

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

RECENSIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MASORETIC TEXT AND THE SEPTUAGINT OF PROVERBS

At times the LXX reflects recensional stages in the development of the biblical books differing from those reflected in MT. As a rule, the LXX reflects an earlier stage than MT as, for example, in the case of Jeremiah, Joshua, Ezekiel, and 1 Samuel 16–18.¹ Only Jeremiah is supported by Hebrew evidence from Qumran,² while for the others the LXX remains the sole witness. In this context two other discrepancies are not mentioned: the large omissions in the LXX of Job should probably be ascribed to the Greek translator, and hence are not relevant to the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible,³ and the status of the major differences in the Greek text of Exodus 35–40 (transpositions, omissions) is as yet in question.

The LXX of Proverbs has not been mentioned in this context, not only because the text cannot be assessed easily, but also because scholars tended to ascribe its deviations from MT to inner-translational factors rather than to its Hebrew *Vorlage*. When these deviations are ascribed to the translator, they are irrelevant to the textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, and their main importance lies in the realm of exegesis. However, several of these LXX deviations derived from a different Hebrew *Vorlage* which often differed recensionally from MT. Such evidence is presented here, but the exegetical deviations introduced by the translator are discussed first.

¹ For a detailed discussion and bibliography, see *TCU*, 237–260 and *TCHB*, chapter 7.

² 4QJer^{b,d}, published in *DJD* XV (1997).

³ For an analysis and bibliographical references, see C. Cox, “Elihu’s Second Speech according to the Septuagint,” in: W.E. Aufrecht (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Job* (Studies in Religion 16; Waterloo 1985) 36–53.

1. Translational factors

There is considerable evidence in the Greek translation that points to inner-translational factors rather than a different Hebrew text behind the differences between the LXX and MT.

1. The translation contains much evidence of contextual exegesis, in both minor and major details.⁴

2. A major divergence between the two texts is the occurrence of scores of doublets, almost all of which seem to be translational doublets of the same verse rather than Greek translations of Hebrew doublets.⁵ The great number of these doublets in the Greek Proverbs is exceptional within the Greek Bible. These doublets pertain to single words and pairs of words, but more frequently to whole verses. As a rule, the two elements of the doublet are juxtaposed in the same verse (e.g., 1:14; 2:21; 9:6; 15:6), but sometimes they occur in adjacent verses (1:18–19; 14:35–15:1). Usually one of the two members of the pair of doublets is more faithful to the Hebrew text, and the other one is free or even paraphrastic. According to a rule laid down by de Lagarde, *Proverbien*, 20, the free rendering reflects the original translation, and the more literal one a revisional rendering. While it is not impossible that the two renderings derived both from the original translator, it is more likely that one of them, the literal one, was added at one of the stages of the textual transmission by a reviser who considered the original translation too free, e.g.:

4:10	וירבו לך שנות חיים	
	καὶ πληθυνθήσεται ἔτη ζωῆς σου	
	ἵνα σοι γένωνται πολλὰ ὁδοὶ βίου	

The individual elements of the Hebrew are rendered twice:

וירבו	καὶ πληθυνθήσεται	ἵνα γένωνται πολλὰ
לך	σου	σοι
שנות	ἔτη	ὁδοὶ
חיים	ζωῆς βίου	

The first set of translations is more literal than the second one.

⁴ The evidence is extensive. For a partial discussion, see A.J. Baumgartner, *Étude critique sur l'état du texte du livre des Proverbes d'après les principales traductions anciennes* (Leipzig 1890); G. Mezzacasa, *Il libro dei Proverbi di Salomone—Studio critico sulle aggiunte greco-alessandrine* (Roma 1913); G. Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint* (LUÅ NF 52,3; Lund 1956); J. Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs, Jewish and/or Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* (VTSup 69; Leiden 1997).

⁵ See Z. Talshir, "Double Translations in the Septuagint," in: Cox, *VI Congress*, 21–63.

3. Translational exegesis is visible in the addition of stichs or whole verses, e.g.,

- a. 6:11 וּבֹא כְמוֹהַלֵךְ רָאָשׁוֹ וּמַחְסֵרְךָ כְּאִישׁ מִנֵּן
 And your poverty will come like a vagabond, and
 your want like an armed man.
 εἴτ' ἐμπαράγινεταιί σοι ὥσπερ κακὸς ὁδοιπόρος ἢ
 πενία καὶ ἡ ἔνδεια ὥσπερ ἀγαθὸς δρομεύς
 Then poverty comes upon you as an evil traveller and
 want like a good runner.

Although the translation is quite free, most of the elements of the Hebrew can be recognized in the Greek. Of particular interest is the opposition created by the translator between the κακὸς ὁδοιπόρος and the ἀγαθὸς δρομεύς, an opposition which is further developed in a translational plus ('11a' in the edition of Rahlfs):⁶

- '6:11a' ἐὰν δὲ ἄοκνος ἦς ἤξει ὥσπερ πηγὴ ὁ ἀμητός σου, ἡ δὲ
 ἔνδεια ὥσπερ κακὸς δρομεύς ἀπαυτομολήσει
 ... but if you are diligent, your harvest will come as a
 fountain, and poverty will flee away as an evil runner.

This plus at the end of the simile of the ant (vv. 6–11) further develops the theme of v. 11 from which two elements are repeated: κακὸς δρομεύς and ἔνδεια. The previous verses mention the idle man (ὀκνηρός [vv. 6,9]), and the present one, '11a,' continues their idea by referring to the rewards of the opposite character, the ἄοκνος, a word which does not occur elsewhere in the LXX. The use in v. '11a' of words occurring in the Greek context makes it likely that the addition has been made in Greek rather than Hebrew, and therefore the Hebrew reconstruction of this plus by Lagarde, *Proverbien*, 23, וּבֹא כְמוֹהַלֵךְ רָאָשׁוֹ וּמַחְסֵרְךָ כְּאִישׁ מִנֵּן, is unwarranted.⁷

b. A similar impression of composition in Greek is created by the added simile referring to the μέλισσα (bee) earlier in the chapter ('6:8a-c' [not found in MT]), where the ὀκνηρός is told to go to the bee and to learn from its ways. This simile is thus very close to that of the ant found in vv. 6–11. The secondary character of this exegetical expansion is suggested by its unusual formulation as 'or go to the bee' that is awkward in the text after the simile of the ant.

⁶ In the system of Rahlfs, most added stichs are denoted with a supernumerary notation such as '11a', '11b', etc. Some added stichs, however, such as in 16:11 discussed below, are not denoted in a special way.

⁷ The Hebrew text of 6:10–11 recurs in 24:33–34 with minor differences, and the translation of these verses is different although ὥσπερ ἀγαθὸς δρομεύς recurs in 24:34. The translation in chapter 24 is not followed by an addition like '6:11a', but on the other hand 24:34 is preceded by an added ἐὰν δὲ τοῦτο ποιῆς. Thus both the additions in '6:11a' and 24:34 as well as the one in '8:21a' start with ἐὰν.

- c. 11:16 אשת חן תתמך כבוד ועריצים יתמכו עשר
 A gracious woman grasps honor, and violent men grasp wealth.
- a γυνή εὐχάριστος ἐγείρει ἄνδρὶ δόξαν
 A gracious wife brings glory to her husband,
- β θρόνος δὲ ἀτιμίας γυνή μισοῦσα δίκαια
 but a woman hating righteousness is a throne of dishonor;
- γ πλούτου ὀκνηροὶ ἐνδεεῖς γίνονται
 the idle men come to lack wealth,
- δ οἱ δὲ ἀνδρεῖοι ἐρείδονται πλούτῳ
 but the diligent support themselves with wealth.

In the MT of 11:16 אשת חן (γυνή εὐχάριστος) is contrasted with עריצים; both of them ‘grasp’ something different. However, the translator probably did not understand the exact meaning of the first stich—hence his unusual rendering—nor did he realize the exact nature of the parallelism—hence his addition of two stichs. These added stichs (β, γ) provided oppositions to the two stichs representing MT (α, δ). To the γυνή εὐχάριστος (α) the LXX added stich β concerning the γυνή μισοῦσα. The content of this added stich has close connections with the wording of the translation elsewhere, so that it was probably added by the original translator himself. For the first phrase in stich β, cf. θρόνος αἰσθήσεως (a throne of knowledge) in 12:23. The ‘throne of dishonor’ is probably meant as the opposite of the ‘throne of honor’ (כסא כבוד), mentioned in 1 Sam 2:8; Isa 22:23; Jer 14:21; 17:12. It reminds one also of the θρόνος ἀρχῆς (Prov 16:12) used in connection with δικαιοσύνη (as here), as well as of similar phrases (20:28; 25:5; 29:14). For the last phrase of that stich cf. 13:5 λόγον ἄδικον μισεῖ δίκαιος.

To stich δ reflecting MT the translator added stich γ as contrast. This stich creates an opposition between πλούτου, not obtained by idle men, in γ, and πλούτῳ, obtained by the diligent, in δ. At the same time, the wording of this plus is based on the vocabulary of the ‘canonical’ section, 6:6, 11, as well as of the added ‘6:11a’ ἄοκνος ... ἔνδεια.⁸

- d. 12:11 עבד אדמתו ישבע לחם ומרדף ריקים חסר לב
 He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he whose pursuits are empty has no sense.
- 11 a ὁ ἐργαζόμενος τὴν ἐαυτοῦ γῆν ἐμπλησθήσεται ἄρτων
 He who tills his land will be satisfied with bread,
- β οἱ δὲ διώκοντες μάταια ἐνδεεῖς φρενῶν
 but they that pursue vanities are void of understanding;

⁸ As a result, the attempt of some scholars to reconstruct a Hebrew *Vorlage* of this Greek plus seems unwarranted. Note, e.g., BH: עזלים יחסרו הן וכסא קלון אשה שאת ישר הן.

- '11a' γ ὅς ἐστιν ἡδὺς ἐν οἴνων διατριβαίς;
 he who enjoys himself in amusements of wine
 δ ἐν τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὀχυρώμασιν καταλείψει ἀτιμίαν
 will leave dishonor in his own strongholds.

The Hebrew verse presents an opposition between עבד אדמתו and מרדף ריקים; v. '11a' of the LXX adds a parallel to the latter.

ὀχυρώμασιν of the added stich δ is based on ὀχύρωμα occurring in v. 12. From the fact that it occurs in the next verse, rather than a preceding one, one might conclude that the Greek addition was made on the basis of an already existing translation.

Stichs γδ continue the train of thought of stich β, even though the verse is phrased in the singular. They probably elaborate on the theme of μάταια mentioned in stich β. The addition uses ἀτιμίαν from the context (v. 9) and this word also features in the plus in 11:16 (see above). Elsewhere, too, ἀτιμία is a favored word of the LXX of Proverbs. For the reference to the drinking of wine cf. also Prov 23:20; 31:4.

- e. 17:21 ילד כסיל לתונה לו ולא ישמח אבי נבל
 He who fathers a stupid son makes sorrow for himself and
 the father of a fool has no joy.
 α καρδία δὲ ἄφρονος ὀδύνη τῷ κεκτημένῳ αὐτήν
 The heart of a fool is grief to its possessor.
 β οὐκ εὐφραίνεται πατήρ ἐπὶ υἱῷ ἀπαιδεύτῳ
 A father rejoices not over an uninstructed son,
 γ υἱὸς δὲ φρόνιμος εὐφραίνει μητέρα αὐτοῦ
 but a wise son makes his mother happy.

The meaning of the Hebrew verse is lost in Greek, probably because the translator read לב instead of ילד. For the phrase, cf. 12:23 לב כסילים - καρδία δὲ ἀφρόνων, and 15:7 (for a similar change, see the LXX of 17:10). Possibly because of the lack of a good parallelism between stichs α and β, stich γ was added as an antithetical parallel to the second stich. At the same time, stich γ was added because of the association with the Hebrew and Greek text of 10:1 (cf. also 15:20; 23:24), where the same rare word תונה is used as here.

The list of these inner-translational pluses is long. For similar pluses of the LXX, see '4:27a' (note the expansion on the theme of 'right' and 'left' found in the MT and LXX of v. 27; v. '27b' contains a double translation of v. 26); '7:1a'; '8:21a'; '9:12a-c'; '9:18a-d'; '10:4a'; '12:13a'; '13:13a'; '17:16a'; '18:22a'; 19:7; '22:14a'; '24:22a-e'; '25:10a'; '27:20a';

'27:21a'; '28:17a'. This list also includes cases of additions made on the basis of verses from other books:⁹

- f. 13:9 אור צדיקים ישמח ונר רשעים ידעך
 The light of the righteous shines brightly, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out.
 φῶς δικαίοις διὰ παντός
 φῶς δὲ ἀσεβῶν σβέννυται
 The righteous always have light, but the light of the ungodly is quenched.

To the opposition between δικαίοις and ἀσεβῶν in this verse, v. '9a' adds a similar opposition:

- '13:9a' ψυχὰὶ δόλῳ πλανῶνται ἐν ἀμαρτίαις δίκαιοι δὲ οἰκτίρουσιν καὶ ἐλεῶσιν
 Deceitful souls wander in sins, but the righteous have pity and are merciful.

The second part of this addition may be based on Ps 37(36):21 (cf. also 111 [112]:4):¹⁰

- Ps 37:21 ליה רשע ולא ישלם וצדיק חונן ונותן
 The wicked borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous is generous and gives.
 Ps 36:21 δανείζεται ὁ ἀμαρτωλὸς καὶ οὐκ ἀποτείνει ὁ δὲ δίκαιος οἰκτίρει καὶ διδοῖ
 The sinner borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous has pity and gives.

For a similar addition in the context, see Prov 13:11 δίκαιος οἰκτίρει καὶ κηχρᾶ (the righteous has pity and lends).

2. Text-critical evaluation

1. The preceding section provided ample evidence of changes made either by the translator or during the course of the textual transmission of the translation. From the outset it thus would seem reasonable to ascribe all major differences between the translation and MT to these factors. However, there are indications that beyond the afore-mentioned instances there are also major differences between the two texts deriving

⁹ In addition to the below mentioned examples, see 1:7 (cf. Ps 111:10); 3:16 (cf. Isa 45:23 and Prov 31:26 [see below]); '26:11a' (cf. Sir 4:21).

¹⁰ At the same time, the origin of the idea of the wandering souls (of the living or the dead?) as in Proverbs is not clear, although one is reminded of Wisdom 17:1 ἀπαίδευτοι ψυχὰὶ ἐπλανήθησαν. and Prov 21:16: ἀνὴρ πλανώμενος ἐξ ὁδοῦ δικαιοσύνης.

from a different Hebrew *Vorlage* used by the translator. This situation makes the text-critical evaluation of the LXX of Proverbs very difficult.

a. The translation of 3:16, referring to Wisdom, contains several details beyond MT. After ארך ימים (long life) it adds καὶ ἔτη ζωῆς (= ושנות חיים [cf. v. 2]) and after πλοῦτος καὶ δόξα, it adds two stichs ('3:16a'):

'3:16a' α ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτῆς ἐκπορεύεται δικαιοσύνη
Out of her mouth proceeds righteousness,
β νόμον δὲ καὶ ἔλεον ἐπὶ γλώσσης φορεῖ
and she carries law and mercy upon her tongue.

Stich α is based on Isa 45:23 צדקה מפֿי צא (from my mouth righteous-ness goes forth), where the LXX uses a different verb, ἐξελεύσεται. Stich β provides a more literal version of Prov 31:26 על לשונה חסד ותורת חסד (and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue) than the LXX *ad loc.* :

31:25 ... ἐννόμως. καὶ τάξιν ἐστείλατο τῇ γλώσση αὐτῆς
(... and lawfully?). And she commanded order to her tongue.

Although inner-Greek activity cannot be excluded, the inner-translational differences between the translations in '3:16a' on the one hand and 31:26 and Isa 45:23 on the other make it likely that the plus in Prov '3:16a' did not derive from inner-Greek activity. Rather this plus is based on an expanded Hebrew text (מפֿיה צדקה ותורת חסד על לשונה?).

b. The plus in '3:22a' is more or less identical with the text of 3:8:

'3:22a' ἔσται δὲ ἴασις ταῖς σαρκί σου
καὶ ἐπιμέλεια τοῖς σοῖς ὀστέοις
It will be healing to your flesh and safety to your bones.
3:8 רפֿאות תהי לְשֶׁךְךָ וּשְׁקוּי לְעֲצָמוֹתֶיךָ
It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.
τότε ἴασις ἔσται τῷ σώματί σου
καὶ ἐπιμέλεια τοῖς ὀστέοις σου

In both cases the Greek text occurs after negative commands (אל תהי 7 - μὴ ἴσθι; 21 אל ילזו - μὴ παραρρῆς). It is not likely that the text of '3:22a' has been repeated on the inner-Greek level, since the two translations differ. Rather, the discrepancies between the two texts most likely derived from different translations of the same Hebrew text (note the differences between τότε [8] and δὲ ['22a'], the different rendering of לְשֶׁךְךָ, τῷ σώματί σου [8], ταῖς σαρκί σου

['22a'],¹¹ and the differences between σου [8] and σοῖς ['22a'.]) In that different Hebrew text the verse may have occurred twice, and in both places it suited the context.

c. The same reasoning obtains regarding the repetition of the following verse:

27:1 (אל תתהלל ביום מחר) כי לא תדע מה ילד יום
 For you do not know what a day may bring forth,
 οὐ γὰρ γινώσκεις τί τέξεται ἡ ἐπιούσα
 for you do not know what the next day will bring forth.
 3:28 ... οὐ γὰρ οἶδας τί τέξεται ἡ ἐπιούσα

The contexts in which the verse occurs in both places are similar, in both cases after מחר in the preceding stich. In 27:1 the Greek has an equivalent in MT, but it has none in 3:28. The occurrence of this verse in 3:28 probably does not represent an inner-Greek repetition (note the differences between the verbs in the two Greek versions). Rather, it reflects a Hebrew text in which the verse occurred twice. Since MT itself contains several instances of recurring verses (see n. 7), it is not surprising that the *Vorlage* of the Greek contains additional instances of recurring verses.

2. Major differences between the two texts are visible in the *transpositions* of verses and groups of verses. Rahlfs denoted these verses as supernumerary pluses ('12a', etc.), as in the preceding examples, but actually they represent transpositions, often coupled with pluses and minuses. The numbering in the edition of Rahlfs thus creates a misleading tool for its investigation.

a. The main example of this phenomenon is found in the verses at the end of chapter 15 and the beginning of chapter 16. The sequence of the verses in the LXX is as follows according to the numbers of MT:

15:1–27
 16:6 (Rahlfs: '15:27a')
 15:28
 16:7 (Rahlfs: '15:28a')
 15:29
 16:8 (Rahlfs: '15:29a')
 16:9 (Rahlfs: '15:29b')
 15:30

¹¹ Both Greek words are known as translation equivalents of the same words, even if the exact equivalent in this verse is not clear (בשר or שר = שאר). Elsewhere in the LXX of Proverbs, σῶμα reflects שאר (5:11; 11:17; instead of בשרים in 25:20 the LXX read another text, either בשר or שאר) as well as בשר (4:22; 5:11; 26:10 [?]). Elsewhere, σάρξ reflects בשר (passim) and שאר (Mich 3:2, 3).

15:32, 33	(note omission of v. 31)
16:2 (?) ¹²	(note omission of v. 1)
16:5	(note omission of v. 3 and transposition of v. 4)
'16:7'	first stich of the LXX (note omission of v. 6)
16:7	first stich, represented as the second stich of 16:7 in the LXX
16:8	(differing from v. 8 of MT)—in other words, the greater part of vv. 7–8 of MT lacks in the LXX
16:4	(Rahlfs: 9)
16:10 ff.	

The reason for these major changes is not connected with the textual transmission, as suggested by Lagarde¹³ nor with the disorderly status of the manuscript(s) from which the translation was made.¹⁴ Rather, the two texts represent *recensionally different* editions. The sequence of most sayings in these chapters is loose, and as each one is more or less independent, two different editorial traditions could have existed concerning their sequence. One notes especially the transposition of several verses of what is now chapter 16 to what is now the end of chapter 15; one also notes the change of position of 16:4. These phenomena are coupled with the omission of 15:31; 16:1,3, and the replacement of 16:6–8 of MT with two different Greek verses (numbered 16:7-8 by Rahlfs). Further, 15:31 (אין שמעה וגו'), lacking in the LXX, could have been added secondarily in the edition of MT as an appendix to the previous verse dealing with מאור עינים and שמועה טובה. The first eleven verses of chapter 16 in MT display a certain principle (occurrence of the name of God in all verses except for vv. 8 and 10), but this situation does not necessarily render that version preferable to that of the LXX, where such an editorial principle is not visible. Furthermore, the type of parallelism of the verses in the arrangement of MT does not make it a more coherent unit than that of the LXX.

b. The sequence in chapter 20 is as follows in the LXX (according to the verse numbers of MT):

1–9

¹² It is not certain that the verse which is denoted by Rahlfs as 16:2 indeed represents 16:2 of MT, as it also presents elements that could be taken as reflecting 16:4.

¹³ Lagarde, *Proverbien*, 51 suggested that the text of chapters 15 and 16 was written in adjacent columns and that the translator wrongly read the text horizontally rather than vertically. However, de Lagarde took into consideration only the transposition of the verses from chapter 16 to chapter 15, and not the other phenomena in the translation (omissions, additions), and therefore his solution is less plausible.

¹⁴ Thus Baumgartner, *Étude critique*, 149 (cf. n. 4 above).

- 20–22 (Rahlfs: '9a-c')
 10–13
 23–30 (note omission of vv. 14–19)

As in the preceding case, there is no logical connection between the verses, and both sequences are possible. Editorial rather than scribal factors must have determined the different sequences, as this is also coupled with an omission (vv. 14–19). Toy¹⁵ ascribed these different sequences to 'accident or scribal caprice.'

c. The sequence in chapter 17 is as follows in the LXX (according to the verse numbers of MT):

- 1–16
 19b (Rahlfs: '16a')
 20b (Rahlfs: '16a')
 17–18
 19a
 20 including a translation of v. 20b (also translated in the LXX of v. '16a')
 21–28

d. The sequence in chapter 31 is as follows in the LXX (according to the verse numbers of MT):

- 1–24
 26 (Rahlfs: 25)
 25 (Rahlfs: 26)
 27
 26a (Rahlfs: '28a')—a second translation is found in '3:16a'
 28–31

e. The same explanation applies to major differences in sequence between the various segments of the book in chapters 24–31. According to their headings, the following eight collections of proverbial material are recognized in the book of Proverbs according to MT:¹⁶

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----------------------------|
| I | 1:1—9:18 | ('The proverbs of Solomon') |
| II | 10:1—22:16 | ('The proverbs of Solomon') |
| III | 22:17—24:22 | ('The words of the wise') |
| IV | 24:23–34 | ('Also words of the wise') |

¹⁵ C.H. Toy, *The Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh 1899) 388.

¹⁶ Toy, *Proverbs*, vi subdivides MT into five consecutive sections. Our own understanding is closer to that of W. Frankenberg, *Die Sprüche* (HAT; Göttingen 1898) 2–5 who mentions eight subgroups and Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 472, who speaks of seven sections. Of the commentators, only Frankenberg, pp. 10–11 paid detailed attention to the sequence of the LXX, the logic of which he tried to explain.

V	25—29	(‘These are also proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied’)
VI	30	(‘The words of Agur’ [and other sayings])
VII	31:1–9	(‘The words of Lemuel’)
VIII	31:10–31	(an acrostichon about the virtuous woman)

This description of the contents of MT is based on explicit headings in that text, but at least in two cases these headings may be misleading. Chapter 30 is represented as ‘the words of Agur’ (and other sayings) since v. 1 contains the only heading in this chapter. However, most commentators doubt whether all of the verses in this chapter should be ascribed to a collection of ‘the words of Agur.’ Indeed, the nature of vv. 15–33 (numerical sayings) differs from that of the first 14 verses, and probably the real ‘words of Agur’ comprised even less than 14 verses. Therefore, when representing here and below ‘the words of Agur’ as one section, this formal approach may be misleading. Likewise, not all of chapter 31 should be ascribed to ‘the words of Lemuel,’ and its second part, an acrostichon about the virtuous woman, should be considered a separate unit.

The sequence of the LXX can be described as following according to the sections and numbers of MT:

I-III	1:1—24:1–22	
VI, part 1	30:1–14	(‘The words of Agur,’ first part)
IV	24:23–34	(‘Also words of the wise’)
VI, part 2	30:15–33	(‘The words of Agur,’ second part)
VII	31:1–9	(‘The words of Lemuel,’ first part)
V	25–29	
VIII	31:10–31	(an acrostichon about the virtuous woman, formally representing ‘the words of Lemuel,’ second part)

In other words, the LXX separates between the two parts of section VI (‘The words of Agur’) and of chapter 31 (VII [‘the words of Lemuel’] and VIII [the acrostichon of the virtuous woman]). Furthermore, it reverses the internal order of sections IV, V, VI and VII, part 1.

When turning to a comparative analysis of the sequence in the MT and LXX, neither one of the two systems should be preferred. The connection between the sections is such that both can be equally correct.

From the outset the juxtaposition of sections III and IV, as in MT, is to be preferred to the arrangement of the LXX as III contains ‘the words of the wise’ and IV ‘also the words of the wise’ (thus Frankenberg [n. 18] who considers IV a *Nachtrag* to III). However, one could also argue against the arrangement of MT. For why should collection IV need a

separate heading if both it and the previous collection contain 'words of the wise'? Therefore, the arrangement of the LXX has more to be recommended than that of MT, since the separation of IV from III requires a separate heading for IV, as in the LXX.

The separation in the LXX between the different sections of 'the words of Agur' and 'the words of Lemuel' is contextually no better or worse than their juxtaposition in MT. One should remember that both of these collections are composed of at least two segments whose contents are not necessarily connected. Thus not all of the sayings in chapter 30 should be considered as 'the words of Agur.' In any event, vv. 15–33 (various numerical sayings) are set apart, and could certainly be placed elsewhere. Likewise, chapter 31 is composed of different segments; its second part, an acrostichon about the virtuous woman, is not connected to the first part, 'the words of Lemuel,' and could therefore be placed elsewhere, as it is in the LXX. In the arrangement of the LXX the second part of 'the words of Agur' (VI, part 2) has no separate heading, and therefore belongs, as it were, to section IV ('also words of the wise'); contextually this arrangement is equally as good as that of MT. On the other hand, both Agur (VI) and Lemuel (VII) are described as 'of Massa' ('the Massaite'), so that their juxtaposition in MT, at the end of the book is preferable to their separation in the LXX. However, even in MT the 'words of Agur' are not really juxtaposed to 'the 'words' of Lemuel,' since the second part of chapter 30 actually does not contain sayings of Agur.

In this description, the arrangement of MT has been compared with that of the presumed *Vorlage* of the LXX, beyond the understanding of the translator. For the translator often misunderstood the nature of the headings. Thus the following headings have been misunderstood in the translation:

24:23 נם אלה לחכמים הכר פנים במשפט בל טוב
 These also are words of the wise. Partiality in judgment is not good.
 ταῦτα δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν τοῖς σοφοῖς ἐπιγινώσκειν αἰδεῖσθαι
 πρόσωπον ἐν κρίσει οὐ καλόν
 And these things I say to you, the wise men, to know: it is not good to respect a face in judgment.

The heading has been taken as an integral part of the sentence.

30:1 דְּבַרֵּי אַגוּר בֶּן יַקֵּה מַמְסָא
 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh of Massa.
 τοὺς ἐμοὺς λόγους υἱέ φοβήθητι καὶ δεξάμενος αὐτοὺς
 μετανόει

my son, fear my words, and receive them and repent

The proper name אָנֹר has been taken as a verbal form, and the first word has been read as דְּבָרַי.

31:1 דְּבָרַי לְמוֹאֵל מֶלֶךְ מַשָּׂא (אֲשֶׁר יִסְרְתוּ אִמּוֹ)
 (The words of Lemuel, king of Massa [which his mother
 taught him].)
 οἱ ἐμοὶ λόγοι εἴρηται ὑπὸ θεοῦ, βασιλέως χρηματισμός
 (My words are spoken by God, an oracle of the king)

Like in 30:1, the first word has been read as דְּבָרַי, and the proper name Lemuel has been separated into two parts. These changes brought about further changes in the translation.

3. Another indication of a different *Vorlage* is the fact that in various instances the text of the LXX is shorter than that of MT: 8:29a, 33; 11:4, 10b, 11a; 15:31; 16:1,3; 18:23–24; 9:1–2; 20:14–19; 21:5, 18b; 22:6; 23:23. The number of these examples is too large to assume a scribal phenomenon (*parablepsis*).

3. Conclusion

It seems that the translation was made from a Hebrew copy of Proverbs that differed recensionally from that of MT. These differences consisted of major and minor differences in sequence as well as differences in pluses and minuses. If the interpretation of these differences is correct, we have gained further insights into the history of the growth of the book of Proverbs. At a relatively late time the different editorial stages of the growth of the book were still reflected in the texts.

When Proverbs was translated into Greek, presumably in the second century BCE, a scroll was used that contained an editorial stage of the book differing from that now contained in MT. Such an understanding parallels views developed previously regarding other biblical books. This view does not imply that the editorial changes were made as late as the time of the Greek translation, but that at that time, in a geographically remote center of Judaism, such early scrolls were still available.¹⁷

¹⁷ This view had already been suggested by Swete, *Introduction*, 241, although he still allows for the possibility that the translator himself may have been involved in the changes. Our own views are more in agreement with those of Mezzacasa (n. 4) 2–3; Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 472; and S. Ahituv, "Proverbs," *Encyclopaedia Biblica* 5 (Jerusalem 1968) 554 (Hebrew). The latter three views mention the possibility of recensional differences between the MT and LXX, although none goes into detail.