The present study surveys an array of literary and linguistic issues relevant to the book of Proverbs. The topics discussed and the examples presented are selected somewhat at random, though they all cohere at the nexus of language and literature within the composition. Much of what is put forth here is not original, but rather is based upon the work of earlier scholars. Nonetheless, the present author hopes that the reader will find this exposition beneficial on a number of levels.

In addition, because I wish to include as much data as possible within the confines of a scholarly essay, the presentation herein will be very schematic. The author begs the reader’s forbearance for the outline form of this study. The knowledgeable reader will realize that each of the passages presented could easily deserve several paragraphs if not a short essay for further elucidation. Hopefully, the accumulation of data included herein will compensate for my inability to provide such elucidation on this occasion.1

* It is my pleasant duty to thank the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Yarnton Manor for hosting me during the period of June–December 2012, during which months this study was written. As those who have enjoyed time at the Centre know well, this singular institution provides the perfect atmosphere in which to conduct one’s academic research. An oral version of this material was presented to the Old Testament Seminar at the University of Oxford on 12 November 2012; I am grateful to members of the seminar for both their warm welcome and their important feedback.

1. The same holds true for the lack of a developed bibliography. No doubt the many fine commentaries on the book of Proverbs treat many of these passages, but I have elected to keep references to the secondary literature to a bare minimum.
1. Israeli Hebrew

As earlier scholars have realized, the language of the book of Proverbs departs from Standard Biblical Hebrew (= Judahite Hebrew [JH]) in manifest ways. Especially in its lexis, but also in its grammar, Proverbs is replete with Israelian Hebrew (IH) features (see especially Albright 1955; Ginsberg 1982: 34-38). Since I do not wish to encumber the beginning of this study with a long list of such features, I direct the reader’s attention to the Appendix at the end. The registry there collects in convenient fashion the many instances of IH lexical and grammatical features in the book of Proverbs. The vast majority of these are culled from my two studies published in the journal Orient (Rendsburg 2003a, 2003b), which in turn are based to a great extent on the doctoral dissertation by Yiyi Chen (2000), which I had the honour of supervising.

2. Transfer to Judah

Eventually the book of Proverbs made its way to Judah, for which see most importantly Prov. 25.1 (Ginsberg 1982: 37 n. 53): שִׁלַּלְתָּן אֶפְשָׁר הָעִיתָן אֱלֹהֵי תָּמִידַת הפִּירֵי נֵס הָאָדָם. (‘These also are the proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah transferred/imported’). While most translations render the key verb פִּיר וַתְּגַשֶּׁנָּו as ‘copied’ (thus RSV, NRSV, NIV, NJPS, etc.), the connotation ‘transferred’ or ‘imported’ is preferable. Note that the verbal root פָּרַשׁ means ‘move, proceed, advance’ (thus BDB, 801) in the qal, so that the hiphil form means ‘cause to move, cause to proceed, cause to advance’ (even if these glosses are hyper-literal). This may be seen most clearly in Job 9.5 פִּירֵי נֵס הָאָדָם (‘he who moves mountains’), with reference to God’s ability to transfer mountains from one place to another. In its two other attestations, the hiphil of פִּיר וַתְּגַשֶּׁנָּו is actually intransitive, to wit, Gen. 12.8; 26.22, but the connotation once more is movement from place A to place B. Hence, Prov. 25.1 must refer not to the copying of this section of the book of Proverbs by Hezekiah’s men, but rather to the transfer of this material from one place (viz., Israel) to another (viz., Judah).

The setting for a transfer of an Israelian literary composition to Judah fits perfectly within the reign of Hezekiah, moreover. For it was during his reign that a significant number of Israelis moved southward to

2. For an altogether different approach to the passage, see Carasik (1994), who proposes that the mention of the ‘men of Hezekiah’ in Prov. 25.1 is not to be taken as a historical reference, but rather arose via inner-biblical exegesis, on par with the development of superscriptions within the book of Psalms.
Judah, to escape the Assyrian onslaught. The most pertinent biblical text is the story in 2 Chronicles 30, in which Hezekiah invites the remnant of the northern kingdom to Jerusalem in order to celebrate Passover. But we also have important archaeological data which confirm the movement of Israelis to Judah during this time.

3. Alliteration in Proverbs

Proverbs across linguistic and cultural boundaries frequently employ sound-play of various types: rhyme, assonance, alliteration, etc. One need only consider the English expressions ‘look before you leap’, ‘dead as a doornail’, and ‘making a mountain out of a molehill’. (One should also look before one jumps, a dead item is equally dead as a floorboard nail, and the small matter is as much an anthill as a molehill—but these replacement terms would denude the sayings of their sound-play.)

One is not surprised, accordingly, to find alliteration (the commonest type of sound-play in Hebrew) scattered throughout the book of Proverbs. In the following illustrations, I pay particular attention to proverbs which include rare words, even hapax legomena. To my mind, the presence of these uncommon lexemes is not coincidental; rather, I believe that the authors have reached deep into the Hebrew lexis to pluck just the right word for their literary purpose.

(1) Prov. 11.18, יָשׁוּב וְשֶׁרֶץ מֵאָרֶץ כָּל הָעָדָן יָשָׁב שֶׁרֶץ מַעֲשַׂהוּ (`The wicked man makes a false profit; but the one who sows righteousness [earns] a true wage’): The noun שֶׁרֶץ (`wage’) in the b-line occurs elsewhere only in Isa. 19.10. It is employed here to resound the similar phonemes in the noun שֶׁרֶץ (`falsehood’) in the a-line.

3. On the historicity of this episode, see Japhet 1993: 935 (and the literature cited there).
4. See the summary of this material presented in Rendsburg and Schniedewind 2010.
5. For the classical treatment, see Boström 1928; for a more recent work, see McCreesh 1991. In addition, many examples are identified in the recently published commentary of our late lamented colleague, Avigdor (Victor) Hurowitz (2012).
6. For an earlier study of mine, which highlights the use of such rare words alliterationis causa, see Rendsburg 2008. Several of my other relevant studies are cited on p. 84, n. 3, of said article. More recently and more concisely, see now Rendsburg 2013a.
7. The translations of proverbs from any source-language to any target-language are notoriously difficult. In general, I have followed my usual practice of rendering the Hebrew as literally as possible into English, even though this makes for unsmooth reading at times. Some of my translations were produced with an eye to Fox 2000, 2009, and especially to Alter 2010.
Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom

(2) Prov. 13.3, "—œ/œf Ž– a: /œf Ž– a: "— /œf /œf Ž– a: "— /œf Ž– a: "— /œf Ž– a: (He who watches his mouth guards his life-force; he who opens-wide his lips, disaster is his): The root 9g6 ('open wide') occurs elsewhere in the Bible only in Ezek. 16.25. It is evoked here, with its /p/-/š/ combination, in anticipation of the same two consonants occurring in the following word ŕš (in reverse order), and as an echo of the preceding word ŕš, with its like-sounding /p/-/š/ combination.

(3) Prov. 13.20, "—+L! Žš) "—+L! Žš) "—+L! Žš) "—+L! Žš) (He who walks with the wise becomes-wise; and he who consorts with fools suffers harm'): The alliteration in the second stich of this verse is self-evident: note the collocation of the two roots: (a) ŕš ('consort, associate with'), and (b) ŕš ('be bad' [qal], 'suffer' [niphal]).

(4) Prov. 14.19-22:

19 The evil bow-down before the good, and the wicked (bow-down) at the gates of the righteous.
20 Even by his neighbour, the poor-man is hated, but the lovers of the rich-man are many.
21 He who scorns his neighbour sins, but he who pities the poor is noble.
22 Indeed, devisers of evil stray, but fealty and truth (are for) devisers of good.

These four verses provide a veritable aural delight, with (a) the following string of words with the reš-šin-'ayin combination (in different orderings): ŕš, ŕš, ŕš, ŕš, (b) three items with an alternating guttural:

8. Given the fact that the Hebrew grapheme urther comment is necessary here. Unfortunately, however, the cognate evidence (from Ugaritic, Arabic, etc.) is not very helpful in this instance, with neither of the two roots having firm congers in other Semitic languages. See the proposals provided in HALOT, 1264, 1269. Regardless, however, even if different sounds were heard when this half-verse was read aloud, they were both fricatives pronounced in close proximity to each other deep in the throat. For general introduction to the phonology involved, see Rendsburg 1997a: 71-72; 2013c: 103.

9. I here accede to the etymological sense of Hebrew בְּשֵׁר, 'noble', which eventually yielded the more general meaning 'happy'. For discussion, see Rubin 2010.
R ENDSBURG  
Literary and Linguistic Matters in Proverbs  
115

(5) Prov. 15.12. אֲלֵי יֶעָבִדְתֶּן הָודָחָל אֲלֵי הָכְלַמְיָן ('A scoffer does not love [it when] one reproves him, to the wise he will not go'): The alliteration in this verse is conducted by the string of /l/ sounds, from beginning to end. An aural linkage between the two stichs is created by the phonemes.

(6) Prov. 19.26. (‘He who despoils a father, he who drives-away a mother, a shameful and disgracing son’): All four verb forms are relatively rare: the sounds of the second and fourth (Hamath and Hiphil) evoke each other; while the first and third (Piel and Masoretic) both include /m/ and /š/, even if the /m/ in these two forms is generated by the use of participle forms, piel and hiphil, respectively.

(7) Prov. 19.28. ('A corrupt witness scorns justice, and the mouth of the wicked covers iniquity'): The verbal root here means not ‘swallow’ (its usual meaning, though clearly a hint of that connotation is present as well, given the subject ‘mouth’), but rather ‘cover’, attested elsewhere only in Num. 4.20. It is employed here in the light of /š/ in the first stich. Note, moreover, that in the parallel expressions in Prov. 10.6, 11, the phonemes /š/ and /š/ of the two relevant words are unknown, so one cannot determine the precise articulation of the guttural fricatives represented by /š/, whether they are velar /š/ or pharyngeal /š/. Regardless, the sounds are so proximate that, especially in combination with the other consonants, /š/ and /š/, the aural effect would have been readily apprehended. Incidentally, HALOT, 135, 420, offers potential cognates for both lexical entries, but they are not convincing. Notwithstanding the prodigious achievement marked by HALOT (and its predecessors), one should proceed cautiously regarding the cognate material offered in the dictionary.

10. As far as Semitic cognates permit us to decide the matter, it appears that all of the phonemes represented by /š/ in this collection of words are /š/, with the exception of /š/ in the second word, for which see Ugaritic ŕšr, ‘gate’. Since the parallel phonological issue concerns the letter /š/ (for which see Rendsburg 1997a: 71-72; 2013c: 102-103), I here register the point that the /š/ in v. 22, viz., ‘devisers of evil’ and ‘devisers of good’) represents the pharyngeal fricative /š/, as determined via Ugaritic šrš, ‘craftsman, labourer’. The basic semantic connection in these usages is ‘work’ (including, incidentally, ‘magic’ [n.], ‘perform magic’ [v.]).

11. Both of the phonemes underlying the /š/ are the pharyngeal fricative /š/; cf. Ethiopic wakkha, ‘clamour, quarrel’, and Arabic ḥakim, ‘wise man, physician’. Even if the two gutturals are different: the pharyngeal fricative /š/ in the former (cf. Arabic ḥariha, ‘move, leave, depart’) and the velar fricative /š/ in the latter (cf. Arabic ḥafira, ‘be shy’; Ethiopic ḥafara, ‘be ashamed’).

12. Even if the two gutturals are different: the pharyngeal fricative /š/ in the former (cf. Arabic ḥariha, ‘move, leave, depart’) and the velar fricative /š/ in the latter (cf. Arabic ḥafira, ‘be shy’; Ethiopic ḥafara, ‘be ashamed’).
more standard verb כסה ‘cover’ is used, because the parallel stich reads differently, without the key word כולה.\footnote{For reasons that are not clear to me, neither Snell 1993 nor Heim 2013 discusses the relationship between Prov. 10.6, 11 and 19.28. For discussion of 10.6 and 10.11, see Snell 1993: 42, 141; and Heim 2013: 217-23.}

(8) Prov. 20.14. (“Bad, bad”, says the buyer, but he goes-away [and] then praises himself’): The root גל (‘go’) appears only five times in the Bible; this is its only attestation in Proverbs. The poet evoked the rare word in anticipation of the following two words, \( \text{גכפ} \).

(9) Prov. 23.2. (‘And you put a knife in your gullet, if you are a gluttonous man’):\footnote{In this case, I have attempted to capture the alliteration in my English rendering, with the use of ‘gullet’ for the \textit{hapax legomenon} \( \text{גכפ} \), and of ‘gluttonous’ for the Hebrew expression \( \text{גכפ} \) \( \text{גכפ} \), lit. ‘master of appetite’. In so doing, I follow the lead of others, including Alter 2010: 291 (though he makes no comment on the matter).} This verse presents a classic instance of the use of a \textit{hapax legomenon} for the purposes of alliteration. The unique word here is \( \text{גכפ} \) (‘gullet’), which, when combined with the prefixed preposition \( \text{גכפ} \) (‘in’), presents the sounds that the listener will hear two words ahead in \( \text{גכפ} \) (‘master’).\footnote{The \( \text{גכפ} \) in \( \text{גכפ} \) clearly represents \( \text{גל} \) (cf. Ugaritic \( \text{בל} \), ‘lord’), but the etymon of \( \text{גל} \) is unclear. Akkadian \( \text{lur} / \text{luhu} \), ‘throat’ (as indicated in \textit{HALOT}, 532; see further \textit{CAD} [L], 258), constitutes a distinct possibility, but even here the precise guttural consonant is uncertain.}

(10) Prov. 23.5. (‘Do your eyes blink at it, and it is no-more? For indeed it will make itself wings, like an eagle, flying to the sky’): The verb \( \text{סכפ} \) (‘blink’[?]) at the beginning of the verse occurs only here in the Bible; it is employed \textit{alliterationis causa} in expectation of the common verbal root \( \text{סכפ} \) (‘fly’) in the b-line.\footnote{Once more we are stymied in our attempt to know the precise relationship between the two sounds represented by \( \text{סכפ} \) in the two key words. The latter is clearly the pharyngeal fricative \( \text{סכפ} \) (cf. Ugaritic \( \text{סכפ} \), ‘fly’), but the exact meaning and potential cognates of the former word constitute a black hole.}

(11) Prov. 24.11. (‘Rescue those who are taken to death, and \( \text{סכפ} \) those who totter on \( \text{סכפ} \) slaughter, do not withhold yourself’): The verb \( \text{סכפ} \) (‘totter, stumble’) is used in a most unusual way here; its purpose is to echo the sounds in the preceding word \( \text{סכפ} \) (‘death’).\footnote{Once more we encounter a}
hapax legomenon employed alliterationis causa. The unique word is the construct form צָל (‘chill, cold’), used at the head of the verse, with its acoustic associates קֵרָה (‘harvest’) and יֵשָׂ (‘envoy’) following. The auditory effect is increased with the prefixing of the preposition -כ (‘as, like’), to create the specific form קְהֵנָה; note the voiced velar /k/ and the emphatic velar /q/ at the onset of the key noun and the liquid /t/ in the two following nouns share phonetic qualities within the sonorant category.18

(13) Prov. 25.26, מֹסְקְנָה לְכַרְסְר הַמַּעֲשֵׂה צְרִיךְ לְפְלָקִירֵנָה (‘A muddied spring, an infested [water-]source, the righteous tottering before the wicked’): The root כֵרָה (‘muddy’) occurs in the Bible only here and twice in Ezekiel (32.2; 34.18—the former with samekh instead of sin). The author of this aphorism employed this word in the niphal form כֵרָה with the consonantal string /n/-/r/-/p/-/q/, in anticipation of the anagrammatic string /p/-/n/-/t/-/q/ bridging the last two words of the verse.

4. Wordplay in Proverbs

Another frequent element in proverbial literature is the presence of wordplay or double meaning. In the book of Proverbs we find examples such as the following.19

(1) Prov. 3.18, נִצָּרִים לְאָלָל עַל הַמַּעֲשֵׂה מַאֲשָׁר (‘She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and those who clutch her are fortunate’): In the context of the ‘tree of life’ in the a-line, one will sense an allusion in the word מַאֲשָׁר (‘fortunate’) to אשִרֵה (‘Asherah’), especially given the dendric imagery associated with this goddess (Taylor 1995).

(2) Prov. 3.26, בְּבֵסָלָה בֶּן בְּנֶסֶלָה יְשַׁרֶּה רֵכֶלֶל מַלְכֶּה (‘For YHWH will be behind you / your support, and he will guard your leg from being-caught’): Note that לְבֵשָׁלָה means both ‘loin, thigh’ (Leviticus 5×; Job 15.27; cf. Ugaritic ksl, ‘back, behind, tendon, sinew’) and ‘support, confidence’ (Ps. 78.7). Both meanings fit the context here.

(3) Prov. 8.30, יָאִיתָ אָמָה יְשַׁרֶּה שָׁעִיטִי יְהוָּה מְשַׁמוֹת תַּנְפֻּת (‘And I was with him [as] a counsellor / craftsman / nursling, and I was a delight every day, rejoicing before him at all times’): Scholars have debated the specific meaning of the key noun תָּנְפֻּת, with the

18. This explains such issues as the realization of the Babylonian royal name Nabû-kudurri-usur as נִבּוּ-קְוָדְרִי-אָסָר (28×) / נִבּוּ-קְוָדְרִי-אָסָר (20×) (with shift of /t/ > /n/) in Hebrew, save for the more accurate נִבּוּ-קְוָדְרִי-אָסָר (20×) (with retention of the /t/) in the book of Jeremiah (32×) + Ezek. 29.19. For general orientation, see Fitzgerald 1978.

19. Once more I direct the reader’s attention to Hurowitz 2012, from which I have culled many of these examples.
following proposals proffered (for the best summation, see Hurowitz 1999):20 (a) ‘counsellor’ (cf. Akkadian \um\math{n\dot{u}}\); (b) ‘artisan, craftsman, architect’ (cf. Aramaic \0\Š\K\, Mishnaic Hebrew \0\Š\L\); and (c) ‘nursling, ward’ ( parsing \0\L\ as infinitive absolute of \0\, that is, ‘one raised’; cf. \0\A\n\dot{u} / \0\J\n\dot{u} ‘foster parent’). Since all three meanings fit the context, one should accept all three connotations, as a brilliant display of polysemy.21

(4) Prov. 11.5-6:

5 The righteousness of the blameless makes straight his way;
and via his wickedness the wicked-one will fall.

6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them;
and in (their) desire/destruction/words the treacherous are caught.

The key word is \0\n\dot{u} in v. 6, which (as in the previous example) is patient of three different meanings (Kselman 2002): (a) ‘(bad) desire’ (see Prov. 10.3); (b) ‘disaster, destruction’ (see Job 30.13); and (c) ‘words’ (see Ps. 52.4; cf. Ugaritic \h\w\t, Akkadian \a\v\u\t). In addition, one notes the manner in which the term \0\n\dot{u} (‘his wickedness’, v. 5) alludes to \0\n\dot{u} ‘net’, the object into which a wicked person typically falls (see Pss. 35.7-8; 57.7).

(5) Prov. 14.4, \0\n\dot{u} \0\n\dot{u} \0\n\dot{u} \0\n\dot{u} \0\n\dot{u} \0\n\dot{u} (‘Without oxen the stall is clean [grain], but great harvest is through the strength of the bull’): Michael Fox (2009: 573) espied not only the surface meaning of \0\n\dot{u} in this passage as ‘clean’ (thus RSV), but also the underlying meaning ‘grain’ (thus NJPS). Both senses work well within the context of oxen in the stall. Fox further noted the alliteration of /b/ and /p/ throughout, with each word save the last one containing either of these two labial consonants (voiced and voiceless counterparts). At the centre, moreover, stands the clearest echo, with \0\n\dot{u} (‘clean’, ‘grain’), followed by \0\n\dot{u} (‘great’).22

20. For an earlier article, not cited by Hurowitz 1999, see Cooper 1987: 73-75.

21. In Cooper’s words (1987: 74): ‘The fact that divergent interpretations of \0\n\dot{u} are both possible and plausible [‘both’, because Cooper fused definitions (a) and (b) above into a single entry—G.A.R.] suggests to me that no single interpretation can contain the “real meaning” of the text’. While Hurowitz argued strongly for ‘nursling’ as the desired meaning, based especially on the larger context of Prov. 8, he also added the following comment concerning the other proposed meanings (1999: 400): ‘it is slightly possible that other interpretations are legitimate secondary meanings, on the level of intentional wordplays and double entendres’.

22. For other instances of this technique, reversing the two letters of short words, see Gen. 6.8 with \0\n\dot{u} ‘Noah’ followed by \0\n\dot{u}, ‘grace’, and Gen. 38.7 with \0\n\dot{u}, ‘Er’, followed by \0\n\dot{u}, ‘evil’.
(6) Prov. 14.24, "The crown of the wise is their wealth; the throne of the fools is stupidity": Most scholars emend this verse, but no alteration is necessary once one realizes that the first כְּתַבָּה is cognate with Ugaritic alt (‘cathedra, throne, base, support’), attested in KTU 1.6.VI.27 (Ba’al Myth) (see Dahood 1963: 31-32): l. ys alt / thtk. lyhpk. ksa. mlkk (‘He will surely uproot the cathedra of your seating, he will surely overturn the throne of your dominion’).

(7) Prov. 21.9, "Better to sit on the corner of the roof, than with a contentious woman—and a house of noise/storage’): The noun קְנֵי (contextual form: קְנִי) is another word which elicits multiple meanings: (a) ‘noise’ (cf. Akkadian ḫūbûrû); and (b) ‘brewery, alehouse’ (cf. Akkadian bit ḫībûrû, and Ugaritic bit ḫbr in KTU 1.14.II.25 [Keret]). In addition, a third meaning may be lurking: (c) ‘friend’ (cf. ḫ ובקר, ‘friend, associate’, 12× in Biblical Hebrew, more commonly attested in Rabbinic Hebrew [262× in the Mishnah alone, including the feminine equivalent]). This third sense may surface in light of והו (‘his fellow’) in the following verse (v. 10), and it also may explain the somewhat awkward syntax at the end of the verse (note my rather literal rendering above).

(8) Prov. 23.7, "For like one who reckons to himself [serves his appetite] is he; ‘Eat and drink’ he says to you; but his heart is not with you’): This verse includes the only occurrence of a verb derived from the root שֹׁרֵשׁ in the entire Bible. Typically it is connected to the noun שֹׁרֵשׁ (‘measures’) attested in Gen. 26.12, itself a unique occurrence. The root is much better known from Rabbinic Hebrew, with 222 attestations in the Tannaitic corpus, always in the piel (not the qal), even if the vast majority of these are the verbal noun שֹׁרֵשׁ (‘measure, measurement’) (including all 75 occurrences within the Mishnah). In theory, this meaning fits the context of Prov. 23.7, but given the larger discussion of eating and drinking (and recalling that שֹׁרֵשׁ may mean ‘neck, throat, appetite’ as well), one will countenance the second meaning for the verb שֹׁרֵשׁ (‘serve a meal’), based on the presence of the root שֹׁרֵשׁ (‘serve a meal, arrange the table’) in the Ugaritic lexicon (Barker 1999).

(9) Prov. 27.17, "Iron sharpens iron, and a man gladdens the face of his fellow’): Two verbal roots are to be seen here: (a) רָדַד ‘sharpen’ in the a-line; and (b) רָדַד (‘gladden’) in the b-line. In addition, a third sense arises, especially in the b-line: (c) רָדַד (‘together’). The wordplay works perfectly on the graphic level, since the written form רָדַד contains all of the above meanings. A phonological problem presents itself, however, especially regarding the second stich.
The first root letter of the first verbal root is / håd / (cf. Arabic ُهَدَّد), while the first root letter of the second verbal root is / hâd / (cf. Akkadian ُهَدُّ). But the middle consonant of the form ُهَد (‘together’) is / hâd / (cf. Ugaritic ُهَدَ).—which raises the question: when the performer/presenter of this proverb intoned the key word in the b-line, did he read [yaḥad] or [yaḥad]? I suspect the former, with a hint of the latter, perhaps through some compromise pronunciation (see Noegel 1996: 148 n. 1).

(10) Prov. 30.4:

Who has ascended the heavens and come-down?
Who has collected the wind in his fists/garment?
Who has gathered the water in his clothing?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?

The key word in this verse is ُهَد (reconstructed singular),21 with two meanings (Cathcart 1970; 1998; Rendsburg 2001): (a) fist (cf. Arabic ُهَدَ); and (b) garment (cf. Ugaritic ُهَدَ) (note LXX ُهَد). Both are appropriate for the context, since collecting the wind in one’s hand/palm/fist is a common idiom in world languages; while the sense of ‘garment’ is rehearsed in the next stich with ُهَد (‘clothing’—as recognized by the LXX, apparently). Once more we have the phonological hurdle of the slightly different pronunciation of the two fricatives (one velar, one pharyngeal: / hâd / and / hâd /, respectively), but the wordplay cannot be denied.

5. Janus Parallelism

A special type of wordplay occurs in Prov. 31.21-22, to wit, the Janus parallelism created by the Janus term ُهَد at the end of v. 21:

She does not fear for her household on account of snow,
for her entire household is clothed in crimson/double-layers.
Bedspreads she makes for herself,
linen and purple are her clothing.

23. Note that in Rabbinic Hebrew the singular form is also not attested; indeed nine of the ten occurrences in the Tannaitic corpus are the same form as in Prov. 30.4, namely, ُهَد, lit. ‘his two fists’ = ‘two fistfuls’.
Scholars have rightly questioned the Masoretic reading שַשְׁנִים (‘crimson’), for as G.R. Driver (1947: 11) noted, ‘scarlet is neither more nor less warm than other colours for clothing in snowy weather’.

The solution, accordingly, is to revocalize the form to שֶׁשֶּנִים (‘two’), since double layers would indeed be appropriate on a wintry day. A hint of this reading may occur at the start of the next verse in the LXX: γύμνας καλάνας (‘she duplicated cloaks’, NETS)—with no indication of ‘two’, ‘crimson’, or any other reflection of שַשְׁנִים at the end of v. 21.

Substantiation for the reading שֶׁשֶּנִים (‘two’), though retaining the word at the end of v. 21, may be forthcoming from KTU 1.10.III.24 (Ba‘al and the Heifer), though the reading is difficult. The Ugaritic Data Bank reads as follows: wtkšyyn. ḫjīn (‘and she covers him with two [?]’); while the Ugaritic Narrative Poetry volume does not: wtkš[y]jn. b— (‘and she covers him with [?]’) (Parker 1997: 185).

With or without the evidence forthcoming from either the Septuagint or the Ugaritic corpus, however, we may confirm the interpretation שַשְׁנִים (‘two’), since, as indicated above, double layers serve to combat the cold during snowy weather.

At the same time, however, we should retain the sense of שַשְׁנִים (‘crimson’), as transmitted by the Masoretes, for it anticipates the use of its congeners שֵׁשֶּנִים (‘linen’) and שְׁשַנִים (‘purple’) in v. 22 (note the collocation of all three words נַעֲרָה in the Tabernacle account [Exod. 25.4; 26.31; 27.16; 28.5; etc.]). As such, the graphic representation שַשְׁנִים at the end of v. 21 constitutes a Janus word, with the meaning ‘two’ facing backward to the context of the verse as a whole, and with the meaning ‘crimson’ facing forward to the setting of v. 22.

6. Double Polysemy

A special kind of wordplay occurs in Prov. 31.19, כְּכֶלֶת בְּכִישָׁר (‘Her hands she sends-forth to the spindle / with skill, and her palms grasp the whorl / with dexterity’). Here the key nouns in both stichs each have double meaning (Rendsburg 1997b). These nouns and their two connotations are as follows: (a) כִישָׁר (‘spindle’ / ‘skill’; cf. כִישָר Ugaritic ktr); and (b) כְּכֶלֶת (‘whorl’ / ‘dexterity’; cf. Jibbali fšk). The result is an exceedingly adroit line of poetry, whose deftness no doubt parallels that of the master weaver-woman’s hands a-work at her task, as described in this section of Proverbs 31.
7. Bilingual Wordplay

Bilingual wordplay may be observed in Prov. 31:26-27:

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of hesed is upon her tongue.
27 She watches (over) / Sophia are the ways of her house, and the bread of laziness she does not eat.

Al Wolters (1985) deserves full credit for the observation that נȍפּי is the only participle form among the long catena of feminine verbs predicated of the ‘woman of valour’ in Prov. 31:10-31. All the other forms are 3rd fem. sg. finite verbs, of different types (qatal, yiqtol, wayyiqtol—in their feminine guise, of course):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>נָפַלְתָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>מָרְשָה / נֵתֲנָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>אֵבָה / תֶּעוֹנָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>נָתַתָה / נָתַת</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>נַכְסָה / נַכְסָה / נַכְסָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>נִבְרָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>נָעָפָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>נָשֶׁלָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>פֶּרֶשֶׁה / נָשֶׁלָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>נָלַתי</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>נַשָּׁה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>נַעַבֶּר / נְעַבְּר</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>נִשְׁפָּק</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>פָתַת</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>נַעֲלָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>נַעֲלָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>נַעֲלָה</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In light of this list, the presence of נوفق at the head of v. 27 is truly striking. The participle form, however, allows for the bilingual pun, for while in Hebrew the form means ‘she watches (over)’, the same word evokes the Greek term Σοφία (‘Sophia, wisdom’). Note especially the resonance due to the presence of נوفق (‘wisdom’) in the previous verse (v. 26).

The attentive reader also would be struck by the rarer form of the fem. sg. participle, with the third radical yod retained, hence נوفق, as opposed to the more standard form נوفق (not attested in Biblical Hebrew, but clearly the expected form; see GKC, 212 §75v). Observe how only the
attested atypical form אֲשֶׁר, with its evocation of ‘Sophia’, and not the standard typical form אֲשֶׁר, allows the bilingual wordplay to operate. 24 The presence of ‘Sophia’ in Prov. 31.27 does not mean that the ancient Hebrew readership of the ‘Woman of Valour’ poem was conversant in Greek, no more than a modern English or French or German speaker who may know the connotation of ‘Sophia’ is conversant in Greek. Rather, the presence of ‘Sophia’ in Prov. 31.27 serves as witness to the truly international flavour of the wisdom tradition, across the Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Finally, I may add that these three sections (§§5–7) attest to the remarkable quality of Prov. 31.10-31. While other instances of Janus parallelism, double polysemy, and bilingual wordplay may occur in the book of Proverbs—either already discovered or yet to be discovered—the concentration of these three special literary devices in a single poem suggests that the person responsible for the canonical order of the book of Proverbs has left the best for last. For while the entire book is of high literary quality, the ‘Woman of Valour’ poem may be judged, if one may be permitted subjective comment here, the best of the best.

8. Visual Wordplay

In Prov. 1.10, בְּנֵי אָדָם תִּשְׁאָר אַלּוֹ, אַלּוֹ תִּשְׁאָר אַלּוֹ (‘My son, if sinners entice you, do not assent’), our attention is drawn to the last word in the verse, which the Masorah transmitted as אֶֻתֶּה (‘assent’), even though the graphemic form might suggest the reading אָסַּב (‘come’) (as occurs 22× in the Bible; see also Isa. 47.11, the same form with conjunctive -ן, ‘and’). 25 Why the unusual spelling? Why the unusual pronunciation? 26 Especially since the expected form is אֶתֶה (‘assent’), for which see the following verses (including one instance in the plural): אֶתְּהָיָהוּ אֶתְּהָיָהוּ (Deut. 13.9); אֶתְּהָיָהוּ אֶתְּהָיָהוּ (1 Kgs 20.8); and אֶתְּהָי אֶתְּהָי אֶתְּהָי (Lev. 26.21). The answer is that the three letters which comprise the word אֶתֶה are a cipher for the reader (in this case, the one actually holding the scroll, with the visual signs before him/her). The next time that he/she encounters the opening בְּנֵי (‘my son’), followed by the negative particle לא (‘[do] not’), is in v. 15, where the cipher is decoded: בֶּן אִילַעַל בֶּן אִלַעַל אַשָּׁמ (Prov. 1.15). Observe how the three words which

24. For other instances of bilingual wordplay in the Bible, see Rendsburg 1988.
25. For some brief comments, see de Waard 2008: 31*.
26. Note that GKC, 215 §75hh, understands the form as an Aramaism.
follow begin with the letters *taw*, *bet*, and *‘aleph*, the same three letters which comprise the enigmatic אֶ abre in v. 10 (see Gordon 1974: 29).\(^{27}\)

In this particular case, then, the scribal tradition transmitted the word in Prov. 1.10 as אֶ abre, as if it were derived from אֶ abre (‘come’); but the tradents responsible for the oral reading tradition transmitted the word ‘correctly’ as אֶ abre, from the root אֶ abre (‘assent’).\(^ {28}\) All of this, moreover, fits perfectly into the context of Proverbs 1, as the author informs his reader, in v. 6, that one of the aims of the book is לַקְבָּרוּת פָּתַח וַתָּמִיתוּ בְּכַלּוּם אֶחָדִים וְאָדוֹתָם (‘to understand the proverb and the epigram, the words of the wise and their riddles’). There is no better place than to begin the task than within the same chapter, as the parallel structures of vv. 10 and 15 demonstrate.

9. *An Arabism in Proverbs*

An Arabism may be detected in Prov. 30.29-31:

*Three are excellent of stride;*
*four, excellent of walk.*

*Lion, hero among beasts,*
*and he does turn-back in the face of all.*

*Saluki of loins; or he-goat;*
*and a king, the populace with him.*

Scholars have long recognized all sorts of foreign influences on all sorts of biblical compositions: the influence of Mesopotamian legal traditions on the law collections in the Torah; the influence of Hittite and/or Assyrian treaty language on the Pentateuchal covenant traditions (especially Deuteronomy); Egyptian influence on Prov. 22.17–24.22 (see ahead, §11); Aramaic linguistic influence on Late Biblical Hebrew; the influence of Greek and/or Persian historiographical style on the book of

\(^{27}\) For a slightly alternative approach, which views אֶ abre in Prov. 1.10 as an abbreviation rather than a cipher, albeit ‘an incorrect restitution of an original אֶ abre אֶ abre, imported from v. 15 into v. 10, see Driver 1960: 128-29. For a thorough investigation of this matter, see now in greater detail Williamson 2014. I am grateful to H.G.M. Williamson for sharing with me a pre-publication version of his article in the wake of my presentation to the Old Testament Seminar in November 2012.

\(^{28}\) Note that the two paths of transmission are present already at the first occasion in the Bible where we encounter the verbal root בָּחַל, ‘write’, namely Exod. 17.14. For a thorough treatment of the subject, see Levin 1997.
Esther (even if parodied [Berlin 2001]); and so on. Rarely, however, does one encounter any Arabian influence. It is for this reason that I opt to highlight the current passage, Prov. 30.29-31, by dedicating to it a separate, albeit short, section in this study.

The crucial word is נְם in v. 31, which is to be analysed as the equivalent of Classical Arabic ‘al-qawm (‘the people’; see Lane 1863–93: 2996; Zammit 2002: 348), replete with the Arabic definite article and the noun following. If I have rendered the word as ‘populace’ (see above), it is due to my approach to Bible translation, which is to reserve common English words for common Hebrew words (e.g. נְם = ‘people’) and to use rarer English words to render rarer Hebrew words (e.g. נְם = ‘populace’).

What is the source of this word? Classical Arabic, of course, is not attested until many centuries after the biblical period, and while the word most likely was part of the lexis of precursors to Classical Arabic in first-millennium BCE Arabia, other options need to be explored as well. I refer mainly to Ancient North Arabian, whose various dialects (Safaitic, Thamudic, etc.) were spoken in relatively close proximity to Israel (especially the Transjordanian tribes) during the period under consideration. In fact, one notes that the verse cited above occurs within the section of Proverbs attributed to Agur of Massa, located in the Syrian Desert (Eph'al 1982: 218-19).

The word qm/qwm is indeed found in Safaitic, for example, in the following passage within a short prayer text, C 3811 (CIS 5.1.1: 480): w h rdł gnm l·qm gy (‘and, O Ruḍay, may there be booty for a starving people’). The lexeme also occurs as the second component in the divine name or epithet š·h-qm ‘companion/protector of the people’, which in turn is to be equated with the Nabatean divine name or epithet šy·l-qwm (Healey 2001: 143-47).

29. For a parallel treatment, see Rendsburg 2014.

30. For other references to Massa in Eph'al 1982, the reader should consult the Index, p. 252.

31. My sincere thanks to Ahmad Al-Jallad for providing me with the information contained in this paragraph, including the text cited here. Note that earlier scholars, including the CIS edition, read nqm in this inscription, but Dr Al-Jallad assures me (via e-mail communication, 22 April 2014) that ‘the reading l·qm is clear on the copy and will be the accepted reading in the Safaitic Database Online’, currently in development under the direction of M.C.A. Macdonald, http://krc2.orient.ox.ac.uk/aalc/index.php/en/safaitic-database-online.

32. To round out the picture from the Arabian peninsula, I also note here the presence of the noun qwm, ‘people, community’, in Sabaic (Biella 1982: 450—though curiously not listed with this meaning in Beeston et al. 1982: 111), and the
Several comments of a linguistic nature are necessary here. First is the matter of the definite article, which appears as ‘al in the cited Hebrew form. While hn may be the more common definite article in the various Ancient North Arabian dialects (Macdonald 2004: 517-18), the form ‘l ‘al/ is also well attested (Al-Jallad forthcoming b). Moreover, it appears regularly in Nabatean as the definite article prefixed to Arabic proper nouns (Jobling 1995: 5) and in other sources of ancient Levantine Arabic (Al-Jallad 2011: 81, 84, 166, 178, 190, 199, and esp. pp. 316-21; forthcoming a: §5.5). In fact, as the reader will have noticed, quite strikingly the exact combination ‘l-qwm occurs within the just-cited Nabatean divine name or epithet.

The second issue is both the reduction of the diphthong /aw/ and its specific representation in the Hebrew form as [u:]. On the former, we note that the diphthong /aw/ typically is retained in the (proto-)Arabic forms of this general region, as seen by the consistent (save one exception) use of Greek ι (Al-Jallad forthcoming a: §4.2.4.1). One may presume, nonetheless, monophthongization in certain dialects or sub-dialects or within certain environments, as suggested, for example, by the aforecited Safaitic qm (‘people’). Naturally, the quality of this vowel cannot be determined. Typically, when the diphthongs in Arabic are reduced, the shifts /aw/ > [o:] and /ay/ > [e:] occur. The Masorah, however, has transmitted the form as קָוֹמָה, which suggests monophthongization of /aw/ > [u:]. This phonological feature actually occurs in colloquial Arabic dialects of North Africa (Pereira 2011: 958), though to the best of my knowledge it is not attested in any Arabian dialects.

All said, we may assume that קָוֹמָה (‘the populace’) reached Hebrew from some North Arabian dialect which included both the definite article ‘al and the lexeme qwm resulting from the atypical shift of /aw/ > [u:]. How many fluent speakers of ancient Hebrew would recognize the word cannot be said, though one may assume that the educated elite understood the word, in like proportion to the number of ancient Israelites who related form mqm, ‘assembly, meeting’, in Qatabanian. This evidence from Ancient South Arabian may be less relevant, given the considerable geographical remove of these inscriptions from ancient Israel; though it does demonstrate the widespread use of cognates to later Classical Arabic qawm, ‘people’, throughout the Arabian peninsula in antiquity.

33. For discussion concerning the parallel diphthong /ay/, see Young 1992; Steiner 2007.

34. For one possible instance, limited to initial position, see Rabin 1951: 165 n. 15, though as the author states, ‘Cases of au becoming ā are rare outside the Maghrib’.
would have apprehended the bilingual wordplay inherent in 'מַעַל' (see above).

To be sure, no emendation of the Masoretic text of Prov. 30.31 is required. The alterations suggested by scholars—including 'פַּשְׁתֶּנָא' (McKane 1970: 664), either 'בַּאֶל כָּדוֹם שֵׁמֶר או כָּדוֹם כָּדוֹם' (Murphy 1998: 233), or 'בַּאֶל כָּדוֹם שֵׁמֶר' (not to rise-up against him') (Waltke 2005: 462)—are all unnecessary once one identifies the origin and meaning of MT 'פַּשְׁתֶּנָא' ('the populace').

(The reader may have noticed my translation of the word 'םֹרֹא' at the beginning of Prov. 30.31 as 'saluki'. I have opted for this rendering, since an animal with outstanding loins is demanded. I have used 'saluki' specifically—as opposed to 'greyhound' or another species—since this dog is depicted in ancient Egyptian artwork and because it is treasured by the Arabs as a great hunting dog, even though dogs generally are eschewed in the Islamic tradition. I owe this suggestion and observation to Stephanie Dalley. Such a meaning for 'םֹרֹא' would fit well with the Arabian context discussed above. Note that 'םֹרֹא' connotes a bird of some sort in Rabbinic Hebrew [e.g. t. Hull. 4.9]—in Modern Hebrew, specifically 'starling'—though to my mind an ornithological identification is not suitable to Prov. 30.31, unless a strutting cock is intended, but this seems most doubtful. For more on the ornithological term 'םֹרֹא', see Nissan 2011: 450-51.)

10. **Egyptian Influence in Proverbs**

In terms of Egyptian influence, we should note Prov. 22.19-20:

35. One final comment here, for the sake of bibliographic completeness: Kassis (1999) makes no mention of the Arabian word present in Prov. 30.31.

36. As sensed by two medieval Jewish commentators, Abraham ibn Ezra and Gershom ben Levi (= Ralbag = Gersonides); see further Forti 2008: 119. The latter, in fact, stated explicitly 'וְזָרָה כָּדוֹם שֵׁמֶר שֵׁיָלֹוחֶה יְינוֹדֶ צֶלֶׁע, וֶעֱשַׂע בַּכָּל מִדְּרֵשׁ צֶלֶע,' 'and this is the dog of thin loins, which the hunters lead to hunt, and which also is fast at running' (as kindly supplied to me by my colleague Seymour Feldman). Almost undoubtedly Gersonides had in mind the 'greyhound' (whence it makes its way, most likely, into early Protestant versions such as Martin Luther 'Windhund' and Bishop’s Bible/Geneva Bible/KJV ‘greyhound’ [with variant spellings]). Note that the greyhound was treasured by the nobility in medieval Europe as a trusted companion and as a hunting dog. In fact, the greyhound appears on the heraldry of Charles V of France (r. 1364–1380), just to mention one king close in time and place to Gersonides (Provence, 1288–1344).

37. For the dog in general, see Viré 2012; for the saluki in particular, see Smith 2012.
Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom

19 That your trust may be in YHWH,
I make-known to you, this-day even (to) you,

20 Behold, I have written for you the three-fold,
in counsel and knowledge.

(though see below for a better translation)

For more than 90 years now, scholars have recognized that Prov. 22.17–24.22 reflects the influence of the Egyptian sapiential composition, the Teaching of Amen-em-opet. Less well known, however, is the presence of the name of the Egyptian sage in Prov. 22.19. While an argument may be made that the string ‘this-day even [to] you’ provides for acceptable Hebrew grammar (GKC, 438 §135e), one still is left with the problem that the verb ‘I make known to you’ should carry a direct object. What is it that the poet makes known to the reader? I therefore propose that the consonantal string, which underlies the Masoretic reading, constitutes the end of a process of inaccurate scribal transmission which began with an original ‘Amen-em-opet’. The parallelism then works very well, for in v. 20 we are to understand the Hebrew word ‘thirty’ (in contrast to either of the options presented by the Kethib/Qere pair), as widely recognized by scholars, based on the fact that the Teachings of Amen-em-opet is divided into thirty sections (BM EA 10474, line 539). We thus arrive at the following translation of Prov. 22.19-20:

38. For a good summary of the history of scholarship, the issues involved, and more, see Emerton 2001.
39. Though GKC, 438 §135e, adds the remark ‘(but the text is most probably corrupt)’. Naturally this is an exceedingly common observation within this classical reference work. Moreover, I find myself here in the unusual position of agreeing with GKC in this regard, since those who know my published oeuvre will recognize that typically I defend MT.
40. See my earlier study, Rendsburg 2001: 192-95. When I wrote my earlier article, I neglected to mention the NAB rendering of Prov. 22.19, ‘That your trust may be in the LORD, I make known to you the words of Amen-em-Ope’, which also includes the name of the Egyptian sage within the verse. See the comment in the Textual Notes on the NAB produced by St Anthony’s Guild, Paterson, NJ: 392: ‘For hayyôm ‘ap-tâttâ read “Amen-em-Ope” (transcription in Hebrew uncertain): conjecture’. In addition, see also Black 2002: 377-78, including n. 282, ‘To the present writer, however, the logic [sc. the logic behind reading Amen-em-Ope in Prov. 22.19] seems inescapable’.

38. For a good summary of the history of scholarship, the issues involved, and more, see Emerton 2001.
39. Though GKC, 438 §135e, adds the remark ‘(but the text is most probably corrupt)’. Naturally this is an exceedingly common observation within this classical reference work. Moreover, I find myself here in the unusual position of agreeing with GKC in this regard, since those who know my published oeuvre will recognize that typically I defend MT.
40. See my earlier study, Rendsburg 2001: 192-95. When I wrote my earlier article, I neglected to mention the NAB rendering of Prov. 22.19, ‘That your trust may be in the LORD, I make known to you the words of Amen-em-Ope’, which also includes the name of the Egyptian sage within the verse. See the comment in the Textual Notes on the NAB produced by St Anthony’s Guild, Paterson, NJ: 392: ‘For hayyôm ‘ap-tâttâ read “Amen-em-Ope” (transcription in Hebrew uncertain): conjecture’. In addition, see also Black 2002: 377-78, including n. 282, ‘To the present writer, however, the logic [sc. the logic behind reading Amen-em-Ope in Prov. 22.19] seems inescapable’. 
That your trust may be in YHWH,
I make-known to you Amen-em-opet,
Behold, I have written for you the Thirty,
in counsel and knowledge.

11. A Note about Negation

A little-known fine point of Hebrew grammar is included here. As Weinfeld (1972: 260-74) observed, the book of Deuteronomy exhibits influence from the wisdom stream within ancient Israel. The best evidence is forthcoming from the prominent parallels between passages in Proverbs and Qohelet, on the one hand, and Deuteronomy, on the other:

Deut. 4.2: לא תסמ עליךבק
Prov. 30.6: אל תסיק עלייך
Deut. 19.14: לא תסיק יבאל טאנק
Prov. 22.28, 23.10: אל תסיק יבאל עולק
Deut. 23.22: יריטככ ידר ותקו אגלוות לא תפקו ילשהל
Qoh. 5.3: בקושת חדר ידר ואילנות אלייהאתי לילשהמ

To this Qimron (1983: 475) added the observation that, in the legal context of Deuteronomy, the expected negative particle לא is used, while in the wisdom texts, the negative particle לא obtains. This distinction stems from the different genres of the two corpora, with Deuteronomy embodying legal prohibition and the wisdom literature axiomatic exhortation (Naudé and Rendsburg 2013: 804). This also will explain why the negative particle לא occurs more frequently in Proverbs than in any other book of the Bible (Andersen and Forbes 1989: 275). Just to compare the two relevant books here, note that Deuteronomy uses לא 412 times, but לא only 21 times; whereas the ratio in Proverbs is nearly 1:1, with לא occurring 133 times and לא appearing 90 times.

41. To be more precise, the 90 attestations of לא in the book of Proverbs represents 130 occurrences per 10,000 words (to use the standard employed by Andersen and Forbes), which, to be technical, is outranked by the eight instances of לא in Obadiah, representing 275 occurrences per 10,000 words—though for my present purposes I have elected to ignore this latter book, comprised of only one chapter and hence susceptible to statistical deviation.
12. Repetition with Variation

One of the main literary features of the book of Proverbs, when the composition is viewed as a whole, is the phenomenon of twice-told proverbs (or in some cases, thrice-told). Daniel Snell (1993) created the best catalogue of the material, though for further analysis the interested reader should consult the more recent works of David Carr (2011: 13-36) and especially Knut Heim (2013). Of the approximately one hundred examples to be found in the book of Proverbs, only a representative sampling, naturally, may be presented here:


Moreover, as the reader may have recognized, the illustrations of twice-told proverbs which I have selected to display here are those with the most minor of alterations between the first and second iterations, to wit:

- נ罩 ~ נ罩
-罩 ~罩
-משנדה ~משנדה
-ק ~ק
-שבת ~שבת

Other repeated proverbs reveal greater variation, for which see Snell and Heim, cited above.

The question remains: How to explain these repetitions with variation? Carr (2011: 13-36), on the one hand, has argued that these passages are to be understood as ‘memory variants’, thereby constituting evidence for the scribe’s (or scribes’) creating his (their) text from memory, with ‘exchange of synonymous words, word order variation, presence and absence of conjunctions and minor modifiers, etc.’ (Carr 2011: 33). If I have understood him correctly, in the main these variations are generated at the sub-conscious level. Heim, on the other hand, has argued that the
technique of ‘variant repetition in Proverbs is a conscious, ubiquitous editorial strategy’ (Heim 2013: 535).

Of the two options, I would opt for Heim’s approach, especially due to the following consideration. It seems to me that if Carr’s approach were correct, one would expect—out of the c. 100 examples of repeated proverbs—at least one example of verbatim repetition. Which is to say, had they been working strictly from memory, the authors/tradents/scribes/etc. could not possibly have never created the same proverb in precisely the same wording. No matter how many times I or any other speaker of English says ‘look before you leap’ (to cite one of the maxims above), I or another reciter never would replace one of the key verbs to produce ‘look before you jump’ or ‘observe before you leap’ or any other possible variant with an ‘exchange of synonymous words’. Hence, I prefer the approach set forth by Heim, upon which I expand here to create a still larger picture: a single editor/compiler/redactor/etc. (or a circle of such individuals working together) must have been responsible for the final shape of the book of Proverbs. Said person or persons made every concerted effort not to repeat the same adage, when it was found in different collections (or even in the same collection) across the composition which emerged as the canonical book of Proverbs.

13. The Date of Proverbs

The dating of biblical books remains a controversial subject, and the dating of poetic works may be even more difficult to ascertain. For Proverbs we have a particular challenge, since ‘we are essentially looking at material that has a timeless and universal quality and attempting to date it early or late’ (Dell 2004: 266). This is not the place to enter the fray in any major way, but I do wish to make a few comments and to direct interested readers to several studies relevant to the book of Proverbs.

If the point made in §2 above is correct, that Hezekiah’s men are responsible for the importing of northern proverbial material into Judah, then a sizeable chunk of material may be dated no later than the eighth century BCE. Moreover, given the very nature of proverbial wisdom, which tends to be more archaic and/or is handed down over the course of

42. Naturally, for any given individual example, Carr’s approach may be correct, but in general, as indicated, I prefer Heim’s approach.

43. For an analogous situation within Song of Songs, see Noegel and Rendsburg 2009: 107-27.

44. For a fine overview, see Hornkohl 2013.
time, one may wish to suggest that this material stems from an even earlier period, especially given the floruit of the northern kingdom in the ninth century BCE.

Some scholars have pointed to certain Late Biblical Hebrew features in the book (Yoder 2001: 15-38), but an ‘Aramaism’ may simply be due to the northern origin of the book (see above, §1, with the Appendix below), especially when one considers the relatively high number of features with parallels in Phoenician and Ugaritic in the book (again, see the Appendix). Other scholars have argued that the international flavour of wisdom literature explains the Aramaisms (and if accepted, the ‘Phoenicianisms’) in the book. Such an international flavour would go a long way to explaining the presence of the ‘Greek’ word σοφία (‘Sophia, wisdom’) in Prov. 31.21 (see above, §7), which, to be sure, is not to be taken as an indication of Hellenistic date.

Note, moreover, that there are no Persian words in the entire book of Proverbs, a remarkably long composition to be devoid of such loanwords, should the book have originated in the Achaemenid period. Readers familiar with my own work on the dating of biblical texts (see, e.g., Rendsburg 2013b) will realize that I am inclined to date texts earlier rather than later. It thus will come as no surprise that I find David Carr’s (2011: 403-31) argument for the early date of Proverbs quite attractive. Carr’s reasoning proceeds as follows: in the better-attested scribal curricula of other cultures, such as Egypt and Mesopotamia, ‘the kind of material seen in Proverbs tended to be used earliest in ancient educational processes’ (Carr 2011: 409); in addition, Proverbs ‘stands as a good candidate for reflecting the dependence of Israelite education on foreign models for creation of its emergent curriculum’ (Carr 2011: 409). To which we may add that the universal quality of axiomatic knowledge would not have been threatening to Israelite/Israelian/Judahite scribes, since the common wisdom imparted in proverbial collections is equally suitable for worshippers of Yahweh as is it for devotees of Amun-Ra or Marduk. Indeed, the strongest direct borrowing in all of biblical literature is the transference of the Teachings of Amen-em-opet to Prov. 22.17–24.22 (see above, §11, even if the point is not emphasized there).

45. Note, however, that Yoder’s focus is on two selected portions, Prov. 1–9 and Prov. 31.10-31.
46. For discussion, see Young, Rezetko and Ehrensvärd 2008: II, 56-58, with specific mention of the lack of Persian loanwords on p. 58.
47. Clearly, Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic influenced the writing of Gen. 6–8, though in this famous case, the Israelite author introduced important changes based on his different theological stance (Rendsburg 2007). For another case, note David
Finally, Carr (2011: 408), as others before him, noted that the ‘names’ of David’s and Solomon’s scribes look suspiciously like the Egyptian word sš (‘scribe’), to wit, šš paraš (1 Chron. 18.16—David) and šš paraš (1 Kgs 4.3—Solomon).

All of this suggests—even if I cannot do justice to Carr’s cogent case in the limited space here—that other ancient Near Eastern (mainly Egyptian) scribal traditions, especially those based on the use of wisdom literature within the curriculum, influenced Israel at an early period. In light of this discussion, it is indeed quite possible that the book of Proverbs—in whole or in part—emanates from the early monarchy.48

14. Proverbs 31.1-9 (Massa), with Special Attention to בִּנִּי הָלָל in Verse 5 and בִּנְיָהוֹן in Verse 8

The attentive reader will have noticed that most if not all of the material presented thus far is derivative of the work of other scholars (as adumbrated in my opening paragraph). Let me conclude, accordingly, by offering something original, or at least as far as I am able to determine after a perusal of the major commentaries.

We begin with a presentation of the short section (Prov. 31.1-9) ascribed to Lemuel, based on the instruction provided by his mother:

Wright’s (2009) proposal that the Covenant Code of Exod. 21–23 is directly influenced by Hammurapi’s Code, though—even if one accepts this theory—once more one notes changes and modifications, for example, the elimination of the Mesopotamian king and his replacement with the God of Israel, with the result that ‘CC has transformed its primary source so as to be a distinct composition with its own ideological stamp’ (Wright 2009: 349). These kinds of changes, I submit, are not present in the case of the book of Proverbs, whose alliance with other ancient Near Eastern wisdom traditions (Amen-em-opet and beyond) is well known.

48. For a thorough review of the entire matter and for further arguments situating Proverbs in monarchic Israel, see Dell 2004.
1 The words of King Lemuel, the teaching which his mother instructed him.49
2 What, my son, and what, son of my womb, and what, son of my vows—
3 Do not give to women your strength, and your powers to wipe-out kings.
4 Not for kings, Lemuel, not for kings, (to) drink wine, and for potentates, no liquor.
5 Lest he drink and he forget what-is-decreed, and he change the law (for) all the sons of poverty/alteration.
6 Give liquor to the one-who-is-lost, and wine to the bitter of soul.
7 Let him drink and let him forget his deprivation, and his toil he will remember no longer.
8 Open your mouth to the dumb, unto the law of all the sons of modification.
9 Open your mouth, judge (with) righteousness, and law (for) the poor/altered and downtrodden.

As is my wont, I have translated hyper-literally, and in two related cases I have used a slash to convey the wordplay.50 The key point will be explicated below.

First, however, I note the unusual grammatical forms (and in one case lexical item) which congregate in this section, though such is to be expected when one realizes the foreign source of this instruction, especially if_massa means ‘Massa’ here (see also Prov. 30.1):

- v. 2: רָב, ‘son’ (3×)
- v. 2: מִן, ‘and what’ (me before non-laryngeal) (variation)
- v. 3: נְעֹרֵךְ, ‘and your powers’ (cf. Ugaritic drkt, ‘power’)
- v. 3: בָּשִׁימ, ‘to wipe-out’ (hiphil infinitive with he elided)
- v. 3: מְלֹא, ‘kings’ (m.pl. ending -în) (note variation in v. 4)
- v. 4: לָא (negative particle before noun) (2×)
- v. 4: לָשׁ, ‘to drink’ (unusual infinitive form)
- v. 4: נַעֲשׁ (negative particle) (cf. MH, Phoenician, Ugaritic)

49. Alternatively, reading against the Masoretic accents/punctuation: ‘The words of King Lemuel of Massa, which his mother instructed him’.

50. Of all the comments I could make regarding my translation, I limit myself to two: (a) by ‘liquor’ (vv. 4, 6) I do not mean, of course, distilled spirits, which did not exist in antiquity, but rather any alcoholic beverage, including one made from grapes (see _OED_, s.v. ‘liquor’ n., def. 3a); and (b) I have opted to employ ‘law’ as a verb in v. 9, based on its obsolete usage in English (see _OED_, s.v., ‘law’ v.).
My main interest, however, lies elsewhere. I begin with the expression 'and he change the law [for] all the sons of poverty', v. 5). As Shalom Paul (1979) demonstrated, this single instance in the Bible about changing the law or verdict, especially once it has been decreed, *ex post facto*, finds clear antecedents in the Mesopotamian legal tradition (e.g. *Laws of Hammurapi* §5). Yitzhak Avishur (2010: 229-30) went further and demonstrated that the same warning appears twice in the Mishnah:51 *m. Sanh.* 11.4, ('one does not change one’s decision, but rather should put him to death at once'); and *m. 'Avot* 5.8, ('the sword comes into the world for changing the law and for perverting the law'). In both traditions, moreover, the verb + noun combination is the same: Akkadian *enû dûni* ('change the law', *CAD* [E]: 174-75), Hebrew כְּלַּלּוֹנִין ('change the law'), from the Semitic verbal root *ny*. Accordingly, we are able to trace the same ancient Near Eastern juridical policy from Hammurapi to Lemu’el to the rabbis.52

There is more, however, for with this knowledge we are able to see wordplay at work in the expression at the end of v. 5: כְּלַּלּוֹנִין, which means not only ‘all the sons of poverty’53 (who are to be protected by the king54), but also ‘all the sons of alteration’ (who would be doubly abused by an altered judicial decree)—hence my cumbersome translation above, with the two terms separated by a slash. The astute consumer of this text would be able to apprehend the double meaning in v. 5, but other readers/listeners would require additional assistance. Hence, the poet/teacher elucidates the wordplay in v. 5 for his audience upon reaching v. 8. Scholars have been puzzled by the phrase כְּלַּלּוֹנִין and hence they typically have followed one of two courses. Either they have expanded the meaning of the root יָנָה ('pass on, change, replace'), often

---

51. Quoted according to Kaufmann Manuscript A50 (Budapest). Danby (1933: 400, 456) and Neusner (1991: 608, 687) render the key verb השע as ‘delay’, but ‘change’ is to be preferred, especially in light of the Akkadian evidence to be presented just below.

52. For echoes of ancient Near Eastern law within rabbinic literature, see Greengus 2011. The author does not discuss the above-cited Mishnah passages, though he does connect (on p. 280) *Laws of Hammurapi* §5 with *t. Sanh.* 6.4-5, though in this latter passage, it is the witnesses who are enjoined not to alter their testimony.

53. For the term יָשע, ‘poverty, affliction’, see Exod. 3.7; Deut 16.3; etc.

54. For a good summary of this motif in Sumerian and Akkadian legal texts, see Paul 1979: 232-33. For an extended discussion, see Weinfeld 1995: 45-56 (with thanks to Shalom Holtz for directing my attention to this book).
to a point beyond the bounds of its semantic range (at least to my
mind);\textsuperscript{55} or, not surprisingly, they have resorted to textual emendation.\textsuperscript{56}

Neither of these routes is necessary, however, for the expression
\( \text{כָּל בְּנֵי קַלָּה מַחֲלָלָה } \) in v. 8 constitutes a clear echo of the similar phrase
\( \text{כֹּל בְּנֵי קָלָה מַחֲלָלָה } \) in v. 5. In my translation above, I have rendered the expression in v. 8 as
‘all the sons of modification’, if only to introduce into the English a new
lexeme to match the introduction into the Hebrew text of a new lexeme.
But the meaning of the phrase is clear, for it refers to those who have
suffered from a change in legal ruling, parallel to the ‘dumb’ in the
a-line. Both require the king’s intervention: the one (that is, the mute)
because no words were spoken;\textsuperscript{57} the other (that is, the one subjected to a
change in the ruling) because too many words were spoken. And then,
just for good measure, the poet/teacher rehearses the key words in the
following and concluding verse with the expression \( \text{כֹּל בְּנֵי קָלָה מַחֲלָלָה } \) (‘and law
[for] the poor/altered’, v. 9). The result is wordsmithing at its very best
within the ancient Israelite wisdom tradition.

\textit{Appendix: Israeli Hebrew in the Book of Proverbs}

By necessity this Appendix devoted to Israelian Hebrew in the book of
Proverbs comprises but an outline of the data, as opposed to a full
treatment of each feature isolated. Part 1 is devoted to lexicon, divided
into the three categories of nouns, verbs, and particles. Part 2 is devoted
to grammar, with ten features listed in more or less random order. Many
of the individual items are treated more fully in my various publications
on the subject\textsuperscript{58} and/or in Chen 2000. Perhaps because it is so special-
ized, I provide bibliography for one single item, the final one in the
Lexicon section. In the outline below, MH = Mishnaic Hebrew, by which
I mean all of Tannaitic Hebrew; the number of attestations given for
particular lexical items is based on the data available at \textit{Ma'agarim: The
Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language}, http://maagarim.hebrew-
academy.org.il. The repeated references to Mishnaic Hebrew in the

\textsuperscript{55} See, for example, Murphy (1998: 239-40): ‘dispossessed’; Waltke (2005:
surveyed by McKane (1970: 411-12). For an analysis of the versions, see de Waard
(2008: 57*).

\textsuperscript{56} Again, see McKane (1970: 411) for various proposals.

\textsuperscript{57} This would be true whether the \( \text{כֹּל בְּנֵי קָלָה מַחֲלָלָה } \) in v. 8 connotes an actual mute or is to
be understood figuratively for the humble or submissive, for which see Lichtenstein

\textsuperscript{58} See the references in Rendsburg 2003a: 9-10; Noegel and Rendsburg 2009:
221-22.
features listed below are relevant to the discussion, when one recognizes
the fact that MH constitutes the northern dialect of Hebrew during the
Roman period (Rendsburg 2003b). In one instance only (the first in the
list of verbs) I provide the information from MH, that is, Amoraic
sources, given its relevance in this case.

Part 1: Lexicon

(A) Nouns

1. סֵנָבֶר, ‘love’: Prov. 7.18 (Hos. 9.10).
2. סֵנָבֶר, ‘love’: Prov. 5.19 (Hos. 8.9).
4. חָלָר, ‘artisan, craftsman’: Prov. 8.30 (Song 7.2 [byform]; MH 86×) (Phoenician KAI 178:3, YMMANNAI).
6. חוּז, ‘health’: Prov. 17.22 (Hos. 5.13 [verb]).
7. נָפָה, ‘edge, rim, surround’, in the phrase נָפָה מִכְרְמִי חָרְבָּה לִשְׁטַח (‘on
the surrounds of the heights of the city’—i.e., the crenellations): Prov. 9.3 (MH 21×, e.g., m. Kel. 8.3 [rim of a vessel],
m. Makš. 1.4 [river’s edge]; also as verb נָפָה, ‘surround, embrace’ [14×], e.g., m. Kel. 15.2) (cf. Ugaritic, e.g., gp ym, gp thm, gpi gr).
8. מַדֶּר, ‘neck, throat’: Prov. 1.9; 3.3; 22; 6.21 (MH 15×).
10. מַלְעָל, ‘leak, dripping’: Prov. 19.13; 27.15 (Qoh. 10.18 [verb];
MH 7×; see also m. Mid. 4.6 מַלְעָל וְרֵב [2×]) (cf. Aramaic)
11. מַלְעָל, ‘palace’: Prov. 30.28 (1 Kgs 21.1; Hos. 8.14; Amos 8.3;
Ps. 45.9, 16; Joel 4.5 [Phoenicia]) (cf. Ugaritic hkl, Aramaic).
12. מַלְעָל, ‘thorn’: Prov. 15.19 (Mic. 7.4; m. ´Erub. 10.8) (cf.
Aramaic).
14. מַלְעָל, ‘jewel’: Prov. 25.12 (variant forms: Hos. 2.15; Song 7.2; t. Shab. 4.11).

59. My research into Mishnaic Hebrew has isolated many linguistic inter-
connections between MH and Phoenician, but one also should take into account the
ever-growing material of an archaeological nature (coins, etc.), for which see Fine
2009: 7–8. In Fine’s words, ‘Upper Galilee was part of the agricultural hinterland of
Tyre’ (p. 8); though naturally I recognize that Sepphoris, where the Mishnah was
compiled, is located in Lower Galilee.
15. זהיר, ‘gold’: Prov. 3.14; 8.10, 19; 16.16 (Zech. 9.3 [style-switching—Tyre]) (cf. Ugaritic ḫrṣ, Phoenician ḫ̄r̄ḥ).
16. סמס, ‘full moon’: Prov. 7.20 (Ps. 81.4) (cf. Ugaritic DN yrḥ w kṣa, Phoenician ṣmṣ).
18. כותר, ‘skilled’: Prov. 22.29 (Ps. 45.2; Ezra 7.6 [Aramaism]) (cf. Ugaritic mhr, Aramaic).
19. עַרְבּה, ‘abundance, advantage, profit’: Prov. 14.23; 21.5 (Qoh. 3.19; MH [70×]) (cf. Aramaic [Targumim for מַרֵּשׁ, עַרְבּוּ, עַרְבּוּ�].)
20. מתנה, ‘gift’: Prov. 25.14 (1 Kgs 13.7; Qoh. 3.3; 5.18) (cf. Phoenician ṭmn).
21. חָלְבָה, ‘good, nice’: Prov. 22.18; 23.8; 24.4 (Ps. 16.11; 81.3; Song 1.16) (cf. Ugaritic ṵm, Phoenician ṣm) (contrast Pss. 133.1; 135.3; 147.1, as b-word to תָּבָא).
22. חומץ, ‘honey’: Prov. 5.3; 24.13; 27.7 (Song 4.11) (cf. Ugaritic ṣh, Phoenician ṣm).
24. כַּרְסָף, ‘bed’: Prov. 7.16 (Amos 3.12; 6.4; Job 7.13; Song 1.16; MH יָנִיסוּ [19×]) (cf. Ugaritic ʾrš, Aramaic).
25. מַטָּח, ‘foot’: Prov. 29.5 (Pss. 58.11; 140.5; Song 7.2) (cf. Phoenician ṭm, Ugaritic pam).
27. עיר, ‘city’: Prov. 10.15; 11.10; 18.11, 19; 29.8 (Hos. 6.8; Ps. 48.3; Job 39.7) (Transjordanian cities: Num. 21.28; Deut. 2.36; 3.4) (cf. Ugaritic qṛt).
28. עַרְבּוּ, ‘city’: Prov. 8.3; 9.3, 14; 11.11 (Job 29.7) (cf. Phoenician מֵרֵי, Ugaritic qṛt, Aramaic).
29. דָּבָא, ‘truth’: Prov. 22.21 (elsewhere Ps. 60.5) (cf. Aramaic).
30. דרך, ‘street’: Prov. 7.8 (Song 3.2; Qoh. 12.4-5) (cf. Aramaic).

(B) Verbs

1. גָּנַה, ‘gather, collect’: Prov. 6.8; 10.5 (Sifre Deb. 16; MHג נ[11×]).
4. מַלְאוּ, ‘teach, learn’: Prov. 22.25 (Job 15.5; 33.33; 35.11) (cf. Aramaic).
5. רָבָא, ‘walk, proceed’: Prov. 4.14; 9.6; 23.19 (cf. Ugaritic ḳr).
10. קְלוּ, ‘incite, be excited, be troubled’: Prov. 10.8, 10 (Hos. 4.14) (cf. Syriac).
11. אָטָה, ‘eat’: Prov. 4.17; 9.5; 23.1, 6 (Ps. 141.4) (cf. Ugaritic ḫlm).
12. מַגְּנָה, ‘give, deliver’: Prov. 4.9 (Hos. 11.8) (cf. Phoenician ḫmn, Ugaritic mn, ‘gift, present’, Aramaic).
14. מַעֲשֶׂה, ‘be good, be lovely’: Prov. 2.10; 9.17; 24.25 (Gen. 49.15 [Issachar]; Ps. 141.6; Song 7.7) (cf. Phoenician ḫmnh).
15. מָסָחִית, ‘wash away’: Prov. 28.3 (MH [m. Ket. 1.6; 7.8]) (cf. Syriac).
17. מָסָח, ‘shut, press’: Prov. 16.30 (cf. Syriac; perhaps Ugaritic Ḫy).
18. מַעֲשֶׂה, ‘be sweet, pleasant’: Prov. 3.24; 13.19; 20.17 (Hos. 9.4; Song 2.14) (Aramaic).
19. מַעֲשֶׂה, ‘find, obtain’; Prov. 3.13; 8.35; 12.2; 18.22 (Ps. 140.9) (cf. Ugaritic ḡp, Phoenician ḥm).
20. מַלְעֵה, ‘cut, split’: Prov. 7.23 (2 Kgs 4.39; Ps. 141.7; Job 16.13; 39.3).
21. מַלְעֵה, ‘level, straighten’: Prov. 4.26; 5.6, 21; 16.11 (Pss. 58.3; 78.50) (cf. Phoenician Ḫm, ‘architect’).
22. מַעֲשֶׂה, ‘make, do’: Prov. 16.4; 30.20 (Deut. 32.27; Hos. 7.1; Pss. 44.2; 58.3; Job 7.20; 11.8; 22.17; 33.29; 34.32; 35.6; 36.23; Num. 23.23 [style-switching]) (cf. Phoenician ḫm, Deir ‘Alla Ḫm; Ugaritic byform ḫf).
23. מַעֲשֶׂה, ‘curse’: Prov. 11.26; 24.24 (Balaam 8×; Job 2×) (cf. Phoenician).
24. כָּבֵל, ‘take, receive’: Prov. 19.20 (all other occurrences are post-exilic as true Aramaisms: Job, Esther, Ezra, Chronicles) (cf. Aramaic).


26. שֶׁבַע, ‘serve a meal’: Prov. 23.7 (cf. Ugaritic š-r, ‘serve a meal, arrange the table’).

(C) Particles

1. בְּלָ, ‘no, not’: Prov. 9.13; 10.30; 12.3; 14.7; 19.23; 22.29; 23.7, 35; 24.23 (IH Psalms; Hos. 7.2; 9.16) (cf. Ugaritic bl, Phoenician בל).

2. אָ, ‘no, not’: Prov. 31.4 (Qere) (MH 271×) (cf. Ugaritic ay [indefinite pronoun], Phoenician אָ).


Part 2: Grammar

1. Feminine singular nominal ending -ָּ, as in Phoenician:
   • Prov. 1.20; 9.1; 24.7: חָכְמָה, ‘wisdom’.
   • Prov. 28.20: חָכְמָה, ‘faith’.
     o Additional IH examples, e.g., Ezek. 26.11: חָכְמָה וַתִּקָּרְבַּה, ‘and the pillar of your strength to the earth shall fall’ (style-switching—Tyre).

2. Reduplicatory plural of geminate nouns, as in Aramaic:
   • Prov. 29.13: כָּפֹטָה, ‘oppression’.
     o Numerous IH examples, e.g., Judg. 5.14: כָּפֹטָה, ‘men’ (see also Ps. 141.4; Isa. 53.3).

3. שָׁ, ‘men’, as plural of שָׁ, as in Phoenician:
   • Prov. 8.4: שָׁ, ‘men’ (see also Ps. 141.4; Isa. 53.3).

4. Retention of yod in IIIy verbs, as in Aramaic and Deir ‘Alla:
   • Prov. 26.7: לְלֵנָה, ‘hang’.
     o Numerous IH examples, e.g., Isa. 21.12 (3×) (style-switching—Dumah).

5. Retention of lamed in imperative of לָכְחָנָה, ‘take’, as in Aramaic:
   • Prov. 20.16: לָכְחָנָה, ‘take’.
     o 1 Kgs 17.11: לָכְחָנָה (Elijah).
     o Ezek. 37.16: לָכְחָנָה (Israel/Joseph) (Exod. 29.1 לָכְחָנָה alliterationis causa).
6. Conjunction אֶל דָּעַת, ’ere, before’, literally ’while not’, as in Aramaic:
   - Prov. 8.26: נִדְלְתוּ אֶל דָּעַת עָכְרִים ḫוּזָה זָה בְּקֵרֵים, ’before he made earth’ (|| v. 25, נִדְלְתוּ אֶל דָּעַת עָכְרִים, ’before the mountains were sunk’).

7. Hithpael used with passive sense, as in Aramaic (two different T-stem formations) and MH (in the nithpaal form):
   - Prov. 31.30: אָשֶׁר יִרְאֶה יְהוָה עֶדֹקַנָּה, ’a woman (with) fear of YHWH, she is to be praised’.
     - Mic. 6.16: יִשְׁתַּפְרָה חַפְּצֶיךָ עַל בְּמַשֵּׁה בִּיִּדְאָרָב, ’and the laws of Omri and all the actions of the house of Ahab are observed’.
     - Qoh. 8.10: יִשְׁתַּפְרָה חַפְּצֶיךָ, ’and they are forgotten in the city’.
     - Num. 23.9: בְּגֵיאָה לֹא יִהְיֶה, ’and amongst the nations it [sc. Israel] is not to be reckoned’.

8. Preposition מִּן with anarthrous noun, as in Aramaic and Deir ‘Ala:
   - Prov. 27.8: בְּצַפְרָה נֶדֶדֶת מְרַכָּבָה נוּדָה מְפַקְּדָה, ’As a bird wanders from its nest, so does a man wander from his place’.
     - Judg. 5.20: נְמָדַע בְּנָחָל שֶׁרֶדֶת וּמֵּלֵא בְּגַדִּים.
     - Judg. 7.23: כְּסָלֶה מַנְחֵא תְמוּנָה מְקַפְּדָה כְּסָלֶה.
     - 51× in Chronicles (Aramaism).

9. Negative particle לא followed by a noun, as in Deir ‘Ala I.6-7: שֵׁשַׁה לֹא נְגַרְנָה, ’darkness and not light’:
   - Prov. 8.10: יַחֲדוּ חוֹדוֹקָה אַלְגֶּפֶּה יָשָׁע מִתְוָרָה בּוֹכָר, ’and not silver’.
   - Prov. 12.28: בְּאִילֵּנָה פְּשִׁיטָה בְּהוּכָר אָלֶמֶטְקָה, ’not death’.
   - Prov. 17.12: פְּלִשְׁטֵן נָבָא בִּיאֶשׁ אַלְגֶּפֶּה בּוֹכָר, ’and not a fool’.
   - Prov. 27.2: יִלְּכֶל לֹא יָלוֹפְּקִינְּה הָאִילֵּנָה שֶׁרֶדֶת, ’and not your lips’.
     - Additional IH examples, e.g., Amos 5.14 לֹא יָשֹׁר שֵׁשַׁה, ’and not evil’.

10. Relative pronoun הנה, with cognates in Aramaic and Byblian Phoenician:
    - Prov. 23.22: שֵׁמַע לְאָבְכִּי הנה, ’listen to your father who begot you’.
     - Additional IH examples, e.g., Pss. 9.16; 10.2.
Bibliography

Albright, W.F.

Al-Jallad, A.M.

Alter, R.

Andersen, F.I., and A.D. Forbes

Avishur, Y.

Barker, K.L.

Bearman, P., et al. (eds.)


Berlin, A.

Biella, J.C.

Black, J.R.

Blau, J.
Boström, G.  1928  *Paronomasi i den äldre hebreiska Maschallitteraturen mid särskild Hänsyn till Proverbia* (Lunds Universitets Årsskrift, N.F. Avd. 1 Bd. 23; Lund: Gleerup).


Driver, G.R.  1947  ‘On a Passage in the Baal Epic (IV AB iii 24) and Proverbs xxxi 21’, *BASOR* 105: 11.


Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom

Fox, M.V.

Ginsberg, H.L.

Gordon, C.H.

Greengus, S.

Healey, J.F.

Heim, K.M.

Hornkohl, A.

Hurowitz, A.V.
2012 *Proverbs* (Miqra’ le-Yisra’el; 2 vols.; Jerusalem: Magnes [in Hebrew]).

Japhet, S.

Jobling, W.J.
1995 *Nabataean-Aramaic: A Provisional Lexicon (Nablex)* (Kensington, MD: Dunwoody Press).

Kassis, R.A.
1999 *The Book of Proverbs and Arabic Proverbial Works* (VTSup, 74; Leiden: Brill).

Khan, G. (ed.)

Kselman, J.S.

Lane, E.W.

Levin, S.

Lichtenstein, M.
1982 ‘Chiasm and Symmetry in Proverbs 31’, *CBQ* 44: 203-211.

Macdonald, M.C.A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Edition/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Murphy, R.E.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td><em>Proverbs</em></td>
<td>(WBC, 22; Nashville: Thomas Nelson).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perspectives on Israelite Wisdom


Rubin, A.D.

Smith, G.R.

Snell, Daniel C.
1993 Twice-Told Proverbs and the Composition of the Book of Proverbs (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns).

Steiner, R.C.

Taylor, J.E.
1995 ‘The Asherah, the Menorah and the Sacred Tree’, JSOT 66: 29-54.

Viré, F.

Waard, J. de
2008 Proverbs (Biblia Hebraica Quinta, 17; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft).


