis of the non-wisdom passages, does he make a good case for a secular wisdom tradition?

McKane's analysis of the biblical texts begins in his fourth chapter, with a study of 2 Sam. 16^{23} and related verses in the Succession Narrative. These verses, he argues, demonstrate the existence of two distinct systems of guidance, depending on human counsel and the word of God respectively, held in an uneasy balance. When in 14^{20} the wise woman of Tekoa compares the wisdom of David with that of the messenger of God (cf. 19^{28} (ET 27)), "...David's

wisdom and the wisdom of the mal'ak of God are assumed to be two separate and distinctive procedures, the one relying on human reason and the other on a divine revelation communicated by the mal'ak of God" [25]. Of 16^{23}, where an editorial note claims that the counsel of Ahithophel was like that of the oracle of God, McKane writes: "Taken at its face value the verse means that there are two parallel and unconnected systems of reliable guidance in matters of state" [26]. Thus it implies that, "the dābār of God and ʿēṣā are equal partners in statecraft" [27]. This argument seems to lack weight. Each of the verses, in its context, clearly seeks to emphasise the wisdom of Ahithophel or David, and does so by comparison with the 'ideal' guidance of God (this is particularly clear in 14^{20} and 19^{28}, where the speakers appear to be employing flattery). The human wisdom is not equated with divine guidance, but we can no more speak of the verses indicating two systems of guidance, than we can of "Brave as a lion" implying two systems of bravery. The verses are interested in asserting parity of efficacy, not in questions of difference in type, and cannot be used as evidence for McKane's conclusion.

In the subsequent chapters, McKane examines a great deal of material from the prophetic literature, and it is with this examination that we come to the heart of his study. Most important for the question we are considering at present, is the first series of passages, which McKane

describes as "The Attack on Old Wisdom": Is. 5^{19-24}, $10^{13ff.}$, 19^{11-13}, 29^{14-16}, 30^{1-5}, 31^{1-3}; Jer. 49^{7} and Ezek. $28^{2ff.}$. The key feature of these passages is an attack on human presumption, and a declaration that the power of God is vastly greater than that of men and nations. For McKane this is, of course, an attack on the pretensions of secular wisdom, but we have demonstrated above that such assertions of the 'Man proposes, God disposes' type are an important part of wisdom from earliest times, and it is difficult to see, then, how the passages can be an informed attack on wisdom <u>per se</u>.

At times, indeed, the polemic is clearly against people who are wholly alien to the spirit of the wisdom tradition: Is. 5^{19-24}, for example, (probably to be taken with the similar woe-sayings of vv. 8 and 11, at least), condemns the consolidation of large estates, perpetual drunkenness, decadent feasting and the corruption of justice. It is hard to reconcile the image of these corrupt and drunken sensualists with the description of the wise men given by McKane, let alone with the impression given by Proverbs. It is quite inaccurate to remark, as does McKane, that wisdom approves the sort of bribery condemned here: Prov. 19^{6} and 21^{14} advocate only the use of 'presents' to win favour generally, and 'open doors', probably the meaning in 17^{8} also, while the corruption of justice and oppression of the poor are roundly condemned in Egyptian and Israelite wisdom.

It is most probable that Is. 5 is an attack not on wise men, but on corrupt rulers generally. If the men attacked in any of the passages cited were 'wise men', and certainly some believed themselves to be wise, they were not representative of the wisdom tradition. To see here a prophetic attack on wisdom is like viewing Jeremiah's attack on false prophets as an attack on prophecy. At most we can say that the wisdom tradition and prophecy were united in their disdain for those who placed too great a value upon their own abilities, who were 'wise in their own eyes', and neglected to take account of the action of God. In no one of McKane's examples, nor in their cumulative effect, is there any evidence to support the idea of a sustained conflict between the 'inspired' prophetic tradition and a 'secular' wisdom tradition.

Conclusions.

The theory that early Israelite wisdom was a secular tradition has been examined in some depth, and found wanting in almost every respect. The internal evidence of Proverbs cited by McKane and others is, I have argued, largely illusory, while the Egyptian and other non-Israelite evidence suggests that wisdom incorporated religious elements long before it reached Israel, if, indeed, it ever

lacked them. It is not so difficult to believe that there existed individuals who emphasised human ability at the expense of ignoring divine action altogether. It may be that such individuals provoked the prophetic attacks examined by McKane, and it is possible that they may have identified themselves with the wisdom tradition. To take them, however, as representatives of wisdom, let alone as guides to the nature of wisdom, would be to fly in the face of compelling evidence to the contrary. In general, there seem to be no strong grounds for the belief that early wisdom was secular in Israel.

I hope that this chapter has given some idea of the importance which we must attach to studies of structure and of the non-Israelite texts when we come to examine the nature of early Israelite wisdom. As the last section shows, however, more circumstantial evidence is also of considerable significance, and it is this which will dominate our discussion in the next section.

Section II Setting: Introduction

Outside the superscriptions to the material, which as we shall see, are of dubious historical value, the book of Proverbs gives little or no explicit information about its setting. The figure most characteristic of the book, the 'wise man', is associated with no specific activity other than the composition and understanding of wisdom sayings ($1^{5f.}$, 22^{17}), and the rewards of his wisdom are of a very general kind. Thus the wise man will inherit honour (3^{35}) and wealth (14^{24} MT), while the fool will be his servant (11^{29b}). His wisdom will preserve him (14^{3}), and make him superior to the strong man (21^{22}, 24^{5}). Characteristic of the wise man is his caution and forbearance (10^{14}, 14^{16}, 20^{1}, 21^{20}, 29^{11}), his willingness to take instruction and reproof ($9^{8f.}$, 10^{8}, 12^{15}, 13^{1}, 18^{15}, 21^{11}) and his ability to persuade and placate (12^{18}, 16^{14}, ^{23}, 29^{8}). His teaching is of benefit to others (13^{14}, ^{20}, 15^{2}, ^{7}, ^{12}), while his wisdom makes his father glad (10^{1}, 15^{20}, 23^{15}, ^{24}, 27^{11}, 29^{3}).

If the character and attributes of the ideal wise man give little clue to the setting, the subject matter and incidental references in the book are rather more useful. Much of the material is set in the home, and deals with the benefits, or otherwise, of marriage (e.g. 31 and the

humorous 27^{15}), the treatment of servants ($29^{19, 21}$, 30^{10}), and the education of children (e.g. 13^{24}, 22^{6}, $23^{13f.}$). Relationships with friends, relatives and neighbours (e.g. 27^{14}, which is also humorous), are frequent themes. More significantly, a number of references to agriculture, trade and commerce suggest that these were direct concerns of many of those addressed [1]. Sayings which deal with the guaranteeing of loans, with the giving and assessment of evidence in the law-court and with behaviour 'in the gate', give some further insight into their activities and preoccupations [2].

Such references, scattered throughout the book, suggest, on the face of it, that the social context is one of a moderately wealthy class, the members of which made their living from agriculture or commerce, and might be called upon to adjudicate in local courts, to speak 'in the gate', and to guarantee the loans of others. It is apparently members of this class who are exhorted to act wisely, to be the 'wise men' of the book. As Clements has put it, "The atmosphere breathed by the book is that of a landowning middle class, with time for leisure and reflection..." [3].

I shall examine such evidence from Proverbs in much more detail later. If we accept, for the moment, that this was indeed the class, if that is not too precise a word, to

which the audience belonged, does it follow that it was also the class of the wisdom authors or collectors? This question cannot be answered easily, and the original setting of wisdom has long evoked considerable discussion.

Franz Delitzsch argued in 1873 that in the reign of Solomon 'wise men' was becoming already the designation of a particular circle of men, private individuals united by their interest in wisdom, and their desire to resist the 'free-thinking' which had arisen in a changed Israel: Wisdom was not just a moral quality, but a science, rooted in the fear of God, to which many "Edle" devoted themselves [4]. However, he was inclined to believe that the wise men became, in the course of time, professional teachers, who gathered disciples around them and eventually formed schools; in this he was concurring, broadly, with the earlier opinion of Ewald, who, however, dated such developments earlier [5].

Cheyne, in 1887, was inclined to be cautious about the extent to which the wise men were 'professional' in the earliest times, but he too described them as a class of teachers somewhat like prophets, who attracted disciples and were possibly peripatetic [6]. C.F. Kent, rather less cautiously, paints a precise picture of wandering wise men, who gathered disciples around themselves 'in the gate',

sought out individuals and attempted to turn them on to the paths of wisdom, and "formed a committee of ways and means, who could be consulted in determining the state policy"; the sole qualification necessary for membership of this class was the possession of natural ability, shaped by experience and education [7].

These views represent the predominant opinion among critics at the end of the last century: the 'wise men' arose from among the ranks of the educated classes in Israel, but became in time a class of professional teachers or philosophers with attendant disciples and, eventually, schools. The evidence employed for such a view was drawn largely from the material within Proverbs, which was treated very literal-mindedly in some respects: it was believed, for instance, that there was, opposed to the wise, a 'class' (Ewald even talks of 'schools') of sceptics or 'mockers' [8]. The view was further influenced by references elsewhere in the OT to 'wise men', where they apparently stood beside prophets and priests as a 'class'.

In his 1912 introduction to the OT, C. Steuernagel pointed out that some wise men probably worked as official political advisors in the royal court, like the wise men of Egypt and Assyria mentioned in the OT. He acknowledged, however, the inadequacy of the evidence, and the difficulty involved in

identifying just what it was which distinguished a wise man in the pre-exilic period, and qualified him for the Zunft of the wise [9]. It was little more than a decade later that such cautious scholarly references to the royal court took on a new and radical importance. In 1924, following Erman's recognition of a close link between Proverbs and Amenemope, Hugo Gressmann suggested that the class of 'wise men' was, in fact, drawn from the ranks of the 'scribes'. Noting that the authors of the Egyptian instructions and the central character of Ahikar were all scribes, he proposed that the same was true of the authors of the Israelite wisdom material. Further, he pointed out that the scribe's profession was international, and that foreign scribes were often to be found in royal courts: this, he claimed, was the explanation for the international character and distribution of wisdom [10].

In 1929 Paul Humbert went further still, arguing not just that the wisdom literature was written by scribes, but that, like the Egyptian instructions, it was written for scribes, and was intended to be used as educational material for scribal training:

> "Ainsi les <<Maximes>> avaient, en Egypte, une inspiration et un but très précis: contribuer à l'éducation des futurs fonctionnaires du royaume. L'apparition parallèle et la conjonction, en Israël, du genre didactique et d'une organisation de fonctionnaires doivent, sans doute, s'expliquer par la même nécessité pratique et très probablement à l'exemple de l'Egypte" [11].

Humbert thus placed the development of wisdom within the development of a state bureaucracy under Solomon, which imitated the bureaucracy of Egypt and necessitated the creation of scribal schools [12].

The broad consensus among scholars of the time, that wisdom contained material originating from among the people as 'folk wisdom', clearly sits rather unhappily in this scheme, as does the material described at the beginning of this introduction. Two main explanations have been advanced for the presence of obviously non-scribal material: in the first it is claimed that wisdom was, from an early stage, a tradition of collection as well as of composition, and that the wise men of the court accepted into their literature material which had originated outside their own circle; the other theory supposes that new, non-scribal material was absorbed into a wholly scribal core when the nature of the tradition changed at the end of the monarchic period.

The former course was chosen by Gerhard von Rad, who, in his last, and finest, major work on wisdom, Weisheit in Israel, acknowledged the relative paucity of material in Proverbs with an explicitly courtly character [13]. His consequent belief, that wisdom collected material from outside the court, material nurtured among the middle classes and landowners, had been implicit already in his

influential 1944 description of the royal court under Solomon as a Pflegestätte, a 'nursery', for international wisdom, though his 1953 article on Joseph and wisdom emphasises only the courtly nature of Proverbs [14]. The other path has been followed by, among others, William McKane, who believes early wisdom to have been wholly secular in character, and oriented toward the achievement of policy, and the successful pursuit of a scribal career. Since he does not take the early wise men to have been collectors of material, he identifies material of an explicitly non-courtly nature as the result of addition to the original core during subsequent stages of wisdom's development [15].

Despite this division over the exact nature of the material, there has been a broad consensus about the setting of the wisdom literature for much of this century, and it is now usual to speak of the wise men as scribes, and of their literature as the product of scribal schools. The origins of this opinion are certainly to be sought in the scholarly recognition of an affinity between the Egyptian instructions, especially Amenemope, and the material of Proverbs. As we have seen above, however, it is not at all clear that the Egyptian, or, for that matter, the Mesopotamian material, can readily be used as analogies.

It is evident, however, that analogy is no longer the sole basis of the hypothesis, and a number of other issues have emerged over the years. The issues are somewhat diverse, and in the next few chapters I wish to examine each separately. In chapter 5 I shall discuss the old question of the "wise" men and women who appear in the Old Testament, whether any of them represent a particular scribal class, and whether there is some special link between such terminology and the wisdom literature. Chapter 6 will return to the book of Proverbs, and assess the evidence within that book for a particular interest in the royal court, and for the existence of court wisdom. This leads on to the consideration, in chapter 7, of the Joseph Narrative in Gen. 37-50, which has been identified by von Rad as a work of didactic court wisdom, and has been accepted as such by many scholars subsequently. Finally, I shall turn in chapters 8 and 9 to an examination of two questions which are central to the historical framework proposed for court wisdom: the role of Solomon's administration in the transmission of wisdom from Egypt, and the evidence for the existence of schools in Israel.

Chapter 5 The Wise in the Old Testament

We have already seen that the identification of a 'class' of wise men played a role in nineteenth century scholarship long before scholars began to link wisdom exclusively with the scribes. It does, however, play a key part in the modern discussion. The root HKM is undoubtedly of great importance within the wisdom literature, but it is by no means confined to that literature, and many scholars claim that it is used on a number of occasions to describe a group or class of individuals who are to be identified as royal counsellors and scribes, and to whom 'wisdom' is also important. This usage and the shared interest in wisdom are assumed to indicate some link between such a class and the wisdom literature.

Since it is acknowledged that HKM does not always possess such an implication, one may reasonably speak of the root having a 'technical' sense when it is used with reference to such a group of "wise" scribes. Yet in his review of R.N. Whybray's book, The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament, William McKane protests that:

> "the question of whether or not there was a class of "wise men" or "scribes" or "counsellors" or statesmen (śārīm) ought not to be so shrunk that it becomes no more than an enquiry whether hākām is a technical term for a member of such a class" [1].

He goes on to claim that:

> "the more valid consideration is the specification of the sense of ḥākām or the like, which is given by the contexts in which it appears...Whether or not ḥākām has a specialist sense and what particular sense it has must always be determined in connection with the context in which it appears...It is not a matter of importance to me to establish that ḥ^{a}kāmīm is a technical term for members of a learned class." [2].

I do not intend to consider Whybray's approach here, nor to spring to his defence; certainly there is good reason to object to his curious emphasis on the presence or absence of the definite article. McKane's claim that the specification of 'wise' is given by the context is clearly true, but it seems to me that his initial protest is quite topsyturvy: surely the question of whether or not 'wise' was a technical term for a class of scribes or counsellors ought not to be so shrunk that it becomes no more than an enquiry as to whether such a class existed. There can be few scholars who believe that there were no royal administrators or counsellors; the point at issue is whether these men are collectively known as "wise men", and thus associated with the wisdom tradition. Even if McKane is correct in his general thesis, that there were prophetic attacks on statesmen whose outlook was essentially secular, such men can only properly be associated with the wisdom tradition on the basis either of the description of such men in the relevant passages, or of strong suggestions within the

wisdom literature itself. McKane loads the question by describing the statesmen as "wise men" from the start.

Let us be clear, then: in this chapter I am attempting to establish whether 'wisdom', when used of individuals in the O.T , commonly has any specific connotations which link it to the literary wisdom tradition and to the administration of the state. To this end, I shall review briefly the usage as a whole before turning to a detailed consideration of texts where a technical sense has been supposed or might be expected.

1. Common uses of 'wisdom'

In the majority of cases it is clear that HKM lacks any real 'technical' sense, as any brief review of usage would show, although it is frequently used of specific types of individual, such as artisans or kings. So in Exod. 1^{10} and 2 Sam. 13^{3}, the primary sense is of shrewd calculation, with no ethical or professional implication; this is probably the case also in 1 Kg. $2^{6, 9}$, where the context is, however, more political. At the same time, the root is used of the skill shown by, and inherent in artisans (Exod. 28^{3}, $31^{3, 6}$, $35^{25, 26, 31, 35}$, $36^{1, 2, 4}$; 1 Kg. 7^{14}; 1 Chron. 22^{15} (ET 14), 28^{21}; 2 Chron. 2^{6}(ET 7), 12f(ET 13f.); Ps. 58^{6}; Is. 40^{20}; Jer. 10^{9}; Ezek. $27^{8f.}$). This 'skill' is most notably

the skill of the artisans who work on priestly robes, the sanctuary and the temple, and is viewed in Exod. 35f. as divinely inspired, although it is also the skill of those who make idols. The use of HKM for artistic skill is mainly late, but it clearly embraces the ideas of intelligence and ability which underlie other uses, and should not be regarded as a fundamentally different idea.

Similar is the use of HKM for 'skill in government'. Joshua is endowed with such wisdom (Deut. 34^{9} P), it is flatteringly attributed to David (2 Sam. 14^{20}), and it is claimed by the kings of Assyria (Is. 10^{13}) and Tyre (Ezek. 28). In a curious expression, Ezra is said to possess the wisdom of his God, which is probably to be understood in the same sort of way, as is the selection of leaders for Israel on the basis of their wisdom, understanding and knowledge in Deut. $1^{13, 15}$. It is this sort of 'governmental' wisdom which Solomon requests, and is granted, in 1 Kg. 3: "an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil".

Closely related to this is wisdom in a forensic sense, the ability to judge, which Solomon again possesses, and which is implied in Deut. 16^{19} (perhaps a proverb). Such ideas of government and judgement are probably embodied in the idea of divine wisdom, which is found in the Ugaritic texts (e.g.

CTA 4 iv 41), and is a characteristic of gods, or perhaps specifically of El, according to Ezek. 28^{2}. The idea of artisanship is perhaps present as well, in the particular association of Yahweh's wisdom with the creation (see especially Prov. 8^{22-31}, also Ps. 104^{24}, Jer. 10^{12}, 51^{15}). Wisdom is, however, associated with other divine action (Is. 31^{2}), and is a gift which God may grant to individuals or to the nation (Is. 33^{6}).

HKM is used of Israel, both in a negative way to express its lack of sense as a lack of wisdom (Deut. $32^{6, 9}$; cf. Hos. 13^{13}), or its skill in doing evil (Jer. 4^{22}), and in a positive way, where the wisdom of Israel lies in its possession of Yahweh's statutes (Deut. 4^{6}). The remnant of the nation, the "shoot from the stump of Jesse", will be endowed with the spirit of wisdom (Is. 11^{2}). 'Wise' is used of other nations in Is. 47^{10}, Jer. 49^{7} and Zech. 9^{2}.

In none of these cases does the term have any literary connotation, and only in two very late sources is such a connotation found outside the wisdom literature itself: in the story of Solomon's wisdom and in the book of Daniel, where Daniel and his companions are said to have been skilful in "letters and wisdom" (1^{17}). There is possibly some similar idea in the reference to famous wise men in the former (1 Kg. 5^{11} ET 4^{31}), but the reference is obscure [3].

2. The Succession Narrative

'Wisdom' has a range of closely related applications, which have different nuances but fundamentally the same basic sense of intelligence, good judgement and skill. It does not always have an ethical or religious implication, but may on occasion be regarded as a gift from God, to be used or abused (Ezek. 28^{17}). Since the qualities implied by 'wise' might be thought to have been useful, if not requisite, for a counsellor or official in the Israelite bureaucracy, it is all the more astonishing that it is never explicitly used to describe any of the numerous Israelite scribes and counsellors who appear in the OT. Thus Ahithophel, David's renegade counsellor, is never called 'wise', though the term is far from unusual in the Succession Narrative, and though McKane devotes an entire chapter of his book Prophets and Wise Men to him as the archetypal royal counsellor and wise man, nor is his rival Hushai. Indeed, the 'wise' individuals in this narrative are, for the most part, very clearly not royal counsellors.

The only possible candidate here for the description 'wise' counsellor, in any official sense, is Jonadab, though as David's nephew he is a member of the royal family, and there is no indication that he holds any official post [4]. Jonadab is rather hard done by in modern scholarship, to the

extent that the RSV turns the description of him as 'wise' into 'crafty' (2 Sam 13^3), and Whybray regards it as "probably ironical in intention" [5]. Yet when he reappears in $13^{30ff.}$, he is clearly not a villain, but gives sensible advice to the king, and prevents a panic. To be strictly fair to him, then, Jonadab's advice to his lovesick friend and cousin Amnon goes no further than to suggest a way in which he can be alone with Tamar and gain her sympathy: Amnon's rape of his sister is seemingly his own idea. Be that as it may, Jonadab is called 'wise' in connection with this advice, which is non-professional and ultimately disastrous, not later when he gives sensible and perceptive advice to the king.

The only other man who is called 'wise' is David himself, in 14^{20}. Here the description is possibly a little ironical, since the king has just been duped, and not for the first time in the narrative. Anyway, as the king, David is clearly neither scribe nor counsellor. The character who calls David 'wise' is a woman, and one of two women in the narrative who are themselves described as 'wise'. This 'wise woman of Tekoa' has been brought to Jerusalem by Joab, David's general, and at his behest presents David with a false case for judgement, turns the king's own ruling against him and persuades him to permit the return of Absalom, who is in exile (this, again, results in disaster).

The details of the exchange are obscured by confusion in the text; more importantly, the role of the woman is a matter of some dispute. G.G. Nicol has argued that the strong emphasis placed on the wisdom of the woman has led to a neglect here of the wisdom of Joab, who achieves his objective "by commissioning her to act and speak precisely according to his own careful direction" [6]. J. Hoftijzer, on the other hand, maintains, surely correctly, that the woman is not portrayed merely as a puppet of Joab, but that, when she extracts from the king a sworn judgement (14^{11}), in place of his initial vague statement, she is responding to circumstances which could hardly have been foreseen [7]. Anyway, it is certainly not the wisdom of Joab that is involved in ch. 20, when another wise woman, this time from Abel, confronts him from the wall as he besieges that city. When this woman learns that he is only after the fugitive Sheba, she 'goes to all the people in her wisdom', and the rebel's head is shortly thereafter thrown out to Joab.

C.V. Camp compares the stratagem of the woman of Tekoa with the prophetic use of 'juridical parables' (e.g. 2 Sam. 12^{1-15}, 1 Kg. 20^{38-43}), and the challenge from the wall by the woman of Abel with the exchanges across city walls by military leaders in 2 Sam. $2^{18-23, 24-28}$ and 2 Kg. 18^{17-36} [8]. From this she concludes that wise women were customarily granted, on a regular basis, a kind of

authority similar to that of prophets and military leaders. The basis of this authority, she suggests, lay ultimately in the joint responsibility of the mother and father for the education of a child, which is to be linked with early Yahwistic egalitarianism, and in a more general concept of motherhood. This hypothesis rests, however, on a wholly unjustified leap from the realm of literary comparison to that of historical conclusion. The 'juridical' parable, moreover, is a literary type known outside Israel [9], while the parley across the wall with Joab resembles the parallels only slightly in all but setting.

Hoftijzer has observed that the fundamental difference between Nathan's parable in 2 Sam. 12 and that of the woman of Tekoa lies in the woman's lack of power and immunity. Both the wise women in the narrative lack the authority to cajole or command: they have no political or religious power, and they employ shrewdness and persuasiveness as their only tool. This is apparently what constitutes the wisdom of the woman of Abel, when she 'goes to all the people in her wisdom'. The other main female characters in the Succession Narrative (Bathsheba and Tamar) are entirely passive, catalysts for the disasters which ensue from the lust they arouse; the 'wise women', on the other hand, are active characters who play a positive role in the course of

events. As Eissfeldt has observed, they manipulate powerful men into the settlement of a matter [10].

It is hard to say whether 'wise', when applied to these women, has any significance beyond this general one of shrewdness and persuasiveness. As I indicate elsewhere, women play a significant role in education, according to the wisdom literature, and some slight link with literary wisdom is suggested by their use of sayings which are seemingly traditional or proverbial (14^{14}, 20^{18}). Eissfeldt assumes that these women must have had some tradition or training, and Brenner connects them with "either a profession or else a social institution which was forgotten later on" [11]. Nicol suggests that they must be understood in the light of Jer. 9^{16} (ET 17), where the 'wise women' are seemingly associated with mourning rites. Possibly the description is stressed in the narrative for purely literary purposes, to highlight the symmetry created by placing a 'wise woman' story at each end of the story of the rebellion and the delightful contrast they make, on both occasions, with the stolid Joab. In any case, they are clearly not royal officials, although their wisdom is not of a sort inappropriate to such officials. The author of the Succession Narrative clearly feels no reluctance to use the term 'wise', and apparently understands it in a quite conventional way. If we are to assume that he was aware of a

special association between the term and the counsellors of the royal court, his failure to use it of Ahithophel and Hushai, both pre-eminently counsellors, becomes a little puzzling. Something similar, indeed, might be said of the OT as a whole.

3. "Wise men" texts

Wisdom is evidently not a quality confined to men: women possess it or are associated with it not only in Proverbs and the Succession Narrative, but also elsewhere as artisans and advisors (Jg. 5^{29}). In the last few pages we have seen ḤKM used in many other contexts and of many other individuals where there is no question of the reference being to state officials. We have seen that it is possible to speak of a particular association between 'wisdom' and such areas as artisanship and leadership, but that such association never seems to give the term a new, technical sense. As we turn now to the handful of passages in which such a sense has been found by some scholars, it is important that we bear in mind both the free and wide usage elsewhere and the relative paucity of these passages.

(a.) Foreign wise men Let us begin with passages which refer to 'wise men' outside Israel. Is. $19^{11f.}$ declares that:

"Utterly foolish are the nobles of Zoan,
the wise counsellors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel.
How can you say to Pharaoh,
'I am a son of wise men, a son of kings of old'?
Where then are your wise men?
Let them tell you and make known
what the Lord of Hosts has purposed against Egypt".

The characters in whom we are interested here are the 'wise counsellors' and 'wise men': who are they, and are they identical? The answer to the second question would appear to be negative: 'wise counsellors' here is parallel to 'nobles of Zoan (=Tanis)', but the first 'wise men' to 'kings of old': moreover, 'where then?', <u>ʾayyām ʾēpôʾ</u>, is an expression implying that something does not exist (cf. Jg. 9^{38}, Job 17^{15}), so it is reasonable to assume that the second 'wise men' indicates the 'ancient kings' also, since the 'wise counsellors' certainly do exist. In other words, the author of this late addition to the book is declaring that the Egyptian counsellors, whom he ironically dubs wise, give stupid counsel, and this makes their claim to be the descendants of ancient wise kings seem ridiculous; if these ancient kings, unlike their descendants, really were wise, maybe Pharaoh should ask <u>them</u> what Yahweh has purposed! This is the only interpretation of the passage which makes any sense of "Where then are your wise men?": these wise men who might give proper counsel cannot be the counsellors who are already there and giving bad counsel.

As we have said, the counsellors are called 'wise' ironically, in contrast to the stupidity of their counsel; this is shown by the somewhat contrived structure of the clause:

wise-counsellors-pharaoh-counsel-stupid

'Wise' is not part of a cliché 'wise counsellors', but of a stylised, chiastic clause in which it corresponds to, and is contrasted with 'stupid'. To sum up, then, this passage at least shows the use of 'wise' to describe counsellors, albeit non-Israelite ones, and the application of 'wisdom' to giving political advice. The unqualified use of 'wise men', however, is in a reference not to professional counsellors, but to ancient kings. The passage cannot be used, therefore, as evidence of a 'technical' use of HKM, as is often proposed, although it raises interesting questions about the knowledge shown of the Egyptian 'wisdom' tradition.

Egyptian 'wise men' crop up again in Gen. 41^{8} and Exod. 7^{11}. In the former, they are summoned, along with the ḥarṭummê miṣrayim, to determine the meaning of Pharaoh's dream. They are the wise men and magicians 'of Egypt', and there is no reason to suppose that they are attached to the court: that Pharaoh has to 'send and call' for them suggests, perhaps, that they were not. In the second

passage, wise men are again 'called for', this time along with 'sorcerers', to match Aaron's transformation of his stick into a snake. The wise men and sorcerers are collectively called the ḥarṭummê miṣrayim here: it is generally acknowledged that ḥarṭōm is derived ultimately from the Egyptian title ḥry-ḥb(t) ḥry-tp, the 'chief ritual book carrier'. Whatever the OT writers understood by the term, its use here to describe both 'wise men' and 'sorcerers' implies that the two are of the same 'magical' ilk. In both passages, indeed, the 'wisdom' required is magical or mantic, and the wise are presumably men skilled in the arcane arts: they are not professional counsellors. The 'wise men' of Babylon who appear in the Aramaic portions of Daniel (eg. $2^{12f.}$, $4^{6f.}$) are certainly diviners.

Foreign wise men feature also in the story of Esther, where the seven nobles "who saw the king's face and sat first in the kingdom" are described as "wise men knowing the times" (Esth. 1^{13}), and are consulted by the Persian king on a matter of law. Their 'knowledge of the times' probably does not indicate skill in divination [12], but a grasp of politics (cf.1 Chron. 12^{33}), and their role is perhaps to be identified with that of the seven Persians who are 'counsellors' to the king in Ezra 7^{14}. They are, anyway, clearly considered to be the highest officials and most intimate courtiers of the king [13]. What is less clear is

that 'wise' is used as a technical term here, since much of the verse is emphasising the ability of these men in legal matters. There is no reason at all to exclude a more general sense of the term, which, as we have seen, is used elsewhere in the OT of political and forensic ability. The verse, then, does not preclude an understanding of 'wise' in a technical sense here, but nor is it evidence for such usage.

The other occurrence of 'wise men' in Esther is at 6^{13}, where Haman's wise men are either identical with his friends of the previous verse, or, more probably, a simple textual error (cf. BHS, ad loc.). Textual problems also surround the 'wise men' of the nations in Jer. 10^{7}. As MT stands, the 'wise' appear to be the idols of the next verse: the reading of Theodotion, 'kings' for 'kingdoms', which would make 'wise men' parallel with 'kings' is attractive. The passage in vv.5-8 interrupts the flow of the oracle, and is omitted in LXX, whose text is supported here by $4QJer^{b}$ [14]. There are, therefore, excellent grounds for regarding it as a late addition. In view of these difficulties, it is not easy to identify the 'wise' of v.7: they are perhaps kings, idols or wise men in a general sense. There are certainly no grounds for assuming that they are officials, or a special group of any kind.

The foreign 'wise men' who appear in Obad. 8 are wise men of Edom, and the traditional association of wisdom with this country means that we should probably understand the term as representing the population in general; this is probably the case in Jer. $49^{7ff.}$ also. In Jer.50^{35} and 51^{57}, however, the matter is rather different. In these passages the 'wise men' of Babylon are included in lists of groups, and on both occasions follow the śārîm, the nobles or senior officials. There can be little doubt that they are intended to be a group of some sort here. The first list runs: inhabitants, nobles, wise men, diviners, warriors, (horses, chariots) [15], foreign troops, treasures, waters. The second: nobles, wise men, governors, prefects, warriors. From the second list it seems probable that the association of 'wise men' is not with diviners in the first, as the usage in Daniel might suggest, but with the śārîm; it is also clear that the lists do not contain synonyms for the same class, and that the 'wise men' and śārîm are not, therefore, identical. Who are they, then? The second list is very consciously a list of foreign officials: peḥāh, 'governor', and segen, 'prefect', are both loan-words from the Assyrian. It does not seem likely, therefore, that the author is merely applying to Babylon a term with which he is familiar from Israel. The two passages may show a 'technical' usage of 'wise men' applied at a late date to a group in Babylon, but we cannot

identify that group with any certainty, nor assume that they are scribes or counsellors.

Of the passages which speak of wise men in a non-Israelite context, then, only the Aramaic portions in Daniel and the oracle against Babylon in Jeremiah appear to demonstrate a technical use of the term. In the former it is used of diviners: this is possibly the sense in the latter also. Clearly, neither can be used to prove the use of the term in pre-Exilic Israel to describe a particular Israelite class. Though in Jer. 50^{35}, 51^{57}, Is. $19^{11f.}$ and Esth. 1^{13} there is some association with śārîm, the term used in 1 Kg. 4^{2} of high officials (whom I shall discuss in a later chapter), there is certainly no equation with them of a group of 'wise men'.

(b.) Israelite wise men What, then, of the use of the terms in an Israelite context? In Is. $29^{13f.}$ Yahweh declares that, since Israel's worship has become mechanical, and not heartfelt, he will again work wonders, "and the wisdom of their wise men will fail, and the discernment of their discerning men will hide away". Some scholars have seen behind this a reference to historical relations between Israel and Egypt [16]; McKane seems to make an implausible division of the material, so that v. 14 is linked not with v. 13, but with vv. 15f. [17]. Yet the passage is not to do

with the punishment of conspiracy and politics, but with the restoration of the religion:

> "Because this people draw near with their mouth
> and honour me with their lips,
> though their hearts are far from me,
> and their fear of me a commandment of men
> learned by rote,
> Therefore, behold, I shall again work wonders with
> this people, working wonders,
> and there will fail the wisdom of their wise and
> the discernment of their discerners will hide away"

The complacency of the people, and the degeneration of their religious observance into mere lip service is the cause of Yahweh's complaint: the people no longer 'fear' him because they feel awe, but because they are told to. So, he declares, he is going to work extraordinary wonders (lĕhaplî'...haplē' wāpele'). The wise and discerning are not a group, or groups [18], who have corrupted the people and are to be punished: the final line is emphasising the miraculous nature of the events to come. Confronted with these events, even the most intelligent will be dumbfounded: the miracles are to be 'mind-boggling'. The hithp. of sātar is used elsewhere only in Is. 45^{1}, of God hiding himself away, and in 1 Sam. 23^{19}, 26^{1} and the title of Ps. 54, of David hiding from the forces of Saul. The verb used with wisdom, 'ābad, is used for the 'failing' of courage in Jer. 4^{9}, and some such sense is probably intended here. The imagery, then, is of the retreat of human intelligence in the face of what it cannot comprehend. To be sure, there may

be some implication in these verses that human intelligence has been allowed to play too great a role in the national religion, but there is no indication whatsoever that there is a reference here to any specific group.

In Is. 5^{21} the prophet declares "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and discerning in their own sight". The context is a series of exclamations in which the prophet attacks those who call for speedy divine action despite their own iniquities: those who confuse good and evil, those who are wise in their own eyes, and those who are mighty in their drinking but corrupt in their dispensing of justice (Is. 5^{18-23}). McKane sees here an attack on a class of officials who wish to substitute human intelligence for piety; the expression 'wise in one's own eyes' is an expression used by 'the wise' themselves, which the prophet is turning against them [19]. Certainly this idiom is one favoured by the wisdom literature to express a false conceit in one's own intelligence (cf. Prov. $26^{5, 12, 16}$, 28^{11}), with some implication of hubris (Prov. 3^{7}). Yet it is clearly dangerous to suppose that the use of the phrase in Isaiah must be an <u>ironic</u> borrowing from that literature, since the prophet seems to be using it in precisely the same way that it is used there. The attack is a general one upon a corrupt and iniquitous establishment, which attempts to justify itself and its corruption, and there is no reason at

all to suppose that the target is a group which is called, or calls itself, 'the wise'.

Even more improbable is the claim that we should understand the 'wisdom' of God in Is. 31^{2} to be set against the 'false' wisdom of the nation's leaders. If they did claim wisdom, in the sense of a political intelligence overriding religious claims, there is no actual mention of it here. 'Wise men', on the other hand, are indeed mentioned in Is. 44^{25}, alongside diviners and liars, and in contrast to prophets. Clearly what unites these groups is not some particular social or political status, but their giving of advice and guidance without reference to the divine 'word'. Deutero-Isaiah shows antipathy toward such people, but neither the context nor the date of the passage allow the assumption that 'wise men' here are a specific group within government.

The key texts within Jeremiah have each provoked considerable discussion, but there is really no more reference to a class of wise men in this book than we found in Isaiah. In Jer. $8^{8f.}$ the prophet asks:

> "How is it that you say,'Wise are we,
> and tôrāh of Yahweh is with us'?
> yet, behold, into falsehood has the false pen
> of the scribes turned it.
> Wise men will be shamed, shattered and taken;
> behold, they reject the word of Yahweh,
> and what wisdom is there in them?"

The context here is somewhat confused by the apparent insertion of a later addition in vv. 10b-12; the previous verses are aimed at the nation in general (8^5). The structure of vv. 8f. is, however, a little clearer. The first verse begins with the quotation of something said by the prophet's hearers: the quotation appears to finish before the asseverative <u>'ākēn</u>, 'yet', in 8b, which introduces the prophet's own comment. The change to the third person in 8b appears to tell against the identification of the scribes mentioned there with those who are claiming to be wise in 8a, since the latter are addressed in the second person. The 'wise men' in v. 9, whose punishment is to ensue from the intolerable situation, may be the addressees, the scribes or a third, as yet unnamed group. The last is improbable, and the link formed by 'wise' probably indicates that the prophet is describing the people quoted in 8b. The prophet's hearer's, then, are claiming to be wise and to possess <u>tôrāh</u> of Yahweh; the prophet protests that this <u>tôrāh</u> has been corrupted by the scribes, and prophesies that those who call themselves wise will be destroyed, since they are in fact rejecting the divine word, and their wisdom is therefore unreal.

The important problem, then, is the identification of the addressees, who call themselves wise but have rejected the

Word. Who would associate possession of divine tôrāh with the possession of wisdom? McKane is forced to suppose that these verses represent a fundamental change in the nature of the 'wise men', from a wholly secular, political group, to one which is concerned with legal piety, since they accord ill with his previous descriptions of the wise man as Realpolitiker [20]. General associations of wisdom with tôrāh are found in Ps. $19^{8(ET\ 7)}$, 119, but the most probable reference is to the Deuteronomic claim in Deut. 4^{6}, that the possession of the Law makes Israel a 'wise' nation. Deut. 4 not only expresses the idea of wisdom through law, but prohibits tampering with this law, the crime of which the scribes are here accused (cf. Jer. 5^{31}). The impression that the audience addressed is not a specific group, but the people as a whole, is reinforced not only by the context, but also by the accusation that they have rejected (mā'āsû) the word of Yahweh: rejection by the people is a prophetic cliché (cf. Amos 2^{4}; Is. 5^{24}, 30^{12}; Jer. 6^{19}; Ezek. 20^{24}. See also Lev. 26^{15} and 2 Kg. 17^{15}); the only individual described as doing so in these terms is Saul, the king.

To sum up, then, there are good reasons to suppose that Jeremiah's address is to the people generally, who claim that they are wise because they possess divine instruction. The prophet attacks this complacency, averring that the instruction which they possess has been corrupted by the

scribes, and does not truly represent the divine Word. The 'wise' people are actually, therefore, rebelling against the Word, and will be destroyed, since their wisdom is illusory. It may be inferred from the final question that the prophet does not disagree that possession of divine instruction may constitute wisdom, but he claims that the written tôrāh, whatever we may understand that to have been, is not the true Word of God. If we insist on identifying a group of 'the wise' here, it cannot be a group of secular, politically orientated, scribes, but must be either a group of 'wise men' separate from the usual hypothetical group, as Lindblom suggests [21], or a radical development of that latter group, as McKane would have it. Either solution, by multiplying groups or stages of groups puts an intolerable burden on a theory which is hard pressed to prove the existence of even a single such group or stage.

Jer. $9^{22f.(ET\ 23f.)}$ has the prophet declare:

> "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom,
> and let not a mighty man boast of his might;
> let not a wealthy man boast of his wealth,
> but let the boaster boast of this:
> understanding and knowing me.
> For I am Yahweh who does ḥesed,
> justice and righteousness on the earth,
> for in these things I delight.
> Utterance of Yahweh".

As Whybray has pointed out, it is highly unlikely that we should view the 'wise man' here as representative of a

particular professional group, as McKane would have it [22]: the mighty man might conceivably be a professional soldier, but are we really to suppose that Israelite society included a group of 'professional' rich men? [23] The characters here are chosen not as representatives of professions, but as men who possess three different sorts of human power, intellectual, physical and economic, of which they might be inclined to boast. The only thing, declares the prophet, which is worth boasting about, is true knowledge of God.

Something similar is true of Jer. 18[18]:

> "And they said, "Come, let us make plans against Jeremiah, for tôrāh will not perish from a priest, nor ʿēṣāh from a wise man, nor dābār from a prophet. Come, let us smite him with the the tongue, and pay no attention to any of his words".

For McKane, the wise man here is "the representative of the political establishment and the prophet and priest of the religious establishment and Jeremiah's opponents accuse him of trying to undermine both" [24]. This interpretation is not uncommon, although many others have been proposed for this difficult passage, the obscurity of which arises from the lack of a direct narrative context [25]. Underlying many of the interpretations is the idea that the words of the protagonists reflect their objection to Jeremiah's teaching, and that they have somehow been provoked by a prophecy of the cessation of instruction from the priest, counsel from

the wise man and word from the prophet. What, then, would such a prophecy actually have meant? Priest and prophet are found together regularly in Jeremiah, and elsewhere, as representatives of the religious establishment, which is why it is tempting to see this as a mere extension to include another group. In that case, the prophecy must have been one of the end of each group's function - but their function as what? There is no statement here of the dissolution of the religious and political establishments: it is not the priest, wise man and prophet themselves who are threatened with extinction, but their pronouncements. It is these pronouncements, in fact, which form the link between them: the priest's instruction in the law, the wise man's counsel and the prophet's word represent the totality of the nation's guidance. If all these were to perish, the nation would be left utterly by itself and cut off from God, as was Saul in an earlier age.

This is clearly the sense of a very similar saying in Ezek. 7^{26}, where the nation, in the midst of calamity, seeks "a vision from the prophet, but the law perishes from the priest and counsel from the elders". This leaves the nation paralysed with despair and terror, incapable of defending itself. The people are abandoned by God and bereft of guidance and comfort; left alone thus, they are unable to cope. The close similarity of wording suggests some

relationship between the passages in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but there is a crucial difference: where Jeremiah reads 'wise man', Ezekiel has 'elders'. What this shows is not some replacement of the 'wise man' by the 'elder' in the post-exilic period [26]: the only evidence at all for the technical use of 'wise' is, as is becoming clear, in the exilic and post-exilic periods. The significance of the change lies in its demonstration of the relative unimportance of the terminology. Counsel can come from 'wise men', 'elders', call them what you will: their importance is as the source of counsel.

The most plausible interpretation of Jer. 18^{18}, then is as a denial by Jeremiah's opponents that the nation's sources of guidance will, as he has apparently prophesied, fail; that is, a denial that God is going to turn his back on, and abandon Israel. Perhaps, in that case, we do not altogether lack a context for the piece: the previous verse, 18^{17}, is a prophecy that God will, in the day of Israel's calamity, turn his back on them. In the next oracle from God, he promises that he will "make empty the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem". We have on our side, it seems, the opinion of the book's redactor. This, the similar passage in Ezekiel, and the sense of the verse itself all tell in favour of regarding Jer. 18^{18} as a reference to a prophecy of the abandonment of Israel and the cessation of guidance there.

It is their unwillingness to accept that Yahweh might abandon his people which leads his hearers to reject Jeremiah; where they can bear to hear about Yahweh's anger and judgement, the idea that he might abandon them altogether is provocative beyond all endurance.

If this is indeed the proper interpretation of this difficult verse, then its relevance to the understanding of wisdom lies in its placing 'counsel' alongside the priestly tôrāh and the prophetic word as a source of divine guidance for the nation. This should only be a source of astonishment to the reader imbued with the idea that wisdom is a wholly secular tradition. We have seen in the pages above that, on the contrary, wisdom is associated with God and with divine inspiration on a number of occasions. The religious significance of 'counsel' more specifically has been described by de Boer [27]. It is their role as sources of divine guidance, not as representatives of the establishment, which unites the priest, wise man and prophet in Jer. 18^{18}. The verse does not, therefore, constitute evidence for the existence of a class of wise men representative of the secular establishment.

(c.) Wise men: conclusions The only use of 'wise' as a technical term for royal officials, other than diviners, seems to be in late references to Babylonians, and it may be

that they too are to be regarded as diviners. It is never used as a technical term for a class of Israelites, and although 'wise' is found on a number of occasions in association with foreign royal officials or counsellors, no official Israelite counsellor is ever explicitly called wise. Of the texts which we studied above, none required that we posit the existence of a class of 'wise men' defined in terms of their professional function, while our interpretation of many precluded such an idea.

A final point which should be made is that we do possess lists of important groups in Israel in 2 Kg. $24^{15f.}$; Neh. 9^{32}; Is. 3^{1-3}, $9^{14(ET\ 15)}$; Jer. 1^{18}, 2^{8}, ^{26}, 4^{9}, 8^{1}, 13^{13}, 32^{32}, 34^{19}; Mic. 3^{11}; Zeph. $3^{3f.}$. If 'wise' really was a term especially associated with royal officials, and if 'wise men' really was the normal term for an important group within the Israelite establishment, it is truly remarkable not only that 'wise' is never used to describe a royal counsellor or official in Israel, but that the 'wise men' do not appear in any of these lists. It is surely more reasonable to conclude that no such technical use existed, at least until the term was used of Babylonians in the exilic and post-exilic periods. The only truly technical use of the term in an earlier time seems to have been in references to foreign diviners and magicians.

3. General Conclusions

The usage of 'wise' in the Old Testament cannot be used to determine the setting of the tradition represented in the wisdom literature. In the first place, it shows no particular connection with the literary tradition: the importance of the term HKM in the wisdom literature does not mean that the wisdom tradition acquired some sort of exclusive proprietorship over it. There is no reason to believe that an Israelite who heard the word would connect it immediately with the literary tradition. Even were there evidence, then, of a group of officials known as "wise men", this would give no cause in itself to assume that they were connected with the wisdom tradition. As it is, the evidence for the existence of such a group is quite inadequate. In several instances, the interpretation of passages by certain scholars seems to have been so influenced by the assumption that such a group did exist, that the content of the passage itself has been all but ignored. This points to something which will become more obvious as we go on: the consensus that wisdom emerged from a scribal and educational tradition has profoundly affected the exegesis of many important passages outside the wisdom literature itself.

Chapter 6 Proverbs and the Court

If the general Old Testament evidence does little to support the idea that the 'wise' are to be identified with the scribes, or some group of them, it is all the more important that we examine the evidence of Proverbs itself. If the earliest material in this book is to be identified as a product of the royal bureaucracy, then we might reasonably expect it to reflect such an origin. The evidence is of several types, and I shall discuss it under different headings.

1. The Superscriptions in Proverbs.

On the face of it, the most compelling evidence in the book of Proverbs for associating proverbial wisdom with the royal court, is the apparent attribution, in superscriptions to the text, of the composition or edition of certain sections of the book to Solomon and to 'the men of Hezekiah'. This is vaguely reminiscent of the royal attributions in Merikare and Amenemhet. Thus, Prov. 1^1 ascribes ch. 1-9, or more probably, indeed, the whole book to Solomon: "The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel"; 10^1 reads more simply: "The proverbs of Solomon". In 25^1 we are told: "These also are proverbs of Solomon

which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied(?)". The brief instruction of 31^{1-9} is attributed, it seems, to a non-Israelite king, or his mother: "The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him".

However, Ecclesiastes is similarly titled "The words of Qoheleth, the son of David, king in Jerusalem", which has traditionally been understood to indicate Solomon, and this title picks up indications of royal authorship in the text itself, which, given the clearly post-exilic origins of the book, must be regarded as fictitious. The fact that royal authorship by a Davidic king is highly improbable for Ecclesiastes, despite the claim of the title, certainly weakens the case for accepting the superscriptions in Proverbs at face value, as do the equally improbable ascriptions of the Song of Songs and the Wisdom of Solomon to Solomon, and of certain Psalms to David and Solomon. There is little inclination on the part of modern scholars to credit David with all those Psalms attributed to him in the Psalter, nor is it generally supposed that Isaiah of Jerusalem was responsible for all the book that now bears his name. In general, then, scholars are reluctant to give too much credit to such superscriptions or titles, and Toy, writing at the end of the last century, was fully in accord with the general critical opinion of his time when he commented that:

> "No OT titles are in themselves authoritative in the sense that they can be accepted without reference to the material involved...The name "Solomon" in titles is of equally doubtful import. The fact that he is said to be the author of Proverbs, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Ψ 72, 127 shows that the Jewish tradition came to regard him as the ideal of wisdom and a writer of idealizing non-liturgical poetry, and ascribed to him indiscriminately everything of this sort. If the titles in Canticles and Ecclesiastes cannot be accepted as authoritative, neither can those in Proverbs be so regarded. And if little or no weight is to be attached to 1^1...the same thing must hold of 10^1 and 25^1" [1].

Few scholars even now would disagree with these comments, at least with regard to Solomonic authorship, though W. Baumgartner asserted some years ago that the ascriptions in Proverbs had come to be taken more seriously in the light of more modern theories of an origin in the Solomonic period [2]. Despite the temptation to make such a connection, the usual caution about ascriptions in the OT has been maintained, and reinforced by the consciousness of a long traditional association of Solomon with wisdom. The ascriptions to Solomon, therefore, are widely assumed to be a consequence of this tradition, which is itself taken rather more seriously as evidence for the origins of wisdom, and possibly to have some further numerological significance [3]. As we shall see below, there are actually considerable difficulties involved in associating the historical Solomon with wisdom, let alone with the authorship of Proverbs.

If a healthy scepticism obtains concerning the ascriptions to Solomon, the same cannot be said, however, of scholarly

reaction to the note in Prov. 25^1, which links a section of Proverbs with 'the men of Hezekiah', and which is very different from those ascriptions. Not only do we have no clear knowledge of a traditional association of Hezekiah with wisdom, but we cannot begin to regard this as a pseudonymous ascription when it is not, apparently, an ascription at all. R.B.Y. Scott, while rejecting the historicity of the ascriptions to Solomon, finds this reference to the men of Hezekiah historically significant:

> "Since no tendentious purpose can be suspected in the mentioning of the otherwise unknown 'men of Hezekiah', this is first rate evidence that an organized literary movement existed at Hezekiah's court and under his patronage" [4].

This reference constitutes the principal evidence for his shift, in effect, of the Israelite Aufklärung from the time of Solomon to that of Hezekiah, when, he supposes, the Solomonic tradition arose as a projection back in time of a contemporary phenomenon.

If we compare with each other the superscriptions to the different collections, certain similarities and cross-references become obvious. Firstly, two of the superscriptions appear to refer back to previous superscriptions: thus 25^1 tells us that "These also (gam-'ēlleh) are proverbs of Solomon", and 24^{23} that "These also (gam-'ēlleh) are (sayings) of the wise". These apparently refer back to 10^1

(and 1^{1}?) and 22^{17} respectively [5]. Further, the use of "miśĕlê", 'mashals', is restricted to the Solomonic ascriptions, 'words' being used elsewhere. This may suggest that the term "miśĕlê šĕlōmōh" is a cliché; although there is a certain consistency about the form of the sayings in the first part of the collection 10^{1}-22^{16}, there is no good reason, when all the instances are taken into account, to suppose that the phrase is a technical term for a certain type of saying [6].

The arrangement of titles is interesting in itself:

1^{1}: mashals of Solomon...
10^{1}: mashals of Solomon.
22^{17}: Words of the wise.
24^{23}: Also of the wise.
25^{1}: Also mashals of Solomon...
30^{1}: Words of Agur.
31^{1}: Words of Lemuel...

This arrangement is, perhaps, suggestive of an artificial classification: 1^{1} introduces the first section and the book with the longest description of Solomon, and it is followed by a collection of mashals of Solomon, and then by a collection of words of the wise. Then come two collections, attributed to the wise and to Solomon respectively, and

marked as additional to the preceding collections. Finally, there are two collections of 'words', attributed to Agur and Lemuel (or his mother). The ascriptions do not cover all the collections isolated by modern scholars, and the neatness of their arrangement may suggest that they form an essentially unified classification of the text. They are quite likely not, therefore, titles which belonged to the individual collections before those collections were brought together. It is tempting to speculate that the 'also' ascriptions mark a stage of redaction in which further collections were added to an original collection. However, the evidence for all this is very slight, and we can reasonably go no further than to suggest that the broad consistency of the basic ascriptions tells against their originality.

If there is a perceptible pattern of ascriptions in Proverbs, then the 'men of Hezekiah' in 25^{1} appear to lie outside it. They are not described as authors, the basic ascription being to Solomon, but are associated in some way with the presence or transmission of the collection. The verb used for their activity is the hiphil form of ʿtq, which the LXX here translates by ἐξεγράψαντο, and the Vulgate by transtulerunt. The Vulgate implies an understanding of the verb as meaning 'transfer', and this would concur with the post-biblical Hebrew use of the verb for 'transcribe'; the Greek probably means 'copy' (for

oneself?). The other occurrences of this form of ʿtq in the OT are in Gen. 12^{8}, 26^{22} and Job 32^{15}, where the use is intransitive and the sense 'move away', and in Job 32^{15}, where it is used of 'removing' mountains (// 'overthrow'). The meaning 'transcribe' is not attested until very late, and the sense of the verb here was still debated by the rabbis [7]: there are certainly no grounds for assuming that such a meaning existed earlier, and it accords badly with other OT usage. The supposition of Scott, that it means 'bring forward', i.e., 'bring forward from the past', 'transmit', and therefore 'transcribe' [8], seems ill-founded, since the other occurrences of the verb in the OT do not, as he seems to believe, have any implication of progression or advance [9]. If it does mean 'copy', then this note is unique in the OT as a reference to the transmission of a text, and this must in itself make us suspicious. When the obscurity of the verb and the anonymity of 'the men' are taken into account also, it would seem most ill-advised to place great weight on the verse as an historical clue.

However, Gressmann has written of this verse that:

> "Für die absolute Chronologie ist 25^{1} von entscheidener Bedeutung. Die eigenartige Notiz über "die Männer Hiskias" läBt sich, obwohl sie sonst nirgends bestätigt wird, einleuchtend nur aus guter Überlieferung erklären; wenigstens hat bisher noch niemand zu zeigen vermocht, warum und zu welcher Zeit sie erfunden sein sollte" [10].

This opinion is, as we have seen, shared by Scott, and many, if not most, scholars have viewed the verse as reliable historical data, in a way which the ascriptions to Solomon are not. Such confidence has been founded in part on the lack of a clear traditional association of Hezekiah with wisdom in the OT, and in part on the very specific nature of the verse.

On the latter point, Toy long ago pointed out that "...still more definite statements are prefixed to certain obviously late psalms ascribed to David (see, for example, ψ 51-60)..." [11]. If later exegetical tradition sought to place Psalms in the appropriate period of David's life, it is interesting to wonder whether a similar process was at work here, seeking to associate with Hezekiah a collection of proverbs which was already linked with Solomon. We may note that in Is.38[9] a psalm is inserted, apparently by a later editor, into the prose text, and attributed to Hezekiah, which may indicate a traditional association of Hezekiah with literary activity. It is certainly noteworthy that the title in Proverbs is followed immediately by an unusual series of sayings which deal with the king and with behaviour in his presence. This and the series of miracle and other stories associated with Hezekiah in 2 Kg. 18-20 and Is. 36-38, allow the possibility, though by no means the presumption, that the association of Prov. 25ff. with

Hezekiah in 25^{1} is the result of a late interpretation of the king and court proverbs which follow the title as specific references to the court of Hezekiah, perhaps on the basis of a tradition no longer known to us. Oesterley, who holds this view, sees the roots of such a tradition in specific items of the account in 2 Kg.: the prominence of Shebna in 2 Kg. 18^{37}, 19^{2}, the crediting of Hezekiah with the utterance of a proverb in 19^{3}, and more generally Hezekiah's piety and commitment to the law. He notes that the verb used in 18^{7} for Hezekiah's 'prospering', is found also in Prov. 1^{3}, with the sense 'wise dealing' [12].

If none of this specific evidence is especially compelling, it does at least cast doubt on the assertion that this verse is explicable only as a genuine historical notice. If a process of traditional exegesis was at work here, there may be a further extension of this exegesis visible in the LXX and Targum readings of 'friends' for 'men' [13]. The 'men of Hezekiah' are quite unspecified in the Hebrew, and the translators have, perhaps, seen a reference to the friends of Prov. $25^{8, 9, 17, 18}$. Despite the claims built on this verse, the 'men', incidentally, cannot be assumed to have been scribes, or any professional servants of Hezekiah; similar OT usage does no more than suggest that they were in some way supporters of him, or

under his patronage (like the men of David in, e.g., 1 Sam. $23^{3, 5}$).

In general, then, the ascriptions of collections in Proverbs to particular Israelite kings present many problems. The ascriptions to Solomon, as is generally agreed, probably reflect a tradition about him which, as we shall see below, may have been late in origin. The reference to the men of Hezekiah in 25^{1} is probably no earlier than the ascription to Solomon in the same verse, and this, as we have speculated above, may be a part of a late system of ascriptions in Proverbs. It is possible that the verse is intended to explain why this section is separate from the first 'Solomonic' collection - that it was 'moved' or 'removed' under Hezekiah - or that it reflects some tradition about Hezekiah similar to that about Solomon. In any case, both the attested senses of the verb and the lack of such notes elsewhere in the OT tell strongly against it being a simple, contemporary reference to the process of transmission. It is wishful thinking to take it that way. In sum, all we can say, on the basis of the ascriptions in Proverbs, about the origins and transmission of the proverbial collections in Proverbs, is that a tradition, probably late in origin, associated such collections with Solomon and the 'men' of Hezekiah.

2. Court and King sayings in Proverbs.

In his last major study of wisdom, Gerhard von Rad acknowledged, as I have mentioned, the limited number of court-orientated sayings in Proverbs:

> "In spite of our first definition of the Sitz im Leben, it is simply not possible to regard the book of Proverbs merely as a product of courtly knowledge and serving for the training of high officials...sentences from the fairly narrow world of court and high officials are, on the whole, only scantily represented. Thus the supposition emerges that the wise men of the court...also functioned as collectors of non-courtly teaching material and that wisdom was not by any means located only at court" [14].

This represents not so much a shift away from his earlier position, as a closer definition of the precise role of the royal court in the formation of the wisdom tradition. Thus although it is in itself the origin of certain sayings, the court, according to von Rad, functions also as a collector of non-courtly material, associated with the middle classes and property owners.

This description of the court, as a centre for the collection and edition of proverbs, is apparently based, at least in part, on the reference to the men of Hezekiah in Prov. 25[1]. I have already questioned the historical significance of this reference, but even if it were clearly authentic, it is hard to see how it could be used to support such a hypothesis. At best, the men of Hezekiah are said to

have transcribed or copied the material, which is hardly the same as collecting or editing it.

Nevertheless, the idea of the court as a centre of collection gives full weight to the fact that many of the sayings in Proverbs reflect a background outside the royal court, as I have indicated above, and as can hardly be doubted after the, albeit flawed, study by Skladny [15]. The theory demands, however, some sort of evidence to suggest that a lot of non-courtly material was collected in the court, rather than that, as seems more likely on the face of it, a little courtly material was collected outside the court. Indeed, it requires evidence that some of the material, at least, can reasonably be called 'courtly'. In other words, it is necessary to show both that there is material in Proverbs which can only reasonably be attributed to court circles, and that there are redactional features in the collections which highlight this material.

If we turn first to the sayings in Proverbs concerning kings and rulers, we find a certain unevenness both of distribution and of opinion. I include under this heading some 32 sayings: 8^{15}, 14^{28}, 35, 16^{10}, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17^{7}, 19^{12}, 20^{2}, 8, 26, 28, 21^{1}, 22^{11}, 29, 25^{2}, 3, $4f.$, 28^{2}, 15, 16, 29^{2}, 4, 12, 14, 16, 26, 30^{29-31}, $31^{4f.}$. Despite

the connection of king sayings with Yahweh sayings in chs. 16 and 22, it seems probable that all these sayings refer to the king or to rulers, rather than to God, although the substitution of 'Lord' for 'king' by the LXX in 22^{11}, for instance, may suggest that later exegetes saw a reference to God. If the sayings are arranged according to the customary divisions of the book, we find that 25 of the 32 lie in the sections $16\text{-}22^{16}$ and 25-29. Furthermore, 21 of them are in $16^{10\text{-}15}$, $20^{2\text{-}28}$, $25^{2\text{-}5}$, 28-29, and are thus concentrated even within the sections. Of the other sections, only 10-15 has more than one saying, and both its sayings are in ch. 14, in close proximity to each other, and perhaps in our 'grey area'..

As regards their opinion, all the sayings in chs. 28-29 express a conditional, if not entirely sceptical, view of kingship and rulers, in contrast to the sentiments of other sayings. Thus, for instance, while in 16^{10}, and perhaps also 21^{1}, the king is an inerrant instrument of the divine will, 29^{26} observes that "Many seek the favour of a ruler, but from the Lord a man gets justice", and thus not only distances the king from God, but implicitly criticises his judgement. Clearly, not all of the sayings can readily be categorised as optimistic or pessimistic about kingship in this way. A large number of the sayings, indeed, are not concerned so much with the nature of the king, as with the

power he wields over others, and with the proper behaviour of individuals seeking to gain his favour or avoid his wrath. Thus 14^{35}, 16^{13}, ^{14}, ^{15}, 19^{12}, 20^{2}, 22^{11}, ^{29} are all concerned with the favour and anger of the king.

Given the variety of subject and opinion in all these sayings, it seems unlikely that they should be treated as a broad unity. On the basis of their favourable attitude to the king and/or their apparently specific application to those in close proximity to the king, I am inclined to say that 14^{35}, 16^{10}, ^{12}, ^{13}, ^{14}, 20^{2}, ^{8}, ^{26}, 21^{1}, 22^{11} and 25^{2}, ^{3}, $^{4f.}$ are the sayings most consistent with an origin in the court. In addition, other sayings with a more general applicability, such as 16^{15}, 19^{12} and 20^{28}, are at least compatible with such an origin. It is again noteworthy that a high proportion of these sayings lie within short sections: 16^{10-15}, 20^{2}-21^{1} and 25^{2-5}.

If we perceive some of the king sayings as at least compatible with an origin in the royal court, it is still not clear that this was in fact their origin. Certain of the sayings raise difficulties in terms of their content; thus, for example, when 21^{1} declares that "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will", we may choose to follow Skladny in seeing here an assertion of the distance between even the mightiest

of men and God [16], or McKane in seeing an assertion of the king's independence from advisors in matters of state [17]. One interpretation suggests subordination of the king, and the other a belittling of his counsellors. In neither case is it easy, therefore, to describe the saying as one with an obvious origin in the court.

This sort of difficulty must force us to take seriously the possible objections to an origin for the king sayings in the Israelite court. Clearly the most general objection that can be made is against the idea that the king is a topic of interest only to those in close proximity to him. This objection is especially relevant, of course, to sayings concerning the nature of the king. If we have rejected, like most writers, those king sayings which are broadly unfavourable to the king, as unlikely to have originated in the court, it is unreasonable to accept automatically those which are sympathetic to him, unless we start from the supposition that everyone except courtiers hated the king. F.W. Golka has argued recently along similar lines, claiming that sayings about kings may arise readily among the general population. He illustrates his argument with African folk-sayings, from which he adduces parallels, some more convincing than others, to the king sayings of Proverbs [18]. Such comparisons must be treated with due caution [19], but, in general, Golka makes a valuable point, and a

valid protest against the presumption that favourable sayings about the king must have originated in the court.

A second presumption which needs to be challenged is that the sayings, if they originated in a royal court at all, must have originated in the Israelite royal court. On this point, let me begin by observing that king sayings are found not only in Proverbs, but also in texts which are clearly post-exilic, and therefore post-monarchic. In Qoh. 8^{2-4} we read "Keep a king's command, on account of your sacred oath; be not dismayed; go from his presence, do not hang back when the matter is unpleasant, as he does whatever he pleases. For the word of the king is power, and who may say to him, 'What are you doing?'"; Sirach $7^{4f.}$ advises, "Do not seek a position of power from the Lord , nor a seat of glory from the king. Do not justify yourself before the Lord, nor be clever before the king". See also Qoh. 2^{12}, the obscure 5^{9} and $10^{16, 17, 20}$; Sir. $10^{3, 10}$, 38^{2}, 51^{6}; Wisd. 6^{24}, 11^{10}; Tobit $12^{7, 11}$. The first two of these passages, Qoh. 8^{2-4} and Sir. $7^{4f.}$, both imply not only the existence of a monarchy, but the presence of a royal court. Although it is possible that some reference was intended to the foreign rulers of post-exilic Israel, it seems highly improbable that we can speak of a living tradition of court wisdom in Israel at this time.

Gressmann suggests that post-exilic king-sayings are the result of inertia in the tradition, a tendency to continue with what has gone before on the part of writers who are not so much authors as collectors [20]. Although this explanation is probably correct to a limited extent, it depicts the collection of wisdom sayings as a somewhat effete and mechanical process, and does not really explain the material in Qoheleth. My own suspicion is that such sayings were taken to embody more general principles in a later age. Be that as it may, Gressmann's explanation, if taken to its logical conclusion, raises an important objection to the supposed origin of the earlier king-sayings in the Israelite court. If Sirach does indeed include king sayings in his work because they are traditional material, even though they have no specific contemporary reference, may not something similar be true of Proverbs itself? This has consequences for the dating of the collections, but even if we assume that the earliest material is pre-exilic, is it not possible that the king-sayings originated outside Israel and were not, therefore, de novo products of the Israelite royal court, nor necessarily even collected by members of that court?

The Egyptian instructions contain, in fact, a few king sayings comparable to those in Proverbs, and we may note, for example:

"Great is the noble whose nobles are great,
Strong is the king who has an entourage,
A wealthy man (indeed) is he who is rich in his nobles"
(Merikare, ll. 44f.)

"The <Lord> of the Two Shores is a knowing man,
A king who has an entourage is not ignorant;
He was wise (even) in his emergence from the womb,
"From among a million men did the god distinguish him
(Merikare, ll. 115ff.).

Bryce points out the specific similarities between the assertions in Prov. $25^{2f.}$, that the glory of kings is to search things out, and that the heart of kings is unsearchable, and the description of a particular king in the Sehetep-ib-Re version of the Loyalist Instruction, verso 1.12 [21]:

"He is Sia ('Perception') who is before hearts,
His eyes seek out every body"

In addition to these we may recall the lengthy eulogies of the king in the Loyalist Instruction more generally, in the Instruction by a Man for his Son, and in the Oxford Wisdom Text.

A closer parallel to the king sayings generally is found, however, in the Aramaic version of Ahikar, where a series of king sayings is found in col. vii, ll. 100-108. These are of varying length, and deal with much the same subjects as are found in the biblical sayings, with a particular interest in the anger of the king. The series is twice interrupted by other sayings (ll. 105a, 106b), but is clearly a coherent

'block' of material. It is, then, a clear parallel to the series in Proverbs, and demonstrates the existence of series outside Israel, which the authors of Proverbs may have imitated. Finally we may recall the Sumerian sayings-collection 12, with a group of sayings linked by lugal.

In Prov. 16^{12}, 20^{28}(following LXX) and 25^{4-5}, we find an idea of the throne being supported by righteousness, and this may in itself suggest a non-Israelite origin for those sayings. H. Brunner has argued that this image goes back to Egyptian conceptions of the foundation of the throne upon Maat, and was taken over from there in the time of Solomon [22]. This does not, of course, necessitate the hypothesis of an Egyptian origin for the sayings themselves, but it makes such an origin plausible, as does the possible Egyptian influence on the nearby 16^{2}, 21^{2} and 25^{21-23}. Against this must be set the possibility that such imagery might arise quite independently (McKane).

Let me sum up, then. Firstly, king sayings occur infrequently in Proverbs, and are for the most part confined to short series of sayings. Of these relatively few sayings, only a very small number seemed to be potential products of the royal court, and certain of those are attributable to

members of the court only with difficulty. Secondly, an interest in the king is not necessarily the prerogative of the court alone, and sayings which deal with the king may quite conceivably have originated outside the court. Finally, sayings which recommend particular behaviour in the presence of the king, and deal with the king himself, are found in OT wisdom literature dating from a period when there was neither king nor court in Israel. This indicated not only that such sayings might be found interesting by collectors of wisdom material outside court circles, but also drew attention to the possibility that, if these were vestiges of earlier wisdom, so might be the sayings in Proverbs. A brief review of king sayings in the Egyptian literature and in Ahikar confirmed the existence of comparable sayings in the broader Near Eastern wisdom tradition upon which Proverbs draws so heavily.

Closely associated with the king sayings are sayings dealing specifically with the proper behaviour of the courtier in the royal court (as opposed to more general sayings about proper behaviour, which may have been intended originally for the courtier, but lack specific reference). Certain of the sayings which we have treated as king-sayings are, in effect, also courtier-sayings (e.g. 16^{14}): there is a considerable overlap between these groups. The most striking sayings are found in chs. 23 and 25:

"When you sit to dine with a ruler,
pay close attention to what is before you;
and take a knife to your throat
if you are a man of appetite.
Do not desire his delicacies,
for it is deceptive food".
(23^{1-3})

"Do not advance yourself in the king's presence
and do not stand in the place of the great;
for it is better that one say, "Come up here",
than that you be put lower in the presence of the prince".
($25^{6f.}$)

"By forbearance a ruler [23] may be persuaded,
and a gentle tongue will break a bone.
(25^{15})

The third saying, however, is probably only a testament to the power of a level temper when one wishes to accomplish something: the second stich shows that the appearance of the king as an example here is quite incidental. The addressee in the other sayings is apparently the individual who might from time to time find himself in the presence of the king himself or, in the first, a man of importance. Other sayings, such as $24^{21f.}$ [24], are less specific, and this is true of most of the sayings dealing with the anger and favour of the king. It is difficult, however, to place even the very specific sayings in the Israelite court, since, again, they may be derived originally from non-Israelite sources. The imagery of 25^{15}, for instance, is close to that of the saying in Ahikar 105f., though its sense is rather different:

"Gentle is the tongue of a k[ing], but it breaks the ribs
of a dragon, like death which is [n]ot seen."[25]

For a similar assertion of the strength of words, see Merikare 1.32:

"If a craftsman in speech, you will be victorious,
The strong arm of [a king] is his tongue
Stronger is speech than all fighting,...".

The saying in 23^{1-3}, lies, of course, in the section of Proverbs most heavily dependant on Amenemope, and corresponds broadly to Amen. 23.13-18:

"Do not eat food in the presence of a noble,
and then put your mouth before <him>.
If you are sated, chew(?) falsely
take pleasure in your spittle.
Look at the bowl which is before you,
and let it serve your needs".[26]

We might compare also the advice in the older instructions of Kagemni (I) and Ptahhotep (VII):

"If you sit with a crowd,
Shun the food which you love. Self-denial is a short
moment, (but) gluttony is baseness:
One points at it (in reproach)".

"If you are one of those sitting
At the table of one greater than you,
Take what he gives as it is set under your nose...".

Advice similar to that of Prov. $25^{6f.}$, regarding the proper place to seat oneself in the king's presence, is also found in Egyptian literature. Ptahhotep XIII advises:

"If you are in the antechamber,
Stand and sit as fits your rank,
Which was assigned you the first day...".

The ruler of Prov. 23^{1} is not necessarily to be identified with the king, and this is nowhere the sense of the Egyptian parallels: rather, he is probably, like the sr of Amenemope, a nobleman or senior official, someone more important than oneself. In the broader context of the relationship between Amenemope and Prov. 22f., it is interesting to note that there seems to be some element of generalisation away from the court. Thus, where Amen. 27.16f. reads: "As to a scribe who is experienced in his office, he will find himself worthy(?) to be a courtier" [27], the equivalent Prov. 22^{29} says: "Do you see a man skilful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men". The most important point about the Egyptian sayings, however, is the strong evidence they constitute against courtier sayings in Proverbs being original compositions of the Israelite court. This is true also of more general sayings about the value of counsellors, such as 11^{14} and 15^{22}, with which we may compare Merikare 11. 44f., 115ff., quoted above.

Our brief survey of the material suggests that neither king sayings nor courtier sayings represent strong evidence for the composition of wisdom sayings at the Israelite court, and that the origins of both are more probably to be sought in the earlier literature of other countries. Nor can

it be assumed that the adoption of such sayings into Israel must have been through the royal court, since later Jewish wisdom happily adopted and collected such sayings despite the absence of a royal court. The very existence of king and courtier sayings in Proverbs does not, then, justify a presumption that wisdom sayings were composed at the Israelite royal court.

An interesting study of the role played by king and court sayings in Prov. 10-29 has been made by W. Lee Humphreys, who himself examines the internal evidence for linking the collections in this section with the royal court and the education of courtiers [28]. The basis of his approach is the belief that there can be discerned in the Egyptian instructional literature a 'motif of the wise courtier', in which is portrayed the ideal courtier whose life is devoted to the service of the king. This motif embraces not only references to the king and court, but also themes found in conjunction with such references in the Egyptian literature. These subsidiary themes are not, Humphreys notes, restricted in their application to the courtier alone, and are of more limited evidential value. They include sayings about the benefits of, for instance, good counsel and self-restraint.

After a brief discussion of the motif in Egyptian literature, Humphreys examines as collections 10^{1}-15^{33}, 16^{1}-

22^{16}, 22^{17}-24^{34}, 25-27 and 28-29, concluding, on the basis of this examination, that the motif plays a prominent part only in 16^{1}-22^{16} and 25^{2}-^{27}, which latter, following Bryce, he takes to be an independent sub-collection [29]. This conclusion as to distribution is, of course, similar to our own above. The limitation of the theme in Proverbs is, Humphreys argues, in part a result of the difference between the perceptions in Israel and Egypt of the king's relationship to the deity. Finally, his study leads him to conclude that the small proportion of 'wise courtier' sayings in Proverbs makes it probable that "circles other than a court educational centre played formative roles in the middle stages of the development of the book" [30].

However, like Skladny and others [31], Humphreys sees significance in the concentration of the sayings in the 'blocks' of Yahweh and king sayings in 16^{1-15} and 20^{22}-21^{3}. The placing of these blocks at the beginning and near the end of the collection 16^{1}-22^{16}, he suggests, may indicate that this collection received its shape at the hands of those concerned with the training of future courtiers, and he observes that the subsidiary themes associated with the wise courtier motif play a significant role in this collection, in contrast to the previous collection 10^{1}-15^{33}.

These blocks are indeed evidence of an interest in collecting together sayings which mention the king or Yahweh. The series of king sayings observed above in Ahikar, however, cautions us against assuming that this was necessarily an activity restricted to the royal court. We may recall that Proverbs contains other series of verbally-linked sayings, most importantly those which feature the fool and the sluggard in $26^{1-12, 13-16}$; not dissimilar are the concentration of righteous/wicked antitheses and sayings about speech in chs. 10-15. So far as I am aware, nobody has ever ventured to suggest that an obvious interest in sluggards and fools is key evidence for the Sitz im Leben of Proverbs.

More importantly, even were we to take the blocks as evidence for the redaction of king and court sayings at the royal court, it would still not be clear that they constitute evidence for the redaction of non-court sayings at the royal court. The relationship of the series to the sub-collection in $16\text{-}22^{16}$ as a whole is crucial here: if they were deliberately formed as part of the process of collection, or if they were deliberately positioned at key points in the collection, it would seem likely that they indicate the major concerns of the collector. However, it is not clear that either of these is true. The evidence of Ahikar for the existence of such series suggests that they

may be a conventional type of unit picked up or imitated by the Israelite redactors.

At the same time, the position in the collection of these blocks is not especially striking: they do not lie at the beginning and end, but at the (estimated) beginning and near the end, a miss which is as good as a mile. In fact there is a great deal of material between 21^{3} and 22^{16}, while the beginning of ch. 16 seems firmly attached to the preceding verses. It will be recalled, of course, that there appears to be a 'grey area' in the middle of Prov. $10\text{-}22^{16}$, the extent of which cannot be properly defined, and which both Whybray and Skehan have viewed as an editorial insertion. Despite the unsuccessful efforts by Humphreys to answer such claims, it is clear that the difficulties which surround the material here pose a considerable obstacle to the assumption that the series were important original features of the second sub-collection. It is simply not possible to show that the second sub-collection begins at 16^{1}, even if that is a convenient starting-point for the purpose of broader stylistic analyses.

Finally, if we wish to find some thematic significance, it is important to bear in mind the close association in these sections between Yahweh and king sayings. Even if the 'king' here is not to be identified as God, it is at least clear

that whoever put the series together was interested in something other than just 'court wisdom': these are not simple eulogies of the king. I am myself inclined to see relatively little significance. The end of ch. 15 and most of ch. 16 are made up of a number of unusually long verbal chains, of which the Yahweh and king series are just two. Within neither is there any strong thematic coherence and if some train of thought is visible, it can yet hardly be said that either makes any point. It surely takes more than the assembling of a few sayings which mention the king to indicate a special editorial purpose. In 20^{22}-21^{3} there is no coherent series as such. Rather 20^{22-24} are linked by 'Yahweh' and v. 24 then begins a short series linked literally (vv. 24-26). Verse 27 mentions Yahweh and v. 28 the king, but vv. 29f. mention neither; there are no links here. Finally 21^{1-3} are Yahweh sayings, the first mentioning the king also. In other words, only three of the sayings mention the king, and the structure is explicable on other grounds.

All this leaves out 25^{2-7}, which Humphreys sees as part of an independent work, following Bryce, and I, for reasons outlined earlier, do not. Here there clearly is a series of king sayings standing at the beginning of a collection, and the first three are certainly grand enough to indicate a special purpose, though the fourth spoils this a bit. This

is the only series where I think that we can even entertain the idea that special redactional interest is involved. However, this is the short sub-collection which includes the fool and sluggard sayings also, and there is a strong possibility that the redactor's interest is not so much in collecting king sayings as in forming series of sayings about a particular character.

3. Conclusions.

Neither the ascriptions nor the court and king sayings in Proverbs are clear evidence for the composition or redaction of wisdom literature in and for the royal court. The ascriptions are probably late and are of dubious historical value, while the courtier sayings, and perhaps the king sayings also, are likely to have been taken up into the tradition from earlier sources. Were our question, "Is the Israelite wisdom literature interested in the king and the royal court?", then the answer would certainly be "yes": both the early and the late, post-exilic wisdom literature are interested in the royal court. The question more important to the issue in hand, however, is whether or not there is any material the only reasonable explanation for which is that it was written or collected by courtiers or officials, for courtiers or officials. The answer to this

question is "no". It is hard to maintain that only courtiers were interested in the court and king, likely to find themselves in the presence of someone more powerful than themselves, or required to be persuasive and to make a good impression. The use of similar sayings in post-exilic wisdom literature, moreover, lends weight to the idea that such interest in the court was inherited by Israel through its adoption of foreign wisdom literature, and there is no need to posit a phase of composition at the court in order to explain its presence.

Chapter 7 Joseph

The patriarchs of Genesis bear little resemblance to the anonymous heroes of Proverbs, and the complex prose narrative of the Joseph story in Gen. 37-50 is hardly reminiscent of anything in the wisdom literature. Nevertheless, since the publication of an article on Joseph by Gerhard von Rad in 1953, the Joseph Narrative has been regarded by many scholars as a manifestation of early wisdom with close links to the proverbial material [1]. If this is true, then the narrative is undoubtedly of the greatest value for an understanding of the setting of wisdom, and it has played an important part in many discussions of the subject. In the chapters which precede this, I have examined the more direct evidence for the setting of wisdom, and in the chapters which follow I shall look at the circumstantial evidence. The Joseph Narrative fits neatly into neither of these categories, and many of the issues involved will crop up again, when I turn much later to the question of wisdom influence. I have chosen to study the narrative at this point because von Rad's ideas are, in some important respects, a crystallisation of the theories studied in the last two chapters, since he argues that Joseph is a wise man holding an office of state, and that the narrative exemplifies the themes of the courtier sayings and of other wisdom material.

It is important that von Rad's claims about the narrative itself be properly understood. Subsequent studies of other texts have made 'wisdom influence' a familiar subject over the last few decades; von Rad, however, does not describe the Joseph Narrative as a text 'influenced' by the wisdom tradition, but as a wisdom text itself. For him, the story was written with the deliberate intention of embodying the educational ideals of the wise men, whom he supposes to have been active in the royal court under the early monarchy. On the one hand, the character of Joseph is depicted in such a way as to exemplify these ideals of behaviour, while on the other, the underlying theological presuppositions of the work are identical to those of the wisdom literature. In this chapter I shall examine, therefore, both the characterisation of Joseph and the theology of the narrative.

1. The characterisation of Joseph. The figure of Joseph himself is undoubtedly the most important element in von Rad's description of the narrative as 'a didactic wisdom story'. He contends that the character and behaviour of Joseph are a blueprint for the young man aspiring to power in the royal court, that he is an idealised figure conforming to the 'Leitbild vom Menschen' of the wise men, as described in Hebrew and Egyptian wisdom literature. This ideal character is founded on the fear of Yahweh, and built

up in the 'hard school of humiliation'. Joseph displays it in his behaviour towards Potiphar's wife, in his shrewd counselling of Pharaoh, and in his forbearance from revenge upon his brothers. In his relationship with these brothers he shows extraordinary control over his emotions, and an ability to 'keep silence'. In more general terms, Joseph is a young man "von bester Bildung und Zucht, von Gläubigkeit und Weltgewandheit", who conforms to the ideal of a man, "der seinem Wesen durch Zucht, Beschiedenheit, Kenntnisse, Freundlichkeit und Selbstbeherrschung eine edle Form gegeben hat".

Certain objections present themselves at once to this assessment. We may reasonably ask, for example, what leads von Rad to attribute a fine education to Joseph, who is, after all, merely a shepherd boy in ch. 37, while '<u>Weltgewandheit</u>' is a wholly subjective impression, with no specific justification from the text. For evidence of Joseph's great self-control, moreover, he cites, remarkably, 42^{24}, $43^{30f.}$ and 45^{1}, all instances in which Joseph is seen to lose control. Certainly these passages demonstrate the depth of Joseph's emotion, and perhaps the pressure to which he is subjected, but they hardly affirm his self-control. Crenshaw [2] has rightly remarked that, "the failure of Joseph to control his emotions must not be overlooked", and Redford [3] demanded, "How can we apply a term like 'self-

controlled' to a man who becomes violently angry one minute, runs out to cry the next, and finally breaks down completely when he can no longer continue the sham?" [4].

Other aspects of von Rad's picture of Joseph are, if not quite so puzzling, at least based on interpretations of the text which are clearly open to challenge. Thus the idea that in chs. 42-44 Joseph is somehow testing his brothers, outlined more fully in von Rad's commentary on Genesis [5], is one which presents considerable difficulties. Given the considerable anguish and humiliation which Joseph inflicts upon his brothers, it is difficult to believe that there is no element of punishment present, and this is never denied in the narrative. Joseph's tale-bearing (cf. Prov. 11^{13}) [6], his indiscreet revelation of his dreams, and his false accusations against his brothers (e.g. Prov. $12^{17ff.}$), are all of importance in the story, and in the portrayal of Joseph, but are hardly in accord with the ethical ideals of the wisdom literature. It can hardly be denied that we should expect in a didactic, idealising text not only a more lucid, but also a more consistent idealisation.

Of Joseph's rise to power von Rad writes: "...Joseph ist Beamter, und er ist es geworden indem er vor dem Pharaoh eine doppelte Kunst bewies, nämlich die der öffentlichen Rede und die des Ratgebens. Das aber ist genau das, worauf

die Weisheitslehrer unablässig gedrungen haben". In this way von Rad seeks to associate the rise with the abilities which, he supposes, were required by the wise courtier according to the wisdom literature. I shall not discuss at this point the reasons for Joseph's elevation, although it should be evident that there is more than his courtly abilities involved. What is more important is that the Joseph Narrative does not in the least depict the hero's rise as the inevitable promotion of an able counsellor through the ranks of a bureaucracy: Joseph arrives at the court as the result of a unique chain of circumstance, summoned from prison to interpret the Pharaoh's dreams. There is nothing in ch. 41 to suggest that Joseph is elevated as a result of his rhetorical ability or persuasiveness [7]. The situation is inimitable: praiseworthy though Joseph may be, it is difficult to see all this as a path to be followed by aspiring royal advisors.

Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, von Rad's attempts to compare Joseph's behaviour and character with the ideals of the wisdom literature rely too much on apparent, rather than real, correspondences. The clearest, and perhaps the most important, example of this is his claim that Joseph's 'keeping silence' with his brothers corresponds to the teaching of passages in Proverbs (e.g.

10^{19}, 12^{23}) and in the Egyptian instructions. Joseph's silence in the story consists wholly of his decision not to reveal his real identity to his brothers: it is not a physical silence or a discreet manner. Even if we were to leave aside Joseph's garrulousness in ch. 37, at every subsequent meeting prior to his self-exposure, he is shown interrogating, accusing or, sometimes, reassuring his brothers, once (44^{15}) boasting to them of his supposed abilities. It is not at all this sort of deception and self-concealment which the wisdom literature and Egyptian instructions have in mind.

G.W. Coats has presented an important development of von Rad's theory, which takes account of and eliminates certain of these difficulties [8]. Coats argues that ch. 39-41 are to be taken as a separate 'kernel', and are to be characterised as a 'political legend', similar to that of Solomon in 1 Kg. 3^{5-8}:

> "The purpose of a legend would be to paint an ideal figure as a model for edification of subsequent generations. As an ideal the legendary principal can appear faultless, almost superhuman, at least more than a little unrealistic...In both cases the legendary heroes exemplify the proper use of power by an administrator already in office" [9].

For Coats, the Joseph of this 'kernel' "seems totally different from the presentation of the same figure in Gen. 37. In crisis situations, in despair and poverty, in

power at all levels, he is the image of a well-disciplined leader, an ideal administrator of a powerful office" [10]. For Coats also, then, Joseph is an idealised figure, although now his exercise of power, rather than his attainment of it, is the model for emulation. By separating the Joseph of ch. 39-41 from the shepherd boy of ch. 37, and from the arbitrary tyrant of the later chapters, whom he believes to have been a deliberate contrast, Coats is able to overcome many of the problems of von Rad's theory. Yet it is still no easier to perceive any real didactic purpose. When he concludes that "The young man who rises through the ranks to a position of power knows from the ideal pattern, the legendary Joseph, that discretion and wisdom are essential", the reader is surely moved to wonder whether this whole, sophisticated story could really have been written to illustrate such a jejune truism. This is hardly didacticism in any meaningful sense.

The chief obstacle to any hypothesis about the character of Joseph in ch. 39-41 is that Joseph in these chapters is a rather pale figure, whose behaviour is described in general terms, and whose administrative successes are ascribed not to his own ability, but to divine intervention ($39^{3, 5, 21, 23}$; cf. also 40^{8}, 41^{16}). A great proportion of these chapters, furthermore, is given over to descriptions of dream-interpretations, described in far greater detail than

Joseph's administrative activities. The only point at which we can make any real judgement of Joseph's behaviour while he is in a position of responsibility, is in his response to the advances of Potiphar's wife, and much is therefore made of this by Coats [11].

Of this story von Rad had commented that, "Die Erzählung Gen. xxxix liest sich doch geradezu wie eine ad hoc verfasste Beispielerzählung zu den Mahnungen der Weisen", citing passages from Proverbs and Ani which warn against 'strange' and married women. Coats accepts this correspondence, as does B.S. Childs [12], who remarks that, "...Joseph reveals the ultimate in self-control and repulses the advances of Potiphar's wife because of his fear of God...". Coats, however, argues that the basis of Joseph's refusal is his responsibility towards his master, while Childs apparently asserts a basis in obedience to God (as does Crenshaw). Essentially, then, two points of contact with the wisdom tradition are claimed for this story: the first that it corresponds to the wisdom literature's warnings against loose women, the second that Joseph's refusal shows him to be following wisdom precepts, either religious or ethical.

For the attitude of the OT wisdom literature to strange women, von Rad cites Prov. $22^{14}$and $23^{27f.}$, to which we may

add 2^{16-19}, 5^{1-14}, 6^{20-35}, 7^{1-27}, 9^{13-18} and 30^{20}. Of these, the last is probably to be distinguished from the rest, referring as it does merely to the disingenuousness of the adulteress. The other passages warn against the seductions and temptations of loose women, perceiving them as a trap. Frequently they warn that the result of succumbing to such temptations is death, the path to Sheol. In 6^{24-35}, dishonour and the seriousness of the punishment are emphasised. It seems probable that, on one level at least, the 'death' in these passages is a reference to the fatal punishment for adultery, be it through judicial sentence of death or through personal vengeance; this aspect is found also in the Egyptian material [13]. For Prov. 1-9 there may also be, as we have seen, some symbolic significance. The emphasis, then, is not upon the moral issues involved in adultery, but upon the difficulty of resisting the temptation and the dangerous consequences of succumbing to it. Again, we have already noted that Prov. 1-9 seems to lay great emphasis upon the power of the woman to attract through speech analogous to the call of Wisdom.

In contrast to the voluptuous seductions by femmes fatales in the wisdom literature, the attempt by Potiphar's wife to seduce Joseph, although frequently repeated, is rather perfunctory. Joseph's refusal bears no resemblance to anything in the passages from Proverbs: he speaks of how

good his master has been to him, and how he has given him everything except his wife: "how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?". Here hārā'āh hagĕdōlāh is not simply the sin of adultery: Joseph argues not on the grounds of some inherent sinfulness in adultery, but that to take Potiphar's wife, when he has been given everything else, would be wrong.

Coats describes this motive as a matter of 'Joseph's responsibility to his master', Westermann and Gunkel as a 'breach of trust', but neither of these descriptions is adequate. Joseph has no 'responsibility', in terms of what Coats calls 'a proper order for administration', to avoid sleeping with his master's wife. Rather, Joseph's refusal appeals to the ethical wrongness, in more general terms, of taking from a man the only thing which he has not given. Joseph's reply shows none of the self-interest which characterises the remarks of the proverbial literature on the subject of adultery. Whether we understand the 'sin against God' to be a description of the ethical basis for refusal, or a second, religious basis, it too is an expression quite unknown in the wisdom exhortations against adultery. Beyond the topic itself, it is, indeed, difficult to find any correspondence between the story here and the wisdom passages cited [14]. The point should also be made,

incidentally, that it is a strange didacticism indeed which promises a prison sentence as the reward for virtue!

Von Rad's claim that the story "liest...wie eine ad hoc verfasste Beispielerzählung..." must, moreover, be taken in the context of the numerous parallels to the central motif [15]. The Egyptian tale of the two brothers, Anubis/Anpu and Bata, has often been cited as a close parallel, indeed, a possible source for the story in Gen. 39, and a similar story is told in the Iliad, where Anteia attempts to seduce Bellerophon [16]. Of other, later parallels, we may note in particular the stories of Peleus, Hippolytus and Tenes [17]. In early Jewish literature we find the story of Susannah, the wife of Joakim, accused by two elders whom she has spurned, where, of course, the sexes are reversed, but the motif the same [18]. None of these stories has any apparent origin in the wisdom tradition. The prevalence of the motif makes it improbable that Gen. 39 was composed especially to illustrate wisdom teachings about adultery, and it shows no significant variations from the theme which might indicate that it has been adapted to such a purpose.

If neither the story of Potiphar's wife nor Joseph's behaviour in that story seem to demonstrate any close relationship with the wisdom tradition, then Coats' theory begins to lack credibility. It is difficult to find any

other point in these chapters where Joseph's behaviour while he is in a position of responsibility, serves as a possible model for emulation. The Joseph Narrative, moreover, is not at all interested in the ethics of power: where the proverbial literature looks at the correct use of power, it emphasises above all the importance of honesty (cf. Prov. 17^{8}, 29^{4}) and justice (cf. Prov. 16^{10}, ^{12}, 29^{14}). If the Joseph Narrative, or at least ch. 39-41, is indeed intended to exemplify and teach wisdom ideals for administration, the omission of these key wisdom concepts is astonishing.

W.L. Humphreys [19] has recently presented an argument similar to those of von Rad and Coats, although he is inclined to see wisdom influence rather than a primary wisdom purpose in the Joseph Narrative. Like Coats, he treats chs. 39-41 as a separate unit, and believes that Joseph is portrayed in these chapters as an ideal courtier, on the model of a wisdom courtly ideal [20]. Much of the evidence which he adduces is similar to that discussed above, although his approach is generally more cautious. The main emphasis in the argument is upon Joseph's courtliness, and his service to the king as an administrator, and Humphreys' new contribution in this area is his treatment of 47^{13-26}, which he believes to be a continuation of 39-41. He denies that the primary purpose of this passage is aetiological, and claims that it is intended to portray the

advantage to the king of Joseph's actions as a great administrator.

But is this really the intention? Even if we bear in mind the conclusion of B.S. Childs [21], that the formula 'to this day' is generally a secondary redactional remark, intended to confirm an independent tradition, the passage still appears to be, in essence, an attempt to explain the situation which was perceived to exist in Egypt This is clear not least from v.22, which details the exception of priestly land. That the passage is secondary is accepted by most commentators, on the grounds of its intrusiveness, style and vocabulary [22]. Further, it shows signs of disunity: vv.13-15a include Canaan, which is absent in the subsequent verses, while the intention of the measures changes abruptly in v.23 from the relief of starvation to the provision of seed for re-sowing, presumably after the famine. Finally, if the intention were to demonstrate Joseph's ability, we should expect to find him initiating all the action, but in vv.18-20 the steps he takes, which enable the 'land reforms' and are most critical of all, are taken entirely at the suggestion of the Egyptians themselves.

If, then, there is no reason to suppose that the narrative is attempting to idealise Joseph's behaviour, does it at

least identify him as a 'wise man' by having him declare that he 'fears God' in 42^{18}? Describing Joseph's 'ideal' character, von Rad comments that, "Das Fundament und der Ausgangspunkt dieses Bildungsstrebens ist die "Gottesfurcht", zu der sich auch Joseph bekennt; und Gottesfurcht ist ganz einfach Gehorsam Gottes Geboten gegenüber (Prov. i 7, xv 33; Gen. xlii 18)" [23]. A concordance reveals at once that the expression 'fear God' is common in the wisdom literature, but is by no means exclusive to it; the very use of the phrase, then, cannot be taken alone as an indication of wisdom influence, and the meaning of the phrase in the context of 42^{18} must be the prime consideration:

> "Joseph said to them on the third day, "Do this and live: I fear God. If you are honest men, let one of your brothers be bound in your prison...".

The clause "I fear God" follows the double imperative clause without any connecting particle, but is probably to be taken as causal [24]: it cannot be taken with the subsequent conditional sentence, and as a wholly independent sentence it would interrupt the command and make no sense. The clause must, then, in some way refer to the promise implicit in the second imperative, which serves as the apodosis of a condition. The unusual word-order of the Hebrew, which places 'God' at the beginning of the clause, might suggest that Joseph is emphasising here his own

allegiance to the same God as the brothers, but, again, that by itself makes little sense unless it is meant to imply something more. Von Rad understands the expression to indicate obedience to the divine law, but this is surely inappropriate here. Rather, the context requires that the clause be in some way an affirmation of the fact that the brothers will live if they obey Joseph's command, of Joseph's fairness and reliability in this matter.

It would be wrong to force this meaning on the clause simply because it is the meaning most appropriate to the context, but there is some evidence to suggest that the expression 'fear God' may have the general connotation of honesty, reliability and straight-dealing. Thus in Exod. 18^{21} Jethro advises Moses to "choose able men from all the people, such as fear God, men who are trustworthy and who hate a bribe". In Neh. 7^{2} responsibility is given to a man because he is <u>'îš 'ĕmet wĕyārē' 'et-hā'ĕlōhîm</u>. In Deut. $25^{17ff.}$, the criticism of Amalek, who "did not fear God", is not of his paganism, but of his 'unfair' attack upon a weakened Israel. In Job $1^{1, 8}$ and Prov. 3^{7}, the term appears to have at least some ethical content. We should not suppose that in any of these instances the term has taken on a completely new meaning, independent of its religious sense, but in each it appears to be used with the connotation of reliability and fairness uppermost. This is

surely also the content of the expression on Joseph's lips: he is telling his brothers, "do this and live, for I am a fair and reliable man". Whether or not we choose to understand it in this sense, it would be perverse to regard this verse as a declaration of the basis of Joseph's general character and behaviour, or as a simple revelation of his religious faith.

Any association with the passages cited by von Rad from Proverbs is difficult. "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1^{7}) and "The fear of Yahweh is instruction in wisdom" (Prov. 15^{33}) represent a use of the expression and an association of ideas which are, perhaps, characteristic of the wisdom literature. This is not how the term is used in the Joseph Narrative, and there is no particular reason to associate Gen. 42^{18} with the wisdom literature rather than with any of the other OT literature which uses the term.

To conclude, then, we have found no reason to suppose that the character and behaviour of Joseph in the Joseph Narrative are intended to represent and teach the ideals for behaviour which are to be found in the wisdom literature. Where it is not actually in contradiction to such ideals, the behaviour of Joseph is either too generally or too specifically described to serve as a model for emulation.

Where there is some opportunity to compare the attitudes of the Joseph Narrative and the wisdom literature to a specific situation, as in the tale of Potiphar's wife and in that of the administration of Egypt by Joseph, the concerns and emphases of the wisdom literature appear to be wholly lacking.

2. Joseph and God Though von Rad barely mentions them in his 1953 article, it is the three pairs of dreams in the Joseph Narrative which, more than anything, give it its distinctive nature. They are not expressions of a dream-science in Israel, but, like dreams in some other ancient stories, serve a narrative purpose [25]. They do, however, raise important questions about the narrator's understanding of divine action in the world, and about the nature of Joseph's abilities. Granted that it is his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams which presents Joseph with his opportunity to advance to a position of power, can we regard this interpretation as an expression of educated wisdom, or is it something more akin to inspiration? Do the dreams in the narrative, moreover, imply an understanding of God as a hidden power, whose purposes are inscrutable, and agree in this respect with other indications in the story?

There can be little doubt that Joseph's ability to interpret dreams is regarded as God-given. In 40^{8}, responding to the complaint of the butler and baker that there is no-one to interpret their dreams, Joseph asks,"hălô' lē'lōhîm pitrōnîm?", while in 41^{16} he apparently disclaims any independent ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams: "bil'ādāy 'ĕlōhîm ya'ăneh et-šĕlôm par'ōh". That Pharaoh accepts the source of the interpretation as divine is shown by his remarks in $41^{38f.}$. It seems too strong, incidentally, to call Joseph's response in 40^{8} "completely polemic", a claim that "the interpretation of dreams is not a human art but a charisma which God can grant" [26], nor is this the emphasis of 41^{16}. There is no attack on human presumption in these sayings, but rather a claim in the former that professional interpretation is not a necessity, since God may communicate interpretation to whomsoever he pleases [27], and an affirmation in the latter that Joseph enjoys divine aid in his interpretation, and should not be perceived simply as a professional interpreter of dreams.

If the interpretation is from God, the role of Joseph in the process is unclear. 41^{16} has generally been taken to be a complete disavowal of any part in it by Joseph, bil'ādāy being taken in the sense 'No, not I', an exclamation to be taken separately from the following clause [28]: the existence of such a meaning is, however questionable [29].

Moreover, the text here is difficult: the Samaritan and LXX texts (cf. also the Syriac) have read bil'ādāy without the first person suffix, and also vocalised y'nh as a niphal, with an indefinite subject. They also read a negative before the verb, and thus render: "Without God (it) cannot be answered...". If these versions reflect the original reading, then Joseph is stating that divine aid is necessary for the interpretation, and perhaps thus explaining the failure of the wise men of the court. If we keep the MT reading, we should understand bil'ādāy as indicating not exclusion but addition [30]. Thus Joseph is affirming the basis of his interpretation, rather than that he is merely a mouthpiece or conduit [31].

It is interesting to compare this with 41^{38}, where Joseph is described as having the 'Spirit of God' in him. We find elsewhere in the OT various roles for the spirit: it comes upon men and makes them prophesy (e.g., Is. 45^{6}), gives them wisdom (Is. 11^{2}) or anoints them for special tasks (eg. Is. 61^{1}). The technical term for prophetic inspiration (with 'al) is not used here, although some similar idea is undoubtedly present; a closer image is that of Exod. 31^{3}, 35^{31}, where the spirit fills men and gives them a particular ability. 'Charisma' is probably a misleading term in this context: Joseph is portrayed as one with whom God communicates, and whom He enables, not as a charismatic

prophet. It is this divine assistance which distinguishes Joseph from the wise men of Egypt.

That Joseph has somehow been enabled by God is confirmed in the next verse (41^{39}), which picks up the suggestion in v.33, that Pharaoh choose a man '<u>nābôn wĕḥākām</u>' to govern Egypt during the coming crisis. This verse cannot be taken to mean that Pharaoh supposed Joseph's interpretation, or God's revelation to him, to have demonstrated a quality which Joseph already possessed: Joseph's 'discernment and wisdom' in some sense follow the revelation [32]. This point is important: 41^{39} is not claiming that Joseph has shown himself more wise than the wise men of the court by interpreting the dream. Rather, the revelation to Joseph by God of what is to come makes Joseph uniquely qualified to superintend the task ahead. This is the content of <u>nābôn wĕḥākām</u>, which implies just government with divine aid [33]. The description of Joseph cannot be taken as an assertion that he displayed 'wisdom' by interpreting the dreams.

In the patriarchal narratives, God often communicates through dreams and visions, and these occasionally consist of non-symbolic images [34]. However, they are not enigmatic, and the meaning of the divine communication is always clear. In the Joseph Narrative, on the other hand, divine communication is portrayed as clear only once, in

46^{2-4} [35]; elsewhere it is through symbolic dreams, even when the meaning of the dreams is clear to all, as in ch. 37. Far more, then, than in the material which precedes the Joseph Narrative in Genesis, divine action is portrayed as subtle and enigmatic [36]. Does this, however, imply that the narrative rests on a theology particularly close to that displayed in the wisdom literature?

The divine plan for the salvation of Israel is revealed and enacted through the dreams. Joseph's own dreams in ch. 37 are a divine promise of his future elevation; at the same time they motivate the attempt on his life by his brothers, which results in his transportation to Egypt. Joseph's imprisonment is necessary in order that he meet the butler, and interpret his dream, so that when Pharaoh needs an interpreter, Joseph and his ability are known by someone at court. Finally, Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams results in his elevation. By the time he confronts his brothers with his real identity, Joseph is obviously aware of the way in which events have been arranged by God. Thus in $45^{5ff.}$ he is able to tell those brothers that God had sent him ahead to preserve life, and so "it was not you who sent me here, but God; and he has appointed me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt". Again, in $50^{19f.}$ he reassures them: "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? You planned evil

against me, but God planned it for good, to bring about the present preservation of many people".

These verses represent Joseph's explanation of the vicissitudes of his life, but they are not climaxes to the story, nor the exposition of a 'moral', and they must be taken in their context [37]. In $45^{5ff.}$ Joseph is urging his brothers not to reproach themselves for their past actions towards him, which were a part of God's plan; as they were unwitting agents of this plan, no guilt should be imputed to them. In $50^{19f.}$, Joseph again identifies their actions as a part of this divine plan: although their motives were in themselves bad, the brothers were unconsciously agents for good. Since God has used them in this way, Joseph explains, to seek bloody vengeance upon them would be to usurp God's position, to reject the way in which God has arranged matters. The motives of the brothers are not irrelevant to this: the dreams of future superiority sent by God to Joseph inspired the malicious actions of the brothers, which led eventually to the elevation of Joseph and the preservation of their own and others' lives. There is, then, no gulf between the plans of the brothers and the divine plan: their motives and consequent actions were a part of that divine plan from the start.

Von Rad sees in these sayings a connection with early wisdom ideas of the divine economy [38]:

> "Hier wird das Rätsel des Ineinanders von göttlichem Führen und menschlichem Handeln noch schärfer betont. Gott hat auch da, wo es kein Mensch mehr annehmen konnte, alle Fäden in Händen gehalten. Aber das wird nur behauptet. Das Wie dieses Ineinanderwirkens bleibt ganz Geheimnis. So stehen sich dieses 'Ihr gedachtet' und dieses 'Gott gedachte' letzlich doch sehr spröde gegenüber".

He compares Prov. 16^{9}, 19^{21}, 20^{24}, $21^{30ff.}$ and Amenemope 19.16, which each express an antithesis between the human action in the first clause and the divine activity in the second, and are thus similar in both form and content to the saying, "You planned evil against me, but God planned it for good" in 50^{20}, and suggests, therefore, that this saying is perhaps an adapted 'Weisheitsspruch'.

These passages from the wisdom literature are not, however, concerned with the role of human activities within the divine plan, but rather with the limit set upon human endeavours by the overriding divine action:

> "Many are the plans in the mind of a man,
> but (it is) the purpose of Yahweh which will be
> established."
>
> (Prov. 19^{21})

> "The god is in his success,
> the man is in his failure;
> The words which men say are one thing,
> That which the god does, another."
>
> (Amenemope (xviii) 19.14ff.) [39]

We need not go into the vexed question of the reason for

the presence of these sayings in the wisdom tradition [40]: the sentiment expressed is clearly quite different from that of the sayings in the Joseph Narrative. Where in the Joseph Narrative human actions and motives are a part of the divine plan, in the wisdom literature they are set over against it, and the wisdom sayings contrast the impotence and frustration of human endeavour with the infallibility of divine action. In the Joseph Narrative God is portrayed as manipulating human desires and behaviour in accordance with his plan; in the wisdom sayings the divine activity is disconnected from human aspirations, and sets their parameter. In short, the Joseph Narrative integrates human and divine efforts, while the wisdom sayings contrast them. The thought expressed in these sayings, then, is not that which underlies the narrative, and Joseph's declarations are, consequently, most unlikely to have been 'adapted' from them.

If the ideas in the Joseph Narrative find no real echo in the wisdom literature, they are not, at least, unparalleled in the Old Testament. The Succession Narrative in 2 Samuel appears to presuppose a similar type of divine action and control, and this is a factor in Whybray's 1968 description of the narrative as "a dramatization of proverbial wisdom" [41]. The theology of this narrative was discussed by von Rad in 1944 [42], when he argued that 2 Sam. 11^{27}, 12^{24} and

17^{14} are the key passages expressing the narrator's conception of divine activity in history:

> "...he evidently thought of it as something hidden and certainly not confined to sensational events which stand out from all other occurrences...Rather he depicts a succession of occurrences in which the chain of inherent cause and effect is firmly knit up - so firmly indeed that human eye discerns no point at which God could have put in his hand. Yet secretly it is he who has brought all to pass; all the threads are in his hands; his activity embraces the great political events no less than the hidden counsels of human hearts. All human affairs are the sphere of God's providential working " [43].

Von Rad does not, however, argue that the theology of the Succession Narrative is wisdom theology, even though it is evident that the theological ideas expressed are very close to those of the Joseph Narrative, since he believes the Joseph Narrative, unlike the Succession Narrative, to be "devoid of any specifically theological interest in redemptive history " [44]. This distinction, however, is hard to maintain: the Joseph Narrative is arguably all about an act of divine salvation, and, if anything, it appears to have a greater interest in salvation history than does the Succession Narrative. The theological presuppositions of the Joseph Narrative and of the Succession Narrative, moreover, are not especially unusual: there are, in fact, many places in the OT where some idea of unconscious submission to divine control is implicit, and many, indeed, where it is explicit. This idea is found with regard to Assyria and Cyrus in Isaiah ($10^{5ff.}$, $45^{1ff.}$); we must assume also that

the divine movement of the nations in Amos 9^{7} was without their knowledge. In Deut. $2^{30ff.}$, Sihon clearly attacks the Israelites with a view to harming them, but his attack is actually divinely inspired, providing as it does an excuse for the Israelites to annihilate the population of Heshbon and occupy its land. In 1 Sam. $25^{32ff.}$ the actions of Abigail, which prevent David from incurring guilt by the slaughter of Nabal, are attributed retrospectively to divine action. Comments about divine action in affairs of state are common in 1, 2 Kg., e.g. 1 Kg 15^{4}, $^{29f.}$, $16^{1f.}$, $^{18.}$. In Exod. $7^{3f.}$, God explicitly hardens Pharaoh's heart for his own purposes. We need not multiply examples. Divine action is assumed in the OT, and the very idea of causation involves this assumption (cf. Amos 3^{3-6}). The ideas of divine action found in the Joseph Narrative and the Succession Narrative reflect common Israelite beliefs about divine action in history.

What makes the two narratives distinctive in this respect is not the theological idea itself, but the literary treatment of it. The account of the divine action is minimised, with the result that suspense is heightened and a greater degree of realism achieved. The importance of the divine role is also, paradoxically, heightened by this treatment. There is nothing, however, to suggest that the exhibition of this role is the primary intention of either

narrative, or that this role reflects any belief which is specific to wisdom.

As with the character of Joseph, then, there seems, on the face of it, to be little reason to associate the religious ideas and portrayal of God in the Joseph Narrative with the wisdom literature. There is no feeling in the Joseph Narrative that God's purpose is inscrutable - at least a part of it is revealed in the very first chapter - although the particular role in the plan of some of the characters is only understood by them in retrospect. Much less is there any of the bleak despair inspired in the wisdom writers by the hiddenness of God: as we have seen, God's presence is felt throughout, and the characters, rightly or wrongly, attribute the turn of events to him (as in, e.g. $42^{21f.}$). Certainly the absence or rarity of direct divine theophanies leaves the Joseph Narrative less grandly miraculous than some parts of the patriarchal narratives. Yet divine action in the salvation of the nation has not been displaced by some gritty wisdom realism, but has been masterfully understated, and imbued with a new subtlety and ambiguity. The distinctiveness of the Joseph Narrative in respect of its portrayal of God is essentially one of presentation rather than of presupposition.

3.Conclusion.

The strength of the claim that the Joseph Narrative was a product of the wisdom tradition, as it was presented by von Rad, lay in the accumulation of numerous supposed correspondences with the Israelite and Egyptian proverbial literature. Our examination of this evidence has, however, shown it to be weak at every point, and neither in its presentation of Joseph, nor in its theological ideas have we found good reason to suppose that the Joseph Narrative depends on the ideas of the wisdom tradition, let alone that it was intended to embody and teach them. In the final analysis, all that is left to connect the narrative with the wisdom literature is the appearance in it of the expressions "wise and discreet" and "fear the Lord". As we have seen, neither of these is used, however, in the sense peculiar to the wisdom literature, and though both are found more frequently in the wisdom literature than elsewhere, it is only the coincidence of the two falling in the same text that is striking. In any case, none of this adds up to the Joseph Narrative being a 'didactic wisdom text': there is really no reason to assume that the narrative was written to embody wisdom ideas and ideals, that Joseph is depicted as an archetypal wise man, or that we can, therefore, employ it as evidence for the setting of wisdom.

Chapter 8 Wisdom and the Reign of Solomon

A Solomon and Wisdom: general considerations.

I have mentioned already the traditional association of Solomon with wisdom, which I supposed to have been the motive for the ascription to Solomon of so much of the wisdom literature. Though it is widely accepted that the ascriptions are late, many modern interpretors are inclined to believe that the tradition itself preserves the memory of an historical fact, the origins of literary wisdom in Israel during the reign of Solomon. Indeed, many go further, and claim that the biblical account of Solomon's reign indicates the historical origins of literary wisdom in Israel: Egyptian influence was transmitted through Solomon's links with that nation during the establishment of his administration. Such ideas, of course, underlie the hypothesis of a Solomonic Enlightenment.

I do not want to get involved here in an extensive analysis of the relevant biblical material, which has been examined many times before. It does seem likely that the traditional link between Solomon and literary wisdom is the final stage of a tradition which underwent many changes. R.B.Y. Scott's 1960 article "Solomon and the beginnings of

wisdom in Israel" distinguishes three different stages in the development of the OT descriptions of Solomon, in each of which wisdom is understood somewhat differently [1]. Thus in 1 Kg. $2^{1-2, 5-9}$ and 5^{15-26} (ET 1-12), the original narratives were concerned only with Solomon's 'wisdom', or 'skill', in government. The editorial 5^{26} (ET 12), the rewritten dream story in 3^{4-15} and the appended story of the two mothers in 3^{16-28}, all reflect an interest in forensic 'wisdom' on the part of the Deuteronomistic editor, and a more general interest in the ability to distinguish right from wrong. Finally, in 5^{9-14} (ET 4^{29-34}), $10^{1-10, 13, 23f.}$, a post-exilic tradition, perhaps founded on the promise to Solomon of wisdom in $3^{12ff.}$, understands wisdom as intellectual brilliance and encyclopaedic knowledge.

On the basis of Prov. 25^{1}, with its mention of Hezekiah, Scott concludes that literary wisdom actually flourished in the eighth century, when a tradition of Solomon's wealth and wisdom was cultivated deliberately for political reasons. The elaborate descriptions of Solomon's proverbs and sayings are later developments of this tradition. Whatever the other evidence for a connection between Solomon and the origins of literary wisdom, "the ostensible biblical evidence for this in the first Book of Kings is post-exilic in date and legendary in character" [2].

Scott produces strong arguments, based on vocabulary and textual considerations, for the late dating of the key passages involving wisdom of a literary type [3]. Of more doubtful value, however, are his conclusions regarding the earlier development of the tradition. It is not clear that there is a strong distinction to be made between governmental and forensic wisdom, or that one can readily discern a linear development over time in the usage of HKM. At the same time, I find it difficult to accept Scott's 'Hezekian Enlightenment'. As I have already noted, it is very possible that the mention of Hezekiah in Prov. 25^{1} is itself based on a tradition similar to the Solomon tradition, and the verse is very probably late. This is Scott's key argument for attributing the cultivation of wisdom literature to Hezekiah's court, and the other evidence, for nationalism and for the presence of wise men in Hezekiah's court, is of limited value. Despite these reservations, I am inclined to accept Scott's key point, that the tradition of Solomon's wisdom rests ultimately on the common description of kings as 'wise', which has no implication of an involvement with literary wisdom.

A wholly different attitude to the material is taken by Albrecht Alt, and in his "Die Weisheit Salomos", published in 1951, he suggests that 1 Kg. 5^{13} (ET 4^{33}), which describes the content of Solomon's sayings, shows these

sayings to have been related to Egyptian onomastic lists [4]. Alt sets out to examine the question of 'nature wisdom' in the ancient world, as well as to assess the reliability of the account of Solomon's wisdom. His attention is thus focussed on this one verse, which claims that Solomon "spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall; he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles and of fish". This is reminiscent, he claims, of the lists found in Egyptian and Mesopotamian onomastica. In particular, he compares the Onomasticon of Amenemope, which probably dates from around 1100 BC, reasonably close to the time of Solomon. This text is a list of 610 items, beginning with cosmological phenomena, and moving on to humans, towns, buildings, land and agricultural products, listing different types of each. The earlier Ramesseum Onomasticon (c.1786-1633 BC) provides a somewhat closer parallel, in that it actually deals with plants and animals.

Alt argues that these onomastica are evidence for the existence in the ancient Near East of a 'nature wisdom', which found its expression in a science of lists, and which strove to comprehend all that exists. The Solomonic wisdom described is a development from, or adaptation of this nature wisdom, and thus 1 Kg. 5^{13} is evidence of the adoption of Egyptian wisdom by Solomon. These conclusions,

however, have to be regarded with considerable scepticism. The nature and purpose of the onomastica have been much discussed, and the idea that their primary intention is the encyclopaedic coverage of the world is now generally rejected [5]. Although the introduction to the Onomasticon of Amenemope claims that it will teach "all things that exist", the restricted scope of the list belies this claim, and the introduction cannot be taken seriously as a declaration of the work's purpose [6]. Michael Fox has pointed out that:

> "there is no science of lists in Egypt in any significant sense. There are only lists, lists of all sorts, with varied contents and principles of organization - medical, zoological, religious, geographical and more. There is nothing to suggest that the creation of lists was considered a single enterprise, as if geographical lists and lists of body parts were in some way intended to contribute to a common purpose of expanding and organizing the body of shared knowledge" [7].

Since, moreover, the scope of the foreign onomastica is not restricted to nature and to non-human affairs, "nature wisdom" is in all ways a misleading description of these texts.

The most important obstacle to linking the sayings described in 1 Kg. 5^{13} with the onomastica, however, is the character of the sayings themselves. Clearly their content is unlikely to have been simply the listing of species, which would have made Solomon's recitations tedious in the

extreme. Alt supposes that Solomon expanded the enumerations into series of proverbs about the things which had traditionally been enumerated: in other words, that he borrowed the contents but rejected the form of the lists. Since, as Fox has pointed out, the form is the distinctive feature of these lists, it is hardly possible to say that Alt has established any connection at all. In the end, his argument rests on little more than that there are Egyptian lists featuring plants and animals, amongst many other things, while plant and animal proverbs are attributed to Solomon [8].

Do the sayings attributed to Solomon in themselves suggest an interest in 'nature wisdom'? Alt notes that the OT wisdom literature has no interest in the character of plants and animals, except in so far as they illustrate truths which are important for human life, and this is the starting point for his suggestion that the sayings attributed to Solomon are quite unlike the extant Israelite wisdom sayings. Actually, there is to be found in later Israelite wisdom an interest in nature which has no apparent connection with Egypt (eg. Qoh. 1^{5-9}), but why should we anyway assume that Solomon's sayings were about the character of the plants and animals? There is absolutely nothing in 1 Kg. 5^{13} which prevents us understanding the sayings attributed to Solomon as fables or proverbs of a type attested in the OT (eg.

Prov. 30^{18-31}, Jg. 9^{7-15}), in Mesopotamian wisdom and in Ahikar. The connection which Alt suggests cannot, then, be upheld: the concept of a nature wisdom in the onomastica is illusory, while the sayings attributed to Solomon are quite readily, and certainly more naturally, to be understood as fables or animal/plant proverbs [9].

Most arguments for Egyptian influence on Solomon are more circumstantial than this, and point to the prosperity of Solomon's reign, and to his good relations with Egypt. Such conditions, it is argued, would have permitted the establishment of a sophisticated administration and allowed the development of an educational system and intelligentsia. His close ties with Egypt would, moreover, have inclined Solomon and his subjects to look in that direction for inspiration, administrative and literary. Certainly the auspices were good for the consolidation of the Israelite state under Solomon, with David's defeat of neighbouring enemies, and with the relative weakness at the time of the major powers. The biblical picture of Solomon's wealth may indeed reflect the fact that this was a period of prosperity for the nation. However, as is well known, the biblical picture is not entirely coherent.

Was Solomon's reign really so settled and content? David's reign was marked by civil war and conquest: Solomon must

have inherited not only the rivalries and factional disputes, to which he may have reacted with ruthlessness, but also a vast number of subjects who had only recently been subjugated. His death was followed by the separation of the kingdom, and this is attributed in the OT account to resentment of his tyranny; the schism demonstrates also that there can have been no diminution in the bitterness between North and South found already under David (2 Sam. 20). Archaeology has supplied evidence for the building of massive fortifications by Solomon, but nothing to suggest more general prosperity in the nation. Eric Heaton has written that, "The transformation of an ancient tribal society into a sophisticated national state within less than a century is itself a phenomenon sufficiently remarkable to merit investigation" [10]: it must also, on the biblical evidence alone, merit doubt.

On the archaeological side, an important contribution has been made recently by David Jamieson-Drake [11]. After a brief discusion of the role of models in modern archaeology, this writer describes the physical evidence which we should expect to find in the archaeological remains of a state exercising administrative control, as opposed to a chiefdom or other forms of society. He then compares the evidence for Judah in particular periods with these expectations. The sort of society for which we are looking is one in which a

centralised urban class redistributes agricultural surplus to allow non-agricultural production and directs resources. According to common anthropological theory, the development of such a state is characterised by the concentration of functions in ever fewer settlements, social stratification and the activity of non-agricultural specialists. As the administrative centre achieves greater primacy, so other major cities become proportionally less important, and decline. These features should be reflected in the archaeological record, and Jamieson-Drake does indeed find them, but only rather later than the time of Solomon.

Probably the most important evidence is the pattern of settlements. From the size and distribution of the sites, making due allowance for possible geographical distortions, Jamieson-Drake concludes that the population of Judah was essentially stable in the 12th to 10th centuries, but in the 10th and 9th came to be concentrated in fewer but larger settlements. These, however, began to decline in size during the 8th and 7th centuries, despite a large increase in the population, while Jerusalem grew, indicating its increased primacy. Finally,the 6th century saw complete collapse, probably indicating the degree to which the country had become dependent on Jerusalem before its fall, as the centre of control and redistribution. Similar stories are told by other evidence, especially that for central control over the

direction of resources towards public works. Duplication of plans in the 10th century 'Solomonic' forts shows some evidence of regional administrative control, but it is only in the 8th and 7th centuries, again, that the distribution of such works points to primarily central, rather than localised, direction of resources. Finally, evidence for artisanship and non-agricultural specialisation, though surprisingly limited in every period, comes mostly from 7th century sites dependent on Jerusalem.

I am not competent to appraise Jamieson-Drake's work in detail, and it is too early yet to gauge the response of those who are. However, his cautious approach to the evidence, and the virtual unanimity of that evidence are persuasive. The book presents compelling evidence to suggest that Solomon's kingdom was a chiefdom, with only a very limited need for an administrative apparatus, and that Judah did not develop into a state until the 8th century. Apart from the clearly exaggerated and probably late account of Solomon's reign and wisdom, the biblical picture seems to be entirely in accord with this, as is the common sense assumption that centralised states and their administrations do not spring up overnight.

Returning to the biblical evidence, we find a certain ambiguity also on the question of Solomon's relations with

Egypt. On the one hand, they are indeed portrayed as being so cordial that he is given the hand in marriage of an Egyptian princess, with territory as a dowry; Israel subsequently engages in trade with Egypt (1 Kg. 3^{1}, 7^{8}, 9^{16}, 10^{28}, 11^{1}). On the other hand, it is in Egypt that Solomon's enemies Hadad and Jeroboam find protection ($11^{14ff.}$, ^{40}), and only a few years after Solomon's death, it is the Egyptians who ransack Jerusalem, ruled at that time by Solomon's son (1 Kg. $14^{25f.}$). Again, I do not wish to go into the intricate historical questions raised by these events, but it is surely important to indicate that the biblical text is hardly a sound basis for averring that Solomon's rule was a settled and happy time for Israel, and that his relations with Egypt were entirely cordial. More importantly, perhaps, the account of Solomon's reign makes it quite clear that his orientation was towards the North, and his relations with Hiram dominate the story. If we are to suppose that Solomon looked outside Palestine for cultural and administrative inspiration, this is surely, on the face of it the direction in which he would have looked.

It is easy, then, to perceive in the biblical narrative undercurrents of internal dissent and of friction with Egypt even if we assume that the account is broadly accurate. This is a big assumption to make, however, about a text which is clearly composite, and frequently hyperbolic in its tone. As

Scott has pointed out, moreover, in the article discussed above, Solomon's reign was charged with political significance for later Israel. It was the last reign during which the nation was united, at least nominally, and the time at which the first Temple was built. This must raise the suspicion that the account of that period has been coloured by nostalgia and by later political and religious ideology. In view of this, the biblical account can only be used as an historical source with considerable reservations, especially about those parts which glorify Solomon's abilities as a king, and extol his prominence in international affairs. In sum, then, the reliability of the account is doubtful, but even when it is accepted in its entirety, those sections which praise Solomon are balanced by those which hint at unrest and tyranny. Only on the basis of a highly selective use of the material can it be claimed, without strong qualification, that Solomon's reign was settled and prosperous, and that his relations with Egypt were consistently cordial. The idea that he transformed Israel into a 'sophisticated national state', furthermore, has little grounding in the biblical, and none in the archaeological evidence. That there were some official posts and administrative mechanisms is most probable, and we shall examine these in the following pages: they do not represent, however, some complex national administration, are few in number, and seem mainly to pre-date Solomon.

B. Egypt and the Establishment of the State Administration

1. The Solomonic State Officials

If the more general evidence for the reign of Solomon is somewhat ambiguous, there is one area, at least, in which scholars have seen a very precise correspondence with Egyptian practices. In the course of this century, the idea that Solomon may be shown to have imitated certain Egyptian administrative institutions has gained considerable ground, and is now amongst the most frequently cited evidence for Egyptian influence on Solomon's reign. Such imitation is viewed by many as the mechanism through which Egyptian wisdom entered Israel. For the rest of this chapter, therefore, I want to look at this issue in some detail, and in particular at the work of Tryggve Mettinger.

Mettinger, whose book was published in 1971 [12], was not the first scholar to suggest that certain of the official posts listed in 2 Sam. 8^{15-18} (// 1 Chron. 18^{14-17}), 2 Sam. 20^{23-26} and 1 Kg. 4^{1-6} were based on Egyptian prototypes, and much of the ground had been covered by previous studies, most notably those of de Vaux and Begrich [13]. Nevertheless, he differs from the opinions of both these scholars on several important issues, and it is his work which is most commonly associated with the hypothesis.

Mettinger himself sees the hypothesis of a Solomonic Enlightenment as corroborative evidence for his proposal that Egyptian prototypes underlie some of the most important governmental posts in Solomon's Israel. My concern here, is, of course, with the other side of the coin, the corroboration given to the Enlightenment hypothesis by Mettinger, and I shall, therefore, concentrate on his other evidence.

Of the six official posts which he examines, Mettinger believes three to have been based on Egyptian prototypes: the sôpēr, the mazkîr and the official ʾăšer ʿal-habbāyit, whom he describes as the 'Royal Secretary', 'Royal Herald and 'House-Minister' respectively. We shall examine these individually below, but shall omit discussion of a fourth, the 'Friend of the King', for whom Mettinger finds the possibility of an Egyptian origin attractive, since he himself acknowledges the absence of any solid evidence.

(a) The sôpēr. Unlike de Vaux and Begrich, who compared the 'scribe' here with the Egyptian sš-nsw, a rank title rather than a specific post, at least under the New Kingdom [14], Mettinger finds an Egyptian prototype in the sš š'ṯ n nsw, the 'royal letter writer'. This Egyptian official is described by Mettinger as 'the head of the royal secretariat', from which the foreign and domestic

correspondence of the king originated. The post was held by one individual at a time, who, in the Wilbour Papyrus at least, was known by his title alone, unlike his subordinates, whose names were used. Mettinger gives no further details of his duties. For the activities of the Israelite sôpēr, Mettinger considers various passages. In 2 Kg. 12^{11} and 22^{3}, the royal secretaries of Jehoash and Josiah each share responsibility for the money raised for the restoration of the Temple; in 2 Kg. 18^{18}, Shebna, the sôpēr is one of the officials who come out to meet the Rabshakeh, and in 19^{2} he is subsequently among those sent to see Isaiah. The story of Baruch's reading in the Temple and its consequences, in Jer. 36, suggests, Mettinger believes, that Gemariah and Elishama were each sôpēr at the same time. Finally, after a lengthy discussion of the likely existence of royal annals, Mettinger claims that these were the responsibility of the sôpēr, apparently on the grounds that they must have been kept by some court official, and the sôpēr seems most appropriate for the job.

It is sometimes a little difficult to see how Mettinger's conclusions follow from his evidence. In summarising the role of the sôpēr, he concludes both that the official was a "'writer' par excellence and from the beginning responsible for the royal correspondence" [15], and that he was responsible for the writing of royal annals. Yet he produces

no substantial evidence for either of these claims. The passages which he examines show the sôpēr controlling money, acting as a royal delegate and discussing matters of import with other officials; nowhere in the OT do we find any reference to his dealing with the royal correspondence or annals, nor is there any text which can lead us to that inference. Apparently the basis for these conclusions is simply the suitability of such functions for someone whose title is linguistically connected with writing. In fact, even this connection is somewhat dubious: McKane and others have posited links with the Akkadian šāpirum [16], and it is possible that the Akkadian root is a better guide to the sense of the title than the Hebrew spr, the primary sense of which is, by the way, counting rather than writing. We shall not go into this matter, which is incidental to our purpose, further than to say that sôpēr, taken as a denominative form, may be connected with writing; it cannot, however, be claimed that the implication of writing is necessarily implicit in the word: one might recall the apparently military sense which it has in Jg. 5^{14}. Without even this etymological prop, it is hard to see how Mettinger feels so confident that the sôpēr was a "'writer' par excellence".

He goes on to conclude that the function of the Egyptian sš-šʿt n nsw "corresponds so closely to what was true of the royal secretary in Israel that one is almost forced to

conclude that we have here the prototype of the Israelite office" [17]. Yet not only has Mettinger produced no evidence to suggest that the Israelite sôpēr was head of a royal secretariat, or that he dealt with the royal correspondence, but he freely acknowledges the existence of two Secretaries together under Solomon, and possibly also under Jehoiakim, while stressing that the Egyptian office was held by only one man at a time. Finally, even were we to allow all Mettinger's claims about the functions of the sôpēr, it is not clear that these imply any correspondence between the Israelite and Egyptian posts close enough to make imitation any more than a possibility: such slight evidence can hardly "force" us to conclude anything.

However, a further element is introduced into the argument when Mettinger takes up the theory of A. Cody, that the Egyptian title sš-š't, in an altered form, actually lies behind the confusion surrounding the name of David's sôpēr [18]. In 2 Sam. 8^{17} we are told that "Seraiah was secretary", in 2 Sam. 20^{25} that "Sheva was secretary", and in 1 Kg. 4^{3} that "Elihoreph and Ahijah the sons of Shisha were secretaries". The parallel to the first of these in 1 Chron. 18^{16} gives the name as Shavsha, while the Kethib in the second reads šy' for the Qere šw'. Wide variation is found also in the LXX texts. On the reasonable assumption that the references are all to a single man, Cody argues

that he was known at the time of David by his title sš-š't, which was rendered šš' in Hebrew, vocalised as śaśī'. This title came, in the course of time, to be supplanted by the native term sôpēr, the foreign title being remembered in certain circles, but not fully understood. Thus 2 Sam. 8^{17} gives the correct personal name of the individual, with his Hebrew title, but when the (less authentic) list in ch. 20 was composed, the Egyptian title was used, furnished either from popular memory or from a list of titles: in either case it was probably taken to be a name rather than a title. The preservation of the original pronunciation in oral tradition led eventually to the writing of the yodh when matres lectionis were introduced; the shin dropped out through textual corruption, and śš' thus became šy', while in 1 Kg. 4^{3}, the yodh and the second shin were transposed, to give šyš'. The Chronicler adopted the form of 1 Kg. 4, but the yodh was confused with waw when written in the square alphabet: the form šwš' thus emerged, and ultimately influenced, by way of the LXX, the Qere reading šw' in 2 Sam. 20^{25}.

Turning first to the text-critical aspects of this argument, Cody's suggested development of the variants, as I understand it, may be set out like this:

	2 Sam. 20^{25} Kt.	1 Kg. 4^{3}	1 Chron. 18^{16}	2 Sam. 20^{25} Q.
1.	šš'	šš'		
2.	šše'	šše'		
3.	še'	šeš' ----->	šeš'	(še')
4.			šwš' --(LXX)->	šw'

We may note first that there is no textual support for the second stage, which Cody hypothesises on the basis of the supposed vocalisation of his title. Moreover at 2 Sam. 20^{25}, the LXX versions, including the Lucianic recension, which is important for the reconstruction of the Old Greek in this 'Kaige' section, suggest the existence of a form šwš(') in the Vorlage. This reading is supported also by some texts of the Targum, and by the Σουσαν of Josephus Ant. 7.293 [19]. There is no good reason to suppose that this reading is based on the reading of the Chronicler, nor, indeed, to suppose that that of the Chronicler is based on 1 Kg. 4. There are simpler explanations available for the facts. Thus, for example, the original form may have been šwš', in which case the development might be explained on the basis of a loss of a shin through haplography in 2 Sam. 20^{25}, with yodh/waw confusions in the kethib of that verse and in 1 Kg. 4^{3}, where the LXX readings with beta may suggest an original waw. Alternatively, the basic form may have been šš', as Cody supposes, but with two rival vocalisations

appearing, in which case the only textual corruption would be the loss of the shin. Other possibilities exist, but it must be concluded that Cody's suggestion, while not impossible, has little to commend it on text-critical grounds.

Nonetheless, Cody is starting not from the problem of the interrelationship of these forms, but from the problem that the form śryh in 2 Sam. 8^{17} is not easily reconciled with any of them. The general inclination of commentators has been to reject this form altogether [20], and the readings Σασα of LXX^{LMN}, Ασα of LXX^{B} and Σισαν of Josephus, Ant. 7.110, may all possibly attest a Hebrew manuscript tradition which read šš' in 2 Sam. 8^{17}: they do not follow the transliterations used in the other verses, which tends to tell against their being simple harmonisations. Furthermore, for the other names and titles the Chronicler follows this list meticulously, with a single deliberate change (probably for dogmatic reasons) at the end; yet Cody supposes that he preferred the witness of the lists in 2 Sam. 20 and 1 Kg. 4, even though they differed from each other, in this single instance.

For the confusion of this very title with the name of its bearer, Cody cites the postscript to the Amarna letter EA 316, which begins: "To Šaḫsiḫašiḫa, of[my lord: me]ssage

of Pu-Ba'la..." (ll. 16f.) [21]. Albright has explained the first name as the Egyptian title sš-ś't [22], written here with a person determinative. Yet this possible confusion on the part of Pu-ba'la about the title of a foreign official, if such it be, is hardly a true analogy to confusion on the part of the Israelites about a title used in their own court, even if it was a funny, foreign sort of title. Finally, both Cody and Mettinger cite Wen-Amon II 68, where reference is made to the sš-š't of the king of Byblos, who brings refreshments to Wen-Amon, as evidence for the familiarity of the title in Canaan. If this is simply the author's use of a familiar title for the benefit of his Egyptian readership, then the passage clearly proves nothing of the sort; if, on the other hand, the title was actually used in Byblos, this would appear to be extremely damaging to Mettinger's argument that the Israelites borrowed it directly from Egypt.

On balance, it seems easier to accept the contradictory traditions about the name of David's official than the immense and indigestible complexities of Cody's argument, with its failure to give any satisfactory answer to the basic question it raises: who were these circles who chose to remember an official by his title, a title which underwent, we may remark, a tremendous phonetic transformation during its short trip from Egypt, yet forgot

that it was a title? Or alternatively, if a list of officials giving only titles influenced our texts, why was this influence exerted in just this one case? Such explanations for the confusion of the title and the name do not really ring true, and they give us no good reason to suspend our disbelief for so much else of the argument.

Finally, it has been suggested that the names of David's sôpēr and his sons are themselves Egyptian, or reflect underlying Egyptian forms. There is nothing inherently improbable about this, but there is a certain danger of forcing the evidence. Thus Mettinger takes the father's name to have been Seraiah, which is known elsewhere from the OT as a Hebrew name, but he suggests that this may reflect the conflation of an Egyptian name with a familiar Hebrew one. He suggests as possibilities a number of Egyptian names from Ranke's lists (Ranke I 316.23, 317.4-6 [23]). However, according to the corrigenda in Ranke II p.388, the first of these, sr "ist zu streichen". Of the rest, sr.i (317.5) is not attested after the Old Kingdom, nor sr.w and sr.y (317.4, 6) after the Middle Kingdom. None of these names are common. Mettinger does not, for some reason, suggest sr (316.25), which is common in the New Kingdom, nor does he note in Ranke's addenda (II 316.22, 23) the two names written sri, from about the 20th Dynasty [24]. There are, then, some Egyptian names similar to Seraiah, which were

possibly in use at the time. There is, however, no reason whatsoever to suppose that any of these underlie the perfectly good Hebrew name Seraiah.

De Vaux, taking šš' as the original name, cites as possible originals Ranke 330.1-5. Of these, however, šš (330.1) is found only in the Old Kingdom, as a woman's name, while neither šš.y (330.4, also a woman's name) nor šš.w (330.5) is attested after the Middle Kingdom. šš (330.2), on the other hand, is not attested before a single occurrence in the 26th Dynasty. The only one of all these names commonly attested is šš.ỉ (330.3), but this is not found after the Old Kingdom either. An Egyptian origin for šš', which does not appear to be a Hebrew name, remains a possibility, but the prototypes suggested by de Vaux are unconvincing [25]. Kitchen has suggested that names using the elements s3ỉ 'satisfaction' or s3wỉ 'his is...' (cf. Ranke I 299.4-10, 301.24-302.3), might readily form suitable prototypes, although his combination of the two, which comes closest to the Hebrew, is hypothetical [26]. He also notes the Hurrian names šešwe and šeŝwiya [27], which, allowing the possibility of metathesis, seem closer than both his proposed Egyptian names and the other Hurrian forms suggested by Mazar [28].

Turning to the sons, Mettinger's suggestion that the Hebrew name Ahijah reflects here an original Egyptian 3ḫ-ỉ'ḥ (Ranke I 2.22) seems unnecessary. The Egyptian name, moreover, is attested only once, in the 19th dynasty, and the reading is doubtful. The questions surrounding the name of the other son, Elihoreph, are altogether more interesting. Mettinger and de Vaux here follow the theory of Marquart [29], that Elihoreph is a distortion of a name originally containing a theophoric element ḥp = Apis [30], which has been altered to the consonants of ḥrp, and given the vowels of bōšet. De Vaux cites in this connection the fifth century Phoenician names bnḥp and ytnḥp from Elephantine, which both appear to contain this theophoric element. The first of these is uncertain [31], but we may add the Aramaic [']bdḥp, again from Elephantine, which has the same characteristic [32]. Attractive though this theory is, it is worth bearing in mind that these parallels are about half a millennium later than the individual in question, and, moreover, that they are Semitic names borne by Semites in Egypt, and are not, therefore, strong evidence that such a name might be adopted by an Egyptian in Israel. In any case, the use of an Egyptian theophoric element in a name does not necessarily imply Egyptian ancestry, and it is noteworthy that in his epigraphic study of names from Israel Tigay finds more names compounded with Horus than with Baal [33]. It is, moreover, quite possible that the '-horeph'

element of the name is to be explained in some other way, especially since names with those consonants are found in Neh. 7^{24}, 10^{20} (ET 19) and an inscription [34]. In general, the oddness of (possibly) two out of the three names in the family may suggest a non-Israelite ancestry, and Egypt is a strong candidate. However, this is a long way from saying that David's sôpēr was an Egyptian, brought in as the first holder of an office based on an Egyptian model.

We have reviewed at some length the rather complicated evidence adduced for the suggestion that the sôpēr was an office based on an Egyptian model, and have found it unconvincing on almost every point. Ultimately, the problem is that we simply know too little about the duties of this official to make any realistic comparison, and the arguments for direct evidence, the use of the Egyptian title in Israel, prove untenable. We may deal with the other offices more briefly, since the evidence is less convoluted.

The mazkîr Mettinger confesses that the information available for the duties of this official is very scanty, and he relies almost entirely on an etymological study, from which he deduces that the term has the sense "he who mentions, proclaims", and so describes the official as the 'Royal Herald'. After a brief examination of the possibility that the office was modelled on the Mesopotamian nāgiru, he

finally concludes that a more probable model was the Egyptian whmw nsw, the king's herald, whose title is possibly a semantic equivalent of the Hebrew. This conclusion was reached also by de Vaux and Begrich.

I do not intend to discuss this comparison in depth since, apart from the vague semantic link, there is no evidence at all for any similarity between the duties of these officials; more importantly, the very existence of the Egyptian office in the time of David and Solomon is questionable. As Redford has remarked,

> "...the sobering fact is, and it has been taken into account upon occasion by those who maintain the identity of the two, that the hey-day of the whmw in the royal administration was during the New Kingdom before 1100 B.C. Thereafter references peter out until, in the late Twenty-first Dynasty and under the Libyans, the whmw is conspicuous by his absence. If David were looking for models, would he not be more liable to copy from contemporary Egyptian titles than to choose an obsolescent function over a century out of date?" [35].

In view of this, it seems unlikely that the comparison can be sustained.

(c) The official ʾăšer ʿal-habbāyit. This official 'over the house' is absent from the Davidic lists, making his first appearance in 1 Kg. 4^{6}, but he appears frequently thereafter, and the term ʾăšer ʿal-habbāyit is found used of individuals in epigraphic material [36]. Its use in the Joseph narrative (especially in Gen. 41^{40}) has given some

impetus to the quest for an Egyptian original. Mettinger rightly rejects the arguments of de Vaux, that the Egyptian vizier was the model [37], and prefers the royal chief steward, the ỉmy-r pr wr. His argument that the Hebrew title probably refers to management of the royal estates is reasonable, but this connection with the Egyptian official seems somewhat tenuous, resting as it does on two observations of questionable value.

The first of these is that the Israelite official in question is found often in association with the two officials we have examined above: since we have rejected the suggestion that these officials were certainly modelled on Egyptian prototypes, the implication that association with them suggests an Egyptian origin cannot be sustained. The second concerns the title itself, which Mettinger regards as a 'semi-calque' on the Egyptian title, the meaning of which is 'great overseer of the house', the element wr, 'great', distinguishing the official from ỉmy-r pr, the Egyptian for 'steward'. Yet this element wr is absent from the supposed translation, making the Hebrew an equivalent of 'steward', rather than 'High Steward'. The precise literal meaning of ỉmy-r is uncertain, but it is used as a set expression for 'overseer': that ỉmy has relative implication, makes it attractive to see in this the origin of the ʾăšer in the common expression ʾăšer ʿal-habbāyit, but the relative is

not a part of the Hebrew title, being used only when the title is in apposition or as an independent relative, while ỉmy is not actually a relative particle, but an adjective formed from the preposition m. Further, the form ʿl + noun is used for other titles, the official 'over the city', for example, in 2 Kg. 10^5. It is highly improbable, then, that the Hebrew relative reflects the Egyptian ỉmy in the set phrase ỉmy-r. Mettinger himself, in an earlier chapter, acknowledges that "...the mere form and syntactic function of the title ʾăšer ʿal-habbāyit cannot be taken as an indication that this title is a loan translation" [38]. The Hebrew title is '(one who is) over the house', the Egyptian title 'great overseer of the house': the similarity is not striking, and is confined to the use of 'house' in each. There is, then, no force in either of the arguments used to show an Egyptian origin for this official, and there is no particular reason to look to Egypt for the inspiration. As Kitchen has written,

> "That the Hebrew office was modelled on the Egyptian one ... is possible, but is neither proven nor even essential, seeing that other Near-Eastern states also had landowning monarchs who likewise must have had stewards to manage their property" [39].

(d) The State Officials: general observations. If we have found little evidence to suggest any direct imitation of Egypt in the establishment of the Israelite administration, that is hardly a matter for surprise. Our information about

the state officials is limited, and comparisons with any nation would be difficult. Mettinger's apparent confidence in his results would be misplaced, given the limitations of the evidence, even were all his arguments unassailable. Given the basic lack of strong evidence, one must turn eventually to the question of inherent likelihood: is Mettinger's theory in accordance with, or does it fly in the face of historical probability, given the little we know about the period?

The whole discussion about the state officials is posited on the belief, reasonable in itself, that the Davidic and Solomonic lists of officials reflect the historical facts. If this is indeed the case, however, two of the three offices which we have discussed, and several others discussed by Mettinger, came into existence during the reign of David. If a case can be made out for strong links between Israel and Egypt under Solomon, no such case can be made out for the reign of David, whose activities and contacts were, according to the biblical account, confined to Palestine and Transjordan. It is inherently far more probable that David's officials, if they were modelled on any foreign prototypes, were modelled on the officials to be found in the Canaanite or other city states within Palestine, with which David would have been familiar. We know next to nothing about the administration in these states, although inferences are

possible from elsewhere, and it is possible that Egyptian influence was mediated indirectly through them [40]. In this context it is interesting to note that the terms sôpēr and mazkîr both appear on Moabite seals, which might indicate that the terms are 'Palestinian' rather than specific to Israel [41]. There is no reason, however, to suppose that the administrative officials of the early Israelite monarchy were deliberately modelled on Egyptian counterparts, or that with the posts came the wisdom literature associated with those counterparts. If there were any reason to suppose this, we should anyway have to speak of a Davidic, not a Solomonic, Enlightenment.

Finally, this issue has to be put into context. We have seen above that there is strong archaeological evidence to suggest that no substantial central administration came into being until centuries after Solomon. At most we are talking here about the imitation of a handful of specific posts. Nor should we assume that such slight imitation, even were it demonstrated, must imply any broader debt to Egyptian administrative structures. Setting aside questions of scale and social structure, the Egyptian administration was geared to an economy which depended on wholly different factors. At the very most it might be shown that Israel borrowed from elsewhere a few specific titles, offices or practices, but the idea of a large-scale imitation of administrative

structures is quite implausible. This is a point which should be borne in mind as we turn to the other areas in which such imitation has been perceived.

2. Solomon's Provisioning System

In 1 Kg. 4[7] we are told that "Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each man had to make provision for one month in the year". The list which follows, apparently naming the individuals and towns or regions responsible, presents grave problems of interpretation, but these need not detain us here [42]. It is this provisioning system that D.B. Redford, who is admirably cautious about the influence of Egyptian prototypes upon the Israelite state officials, believes to be evidence for Egyptian influence upon Solomon's administration [43]. The most precise analogy, he suggests, is in a near contemporary stela of Shoshenq I, in which the king describes his restoration of the daily sacrifice at the temple of Arsaphes in Herakleopolis, and gives details of the source of the levy in twelve monthly sections, with a final section to cover the epagomenal days. In each section are listed the officials and towns responsible for supplying the temple during that month, and the amount which is to be

levied. Less precise analogies are to be found in other Egyptian texts.

In a twist to this argument, A.R. Green has noted that almost all the other parallels are later than the Shoshenq inscription, and so concluded that in fact it was Solomon's system which influenced Shoshenq [44]. If Shoshenq's twelve-divisional system was indeed the first of its kind in Egypt, Green argues, it could not have influenced the establishment of the royal provisioning system early in Solomon's reign, since Shoshenq was a later contemporary, overlapping Solomon by only about fifteen years. Finally, he suggests that Jeroboam, who fled to the court of Shoshenq (1 Kg. 11^{40}) may have been the conduit for the idea.

The essential similarity between the system at Herakleopolis and that in Israel is that they each involve the appointment of officials responsible for provisioning during one month at a time [45]. It is important to note, however, that the provisioning in each case is for very different purposes: on the Herakleopolis stela the levy is for oxen, which are to be sacrificed daily at the temple, while the Israelite list refers to provisioning for the royal household [46]. Furthermore, although many of the Egyptians are implicitly associated with particular areas or estates by virtue of their offices, the Egyptian system,

unlike the Israelite, is not explicitly related to geographical areas.

What similarity there is seems less striking, moreover, when it is recalled that the appointment of officials to collect provisions for the royal household in particular areas is attested in Mesopotamia [47], while the responsibility of certain areas for certain months may have been known in Persia [48]: such systems are sensible and obvious, spreading the burden of the royal household across the state. While the coincidence of time makes it particularly tempting to see a connection between the systems of Solomon and Shoshenq, it would, then, hardly be a strain on credulity to suppose that they arose independently. On the other hand, it would be distinctly curious if Solomon borrowed, as the basis for his national system of provisioning for the palace, a method of providing temple sacrifices in a small area of Egypt. It is far more probable that Solomon's system goes back ultimately to Canaanite practices, and Kitchen has adduced evidence from Ugarit for palace levies and monthly regulation [49]. In short, it is possible that Solomon's provisioning system was inspired by Egyptian methods, but it is highly improbable.

3. Hieratic Numerals, Weights and Measures.

In the course of his discussion about the Solomonic officials, Mettinger cites the use of hieratic numerals in Israel as corroborative evidence of Egyptian influence upon the Israelite royal administration: "That this Egyptian influence should go back to the Egyptian domination of Syro-Palestine", he claims, "does not seem probable, since Phoenician has developed a system of its own and since all the evidence for hieratic numerals in Palestine dates from the Israelite monarchy" [50]. The use of Egyptian hieratic symbols in Israel is an issue of considerable complexity, and a thorough review of all the issues would demand a discussion quite out of proportion to the importance of the evidence; what follows, therefore, is a summary of the issues as they impinge upon our present concern.

The hieratic method of writing numbers is substantially more sophisticated than either the hieroglyphic or the Phoenician system mentioned by Mettinger. Those systems make use of a very limited number of symbols, which represent only units and powers of ten, each symbol being repeated as often as necessary. So, for example, 29 would be written with a symbol for 10 written twice and a symbol for 1 written nine times, a total of eleven symbols. The hieratic system, on the other hand, although using a similar

technique on occasion, possesses separate signs for the numbers 5 to 9 and for multiples of ten as well as powers of ten. So 29 in hieratic would require only two symbols, one for 20 and another for 9. Inevitably this would be harder to learn than the Phoenician system, but would allow a far more concise and convenient record of numbers. Whatever the time of its introduction, this is probably the reason it was used in Israel in preference to any other current system.

That hieratic numerals were in wide use throughout Israel seems probable, although the waters have been somewhat muddied by a number of dubious identifications. The best known of these is the attempt by Segal to show the presence of a hieratic 2 in several places on the 'Gezer Calendar' [51], an attempt which fails not least because the symbol in question bears little resemblance to the hieratic figure, and is probably to be read as a waw [52]. Other doubtful identifications [53] are of less importance, except, perhaps, insofar as they highlight the difficulties of identifying unusual symbols in Hebrew texts [54]. These problems aside, it is clear from their presence in texts from such places as Lachish, Samaria, Arad, Meṣad Ḥashavyahu, Wadi Murabbaat and Qadesh-Barnea, that hieratic numerals were widely used in both kingdoms during the Divided Monarchy, and there is every reason to suppose that this was true of an earlier period. Also noteworthy is the

use of these symbols in conjunction with other signs, for quantities or commodities, which are themselves apparently derived from hieratic [55]. This would tend to connect the use of the hieratic numerals with the trade that had existed between Egypt and Palestine since long before Israel.

That hieratic numerals were known in Late Bronze Age Canaan, shortly before the establishment of Israel, seems clear. Hieratic inscriptions (including numerals) have been found from the LB strata at Lachish and Tel Sera^{c} [56], reflecting the Egyptian presence in those places, and if we have no evidence for the use of hieratic numerals in texts written in Canaanite, it is only fair to point out that we have only a few brief inscriptions in Canaanite altogether, none of them including numerals at all. There is good reason to suppose that the Canaanites knew the hieratic system of numerals, and, if the Israelites found them useful, it is perhaps probable that the Canaanites did too. Our paucity of texts between the end of the Egyptian domination and the period of the divided monarchy means that we simply cannot know what numerals were in general use during this time in Palestine. Mettinger's remark, that "all the evidence for hieratic numerals in Palestine dates from the Israelite monarchy" is, therefore, rather meaningless, since all our evidence for any numerals in Palestine between the Late Bronze Age and the post-exilic period dates from that time.

In sum, the use of hieratic numerals in Israel illustrates very clearly the impact of Egypt upon Palestine, but can hardly be identified with any particular importation of Egyptian administrative methods in the early monarchy. It is, so far as we can tell, the usual method of writing numbers in Israel, with no particular basis in the royal administration; only once is any other system of numerals attested [57]. By far the more likely explanations for the use of the numerals in Israel are their earlier use by the Egyptians in the administration of Canaan and the strong trading links between Palestine and Egypt.

Connected with the question of hieratic numerals is that of the markings upon the shekel weights, an issue which probably relates to the period of Josiah rather than to the early monarchy, but which itself emphasises the influence of the trade with Egypt upon Israel. The weights in question characteristically bear a sign resembling an X with its two bottom points joined by a line or loop, which is generally accepted to be the sign for 'shekel'. The mass of one shekel appears to have been between 11 and 12 grams [58], and we have marked weights whose mass is 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 and 24 times this amount, with some unmarked weights apparently representing higher multiples [59]. As one might expect, the one and two shekel weights are marked with one and two strokes respectively, but the 4, 8 and 24 shekel weights

bear symbols which resemble closely the hieratic symbols for 5, 10 and 30; the symbol on a 16 shekel weight from Shechem may be the hieratic 20, although this is not entirely clear [60]. The identification of these symbols with the hieratic numerals is corroborated by the ostracon from Qadesh-Barnea in which hieratic numerals are listed at one point with the shekel sign preceding each [61]. The one and two shekel weights prevent us from assuming that the basic unit was actually one fifth, rather than a quarter, of the 4-shekel weights marked with a '5'. In short, we should expect the numerals on each weight to correspond to the mass of the weight expressed as a multiple of the basic shekel: our problem is that they do not [62].

Some light is shed on this peculiar situation by Scott's observation that the 8-shekel weight, the most common denomination found, is roughly equivalent in mass to the Egyptian deben weight [63]. Aharoni took this further, and argued that, since the deben was composed of ten ḳedet, the hieratic numerals represent the number of ḳedet to which the weights were equivalent [64]. This is an attractive hypothesis, which helps to explain why the system should be based around fractions and multiples of eight shekels. It does not, however, explain the numerals on the one and two shekel weights, nor does it give any reason for the use of the shekel sign with the ḳedet amount, which is a little

like changing the number of the kilograms in a metric weight to the equivalent in pounds, but then leaving the 'kg.'. All we may reasonably conclude on the present evidence is that in the seventh century a curious system of weights came into being, apparently inspired by the convenient equivalence of eight shekels to one deben. The prime motivation behind such a system must have been trade, and this is further evidence of the strong trading links with Egypt, but hardly of administrative influence [65].

Finally we may mention briefly the curious alterations, noted by Aharoni, to the dimensions of the Temple at Arad during the early monarchy [66]. According to Aharoni, almost all the dimensions of this temple were enlarged by about a sixth in Stratum X. If, as seems likely, the original measurements were in cubits, then this might indicate a change in the length of the standard cubit at the time. Aharoni goes on to note that the Egyptian royal cubit, of about 52.5 cm. is a sixth longer than the Egyptian 'common' or 'small' cubit of about 45 cm., and supposes that the temple was built originally in common cubits, the 9 m. width of the hekal being thus 20 cubits, and then rebuilt in royal cubits, the new 10.5 m. width being 20 of these cubits. He relates this to OT remarks about 'cubits of the old standard' (eg. 2 Chron. 3^3), and believes that it was

connected with a restandardisation of measurements at the end of the tenth or beginning of the ninth century.

Our evidence for the length of Israelite cubits is very slight. If any faith is to be placed in the round figure of 1200 cubits given by the Siloam inscription as the length of Hezekiah's tunnel, the cubit must have been somewhere around 44 cm. at that time: at the least, it is unlikely to have been as much as 52.5 cm [67]. This and other clues would seem to tell against the general replacement, before the eighth century, of a shorter cubit by one equivalent to the Egyptian royal cubit. In the Hellenistic and Roman periods, however, a cubit of this length, the Philetaerean cubit, was in use [68]. With regard to Egyptian influence at Arad, it does indeed seem probable that the cubits in use there were equivalent to, and, therefore, perhaps based on Egyptian cubits. That the change from a shorter to a longer cubit was inspired by Egyptian usage does not, however, seem likely: although such a change did take place in Egypt, when the common cubit was replaced by the 'reformed' cubit, the same length as the royal cubit, this change did not occur until the 26th Dynasty, much later than the change at Arad [69]. The measurements at Arad, then, seem to show the use of both common and royal Egyptian cubits in Israel, but they do not show any change in Israelite measures inspired by Egypt [70]. The very fact of the change, in fact, may tell against

the measurements having been introduced to Israel during the early monarchy, if it does indeed represent a restandardisation, since it is improbable that a system only recently introduced would be thus replaced. Far more likely, again, is the supposition that the measurements were introduced during the Egyptian domination of Canaan.

4. Egypt and the state administration: Conclusions

It has not been my intention in this discussion to pinpoint the actual origins of the state administrative system in Israel, but rather to examine the claim that the Egyptian system, or various parts of it, was its model. This claim has, it appears, little to commend it: where Egyptian influence is probable or demonstrable, that influence has, fairly clearly, not been mediated through any central administrative directive. It follows that we cannot use any supposed imitation of the Egyptian administration as evidence for the nature of Israelite wisdom.

In connection with this argument, I may make the more general point that it seems unwise to overemphasise the difference made to Israel by the advent of the Davidic monarchy. To be sure, the consolidation of the nation would

bring with it the need for some new political structures, though it is unlikely that these would have obtruded into such inherently conservative areas as the systems of weights and measures. Yet as discussions of the origins of Israel tend more and more to emphasise the essential cultural continuity between Canaan and Israel, the idea that Canaanite or other Palestinian administrative practices would have been ignored or rejected by Israel seems increasingly out of step. That Canaanite and pre-monarchic Israelite usage was the most probable source for the state administration should be an a priori assumption, and that we know little about such usage does not somehow make Egypt a more likely source. The sort of discontinuity which is implied by the claims I have been discussing, and which is central to the hypothesis of a Solomonic Enlightenment, cannot be accepted as plausible without far better evidence than has hitherto been produced.

Chapter 9 The Existence of Schools in Israel

In the last chapter we found no good reason to suppose that the Israelite administration was modelled upon the Egyptian system. This does not, however, rule out altogether the possibility that the Israelite system for educating its administrators was inspired by that of Egypt, and that the Israelite wisdom literature, like the Egyptian instructions, was used in the curriculum of schools. Indeed, the case for the existence of schools, and for the use of the wisdom literature in teaching, has frequently been put without any reference to Egyptian influence upon the state administration or to a Solomonic Enlightenment, and was argued by Klostermann some years before the general recognition of the links between the book of Proverbs and Egyptian instructional literature [1].

There is nothing in Proverbs which is explicable solely in terms of a pedagogical need, but it is naturally possible that the book was used, or possibly even designed, to meet some such need. However, if we are even to begin to understand it in that way, it is necessary to show that schools actually existed. If we found evidence for a formal educational system in Israel, it would not demonstrate that wisdom literature was used in schools, but it would at least

open up the possibility. In this chapter, therefore, I wish to concentrate primarily upon the evidence adduced for schools, but shall look also at a few related issues.

1. Old Testament evidence for schools in Israel.

The Old Testament is notoriously reticent on the subject of education, and there is no explicit reference to a 'school' in Hebrew before Sir. 51^{23}. The evidence which has been adduced from the OT by scholars is, therefore, circumstantial, and much of it is very weak. Before turning to the particular passages, it is worth asking what we are actually seeking: as will become clear, the biblical evidence lends support to the idea that education existed in Israel, but says little about the nature of that education. This is hardly a great step forward, since some sort of education is implied by the very existence of written documents, biblical and extra-biblical. Simple references to teaching or literacy are, therefore, of very limited value, although they continue to occupy much space in some studies of this subject.

Three passages used by Klostermann [2], Is. 28^{9-13}, 50^{4-9} and Prov. 22^{17-21}, have continued to be prominent in subsequent discussions, although the last of these is too

closely related to Amenemope to be of any value for an evaluation of the situation in Israel, and I shall not examine it here [3]. The first, Is. 28^{9-13}, is a passage of considerable obscurity:

(9) To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message?
Those weaned off milk, those removed from breasts?
(10) For ṣaw lāṣāw ṣaw lāṣāw qaw lāqāw qaw lāqāw
zĕʿêr šām zĕʿêr šām
(11) For through men of unintelligible speech and alien tongue will Yahweh speak to this people,
(12) to whom he has said, "This is rest; let the weary rest: and this is repose"; yet they would not listen.
(13) And the word of Yahweh will be to them
ṣaw lāṣāw ṣaw lāṣāw qaw lāqāw qaw lāqāw
zĕʿêr šām zĕʿêr šām
That they may go, and fall back, and be broken and trapped and taken.

The text underlined here is difficult to interpret, and is the crux of the matter: zĕʿêr šām zĕʿêr šām is perhaps to be taken as meaning "a little here, a little there", but attempts to understand the rest as Hebrew are unconvincing. Klostermann takes saw and qaw to be the names of letters (cf. 'waw', 'taw') being used to teach children how to write. By this reckoning, vv.9-10 are to be understood as a pastiche of a school lesson, in which the drunken prophets and priests of the preceding verses complain that Isaiah is talking to them as though to school children.

Despite its popularity, this interpretation encounters several difficulties. It may well be that children of that time were weaned rather later than in our society [4], but

it is still unlikely that children just weaned would be taught to read [5]. Equally, there is no evidence that these sounds were ever the names of letters. More importantly, this interpretation gives no weight to the following verse, which is surely connected with vv. 9-10 by its reference to incomprehensible speech. A. Van Selms has taken this seriously by attempting to understand the strange words as a prophecy in Akkadian, contrasting with v. 12, but his translation, alas, makes little sense: "Go out! Let him go out! Go out! Let him go out! Wait! Let him wait! Wait! Let him wait! Servant, listen! Servant, listen!" [6]. A. Lemaire attempts to combine these interpretations, believing that the repetition of the words in v.13 is a piece of prophetic sleight of hand, whereby the school lesson of v.10 is revealed to be, in fact, an announcement of the Assyrian invasion [7]. Even apart from the problem of understanding the 'Assyrian', this appears to be a rather over-subtle attempt to have one's cake and eat it: it is most improbable that the same words would coincidentally be recognisable to the listeners as both a Hebrew writing lesson and an Assyrian exclamation.

Rather closer to the mark, I suspect, is the interpretation of the words as 'baby talk'. Lindblom thus argues that:

> "What the enemies meant was that the message of disaster proclaimed by Isaiah was pure nonsense. They were grown-up people and had understanding enough to comprehend the ways of Yahweh. Isaiah's reply is ironical and biting: one day Yahweh will speak to this people by babbling lips and an alien tongue, when the Assyrian armies with their barbaric language come down upon the land of Israel" [8].

It seems clear, in view of v. 9, that the words are indeed intended to sound like baby talk: however, it seems probable that they are also intended to represent the babbling of drunkards. To take vv.9-10 as the words of Isaiah's opponents about him is not justified by anything in the text except the sudden use of singular verbs without an explicit subject. Rather than taking these as the words of the opponents, it would, in fact, be more natural to take them as a continuation of the description of the drunken priest and prophet of v.7, especially since the hiphil of yārāh, 'teach', is used pre-eminently of priestly directions, and the 'message' may be the prophetic revelation of coming destruction (cf. 28^{19}, Jer. 49^{14}, Ezek. 21^{12} (ET. 7), Obad. 1). Then the singular verbs are explained by their separate references: "whom will (the priest) teach knowledge, and to whom will (the prophet) explain the message". The drunken burbling of these supposed teachers of the divine will are comprehensible only as baby talk; so it is that God's kindly words to Israel come across to them as an incomprehensible babble, which they ignore, to their eventual ruin.

Whether or not this is the correct interpretation, it must be clear that the interpretation of the words as part of a primary school lesson is very far from certain, and the evidential value of this verse therefore very limited. The same is true of the other passage, Is. 50^{4-9}, although for somewhat different reasons. This is the third of the 'Servant Songs' in Deutero-Isaiah, and is almost certainly composed after the period of the monarchy: it does not, therefore, necessarily reflect the situation of an earlier age. The argument that it is evidence for the existence of schools is based upon the supposition that it reflects the vocabulary of education in vv.4f.:

(4) The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.
Morning by morning <he wakens>, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.
(5) The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not backward.

In Israel, as in Egypt, the ear is characteristically associated with the apprehension of knowledge, as for example in Prov. 5^{13}, Amenemope 3,9 (ch. I). In the OT, however, the expression "open the ear", which occurs in v. 5, has a particular association with ideas of divine communication. In Job 33^{16} and 36^{10}, God opens the ears of men to warn them and persuade them to obedience. In Is. 42^{20}, the reference is probably to the literal ability to hear (cf. 35^{5}), but in 48^{8} the implication is similar to

that of the passages in Job: the fact that Israel's ear 'has not been opened from of old' is associated with her longstanding rebellion against God. It is probable that the same is true of 50^{5}, where the expression is again associated with rebelliousness: the speaker's obedience follows from God's opening of his ear, and the expression does not mean that the speaker has received some sort of formal education from God, but that he is obedient to God.

What, then, of verse 4? God enables the prophet to speak and to listen like a limmûd, literally "one taught", but there is no reference to school education here, unless it is really to be supposed that the schools taught how "to sustain the weary with a word". The obscure Jer. 2^{24} or Jer. 13^{23} may suggest that limmûd means no more than 'trained' or 'accustomed', but its use in Is. 8^{16} supports the notion that the reference here may be to prophetic discipleship (see also 54^{13}). In that case there may be a reference to the sustaining of the weary by Yahweh in $40^{29ff.}$: the prophet has learnt to listen properly to Yahweh, like a disciple, and to pass on his word effectively. In any case, there is no clear reference to schooling in these verses, only to education more broadly.

These examples, often cited in favour of there having been schools, illustrate the problems of all the OT evidence

adduced: those passages which are not too vague or general to be used as evidence require exegesis which is too tortuous or uncertain to be convincing. Only once is there any apparent reference to the payment of fees for tuition, in Prov. 17^{16}, and that reference is more apparent than actual. The RSV translation, "Why should a fool have a price in his hand to buy wisdom, when he has no mind?", is rather misleading, since the Hebrew word order very clearly stresses not the fool but the fee (mĕḥîr): "What use is a fee in the hand of a fool? To buy wisdom when he has no mind?" [9]. Far from proving that the payment of fees was common, as argued by Oesterley and others [10], the verse appears to express incredulity at the idea. We have, of course, no way of determining whether the writer is being disingenuous, or drawing a distinction between wisdom and education, but we can say with some confidence that the saying provides no evidence for formal schooling.

Rather than run through all the evidence, I refer the reader to the lists of Lemaire and Crenshaw [11]. The summaries at the end of these are useful; Crenshaw observes that

> "The evidence clearly points to the existence of literate persons at an early period in Israel. What remains unclear, however, is the place where that literacy was acquired. Was the teaching of reading and writing exclusively a parental responsibility, or did professional teachers supplement the learning that occurred at home? Unfortunately, the evidence presented above does not permit a definitive answer to this question" [12].

Lemaire's summary reveals his discomfort:

> "Nous avons vu ainsi que ces textes étaient peu explicites; dans ces conditions, on comprend mieux que certains exégètes aient pu mettre en doute l'existence d'écoles à l'époque royale israélite car les textes invoqués leur paraissent souvent très vagues et insuffisants pour prouver l'existence de ces écoles" [13].

It is widely agreed that the OT provides no convincing evidence for schools in Israel, but, in view of the silence of the OT on so many aspects of daily life, this is hardly an argument in itself against schools. It is necessary, then, to consider other evidence.

2. Epigraphic Evidence.

(a) Abecedaries and School Exercises. If the OT evidence for schools is inconclusive, that of the epigraphic evidence is, at least in the opinion of André Lemaire, overwhelmingly decisive [14]. It is Lemaire's contention that a number of Palestinian inscriptions are to be interpreted as the work of students, and testify to the activity of a network of Canaanite and Israelite schools. We shall examine below some of the general considerations which stand in the way of this hypothesis; first, however, let us review briefly the material which Lemaire cites. This consists of a number of inscriptions from eight different sites, all of which

Lemaire interprets as school exercises of some form or another, and they form the basis of the rest of his book. The criteria with which he works are never set out explicitly, but we may set out some of our own: if it is to be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt, and that is at least the level of proof which Lemaire claims to have attained, that there was a school at a given site, it is necessary to produce at least one text that is most plausibly interpreted as the work of a pupil at a school in that place. It is not sufficient merely to produce material which demonstrates the acquisition of literacy, since we know that there were literate people in Israel, and our concern is not with their literacy but with the context in which they learnt to read and write. It is necessary also, then, to show that there could have been a school at which the inscriptions were produced. In other words, evidence of someone learning to write or being taught to write, is of no significance if it is discovered somewhere where there could not possibly have been a school; in fact, such evidence would contradict Lemaire by showing that writing was taught outside schools. The physical and historical context of the inscription is, then, of as much significance as its content, and this will become clear in the first of the sites to be examined.

(i) ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah. The first and earliest of the texts discussed is an ostracon discovered, during the 1976 excavations, in a silo close to the four-room house in Stratum II of ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah. Five lines of writing are incised on the ostracon, comprising over 80 letters altogether, and one of these lines, in which the characters are larger and more deeply cut than in the others, appears to be an abecedary in the (proto-) Canaanite script [15], written from left to right [16]. The other four lines make no obvious sense, and are taken by Kochavi, Demsky, Lemaire and others to be writing exercises, in which a student practised his letters, singly or in groups, sometimes writing them very badly; Demsky argues that the exercise is in fact the work of a second writer [17]. That this is indeed the nature of the four lines is plausible, although such an explanation is somewhat belied by the regularity of size and spacing, indicative of a continuous text. Two scholars, indeed, have chosen to take it as continuous: Garbini rejects altogether the idea that the inscription is in an alphabetic Canaanite script, believing it rather to be a precursor of this system, used to write an unknown, non-Semitic language [18]. Dotan, on the other hand, has attempted to make sense of the lines as three short sentences, although his hypothesis requires that the lines be ordered differently, and some groups of letters read, a

little improbably, as names [19]. Neither of these scholars has won general acceptance for his view.

Given that the inscription demonstrates some sort of literacy, and that where there is literacy there are likely to be writing exercises, whether it is taught in schools or elsewhere, it is not really the content of the sherd which concerns us at present, but the likelihood of a connection with some local school. Some 3 km. distant from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah is the site of Aphek, and cuneiform texts have been found in the LB palace there which testify to scribal activity in the period preceding its destruction. Lemaire supposes that our text is the work of an Israelite pupil attending a Canaanite school at Aphek. Now the ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon is probably to be associated with the Israelite settlement in Stratum II of ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah [20], which has been dated to the end of the eleventh century BC [21], somewhat later than the destruction by fire of the LB palace at Aphek in the second half of the thirteenth century. We may well question Lemaire's assertion that the scribal tradition there "a vraisemblablement continué au xii-xième siècle" [22], since the Canaanites apparently did not continue to live there. Instead Aphek seems to have been settled firstly by some unknown, non-Canaanite people (Stratum XI), and then, perhaps as early as the middle of the twelfth century, by the Philistines (Stratum X). The

Israelite occupation of the city did not begin until the early tenth century, around the same time as the Israelite settlement of ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah finished [23]. Even the earliest settlement at ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah (Stratum III), with which there is no reason to connect the text, would have overlapped only slightly, if at all, with Canaanite Aphek [24]. Even had they wished to, then, the writer of the ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon, if they were an Israelite living in the late eleventh century, could not have attended either a Canaanite or an Israelite school in Aphek. If anything, then, the ostracon is evidence of the acquisition of literacy outside any school, unless we are to believe that even a small agricultural settlement the size of ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah had its own school [25].

(ii) Gezer. The second of Lemaire's examples, the tenth century inscription from Gezer, which apparently lists the agricultural activities associated with months, is well-known, and has been viewed as a school exercise by a number of other scholars [26]. The tablet is made of limestone, irregularly shaped and measuring 67-111 by 72 by 14-19 mm. The lower part is broken, but shows the top of what must have been a square or rectangular hole; on the reverse there is a deep indentation just above this. These

holes may have been used for hanging the tablet, or perhaps for mounting it in some other way, since the present text would be upside-down were it actually hanging. The obverse has seven lines of script, written from right to left and parallel with the shorter side of the tablet, with a short broken line of characters written vertically, at ninety degrees to these, and apparently the name of the writer. The reverse seems to show traces of letters belonging to some previous text now erased; similar traces on the obverse have led scholars to describe the tablet as a palimpsest [27].

Lemaire compares this limestone tablet with three others, implying that they form a particular type of tablet used for school exercises. The first of these is a Phoenician tablet of unknown provenance, dated on paleographical grounds to the early eighth century. This seems to have been inscribed originally with an alphabet, written clumsily in boustrophedon, parallel to what would have been the longest side, were the tablet not broken. It now measures 42 by 30 by 17 mm., but Lemaire suggests elsewhere that the original width may have been c. 80 mm. [28]. The second is an Aramaic inscription from Tell Halaf, an abecedary which has recently been perceived amongst a mass of scratches on the stone. The fragment, however, although made of limestone, bears little resemblance to the Gezer tablet, since it is clearly broken from a disc, and it is hard to believe that it was designed

as a school tablet [29]. The third inscription is a limestone tablet from Byblos, measuring 135 by 120 by 17 mm., with five lines of Phoenician script written clumsily, and apparently comprising a list of personal names. Like that of Gezer, the Byblos tablet appears to be a palimpsest [30].

If these three tablets are, by their form and content, supposed to support the idea that the Gezer tablet is a school exercise tablet, then it is only fair to take account of two other limestone tablets which resemble that of Gezer much more closely, the incantation tablets from Arslan Tash. These measure 82 by 67 by 22 mm. and 45-53 by 33 by 15mm., and are inscribed with drawings and script [31]. Like the Gezer tablet, both are pierced by a hole, and the smaller tablet has an 'appendix' at the top to receive this hole. Many questions surround the language and meaning of these texts, which seem to be magical, but it is clear that they are not schoolboy exercises. Furthermore, they resemble, much more closely than does the Gezer tablet, the type of wooden school exercise boards found in Egypt [32]. It must be clear that, even if we can speak of such limestone tablets as a 'type' of tablet, it cannot be assumed that such tablets were designed specifically for use in schools.

There is a more general consideration which tells against the use of such tablets in schools, and that is the essential unsuitability of limestone for such a purpose. Pierced limestone tablets with a smooth surface would not be easy to make, which may account for the re-use of the Gezer tablet; they would be somewhat unwieldy in the hands of children, and readily chipped. Once used, the text could only be erased with difficulty, and would even then leave the sort of marks perceptible on the Gezer tablet. Is it really credible that such tablets would be thought preferable to tablets made of clay or wood?

The form of the tablet, then, is of little use as a guide to the interpretation of the contents, which have long been a source of scholarly debate. For Lemaire, the tablet is essentially a list of month names, "un type d'exercise scolaire déjà connu en Egypte" [33]. On this view, the Egyptian examples, which are simple repetitive lists, numbering the months of each season, are possibly comparable [34]. The Gezer inscription, however, does not give simply the names of months, so far as we know them, nor is it a simple month-to-a-line calendar: if yrḥw in lines 1, 2 and 6 is taken as a dual, then a total of twelve months can be reached, but the inscription ceases then to be a simple list of each month, one at a time. The view that the inscription is a school exercise must remain only one of a number of

options for which a case may be made, and it is not an especially probable one. My own suspicion is that the purpose is in some sense magical or votive, as Wirgin argues [35]. Be that as it may, the content of the tablet no more requires the existence of a local school than does the form.

(iii) Lachish Lemaire cites three inscriptions from Lachish. The first of these was found in 1938, on the last day of the excavations, faintly scratched on the rise of a limestone step, which was under the upper stairway of Palace C [36]. It probably dates from the ninth or eighth century. The first five letters of the alphabet are written in order, along with some other, unintelligible signs and some drawings, which include one of a lion roaring. Lemaire's drawing is actually a little misleading, following as it does that of the excavators [37], which omits the large space between the lion and the inscription on the 4 m. wide step, and thereby gives an impression of a greater association between the two than is actually the case [38]. The position from which the inscription was written must have been rather awkward: "Sitting on a lower step with his back to the palace wall, the writer must have stretched out his arm to scratch the letters diagonally across the corner of the rise" [39]. This sounds more like the scrawling of

graffiti than the copying of a school exercise, the way Lemaire interprets it, and the words of C.H. Inge's field report are apposite:

> "On the vertical face of the upper step was a schoolboy scribbling...not, as one might expect, a name or a rude remark, but the first five letters of the Phoenician Hebrew alphabet in their conventional order, perhaps the work of a schoolboy airing his knowledge writing the equivalent of ABCDE until he reached the top of the step" [40].

Lemaire's attempt to portray both this inscription and the drawings as formal school exercises seems a little absurd, given their position [41], and it is quite clear that they are more in the nature of a graffito or doodle.

The second of the inscriptions is an ostracon found in the foundation fill of Palace A in 1973, and dated by Lemaire, on paleographical grounds, to the ninth century [42]. The inscription is partially erased, but Lemaire believes that he can discern an abecedary with some letters misplaced, showing it to be the work of a beginner [43]. This reading of the very faint characters is far from certain, and this in itself casts doubt on the evidential value of the ostracon [44]. If the reading is correct, and the text an abecedary, then its writer has got it spectacularly wrong, with three of the eleven letters misplaced, and too little space left for many of the missing letters.

The third inscription was incised on a jar before firing, and consists of a large symbol, a little like an arrow pointing upwards and of unknown significance, followed by the letters ʾ b g d (or r) [45]. Lemaire assumes that this is the work of "un jeune potier s'entrainant sur des vases non cuits" [46]. The first four letters of the alphabet crop up together elsewhere, in particular on a seal inscribed l'bgd, where they are perhaps to be taken as a name, 'Abigad' [47]. It is possible, then, that we are dealing with a name here, and that is perhaps suggested by the context of the inscription. In any case, the jar, which was apparently fired and used, does not seem to have been merely a practice piece, and the letters are incised firmly and clearly. There is no special reason to suppose that it is the work of an apprentice, and no perceptible link with any sort of school, let alone the sort of military academy about which Lemaire goes on to speak.

From these inscriptions, Lemaire concludes not only that Lachish had a school, possibly centred upon the palace fortress, but that it was a school for training army subalterns. With this he associates the complaint in Lachish ostracon 3, lines 8-13, where the writer protests at an accusation that he cannot read, perhaps a sarcastic comment on his failure to obey some order. According to Lemaire, he claims that he is able to repeat verbatim anything he has

read. Such an ability, we are told, is the result of a school exercise, where pupils repeat what they have learnt off by heart from a document, an exercise "qu'on connaissait déjà en Egypte" [48]. This is a repetition of a claim made by Lemaire in an earlier work [49], where he justifies his translation, reached by dividing a line rather differently from most scholars, and subsequently interpreting the letters as an unattested form of an unusual verb. Possibly such a treatment of the rather difficult text is justified, even if it has been rather literally interpreted, and although there is no reference to school exercises in the Ptahhotep passage used to back the claim of an Egyptian model, where the reader is admonished to transmit faithfully the messages of his superiors, such exercises probably did exist in Egypt. However, like the ostraca cited, this evidence is far too weak to sustain Lemaire's detailed conclusions about a school in Lachish.

(iv) Khirbet el-Qôm Lemaire turns his attention next to Khirbet el-Qôm, between Lachish and Hebron, where on the south wall of Tomb 1 there are scratched three pairs of letters. The first two are apparently ʾ ʿ and ʾ b; the third is somewhat obscure, but may read n l [50]. Although the same juxtapositions of letters as in the first two pairs are

to be found amidst the letters of the 'Izbet Ṣarṭah inscription, and although the second pair may be the beginning of an abecedary, Lemaire himself concedes that it would be hazardous to view this inscription as the work of a school pupil. Such an opinion is rather confirmed by the position of the inscription: the middle of an unlit, underground tomb, which has to be approached down a short shaft and through a narrow entrance (c. 55 cm. sq.), is hardly likely to have served as a school.

(v) Arad Lemaire lists a number of inscriptions from Arad which he believes to be school exercises, although he confesses that such an interpretation remains very hypothetical for all but one of them. This exception, which he discusses first, is an inscription on a bowl (see my illustration on p. 317), sherds of which were found in Stratum IX of the citadel (early eighth century). The name of the city is found engraved eight times on these sherds, written six times from right to left, but with the letters facing left to right in 'mirror writing', and twice from right to left; the writing is consistent only in its clumsiness [51]. Aharoni has suggested that the inscription was the work of an illiterate or an apprentice, if it was not a game, while Yadin has proposed that it was the work of

a Greek mercenary attempting to write Hebrew [52]. Whatever the purpose of the work, however, it seems improbable that it was done by somebody learning to write: the author had enough knowledge to form the letters evenly and consistently, and it seems unlikely that someone with that much knowledge would not then be able to remember the direction in which they were supposed to write [53]. With the exception of a single writing, which is incomplete and so lightly scratched that it apparently went unnoticed in the first publication and is barely perceptible in the photograph, all the writings of the name lie roughly on concentric circles around the plate. This suggests that the inscription is a crude and perhaps whimsical attempt to decorate the dish.

The second inscription cited is the intriguing ostracon 88, which appears to contain the pronouncement of a king. Although attributing it to differing circumstances, both Aharoni and Yadin have taken this to be an historical message, of which this is perhaps a copy [54]. Millard, on the other hand, has suggested tentatively that it may be a copy of a royal inscription, perhaps made by an apprentice scribe [55]. As Millard remarks, there is really no way in which we can determine its nature with any certainty, but Lemaire is probably right to concede that the quality of the

handwriting tells against it being the work of an apprentice.

Ostracon 33, in which htm, 'wheat', recurs several times, followed by numbers and symbols of quantity, is almost certainly an inventory of some sort, and not a school exercise [56]. Ostracon 34 is probably also an inventory: it is difficult to read, but apparently contains a list of hieratic signs for goods and measurements, together with numerals [57]. It is possible that it was composed by an Egyptian scribe, as Aharoni suggests, but it is equally likely that the signs were employed by Israelites for their brevity and convenience. Ostracon 46 contains three lines of difficult signs, and the last of these lines is unintelligible. The first two consist of a symbol followed by short vertical strokes, of which there are three in the first line and apparently four in the second, although Aharoni reads six there. Horizontal lines separate the first from the second, and the second from the third line. The vertical strokes in the first two lines apparently represent the numbers 3 and 4 or 6 respectively: there is no reason to suppose that they are hieratic numerals [58], or that this ostracon is an exercise rather than another inventory. Ostraca 81 and 83 show some difficult and isolated symbols, the meaning of which is obscure; again, there is no reason to take them as school exercises.

Lemaire supposes that ostracon 85 has been presented upside-down by Aharoni [59], and is in fact an exercise in the drawing of the Egyptian hieroglyphs for 'year' (twice) and 'night'. There certainly is some resemblance to these signs (nos. M4 and N3 in Gardiner's sign-list), but the combination makes no sense in Egyptian, and the symmetry of the piece, whichever way up it is supposed to go, supports the view of Aharoni that it is a monogram or drawing.

Ostracon 86 is unlikely to contain an exercise in writing letters, since there is no certainty that the strange signs upon it are in fact letters [60]. Ostracon 87 has nine vertical strokes followed by a diagonal stroke and perhaps a hieratic 5 [61]. Lemaire reads the whole as representing the number 10. Whether he is correct or not, there is no reason to suppose that this isolated number is an exercise, not least because it is written regularly and confidently. Finally, ostraca 50-57 each contain a single personal name, and Lemaire interprets these as exercises by school pupils learning to write their own names. Again, the generally high standard of writing on the ostraca tells against such an interpretation, and Aharoni's idea that the names were used in a lottery or ballot, perhaps for priestly duties, is to be preferred [62].

In general, then, Lemaire's evidence from Arad is unimpressive, as he concedes himself, and we cannot accept that any of it comes close to being credible evidence for the existence of a school in the town.

(vi) Aroer Lemaire cites two ostraca from Aroer in the Negev. On one of these is what appears to be a single personal name, and he compares this to Arad ostraca 50-57. On the other ostracon is the inscription qr[..., and he suggests that the ostracon may be a fragment from the bottom right of an abecedary [63]. However, there is no particular reason to suppose that the letters are not the beginning of a word, perhaps a name [64].

(vii) Qadesh-Barnea Lemaire examines five ostraca from Qadesh-Barnea. The first of these is a triangular fragment, probably to be dated to the seventh century, at the bottom of which may be seen the tops of the letters z, ḥ and t. Lemaire's supposition that it is part of an abecedary is reasonable [65]. It is clearly not, however, the work of someone just learning to write, since the letters, as he acknowledges elsewhere, are "écrites d'une main assurée"

[66]. On a second ostracon Lemaire believes he can read the words ml' and wt'sr, each repeated once, and he supposes this to be a writing exercise. However, the ostracon is all but illegible, and the transcription is rather speculative: the interpretation, as he concedes himself, must therefore remain uncertain.

The remaining three ostraca all contain lists of hieratic numerals, the first and third having units of measure written beside the numerals [67]. The reading of the second is difficult, and the inscription may be a series of numbers all beginning with the same numerical signs, or a repetition several times of the same number. The third, which repeats whole sequences of numbers, is most plausibly interpreted, with Lemaire, as an exercise in the writing of numbers, and the same may be true of the others also, although in all the numbers are written confidently and apparently correctly. All are probably to be dated to the seventh century, and testify to the learning of the hieratic numeral system in Qadesh-Barnea at this time.

(viii) Kuntillet ʿAjrud About 50 km. south of Qadesh-Barnea lies the site of Kuntillet ʿAjrud, on the top of a steep hill close to a junction of ancient trading roads and above

some shallow wells, a rare source of water in the heart of the desert. Traces have been found of only two structures, set close together on the plateau. One, the East building, was clearly of substantial size, but is very poorly preserved, and its function cannot be determined. The other building, measuring about 25 by 15 m., is larger still and better preserved; it has been dubbed the Main building. This latter is centred on a courtyard, to the South and West of which lie large storerooms; the entrance to this courtyard is from the East, and bisects a long, narrow room lined with benches, the 'bench-room'. At each end of this room are small rooms or compartments connected to it by sort of windows above the benches: it was from these and from the bench-room itself that most of the inscriptions were recovered. The site is probably to be dated to the ninth and eighth centuries [68].

The inscriptions which Lemaire cites as school exercises, are of various types. First of all he discerns three abecedaries, or parts of abecedaries, on the shoulder of the second large pithos recovered (see my illustration, p. 317). The uppermost one of these runs from ṭ to t [69], the second, parallel to it and underneath, from ʿ to t, and the third, below that, from k to t. The first and third abecedaries are written in a highly cursive style, the second being smaller and squarer. Lemaire's interpretation

is that the first and third are the work of an experienced writer, teaching a pupil who is responsible for the second. Such an interpretation is improbable, however, if Lemaire's own reading is correct: the first and third abecedaries adopt the order pe ʿayin, but the second has ʿayin pe. These orders are alternatives, both known from elsewhere, but it is unlikely that a pupil following a teacher's example would adopt a different, alternative order. It is equally unlikely that such a pupil would also write his letters in a fashion which is quite correct but radically different in style: nothing in the second abecedary suggests that its writer is attempting to imitate either the first or the third, and there are some grounds for supposing that it was written before them [70].

On the same pithos, the word ṣʿrm is, it is claimed, written twice, between the second and third abecedaries, although the first occurrence is barely legible, and seems to be preceded by a he. Lemaire takes this to be an exercise in the repeated writing of a word. If so, and Lemaire's reading is questionable, it is a very brief exercise indeed [71]. Two short sentences from the first and second pithoi, both beginning with ʾmr, and ending with blessings, are taken to be letter formulae, and compared with formulae from elsewhere. The resemblance is not striking: the first sentence is too fragmentary for a proper grammatical

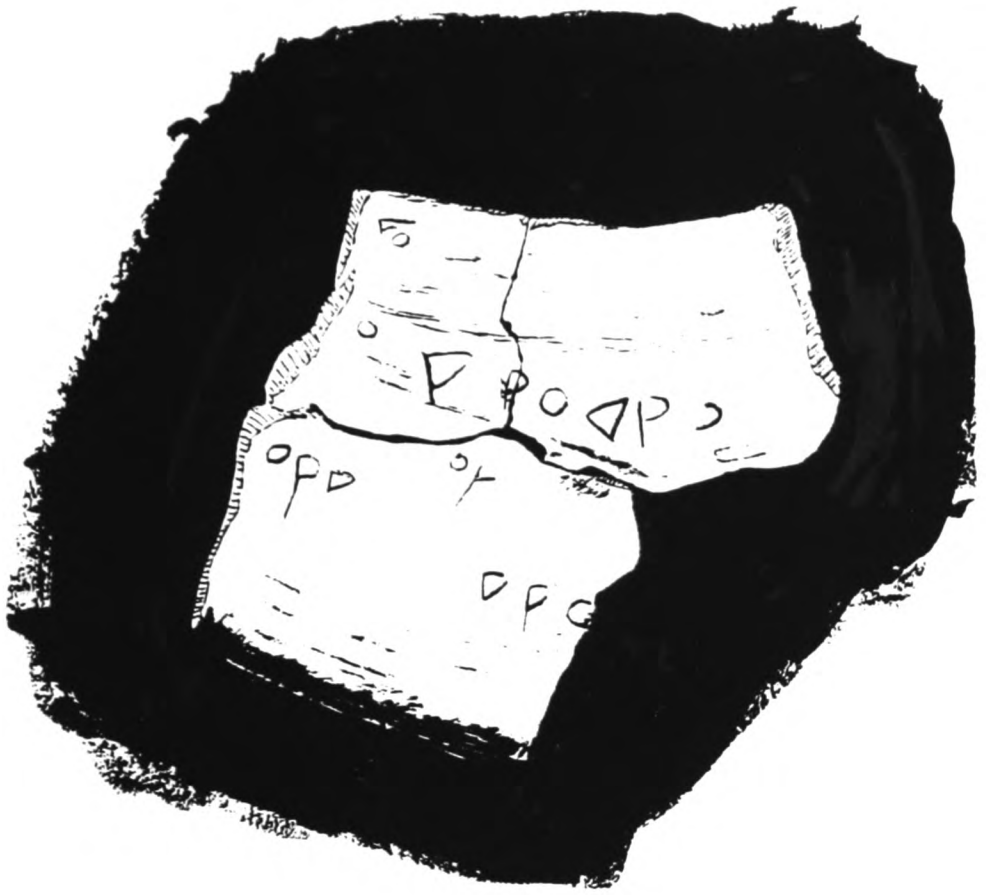
analysis, but in the second the <u>'mr</u> is clearly the 3 m.s. perf. Qal of the verb, while in the letter formulae cited it is equally clearly an imperative [72]. Next Lemaire takes the drawings on the pithoi to be the result of drawing classes: the good ones on the first pithos are the work of the teacher, and the somewhat cruder attempts on the second the work of pupils [73]. Finally he suggests that the various inscriptions in Phoenician which were found at the site, of which a number are benedictions, were intended as aids in the teaching of Phoenician.

From this evidence Lemaire concludes that there was a school at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, and that the bench-room served as the classroom, with the pithoi used as blackboards. His belief that the benches show that the room was a "salle de reunion", an assembly room, and that it was used as a classroom, sounds plausible until it is recalled that this room is only about 2 m. wide, with less than a metre between the benches, and about 7 m. long, with the main entrance to the building running through the middle [74]. This would not make a comfortable or practical classroom. More importantly, where are the pupils supposed to have come from? Kuntillet ʿAjrud was two buildings on the top of a steep hill in the desert, many miles from any known settlement. Even if Lemaire's interpretation of the inscriptions were plausible, the position and nature of the site would rule out the

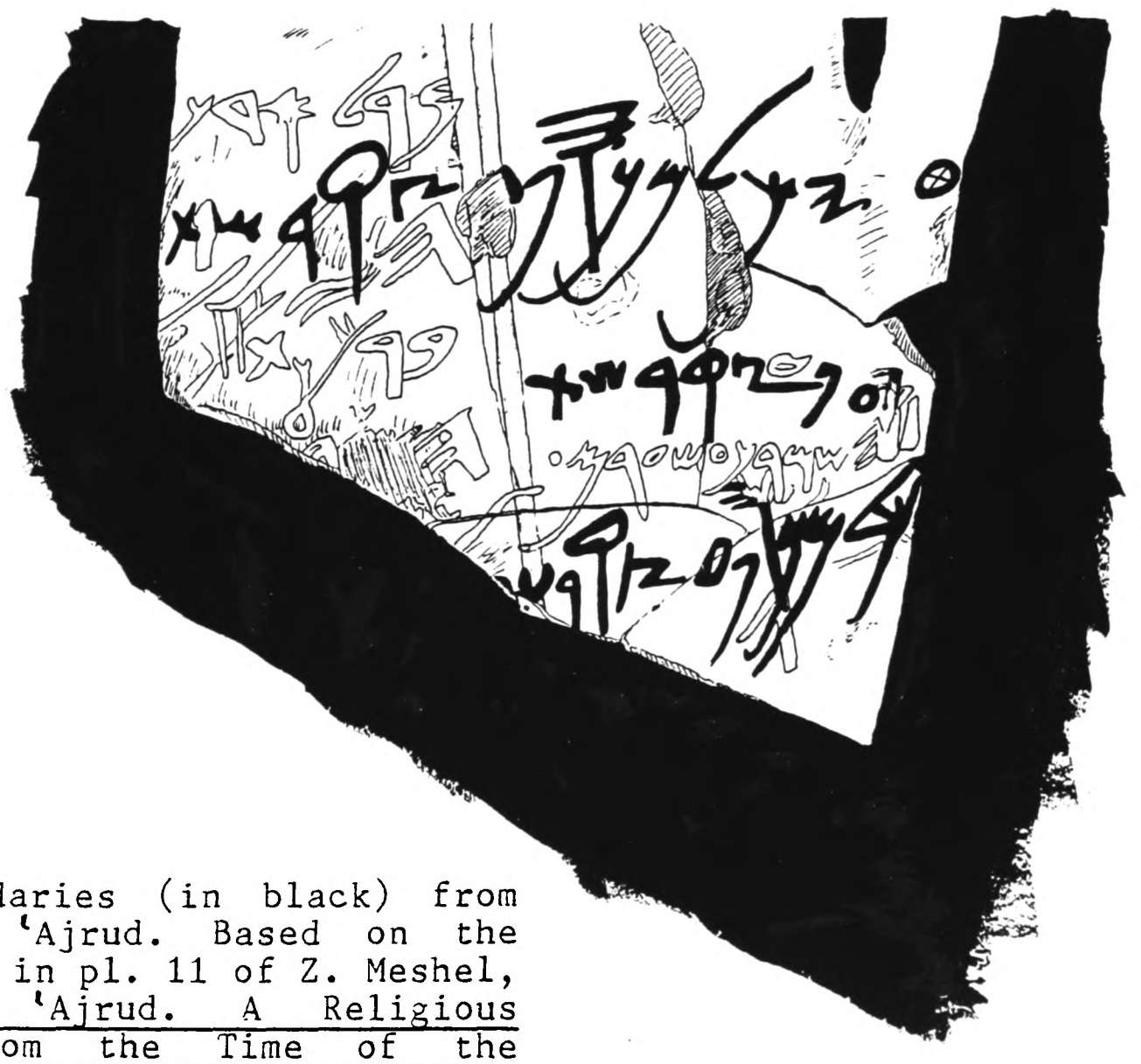
possibility that there was a school there. Far more likely is the view of most scholars that the bench-room served some religious purpose, with which the inscriptions are to be associated, while the position of the site as a whole, and its abundant storage facilities, may suggest that it served as an ancient equivalent of the motorway service-station [75].

(ix) Abecedaries: general considerations. In our review of these sites we have encountered a number of abecedaries, partial abecedaries, and groups of letters which may be partial abecedaries. If not commonplace, such inscriptions are certainly not very rare, and a number have been found from outside Israel and from a later period within Israel. Yet even among the few we have discussed, a number, most especially those in the tomb at Khirbet el-Qôm and in the bench-room at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, simply cannot plausibly mark the site of a school. M. Haran has pointed out that this is true also of a number of the later abecedaries, including that in the cave at Naḥal Michmash, which was home to a single family and approachable only by rope-ladder [76]. If it is accepted that such spots were unlikely to have been schoolrooms, it must also be accepted that there is no necessary link between abecedaries and schools. Are

abecedaries, in fact, writing exercises at all? There is no simple answer to such a question: Haran suggests that some of the abecedaries should be viewed as practice work by apprentice craftsmen, which has a ring of plausibility about it, but he rightly acknowledges that this is unlikely to be the full explanation. We have suggested that the letters on the step at Lachish are a simple graffito, and it may be that this doodling of letters was quite common. Again, we have speculated that the repetition of the name of the city on the bowl from Arad was an attempt to decorate it, and this seems quite clearly to have been the case with an abecedary inscribed around a dish from Deir ʿAlla [77]. Given the possibly religious context of the abecedaries at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, on the other hand, there is surely some weight in the suggestion that writing, and abecedaries in particular, were seen to be endowed with some magical or mystical significance, as was the case in classical times [78]. The alphabet, be it from ʾaleph to taw, or from alpha to omega, expresses completeness and order, and in this context it is worth noting the particular association of biblical and Babylonian acrostics with hymns, prayers and, perhaps, the cult [79]. There is probably no single interpretation to be put on all the abecedaries which have been recovered, and the automatic association of abecedaries with the learning of writing, let alone with schools, is to be regarded with profound suspicion.



A section from the inscribed dish, Arad inscription 99. Based on a photograph on p. 114 of Y. Aharoni, Arad Inscriptions (Heb. version. Jerusalem, 1975).



The abecedaries (in black) from Kuntillet ʿAjrud. Based on the photograph in pl. 11 of Z. Meshel, Kuntillet ʿAjrud. A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judaean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai (Jerusalem, 1978).

Summary We may conveniently summarise our examination of Lemaire's claims:

(i) ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah: the ostracon from this site cannot have been associated with any Canaanite or Israelite scribal school in Aphek.

(ii) Gezer: neither the form nor the content of the tablet suggests that it is a school exercise tablet.

(iii) Lachish: the inscription and drawings on the rise of a step are most probably to be regarded as graffiti. The ostracon discovered in 1973 is barely legible, and the identification of it as an abecedary is problematic. The inscription on a jar may be a name, or may be the work of an apprentice potter, but demonstrates no connection with any school. The activity of a school cannot be deduced from Lachish ostracon 3.

(iv) Khirbet el-Qôm: the position of the inscription rules out the possibility that it marks the site of a school.

(v) Arad: the inscribed bowl is not a writing exercise, but probably a crude attempt at decoration. Ostracon 88 is probably an official copy of a message or decree, rather than a literary exercise. Of the other ostraca, none are plausibly regarded as school exercises.

(vi) Aroer: the first ostracon is not a school exercise, while the second may or may not be part of an abecedary.

(vii) Qadesh-Barnea: the first ostracon may be part of an abecedary, but is not written by someone just learning to write; the second is almost illegible, and is not plausibly a school exercise. The three hieratic numeral ostraca, however, are plausibly interpreted as evidence of the teaching of these numerals.

(viii) Kuntillet ʿAjrud: none of the inscriptions are plausibly to be regarded as school exercises, and the position of the site rules out the possibility that there was a school there.

For reasons discussed above, I do not believe that the abecedaries found can be taken as evidence of schools, even

where their handwriting or position does not rule out this possibility. Our examination, then, hardly supports Lemaire's claim that epigraphic material proves the existence of numerous schools. Only in the single instance of the numeral ostraca from Qadesh-Barnea, indeed, can I agree that there is evidence of formal instruction. Nowhere do we find any evidence of the use of literature in education. We cannot, therefore, conclude that Lemaire, for all the ingenuity and erudition with which he argues, has proved his claim: the existence of schools in Israel under the monarchy has no more been proved by 'school exercises' than by the OT.

(b) Schools and Writing. Learning to write was by no means a simple process in Egypt or Mesopotamia, where the sheer number of phonetic signs employed, as well as the use of non-phonetic determinative signs, and of archaic spellings, all contrived to make considerable experience in the reading of texts a virtual prerequisite. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the alphabetic system used in Israel and the writing-systems of these nations: it was designed to be easy to learn, and they were not. The well-worn dictum of W.F. Albright is, perhaps, rather too optimistic, but is still worth quoting:

> "Since the forms of the letters are very simple, the 22-letter alphabet could be learned in a day or two by a bright student and in a week or two by the dullest; hence it could spread with great rapidity. I do not doubt for a moment that there were many urchins in various parts of Palestine who could read and write as early as the time of the Judges..." [80].

Albright's assumption that the ease of writing must in itself have led to widespread literacy has very properly been challenged [81], but his main point is surely indisputable: the Phoenician alphabet adopted and then adapted in Israel is neither complicated nor arcane. The system of writing was not an obstacle to the acquisition of literacy in Israel, and it is not necessary to suppose that lengthy schooling and a course in reading literature was necessary for a good grasp of the essentials. The argument has been advanced, however, that such schooling must be hypothesised, as the only explanation for a perceived uniformity of script and orthography in Hebrew inscriptions [82].

There would be some force in this argument if orthography and script in the early Israelite inscriptions showed any marked tendency toward conservatism or any other form of artificiality, but they do not. In fact, as regards orthography, there is regional variation in the representation of vowels, expressing differences in pronunciation, while the use of matres lectionis is far from consistent, and shows considerable development over time.

Even as late as the sixth century, orthographic variation is found within the official correspondence from Arad and Lachish [83]. Such adaptation and development is hardly evidence of a static tradition of orthography, and the general uniformity of orthography is explained simply by the nature of the script: it is really quite hard to come up with alternative spellings of a word when the alphabet offers no choice of characters to represent a given sound, as is often the case in English; it is only with the widespread use of the more ambiguous vowel letters, in a much later period, that great variation was enabled to occur. As regards the script, it is simply a fallacy to suppose that it was uniform: it went through periods of very rapid development, and different styles certainly existed side by side [84]. There is nothing in the fact of writing, in the orthography, or in the development of the script which demands the existence of schools or of lengthy schooling.

We cannot go into the question of literacy here, beyond saying that there seems to be some consensus emerging among scholars, that writing in Israel before the Exile was very far from being a skill confined to a small class of professional scribes. Many of the inscriptions discovered, especially those incised on pots before firing and carved on seals, are clearly the work of artisans rather than scribes,

while there is biblical and epigraphic evidence to suggest that many Israelites who were neither scribes nor artisans possessed some degree of literacy [85]. Arguments from silence, against the existence of anything, draw their strength from the reasonableness of the expectation that there should be evidence of that thing if it existed. If literacy was acquired only or mainly through schooling, a lot of literate people would imply the existence of a lot of schools, and the expectation that there should be some clear biblical or archaeological evidence for such schools becomes correspondingly more reasonable. Since such evidence is almost negligible, consisting only of evidence for instruction in numerals and measures at Qadesh-Barnea in the closing decades of the southern kingdom, it is extremely difficult to maintain on present evidence that the use of writing is dependent upon the existence of schools.

3. Schools, Scribes and the Wisdom Literature

The difference in the type of script, and the evidence for some degree of literacy far outside the scribal profession mean that we should be very wary of assuming that Egyptian or Mesopotamian education can be used as a guide to the nature of education in Israel. Even Ugarit, which possessed an alphabetic script, is a poor potential analogy, since Akkadian seems to have played a role there which is

unattested in Israel. Furthermore, the different histories and different administrative needs of each nation are likely to have necessitated different systems and different types of education [86]. For these reasons, the sporadic debate about the relative stages of advancement in the various nations is misguided [87]: administration and education are a function of structures, needs and history within a society, and there is no uniform path of development. Equally, there is no evidence of some universal scribal culture towards which the administrators of each nation might aspire. Relevant to this, of course, is the evidence studied in the last chapter. If, as we have seen, concrete evidence is lacking for the suggestion that Israel imitated the administrative system of Egypt, it is hardly something which we should suppose on theoretical or analogical grounds. The needs of the Israelite administration, and the skills required, therefore, of administrators, must be assessed in terms of the archaeological and biblical evidence for Israelite society, economy and organisation, not on the basis of the quite different systems which evolved elsewhere.

That is not a study which I can undertake here, but there are a few common assumptions about scribes in Israel which do need to be questioned. Chief among these is the belief that scribes must have been involved in the production of

literature. This is not a pursuit or skill which follows necessarily from administrative skill: literacy may be a sine qua non for the composition of literature, but one can be literate and yet not feel the urge to write books. As I pointed out much earlier, Egyptian literature is associated with the literate 'scribal' class in Egypt, but it is not a product directly of administrative concerns, nor can such a class be transposed to Israel. The evidence of the Old Testament itself demonstrates quite clearly that literature in Israel was not a scribal monopoly, and there is no pre-Exilic literature, indeed, which can unequivocally be attributed to the activity of scribes [88]. Again, then, we cannot simply employ analogy to suggest that Israelite administrators were associated with literature. That is not, of course, to rule out the possibility that individual scribes, along with anyone else sufficiently literate, might have composed literature.

Correspondingly, I see no good reason to presuppose that literature was employed in the education of scribes. Since there were, to our knowledge, no 'classical' or literary languages to be learnt, and no requirement for extensive reading in order to master the script, an education similar to that of an Egyptian or Babylonian scribe would have been both unnecessary and extravagant in Israel. The degree of literacy required and the specialist knowledge to be learned

are quite compatible with the idea of training through apprenticeship or within hereditary families of scribes. Particular things might, of course, be taught formally to those who needed them. Here the Qadesh-Barnea evidence for instruction in numerals is particularly interesting, not least because evidence for instruction in this matter is not balanced by any evidence to suggest that it was part of a broader curriculum there. It would seem a little odd that we have only recovered a number of exercises on the same topic if other topics were indeed taught.

One area of specialised learning which might well have been taught formally, using literature, is that of foreign languages. It seems possible, moreover, that this was one route through which foreign wisdom literature might have entered Israel and been translated. This must, however, be put in context. In the first place, the number of scribes actually involved in foreign relations, and requiring foreign languages is likely to have been fairly low. Probably from about the 8th century Aramaic would have sufficed for most purposes [89]. It is difficult to think of any practical reason for Israelite scribes to have learnt Middle Egyptian, which was archaic many hundreds of years before Solomon, or Sumerian: the languages in which much of the foreign literature was written are unlikely to have played any role in international affairs.

Furthermore, only in the case of Amenemope do we have good reason to suppose that an actual text, or some version of it, was known in Israel. Most of the close parallels to other works are scattered and isolated. In part this may be due to the influence of texts or traditions unknown to us, but I think it is also probable that some proportion of the transmission was oral and piecemeal. The number of people who spoke Hebrew or some closely related language but were able to understand spoken Egyptian is likely to have been much higher than the number able to read Egyptian [90], and sayings may have been spread through trade or via the many Semites resident in Egypt at various times. Finally, the Exile and the settlement of Jews in Mesopotamia and Egypt may have played an important role, though this importance varies according to the date one assigns to the wisdom literature. Scribal training in foreign languages may, then, have played some part in the transmission of foreign wisdom literature, but it is not the only way of understanding that transmission, nor should skill in languages be assumed to have been a part of the training for all scribes.

On other areas of administrative expertise, the relationship to the wisdom literature is very general: there is nothing in Proverbs which would have been of interest or use solely to a scribe. However, the assumption that wisdom is 'scribal' has led to some curiously narrow inter-

pretations of wisdom interests. The emphasis on the value of speech and persuasiveness, for example, need hardly be interpreted in terms of 'rhetorical' skill [91], nor counsel viewed solely as political advice: where these are related to the court or to government, this is simply an aspect of them, and sometimes clearly just illustrative [92]

4. Schools: conclusions

Its use in schools has long been viewed as a central influence on the development of the wisdom literature, and has been seen by some scholars as the medium through which wisdom literature exerted an influence on other areas of the biblical tradition. Were it possible to prove, or produce strong evidence for the existence of schools on other grounds, the possibility that the wisdom literature was used in them, or even composed for use in them, might at least be entertained. However, our examination of the epigraphical evidence, and of the strongest of the biblical evidence for the existence of schools, has shown that it is incapable of lending any such support. Our only evidence for any kind of education is for formal instruction in numerals at Qadesh-Barnea in the closing decades of the southern kingdom: that is a long way from the sort of schooling that must be demonstrated if we are to accept that this was the Sitz im Leben of the wisdom literature.

Section II Summary and Conclusion

The main points from the preceding chapters can be summarised very briefly:

1. 'Wisdom' is used widely in the OT, but it has a literary connotation only in late texts. There is no evidence of any weight to support the idea that 'wise men' was a normal designation in pre-exilic Israel for royal administrators or scribes.

2. There is little or no material in Proverbs for which an origin in the royal court is the only reasonable explanation. Much of the material which refers to kings, or is possibly addressed to courtiers, may anyway have arisen outside Israel and have been absorbed into the Israelite wisdom tradition for traditional reasons or because it reflects more general principles. Such material is, furthermore, rather rare, and its distribution does not suggest redaction in the royal court.

3. The theories are ill-founded which claim that the Joseph Narrative, or some part of it, reflects and teaches ideals of courtly wisdom.

4. The association of Solomon with literary wisdom is late, and there is no reason to believe that it reflects historical fact. There are no grounds for the belief that Solomon based his administration on that of Egypt, and therefore adopted Egyptian methods and materials for educating his administrators. Nor does the Israelite use of Egyptian numerals and measures require any explanation beyond the exigencies of trade and the earlier influence of Egypt on Canaan.

5. Evidence for formal schooling in Israel is slight: it cannot support the idea that Israel had an educational system which was similar to that of Egypt, and might, therefore, have made use of wisdom material. There is considerable evidence, on the other hand, to suggest that literacy was far from unknown outside the scribal profession.

None of this obliges us to discard the possibility that wisdom was cultivated, chiefly at least, in the royal court, and used for the education of officials. On the other hand, it does show that there is hardly any evidence to suggest such a possibility. Just as good a case could probably be made out for the cultivation of wisdom among, say, a group of disgruntled husbands. I would not wish to reject outright the notion that some of the wisdom writers were courtiers or

administrators (or, for that matter, disgruntled husbands). As we shall see, the writers seem mostly to have been members of a social class which may have included such individuals. I do not, however, believe that such literary endeavour was a part of their professional work or reflects the ethos of their profession. I shall return to this issue in the next section, where I shall also explore some of the more positive implications of the above studies.

Section III Conclusions and implications

The book of Proverbs is a composite work, major sections of which are indicated by superscriptions in the text. These may comprise a unified system imposed on the material and reflecting late traditions about the composition. Further sub-sections may be isolated in formal grounds. Most of the book consists of 'instruction' or 'sentence literature', sometimes mixed, and these styles of composition have counterparts within literature from elsewhere in the ancient Near East, including some of the earliest texts from Egypt and Mesopotamia. There the styles are associated with broader genres, which include much material not directly comparable to anything in Proverbs and are integral parts of the respective literary traditions. Although it certainly draws on foreign literature and traditions in important respects, the material in Proverbs is not part of some integrated and distinct wisdom movement across the Near East, nor its writers part of some international 'fraternity' [1].

So far as we can determine the principles of organisation within the sentence literature, they seem to reflect relatively little interest in the development of themes, but a strong desire to give the material coherence and flow through the use of associative links at a level of sound and

form. This too is a feature of similar material outside Israel, and it corresponds to a concern within the individual sayings also: the desire to use 'pleasing words', and to arrange materials with great care, which is attested for Qoheleth [2], appears to have been an important feature of wisdom from an early time. In view of the general conformity with Hebrew poetical techniques [3], the regularity of expression, and the differences from attested popular sayings in Israel [4], I am inclined to think that these are features of a high literary style, while acknowledging that criteria for distinguishing such a style are very difficult to establish. Whatever its significance, this style seems to take precedence over other concerns in the creation of the sayings collections, and it may have an important role in other parts of Proverbs.

In looking for the creators of this literature, then, we are seeking individuals who went to a great deal of trouble to find and arrange their materials, and who were evidently interested in the literature or traditions of other nations. Our knowledge of Israelite society is so slight that this does not really rule out anybody, although more general considerations suggest that the creation of literature is unlikely to have preoccupied those members of the community without the time or resources for such a luxury. For most of this century the royal court, the royal administration and

scribal schools have been thought to be the most important setting for wisdom composition and redaction, although it is generally allowed that much of the material is not appropriate to this, and must reflect either some composition outside the court or a non-scribal stage of redaction.

Earlier ideas have come to play some role in this general hypothesis. The identification of a group in the OT supposedly associated with administration and called 'wise men' has been an important constituent, but even if we accept all the key arguments for this, such a group is not attested before the 8th century, and the evidence can have no place in the idea of a Solomonic Enlightenment. I very much doubt that such a group existed at all and see no compelling reason to associate pre-exilic references to wise men with the wisdom literature. Schools, later 'scribal' schools, have also been associated with the wisdom literature for many years, but in the absence of anything to suggest the very existence of such institutions, it seems unwarranted to assume that Proverbs had anything to do with them. Finally, references to king and court in Proverbs were long taken to indicate some association between wisdom and such a milieu. I would not wish to rule out completely such an association, although, as I have argued, the presence of such sayings is by no means inexplicable without such a

connection. My chief objection is to the idea that early wisdom is primarily to be associated with and defined by the royal court and administration.

Those theories which have emerged since the 1920's are central here. The recognition of a link between Proverbs and the Egyptian instructions occurred at a time both when the Egyptian instructions were understood 'pragmatically' by many scholars, and when the uncritical use of analogy between nations, so important to the Myth and Ritual school, still reigned unchecked. It was a short step to concluding on the basis of the Egyptian texts that Israelite wisdom must have been used for the training of scribes. Methodology and the actual nature of the instructions aside, the most important problem here is clearly the assumption that Israel possessed a scribal class remotely comparable to that of Egypt. This is an issue which has become fudged by unproven and improbable claims about the international nature of the scribal class and the mobility of its members [5]. Specifically, though, it has been widely accepted that Solomon created an administration in Israel which directly imitated that of Egypt, an idea which takes the problem out of the realm of analogy and into that of influence. It is, however, an idea based more on wishful thinking than either probability or fact. There are good reasons for supposing that no proper state administration emerged until much

later, and that Solomon was anyway influenced more from the North than the South. At best, a handful of official positions might have been based on Egyptian offices, but there is no evidence that they were, it is more likely that they derive from Palestinian models, and they seem anyway to have existed under David. It is more than the Solomonic date which is in jeopardy here. The sort of setting for early wisdom envisaged by von Rad and many others is dependent upon a cultured scribal class comparable to and associated with that of Egypt, and producing wisdom literature for similar reasons. The existence of such a class cannot be deduced from archaeological or biblical evidence, and simple analogy between two such different societies would be improper.

In view of the many problems associated with the evidence most often adduced for the setting of wisdom, I should like to suggest that a more appropriate means of establishing the nature and outlook of wisdom is to be found in the study of Proverbs itself, and of the sections within it. At the very least we might hope to establish clearly the interests and outlook of the writers by reference to their writings. This cannot, of course, be done through a simple equation of subject-matter with background: my observation on the king sayings, that the king is of interest to people other than just courtiers, is more widely applicable. Sayings about

farming, for instance, do not have to be taken as "Farmers' wisdom", but may reflect a literary interest of the sort shown in the Sumerian Farmer's Instruction or in Virgil's Georgics. Even when direct address is involved, we must allow similarly for a broader interest; to take somewhat extreme examples, Merikare and the instruction to Lemuel were hardly of interest only to kings. On the same basis, an admonition to judge fairly need not be addressed solely to those who might be in a position to judge: it reflects a broader interest in justice. It is the simplistic belief that subject-matter must indicate background which mars Skladny's attempt to place the sayings collections [6].

More profitable, I think, is the examination of viewpoints and incidental details within the literature, and much work remains to be done in this area. The recent studies by Whybray and Pleins, which reach radically different conclusions, are both seriously flawed by a failure to recognise the importance of genre and an inclination to force the evidence [7], but these are problems more to do with the working-out than the actual approach. My own limited research in this area suggests that the bulk of the material in Proverbs reflects a background in the towns and countryside rather than Jerusalem, and the outlook of a relatively prosperous class. I am not convinced that the sayings which refer to king and court need be explained

separately, as members of such a class may have had an interest in and even some access to the king. Some, indeed, may have been scribes, priests or members of other professions. My point here is not that such men were necessarily not involved in wisdom, but rather that the wisdom literature does not reflect a professional ethos or activity.

I would suggest that it is probably wrong, furthermore, to view the wisdom literature as the product of a distinct tradition or school of thought; as we have seen, there is nothing to suggest that it was any such thing in Egypt or Mesopotamia. Indeed, with all due caution, I think we should consider very seriously the possibility that 'wisdom' should be taken essentially as a literary classification, as in Egyptology and Assyriology. Certainly, 'wisdom thought' no longer seems so alien as it once did. On the one hand, recent studies have begun to emphasise the extent to which it complements, rather than contradicts, ideas found elsewhere in the OT; on the other, the grip of salvation history has now been broken, and it is no longer perceived as both normative and unique to Israel [8]. Increasingly, Israelite thought and literature are perceived in a much wider, Near Eastern context: the non-nationalism of the wisdom literature, the universalism of its themes and its

use of foreign traditions may find a more comfortable place in this new perspective than hitherto.

Finally, the whole issue of wisdom influence is in need of some re-assessment. The proliferation of articles on this topic seems finally to have ceased, perhaps because there is so little of the OT left to be claimed [9]. I cannot review them all here, and some are clearly a great deal more convincing than others, but at the very least many can be said to have demonstrated some common ground between the wisdom literature and other parts of the OT. Roland Murphy's idea, that this reflects an outlook shared to some extent by all Israelites, certainly has some validity, although this can hardly explain links through vocabulary and form [10]. Whybray's suggestion, that wisdom is the manifestation of an intellectual tradition which shows through in other works, has more to commend it in this respect, although I cannot approve the method he uses to determine such outbreaks [11]. I am myself inclined to suspect that we should reckon with the wide circulation of wisdom sayings and compositions, orally and in texts, from a relatively early time in Israel. If we are not to suppose that wisdom literature was associated with some particular movement or profession, then equally we need not view the influence of wisdom literature as the influence of one group upon another or upon an individual author. Though it is necessarily speculative, I

would go further, and suggest that wisdom might well have been read and quoted for pleasure and edification in many different circles, and perceived as something of a common heritage.

Notes and Bibliography

Chapter 1: Notes

1. See W. McKane, Proverbs. A New Approach (London, 1970), and C. Kayatz, Studien zu Proverbien 1-9: eine form- und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung ägyptischen Vergleichsmaterials, WMANT 22 (Neukirchen, 1966).

2. McKane, op. cit, (1970), p. 3

3. See especially J. Schmidt, Studien zur Stilistik der Alttestamentlichen Spruchliteratur, Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen 13, 1 (Münster, 1936).

4. McKane, op. cit. (1970), p. 413.

5. The full list of sayings linked literally is: (a) linked by same initial letter: $10^{2f.}$, $25f.$; $11^{5f.}$, $9-12$; $12^{17f.}$, $28-13^{1}$; $14^{3f.}$, $32f.$; 15^{12-14}, $16f.$; $16^{6f.}$, $27-29$, $30f.$;$17^{3f.}$, $18f.$; $18^{1f.}$, $5f.$, $20-22$; $20^{4f.}$, $7-9$, $12f.$, $24-26$; $21^{16f.}$; $22^{2f.}$. (b) linked by sequence of letters: 16^{20-23} (m,l,m,l) and 17^{12-15} (p,m,p,m).

6. Hermisson, for example, sees a broad theme of "Armut und Reichtum, Mangel und Sattigung" linking 10^{2-5}. See H.-J. Hermisson, Studien zur israelitischen Spruch-

weisheit, WMANT 28 (Neukirchen, 1968) p. 174. On the question of themes more generally, see below.

7. All percentages are rounded to the nearest integer, downwards if the fraction is less than 0.5, else upwards.

8. For the verbal links in these chapters and elsewhere, I have followed, for the most part, the lists given by Gustav Boström in his excellent Paronomasi i den Äldre Hebreiska Maschallitteraturen, LUÅ 29/8 (Lund, 1928). In those cases where the text is in doubt (eg. at 13^{13}, where Bostrom reads hkm on the basis of the longer LXX, and thus sees a link with v. 14), or where the verbal resemblance is very slight, I have generally taken a more cautious approach. In the case of textual problems, this should not be taken to express my preferred reading in every instance, but merely my desire to exclude controversial cases.

9. Skladny, for example, believes there to be 164 sayings (if we include 10^{1}) in chs. 10-15 which show antithetical parallelism, while Pfeiffer finds 169, and Skehan 170; I consider all of these to be overestimates. See U. Skladny, Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel (Göttingen, 1962) p. 23 n. 141; R.H. Pfeiffer, Introduction to the Old Testament (London, 1952) p. 647;

P. Skehan, "A single editor for the whole book of Proverbs" (Revised version), in P. Skehan (ed.), Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom, CBQMS 1 (Washington, 1971), pp. 15-26, see p. 18. It is important to point out that the present analysis is stylistic, not form-critical.

10. A synonymous interpretation, which is generally adopted by translators, poses considerable problems. It seems more likely that the verse is antithetical, and it might be paraphrased as "One who conceals hatred may be a liar, but one who utters slander is (far worse!) a fool".

11. In chs. 10-15 I take all the sayings to be antithetical except: $10^{22, 26}$; $11^{7, 22, 25, 29, 31}$; $12^{9, 14}$; $13^{14, 23}$; $14^{7, 10, 13, 19, 26, 27}$; $15^{3, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23, 24, 30, 31}$. In chs. 16-$22^{16}$ I take the following to be antithetical: $16^{1, 9, 22, 25, 33}$; $17^{9, 16, 22, 24}$; $18^{12, 19, 23, 24}$; $19^{4, 12, 14, 16, 21, 25}$; $20^{3, 5, 6, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24, 29}$; $21^{2, 5, 8, 11, 12, 15, 20, 26, 28, 29, 31}$; $22^{3, 5, 12, 15}$. It is, of course, possible to quibble about a number of these and other sayings, but the overall picture is not really affected. Caution has led me to take 13^{19} as antithetical; it is, however, tempting to see the second stich as consequent upon the

first, i.e., fools hate to give up their plans because the gratification of desire is so sweet (cf. R.B.Y. Scott, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes (Garden City, 1965), p. 94).

12. Skehan op. cit. (1971).

13. The Yahweh and king chains are probably to be taken as verbal chains, not thematic blocks, since they cover a number of different issues, and in some sayings Yahweh and the king are not really the subject matter (e.g. 15^{33}, $16^{5f.}$, ^{13}). The same is true of the short chain of 'king' sayings in 25^{2-7b} and of the chains in ch. 26 linked by the 'fool' (vv. 4-12) and the 'sluggard' (vv. 13-16). Nevertheless, there is something more than simple catchword linking involved, and perhaps they should be viewed as a sort of 'catch-theme' linking, of the sort described below.

14. The full list of sayings linked literally is: $25^{(4f.)}$, (6-7b), 25, 26; 26^{1}, ^{2}; 27^{6}, ^{7}; 28^{8-10}, 18, 19, 24, 25. As before, I have only taken into consideration, for the diagram and subsequent calculations, literal chains of more than two sayings. The literal link between vv. 18 and 19 in ch. 29 has, however, influenced my decision to accept the otherwise rather weak verbal link.

15. I take to be antithetical sayings: 25^{2}; $27^{6, 9, 12}$; $28^{1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 10\text{-}14, 16, 18\text{-}20, 25\text{-}28}$; $29^{2\text{-}4, 6\text{-}8, 11, 15, 16, 23, 26, 27}$. I am not sure about $29^{18, 25}$ and have excluded them, along with $28^{21, 23}$. The simile-sayings, or similitudes, are presented in various ways. The most basic form is the simple juxtaposition of two statements for comparison: $25^{11, 12, 14, 18, 19, 26, 28}$; $26^{6, 17, 23}$; $28^{3, 15}$. This is given a twist in $25^{(4f.)}$ by the juxtaposition of distichs. More common is the linking of the two stichs by '<u>waw</u> copulative': $25^{3, 20, 23, 25}$; $26^{3, 7, 9, 10, 14, 20, 21}$; $27^{17, 18, 20, 21}$. In three cases the preposition <u>kĕ</u> is used alone: 25^{13}; $26^{11, 22}$; it is more frequently used with <u>kēn</u> ("as...so"): $26^{1, 2, 8, (18f.)}$; $27^{8, 19}$. Finally, $27^{(15f.)}$ employs a verb of comparison. I have excluded $27^{2, 3}$, the distinctive form of which is paralleled in Ahikar, since they are not really similes.

16. Admonitions (excl. instruction): $25^{16, 17, 27}$; $26^{4, 5}$; $27^{1, 2, 10, 11, 13}$; 28^{17}; 29^{17}.

17. Statements lacking parallelism: $26^{13, 15, 16}$; $27^{14, 22}$; $28^{8, 9, 21\text{-}24}$; $29^{1, 5, 9, 12\text{-}14, 19, 21, 24}$.

18. K. Hoglund, "The fool and the wise in dialogue", in K. Hoglund <u>et al.</u> (eds.), <u>The Listening Heart. Essays in</u>

Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm, JSOTS 58 (Sheffield, 1987), pp. 161-180. Hoglund draws heavily on an unpublished thesis by Van Leeuwen, which has not been available to me.

19. J. Krispenz, Spruchkompositionen im Buch Proverbia, Europäische Hochschulschriften Series 23 349 (Frankfurt, 1989). See pp. 107ff.

20. G.E. Bryce, "Another wisdom-'book' in Proverbs", JBL 91 (1972), pp. 145-157.

21. The Kemit, reconstructed from numerous fragments, seems to have been a compilation of material, e.g. letter formulae, for use in schools. It is not an 'instruction'. See especially H. Brunner, Altägyptische Erziehung (Wiesbaden, 1957), pp. 83-85, 86-88.

22. See especially O. Plöger, "Zur Auslegung der Sentenzensammlungen des Proverbianbuches", in H.W. Wolff (ed.), Probleme Biblischer Theologie. Gerhard von Rad zum 70. Geburtstag (Munich, 1971), pp. 402-416.

23. This is to over-simplify rather. On the problem generally, see Carole Fontaine's fascinating Traditional

Sayings in the Old Testament. A Contextual Study. (Sheffield, 1982).

24. Hoglund, op. cit. (1987), p. 162.

25. Krispenz, op. cit. (1989), esp. pp. 9ff.

Chapter 2: notes

1. For English translations, see M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature 3 vols. (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London; 1973, 1976, 1980); for German, and a fuller coverage, H. Brunner, Altägyptische Weisheit (Darmstadt, 1988); French, J. Lévêque, Sagesses de l'Égypte Ancienne, Supplément au Cahier Évangile 46 (Paris, 1983). See also the notes on individual texts. Bibliographical information is given by Lichtheim and Brunner; amongst the recent literature, see also E. Hornung and O. Keel (eds.), Studien zu Altägyptischen Lebenslehren, OBO 28 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1979), pp. 363-391; M.V. Fox, "Two decades of research in Egyptian wisdom literature", ZÄS 107 (1980), pp. 120-135 esp. pp. 131-135. R.J. Williams, "The sages of ancient Egypt in the light of recent scholarship", JAOS 101/1 (1981), pp. 1-19, complements the bibliography in J. Leclant, "Documents nouveaux et points de vue récents sur les sagesses de l'Égypte ancienne" in Les Sagesses du Proche-Orient Ancien. Colloque de Strasbourg 17-19 mai 1963 (Paris, 1963), pp. 5-26, esp. pp. 18ff. For the Middle Kingdom literature, R. Parkinson, "Tales, teachings and discourses from the Middle Kingdom", in S. Quirke (ed.), Middle Kingdom Studies (New Malden, forthcoming), supplements G. Posener, "Les richesses inconnues de la

littérature égyptienne", RdÉ 6 (1951), pp. 27-48 (="1951a"), RdÉ 9 (1952), pp. 117-120. See also pp. 328-341 of M. Bellion, Égypte Ancienne. Catalogue des manuscrits hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques et des dessins, sur papyrus, cuir ou tissu publiés ou signalés (Paris, 1987), which is comprehensive, but far from user-friendly. For general treatment and bibliography of the major instructions, see the relevant articles on pp. 963-992 of vol. 3 of the Lexikon der Ägyptologie (Wiesbaden, 1980). For Mesopotamia, many texts are still untranslated; there is good coverage of the bilingual and Akkadian texts in W.G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature (Oxford, 1960), henceforth "BWL", with a few translations of Akkadian and Sumerian material in ANET^3. For general surveys and bibliographies, see especially E.I. Gordon, "A new look at the wisdom of Sumer and Akkad", BiOr 17 (1960), pp. 122-152, and the article "Literatur", in the Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie (Berlin, 1987), vol. 7, pp. 35-75.

2. Publication and editions: E. Brunner-Traut, "Die Weisheitslehre des Djedef-Hor", ZÄS 76 (1940), pp. 3-9; G. Posener, "Le début de l'enseignement de Hardjedef (Recherches Littéraires IV)", RdÉ 9 (1952), pp. 109-117, and "Quatre tablettes scolaires de Basse Époque

(Aménémopé et Hardjedef)", RdÉ 18 (1966), pp. 45-65, esp. pp. 62ff.; W. Helck, Die Lehre des Djedefhor und die Lehre eines Vaters an seinen Sohn (Wiesbaden, 1984).

3. See J. Assmann, "Schrift, Tod und Identität. Das Grab als Vorschule der Literatur im alten Ägypten", in A. Assmann et al. (eds.), Schrift und Gedächtnis, Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation (Munich, 1983), pp. 64-93, esp. p. 86; R. Parkinson, op. cit. (forthcoming). More generally, J. Baines, "Literacy and ancient Egyptian society", Man N.S. 18 (1983), pp. 572-599, esp. p. 578. This view, that the instructions, and literature in general, arose only after the Old Kingdom, is not universally held, but is now very influential. Principally their Middle Kingdom language, but some more circumstantial evidence also, points to a convention of pseudonymity in the early instructions, not unlike that found in Jewish apocalyptic. The clear example of Amenemhet lends considerable force to the argument. Some sensible comments, on the reluctance of scholars to abandon the earlier dates, are made by Stephen Quirke on p. 91 of a review in Discussions in Egyptology 16 (1990). Miriam Lichtheim, acknowledging that the texts are later and pseudonymous, has nevertheless preferred to retain an Old Kingdom dating, a

compromise which has little to commend it: see op. cit. (1973-80), vol. 1, pp. 6f.

4. See W. Helck, "Zur Frage der Enstehung der ägyptischen Literatur", WZKM 63/64 (1972), pp. 6-26 esp. pp. 16-19, and comments in his edition, op. cit. (1984), passim. Hellmut Brunner claims that Hardjedef 4.3 is cited in a text from the time of Pepi II, in the Old Kingdom, which would, of course, preclude a Middle Kingdom date: see his "Zitate aus Lebenslehren" in E. Hornung and O. Keel (eds.), Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren, OBO 28 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1979), pp. 105-171, esp. pp. 117f., 122. However, the similarities between the texts are not so great as to imply that one is a citation of the other, and there are some substantial differences.

5. Publication and editions: G. Jéquier, Le Papyrus Prisse et ses Variantes (Paris, 1911), pl. I, cf. p. 9; A. Scharff, "Die Lehre für Kagemni", ZÄS 77 (1942), pp. 13-21; A.H. Gardiner, "The instruction addressed to Kagemni and his brethren", JEA 32 (1946), pp. 71-74.

6. Publication and editions: (facsimiles) E.A. Wallis Budge, Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum (London, 1910), pls. xxxiv-xxxviii; G. Jéquier, op. cit. (1911). E. Devaud, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep

(Freiburg, 1916) gives a hieroglyphic transcription of the major texts; the planned commentary never appeared. The standard edition is Z. Żāba, Les Maximes de Ptahhotep (Prague, 1956), which includes a full commentary and French translation. Three ostraca from Deir el-Medina, containing lines from the beginning of the work, have been published subsequently: see G. Posener, Catalogue des Ostraca Hiératiques Littéraires de Deir El Médineh I (Cairo, 1972), p. 34 and pl. 58.

7. On the text of Ptahhotep, see G. Burkard, Textkritische Untersuchungen zu Ägyptischen Weisheitslehren des Alten und Mittleren Reichs, Ägyptologische Abhandlungen 34 (Wiesbaden, 1977). This also covers Merikare, Amenemhet, Khety and the Instruction by a Man for his Son.

8. See E. Blumenthal, "Ptahhotep und der 'Stab des Alters'", in J. Osing and G. Dreyer (eds.), Form und Mass, Beiträge zur Literatur, Sprache und Kunst des alten Ägypten. Festschrift für Gerhard Fecht (Wiesbaden, 1987), pp. 84-97. P. Seibert had earlier suggested a date not earlier than the Eleventh Dynasty, in Die Charakteristik I (Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 70; cf. Helck, op. cit. (1972). For a contrary view, maintaining the Old Kingdom dating, see H. Brunner, op. cit. (1988), p. 104, who rests his case, as have others, on the apparent absence of any

reference to the travails of the First Intermediate Period, and the claim in the work that Maat has never been disrupted. To put his argument in context, it should be recalled that wisdom, Israelite and Egyptian, is capable of asserting that the righteous never suffer, contrary to all human experience: one cannot suppose that all assertions, even in the very experiential wisdom tradition, are dropped when they cease to agree with reality.

9. Publication and editions: W. Golénischeff, Les Papyrus Hiératiques N°N° 1115, 1116A et 1116B de l'Ermitage Impérial à S^{t}-Pétersbourg (St Petersburg, 1913) gives facsimiles and hieroglyphic transcription. The standard edition is A. Volten, Zwei Altägyptische Politische Schriften, Analecta Aegyptiaca 4 (Copenhagen, 1945), pp. 3-105, which gives text, translation and commentary. W. Helck, Die Lehre für König Merikare (Wiesbaden, 1977) gives text, textual commentary and translation.

10. This hymn has been studied by J. Assmann, on pp. 201-205 of Ägypten - Theologie und Frömmigkeit einer frühen Hochkultur (Stuttgart etc., 1984). Assmann makes some valuable comments about the nature and structure of Merikare more generally.

11. Publication and editions: the text and annotated translation of the most important papyrus is given in F. Ll. Griffith, "The Milligan Papyrus (teaching of Amenemhat)", ZÄS 34 (1896), pp. 35-51. The standard edition is Volten, op. cit. (1945), pp. 106-128. See also W. Helck, Der Text der 'Lehre Amenemhets I, für seinen Sohn' (Wiesbaden, 1969). On the many texts found subsequently, see n. 3 on p. 85 of E. Blumenthal, "Die Lehre des Königs Amenemhet (Teil I)", ZÄS 111 (1984), pp. 85-107, and the second fascicle of H. Goedicke, Studies in 'The Instructions of King Amenemhet I for his Son', Varia Aegyptiaca Supplement 2 (San Antonio, 1988).

12. This has long been a matter of debate, but recent textual discoveries give very strong support to the view that the king is actually dead, rather than that he has survived the attempt on his life; see J.L. Foster, "The conclusion to The Testament of Ammenemes, King of Egypt" JEA 67 (1981), pp. 36-47, and the new translation of the text in R.B Parkinson, Voices from Ancient Egypt. An anthology of Middle Kingdom writings (London, 1991), pp. 48-52. The question is discussed in detail by Goedicke, op. cit. (1988).

13. See A.H. Gardiner, Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Third Series, Chester Beatty Gift Vol. I Text (London, 1935), pp. 43f.

14. G. Posener, Littérature et Politique dans l'Égypte de la XII^{e} Dynastie (Paris, 1956), pp. 61-86. Goedicke, op. cit. (1988), argues that it was in fact directed towards Sesostris in an attempt to influence him before his accession, while Parkinson, op. cit, (1991), p. 48, describes it as a 'dramatic monologue'.

15. Publication and editions: facsimiles of some texts in E.A. Wallis Budge, Facsimiles of Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Second Series (London, 1923), pls. 65-73, cf. p. 19. Edited in H. Brunner, Die Lehre des Cheti, Sohnes des Duauf, Ägyptologische Forschungen 13 (Gluckstadt and Hamburg, 1944). A list of the numerous texts then known was given in Helck's edition: W. Helck, Die Lehre des Dw3-Ḫtjj (Wiesbaden, 1970; 2 vols.). For some of the more recent discoveries, see the references in R.J. Williams, op. cit. (1981), p. 2.

16. There is disagreement over the name, which is variously attested: Khety is the most convenient and recognisable form. The writer is not to be confused with the king of the same name, identified as the author of Merikare.

17. Publication (transcription only) in H.O. Lange and H. Schäfer, Grab- und Denksteine des Mittleren Reichs in Museum von Kairo No. 20001-20780, Cat. Gen. des Ant. Eg. du Mus. du Caire II (Berlin, 1908), pp. 145-150. More conveniently, the text is found in K. Sethe, Ägyptische Lesestücke (Leipzig, 1924), pp. 68-70, with commentary in his Erläuterungen zu den Ägyptischen Lesestücken (Leipzig, 1927), pp. 99-104.

18. G. Posener, L'Enseignement Loyaliste. Sagesse Égyptienne du Moyen Empire, Centre de Recherches d'Histoire et de Philologie de la IVe Section de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études. II, Hautes Études Orientales 5 (Geneva, 1976). A number of ostraca have been discovered subsequently.

19. Ibid., p. 18.

20. See Posener, op. cit. (1956), pp. 117-140.

21. Publication and editions: The fullest presentation of the text so far is in W. Helck, op. cit. (1984); for major additional texts, see G. Posener, "Pour la reconstitution de l'Enseignement d'un homme à son fils" RdÉ 36 (1985), pp. 115-119, and "L'Enseignement d'un homme à son fils. Cinq nouveaux ostraca", in Fest.

Fecht, Osing and Dreyer, op. cit. (1987), pp. 361-367; also J.L. Foster, "Texts of the Egyptian composition 'The Instruction of a Man for his Son' in the Oriental Institute Museum", JNES 45 (1986), pp. 197-211.

22. Parkinson, op. cit. (forthcoming), notes that "the title is universalised, almost 'Everyman'".

23. See P.E. Newberry, The Amherst Papyri (London, 1899), pl. I, fragments H-L for a facsimile of the text. For identification as a wisdom text, see Posener, op. cit. (1951a), p. 39.

24. Facsimiles in A.H. Gardiner, The Ramesseum Papyri. Plates. (Oxford, 1955), pls. III-VI, cf. pp. 8f. Transcription and commentary in J.W.B. Barns, Five Ramesseum Papyri (Oxford, 1956), pp. 11-14, pls. 7-9. Partial translation in Brunner, op. cit. (1988), pp. 193-195.

25. See J.W. Barns, "A new wisdom text from a writing-board in Oxford", JEA 56 (1968), pp. 71-76, pls. XA, X.

26. Publication and editions: facsimiles of the text may be found in A. Mariette, Les Papyrus Égyptiens du Musée de Boulaq (Paris, 1871), pls. 15-28. There is no good

edition: E. Suys, La Sagesse d'Ani, An. Or. 11 (Rome, 1935) is complete, but unreliable; A. Volten examines only extracts in his Studien zum Weisheitsbuch des Anii, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Hist.-fil. Meddelelser XXIII, 3 (Copenhagen, 1937). Of texts discovered subsequently, the most important is P.DeM I recto, which presents significant variants in content and order: see J. Černy, Papyrus Hiératiques de Deir el Médineh I (Cairo, 1978), pp. 2-4, pls. 1-8a. The other texts are listed there; the three marked "inédit" are now to be found in G. Posener, Catalogue des Ostraca Hiératiques Littéraires de Deir el Médineh III (Cairo, 1977, 1978, 1980) as no.s 1639, 1659 and 1660; no. 1658 should be added to the list.

27. Publication and editions: facsimiles in Budge, op. cit. (1923), pp. 9-18, 41-51, pls. 1-14; Budge's transcription is to be preferred on the whole to that of H.O. Lange's edition, Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope, Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Hist.-fil. Meddelelser XI, 2 (Copenhagen, 1925). I. Grumach, Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenope, Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 23 (Munich and Berlin, 1972) gives valuable commentary and transliteration, but no full transcription. Relatively few copies of this text have been found; see Williams, op. cit. (1981), p. 2. Despite earlier

controversy, there is now a broad consensus on the date. The work cannot be later, and is probably much earlier, than an ostracon in Cairo (no. 1840) which contains part of the text and is dated by Cerny to the late Twenty-First Dynasty: see p. 106 of R.J. Williams, "The alleged Semitic original of the Wisdom of Amenemope", JEA 47 (1961), pp. 100-106.

28. Publication: G. Posener, "L'exorde de l'instruction éducative d'Amennakhte (Recherches Littéraires, V)", RdÉ 10 (1955), pp. 61-72. For subsequent discoveries, see J. Von Beckerath, "Ostracon München ÄS 396", SAK 10 (1983), pp. 63-69, and Posener, op. cit. (1977, 1978, 1980), pl. 47, no. 1596 (which corresponds to O.BM 41541 lines 7 to 10).

29. See M. Weber, art. "Lebenshaus I", in vol. 3 of the Lexikon der Ägyptologie (Wiesbaden, 1980).

30. Facsimile and transcription in J. Černy and A.H. Gardiner, Hieratic Ostraca I (Oxford, 1957), pl. I. Translation and comments in A.H. Gardiner, "A new moralizing text", WZKM 54 (1957), pp. 43-45; M. Lichtheim, Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A Study of Demotic Instructions,

OBO 52 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1983), pp. 7-10; Brunner, op. cit. (1988), pp. 215-217, 469f.

31. See Posener, op. cit. (1951a), p. 43, and p. 281 of K.A. Kitchen, "The basic literary forms and formulations of ancient instructional writings in Egypt and Western Asia", in Hornung and Keel, op. cit. (1979), pp. 235-282.

32. I have been unable to discover any collation of these texts; roughly, the correspondences seem to be:

O.Petrie 11 rt. 1-7 = O.IFAO 1632 I, 9-15
1 = O.Turin 57089 line 5
4-7 = O.IFAO 1633
O.Turin 57089 = O.IFAO 1632 I, 5-9

In other words, O.IFAO 1632 seems to begin eight lines before O.Petrie 11 recto, and it continues for an undetermined number of lines beyond (at least six), though it does not correspond to any of the text on the verso; it is partially supplemented by O.Turin 57089 and O.IFAO 1633. For O.Turin 57089 see p. 184f. of G. Posener, "Ostraca inédits du Musée de Turin (Recherches Littéraires III)", RdÉ 8 (1951), pp. 171-189, pl. 14A, where it appears under its inventory no., 6391; now published in J. Lopez, Catalogo del Museo Egizio di Torino Serie II vol. III (Milan,

1978-1980), pl. 38.For O.IFAO 1632 and 1633, see G. Posener, op. cit. (1977-1980), pl. 62.

33. See O.IFAO 1090 in Posener, idem I (Cairo, 1938), pl. 49, O.Petrie 45 and O.BM 5631 in Černy and Gardiner, op. cit. (1957), pls. VII 2 and LXXXVIII respectively.

34. Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), pp. 9f.

35. See A.H. Gardiner, op. cit. (1935), Vol. I text, pp. 37-44, and Vol. II, pls. 18-22. Includes translation and commentary.

36. See Posener, idem II (1951, 1952, 1972), pl. 62, for facsimile and transcription only.

37. See F. Hintze, "Ein Bruchstück einer unbekannten Weisheitslehre", ZÄS 79 (1954), pp. 33-36.

38. Published in Černy and Gardiner, op. cit. (1957), pls. LXXVIII, LXXVIIIA (transcription and photograph), cf. p. 22. Editions: W. Guglielmi, "Eine 'Lehre' für einen reiselustigen Sohn (Ostrakon Oriental Institute 12074), Die Welt des Orients 14 (1983), pp. 147-166; J.L. Foster, "Oriental Institute Ostracon #12074:

'Menna's Lament' or 'Letter to a Wayward Son'", SSEA Journal 14 (1984), pp. 88-99.

39. G. Posener and J. Sainte Fare Garnot, "Sur une Sagesse Égyptienne de Basse Époque (Papyrus Brooklyn no. 47.218.135)" in Les Sagesses du Proche-Orient Ancien (Paris, 1963), pp. 153-157. My citations are translated from this article. Also Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), pp. 11f.

40. Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), p. 11.

41. S.R.K. Glanville, Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum II: The Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy (British Museum Papyrus 10508) (London, 1955); B.H. Stricker, "De wijsheid van Anchsjesjonq", OMRO 39 (1958), pp. 56-79; B. Gemser, "The Instructions of 'Onchsheshonqy and biblical wisdom literature", SVT 7 (1960), pp. 102-128, reprinted in J.L. Crenshaw (ed.), Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom, (New York, 1976), pp. 134-160.

42. H.J. Thissen, Die Lehre des Anchscheschonqi (P. BM. 10508), Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 32 (Bonn, 1984); M. Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983).

43. For a reconstruction of the fragmentary parts of the story, see H.S. Smith (with help from G.R. Hughes), "The story of 'Onchsheshonqy", Serapis 6 (1980), pp. 133-156.

44. From Lichtheim's translation, op. cit. (1983), p. 69.

45. See ibid., pp. 63ff.

46. Thissen, op. cit. (1984), p. 1, regards Brunner's description, "Bauernweisheit" as "eine ungerechtfertige Verkürzung". See also Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), p. 4: "The fact is that fewer than one-tenth of the more than five-hundred sayings have any bearing on farming and country life".

47. E.g., Stricker, op. cit. (1958), p. 56 and p. 58 n. 15.

48. Publication and editions: phototype edition of Pap. Insinger in Suten-Xeft, le Livre Royal. Édition en Phototypie, Monuments Égyptiens du Musée d'Antiquités des Pays-Bas à Leide, publiés d'après les ordres du gouvernement. Supplement à la 34^{me} Livraison des Monuments Égyptiens (Leiden, 1905). Introduction, transcription, translation and commentary in F. Lexa, Papyrus Insinger. Les Enseignements Moraux d'un Scribe Égyptien du Premier Siècle après J.-C. 2 vols. (Paris,

1926). See also A. Volten's Kopenhagener Texte zum Demotischen Weisheitsbuch (Pap. Carlsberg II, III verso, IV verso und V), Analecta Aegyptiaca I (Copenhagen, 1940), and his Das Demotische Weisheitsbuch, Analecta Aegyptiaca II (Copenhagen, 1941). More recently, Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), pp. 107-234, gives a translation and valuable analysis of themes etc.; see also her earlier "Observations on Papyrus Insinger", in Hornung and Keel, op. cit. (1979), pp. 283-305.

49. See Zauzich, quoted in Lichtheim op. cit. (1983), pp. 107-109. The name of the author or protagonist is still unknown. J.T. Sanders, in Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom, SBL Monograph Series 28 (Chico, 1983), calls him "Phibis" throughout, but this appears to be an incorrect reading of the copyist's name. Cf. the review by J.D. Ray in VT 35 (1985), pp. 383f.

50. M.J. Smith, art. "Weisheit, demotische", in Lexikon der Ägyptologie vol. 6 (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 1191ff.

51. M. Pezin, "Fragment de sagesse démotique (P. inv. Sorbonne 1260)", Enchoria 11 (1982), pp. 59-61 and pls. 7-8.

52. I translate from Pezin's French.

53. From Lichtheim's translation, op. cit. (1983), p. 71. Lichtheim translates "send" and Pezin "consult", but the verb, hb, is the same in each case.

54. R.J. Williams, "Some fragmentary Demotic wisdom texts", in Studies in Honor of George R. Hughes, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilisation 39 (Chicago, 1976), pp. 263-271; see pp. 264-266 and fig. 50. Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), pp. 100-102.

55. Williams, op. cit. (1976), pp. 268-270 and fig. 51. The words and phrases cited below are from Williams' translation.

56. R. Jasnow, "An unrecognised parallel in two demotic wisdom texts", Enchoria 11 (1982), p. 111.

57. A. Volten, "Die moralischen Lehren des demotischen Pap. Louvre 2414" in Studi in Memoria di Ippolito Rosellini nel Primo Centenario della Morte vol. II (Pisa, 1955), pp. 269-280 and pls. xxxiv-xxxv.

58. See G.R. Hughes, "The blunders of an inept scribe (Demotic Papyrus Louvre 2414)", in G.E. Kadish and G.E. Freeman (eds.), Studies in Philology in Honour of

Ronald James Williams. A Festschrift (Toronto, 1982), pp. 51-67. Also, Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), pp. 93-100.

59. H.J. Thissen, op. cit. (1984), suggests that these two texts, and others, are 'testimonies', rooted in experience, which are related to, but to be distinguished from, the more theoretical tradition of instructions, represented in Demotic by Pap. Insinger.

60. See Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), pp. 98f.

61. From Hughes, op. cit. (1982), p. 52.

62. See Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), p. 99.

63. E. Bresciani, Testi Demotici nella Collezione Michaelidis, Orientis Antiqui Collectio II (Rome, 1963), pp. 1-4. See p. 2.

64. I translate from Bresciani's Italian.

65. From the translation by Lichtheim, op. cit., p. 84. Note that Lichtheim discusses the Michaelides text briefly on pp. 102f.

66. See pp. 102f. of the text volume in W. Spiegelberg, Die Demotischen Denkmaler 30601-31270, 50001-50022 II Die Demotischen Papyrus, Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire (Strasbourg, 1908).

67. Ibid., p. 107.

68. H.S. Smith, "A Cairo text of part of the 'Instructions of ʿOnchsheshonqy'", JEA 44 (1958), pp. 121f.

69. Williams, op. cit. (1976), pp. 270f. and fig. 52.

70. See Williams, op. cit. (1981), p. 3.

71. Lichtheim, op. cit. (1983), p. 104.

72. W.J. Tait, Papyri from Tebtunis in Egyptian and Greek (P. Tebt. Tait) (London, 1977), pp. 53-56.

73. For the text of these works, see A.H. Gardiner, Late-Egyptian Miscellanies, Bibliotheca Aegyptiaca VII (Brussells, 1937), pp. 34-56, 79-88, 99-116. Translation and commentary in R.A. Caminos, Late Egyptian Miscellanies, Brown Egyptological Studies I (London, 1954), pp. 125-221, 303-329, 373-428.

74. Transcription only in J. Černy, Catalogue Général des Antiquités Égyptiennes du Musée du Caire Nos, 25501 - 25832 I (Cairo, 1935), p. 96.

75. Transcription only in W. Spiegelberg, Hieratic Ostraka and Papyri found by J.E. Quibell in the Ramesseum, 1895-6 (London, 1898), pl. I nos. 3 and 4.

76. See Černy and Gardiner, op. cit. (1957), pl. VI no. 1. Transcription, translation and commentary now in H.-W. Fischer-Elfert, Literarische Ostraka der Ramessidenzeit in Übersetzung (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 1-4.

77. See, e.g., H.G. Fischer, "A didactic text of the Late Middle Kingdom", JEA 68 (1982), pp. 45-50, on the tomb of Inpy. This text is very fragmentary, and is hardly 'didactic' in any meaningful sense. W. Schenkel, in "Eine neue Weisheitslehre?", JEA 50 (1964), pp. 6-12, has challenged Goedicke's claim that the stela of Menuhotep contains a 'didactic' section, described as an "instruction": see H. Goedicke, "A neglected wisdom text", JEA 48 (1962), pp. 25-35. The best known of these tomb "instructions" is that of the priest Amenemhet (not to be confused with the king of that name): his "instruction" is, however, almost wholly autobiog-

raphical; see A.H. Gardiner, "The tomb of Amenemhet, high-priest of Amon", ZÄS 47 (1910), pp. 87-99, esp. pp. 92-97.

78. See M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Autobiographies Chiefly of the Middle Kingdom. A Study and an Anthology, OBO 84 (Freiburg and Gottingen, 1988), p. 7.

79. Contra R.J. Williams, on pp. 29f. of "The sage in Egyptian literature", in J.G. Gammie and L.G. Perdue (eds.), The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East (Winona Lake, 1990), pp. 19-30, though he does not claim direct literary dependence.

80. On the subject generally, see Assmann, op. cit. (1983).

81. All the versions are edited in B. Alster, The Instructions of Šuruppak. A Sumerian Proverb Collection, Mesopotamia 2 (Copenhagen, 1974); for a literary/structural study see also his Studies in Sumerian Proverbs, Mesopotamia 3 (Copenhagen, 1975). German translation and commentary in C. Wilcke, "Philologische Bemerkungen zum Rat des Šuruppag und Versuch einer neuen Übersetzung", ZA 68 (1978), pp. 196-232. New fragments have been published by Alster in "Additional fragments of the Instructions of Šuruppak", Aula Orientalis 5

(1987), pp. 199-206, and by M. Civil in "Notes on the 'Instructions of Šuruppak'", JNES 43 (1984), pp. 281-298, and "More additional fragments of the instructions of Šuruppak", Aula Orientalis 5 (1987), pp. 207-210.

82. Alster's datings; cf. also Wilcke op. cit. (1978), pp. 196ff.

83. Alster and Wilcke disagree as to the nature of these motive clauses: grammatically, they appear to be past tense, and Wilcke insists that they should be translated as such; Alster appeals to the many parallels in other languages, and to the sense, claiming that they should be translated as future. For his response to Wilcke, see op. cit. (1987), p. 204.

84. Part of the work is edited by J.J.A. Van Dijk in La Sagesse Suméro-Accadienne. Recherches sur les genres littéraires des textes sapientiaux, Commentationes Orientales I (Leiden, 1953), pp. 102ff. Note, however, that his text 'C' (TRS 93) is in fact from Šuruppak. On the text, see M. Civil, "Supplement to the Introduction to ISET I", Orientalia N.S. 41 (1972), pp. 83-90.

85. Based on the translation by Van Dijk.

86. See, most conveniently, pp. 202-212 of A. Salonen, Agricultura Mesopotamica nach sumerisch-akkadisch Quellen (Helsinki, 1968), with an English translation based on that of Kramer.

87. See pp. 126-130 and 151 of E.I. Gordon, op. cit. (1960). The textual information has been summarised by B. Alster on pp. 98-102 of his "Sumerian Proverb Collection Seven", RA 72 (1978), pp. 97-112. D.O. Edzard, art. "Literatur" (Sum.), in the Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie vol. 7 (Berlin, 1987), pp. 35-48, is convenient but has little to add: see p. 46.

88. On 8 and 20, see Gordon, op. cit. (1960), p. 151; on 11 and 19 see Alster, op. cit. (1975), p. 141.

89. E.I. Gordon, Sumerian Proverbs. Glimpses of Everyday Life in Ancient Mesopotamia (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 23-150, 491-517, with comments by Jakobsen on pp. 448-473, 547-550.

90. For various interpretations of this section, see Gordon, ibid, p. 176f., 522, 474f. (Jakobsen); Alster, op. cit. (1978), p. 107.

91. Gordon, op. cit. (1959), pp. 151-284, 473-487, 518-545, 550.

92. E.I. Gordon, "Sumerian proverbs: 'Collection Four'", JAOS 77 (1957), pp. 67-79.

93. E.I. Gordon, "Sumerian animal proverbs and fables: 'Collection Five'", JCS 12 (1958), pp. 1-21, 43-75.

94. Alster, op. cit. (1987).

95. Alster, op. cit. (1975), pp. 96f.

96. Ibid., pp. 90ff.

97. Alster, op. cit. (1978), p. 101 n. 7.

98. Lambert, op. cit. (1960) = BWL.

99. Gordon, op. cit. (1960), pp. 134f.

100. BWL, p. 272f.

101. BWL, p. 273f; cf. Gordon op. cit. (1960), p. 134 n. 75.

102. See Gordon, op. cit. (1959), pp. 61f.

103. BWL, p. 274.

104. For Alster's interpretation, see op. cit. (1978), p. 110.

105. BWL, p. 225ff. Van Dijk, op. cit. (1953), pp. 9-11 translates the Sumerian of VAT 10251, covering ii 1-20 (which he takes as the rev.), iv 25-41.

106. Oral suggestion to Lambert; see BWL, p. 225.

107. BWL, pp. 260ff.

108. Edited by Nougayrol in J. Nougayrol et al. (eds.), Ugaritica V (Paris, 1968), pp. 291-300.

109. BWL, pp. 233f.

110. BWL, pp. 234f.

111. BWL, pp. 235ff. and 257ff.

112. BWL, pp. 239-250

113. Gordon, op. cit. (1960), p. 137 n. 106.

114. BWL, p. 251.

115. Gordon, op. cit. (1957), p. 78.

116. BWL, p. 251; cf. Gordon, op. cit. (1959), pp. 85f.

117. BWL, pp. 252f.

118. BWL, pp. 253f.

119. BWL, pp. 254f.

120. BWL, p. 255.

121. BWL, p. 256.

122. Ibid.; cf. Gordon, op. cit. (1957), pp. 71f.

123. BWL, p. 258.

124. BWL, pp. 258f.

125. See Gordon, op. cit. (1959), p. 98.

126. BWL, p. 260.

127. BWL, pp. 262ff.

128. Lambert's reference to Sum. coll. 6 appears to be a misprint: the texts which he cites belong to coll. 14.

129. See Gordon, op. cit. (1960), pp. 137f. n. 108.

130. BWL, pp. 264ff.

131. BWL, pp. 266f.

132. BWL, pp. 267ff.

133. BWL, pp. 270f. With the imagery of the last saying cited, compare that of Jg. 9^2.

134. BWL, pp. 118ff.

135. BWL, pp. 92ff.

136. Alster, op. cit. (1987), p. 199.

137. The Ras Shamra and Boghazkoy texts are edited in Nougayrol et al., op. cit. (1968): the Ras Shamra text on pp. 273-293 (Nougayrol), the Boghazköy text on pp. 779-784 (Laroche). The Emar text is in D. Arnaud,

Recherches au Pays d'Aštata. Emar VI.4. Textes de la Bibliothèque: Transcriptions et traductions (Paris, 1987), pp. 377-383.

138. For Alster's revised translation of Šuruppak 17 (with variants), see op. cit. (1987), p. 204, and for his interpretation of the relationship between III 10-14 and Šuruppak 213ff., see op. cit. (1975), pp. 83f.

139. BWL, p. 96.

140. Lambert suggests that one of two fragments may be from the beginning, if not from similar works: see BWL, pp. 106f. These are K 13770 and 80-7-19.283, the first of which does indeed seem to be the prologue of a paternal instruction. In view of this possibility, even though it is speculative, I have not treated these texts separately.

141. See BWL, pp. 107ff. The terminus a quo is the First Dynasty of Babylon, ad quem, the reign of Ashurbanipal.

142. BWL, pp. 110ff.

143. On earlier attempts, see ibid., p. 111. Lambert himself suggests that the king in question is Babylonian,

c. 1000-700 BC, but on what seems very slender evidence. His arguments are criticised by I.M. Diakonoff in "A Babylonian political pamphlet from about 700 B.C.", in H.G. Guterbock and Th. Jacobsen (eds.), Studies in Honor of Benno Landsberger on his Seventy-Fifth Birthday, Assyriological Studies 16 (Chicago, 1965), pp. 343-349; Diakonoff sees the piece as a literary and political work addressed to Sennacherib, but not describing the actions of that king. See also E. Reiner, "The Babylonian Fürstenspiegel in Practice", in M.A. Dandamayev et al. (eds.), Societies and Languages of the Ancient Near East. Studies in Honour of I.M. Diakonoff (Warminster, 1982), pp. 320-326, with an appendix by M. Civil. Reiner notes apparent citation of the text elsewhere, and emphasises its place within the literary tradition.

144. BWL, p. 117.

145. Ibid.

146. BWL, pp. 276f.

147. BWL, p. 278.

148. BWL, pp. 121ff.

149. See Laroche, in Nougayrol et al., op. cit. (1968).

150. BWL, p. 116.

151. BWL, p. 279.

152. The text was published by E. Sachau, in Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraca aus einer jüdischen Militärkolonie zu Elephantine (Leipzig, 1911), with photographs in tables 44-50 of vol. I, transcription, translation and commentary in vol. II, pp. 147-182. The standard edition in England has long been in A. Cowley, Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC (Oxford, 1923), pp. 204-248. More recently, the sayings, but not the story, have been edited by J.M. Lindenberger, in The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar (Baltimore and London, 1983). Now see also I. Kottsieper, Die Sprache der Ahiqarsprüche, BZAW 194 (1990), a philological study which includes facsimiles of the text, transcription and German translation of the sayings collection. On the relationship between the versions, see conveniently pp. 4-7 in Lindenberger; F.C. Conybeare, J. Rendel Harris and A.S. Lewis, The Story of Ahikar^2 (Cambridge, 1913), gives very useful translations of many of the major versions. The early tradition is examined at length on pp. 319-413 of M. Küchler, Frühjüdische

Weisheitstraditionen. Zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens, OBO 26 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1979).

153. A text of the Seleucid period from Uruk states that one Aba'enlildari, "whom the Arameans call Ahikar", was the ummânu of Esarhaddon, and this text has been taken by some scholars to prove the existence of Ahikar as an historical figure; see, e.g., pp. 49f. of J.C. Greenfield, "The background and parallel to a proverb of Ahiqar", in A. Caquot and M. Philonenko (eds.), Hommages à André Dupont-Sommer (Paris, 1971), pp. 49-59. The text itself is published by J. Van Dijk, on pp. 44ff. of H.J. Lenzen (ed.), XVIII. vorläufiger Bericht über die von dem Deutschen Archäologischen Institut und der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft aus Mitteln der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft unternommen Ausgrabungen in Uruk-Warka (Berlin, 1962). I am not myself convinced that the text demonstrates anything more than the influence of the story at this time, and the necessity felt to identify Ahikar with a senior official of Esarhaddon. It is of interest principally for the support which it gives to the theory that the tradition is Aramean, not Assyrian, in origin.

154. So, e.g., sayings 2-4 are linked verbally and thematically, 5-6 verbally, 8-11 verbally and by their nature (animal sayings/fables), 12-13 verbally.

155. Most of the links commonly identified are no more than general sayings about lies or treachery, but sayings 50 (11. 50-52), and perhaps also 76 (169b-170) and 80 (175f.), may reflect more closely Ahikar's situation in the story.

156. On the dialects, see p. 97 of J.C. Greenfield, "The dialects of early Aramaic" JNES 37 (1978), pp. 93-99, and Lindenberger, op. cit. (1983), pp. 288ff. Note also the lack of any introduction to the sayings in the Aramaic story.

157. See Lindenberger, op. cit. (1983), pp. 19f., 287-304, and Kottsieper, op. cit. (1990). The linguistic evidence, too detailed for assessment here, even were it within my competence, is very compelling. Lindenberger's discussion of the deities is presented in "The gods of Ahiqar", UF 14 (1982), pp. 105-117. He finds references to Šamaš, El and Baal Šamayn, and possibly to a divine assembly also; adducing epigraphic parallels, he argues that such a combination would most naturally be found in N. Syria. His evidence does not

seem to be incompatible with Kottsieper's theory of a more southern provenance.

158. See, e.g., saying 41 (l. 128): htk, "your arrow" /ḥṭʾ, "sin". There is one possible play on an Akkadian word in saying 34 (117): cf. Lindenberger, op. cit. (1983), pp. 105-107. Kottsieper, however, denies this: op. cit. (1990), p. 242.

Chapter 3: Notes

1. M.T. Lichtheim, review of Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom by J.T. Sanders, JAOS 104 (1984), pp. 768f.

2. See H.H. Schmid, Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit. Eine Untersuchung zur altorientalischen und israelitischen Weisheitsliteratur, BZAW 101 (1966).

3. On foreign influence in the demotic literature, see M.T. Lichtheim, Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context. A Study of Demotic Instructions, OBO 52 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1983), and in this period more generally, M. Kuchler, Frühjüdische Weisheits-traditionen. Zum Fortgang weisheitkichen Denkens im Bereich des frühjüdischen Jahweglaubens, OBO 26 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1979).

4. M.V. Fox, "Two decades of research in Egyptian wisdom literature", ZÄS 107 (1980), pp. 120-135; see pp. 128f.

5. BWL, p. 1

6. A. Erman, "Eine ägyptische Quelle der 'Sprüche Salomos'", Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-hist. Klasse 15 (1924), pp. 86-95, tab. VIf.

7. Ibid., pp. 89f. The emendation of MT šilšôm (Q. šālîšîm) to šelôšîm is a good explanation for a difficult text, and thus more justifiable than many of the emendations proposed elsewhere on the basis of the Egyptian. Whether we are justified in going on to seek 30 actual sayings in the section is another matter, since the reference may be to an earlier stage of transmission or adaptation. See W. Richter, Recht und Ethos: Versuch einer Ortung des weisheitlichen Mahnspruches, StANT 15 (Munich, 1966), pp. 17-21, 36f.; also O. Plöger, Sprüche Salomos (Proverbia) (Neukirchen, 1981-1984), p. 266.

8. G.E. Bryce, A Legacy of Wisdom. The Egyptian contribution to the wisdom of Israel (London, 1979), pp. 15-56.

9. I. Grumach, Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre Amenope, Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 23 (Munich and Berlin, 1972).

10. D. Römheld, Wege der Weisheit. Die Lehren Amenemopes und Proverbien 22,17-24,22, BZAW 184 (1989)

11. W. Helck, "Beiträge zu Syrien und Palästina in altägyptischer Zeit", AfO 22 (1968/69), pp. 21-27, esp. p. 26.

12. J. Ruffle, "The Teaching of Amenemope and its connection with the book of Proverbs", Tyndale Bulletin 28 (1977), pp. 29-68.

13. Bryce, op. cit. (1979).

14. Especially Edom (e.g., Jer. 49^{7}). The nationality of Agur (Prov. 30^{1}) and King Lemuel (31^{1}) is uncertain. If 'Massa' is to be read as a place-name in both verses, then this is probably to be identified with the Massa in Gen. 25^{14}. Note also the apparent setting of Job abroad.

15. See R.N. Whybray, Wisdom in Proverbs, SBT 45 (London, 1965), esp. pp. 33-71.

16. Ibid., p. 35.

17. K.A. Kitchen, "Proverbs and wisdom books of the ancient Near East: the factual history of a literary form", Tyndale Bulletin 28 (1977), pp. 69-114, and "The basic literary forms and formulations of ancient instructional writings in Egypt and western Asia", in E. Hornung and

O. Keel (eds.), Studien zu altägyptischen Lebenslehren, OBO 28 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1979), pp. 235-282.

18. Kitchen, op. cit. (1979), p. 248.

19. Kitchen, op. cit. (1977), e.g., pp. 98f.

20. Ibid., p. 80.

21. Ibid., p. 70.

22. See, e.g., Prov. 16^{12}, 20^{28} LXX, 25^{4-5}, where the image of the throne supported by righteousness may go back to Egyptian ideas. These verses will be discussed in a later chapter. Though this is a more contentious area, I suspect that the imagery used of personified Wisdom in Prov. 1-9, whatever its origin, no longer preserves any original ideological or mythological significance.

23. On the significance of women generally in Proverbs, see especially C.V. Camp, Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs (Sheffield, 1985).

24. See R.N. Whybray, The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament, BZAW 135 (1974), p. 42.

25. E.g., Camp, op. cit. (1985), p. 82; J.L. Crenshaw, "Education in ancient Israel", JBL 104 (1985), pp. 601-615, esp. p. 614.

26. Cf. Kitchen, op. cit. (1977), p. 82; occurrences in Šuruppak, Šube'awilum and "Counsels of Wisdom", also in Ahikar, which was certainly influenced by the Mesopotamian tradition.

27. See especially Šuruppak 259f., in the section reconstructed by Alster on pp. 137ff. of Studies in Sumerian Proverbs, Mesopotamia 3 (Copenhagen, 1975); cf. the similar saying in rev. 5.1 of the 'Sumerian preceptive work'.

28. Such influence is probably shown by the general resemblances between Ps. 104 and the Great Hymn to the Aten.

29. See J.N. Aletti, "Séduction et parole en Proverbes I-IX", VT 27 (1977), pp. 129-144, who points out that it is, significantly, the woman's speech which accomplishes the seduction; more recently, G.A. Yee, "'I have perfumed my bed with myrrh': the foreign woman (ʾiššâ zārâ) in Proverbs 1-9", JSOT 43 (1989), pp. 53-68, also notes the importance of speech, but emphasises the

similarities in the portrayal of Wisdom and the foreign woman, and the eroticism which surrounds each.

30. This is not an original suggestion. See esp. Yee, op. cit. (1989), and perhaps R.E. Murphy, The Tree of Life. An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York, etc., 1990), pp. 17f.

31. S. Talmon, "The 'comparative method' in biblical interpretation - principles and problems", SVT 29 (1977), pp. 320-356; pp. 351ff. are especially relevant.

32. For Egypt, see, e.g., P. Kaplony, "Die Definition der schönen Literatur im alten Ägypten", in J. Assmann et al. (eds.), Fragen an die altägyptische Literatur. Studien zum Gedenken an Eberhard Otto (Wiesbaden, 1977), pp. 289-314, and R.B. Parkinson, "Tales, teachings and discourses from the Middle Kingdom", in S. Quirke (ed.), Middle Kingdom Studies (New Malden, forthcoming), with references. For a similar description of the Sumerian material, see, e.g., S.N. Kramer, "Sumerian literature, a general survey", in G.E. Wright (ed.), The Bible and the Ancient Near East. Essays in Honor of William Foxwell Albright (Garden City, 1961), pp. 249-266.

33. See especially the N.K. eulogy to authors on Pap. Chester Beatty IV; a complete translation of this, including the last section, is now to be found on pp. 148-150 of R.B. Parkinson, Voices from Ancient Egypt. An anthology of Middle Kingdom writings (London, 1991).

34. Eric Heaton's description, in Solomon's New Men. The Emergence of Ancient Israel as a National State (London, 1974), p. 116. Such descriptions are common in biblical scholarship, but it is hard to see how they fit, e.g., Amenemhet. Of course the instructions are educational in a very broad sense, and maintain a convention that they are the advice given by a father to his son (not a teacher to his pupil), but they are not mere pedagogic tools. As we have seen, the letter of Menna suggests, for the N.K. at least, the actual address of literary works to sons.

Chapter 4: Notes

1. J. Fichtner, "Jesaja unter den Weisen", ThLZ 74 (1949), cols. 75-80. ET in J.L. Crenshaw (ed.), Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom (New York, 1976), pp. 429-438.

2. H. Ewald, Die Dichter des alten Bundes. II Die salomonische Schriften^2 (Göttingen, 1867), p. 12. This is the second edition: the claim is absent from the first edition of 1837 (in which the volume is entitled IV Sprüche Salomo's. Kohélet)

3. F. Delitzsch, Biblischer Commentar über die poetischen Bücher des alten Testaments III Das salomonische Spruchbuch (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 32f. ET: Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1874-75), pp. 39f.

4. T.K. Cheyne, Job and Solomon or The Wisdom of the Old Testament (London, 1887).

5. W. McKane, Prophets and Wise Men (London, 1965), p. 54.

6. See, for example, G. von Rad Weisheit in Israel (Neukirchen, 1970), E.T. Wisdom in Israel (London, 1972), chapter 6.

7. See McKane, op. cit. (1965), pp. 113-130, and the introduction to the reissue of 1983 (pp. 9-14).

8. W. McKane, Proverbs. A New Approach (London, 1970). See pp. 10-22.

9. See D. Winton Thomas, "Textual and philological notes on some passages in the book of Proverbs", SVT 3 (1955), pp. 280-292. This verse is discussed on p. 286.

10. For some similar criticisms, see pp. 320f. of F.M. Wilson, "Sacred and profane? The Yahwistic redaction of Proverbs reconsidered", in K.G. Hoglund et al. (eds.), The Listening Heart. Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm, JSOTS 58 (Sheffield, 1987), pp. 313-334.

11. R.B.Y. Scott, "Wise and foolish, righteous and wicked", SVT 23 (1972), pp. 146-165.

12. R.N. Whybray, "Yahweh-sayings and their contexts in Proverbs 10^{1}-22^{16}", in M. Gilbert (ed.), La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament (Louvain, 1979), pp. 153-165. In his earlier Wisdom in Proverbs, SBT 45 (London, 1965), Whybray had already argued for Yahwistic reinterpretation in the passages concerning the figure of Wisdom in Prov. 1-9.

13. P. Skehan, "A single editor for the whole book of Proverbs". Originally published in CBQ 10 (1948), pp. 115-130; revised version (consulted here) in P. Skehan (ed.), Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom CBQMS 1 (Washington, 1971), pp. 15-26.

14. Whybray, op. cit. (1979), p. 163.

15. Amenemope 19. 16f. This translation, which takes rwy3ty to indicate difference, goes back to Sethe, and is adopted by most commentators.

16. McKane, op. cit. (1970), p. 495.

17. Taking šnn as "grief" or "vexation" with most commentators, as a good parallel to h3ty ndm in the previous line. Alternatively, it is derived from šnî, and means "strife".

18. G.E. Bryce, A Legacy of Wisdom (New Jersey, 1989), pp. 71ff.

19. Numerous other correspondences have been noted by H.D. Preuss in "Das Gottesbild der älteren Weisheit Israels", SVT 23 (1972), pp. 117-145.

20. H. Frankfort, Ancient Egyptian Religion. An Interpretation (New York, 1948). In his Solomon's New Men. The Emergence of Ancient Israel as a National State (London, 1974), E.W. Heaton suggests that modern rationalistic prejudices underlie attempts to view Israelite wisdom as the religious debasement of a humanistic and intellectual Egyptian tradition (p. 122).

21. See McKane op. cit. (1970), p. 16, and p. 10 in the 1983 reissue of Prophets and Wise Men.

22. See Preuss op. cit. (1972) and H.H. Schmid, Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit, BZAW 101 (Berlin, 1966), pp. 144ff., esp. pp. 145-9.

23. McKane op. cit. (1970), p. 420.

24. For the translation, see J.M. Lindenberger, The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar (Baltimore and London, 1983), p. 171.

25. H. Donner and W. Röllig, Kanaanische und Arämaische Inschriften (Wiesbaden, 1962-1964).

26. McKane op. cit. (1965), p. 60.

27. Ibid., p. 59.

28. Ibid., p.55.

Section II Introduction: Notes

1. For references to agriculture, see especially 27^{23-27}; also 10^{5}, 12^{10}, 11, 13^{23}, 14^{4}, 20^{4}, $24^{30ff.}$, 27^{18}, 28^{19}, 31^{16}, and cf. the sayings about landmarks in 22^{28}, 23^{10}. On trade and commerce see 11^{26}, 20^{14}, 22^{7}, 28^{8} cf. also 11^{1}, 16^{11}, 20^{10}, 23

2. On loans see 6^{1}, 11^{15}, 20^{16}, 22^{26}, 27^{13}; on the law-court 12^{17}, 14^{5}, 25, 17^{26}, 18^{17}, 18, 19^{28}, $24^{23f.}$, $25^{2ff.}$ 18, 31^{9}; on behaviour in the gate 22^{22}, 24^{7}

3. R.E. Clements, A Century of Old Testament Study (London, 1976), p. 11.

4. F. Delitzsch, Biblischer Commentar über die poetischen Bücher des Alten Testaments. III Das Salamonische Spruchbuch (Leipzig, 1873). See esp. pp. 32f. ET: Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon I (Edinburgh, 1874); see pp. 39f.

5. See especially H. Ewald, "Über die volks- und geistesfreiheit Israel's zur zeit der groBen Propheten bis zur ersten zerstörung Jerusalems", which is section IV in his Jahrbücher der Biblischen wissenschaft I (Göttingen, 1848), pp. 95-113. See also p. 12 of Die

Dichter des Alten Bundes[2] II Die Salomonische Schriften (Göttingen, 1867). His opinion is not fully developed in the first edition of this latter work, Die Dichter des alten Bundes IV Sprüche Salomo's. Kohélet (Göttingen, 1837); cf. idem, I Allgemeines über die Hebraeische Poesie und über das Psalmenbuch (Göttingen, 1839), pp. 34ff. Ewald claims that actual wisdom schools existed by the eighth century, and that wisdom was a powerful influence in Israel from the time of Solomon.

6. T.K. Cheyne, Job and Solomon or The Wisdom of the Old Testament (London, 1887), p. 124.

7. C.F. Kent, The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and their Proverbs[2] (New York etc., 1899).

8. Ewald, op. cit. (1848), pp. 100f. and (1867) p. 12, suggests that there was a powerful party of 'false' wise men, condemned by the true wise men and by the prophets, who despised wisdom and religion, and sought political power; such men had the ear of the king and were a baneful influence on Israel.

9. C. Steuernagel, Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das alte Testament (Tübingen, 1912).

10. H. Gressmann, "Die neugefundene Lehre des Amen-em-ope und die vorexilische Spruchdichtung Israels", ZAW 42 (1924), pp. 272-296. See especially pp. 292ff.

11. See P. Humbert, Recherches sur les Sources Égyptiennes de la Littérature Sapientale d'Israël (Neuchâtel, 1929), p. 181.

12. In this last respect, Humbert was following the ideas of Volz: see P. Volz, Hiob und Weisheit, SAT III/2 (Göttingen, 1921), p. 101.

13. G. von Rad, Weisheit in Israel (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970). ET: Wisdom in Israel (London, 1972).

14. G.von Rad, "Der Anfang der Geschichtsschreibung im alten Israel", Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 32 (1944), pp. 1-42 and "Josephsgeschichte und ältere Chokma", SVT 1 (1953), pp. 120-127. An ET of both articles is to be found in The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays (Edinburgh and London, 1965): pp. 166-204 and 292-300.

15. See especially W. McKane, Proverbs. A New Approach (London, 1970), and also his Prophets and Wise Men (London, 1965).

Chapter 5: Notes

1. W. McKane, Review of The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament by R.N. Whybray, JSS 20 (1975), pp. 243-248. See p. 243.

2. Ibid. McKane goes on to point out that "in the passages where Isaiah and Jeremiah are clearly encountering politicians, there is no doubt that the ḥ^{a}kāmīm of whom they speak are śārīm and are exponents of political wisdom". Clearly the context is important here, but throughout his work McKane seems to interpret the context of many passages on the assumption that a reference to 'wise men' is a reference to politicians. His entire concept of 'political wisdom' is posited on the notion that 'wisdom' may be a technical term indicating a tradition of secular Realpolitik, and that it bears this sense in the early wisdom literature. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that McKane regards the establishment of such a sense as unimportant.

3. Solomon is described as being wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite and Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. Ethan, Heman, Calcol and Dara (sic) are listed in 1 Chron. 2^{6} as sons of Zerah, the son of Judah and Tamar. This suggests that 'Ezrahite' might be a corruption of

Zerahite (cf. Num. 26^{20}), but Heman and Ethan are both called 'Ezrahites' in the titles to Psalms 88 and 89. Mahol is unknown. There is clearly considerable confusion in the tradition.

4. Whether or not the "King's friend" was the title of an official, it seems unlikely that Jonadab, as his "friend" held some position as an advisor to Amnon, contra A. Van Selms, "The origin of the title 'the King's Friend'", JNES 16 (1957), pp. 118-123.

5. R.N. Whybray, The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament, BZAW 135 (1974), p. 90.

6. G.G. Nicol, "The wisdom of Joab and the wise woman of Tekoa", StTh 36 (1982), pp. 97-104.

7. J. Hoftijzer, "David and the Tekoite woman", VT 20 (1970), pp. 419-444

8. C.V. Camp, "The wise women of 2 Samuel: a role model for women in early Israel", CBQ 43 (1981), pp. 14-29. See also her Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs (Sheffield, 1985), p. 120.

9. For an Egyptian narrative parallel to the 'parable', see the story of Horus and Seth (Pap. Chester Beatty 1, recto) 6,7ff.

10. O. Eissfeldt, Einleitung in das Alte Testament (Tübingen, 1964), p. 15; ET Introduction to the Old Testament (Oxford, 1965), p. 12.

11. A. Brenner, The Israelite Woman (Sheffield, 1985), p. 44

12. Contra H.-P. Müller, "Magisch-mantische Weisheit und die Gestalt Daniels", UF 1 (1969), pp. 79-94, esp. p. 80.

13. On the possible relationship betwen these men, the 'six helpers' of Darius,and the later great families of Iran, see R.N. Frye, The Heritage of Persia^2 (London, 1976), p. 106.

14. See F.M. Cross, The Ancient Library of Qumran (London, 1958), p. 139

15. See BHS apparatus, ad loc.

16. See, for example, O. Kaiser, Der Prophet Jesaja/ Kap. 13-39 (Göttingen, 1973), ad loc.; ET^2 Isaiah 13-39 (London, 1980).

17. W. McKane, Prophets and Wise Men (London, 1965), p. 70.

18. Whybray, op. cit. (1974), p. 19 points out that if we are to take the 'wise' as a group here, we must logically take the 'discerning' to be a group also. This is a fairly good example of Whybray's approach to the search for 'technical' usage, which is valid within limits, although it is easy to understand McKane's impatience with it.

19. McKane, op. cit. (1965), p. 66.

20. Ibid., ch. IX, pp. 102-112.

21. J. Lindblom, "Wisdom in the Old Testament prophets", SVT 3 (1960), pp. 192-204.

22. Cf. McKane op. cit. (1965), p. 90.

23. Whybray, op. cit. (1974), pp. 21f.

24. McKane op. cit. (1965), p. 128, n. 1

25. In W. Rudolph, Jeremiah, HAT 12 (Tübingen, 1958), p. 114, the various interpretations are classified as three types. The first two take 18b, in different ways,

to indicate the authority or backing of the conspirators, the third takes it as a reference to a prophecy by Jeremiah. My own interpretation falls under he third heading, but differs from that of, e.g., Lindblom in that I do not understand the prophecy as one of doom upon certain groups, but as a prediction of the cessation of divine guidance as mediated by those who fulfil certain roles. Whybray regards 18b as a proverbial saying, which expresses contempt for the continual chatter of prophets and others: this does not satisfactorily explain the context of the saying in Ezekiel.

26. See col. 77 in J. Fichtner, "Jesaja unter den Weisen", ThLZ 74 (1949), cols. 75-80. ET in J.L. Crenshaw (ed.), Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom (New York, 1976), pp. 429-438 (see p. 432).

27. P.A.H. de Boer, "The counsellor", SVT 3 (1960), pp. 42-71.

Chapter 6: Notes.

1. C.H. Toy, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs., ICC (Edinburgh, 1899), pp. xixf.

2. W. Baumgartner, "The wisdom literature" in H.H. Rowley (ed.), The Old Testament and Modern Study (Oxford, 1951), pp. 210-237. On p. 213 he claims: "There is now again more disposition to treat seriously the ascription of both [the second and fifth collections] to Solomon, who, according to I Kings v. 9-14 and x. 1-10, was himself a 'sage' and composer of proverbs; this is also true of the statement in xxv. 1 that 'the men of Hezekiah' had a hand in compiling that collection. The existence of a school of wisdom poetry is thus confirmed for the period of the monarchy...".

3. W.O.E. Oesterley summarises this point in his commentary, The Book of Proverbs (London, 1929), p. xxvii, with reference to the Solomon ascription in 10^{1}: "Apart from the evidence of the Solomonic tradition, this title has no importance; but there is a curious little point of interest about it discovered by Behnke [ZAW 1896, p.122]. The collection at the head of which it stands (x. 1 - xxii. 16) contains 375 proverbs; this corresponds with

the numerical value of the Hebrew letters forming the name of Solomon". This point assumes considerable significance in the theory of redaction proposed by Skehan.

4. R.B.Y. Scott, "Solomon and the beginnings of wisdom in Israel", SVT 3 (1955), pp. 262-279.

5. 22^{17} is usually taken to be a title 'absorbed' into the text, rather as in 1^{1}. See Fichtner in BHS, ad loc., and also the unnatural position of λογοις σοφων at the beginning of the sentence in LXX.

6. As suggested by Scott op. cit. (1955), pp.272f.; cf. S.R. Driver, Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament[9] (Edinburgh, 1913), p. 407. In his later article, "Folk Proverbs of the Ancient Near East", in Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada 15 (1961), pp. 47-56, Scott describes 'Proverbs of Solomon' as "the bilinear couplet in poetic parallelism".

7. Rabbinic suggestions include 'suppress', 'translate', 'consider'; cf. esp. M. Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (New York and Berlin, 1926), ad loc., and the references there, particularly Yalk.

Prov. 961. I am aware of no comparative philological evidence to suggest an early sense 'copy'. ʿtq in Ugaritic is attested in a causative form only in the name ṡʿtqt; the verb is otherwise used intransitively for 'enter', or of the passing of days, cf. Gordon's glossary ad loc. in his Ugaritic Textbook, Analecta Orientalia 38 (Rome, 1965).

8. Scott, op. cit. (1955), p. 273 n. 2.

9. This is particularly clear in Job 32^{15}, where the implication is that words have deserted the speakers, not 'advanced from' them.

10. H. Gressmann, "Die neugefundene Lehre des Amen-em-ope und die vorexilische Spruchdichtung Israels", ZAW 42 (1924), pp. 272-296. See p. 286.

11. Toy, op. cit. (1899), p. xx.

12. Oesterley, op. cit. (1929), pp. 219f. See also Toy, op. cit. (1899), ad loc.

13. See Fichtner in BHS, ad loc., and A. Baumgartner, Étude Critique sur L'État du Texte du Livre des Proverbes

d'apres les Principales Traductions Anciennes (Leipzig, 1890), ad loc.

14. G. von Rad, Weisheit in Israel (Neukirchen, 1970); ET Wisdom in Israel (London, 1972). Extract from ET, p. 17.

15. U. Skladny, Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel (Gottingen, 1962).

16. Ibid., p. 29.

17. W. McKane, Proverbs. A New Approach. (London, 1970), ad loc.

18. F.W. Golka, "Die Königs- und Hofspruche und der Ursprung der israelitischen Weisheit" VT 36 (1986), pp. 13-36. See also his "Die Flecken des Leoparden. Biblische und afrikanische Weisheit im Sprichwort", in R. Albertz et al. (eds.), Schöpfung und Befreiung. Für Claus Westermann zum 80. Geburtstag (Stuttgart, 1989), pp. 149-163.

19. R.N. Whybray has observed of the African parallels adduced by Golka and others that "Many of these show remarkable similarities not only in theme but also in form to individual sayings in Proverbs ... But there is

a need for much more research into this matter and for an assessment of the enterprise by anthropologists before any firm conclusions can be drawn from such comparisons". See p. 233 of "The social world of the wisdom writers", in R.E. Clements (ed.), The World of Ancient Israel (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 227-250.

20. Gressmann, op. cit. (1924),p. 287.

21. G.E. Bryce, "Another wisdom-'book' in Proverbs", JBL 91 (1972), pp. 145-157. See p. 155.

22. H. Brunner, "Gerechtigkeit als Fundament des Thrones", VT 8 (1958), pp. 426-428.

23. Some commentators, e.g. Toy, Oesterley, emend to "one who is angry"; others, e.g. Gemser, translate as "judge".

24. J.A. Emerton views Prov. 24^{21} as a direct address to a prince or king, pointing wmlk as a Qal imperative and translating the first stich, "Fear Yahwe, my son, and thou wilt rule"; cf. pp. 210f. of "Notes on some passages in the book of Proverbs", JTS N.S. 20 (1969), pp. 201-220. This overcomes the clumsiness of the stich, and is attractive for that reason. However, such a

pattern would be unusual; the preceding three sayings follow a characteristic pattern of two commands in parallel followed by a motive clause for both, and this favours, perhaps, emendation of the second stich in accordance with LXX, cf. BHS ad. loc.

25. On this saying, see J.M. Lindenberger, The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar (Baltimore & London, 1983), p. 91. McKane, op. cit. (1970), ad loc., points out that the expression is used differently in each case, but it is the metaphor of a soft tongue breaking bones, however understood, that constitutes the basis for comparison

26. This is a very difficult passage. I read r-h3t:f in line 13, correcting to (with Grumach; Lange reads it as a noun, parallel to sr, and Griffith as an adverb). In line 15, s3(w):k is to be read, not Lange's s3.tw:k: cf. Budge, Grumach. In line 16, st d3y ḥr m is clearly corrupt, and must be corrected to st sḏ3y ḥr m or sḏ3y ḥr m (Griffith, Polotsky p. 140 n. 3). On ḳ3y for g3y in line 17, see Caminos pp. 128f., 194f. Grumach takes the passage to be an admonition against idle chatter in the presence of a senior official, basing her opinion on her translation of wgy in line 15, usually translated "chewing", as "Geschwatz". She refers to Gardiner's translation of wgyt in the Eloquent Peasant as

"mouther", a metaphorical extension from the basic meaning "jaw". It is perhaps possible that the reader is being given advice for two different situations: if he is sated (but there is still food on the table), he should pretend to keep eating by chewing with an empty mouth; if, on the other hand, he has been given too little food, he should not demand more. References: I. Grumach, Untersuchungen zur Lebenslehre des Amenope, Münchner Ägyptologische Studien 23 (Munich & Berlin, 1972); H.O. Lange, Das Weisheitsbuch des Amenemope aus dem Papyrus 10,474 des British Museum, Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Hist.-fil. Meddelelser XI,2 (Copenhagen, 1925); F.Ll. Griffith, "The Teaching of Amenophis, the son of Kanekht, Papyrus B.M. 10474", JEA 12 (1926), pp. 191-231; E.A. Wallis Budge, Facsimiles of Egyptian Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum. Second Series (London, 1923); H.J. Polotsky, "Notre Connaissance du Neo-Egyptien", in Textes et Langages de l'Égypte Pharaonique. Cent Cinquante Années de Recherches 1822-1972. Hommage à Jean-François Champollion I, Bibliothèque d'Étude LXIV/I (Cairo, 1973), pp. 133-141; R.A. Caminos, Late Egyptian Miscellanies, Brown Egyptological Studies 1 (London, 1954); A.H. Gardiner, "The Eloquent Peasant", JEA 9 (1923), pp. 5-25.

27. smr is probably more precise than "courtier", and is used in a number of titles.

28. W.L. Humphreys, "The motif of the wise courtier in the book of Proverbs", in J. Gammie (ed.), Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Studies in Honor of Samuel Terrien (New York, 1978), pp. 177-190. The article is based on his earlier The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Old Testament (Unpublished dissertation, Union Theological Seminary, New York, 1970).

29. See G.E. Bryce, op. cit. (1972), pp. 145-157.

30. Humphreys, op. cit. (1978), p. 187.

31. Skladny op. cit.(1962), p. 46. See also the comments of Gustav Boström in his Paranomasi i den Äldre Hebreiska Maschallitteraturen, LUÅ N.F. Avd. 1 Bd. 23 8 (Lund and Leipzig, 1928), pp. 92f.

Chapter 7: Notes

1. G. von Rad, "Josephsgeschichte und ältere Chokma" SVT 1 (1953), pp. 120-127, ET in The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (Edinburgh and London, 1965), pp. 292-300; cf. also his Die Josephsgeschichte, Biblischen Studien 5 (Neukirchen, 1954), and his commentary, Das Erste Buch Mose, Genesis. (Göttingen, 1956), ET Genesis. A Commentary. (London, 1959). Von Rad's opinions in the matter of Joseph's personality have been supported by many scholars. See, for example, R. de Vaux, Histoire Ancienne d'Israël I (Paris, 1971), pp. 281f., ET The Early History of Israel I (London, 1978), p. 296, and C.T. Fritsch "God was with him", Interpretation 9 (1955), pp. 21-34.

2. See pp.135ff. of J.L. Crenshaw "Method in determining wisdom influence upon 'historical' literature", JBL 88 (1969), pp. 129-142.

3. See pp. 100ff. of D.B. Redford, A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph, SVT 20 (1970).

4. H.-C. Schmitt, in Die Nichtpriesterliche Josephsgeschichte, BZAW 154 (1980), pp.158ff., has objected to claims that Joseph's weeping at the sight of Benjamin (43^{30}) and at the death of his father (50^{1}) demonstrate too great a lack of

control by the standards of wisdom. Citing Ps. 133, Prov. 30^{17} and, most tellingly, Sirach $38^{16ff.}$, he remarks that "Die Betonung enger Verbundenheit innerhalb der Familie ist weisheitlichen Denken durchaus nicht fremd". W.L. Humphreys (1988) p.144, believes that Joseph's self-control is shown by his lack of anger at the forgetfulness of the butler; this argument from silence, however, carries little conviction. This issue is something of a red herring: impassibility is greatly overemphasised by von Rad as an attribute of the wise man, and it is, equally, an element plainly lacking in the JN. We may, incidentally, note that the term used of Joseph's controlling himself (43^{31}, 45^{1}), <u>'āpaq</u> (hithp.) is used nowhere in the wisdom literature.

5. Von Rad, <u>op. cit.</u> (1956), <u>ad loc.</u>

6. See also Prov. 10^{18}, where the same term, <u>dibbāh</u>, is used. J. Peck, in his "Note on Genesis 37:2 and Joseph's character", <u>ET</u> 82 (1970/71), pp. 342f., has proposed that the 3 pl. suffix on <u>dibbāh</u> in 37^{2} should be taken as a subjective genitive, and the clause rendered "Joseph brought their (his brothers') slanders against him to his father". <u>dibbāh</u> always bears an unpleasant connotation, despite the curious proposal of <u>BDB</u> that in this single instance it means 'a (true) report', and Peck finds the idea of Joseph as a slanderer incompatible with the subsequent characterisation. His proposed rendering is perhaps possible

(cf. GK§135 m), but since this ambiguity is syntactical, Peck's inconclusive survey of other examples of dibbāh with suffixes is of no help in determining the sense. His references to the LXX are odd: ψόγος is found only here in the Pentateuch, and that, on those rare occasions when it is used elsewhere, it always translates dibbāh with a subjective genitive, is quite coincidental. Peck does not mention that the LXX of 37^2 does not translate the suffix at all (contra LSJ sub καταφέρω: αὐτῶν here qualifies τον πατέρα). This implies that the LXX probably took the genitive as objective, the more natural understanding, since bô' (hif.) does not mean 'report', and there is no 'against him' in the Hebrew. Even were Peck correct, Joseph would still be tale-bearing, and this is fully in accordance with the depiction of him in ch. 37.

7. When W.L. Humphreys, Joseph and His Family. A Literary Study. (Columbia, 1988), p.143 observes that Joseph's interpretation and advice carried immediate conviction, and must therefore have been persuasively phrased, we must pause to ponder what would have happened to the rest of the story had he not been believed. Narrative constraints are at work here, not deliberate implications.

8. G.W. Coats "The Joseph story and ancient wisdom: a reappraisal", CBQ 35 (1973), pp. 285-297. The position is reaffirmed, and the source-critical and structural views

explained in his From Canaan to Egypt. Structural and Theological Context for the Joseph Story., CBQMS 4 (Washington, 1976).

9. Coats, op. cit. (1973), p. 290.

10. Coats, op. cit. (1976), p. 32.

11. Redford, op. cit. (1970) wishes to exclude this narrative as a secondary insertion. The arguments for this are plausible, but frequently somewhat subjective, as Coats op. cit. (1976), pp. 29ff., has observed. It seems to me that Redford's case has considerable merit, but must be considered unproven.

12. B.S. Childs, "The birth of Moses", JBL 84 (1965), pp. 109-122.

13. The motif is common in Egyptian instructional literature: see, e.g., Any 3, 13f. The fatal consequences are stressed also in Ankhsheshonqy 23, 6f.: "Do not make love to a married woman. He who makes love to a married woman is killed on her doorstep" (Lichtheim). On adultery generally, see W. Kornfeld, "L'adultère dans l'Orient antique", RB 57 (1950), pp. 92-109.

14. The anonymity of Potiphar's wife is not a similarity: such anonymity marks much of the JN, and also the early chapters of Exodus. Names are, of course, rare in Proverbs, but there is no reason to suppose that anonymity per se is a feature of wisdom literature style.

15. I omit here the more broadly parallel tales of the fury of women scorned, such as that of Gilgamesh and Ishtar. On parallels to the story in Gen. 39, see D. Irvin in section III.3 of J.H. Hayes and J.M. Miller (eds.), Israelite and Judean History (London, 1977), esp. pp. 185-188, and J.D. Yohannan (ed.) Joseph and Potiphar's Wife in World Literature: an Anthology of the Story of the Chaste Youth and the Lustful Stepmother. (New York, 1968).

16. Iliad vi 155ff. The tale of the Two Brothers is translated in M. Lichtheim, Ancient Egyptian Literature vol. 2 (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1976), pp. 203-211.

17. For Peleus, see Apollodorus iii. The best known version of the story of Hippolytus is the Ἱππόλυτος στεφανηφόρος of Euripides, c. 428 BC. The scope for variation within the motif is shown very clearly in this play, where the sympathy of the audience is engaged not by Hippolytus, but by Phaedra. Euripides probably attempted the subject also in an earlier work, upon which Seneca's Phaedra may have been based. We also possess fragments of a treatment by

Sophocles. For Tenes, see Plutarch, Quaest. Graec. 28 (=Mor.350 d-f): this story is probably late.

18. In Susannah, the legal consequences are clearly drawn out, as is the fact that adultery is a 'sin in the sight of the Lord'. The story is hardly, however, about a 'strange woman', and influence from the proverbial literature seems unlikely.

19. Humphreys, op. cit. (1988), pp.135ff.

20. This builds on his earlier work, "A life-style for diaspora: a study in the tales of Esther and Daniel", JBL 92 (1973), pp. 211-223, and "The motif of the wise courtier in the book of Proverbs", in (ed.) J. Gammie, Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Studies in Honor of Samuel Terrien. (New York, 1978), pp. 177-190.

21. B.S. Childs "A study of the formula 'Until This Day'", JBL 82 (1963), pp. 279-292, esp. p.289.

22. For details and references, see C. Westermann, Genesis, 3 Teilband, Genesis 37-50. (Neukirchen, 1982), ET Genesis 37-50, A Commentary. (London, 1986), ad loc., and Redford, op. cit. (1970).

23. Von Rad, op. cit. (1953), p. 122.

24. See GK § 158a.

25. See my Joseph, Dreams and Wisdom (Unpublished M.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1989).

26. Von Rad, op. cit. (1956), ad loc.

27. Westermann, op. cit. (1982), ad loc.

28. Ibid.

29. This use is found by commentators only here and in Gen. 14^{24}, where it is taken to mean, "not for myself". However, in 14^{24} it is surely to be repointed without the suffix: "I have sworn...I shall take nothing...except what the young men have eaten (cf. LXX πλὴν ὧν ; Vulg. exceptis his). If so, there are no other examples of a deprecatory sense.

30. Cf. v. 44.

31. The last part of this sentence is also very difficult. Contra Westermann, the accusative particle is never used after ʿānāh to indicate the answer given, but generally for the person answered. The construct 'peace of Pharaoh' is also odd: the sense 'prosperity/a favourable answer to Pharaoh' is syntactically difficult and makes no sense in

this part of the narrative. A coming famine is hardly good news, while (contra E.L Ehrlich, Der Traum im Alten Testament, BZAW 73 (1953)) surely we are not expected to believe that Joseph knows the answer before hearing the dreams. W. Eisenbeis, Die Wurzel ŠLM im Alten Testament, BZAW 113 (1969), p.92, also rejects the usual interpretations: "...sehr wahrscheinlich handelt es sich an dieser Stelle um die ErschlieBung des gôttlichen Willens. Wo solches Geschehen stattfindet, ereignet sich das Heil". If šālôm is original here, then this is probably the least unsatisfactory understanding of it. Any emendation is speculative.

32. W.J.P. Boyd, "Notes on the secondary meanings of ʾḤR", JTS N.S. 12 (1961), pp. 54-56, lists eight examples of ʾaḥărê with causal force, including this verse, and several with concessive. Of these, however,only three (Jg. 11^{36}, 19^{23}; 2 Sam. 19^{31} (Eng. 30)) seem to have a sense which is primarily causal, and all of these use ʾaḥărê ʾăšer + perf., rather than the more usual ʾaḥărê + inf. cs., which is used here. In all cases, as Boyd notes, the temporal element remains important, and in no instance does the subordinate clause with ʾaḥărê serve to confirm the main clause, rather than provide the motive or circumstances for it.

33. Thus Solomon in 1 Kg. 3^{12} is given by God a 'discerning and wise heart' to govern justly; in Deut. 4^{6} Israel is to be called a 'wise and discerning people' for its proximity to God and the righteousness of its statutes. The two words are found separately and in parallel frequently in the wisdom literature, where they have a more general application. In combination, they appear to be a cliché describing the ideal quality for righteousness and fairness in government and judgement. There is no implication of ability in organisation or counselling: Joseph is being described as fit to govern justly.

34. See the E section of Jacob's dream at Bethel (Gen.$28^{11f.}$) and the J section of his dream of the flocks ($31^{10, 12b}$). Note also how the stars are integrated into the vision of Abraham in $15^{1ff.}$.

35. The theophany to Jacob is very similar to the earlier theophanies in the patriarchal narratives, and in its present position serves to reaffirm the divine promises and also to cancel the previous prohibition against travelling to Egypt in 26^{1-5}. This may indicate that the passage is a redactional device intended to overcome this apparent inconsistency (cf. Redford, op. cit. (1970), pp.20ff.). It is possible that the curious episode in $37^{15f.}$ is also a theophany (cf. H. Holzinger, Genesis, Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum A.T. I (Freiburg, 1898), p.225), reminiscent

as it is of the anonymous 'men' in Gen. 18, $32^{24ff.}$. If so, it is not clearly indicated as such.

36. This portrayal of God alters radically in the blessings of ch. 48-49, where the concern is with later tribal history. These chapters place the JN in a salvation-historical context, but, as almost all commentators agree, are not to be regarded as part of the JN proper.

37. Cf. Westermann, op. cit. (1982), ad loc.

38. Von Rad, op. cit. (1953), pp. 124ff.

39. Taking rwy3ty to indicate difference, following Sethe and most subsequent commentators.

40. On this subject, see W. McKane, Prophets and Wise Men (London, 1965), pp. 50ff.,and his Proverbs. A New Approach (London, 1970). Contrast G. von Rad, Theologie des Alten Testaments I. Die Theologie der historischen Überlieferungen Israels. (Munich, 1957), pp. 437ff., ET Old Testament Theology I (Edinburgh, 1962;London, 1975), pp. 438ff. McKane argues that the sayings represent a reaction against the intellectual claims of the early wise men, von Rad that they are the self-imposed markers of the limits of wisdom.

41. R.N. Whybray, The Succession Narrative. A Study of II Samuel 9-20; I Kings 1 and 2, SBT Second Series 9 (London, 1968).

42. G. von Rad, "Der Anfang der Geschichtsschreibung im alten Israel", Archiv für Kulturgeschichte 32 (1944), pp. 1-42; ET in The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays (Edinburgh, 1965), pp. 166-204.

43. Ibid, ET p. 201 (Germ. p. 39).

44. See the comments of Whybray, op. cit. (1968), p. 78, n. 42.

Chapter 8: notes

1. R.B.Y. Scott, "Solomon and the beginnings of wisdom in Israel", SVT 3 (1960), pp. 262-279.

2. Ibid., p. 279.

3. Scott's textual evidence demonstrates the fluidity of the text at a late period, but not that the passages in question are themselves late. His argument from the presence in the passages of vocabulary, the usage of which is mainly late, is generally convincing, in so far as arguments from vocabulary of this type ever are. Against the late usage, one might set, e.g., the idiom for "like the sand on the seashore" in 5^{9}, which is only worded this way in Gen. 22^{17}, Josh. 11^{4} and 1 Sam. 13^{5}.

4. A. Alt, "Die Weisheit Salomos", ThLZ 76 (1951), cols. 139-144; ET in J.L. Crenshaw (ed.), Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom (New York, 1976), pp. 102-112.

5. On the Egyptian onomastica, see generally A.H. Gardiner, Ancient Egyptian Onomastica (London, 1947); H. Grapow and W. Westendorf, Handbuch der Orientalistik I.I.2 (Leiden, 1970), pp. 219-225. On the examples from the Late

Period: U. Kaplony-Heckel, "Schüler und Schulwesen in der Ägyptischen Spätzeit", SAK 1 (1974), pp. 227-246. On the significance of the lists for biblical interpretation: M.V. Fox, "Egyptian onomastica and biblical wisdom", VT 36 (1986), pp. 302-310.

6. Gardiner, op. cit. (1947), describes the introduction as "wordy and pretentious" (p. 1), and "bombastic" (p. 35), while of the work as a whole he writes, "Certainly there was never written a book more tedious and less inspired than the Onomasticon of Amenope" (pp. 24f.). H. Brunner also describes the introduction as bombastic in his Altägyptische Erziehung (Wiesbaden, 1957), p. 93, and Fox, op. cit. (1986), p. 303, calls it "an exaggeration, somewhat along the lines of a book blurb, rather than a careful declaration of purpose".

7. Fox, op. cit. (1986), pp. 308f. For a fuller description of the types of list, see Grapow and Westendorf, op. cit. (1970).

8. With Alt's view of the Solomonic sayings we may compare that of P.J. Nel, expressed on p. 12 of his The Structure and Ethos of the Wisdom Admonitions in Proverbs, BZAW 158 (1982): "Evidently they represented a systematic classification of the botanic and zoological species and

each of these groups are again subdivided according to four basic types: birds, animals (land), reptiles and fish". This is a variation on Alt's idea, and rests on a similar misunderstanding of the onomastica, but it requires an even more literal-minded reading of the biblical text.

9. The sayings were taken to be fables by some earlier scholars: see, e.g., p. 282 of H. Gressmann, "Die Neugefundene Lehre des Amen-em-ope und die vorexilische Spruchdichtung Israels", ZAW 42 (1924), pp. 272-296.

10. E.W.Heaton, Solomon's New Men. The Emergence of Ancient Israel as a National State (London, 1974), p. 11.

11. D.W. Jamieson-Drake, Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah. A Socio Archaeological Approach (Sheffield, 1991).

12. T.N.D. Mettinger, Solomonic State Officials. A Study of the Civil Government Officials of the Israelite Monarchy, CB OT Series 5 (Lund, 1971). I am aware of no comprehensive study of the Egyptian officials during the Third Intermediate Period. For the Middle and New Kingdom evidence, see W. Helck, Zur Verwaltung des

mittleren und neuen Reichs (Leiden, 1958); an index was issued at Leiden in 1975.

13. R. de Vaux, "Titres et fonctionnaires égyptiens à la cour de David et de Salomon", RB 48 (1939), pp. 394-405; reprinted in his Bible et Orient (Paris, 1967), pp. 139-201. J. Begrich, "Sōfēr und Mazkīr. Ein Beitrag zur inneren Geschichte des davidisch-salomonischen GroBreiches und des Königreiches Juda", ZAW 58 (1940), pp. 1-29.

14. See the criticisms of this theory by Mettinger, op. cit. (1971), p. 46 n. 5, and by D.B. Redford in n. 4 (pp. 142ff.) of his "Studies in relations between Palestine and Egypt during the First Millennium B.C. I The taxation system of Solomon", in J.W. Wevers and D.B. Redford (eds.), Studies on the Ancient Palestinian World Presented to Professor F.V. Winnett (Toronto, 1972), pp. 141-156.

15. Mettinger, op. cit. (1971), p. 42.

16. See W. McKane, Prophets and Wise Men (London, 1965), pp. 25ff. and references.

17. Mettinger, op. cit. (1971), p. 48.

18. A. Cody, "Le titre égyptien et le nom propre du scribe de David", RB 72 (1965), pp. 381-393.

19. Compare C.F. Burney, Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings (Oxford, 1903), pp. 38f.

20. This is the view of Burney, op. cit. (1903). See also, for example, J. Wellhausen, Der Text der Bücher Samuelis (Göttingen, 1871), p. 177, with its blunt "Für Śryh lies šš'", and S.R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel (Oxford, 1913), p. 283. For a more recent discussion of the text-critical issues, see the notes of P.K. McCarter, in his excellent II Samuel (Garden City, 1984), especially p. 433.

21. I translate from Moran's French edition, but leave the first name, which he translates as 'scribe' on the basis of Albright's argument. See W.L. Moran, Les Lettres d'El-Amarna. Correspondance diplomatique du Pharaon. (Paris, 1987), p. 540.

22. W.F. Albright, "Cuneiform material for Egyptian prosopography 1500-1200 B.C.", JNES 5 (1946), pp. 7-25. See pp. 20f.

23. H. Ranke, Die ägyptischen Personennamen 3 vols. (Gluckstadt, 1935, 1952, 1977).

24. See J. Černy, Late Ramesside Letters (Brussels, 1939), 57.11 (Pap. Geneva D.191, l. 8) and A.H. Gardiner, The Wilbour Papyrus 4 vols. (Oxford, 1948), A77.52, A91.15, A97.28. (The group-writing of each name is slightly different).

25. See De Vaux, op. cit.(1939), p. 399.

26. See pp. 112f. in K.A. Kitchen, "Egypt and Israel during the First Millennium B.C.", SVT 40 (1988), pp. 107-123.

27. See I.J. Gelb, P.M. Purves and A.A. Macrae, Nuzi Personal Names (Chicago, 1943), p. 133.

28. B. Mazar (Maisler) ingeniously suggests that the original name was Ša/e-wa/e-šarri, abbreviated and written šwš'/šwā; śryh is a Hebrew adaptation. See "The scribe of King David and the problem of the high officials in the ancient kingdom of Israel", BJPES 13 (1946-7), pp. 105-14 (Heb.: Eng. summary on pp. iv-v). See also his revised version, "King David's scribe and the high officialdom of the United Monarchy of Israel",

in his The Early Biblical Period (Jerusalem, 1986), pp. 126-138.

29. J. Marquart, Fundamente israelitischer und jüdischer Geschichte (Göttingen, 1896).

30. See Jer. 46^{15} MT and 26^{15} LXX for Hebrew hp = Apis. Mazar op. cit. (1946-7) & (1986), takes -hrp to be the Hurrian deity Harpa; Tigay, however, notes that this deity is no longer found in personal names of the first millennium: see J.H. Tigay, You Shall Have No Other Gods, HSS 31 (Atlanta, 1986), p. 77 n. 15.

31. The names are from 5th century Elephantine ostraca; see M. Lidzbarski, Phönizische und aramäische Krugaufschriften aus Elephantine (Berlin, 1912), nos. 2, 5 and 35b. Lidzbarski himself notes that bnhp may be read bnhr, which occurs in 14a: the final letter may be read as resh or pe.

32. This name is found in Frag. 7, 3, 2 in G.R. Driver, Aramaic Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. (Oxford, 1954), p. 41. See also W. Kornfeld, Onomastica Aramaica aus Ägypten (Vienna, 1978), p. 65.

33. See Tigay, op. cit. (1986), p. 13.

34. Ibid., p. 77. See also E. Lipiński, "Scribes d'Ugarit et de Jérusalem", in H.L.J. Vanstiphout et al. (eds.), Scripta Signa Vocis. Studies about Scripts, Scriptures, Scribes and Languages in the Near East, presented to J.H. Hospers by his Pupils, Colleagues and Friends (Groningen, 1986), pp. 143-154, who sees a N. Syrian origin for both Elihoreph and his father.

35. Redford, op. cit. (1972), p. 144, n. 7.

36. See N. Avigad, Hebrew Bullae from the time of Jeremiah (Jerusalem, 1986), nos. 1-3 (pp. 21-23) and the references there.

37. See de Vaux, op. cit. (1939), pp. 401ff., and Mettinger, op. cit. (1971), p. 77.

38. Mettinger, op. cit. (1971), pp. 16f.

39. Kitchen, op. cit. (1988), p. 115. A much more comprehensive study of this office has been undertaken recently by S.C. Layton, in "The Steward in ancient Israel: a study of Hebrew (ʾăšer) ʿal-habbayit in its Near Eastern setting", JBL 109 (1990), pp. 633-649. Unfortunately this article became available to me too late for proper consideration here of the evidence which

Layton presents. He argues for a Canaanite model, rejects Egyptian influence, and sees the royal palace as the initial sphere of the official's activity.

40. Canaanite influence on the administration of Israel has been perceived by a number of scholars, most notably H. Donner. U. Rüterswörden argues persuasively that the new Davidic state officials were derived from the system in pre-Israelite Jerusalem, in his Die Beamten der israelitischen Königszeit, BWANT 117 (Stuttgart, 1985). See his remarks on the individual officials on pp. 77-91, and pp. 120f. of his conclusion. Mazar (Maisler) op. cit. (1946-7) & (1986) argues that both the office of sôpēr and its first holder were Canaanite.

41. For the sôpēr, see p. 289 of N. Avigad, "Ammonite and Moabite seals", in J.A. Sanders (ed.), Essays in Honor of Nelson Glueck. Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century (Garden City, 1970), pp. 284-295. The term may be used here, of course, in the more general sense of 'scribe'. For the mazkîr see M. Abu Taleb, "The seal of plty bn m'š the mazkir", ZDPV 101 (1985), pp. 21-29.

42. For the main problems, see J.M. Miller and J.H. Hayes, A History of Ancient Israel and Judah (London, 1986), pp. 205-207.

43. Redford, op. cit. (1972).

44. A.R. Green, "Israelite influence at Shishak's court?", BASOR 233 (1979), pp. 59-62. Green's hypothesis has been described as far-fetched even by Kitchen, op. cit. (1988), p. 116, who might be expected to share his assumptions about the trustworthiness of the OT in such matters as the length of Solomon's reign.

45. The figure 12 is a product of the division into months: the OT text does not appear to relate the system to the 12 tribes.

46. Redford's speculation, op. cit. (1972), pp. 154ff., that the provisions listed in 1 Kg. $5^{2f.}$ (ET $4^{22f.}$) are actually the provisions for sacrifice in the Jerusalem Temple, runs counter to the assertions of the text itself.

47. For the Neo-Babylonian evidence, see R.P. Dougherty, "Cuneiform parallels to Solomon's provisioning system", AASOR 5 (1923-4), pp. 23-65. Dougherty does not succeed

in demonstrating the responsibility of officials for provisioning in certain months of the year only.

48. See Herodotus I.192.

49. See Kitchen, op. cit. (1988), pp. 116f.

50. Mettinger, op. cit. (1971), p. 49.

51. J.B. Segal, "YRḤ in the Gezer 'Calendar'", JSS 7 (1962), pp. 212-221.

52. Segal argues that the signs following yrḥ in ll. 1, 2 and 6 vary too much both from each other, given the regularity of the handwriting, and from the usual forms of waw, to be read as that letter. Rather, they are the progressively more successful attempts of a copyist to reproduce the hieratic 2. As Donner and Röllig note, in Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften (Wiesbaden, 1962-64) vol. 2, p. 182, Segal's own epigraphic tables tell against him. All the symbols are broadly similar to the waw of l. 5, and the variation between each is hardly inexplicable, since the writing of the text is rather more erratic than Segal allows; cf. J.C.L. Gibson, Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Vol. I Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions

(Oxford, 1971), pp. 1, 3. The symbols, which resemble, very roughly speaking, a Y, are most unlike the hieratic 2, which consisted of two vertical strokes, sometimes joined at the bottom, and they seem to have been formed quite differently. See G. Möller, Hieratische Paläographie vol. 2 (2nd ed.; Leipzig, 1927), p. 55 no. 615, and vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1912), p. 59 no. 615.

53. Y. Aharoni, in his Arad Inscriptions (English version. Jerusalem, 1981), p. 51 n. 15, is probably right to question Milik's reading of a 4, based on a comparison with the Nabatean 4 (a cross), in the first line of the list on Pap. Mur. 17B from Wadi Murabbaat; see J.T. Milik in Les Grottes de Murabba'ât, DJD 2 (Oxford, 1961), pp. 96-100 of the text volume and plate xxviii (lower). The sign occurs also in ostracon 63 from Samaria, and Milik's view is accepted by Gibson (op. cit. (1971), p. 13) for this. However, the symbol is better read as a hieratic 6, or possibly 7: compare the similar character in col. iv, line 6 of the hieratic numeral list from Qadesh-Barnea; see R. Cohen, "Excavations at Kadesh-Barnea 1976-1978", BA 44 (1981), pp. 93-107, in the addendum of pp. 105-107, and A. Lemaire & P. Vernus, "L'ostracon paléo-Hébreu no. 6 de Tell Qudeirat (Qadesh-Barnéa)", in M. Görg (ed.), Fontes atque Pontes. Eine Festgabe für Hellmut Brunner,

ÄAT 5 (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 302-326. The figure usually taken to be 50 on Lachish ostracon 19 is surely to be read as a 9: this would bring it into closer conformity with the other amounts noted. The hieratic 50 did not assume a similar form until very much later (Möller cites an example from c. 50 B.C.). Finally, on ostracon 6 from Meṣad Ḥashavyahu, Aharoni reads the hieratic 30 followed by three strokes; see Y. Aharoni, "The use of hieratic numerals in Hebrew ostraca and the Shekel weights", BASOR 184 (1966), pp. 13-19. This is probably better than Naveh's difficult interpretation, in "More Hebrew inscriptions from Meṣad Ḥashavyahu", IEJ 12 (1962), pp. 27-32 (and see plates 5 and 6), but it is far from clear that the symbol bears any close resemblance to the Egyptian form, and it is different from both the 30 on the Qadesh-Barnea list, and the 30 which Aharoni himself reads on the shekel weights.

54. This is particularly true of some of Aharoni's attempts to identify hieratic numerals on the Arad ostraca, op. cit. (1981). In his preliminary publication of ostracon 31, for instance, Aharoni noted that the text was a list of names followed by symbols, which he took to be the hieratic numerals 2 (twice), 4 (five times) and 8 (once), with a total of 32 written below. However, in his later publication only the reading for 8 remained:

the other symbols were reinterpreted as 5 (five times), 6 (once) and 7 (once), with a total of 46. In both cases he asserted the close similarity of the symbols to the respective hieratic numerals, but the most common symbol, taken first as 4 and then as 5, resembles neither at all, while the first symbol in the 'total' could hardly resemble less either a 30 or a 40 in hieratic.

55. See the tables at the end of Gibson, op. cit. (1971) and on pp. 138f. of Aharoni, op. cit. (1981).

56. See O. Goldwasser, "Hieratic inscriptions from Tel Sera' in Southern Canaan", TA 11 (1984), pp. 77-93, and M. Gilula, "An inscription in Egyptian Hieratic from Lachish", TA 3 (1976), pp. 107f.

57. In the 8th cent. Ostracon 2 from Tell Qasîle, see B. Maisler (Mazar), "The excavations at Tell Qasîle", IEJ 1 (1950-51), pp. 194-218, see pp. 209f. The number 30 is shown, written with three horizontal strokes in the Phoenician fashion. J. Naveh, in "Writing and scripts in seventh-century BCE Philistia: the new evidence from Tell Jammeh", IEJ 35 (1985), pp. 8-21 argues, on the basis of the Philistine (?) ostraca 2 and

3 from Tell Jammeh, where similar numerals occur, that this ostracon may in fact be Philistine.

58. On the basis of 24 published weights, some rough sums yielded an average for the shekel of 11.37 g.; none of the weights were more than 0.4 g. heavier or 0.5 g. lighter than this, that is to say, there was no deviation from the average greater than 4.2%. The sample did not include, however, the aberrantly large weight from Gibeon, on which see J.B. Pritchard, Hebrew Inscriptions and Stamps from Gibeon (Philadelphia, 1959), p. 20. In this context, it is interesting to note the experiment cited by A.S. Hemmy in "An analysis of the Petrie collection of Egyptian weights", JEA 23 (1937), pp. 39-56, where it was shown that on a balance of c. 600 B.C. a weighing error of around 6% was possible. Since highly accurate scales seem not to have existed until Roman times, we should probably not, for practical purposes, consider a shekel to be a precise weight, but rather a weight lying within parameters determined by the accuracy of ancient scales.

59. Weights have been found apparently representing 40 and 400 shekels. See p. 135 in R.B.Y. Scott, "The scale-weights from Ophel 1963-64", PEQ 97 (1965), pp. 128-139.

60. Aharoni, op. cit. (1966), p. 16 reads as a 20 the symbol on the weight published by Kerkhof in "An inscribed stone weight from Shechem", BASOR 184 (1966), p. 20. As he draws it in his fig. 2b, there is a resemblance to the hieratic figure, but he has possibly read the weight upside-down, and the correct position may be shown in Kerkhof's photograph. That the Shekel symbol must be read upside-down on another weight, unless the number has been very badly written (no. 5557 in W. Flinders Petrie, Gerar (London, 1928), p. 26 and plate 17), and may occasionally be written to the left of the numeral, is only a slight justification for the assumption that it has been written upside-down and to the left on this weight. If Aharoni's figure is inverted, all resemblance to the hieratic 20 disappears.

61. See R. Cohen, op. cit. (1981).

62. Y. Yadin and others have, in fact, attempted to read the numerals as corresponding to the weights, and this was the position of Scott in his 1965 article. Lemaire & Vernus, op. cit. (1983), p. 319 note that in col. iv of the Qadesh-Barnea list, in which the numerals are preceded by shekel signs, the normal hieratic sign for 5 follows 3 and is separated from 6 by another sign, which they call '5+'. This may, as they suggest, indicate that

the sign for 5 on the weights was actually understood to mean 4, and that another sign had therefore to be invented to represent 5.

63. Scott, op. cit. (1965), p. 135.

64. Aharoni, op. cit. (1966), p. 18.

65. I do not discuss here the question of hieratic numerals on fractional weights. On this see R.B.Y. Scott, "Shekel-fraction markings on Hebrew weights", BASOR 173 (1964), pp. 53-64, and I.T. Kaufman, "New evidence for Hieratic numerals on Hebrew weights", BASOR 188 (1967), pp. 39-41.

66. Y. Aharoni, "Arad: its inscriptions and temple", BA 31 (1968), pp. 2-32. See pp. 22-24.

67. The axial length of the tunnel has been put at 533.1 m., see O.R. Sellers, art. "Weights and measures", in IDB 4, pp. 828-839, and Gibson, op. cit. (1971), p. 21. Divided by 1200, this gives a cubit of 44.43 cm.; if the cubit were 52.5 cm., the tunnel would be only 1015 cubits long. On the basis of measurements in the area of the Temple, a length of c. 44.6 cm. is claimed for the 'long cubit' of Solomon's time and later by A.S. Kaufman, in

"Determining the length of the Medium Cubit", PEQ 116 (1984), pp. 120-132.

68. See A. Segrè, "A documentary analysis of ancient Palestinian units of measure", JBL 61 (1945), pp. 357-375.

69. See E. Iversen, Canon and Proportions in Egyptian Art^2 (Warminster, 1975), pp. 16-19.

70. Contra R.J. Williams, "A people come out of Egypt", SVT 28 (1975), pp. 231-252, who implies that both the system of weights and the cubit were made to conform to Egyptian standards.

Chapter 9: notes

1. A. Klostermann, "Schulwesen im alten Israel", in N. Bonwetsch et al., Theologische Studien, Theodor Zahn (Leipzig, 1908), pp. 193-232.

2. Ibid., pp. 211ff. I do not follow Klostermann's order in my treatment of the passages.

3. See the comment on p.603 of J.L. Crenshaw, "Education in ancient Israel", JBL 104 (1985), pp. 601-615.

4. I Sam. $1^{22ff.}$ can only be taken to imply a period of at least three months of breast-feeding, but the later 2 Macc. 7^{27} mentions a period of three years.

5. Contra Lang, Prov. 4^{3} has nothing to do with the formal schooling of small children; see p. 191 of B. Lang, "Schule und Unterricht im alten Israel", in M. Gilbert (ed.), La Sagesse de l'Ancien Testament, BETL 51 (Louvain, 1979), pp. 186-201.

6. A. Van Selms, "Isaiah 28: 9-13: An attempt to give a new interpretation", ZAW 85 (1973), pp. 332-339.

7. A. Lemaire, Les Écoles et la Formation de la Bible dans l'Ancien Israël, OBO 39 (Freiburg and Göttingen, 1981), p. 39.

8. J. Lindblom, Prophecy in Ancient Israel (Oxford, 1962), p. 201.

9. For this common use of lămmāh-zeh for "what is the point of...?", see, e.g., Gen. 33^{15}.

10. W.O.E. Oesterley, Proverbs (London, 1929), ad loc.

11. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), pp. 34-41; Crenshaw, op. cit., (1985), pp. 602-604.

12. Crenshaw, op. cit. (1985), p. 604.

13. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 41.

14. Ibid., ch. 1 (pp. 7-33). See also Lemaire's "Abécédaires et exercises d'écolier en épigraphie Nord-Ouest Sémitique", JA 266 (1978), pp. 221-235 (=Lemaire 1978a), and "Sagesse et écoles", VT 34 (1984), pp. 270-281, esp. pp. 277ff.

15. See M. Kochavi, "An ostracon of the period of the Judges from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah", TA 4 (1977), pp. 1-13; A. Demsky, "A Proto-Canaanite abecedary dating from the period of the Judges and its implications for the history of the alphabet", TA 4 (1977), pp. 14-27; F.M. Cross, "Newly found inscriptions in Old Canaanite and early Phoenician scripts", BASOR 238 (1980), pp. 1-20; A.Demsky, "The ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon ten years later", in I. Finkelstein (ed.), ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah. An Early Iron Age Site Near Rosh Haʿayin, Israel, BAR International Series 299 (Oxford, 1986), pp. 186-197. References to other articles may be found in the last of these, with photographs of the ostracon on p. 190 of that, and on p. 64 of M. Kochavi, A.F. Rainey, I. Singer, R. Giveon, A. Demsky, Aphek-Antipatris 1974-1977. The Inscriptions. (Tel Aviv, 1978).

16. J. Naveh, in "Some considerations on the ostracon from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah", IEJ 28 (1978), pp. 31-35, argues that the inscription should be read from right to left, and that the abecedary is the first, rather than the last, line of the inscription. A reading from left to right would not be especially surprising, as the direction of writing does not seem to have yet been fixed; see, for example, the earlier Canaanite inscription from Lachish, which is apparently to be read boustrophedon, in

F.M. Cross, "An Old Canaanite inscription recently found at Lachish", TA 11 (1984), pp. 71-76.

17. Demsky, op. cit. (1977), pp. 18ff.

18. G. Garbini, "Sull' alphabetario di ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah", OA 17 (1978), pp. 287-295. See also pp. 23ff. of his I Fenici. Storia e Religione (Naples, 1980).

19. A. Dotan, "New light on the ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah ostracon", TA 8 (1981), pp. 160-172.

20. On the association of silo 605, in which the ostracon was found, with Stratum II, see Finkelstein, op. cit. (1986), pp. 18-20. For the identification of the site as Israelite, see ibid., pp. 201-204.

21. Ibid., p. 201. M. Kochavi op. cit. (1977), dated it slightly earlier, and Lemaire describes it as c.12th-11th cent. BC. Finkelstein's date is to be preferred, but the earlier dates do not detract from my argument.

22. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 10.

23. For an outline of the history of Aphek, see M. Kochavi, "The history and archaeology of Aphek-Antipatris: a biblical city in the Sharon Plain", BA 44 (1981), pp. 75-86. The Philistine occupation may be surmised from the material remains, and is not hypothesised upon the biblical account of the Philistine wars.

24. For a discussion of this question, see Finkelstein, op. cit. (1986), pp. 202ff.

25. The Stratum II population has been estimated at c. 100 people, living in 20 dwellings. See Finkelstein, op. cit. (1986), p. 114.

26. See the references in Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 87, notes 16-18.

27. Photographs of both sides of the tablet may be found in e.g. R.A.S. Macalister, The Excavation of Gezer 1902-1905 and 1907-1909. Vol. 3 (London, 1912), pl. cxxvii, with comments on the text in Vol. 2, pp. 24-28, and in D. Diringer, Le Iscrizioni Antico-Ebraiche Palestinesi (Florence, 1934), pl. I-II, with comments on pp. 1-20.

28. Published in A. Lemaire, "Fragment d'un alphabet Ouest-sémitique du viii^{e} siècle av. J-C.", Semitica 28 (1978), pp. 7-10 and pl. I (=Lemaire 1978b)

29. See R. Degen, "Ein aramäisches Alphabet vom Tell Halaf", Neue Ephemeris für Semitische Epigraphik 3 (1978), pp. 1-9.

30. Published in M. Dunand, Fouilles de Byblos Vol. I 1926-1932 (Paris, 1939), p. 95, no. 1452, and pl. 34 in the Vol. I 'Atlas'.

31. Published in R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "Une tablette magique de la région du Moyen Euphrate", in Mélanges Syriens offerts à Monsieur René Dussaud Vol. 1 (Paris, 1939), pp. 421-434, and A. Caquot & R. du Mesnil du Buisson, "La seconde tablette ou <<petite amulette>> d'Arslan-Tash", Syria 48 (1971), pp. 391-406.

32. See G. Posener, "Quatre tablettes scolaires de Basse Epoque (Aménémope et Hardjédef)", RdÉ 18 (1966), pp. 45-65. Egyptian writing boards frequently had an appendix pierced by a hole for hanging them up.

33. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 11.

34. See U. Kaplony-Heckel, "Schüler und Schulwesen in der ägyptischen Spätzeit", SAK 1 (1974), pp. 227-246, especially pp. 234f. and the translation of Bod. Eg. Inscr. 300 on p. 246.

35. W. Wirgin, "The calendar tablet from Gezer", Eretz-Israel 6 (1960), pp. 9*-12*.

36. See O. Tufnell et al., Lachish III (London, 1953), pp. 67, 85, 118, 357f., and pl. 18:2-4, 48B.

37. Ibid., p. 118, fig. 10.

38. See Diringer, apud Tufnell, op. cit. (1953), p. 357.

39. Ibid.

40. From p. 256 of C.H. Inge, "Excavations at Tell ed-Duweir", PEQ 70 (1938), pp. 240-256.

41. See M. Haran's criticism of Lemaire on this point on pp. 88f. of his "Literacy and schools in ancient Israel", SVT 40 (1988), pp. 81-95.

42. No certain date can be ascertained from the archaeological context: see p. 31 of D. Ussishkin,

"Excavations at Tel Lachish 1973-1977, preliminary report." TA 5 (1978), pp. 1-97. The ostracon itself was published by Lemaire in "A schoolboy's exercise on an ostracon at Lachish", TA 3 (1976), pp. 109f. and pl. 5.2. Y. Aharoni has appended to this a critical "editor's note" (p. 110).

43. Lemaire's opinion is broadly supported by E. Puech, who reconstructs the inscription slightly differently, however, in n.4, p. 119 of his "Abécédaire et liste alphabétique de noms Hébreux du début du II^{e} s. A.D.", RB 87 (1980), pp. 118-126.

44. Aharoni, in his editor's note to Lemaire, op. cit. (1976a), reads the characters at the end of the first line as hieratic numerals, an interpretation which is far more plausible than the suggestions of either Lemaire or Puech for these signs, and which rather undermines the idea that this is an abecedary. From the photograph of the text it is clear that Lemaire's drawing is extremely optimistic.

45. See Ussishkin, op. cit. (1978), pp. 81ff., fig. 25 and pl. 26.

46. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 12.

47. Published, appropriately enough, by N. Avigad in "The seal of Abigad", IEJ 18 (1968), pp. 52f. and pl. 4c. The seal is probably to be dated to the eighth or seventh century, and may be non-Israelite. Avigad cites an occurrence of the name in a much later Aramaic inscription, and it is perhaps also to be found on a Syrian seal of the eighth century published by P. Bordreuil and A. Lemaire in "Nouveaux sceaux Hébreux, Araméens et Ammonites", Semitica 26 (1976), pp. 45-63, no. 25, where it is taken to be not a name, but a short abecedary. That the first of these reads l'bgd may indeed suggest the existence of the name, which is not attested in the OT, though Gad is known as an element in Hebrew and Phoenician names; see, e.g., no. 64 on p. 220 of Diringer, op. cit. (1934). However, Lemaire, op. cit. (1978a), pp. 226f. cites a number of other seals in which the four letters, once preceded by l, are clearly part of an abecedary. For the view that they are apprentice pieces, see A.R. Millard, "'BGD...-Magic spell or educational exercise?", Eretz-Israel 18 (1985), pp. 39*-42*

48. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), pp. 14f.

49. See A. Lemaire, Inscriptions Hébraïques Vol. 1 Les Ostraca (Paris, 1977), pp. 100-109. E. Puech rejects

Lemaire's interpretation in n. 4, p. 199 of his "Les écoles dans l'Israël préexilique: données épigraphiques", SVT 40 (1988), pp. 189-203.

50. See pp. 157f. of W.G. Dever, "Iron Age epigraphic material from the area of Khirbet el-Kôm", HUCA 40/41 (1969-70), pp. 139-204.

51. Description and photographs in Y. Aharoni & R. Amiran, "Excavations at Tel Arad, preliminary report on the first season, 1962", IEJ 24 (1964), pp. 131-147, and in Y. Aharoni, op. cit. (1981), pp. 112f.

52. Y. Yadin, "Four epigraphical queries", IEJ 24 (1974), pp. 30-36, esp. pp. 30-32.

53. Puech , op. cit. (1988), pp. 194f., argues that the plate must be regarded as a game, or in some way deliberate, since no school pupil would have learnt the letters the wrong way round, the direction of the alphabet having been fixed since the 11th or 12th century.

54. Aharoni, op. cit. (1981), pp. 103f.; Y. Yadin, "The historical significance of inscription 88 from Arad: a suggestion", IEJ 26 (1976), pp. 9-14. Aharoni attributes

the message to Jehoahaz, Yadin to Aššur-uballit. See also n. 3 on p. 290 of D. Pardee, "Letters from Tel Arad", UF 10 (1978), pp. 289-336.

55. See p. 26 of A.R. Millard, "Epigraphic notes, Aramaic and Hebrew", PEQ 110 (1978), pp. 23-26.

56. See Aharoni, op. cit. (1981), p. 61.

57. See ibid., pp. 62-64 and S. Yeivin, "A hieratic ostracon from Tel Arad", IEJ 16 (1966), pp. 153-159.

58. Contra Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 18. Lemaire reads them as the hieratic characters for 6 and 8, which I assume to be misprints, since he cites the reference numbers (628 and 630) in Möller for 60 and 80. These numerals do indeed consist of three and four underlined vertical strokes respectively, but the horizontal lines on the ostracon are far too long and too far below the strokes to be the bottom bars of the hieratic figures.

59. Aharoni, op. cit. (1981), p. 102.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid. The last sign is very faint, if it is present at all.

62. Ibid., p. 87.

63. Lemaire, op. cit. (1981), p. 20; see also pp. 19f. of his article "Notes d'épigraphie Nord-Ouest Sémitique", Semitica 30 (1980), pp. 17-32. For photographs and details of the locus, see A. Biran & R. Cohen, "Aroer, 1977", IEJ 27 (1977), pp. 250-251 and pl. 38.

64. A number of place names beginning qryt might suit; few personal names begin with these letters, but note qrh in e.g. Gen. 36^5, 2 Kg. 25^{23} and, of course, certain Ps. headings, also known at Ugarit (UT 2117:28) and elsewhere. The combination q r is found twice incised on the shoulders of pithoi at Kuntillet ʿAjrud, and Meshel suggests that they may stand for qrbn, 'sacrifice': see Z. Meshel, Kuntillet ʿAjrud. A Religious Centre from the Time of the Judaean Monarchy on the Border of Sinai. (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 11 of the Eng. sect.

65. See also R. Cohen on p. 72 of his "The Iron Age fortresses in the central Negev", BASOR 236 (1979), pp. 61-79, and p. 98 of his "Excavations at Kadesh-Barnea 1976-1978", BA 44 (1981), pp. 93-107.

Photographs of the ostracon are to be found in both these articles.

66. See p. 341 of A. Lemaire & P. Vernus, "Les ostraca paléo-Hébreux de Qadesh-Barnéa", Orientalia 49 (1980), pp. 341-345.

67. The third and largest of the ostraca had not yet been properly published when Lemaire wrote his 1981 book; see now A. Lemaire & P. Vernus, "L'ostracon paléo-Hébreu No. 6 de Tell Qudeirat (Qadesh-Barnea)", in M. Görg (ed.), Fontes atque Pontes. Eine Festgabe für Hellmut Brunner, ÄAT 5 (Wiesbaden, 1983), pp. 302-326.

68. See Z. Meshel, op. cit. (1978).

69. Lemaire curiously omits from his drawing, op. cit. (1981), p. 27, the last two letters of this first abecedary, although they are clearly visible in the photograph upon which it is based (Meshel, op. cit. (1978), pl. 11).

70. As regards the order of the letters, there is a round mark above and to the right of the sade in Meshel's photograph, but the ʿayin is clearly visible to the right of the pe, where Lemaire places it in his drawing.

E. Puech has noted this discrepancy, and in his own drawing takes the mark to be the ʿayin. However, he denies absolutely that the alphabets are a school exercise, and points out that: 1. the second abecedary is, on paleographic grounds, to be dated earlier than the first and third; 2. a vertical line runs down the pot, serving as the margin for another text: the first and third alphabets are written over this line, and therefore after it, while the second is well to the right of it; 3. that the writer of the first abecedary had to write on the handle of the pot shows that his space was more restricted than that of the writer of the second. On these grounds, Puech claims that the second abecedary predates the first and third, and cannot, therefore, be a copy. See p. 363 and fig. 3 of E. Puech's response to the papers by Lemaire and Levine, in J. Amitai (ed.), Biblical Archaeology Today. Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984 (Jerusalem, 1985), pp. 354-365. See also Puech, op. cit. (1988), pp. 191f.

71. Puech reads not a repeated word, but the two words šmrn and šʿrm: op. cit. (1984) and (1988).

72. See D. Pardee, Handbook of Ancient Hebrew Letters SBL Sources for Biblical Study 15 (Chico, 1982), pp. 120f.,

where it is noted that the ʾmr...l formula is attested only twice in N.W. Semitic letters of the first millennium, in Pap. Mur. 17 and the Phoenician KAI 50, although parallels are to be found in Akkadian and Ugaritic.

73. A thorough examination of the wall-paintings and drawings on the pithoi has been made in P. Beck, "The drawings from Ḥorvat Teiman (Kuntillet ʿAjrud)", TA 9 (1982), pp. 3-68, where the Phoenician-Syrian background to the iconography is emphasised, and it is suggested that the wall-paintings, at least, were the work of itinerant artisans.

74. See the scale drawing in Meshel, op. cit. (1978).

75. The view that the site is to be connected with the nearby trade routes, and not with any local settlement, is confirmed by scientific analysis of the composition of the material used in the pottery. From this it is clear that none of the pottery was manufactured locally, and that it was probably transported along these trade routes. See J. Gunneweg, I. Perlman & Z. Meshel, "The origin of the pottery of Kuntillet ʿAjrud", IEJ 35 (1985), pp. 270-283. Meshel's identification of the site as a religious shrine has also been rejected, in favour

of the view that it was a way station, by J.M. Hadley in her unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Yahweh's Asherah in the Light of Recent Discovery (Cambridge, 1989); see pp. 143-158. She is also critical of Lemaire's interpretation.

76. M. Haran, op. cit. (1988).

77. See Lemaire, op. cit. (1978a), pp. 225f., and J. Hoftijzer & G. Van der Kooij, Aramaic Texts from Deir ʿAlla (Leiden, 1976), p. 267 and pl. 22.

78. As suggested by J. Teixidor on pp. 354f. of his "Bulletin d'épigraphie Sémitique 1978-1979", Syria 56 (1979), pp. 353-405.

79. See W.M. Soll, "Babylonian and biblical acrostics", Biblica 69 (1988), pp. 305-323.

80. W.F. Albright in C.H. Kraeling & R.M. Adams (eds.), City Invincible (Chicago, 1960), p. 123.

81. See S. Warner, "The alphabet: an innovation and its diffusion", VT 30 (1980), pp. 81-90. Warner argues rightly that the adoption of a technology does not follow automatically from the existence of that

technology, but depends upon social factors. I am not, however, entirely convinced by his choice of factors or his emphasis upon the acquisition of literacy through occupational necessity. A number of modern historians have written on the spread of literacy: T. Laqueur, for instance, has pointed out that cultural pressure, more than economic or occupational requirements, lay behind the widespread acquisition of literacy in seventeenth and eighteenth century Britain, and that formal schooling played little part until much of the population was already literate. See "The cultural origins of popular literacy in England 1500-1850", Oxford Review of Education 2 (1976), pp. 255-275. That the assessment of literacy is difficult even in nineteenth century Britain is emphasised by W.B Stephens, Education, Literacy and Society 1830-70 (Manchester, 1987), who explores the considerable regional differences and shows how complicated the relationship between literacy and schooling is. Obviously, parallels with ancient Israel are limited, but such studies caution us against supposing either that literacy requires schooling or that we shall ever be able to establish the precise extent of literacy.

82. See B. Lang, op. cit. (1979), pp. 190-192, and also E. Puech, op. cit. (1988), p. 201. Aharoni, op.

cit.(1981), p. 130 writes that "...from the beginning an independent school of Hebrew scribes was set up which preserved the script nearly unchanged during the whole period of the monarchy", but then goes on to describe the changes discernible in the script of the ostraca from successive strata at Arad.

83. The classic review of the subject, now rather dated, is F.M. Cross & D.N. Freedman, Early Hebrew Orthography, American Oriental Series 36 (New Haven, 1952). See esp. pp. 45-60 there, and also D.N. Freedman, "The Orthography of the Arad Ostraca", IEJ 19 (1969), pp. 52-56, although some of the views expressed in the latter must also be corrected in the light of new material: see Aharoni, op. cit. (1981), p. 142. J. Naveh, Early History of the Alphabet (Leiden, 1982), pp. 76ff. gives a useful summary, but the most thorough recent work is Z. Zevit, Matres Lectionis in Ancient Hebrew Epigraphs, ASOR Monograph Series 2 (Cambridge Ma., 1980).

84. See F.M. Cross, "Epigraphic notes on Hebrew documents of the eighth to sixth centuries B.C.: II The Murabba'at papyrus and the letter found near Yabneh Yam", BASOR 165 (1962), pp. 34-42, and idem "III The inscribed jar handles from Gibeon", BASOR 168 (1962), pp. 18-23. Also

J. Naveh, "A palaeographic note on the distribution of the Hebrew script", HTR 61 (1968), pp. 68-74.

85. See A.R. Millard, "An assessment of the evidence for writing in ancient Israel", in Amitai (ed.), op. cit. (1985), pp. 301-312, and the responses by A. Demsky and J. Naveh on pp. 349-354; also Haran, op. cit. (1988).

86. Jamieson-Drake points out that the administrative needs as reflected in the material remains seem to have been quite different: "... cross-cultural comparison on any material basis results in a resounding conclusion of lack of comparability between monarchic Judah on the one hand and Egypt and Mesopotamia on the other ... we must conclude that the evidence from Egypt and Mesopotamia provides no basis for supposing that schools to train scribes ever operated in monarchic Judah. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that institutions for teaching writing as an integral part of information management and regional control in our period would have been quite different from those which developed in Egypt and Mesopotamia". See D.W. Jamieson-Drake, Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah. A Socio-Archaeological Approach (Sheffield, 1991), pp. 152-154.

87. See the review of this issue in Crenshaw, op. cit. (1985), pp. 609f.

88. M. Weinfeld's argument for the scribal origin of Deuteronomy rests in part upon the assumption that wisdom is scribal, and also upon a misinterpretation of Jer. 8^8: see M. Weinfeld, Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School (Oxford, 1972), esp. pp. 158-178, 244-297, and cf. J. Malfroy, "Sagesse et loi dans le Deutéronome. Études", VT 15 (1965), pp. 49-65. The post-Exilic situation, and 'scribes', are probably to be understood rather differently.

89. Cf. 2 Kg. 18^{26} for knowledge and use of Aramaic by Israelite officials at this time.

90. It is interesting to note that the teaching of Egyptian to a Semite is one of the examples adduced in the epilogue to Any for the educability of man.

91. This idea may have been influenced by misconceptions about the idea of "perfect speech" in the Egyptian instructions. This does not indicate rhetorical ability but the embodiment of perfection and truth in speech: the first maxim of Ptahhotep points out that it is rare and hidden, but may be found among maids at the

grindstone. On this, see, e.g., R.B. Parkinson, Voices from Ancient Egypt. An Anthology of Middle Kingdom Writings (London, 1991), p. 66.

92. Thus Prov. $24^{5f.}$ uses the value of wisdom in war to illustrate the general principle that brains are better than brawn.

Section III: Notes

1. McKane's term: cf. Proverbs. A New Approach (London, 1970), p. 376.

2. See Qoh. $12^{9f.}$. On paronomasia within the sayings, see especially G. Boström, Paronomasi i den Äldre Hebreiska Maschalliteraturen, LUÅ N.F. Avd. 1 Bd. 23 Nr. 8 (Lund and Leipzig, 1928). For word-play in particular, Boström is, of course, right to point out that this is not simply humorous, but exposes in some way "ett dolt, reellt samband", the hidden, real connection (see pp. 14f.). Nevertheless, as more general assonance and alliteration show, there is a concern with sound involved also. Paronomasia is widespread in Proverbs, and Gemser has gone so far as to claim that it is present in almost every verse (Sprüche Salomos[1] (Tübingen, 1937), p. 5), but in cases of rhyme or vocalic assonance, we must be wary of overestimating our knowledge of the original pronunciation; cf. J.M. Thompson, The Form and Function of Proverbs in Ancient Israel (The Hague and Paris, 1974), pp. 63f.

3. On the purely formal level, most notable is the almost consistent use within the sentence literature of distichs in parallel. Though we cannot be sure that this

represents the influence of Hebrew poetry, it is certainly very unusual in the non-Israelite sentence literature. More broadly, see R. Alter, The Art of Biblical Poetry (British edition; Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 163-184, who examines some of the techniques employed in "the poetry of wit".

4. See especially H.J. Hermisson, Studien zur israelitischen Spruchweisheit, WMANT 28 (Neukirchen, 1968), pp. 15-96, but also the criticism of Hermisson's approach on pp. 10-13 of C.R. Fontaine, Traditional Sayings in the Old Testament. A Contextual Study (Sheffield, 1982).

5. It can hardly be stressed too often that there is no reason to believe that Israelite scribes enjoyed some especially close relationship with those of other nations, that they served in foreign courts before the Exile or that foreign scribes (as opposed to men of foreign descent) served in Israel.

6. U. Skladny, Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel (Göttingen, 1962).

7. R.N. Whybray, Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs, JSOTS 99 (Sheffield, 1990). See also his "Poverty, wealth and point of view in Proverbs", ET 100 (1988/89),

pp. 332-336. Essentially Whybray concludes that the sentence literature reflects the outlook of small land-holders while the instructional sections reflect the aspirations of a prosperous and acquisitive middle class. The book is marred by some terrible over-exegesis (of, e.g., 1^{11}), but more fundamentally by a failure to enquire as to whether the different outlooks might not be a function of genre. J.D. Pleins, "Poverty in the social world of the wise", JSOT 37 (1987), pp. 61-78, sets out to show that Proverbs reflects the outlook of an urban élite who regard the poor as insignificant and attribute their poverty to laziness; this he contrasts with a supposed socio-economic analysis in the prophets who recognise that poverty results from exploitation. This contrast is simplistic, and the connection between laziness and poverty based on a false syllogism: laziness in Proverbs is viewed as a path to poverty, but poverty is not attributed to laziness. His claim that poverty is never elevated is irrelevant: we do not expect to find Franciscan ideals of poverty in the OT.

8. On wisdom thought as complementary, see, e.g., L. Boström, The God of the Sages. The Portrayal of God in the Book of Proverbs, CB OT Series 29 (Stockholm, 1990), esp. p. 238. For salvation history, see especially B. Albrektson, History and the Gods, CB OT Series 1

(Lund, 1967); more broadly, H.W.F. Saggs, The Encounter with the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel (London, 1978).

9. The main studies are listed in J.L. Crenshaw, "Method in determining wisdom influence upon 'historical' literature", JBL 88 (1969), pp. 129-142, see p. 129; cf. also R.N. Whybray, The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament, BZAW 135 (1974), and D.F. Morgan, Wisdom in the Old Testament Traditions (Atlanta and Oxford, 1981).

10. R.E. Murphy, "Wisdom - theses and hypotheses", in J. Gammie (ed.), Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Studies in Honor of Samuel Terrien (New York, 1978), pp. 35-42. See pp. 39f.

11. Whybray, op. cit. (1974).

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