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PROVERBS AND WISDOM BOOKS OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST: THE FACTUAL HISTORY OF A LITERARY FORM

By K. A. KITCHEN

1. Introductory Considerations

For many decades it has been customary to make detailed comparisons between the contents of the book of Proverbs within the Old Testament and the various broadly similar writings from the neighbouring and related cultures of the ancient Near East.¹ Likewise, much has been said of the ‘international’ character of ancient Near-Eastern wisdom as represented in both biblical and non-biblical compositions. However, no systematic study has ever been made of the basic forms of wisdom *books* (as distinct from individual proverbs, maxims, etc.) either inside or outside the Old Testament, in order to establish a proper factual history of wisdom works in general or of that particular group of writings to which the constituent compositions of the book of Proverbs belong. What is here proposed for the first time is a real (as opposed to imaginary) “*Formgeschichte*” — real, because based directly upon the observable series of actual books of ‘instructional’ wisdom (including those within Proverbs) that straddle three millennia of the history and civilization of the ancient biblical world.

* Delivered at Tyndale House, Cambridge, 16th July, 1976. This paper is excerpted from materials long intended for use in a larger work, prospects for the completion and publication of which are bleak in the extreme; regrettably, therefore, presentation here is necessarily much condensed.

¹ At random, cf. (e.g.) D. C. Simpson, *JEA* 12 (1926) 232-9; R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs* (*Anchor Bible*, 1965) xviiiiff., xlff.; W. McKane, *Proverbs* (*Old Testament Library*, 1970) 1-208 *passim*; among many others.

I. Existing Structural Content of the Book of Proverbs.

The present book of Proverbs, as transmitted to us, actually contains one large composition (*Proverbs of Solomon*, now chapters 1-24), one smaller work (*Proverbs of Solomon recopied by Hezekiah's men*, now chapters 25-29), and two (possibly three) very brief compositions (*Words of Agur*, now ch. 30; *Words to Lemuel*, with or without *the Good Wife*, both now ch. 31). This is simply a matter of direct observation, taking due note of the explicit titles of the works themselves. One other such observation may be made at this stage: this body of at least four compositions divides into two groups as follows, on form.

First, Proverbs of Solomon (1-24):

- Title/preamble, 1:1-6;
- Prologue, 1:7-9:18;
- Sub-title, 10:1;
- Main Text,² 10:2-24:34.

Second, the other three compositions have only:

- Title (*A* 25:1; *B* 30:1; *C* 31:1);
- Main Text (*A* 25 2-29:27; *B* 30:2-33; *C* 31:2-9, plus 10-31).

Again, the physical distinction between the fuller form of the one longer work and the simpler form of the three others is visible in the extant text as a given datum.

Along with other biblical references to Solomon and Hezekiah (but not for Agur or Lemuel), the titles clearly differentiate in historical period between

- (i) *Proverbs of Solomon*, supposedly composed/compiled by Solomon in his own time (*fl.*, c. 950 BC).
- (ii) *Proverbs, Solomon, Hezekiah's men*, supposedly Solomonic material copied out 250 years later as an entity in Hezekiah's reign (c. 700 BC).
- (iii) *Words of Agur, Words to Lemuel*, both undated,

² Incorporating two sections at the end, termed 'words of the wise' (22:17-24:22, and 24:23-34). The first one should be understood as an integral part of 10-24. Note especially (in 22:17) that "Incline your ear and hear the words of wise men" is set directly in parallelism with "and set your heart on *my knowledge*". The speaker is about to introduce wisdom gained from others, but wisdom that he has assimilated and made his own. Attempts to turn 22:17 into a distinct title-line, by emending LXX *logoi* to *logoi* and the MT still more drastically, should be resolutely rejected. The existing texts of MT and LXX in each case make perfect sense as they stand, rendering such emendations superfluous.

lacking all external historical notices, other than for *massā* as note of origin rather than 'oracle'.

The explicit literary history of the existing book of Proverbs would then be as follows. In the 10th century BC, Solomon produced a work (1-24) with overall title, prologue (introductory discourses), sub-title and main text, incorporating some data from other sages (22:17ff.; 24:23ff.). He would also have left behind further such 'wisdom'. This, Hezekiah's scribes recopied as a collection, giving it a title. It may even have been appended to Solomon's main work. At some date(s) unknown, the Words of Agur and to Lemuel were composed, and at some later date(s) added to the two Solomonic collections — evidently not before Hezekiah's time, but in theory at any time from his day onwards. (It should hardly need to be said that 'authorship' of wisdom-compositions of this kind does not necessarily imply personal invention of everything that is presented. Given the highly traditional and 'international' nature of ancient Near-Eastern wisdom, authors of such works were as often collectors and reformulators of treasured lore as actual inventors.)

II. Origin and History of Proverbs in Conventional OT Studies.

However, the growth and career of the book of Proverbs current in Old Testament studies is commonly presented in a reconstruction drastically different from the picture drawn from the text itself in the foregoing paragraph. Variations are numerous, but the most dominant views may be summarised in basic form as follows.

1. Chapters 10:1-22:16 and 25-29 are usually considered to be (or to contain) the oldest compilations. Not a few have considered these two sections to be pre-exilic,³ but others

³ E.g., S. R. Driver, *Literature of the Old Testament*, (1913) 405, 407; W. O. E. Oesterley, *Proverbs (Westminster Commentaries)*, 1929 xx-xxv (especially xxv: 'not later than c. 700 BC'); A. Weiser, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1939) 245; W. Baumgartner, in H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament in Modern Study* (1951) 213, 214; A. Bentzen *Introduction to the Old Testament*, II (1952) 173; W. F. Albright, *VTS* 3 (1955) 4-5; J. Patterson, *The Wisdom of Israel (Bible Guides)*, 1961 61; B. Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos (HAT)*, I/16, (1963) 4; J. C. Rylaarsdam, *Proverbs to Song of Solomon (Layman's Bible Commentaries)*, 1964 8-9 (implicit); O. Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, (1964) 641 (material only), and *The Old Testament, an Introduction* (1965) 474.

have preferred a post-exilic date.⁴ Either way, perhaps only a slender nucleus might have come down from as early as Solomon's time to justify the attributions at 10:1 and 25:1, or the brief references in Kings (e.g. 1 Ki, 4:29-34).

2. Largely because of its alleged connections with the Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope,⁵ the first collection of Words of the Wise is often considered as pre-exilic,⁶ but not invariably.⁷ Chapters 30-31 are usually admitted to bear no clear date of origin.⁸

3. The prologue, chapters 1-9, has been almost universally⁹ considered to be the latest part of the entire book, post-exilic,¹⁰ and is often not allowed to be earlier than the 4th century BC.¹¹

In summary, therefore, 'conventional wisdom' on the composition and history of Proverbs runs somewhat as follows. It is possible that some few elements were handed-down from Solomon's time, but the main collections in 10-24 (certainly the Words of the Wise, esp. if drawing on Amenemope) and in 25-29 began to accumulate during the Divided Monarchy onwards. In or probably after the Babylonian Exile, chapters 30-31 were appended. Then, or as late as the 4th/3rd centuries BC, chapters 1-9 were prefixed to

⁴ E.g., C. H. Toy, *Proverbs* (ICC, 1899) xix-xxxi (especially xxviii.); R. Kittel, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, III (1927) 721-2, 725; A. Causse, *RHPR* 9 (1929) 164ff.; J. Hempel, *Die althebraische Literatur* . . . (1930) 51f.; 55; R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (1941) 659; V. Hamp, *Sprüche (Echter-Bibel)*, 8, (1949) 6; Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, 641 and 474 (present form); R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs (Anchor Bible)*, 1965) 18 (as Eissfeldt).

⁵ A subject not dealt with in the present study; cf. the paper and book by J. Ruffle (forthcoming).

⁶ E.g., Oesterley, *op. cit.*, xxv; Bentzen, *loc. cit.*; Albright, *op. cit.*, 6; Patterson, *loc. cit.*; possibly Gemser, *op. cit.*, 4 end; Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, 643 and 475.

⁷ E.g., Toy, *loc. cit.*; Kittel, *loc. cit.*; Pfeiffer, *loc. cit.*

⁸ E.g., Oesterley, *op. cit.*, xxvi; Bentzen, *loc. cit.*; Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, 644 and 476; Toy regarded this section as post-exilic.

⁹ But not quite; cf. (e.g.) C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9* (1966) *passim* (e.g., 136), and earlier, Albright, *op. cit.*, 5, and C. T. Fritsch, *Interpreter's Bible*, IV (1955) 767. Recently, R. N. Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs* (SBT, No. 45, 1965) argued for a pre-exilic basis in 1-9, but augmented later (cf. 105-6).

¹⁰ E.g., Driver, *op. cit.*, 405 note *n* and refs.; Kittel, *op. cit.*, 725, 731-2; Oesterley, *op. cit.*, xiii, xxvi, cf. xxvii (title); Weiser, *loc. cit.* (n.3, above); Pfeiffer, *loc. cit.*; Baumgartner, *op. cit.*, 212; Bentzen, *op. cit.*, 172; Rylaarsdam, *op. cit.*, 9; Gemser, *op. cit.*, 6; Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, 640 and 473; cf. McKane, *Proverbs* (1970) 7-8.

¹¹ E.g., Weiser, Pfeiffer, *loc. cit.*; Baumgartner, *loc. cit.* (by implication); Bentzen, *loc. cit.* (with caution); Paterson, *op. cit.*, 59 end; E. Jones, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (Torch Commentaries)*, 1961) 23; Eissfeldt, *op. cit.*, 640 and 473 (4th or 3rd centuries BC.).

the whole. The main alternative to the foregoing picture is the same basic sequence, but with all the materials relegated to the exilic and post-exilic periods. Generally, the titles at 1:1 and 10:1 are for all practical purposes discarded as of little account, so far as ‘authorship’ of the complete sections 1-9 and 10-22/24 are concerned.¹² It is hardly necessary to point out the contrast between this overall view of the history of Proverbs and that explicitly suggested by, and derivable from, the notices and observable features of the text itself.

2. *Basic Data on Overall Literary Forms of Entire Works*

‘Wisdom literature’ in the Bible and its world includes several different types of composition,¹³ one prominent group being that of the ‘instructional’ works to which belong the four constituent works within Proverbs. For an outline listing by region and date of the main works in this class, the reader is here referred to Excursus II at the end of this paper. Out of 40 or so works there listed, some 30 or more are sufficiently preserved to be classified into two main types, ‘A’ and ‘B’.

Type A has a formal title, then immediately the main text. *Type B* has a formal title, a prologue, and then main text (sub-titles being optional). For the distribution of Types A and B by region and date, see Table 1 subjoined.¹⁴

From this tabulation of works, several facts can be observed.

First, both Egypt and Mesopotamia with the Levant cover all four periods noted, from the 3rd millennium BC down to Graeco-Roman times.

Second, Type A and Type B occur side-by-side throughout this long span, except for the temporary absence of Type A in the early 2nd millennium BC in Egypt and W. Asia alike.

¹² Cf. Oesterley, *op. cit.*, xxvii, 220 (on 25:1); Driver, *op. cit.*, 406-7 (by implication); Pfeiffer, *op. cit.*, 645; Bentzen, *op. cit.*, I, 169, II, 172, etc.

¹³ ‘Instructions’ (subject of this paper); proverb-collections (distinct from the foregoing); ‘theodicies’; ‘discourses’; fables, riddles and other works, both organic compositions and synthetic collections. For outline-surveys of Egyptian and Mesopotamian material (no longer up-to-date, but still convenient), cf. respectively G. Posener, *Revue d’Egyptologie* 6 (1949) 27-48, *passim*, and E. I. Gordon, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 17 (1960) 122-152, *passim*.

¹⁴ The key-numbers (E.1, M.7, L.12, etc.) refer to the Egyptian and Mesopotamian/Levant sections of the list of ancient works given in Excursus II at the end of this study.

TABLE 1: *Types of Works*

	<i>TYPE A</i>			<i>TYPE B</i>	
	<i>Egypt</i>		<i>W. Asia</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>
<i>(a) 3rd Millennium BC</i>	E.3: Hardjedef			<i>(a) 3rd Millennium BC</i>	
	E.6: Merykare		—	E.4: Ptahhotep	M.1a/b: Shuruppak (S); AS & Adab
<i>(b) Early 2nd Millennium BC</i>	—		—	<i>(b) Early 2nd Millennium BC</i>	
				E.7: Khety s. Duauf	
				E.8: Schetepibre	M.1c: Shuruppak (S); classical vs.
				E.9: Man for Son	
				E.10: Amenemhat I	M.2: Shuruppak (Akk.)
<i>(c) Later 2nd Millennium BC</i>				<i>(c) Later 2nd Millennium BC</i>	
E.17: Anc. Writings		M.5a: Shube-awilim (Akk.)		E.15: HP Amenemhat	
E.20: Hori				E.18: Aniy	M.7: Counsels of Wisdom (Akk.)
E.i-v: Letter-writing	[L.5b: Shube-awilim (Hitt.)]			E.19: Amennakhte	
E.vi: Onomasticon				E.21: Amenemope	
<i>(d) 1st Millennium BC</i>				<i>(d) 1st Millennium BC</i>	
E.24: Louvre D. 2414	(L.10b: Solomon II)			E.23: Ankh-sheshonqy	(L.10a: Solomon I (Heb.))
E.25: [Insinger & parallels]	(L.10c: Agur)				
E.26: Amenothēs (Gk.)	(L.10d: Lemuel) (all Heb.)				M.12: Ahiqar (Aram.)
	M.11: Advice to a Prince (Akk.)				

Thus, there is *no* ‘development’ from Type A into Type B (or vice-versa) from c.2600 BC onwards. Any such postulated ‘linear’ development must precede that approximate date (and all known instructional works), if it ever occurred at all.

Third, the available, classifiable works are fairly evenly distributed between Types A and B (apart from B’s preponderance in the early 2nd millennium) — and certainly so in overall totals: 13/19 works of Type A¹⁵ as against some 16 of Type B. This also applies regionally. In Egypt, we have 7/13 of Type A to 10 of Type B; and in W. Asia, 6 of Type A to 6 of Type B.¹⁶ Proportionately, therefore, both types were about equally popular in the main cultures of the biblical Near East. *No* evolutionary development is visible in the inter-relations of types, dates or regions.

Fourth, the constituent compositions of the book of Proverbs find their places easily. Solomon II (Pr. 25-29), Agur (30) and Lemuel (31) are all Type A, while Solomon I (1-24) is equally clearly Type B. This latter point is of considerable importance, as there can be no doubt concerning the attestation of initial title (1:1-6), mainly exhortatory prologue (1:7-9:18) of some length, and main text (10-24) introduced by a sub-title (10:1)¹⁷ and using other sub-titles or cross-headings (22:17; 24:23).

This clearly visible structure corresponds precisely to what one finds in other works of Type B, e.g. Ptahhotep (3rd millennium BC) with its full title, relatively long prologue, clear sub-title then main text, plus allied features in varying measure in (e.g.) Khety, Aniy, Amennakhte or Ankhsheshonqy (early 2nd to late 1st millennia BC).

Fifth, therefore, this situation clearly implies that Proverbs 1-24 *complete* forms one proper literary unit, *not* either 1-9 or 10-24 on their own; 1-24 is a single, planned work in need of no further dissection. In fact, given the objective existence across three millennia of no less than *fifteen* other works having this selfsame basic structure, any such dissection into theoretical ‘anterior’ works must be dismissed as the sheer fiction that it always was. What cannot be imposed upon the

¹⁵ *I.e.* 13 without the special group E.i-vi, and 19 including these.

¹⁶ Throughout, counting M. 1a/b as variants of one work, but 1c separately as a new version of it.

¹⁷ Not a full title, in contrast to 1:1-6.

other works (except as a sterile exercise) should not be imposed on 1-24 either. The issue of the unity of Proverbs 1-24, of course, is entirely separate from that of date, given that Type B is found at all periods.

3. *Constituent Elements of Known Works*

I. *Titles and Sub-titles.*

(a) *Titles: Type and Content.* On content, *one* basic type of formal title is common to nearly all the ‘instructional’ compositions regardless of date, region or language. Such titles include the personal name, with title(s)/epithet(s), of the author/compiler (real or supposed) expressed in the third person.¹⁸ In Egypt, the formulation is substantial: ‘Instruction by . . . (PN)’ in the 3rd millennium, then universally ‘Beginning of the Instruction made by . . . (PN)’ throughout the 2nd millennium, reverting to the simpler ‘Instruction (or: Teaching) of . . . (PN)’ in the late 1st millennium (Demotic works). In Mesopotamia, the formulation is verbal, either narrative (Sumerian, Akkadian alike: ‘PN . . . gave instruction’) or directly imperative (*cf.* Akk., Shube-awilim, ‘Hear the counsel of PN’). In the Levant, a substantive formulation is preferred: ‘[These are the wo]rds of PN’ (so, Ahiqar).

Further, optional, features can be added to these basic essentials. Frequently the author addresses his son,¹⁹ the latter often being named.

The basic title-structure is sometimes ‘inflated’ with additional titles or epithets of the author,²⁰ or by inclusion of claims for the aims and value of the work,²¹ or by other literary embellishments.²²

As with the external ancient Near-Eastern data, so with the compositions within Proverbs. In each case, the author/

¹⁸ Exceptions are of the rarest, that ‘prove the rule’; e.g., *Man for his Son*, anonymous because intended as an instruction for ‘everyman’, to be used by all; *cf.* G. Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l’Égypte de la XIIe Dynastie* (1956) 126-7.

¹⁹ Or apprentice, in the Egyptian letter-writing instructions, E.i-v.

²⁰ *Cf.* especially those flouted by the High Priest Amenemhat, and by Amenemope (E.15, 21).

²¹ *Cf.* Ptahhotep (E.4), especially sub-title, and Amenemope (E.21).

²² As in Shuruppak (classical Sum. version, M.1c) or in the Onomasticon (E.vi).

TABLE 2: Titles

<i>SHORT</i>		<i>MEDIUM</i>		<i>LONG</i>	
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>
3rd Milln.		3rd Milln.		3rd Milln.	
E.6: Merikare	—	E.3: Hardjedef	M.1a/b: Shuruppak	E.4: (Ptahhotep, sub-title)	—
Early 2nd Milln.		E.4: Ptahhotep (early)	(AS; Adab)	Early 2nd Milln.	
E.9: Man for Son	M.2: Shuruppak (Akk.)	Early 2nd Milln.		E.4: Ptahhotep (classical)	M.1c: Shuruppak (S) (classical vs)
		E.10: Amenemhat I	—	E.7: Khety s. Duaf	
				E.8: Sehetepibre	
Later 2nd Milln.		Later 2nd Milln.		Later 2nd Milln.	
E.17: Anc. Writings	M.7: Counsels of	E.19: Amennakhte		E.15: HP Amenemhat	M.5a:Shube-awilim
E.18: Aniy	Wisdom (?)	E.i, ii, iii	—	E.21: Amenemope	(Akk.)
E.20: Hori	(K.13770)			E.vi: Onomasticom	
1st Milln.		1st Milln.		1st Milln.	
E.24: Louvre D.2414	L.10c: Agur	—	L.10b: Solomon II	E.23: (Ankh- sheshonqy, sub-title)	L.10a: Solomon I
	L.10d: Lemuel		L.12: Ahiqar		

compiler is named in the third person, with formal title and/or epithets ('king of Israel', 'son of Jakeh', etc.). Three of the titles are relatively brief (Solomon II, Agur and Lemuel), but yet contain complementary matter (activity of Hezekiah's men; Massa or 'oracle'; a mother's teaching). The other (Solomon I) is longer, embodying five couplets on the aims and utility of the work so announced. Such embellishments also come within the regular scheme of titles as outlined above. The scale of the longer title in Solomon I is comparable with those of Shube-awilim (M.5a), Amenemope (E.21) and the Onomasticon (E.vi), besides the elaborate sub-title of Ptahhotep (E.4), which are sometimes longer, more complex than Solomon I — and all are earlier than it. The four works in Proverbs all formulate their titles substantively ('The proverbs of . . .'; 'These are the proverbs . . .'; 'The Words of . . .'), as in Egyptian and other West-Semitic works (e.g., Ahiqar), and in contrast to Mesopotamian works.

(b) *Titles: Length.* The varying lengths of the titles of works are worthy of note. Those undeniably 'short' or 'long' stand out clearly. The former have usually little but the essentials, the latter may display additional features at some length. In between these comes a sizeable group that may be termed 'medium' in length. Besides the nuclear essentials, they often include some further element — circumstances, further titles, etc. — but not at great length. See Table 2 for the distribution of the total available evidence, and Excursus I, section (a), for examples of short, medium and long titles.

From the tabulated evidence, certain facts become clearly evident. Thus, short, medium and long titles occur at all periods — there is *no* unilinear development from short through medium to long, or *vice-versa*. All three degrees of length occur in all regions. In sum, in all periods and regions from the mid-3rd millennium BC onwards, authors were free to preface their instructional works with a title of whatever length seemed good to them; they were hidebound by no rule in the matter.

On this clear evidence, therefore, it is totally baseless to presume that the relatively 'long' title of Solomon I (1:1-6) must needs be later than the 'medium' title of Solomon II (25:1) or the 'short' titles of Agur or Lemuel (30:1; 31:1), merely to fit in with evolutionary misconceptions about Old

Testament literature. The four titles within Proverbs fit their literary contexts. The ‘long’ 1:1-6 fittingly opens an ambitious Type B composition, while the ‘medium’ 25:1 prefaces a fair-sized collection, mentioning the circumstances. In turn, 30:1 and 31:1 (both ‘short’) introduce in each case a short, unpretentious work. So, ‘heads’ and ‘bodies’ are all well matched.

(c) *Sub-titles and Cross-headings*. Leaving aside the varying degrees of elaboration, the available data show two basic types of such marker: *occasional* sub-titles or titular interjections; and *periodic* or recurrent cross-headings. Both types occur in Egypt and W. Asia alike.

In Egypt, Ptahhotep and Ankh-sheshonqy — 2000 years apart — each exhibit a long and elaborate formal sub-title to introduce the main text. In the early and later 2nd millennium BC respectively, Khety son of Duauf and Aniy use short and medium-length titular interjections — Khety, to introduce the second half of his main text, and Aniy to introduce (probably) the first part and (certainly) the second part of his main text; cf. Excursus I, section (b). Periodic cross-headings occur in Amenemope (late 2nd millennium) who has 30 numbered chapter-headings, a practice found almost 1000 years later in the 25 numbered ‘teachings’ in the Demotic Papyrus Insinger and its parallels (E.25), where each heading is followed by a summary of the ensuing paragraph. So, Egypt offers ‘occasional’ long sub-titles both early and late, with short titular headings in between. Periodic (numbered) headings emerge in the late 2nd millennium and persist late; apart from their relatively late emergence, there is — again — no unilinear development here either. One may add that works could have visible sub-sections without employing sub-titles (so, Merikare, E.6; Amenemhat I, E.10).

In Mesopotamia, the picture is remarkable. The Old-Sumerian versions of Shuruppak (M.1a/b; 3rd millennium BC) show the use of a series of standardised sub-titles, even to the point of alternating single-line ones with ones having a two-line sub-prologue attached (Abu Salabikh version). Then, in the early 2nd millennium BC, the classical Sumerian version of Shuruppak shows just two formal sub-titles (each, a quatrain plus sub-prologue), numbered ‘second time’, ‘third time’ — while the Akkadian version shows none at all in the

little that survives. In fact, in the Akkadian works of the 2nd and 1st millennia BC, no sub-titles so far appear. In relation to West-Semitic, Ahiqar is our only witness, and any sub-title between the narrative prologue and the gnomic main text is lost in the existing Aramaic fragments. So, in Mesopotamia to date, we at present have an 'evolution' in reverse — free use of alternating formal sub-titles, then use of fewer, fuller (and numbered) sub-titles, and then none at all.

In Egypt and Mesopotamia combined, the complementary data thus furnish (in one region or the other) most sorts of sub-title at most periods. In both areas, sub-titles occur particularly in Type B compositions.

In Proverbs, the four constituent works fit this picture precisely. Solomon II and the very brief Agur and Lemuel — all of Type A — have no sub-titles, appropriately enough. Equally fittingly, Solomon I (of the more elaborate Type B) has two clear, formal sub-titles (10:1; 24:23) and one titular interjection (22:17). Noticeably, the two formal sub-titles are of the very briefest kind, consisting (in Hebrew) of only two words and three words respectively — they could not possibly have served as full formal titles to independent works in such a form, on our comparative evidence. The titular interjection at 22:17 is a well-turned couplet, fully comparable with those in Khetu son of Duauf and Aniy long before (*cf.* Excursus I, (b)).

This use of sub-titles in Solomon I, it should be noted, finds parallels only in the 3rd and early 2nd millennia BC in Mesopotamia and (so far as 'occasional' sub-titles go) in the 3rd and 2nd millennia in Egypt. Only Ankh-sheshonqy (perhaps Ahiqar?) offers any parallel in the later 1st millennium, and then in a form immensely more elaborate than the very simple sub-titles in Solomon I. Thus, overall, the usage visible in Solomon I looks back into the 2nd millennium BC and beyond for its best models and analogies, a fact worth noting.

II. Direct Personal Address in Title and Text.

(a) *To Son(s) in Titles.* In Egypt, out of 16 titles preserved, twelve or thirteen²³ have the instruction addressed to the son,

²³ Thirteen if one includes the damaged title of Aniy (E.18), which work is elsewhere clearly addressed to his son Khonshotep.

apprentice or children; only three actually exclude such mention.²⁴ Five (probably six²⁵) name the son, while seven do not (two being addressed to 'his children', plural²⁶). In Mesopotamia, all six available title-lines address the son, three doing so by name (Shuruppak, classical Sumerian version; ditto, Akkadian version; Shube-awilim). Two omit any name (Shuruppak, Old-Sumerian versions; probably Counsels of Wisdom, if it includes K.13770). One text is uncertain (Ahiqar — room for '[Nadin]', end of line 1). Thus, at all periods, both Egyptian and Mesopotamian sages address their sons or pupils in their title-lines, in the vast majority of known cases. On this point, the four works in Proverbs stand in striking contrast with their analogues, as none of their authors addresses their son(s) in the title-lines; only Lemuel acknowledges his mother's admonitions.

(b) *To Son(s) in Text of Works*. Here, it is Egypt and Mesopotamia that diverge remarkably. In the Old-Sumerian version of Shuruppak, the three prologues and sub-prologues each begin 'my son', and the phrases 'my son', 'my little one' recur once each in the main text (VI:5; Rev. II:14). In the classical Sumerian version, 'my son' occurs not only in the three elaborated prologues but also nine times throughout the text,²⁷ while 'my little one' may occur twice (107, [216a]), and 'my child' once (247). The fragmentary Akkadian version still has 'my son' in its prologue. Later in the 2nd millennium, Shube-awilim addresses '(my) son' at least thrice in the main text (I, 17, 19; II, 6), besides the title-line. The Counsels of Wisdom has 'my son' once in its possible prologue (K.13770) and once in its main text (81). Finally, Ahiqar addresses 'my son' at least five times in the surviving Aramaic text (lines 82, 96, 127, 129, 149). But in Egypt, nowhere do we find any such 2nd-person address to 'my son' in any main text, prologue or title.²⁸

As for Proverbs, Solomon II, Agur and Lemuel go with Egypt rather than Mesopotamia, using 'my son' hardly at all.

²⁴ *I.e.* the *Instruction according to Ancient Writings*, a compilation from the past, not a 'personal' work; Hori; and the Greek pastiche, Amenothos. Also, the *Onomasticon* (E.vi).

²⁵ Six, if one includes Aniy (*cf.* n.23 above).

²⁶ Shehetepibre (E.8) and the High Priest Amenemhat (E.15).

²⁷ In lines 35, 39, 138, 165, 170, 197, 212, 223, 265.

²⁸ An isolated third-person reference, in Amenemhat I (Pap. Sallier II, 3:3-4).

It occurs only once in Solomon II (27:11) and in the opening verse (31:2) of Lemuel,²⁹ never in Agur. But Solomon I, strikingly, uses ‘my son’ thirteen times (and ‘(my) sons’ thrice³⁰) in the prologue (1-9) — but only twice in the whole of the main text (19:27; 24:13). The frequency of ‘my son’ in the *prologue* classes it with the oldest usage in Mesopotamia, in contrast to Egypt and the late-period texts. The rarity of the phrase in the main text compares with Mesopotamian works of the middle and later 2nd millennium in particular, slightly less so with Ahiqar (mid-1st-millennium) who uses it oftener. So, in sum, Solomon I goes with Mesopotamian usage, with the earliest evidence in prologue (1-9) and 2nd-millennium data in main text; 1st-millennium texts go further than Solomon I.

(c) *Personal Address: in Commands to Heed, and Otherwise.* In their prologues (cf. III below), Egyptian works frequently³¹ exhort their readers to ‘hearken’, ‘pay heed’, etc., to the instruction they offer — but always avoiding the phrase ‘my son’ (cf. above). In Mesopotamia, ‘my son’ occurs in these ‘hearkening’ contexts *exclusively in the prologues* in instructional works.³² Of course, the phrase ‘my son’ occurs also in the main texts of such works — but *exclusively in non-hearkening contexts*.³³

In the compositions within Proverbs, Solomon II and Lemuel each have ‘my son’ once (27:11; 31:2 plus parallelism) in *non-hearkening* contexts, precisely as in Mesopotamia. In Solomon I, of the two isolated examples of ‘my son’ in the main text (19:27; 24:13), the first probably³⁴ and the second certainly are *non-hearkening* in usage and content. This, again, agrees with external usage.

²⁹ As in Mesopotamian works of 3rd and later 2nd millennia BC.

³⁰ One being from the mouth of personified Wisdom, 8:32.

³¹ E.g., Sehetepibre, Man for his Son, Amenemhat I, High Priest Amenemhat, Amennakhte, Amenemope, etc.

³² So, in Shuruppak (classical Sumerian version, all 3 prologues; and Akkadian version), and probably Counsels of Wisdom (K.13770).

³³ So, Shuruppak (cl. Sum. vs.; 10 times plus 2 parallel phrases), Shube-awilim (4 times), Counsels of Wisdom (once), Ahiqar (4 times), all of these occurrences being observations or injunctions addressed to the son, but on matters other than to pay heed or to listen.

³⁴ At first glance, 19:27 looks very like a ‘hearkening’ context stated negatively; but its thrust is that of an injunction not to err from right ways through reacting against proffered instruction.

TABLE 3: Prologues

<i>SHORT</i>		<i>MEDIUM</i>		<i>LONG</i>	
<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>	<i>Egypt</i>	<i>W. Asia</i>
3rd Milln. —	M.1a/b: Shuruppak (S) hearken	3rd Milln. E.4: Ptahhotep autobiogr. dialogue	—	3rd Milln. —	—
Early 2nd Milln. E.8: Sehetepibre hearken E.9: Man for Son hearken E.10: Amenemhat I hearken Later 2nd Milln. E.15: HP Amenemhat aims	M.2: Shuruppak (Akk.) hearken	Early 2nd Milln. E.7: Khety s. Df. aim & basis	M.1c: Shuruppak (S) hearken	Early 2nd Milln. —	—
1st Milln. —	—	Later 2nd Milln. E.19: Amennakhte hearken E.21: Amenemope hearken E.18: Aniy? 1st Milln. —	—	Later 2nd Milln. E.18: Aniy? 1st Milln. E.23: Ankh- sheshonqy biogr. narr.	L.10a: Solomon I hearken & instr. L.12: Ahiqar biogr. narr.

Now, in the prologue (1-9) of Solomon I, the 12 hearkening uses of ‘my son(s)’³⁵ far outnumber the four non-hearkening cases³⁶, by three to one. In other words, following-on from 1:7-9 (which closely resembles a classic Egyptian short prologue of appeal to pay heed), eleven successive such appeals to hearken maintain the essentially exhortatory nature of this prologue right through to its closing section portraying Wisdom’s activity (8-9; *cf.* 8:32). Solomon I, therefore, corresponds closely with Near-Eastern (especially Mesopotamian) usage in having ‘(my) son(s)’ in mainly hearkening contexts in the long prologue, and non-hearkening cases much more rarely, particularly so in the main text. The prologue-nature of 1-9 thus finds clear confirmation.

III. Prologues.

The most distinctive feature of works of Type B is their possession of a prologue between the initial title and main text. For the distribution by region, date, relative length and basic content of the surviving prologues, see Table 3. They occur in all regions, at all dates.

In terms of length, ‘short’ and ‘medium’ prologues are to be found side by side during the 3rd, early 2nd, and later 2nd millennia BC — but *not* (so far) in the 1st millennium BC. Conversely, with the possible exception of Aniy (late 2nd millennium),³⁷ ‘long’ prologues first appear (on current evidence) during the 1st millennium BC. Thus, there is no discernible development from short to medium during the earlier periods, but there is a probable development from the short plus medium to long, in the late 2nd/early 1st millennium BC, first fully visible in the middle and later 1st millennium BC.

In terms of content, the distribution is of interest. Ptahhotep (3rd millennium BC) uses his prologue for an

³⁵ Prov. 1:8; 2:1 (in conditional form); 3:1, 21; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1, 7; 6:20; 7:1; 8:32 (Wisdom).

³⁶ Prov. 1:10, 15; 3:11; 6:1.

³⁷ Regrettably, the first page (of some 17-20 lines) of the Cairo MS of Aniy is so badly destroyed that very little detail can be gleaned from it. That this first page concludes with a titular interjection (restored in Excursus I, (b) below) suggests a 17/20-line prologue, *i.e.* ‘long’ rather than ‘medium’.

autobiographical dialogue — nothing else remotely like this recurs in instructional works until some 2000 years later (Ahiqar and Ankh-sheshonqy). Otherwise, in the 3rd and throughout the 2nd millennia BC, the overwhelming majority of Type B works have prologues that appeal to their readers to hearken to the instruction proffered.³⁸ In the 1st millennium, in striking contrast, the surviving W. Asiatic and Egyptian works (Ahiqar and Ankh-sheshonqy) have as prologues long biographical narratives, and no emphatic or sustained harangue or appeal.³⁹

Thus, in Proverbs, Solomon I (1-24) can be seen to occupy a remarkable *intermediate* position between the 3rd/2nd millennium works and those of the first millennium. On its proportionate and absolute length, the prologue of Solomon I (1-9) must be classed as ‘long’ (over 230 verses; about one-third of total bulk of 1-24), like those of Ahiqar (5th century BC or earlier; prologue, about one-third of extant Aramaic text) and Ankh-sheshonqy (1st century BC or earlier; prologue, nearly one-fifth of total text). On the other hand, by content, the prologue of Solomon I is totally different from the two 1st-millennium works just mentioned. It contains no biographical narrative at all, but instead offers reiterated appeals to the reader (via ‘my son’) to hearken to the instruction offered — as in works throughout the 3rd/2nd millennia BC — in a form reminiscent of the Sumerian versions of Shuruppak (3rd/early 2nd millennia BC). Thus, at the intersection of these two lines of approach, Solomon I may best be regarded as transitional, using the old and persistent tradition of a prologue that bids readers hearken, but at much greater length, comparable with 1st-millennium works. In terms of date, such a transitional role would undoubtedly fit best at the end of the 2nd millennium BC and into the early 1st millennium BC.

The only other possible approach would be to view 1:7-9 as the prologue of Solomon I (a short one, entirely in the 3rd/2nd millennium tradition), and then treat 1:10-9:18 as the first segment of main text (see IV below, on segmented main

³⁸ Two state their aims (Khety son of Duauf; High Priest Amenemhat), but evidently expect to be heeded.

³⁹ Thus, in his sub-title (following after the narrative prologue), Ankh-sheshonqy has just *one* line (IV, 21) asking to be heeded.

texts). However, several factors stand out against this hypothesis. First is the quite restricted content of 1-9 (wisdom; right and wrong in divine view; marriage, love, lust). Second is the presence of particular literary markers already discussed. These include the use of direct personal address, found always in *prologues*. not in main texts, of instructional books, in hearkening contexts. Third, one notes the use of a sub-title at 10:1 and later — but not any earlier (e.g., at 1:10). Hence, the classification of all of 1-9 as title plus prologue remains factually and methodologically by far the preferable one.

IV. Main Texts.

(a) *Overall*. On the basis of their observable structure, the principal classes of main text (i.e., the main body of a work) may be set out as follows,⁴⁰ under three heads, distinguishing between Types A and B under each head.

1. *Unitary, undifferentiated text*. All periods.

Type A: Hardjedef (3; Eg); Shube-awilim (E2;ML); Anc. Writings (L2; Eg); Hori (L2; Eg); Letter-wr. instrs. i-v, Onom. (all L2; Eg); Advice to Prince (1; ML); Solomon II (1; ML); Agur (1; ML); Pap. Louvre D.2414 (1; Eg); Amenoths (1; Eg).

Type B: Ptahhotep (3; Eg); Man for Son (E2; Eg); Amenemhat I (E2; Eg); Shuruppak, Akk. (E2; ML); HP Amenemhat (L2; Eg); Amennakhte (?) (L2; Eg); Counsels of Wisdom (L2; ML); Ahiqar (1; ML); Ankh-sheshonqy (1; Eg).

Total, Group 1: 18 works, plus 6 'educational' (E.i-vi).

2. *Two- or three-sectioned text*. All periods.

Type A: Merikare (3; Eg; x3; no s/t);⁴¹ Sehetepibre (E2; Eg; x2; int); Lemuel (1; ML; x2; no s/t).⁴²

Type B: Khety s. Duauf (E2; Eg; x2; int); (Shuruppak, Sum. cl. vs. (E2; ML; x3; s/t) is equally Group 3); Aniy (L2;

⁴⁰ Abbreviations used in this tabulation are: 3, E2, L2, 1=3rd, early 2nd, later 2nd, 1st, millennia BC respectively; Eg, ML=Egypt, Mesopotamia (&) Levant; x2, x3=number of sections of main text; s/t, int=sub-title(s), titular interjection(s).

⁴¹ The three major sections each have their own theme: (a) political principles, (b) actual political conditions, (c) moral/religious principles.

⁴² The two sections each have a distinct theme: (a) behaviour of kings, (b) ideal wife.

Eg; x2; int); Solomon I (1; ML; x3; s/t x2, int).

Total: Group 2: 6 works, plus one of either this or next group.

3. *Multi-segmented text.* All periods.

Type A: Pap. Insinger and parallels (1; Eg; x25 numbered teachings).

Type B: Shuruppak, Old-Sum. vss. (3; ML; x5/6; s/t x4/5); Shuruppak, classical Sum. vs. (E2; ML; x3; 2 numbered s/t); Amenemope (L2; Eg; x30 numbered 'chapters').

Total, Group 3: 4 works (one, possibly equally is Group 2).

As the foregoing conspectus makes clear, compositions having plain continuous texts (without subdivisions by either cross-headings or in subject-matter) are twice as common (18/24 works, Types A & B equally) as works that articulate their main text into major subdivisions by subject, sub-titles, or both. All three groups of main text occur at all periods as well as in all regions. Thus, it is impossible to posit any unilinear evolution (e.g., plain to sectional to multi-segmented) after the mid-3rd millennium BC; rather, there were three parallel modes of composition.

In undifferentiated texts (Group 1), the writers commonly pass freely back and forth from one subject to another without any special order (except in brief sequences), sometimes choosing to deal with different aspects of a subject at various points, or even occasionally repeating themselves.

In two/three-sectioned texts (Group 2), most writers devote each section to a major theme or interest — so with Merikare, Kheti son of Duauf, Sehetepibre, Lemuel, for example. Others, such as Aniy and Solomon I, mark off sections, but without devoting any of these to one particular topic. Thus, again, varying usages operated in parallel.

In multi-segmented texts (Group 3), usage again diverges. In the earlier periods (Shuruppak, Old & cl. Sum. vss.), the numbered sections each cover a miscellany of topics, whereas in later epochs such numbered divisions frequently cover one topic each (cf. Amenemope, Insinger). Thus, here at least, there may have been a possible development in usage from numbered sections of miscellaneous content to such sections corresponding to precise divisions in subject-matter.

(b) *Detailed formulation of precepts, etc.* In this class of writings, largely poetic in formulation, the smaller constituent

units — lines, verses, stanzas, and so on — show considerable variety in length, type and usage, exhibiting also certain dominant traits.⁴³

(i) *Length.*

1. *One-line units* (single colon, stich(os)): a single sentence of modest length.⁴⁴
2. *Two-line units* (couplet, bicolon, distich): two lines in synonymous, antithetic or synthetic parallelism (conceptual, sometimes verbal), or in 'balanced' phrases.⁴⁵ This is the basic, commonest poetic unit in all of the instructional wisdom-literature.⁴⁶
3. *Three-line units* (tricolon, tristich): three lines making up one conceptual whole, utilising constructions noted under (2) either singly or in combination; a commonly-used unit.⁴⁷
4. *Four-line units* (quatrains): four lines forming a unit of sense, using constructions noted under (2), singly or in combination (as (3)), e.g. twin pairs of lines, alternating pairs of lines, etc.; well-attested.⁴⁸
5. *Five-line units* (pentads): five lines forming one natural unit of concept. This and larger groupings are rare than (1) to (4), but are securely attested nevertheless.⁴⁹
6. *Six-line units*: six lines forming one unit of meaning.⁵⁰
7. *Seven-line units*: of seven lines forming one whole.⁵¹

⁴³ Needless to say, these phenomena are not limited to 'instructional' or to wisdom writings, but appear also in a wide variety of other ancient texts which lie beyond the purview of the present study.

⁴⁴ E.g. Ptahhotep, Shuruppak (Old & cl. Sum. vss.), Amenemope (ch. 9), Ahiqar (113), Pap. Louvre D.2414, Ankh-sheshonqy.

⁴⁵ A 'balanced phrase' couplet is one in which the two lines complete each other to form a conceptual unit, but without any verbal parallelism in the two members beyond an approximate equality or 'balance' in length.

⁴⁶ E.g. Kagemni, Hardjedef, Ptahhotep, Shuruppak (all Sum. vss.), Man for Son, Sehetepibre, Counsels of Prudence, Counsels of Wisdom, High Priest Amenemhat, Amennakhte, Hori, Aniy, Amenemope, Pap. Louvre D.2414, Ankh-sheshonqy, Amenothos.

⁴⁷ E.g. Kagemni, Hardjedef, Ptahhotep, Khety son of Duauf, Man for Son, Sehetepibre, Shuruppak (cl. Sum. vs.), Counsels of Wisdom, Amennakhte, Aniy, Hori, Amenemope (chh. 3, 10), Ahiqar, Pap. Louvre D.2414, Ankh-sheshonqy.

⁴⁸ E.g. Kagemni, Ptahhotep, Shuruppak (all Sum. vss.), Man for Son, Sehetepibre, Shube-awilim, Amennakhte, Hori, Amenemope, Ahiqar, Ankh-sheshonqy.

⁴⁹ Five-line units in (e.g.) Ptahhotep, Shuruppak (cl. S. vs.), Amenemope (ch. 6), Ankh-sheshonqy (col. XXII).

⁵⁰ E.g. Ptahhotep, Shuruppak (cl. S. vs.), Sehetepibre, Amenemope (chh. 4, 6).

⁵¹ E.g. Ptahhotep (§ 38), Shuruppak (cl. S. Vs.).

8. *Larger units*: of eight, ten lines, etc.⁵²

Several facts emerge from study of the data here briefly tabulated.

First, *all* lengths of basic unit (especially one to six line) occur in all areas, and at all periods. Again, from the mid-3rd millennium onwards, there is *no* unilinear development in either Egypt or Mesopotamia, e.g. from 1-line to 2-line and so on. This negative result is equally true in the Levant when data emerge in the 2nd millennium onwards.⁵³ The non-linear parallel existence of formulations is particularly true for the 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-line units.

Second, the two-line unit or couplet (of whatever type) is the dominant favourite in most periods. In Egypt, this is clearly so in the 3rd and early 2nd millennium. The couplet is still the basic 'building block' in the later 2nd millennium (New Kingdom), but by the late 1st millennium it is far less in evidence, in the reiterative, *non*-parallelistic style so popular in the Demotic books (though still traceable there and in the Greek Amenothos). In Mesopotamia, the oldest works (Old-Sum. Shuruppak) give preference to one-line precepts, but from the early 2nd millennium ample use is made of couplets (classical-Sum. Shuruppak), these often being the 'building blocks' to fashion longer paragraphs or pericopes (e.g., in Counsels of Wisdom). Couplets are still employed as late as Ahiqar.

Third, in Egypt, one should note the shift in preference away from poetic parallelism to verbally reiterative forms without use of conceptual and/or poetic parallelism. This trend begins as early as Amenemope (late 2nd millennium) and is dominant in the Demotic works of the late 1st millennium. It is not found in Mesopotamia and the Levant, except insofar as the oldest Sumerian works sometimes have repeated prohibitions (series of negated verbs).

Fourth, the results for the four works in Proverbs. Here, inspection of the text shows that the simple two-line couplet is everywhere dominant. In Solomon I, it is the basic element in the prologue-paragraphs, and is almost invariable throughout

⁵² E.g. Ptahhotep (later vs., § 12, 10 lines, 206-215), Amenemope (chh. 8 (8 lines), 7 (10 lines)); plus works with long, *non-poetic* paragraphs, e.g. Ahiqar (118-124).

⁵³ Shube-awilim, Hittite version; Akkado-Hurrian precepts from Ugarit; then Proverbs and Ahiqar.

the main text, as also in Solomon II and Lemuel. Furthermore, in the predominance of poetic and allied parallelism in their couplets, Solomon I and II hark back to Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Levantine works of the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, and stand in clear contrast to the fuller miniature paragraphs of Ahiqar, and even more so to the series of atomistic single lines that make up the verbal reiterations of the late-1st-millennium Demotic works in Egypt.

(ii) *Variety.*

Attention has already been drawn (preceding section) to the variety of construction exhibited by multi-line units; suffice it to say here that (again) such variety covers all periods and regions, without distinction.

(iii) *Utilization.*

One finds two basic modes of employment of units: *atomistic* (isolated, individual units of whatever length), and the *organic* ('essay' paragraphs, with continuity of topic, built from smaller units).

(A) *Atomistic.* Attested (e.g.) in Kagemni (occasional, last four injunctions); Hardjedef (occasional, and first couplet); possibly Ptahhotep (§§ 29, 36 — lines 421ff., 495ff. each four lines); Khety son of Duauf (second half); Anc. Writings (entirely); Amennakhte, part B (Pap. Chester Beatty IV, verso, 1:1-2:5); Aniy (I, XIX-XXIII, etc.); Pap. Louvre D.2414 and Ankh-sheshonqy (both, *passim*). Cf. also Shuruppak (Old and cl. vss.); Ahiqar (ix-x); Solomon I and II.

(B) *Organic.* Attested (e.g.) in Kagemni (loosely, on discretion, abstemiousness); Hardjedef (ditto, on family, tomb, endowments); Ptahhotep (whole series of 37 paragraphs, long or short, some grouped (2, 3, 4), and long epilogue); Merikare (*passim*); Khety son of Duauf (first half); Man for Son (§§ 4-6, reliability; §§ 7ff., loyalty to crown); Sehetepibre (e.g., first half, loyalty to crown; later part, running estate); Amenemhat I (*passim*); Counsels of Prudence, 'Sagesse inconnue' (discretion; patience; nature of strife); Amennakhte, part A; part B (eulogy of ancient writers; Aniy, Amenemope (*passim*)). Cf. also Shube-awilim, Counsels of Wisdom, Ahiqar (all *passim*); Solomon I (prologue only); Agur (*passim*).

First, we may again note that both ‘atomistic’ and ‘organic’ usages are attested in all regions at all periods — no ‘development’ from the simple ‘atomistic’ units to ‘organic’ essays. Quite the reverse — the abundant paragraphs of Ptahhotep (3rd millennium) excel in their variety, length, and complexity of usage, while the very simplest, nuclear, one-line precepts are to be found with Ankh-sheshonqy at the end of the 1st millennium BC!

Second, ‘organic’ usage and discourses of varying length occur at all periods, but become less evident in the 1st millennium BC. Egypt has such in the 3rd and 2nd millennia, but much less in the 1st. Mesopotamian writers prefer ‘atomistic’ usage in the 3rd millennium, but from the mid-2nd millennium they shift their preference to mini-discourses or paragraphs on particular subjects (e.g., Shube-awilim; Counsels of Wisdom), a habit still retained into the mid-1st millennium (Ahiqar), mixed with ‘atomistic’ use of units. In short, ‘organic’ use of units grouped in paragraphs or discourses is *old* — old in Mesopotamia (2nd millennium), and very old in Egypt (Ptahhotep), becoming a rather vestigial feature in the 1st millennium. Hence its appearing in Solomon I (prologue only) and Agur is certainly not ‘late’, but archaic!

Third, a given unitary work may freely include both ‘atomistic’ and ‘organic’ use of units, again in all regions and at all epochs (cf. the lists under (A), (B), above). Therefore the same mixture in Solomon I, Agur and Lemuel is of no significance whatsoever for determining the unity or otherwise of these works, any more than it is for (e.g.) Kagemni, Khety son of Duauf, Ahiqar, or the like.

(iv) *Repetition.*

A sporadic feature typical of ‘instructional’ works. One may find either total verbal repetition of a phrase or sentence, or else repeated treatment of a subject from varying angles. Thus, Ptahhotep has several sections on officials’ practice of justice (§§ 5, 19, 28, 29), on generosity (§§ 22, 34), and so on — similarly, Ankh-sheshonqy 2000 years later,⁵⁴ and Amennakhte part B (Pap. Chester Beatty IV, vs. 1:5, 10),

⁵⁴ Cf. on this, S. R. K. Glanville, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri, British Museum*, II (1955) xiii, xiii-xiv.

halfway in time between these.⁵⁵ Occasional repetitions in Proverbs, therefore, are of no more significance than in such works as these.

(v) *Verbal reiteration.*

This has been seen from Amenemope (late 2nd millennium) down to especially the late-1st-millennium Demotic works. It is the literal repetition of an initial, medial, or terminal word or phrase through a series of lines, but with different complements each time. This forms a series of discrete precepts linked often in no other respect. This feature can, of course, occur sporadically at much earlier periods.⁵⁶

(vi) *Quotation and allusion.*

By its very nature, wisdom literature is commonly considered as highly 'traditional', drawing upon the experience of earlier ages and sages. Already in the 3rd millennium BC, Ptahhotep sought to instruct his son in the counsels of the ancestors:

"(their) every word is carried forward," because of the goodness of their precepts" (lines 511-514). He quotes (§ 21, ll.325-6) from Hardjedef implicitly.⁵⁷ In his turn, Merikare does likewise,⁵⁸ but adding his own qualifying comment.⁵⁹

Merikare also explicitly mentions a 'Prophecy of the Residence' (line 72) without quoting its wording. In the early 2nd millennium BC, Khety son of Duauf explicitly refers his readers to the end of the *Book of Kemyt*, and quotes from it, in the best modern bibliographical manner. Later in the 2nd millennium, the 'Instruction according to Ancient Writings' proclaims its origins by its very title, while the praise of famous sages (naming Imhotep, Hardjedef, Khety, etc.) features in Pap. Chester Beatty IV (Amennakhte B).

Therefore, when in Solomon I the reader is invited to hear 'words of the wise' equated by its writer with 'my knowledge' (22:17), and also finds the sub-title 'These also are from the wise' (24:23), it is clear that Solomon I here followed long-

⁵⁵ This phenomenon recurs in other classes of literary work, e.g. the 'Prophecy of Neferty' (Posener, *Littérature et politique dans l'Égypte de la XIIe Dynastie* (1956) 40).

⁵⁶ So, in negative imperative, Old-Sumerian Shuruppak; in Sumerian proverb-collections, and in the Egyptian *Lebensmüde* text.

⁵⁷ "If you are a worthy man, found your house(hold) . . .".

⁵⁸ Taking from Hardjedef: "Embellish your house (= tomb) in the Necropolis, make perfect your abode in the West . . .".

⁵⁹ Adding: "as an upright man, one who executes justice".

established precedent in invoking and explicitly utilising the cream of past wisdom which its author could cite (as Ptahhotep did) or adapt (as Merikare did) at need.

(vii) *Epilogues and colophons.*

Often enough, the ancient authors simply stop abruptly and neatly when their task is complete; but some added some kind of epilogue. In the 3rd millennium BC, Kagemni closes with a brief narrative of its acceptance and of its addressee's promotion, while Ptahhotep ends with a very long epilogue on filial obedience and a brief farewell. Closing exhortations of varying length conclude Merikare, Khety son of Duauf and Amenemhat I (all early 2nd millennium). On the later 2nd millennium, Aniy ends with a fourfold correspondence with his son, while Amenemope's 30th chapter is a concluding advertisement for his work. In Mesopotamia, the Old-Sumerian version of Shuruppak ends with an exhortation to pay heed, plus an 'end-title' line, while the classical Sumerian version closes with a typical Sumerian invocation to a deity — in this case, fittingly, to Nisaba, goddess of writing and wisdom. Scribal colophons close some MSS in Egypt (e.g., Ptahhotep, Merikare, Amenemope) and in Mesopotamia (e.g., Shube-awilim). In the constituent books of Proverbs, neither epilogues nor colophons occur; they conform, rather, to the simpler usage of other works of this class (e.g., 'Sagesse inconnue'; Pap. Louvre D.2414; Counsels of a Pessimist, etc.).

V. Authors.

(a) *Nature of the Named Authors.* Of the 30 or 40 'instructional' works known (and excluding merest fragments), all are assigned to named human authors, and certainly to no other kind of author.⁶⁰ In Egypt, all the named authors and recipients of 'instructions' are presented as real people, and in many cases their historical existence is known from first-hand data (e.g., Imhotep, Hardjedef; kings Khety I, Merikare, Amenemhat I; the High Priests Amenemhat and

⁶⁰ Anonymous works in this class are rare (E.9, E.17; M.8, M.11). Anonymity sometimes stems from the very nature of the work itself — e.g., *Man for his Son*, for the use of 'everyman' (n.18, above), or the *Instruction according to Ancient Writings*, an explicit compilation, eclectic, from sundry older sources, not a work of 'creative' authorship.

Ahmoose; the scribes of E.i-iii), or is beyond rational doubt (e.g., Ptahhotep, Khety son of Duauf, Aniy, Amenemope, Hori, Amennakhte, etc.). In Mesopotamia, both Shuruppak with his son Ziusudra and Shube-awilim are more shadowy figures altogether. Ziusudra is otherwise the Sumerian flood-hero and then son of Ubar-tutu, king of the *city* Shuruppak; one is tempted, therefore, to see in the name Shuruppak some kind of sobriquet ('Shuruppakite', *par excellence*) of Ubar-tutu, although this would not reflect normal Sumerian usage. Shube-awilim and his son Zur(?)ranku remain an enigma at present, and may even simply be a reflex of Shuruppak and Ziusudra.⁶¹ On the other hand, Ahiqar's probable historicity is enhanced by his presence as *ummanu* to Esarhaddon as Aba-ninnu-dari 'called Ahuqar' (i.e. Ahiqar).⁶² As for Proverbs, Solomon and Hezekiah are attested elsewhere in the Old Testament, and the latter in Assyrian texts; there is no warrant to regard either as other than historical. Agur and Lemuel remain otherwise unknown.

(b) *Social Standing of Named Authors.* In Egypt, the long series of works begins with viziers and royal princes from the Old into the Middle Kingdom; in the transition from one to the other, three kings appear as authors (Khety I; Merikare's father; Amenemhat I). In the Middle Kingdom, the learned scribe Khety son of Duauf played an important role.⁶³ In the New Kingdom (later 2nd millennium), officials both exalted (HP Amenemhat) and of humbler status (Aniy, Amenemope) appear as wisdom-writers, while by the late 1st millennium such include quite modestly-placed people (e.g., Ankh-sheshonqy). In Mesopotamia, the very limited evidence offers only Shuruppak, an early king, Shube-awilim, a sage, and Ahiqar, a royal councillor. In Proverbs, Solomon, Hezekiah and Lemuel are all kings, as in the relatively early Near-Eastern examples; Agur's status is unknown.

(c) *Role of the Named Authors.* Here, perhaps, we behold two extremes. On the one hand, few may be disposed to grant that

⁶¹ Cf. the remarks by Nougayrol, in *Ugaritica V* (1968) 275-6, 283, 284.

⁶² Cf. J. J. A. van Dijk in H. Lenzen, *Uruk vorläufiger Bericht*, XVIII (1962) 43-52, esp. 45, 51-52 (also J. C. Greenfield, *JAOS* 82 (1962) 293).

⁶³ Author of his own Instruction, of the Book of Kemyt (also educational), and probably of the Hymn to the Nile, besides acting as amanuensis to Amenemhat I (whose Instruction was composed before the co-regency with Sesostri I, hence — 10 years before A.I's death — is not a posthumous work as often claimed).

Shuruppak (alias Ubar-tutu) of 'flood' fame transmitted his instruction to posterity through his son. On the other hand, in Egypt, there can be no doubt that the historical high priest Amenemhat was the real and direct author of the particular instruction that he caused to be inscribed in his tomb-chapel. Between these two extremes, comes the rest of our material. In Mesopotamia, the status of Shube-awilim remains obscure. But in Egypt, it would be generally accepted that such as Khety son of Duauf, Sehetepibre's precursor⁶⁴ (Middle Kingdom), Aniy, Amennakhte, Amenemope, Hori, Amenemope of the Onomasticon, and the instigators of the five 'letter-writing' instructions were all responsible for the works that now bear their names. In the Old Kingdom, no adequate reason has yet been given for doubting the authorship then of (e.g.) Hardjedef, Ptahhotep, and later Merikare, among others.⁶⁵ Thus, in most cases, the named author (certainly in Egypt) should be regarded as the real author or compiler in default of evidence to the contrary. In the Levant, Ahiqar is patently a historical character (cuneiform evidence), and may well have been the originator of the work that now bears his name, in its oldest (Aramaic) form.

In the case of Proverbs, the three named authors and one compiler (Solomon, Agur, Lemuel; Hezekiah) may — on the data so far reviewed — be considered as real human authors, precisely as in Egypt overwhelmingly and as is likely with Ahiqar; none of the supposed biblical authors are figures from some distant primeval age like Shuruppak. Therefore, the attributions of authorship given in Proverbs should be given serious consideration if all other factors favour or permit these attributions, and be dismissed only if contrary factual evidence so dictates.

⁶⁴ Probably Ptah-em-Djehuty of the early 12th Dynasty, *cf.* with all due caution, Posener, *Littérature et politique* . . . (1956) 119.

⁶⁵ As is remarked by H. Brunner in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I/2 (*Ägyptologie: Literatur*, 1952) 96ff., and in his *Grundzüge einer Geschichte der Altägyptischen Literatur* (1966) 11ff. In support of the Old Kingdom date of Ptahhotep, *cf.* the work of G. Fecht, *Der Habgierige und die Maat in der Lehre des Ptahhotep* (1958); the contrary view expressed by Helck, *Wiener Zeitschrift für den Kunde des Morgenlandes* 63/64 (1972) 6-26, rests on the purely negative observations that we do not (yet!) have any literary MSS of Old-Kingdom date, and that 'literature' would not fit the ethos of that period — a subjective opinion lacking all foundation in fact, and contradicted by the literary formulations in biographical and religious texts.

4. *Summary of Literary Results*

I. Summing-up of the Basic Data.

(a) *Entire Compositions*. (i) *EML*.⁶⁶ Two basic types: *A*, title and main text; *B*, title, prologue, main text; sub-titles, etc., optional. (ii) *Prov*. Solomon II, Agur, Lemuel, are all of Type *A*; Solomon I (1-24, entire) is of Type *B*, as one unit.

(b) *Titles*. (i) *EML*. All regions and periods show one basic form: the author is named in the 3rd person, usually with titles/epithets; formulation may be substantival (Egypt; W. Semitic) or verbal (Mesopotamia). Short, medium, long titles occur in all periods and regions; no unilinear development. (ii) *Prov*. Therefore the modestly-long title of Solomon I cannot be treated as needfully any later than the shorter titles of Solomon II, Agur or Lemuel. Elsewhere, far longer titles amply precede it in time.

(c) *Sub-titles*. (i) *EML*. 'Occasional' sub-titles and titular interjections (all lengths) occur at all periods, but are optional. 'Recurrent', numbered cross-headings crop up in the early 2nd, late 2nd, and later 1st millennia BC. (ii) *Prov*. Sub-titles occur only in Solomon I, and only in simplest form, showing clearly their role as sub-headings and not as main titles.

(d) *Direct Personal Address: (I) To sons in titles*. (i) *EML*. In Egypt overwhelmingly, and in Mesopotamia mainly, authors address a son (often named) in their title-lines. (ii) *Prov*. The four works in Proverbs *never* do this.

(II) *To sons in the text*. (i) *EML*. In Egypt, this never occurs; in Mesopotamia and the Levant, it is quite frequent. (ii) *Prov*. Solomon II, Agur and Lemuel stand closer to Egypt, but Solomon I closer to W. Asia. Solomon I also stands midway between Mesopotamian works of the 2nd millennium and Ahiqar of the mid-1st millennium.

(III) *Concerning calls to heed*. (i) *EML*. Calls to pay heed are frequent in prologues (esp. with 'my son', W. Asia only), but *not* in main texts. 'My son(s)' occurs in main texts in *non-hearkening* contexts only. (ii) *Prov*. Closely similar usage obtains.

⁶⁶ *I.e.* Egypt, Mesopotamia, Levant.

(e) *Prologues.* (i) *EML.* All periods and areas. Short and medium prologues occur side-by-side in 3rd and 2nd millennia (no development), while long ones probably begin in late 2nd millennium (Aniy?) and characterize the 1st millennium — possible development here. On content, biographical material occurs early and late; during 2nd millennium, exhortation to pay heed is the main emphasis in prologues. (ii) *Prov.* Solomon I stands on its own, midway between 2nd and 1st millennia: by length, with 1st, on content (calls to heed), with 2nd — it is transitional.

(f) *Main texts.* (I) *Overall.* (i) *EML.* Undifferentiated texts are in a clear majority (two to one) over all types of segmented text; but all types occur in all periods and regions (ii) *Prov.* Solomon II and Agur belong with the undifferentiated majority. Solomon I and Lemuel are 2/3 sectioned texts, former with, latter without sub-titles, etc.

(II) *Detailed formulation.* (i) *EML.* All lengths of basic unit — from 1-line to 7-line and more — occur in all periods and places; no development. The 2-line couplet dominates, in itself or as basis of many 4-line and 6-line units. In later 1st millennium, Egypt sees decline in use of poetic parallelism, couplets, etc. (ii) *Prov.* In all four works, the couplet dominates, in line with earlier usage as opposed to later usage (such as Ahiqar's miniature paragraphing, or Egyptian reiteration).

(g) *Authors.* (i) *EML.* All works are assigned to human authors, almost always named (never to deities, etc.). Earliest Mesopotamian ones, shadowy; later, Ahiqar to be taken seriously. In Egypt, most attributions to the named authors should be treated seriously, i.e. at face value. (iii) *Prov.* Position here potentially is like Egypt — historical figures, to whom the attributions given in text are reasonable in themselves on literary grounds.

II. Results for Proverbs.

Hitherto, we have classified the various literary phenomena actually presented to us by the existing ancient Near-Eastern 'instructional' books throughout their epochs and areas. Now, conversely, we must draw upon that harvest of results to view its application to the four individual works within

Proverbs, and hence to Proverbs itself.

1. *Solomon I (1-24)*.

(a) *Literary Unity*. On the clear comparative evidence of some fifteen other works of the same configuration, Solomon I belongs to Type B — title, prologue, main text — and so constitutes a unitary composition in itself; by its utter brevity, 10:1 was never fitted to be more than a sub-title like such in other works of Type B.

(b) *Features chronologically non-significant*. Some features common to Solomon I and its fellows occur early, late, and throughout, and therefore cannot be used as dating-evidence. Such are:

1. Belonging to Type B (i.e., having a prologue).
2. Use of long title, of sub-titles and titular interjections.
3. Use of direct personal address *per se*.
4. Length, variety and mode of employment of poetic units.

(c) *Features of early date (3rd/2nd millennium BC)*, unknown or tailing-off by the 1st millennium BC. Such are:

1. *Brief* sub-titles (cf. 3rd, early 2nd millennia, Mesopotamia).
2. Use of direct address in prologue (hearkening contexts only).
3. *Content* (exhortative) of prologue, as opposed to its length.
4. Two/three-sectioned main text is relatively early (2nd millennium BC).
5. Dominance of parallelistic couplets in poetic units, including 'organic' usage of units.

(d) *Features of later date (1st millennium BC)*. One has:

1. *Length* of prologue, as opposed to its content.

In short, Solomon I is a literary unit whose literary affiliations are in some measure indicative of date. Those that do so point overwhelmingly (five to one) back towards the 2nd millennium BC. One factor alone speaks for the 1st millennium, i.e. the length of prologue. As this latter feature is an integral part of the book (*not* a secondary feature), the combination of this point with the body of 'early' pointers would suggest strongly a literary date for Solomon I at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. The later the date chosen in the 1st millennium for Solomon I, the less likely is it to be correct in the light of the 2nd-millennium-type features. It is

one thing to compose a work squarely in the mainstream of a long and still live tradition. It is entirely another to cook up a quaintly-artificial antique that would only be an oddity at the time of its production, long after the period of accepted currency of its main features.

Therefore, basing ourselves firmly on the direct, external, independent, comparative evidence now available, we find that the most probable *literary* date of Solomon I is entirely compatible with that of the named author in the title of the work, i.e., king Solomon, of c. 950 BC. This result owes nothing to theology or 'tradition', but rests on the total available comparative data. The role of a king in wisdom-literature is far from unparalleled — witness Khety I, Merikare's father, and Amenemhat I, all a millennium before Solomon — so, as a royal author or patron of 'wisdom', he was hardly precocious. In short, Solomon is *not* hereby mechanically proven to have been the author/compiler of Prov. 1-24, but on strictly external literary grounds, he is entirely the most appropriate candidate.

2. *Solomon II (25-29).*

(a) *Literary Unity.* On the comparative evidence of a dozen other works, Solomon II belongs to Type A — title and main text — i.e., to the simplest type of ancient Near-Eastern instructional work. They are recognised unities; Solomon II need be no different.

(b) *Features chronologically non-significant.* Such are:

1. Belonging to Type A.
2. Use, and medium length, of main title.
3. Use of direct personal address *per se*.
4. Undifferentiated main text.

(c) *Features of chronological interest.* We have:

1. Dominance of parallelistic couplets as basic poetic unit, singly or in combination. An 'early' trait,

Here, we have a work whose physical features prescribe no particular date, except that its use of full parallelistic couplets suggests a date before the second half of the 1st millennium. In this respect, Solomon II looks back to 2nd-millennium usage, and contrasts with the growing formlessness of miniature paragraphs as visible (e.g.) in Ahiqar, and especially in such known late works as Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) and 'Wisdom' in the Apocrypha. In short, echoes of the 2nd,

on into the first half of the 1st millennium are what we find here — within *c.* 1200-600 BC. The attribution in the title is to Solomon (*c.* 950 BC) but recopied by Hezekiah's men (*c.* 700 BC). This would be entirely consistent with the limited external indications on literary grounds. Thus, again, the correctness of the title-line attribution is not proven, but is entirely reasonable on literary grounds. A limited tendency to group entries under themes (e.g., on kingship, agriculture, fools, etc.) might represent part of the contribution of Hezekiah's men, assembling miscellaneous Solomonic material.

3. *Agur (30)*.

(a) *Literary Unity*. This brief work is of Type A, with undifferentiated main text. The latter consists of a series of brief 'organic' paragraphs of from two to five verses, interrupted by 'atomistic' units. No feature occurs that would preclude the unity of the work.

(b) *Features of chronological interest* are few. The climactic use of numerals (e.g., 2-3-4; 3-4 twice) is ancient, going back into the 2nd millennium at Ugarit,⁶⁷ attested also in Akkadian⁶⁸ and Semitic-influenced Egyptian;⁶⁹ it continues well into the 1st millennium (Amos 1:3-2:6; *Ahiqar*).⁷⁰ The use of poetic parallelism is also old, while that of miniature paragraphs comes down into the 1st millennium. In the title, *ham-massā* may indicate 'Agur-son-of-Jakeh, the Massa(ite)', rather than 'the oracle'.⁷¹ Such a region, Massa, is externally attested in the first half of the 1st millennium BC — most probable date, perhaps, for Agur. See also next, under Lemuel.

4. *Lemuel (31)*.

(a) *Literary Unity*. This work also is of Type A. On comparative literary grounds, its extent should be reckoned to include not only verses 1-9 but also verses 10-31. This work would then be of Type A with a two/three-sectioned main text, precisely like Merikare, or Sehetepibre and four further

⁶⁷ Cf. (e.g.) *ANET* 132, (iii), and generally G. Sauer, *Die Sprüche Agurs*, (*BWANT*, 84, 1963) 36-65, *passim*.

⁶⁸ Cf. (e.g.) Sauer, *op. cit.*, 66-68.

⁶⁹ Papyrus Leiden I 343+345, rt. III, 13, vs. 6, [7], in A. Massart, *The Leiden Magical Papyrus I 343+I 345* (Leiden, 1954) 59-60; 13th/12th century BC.

⁷⁰ Cf. (e.g.) Sauer, *op. cit.*, 68-9, and *ANET*, 428, col. vi end.

⁷¹ So D. A. Hubbard, in J. D. Douglas et al., (eds.), *The New Bible Dictionary* (1962) 793 s.v. 'Massa'.

works of Type B. The subject-matter of verses 10-31 ('the good wife') is wholly consistent with the reputed origin of the work (Lemuel's *mother*, not Lemuel himself), both being feminine. Use of two sections of text on two separate subjects (here, royal sobriety; good wife) is a phenomenon amply attested in other works. Conversely, if verses 10-31 be excluded from Lemuel, then (i) the resulting first 'work' of only 9 verses becomes ludicrously brief, and (ii) the supposed second 'work' of vv. 10-31 becomes an isolated poem with no title and falls outside the instructional literary genre altogether. It would then be an anomalously foreign body in Proverbs. Thus, as there is no compelling reason to divide verses 10-31 from 1-9, and there is good external analogy for regarding them as twin parts of one work, the literary unity of vv. 1-31 is at the very least a reasonable hypothesis, and in fact more than that.

(b) *Features of chronological interest* are as limited as in Agur. The use of traditional ancient poetic parallelism in couplets (with some 'balanced' phrases in 1-9) is apparent, suiting any time down into the mid-1st millennium BC. In the title, the phrase *Lemu'el melek massa* should most probably be translated as 'Lemuel, king of Massa',⁷² precisely like 'Solomon (son of David) king of Israel' in Solomon I (Prov. 1:1). A district Massa in N.W. Arabia is externally attested for the early to middle 1st millennium BC in Assyrian texts ranging from Tiglath-pileser III⁷³ to Assurbanipal⁷⁴ (i.e. within c. 745-630 BC). Thus, descended from forbears of the 2nd millennium,⁷⁵ a tribal principedom of Massa seems to have emerged and become established during the first half of the 1st millennium BC on this Assyrian evidence. This general date would sufficiently suit for both Agur and Lemuel; the

⁷² So, with Hubbard, *loc. cit.*, and many others since Hitzig in 1844; cf. Albright, *Studi Orientalistici . . . Levi della Vida*, I (1956) 6 (in a paper (1-14) concerned with Massa and related terms).

⁷³ ANET 283 (:205/240, Mas'a), Luckenbill, *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia* I paras [778], 799; ANET 284 (:1/34, Mas'ai), Luckenbill, *op. cit.*, I, para. 818. Cf. Albright, *loc. cit.*, 3f. and n.5.

⁷⁴ Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, No. 260, studied by Albright, *loc. cit.*, 4-6, and by I. Eph'al, *JAOS* 94 (1974) 115.

⁷⁵ Cf. Massa as one of the descendants of Ishmael in Gen. 25:14 (and 1 Chron. 1:30); contrast Eph'al, *JNES* 35 (1976), 225ff., whose doubts rest on rather negative (therefore, unconvincing) grounds.

proper names appear to reflect old-Arabic nomenclature,⁷⁶ and therefore geographically and linguistically (as well as on literary grounds and general date), they may well indeed have been the real authors/compilers of these two short works.

5. *The Present Book of Proverbs: Literary Result.*

On the basis of the *external* literary measuring-standard of the numerous, well-dated, widely-distributed 'instructional' writings from the biblical world (to which group the four works in Proverbs belong), the following picture emerges.

(a) Solomon I is a well-constructed unitary work (1-24) of the early 1st-millennium BC, of Type B, which could well date from the reign of Solomon, mid-10th century BC. Solomon II (25-29) is a simpler collection of material ascribed in origin to Solomon — which is possible — but arranged and recopied by scribes of Hezekiah, c. 700 BC. Therefore, the earliest date at which the whole of Solomon I and II may have first been copied collectively is from the beginning of the 7th century BC.

(b) Both Agur (30) and Lemuel (31) appear to have a common origin in Massa, to the east of Israel-Judah, on the Arabian desert fringes, where such a people is attested in mid-1st-millennium Assyrian texts. Hence, the overall period of the 10th-6th centuries BC would perhaps cover Agur and Lemuel. The earliest date at which their independent works could have been added to a scroll containing the present Prov. 1-29 is the 7th century BC, but the real date could obviously have been later, and at present must remain unknown.

(c) Hence, a final date — in purely literary terms — for the present book of Proverbs (1-31) would not be earlier than the 7th century BC, and may quite possibly have been some time later — how much later (late monarchy? Post-exilic?) is entirely unknown at present.

5. *Non-literary Factors*

At this point it may very properly be remarked that literary formulation, for all its importance, is not the only angle from which works such as Proverbs must be studied. Therefore, while the literary aspect is necessarily the main concern of this

⁷⁶ Cf. provisionally, Albright, *loc. cit.*, 5-7; Eph'al, *JAOS* 94 (1974) 114 and n.46 (for Agur and Jakeh).

study, it is desirable to deal (however briefly) with the essentials of other factors such as the conceptual and linguistic.⁷⁷

I. Concepts.

Most of the subject-matter in the four constituent works of Proverbs belongs to the down-to-earth affairs of daily life and human relationships, based upon a theological undergirding⁷⁸ that is largely but not solely⁷⁹ implicit. The range of topics covered is that common to most human societies (not least in the biblical world). Such broad topics, therefore, have little or no bearing upon such matters as the origin, date or authorship of any part of Proverbs.

However, one or two less mundane concepts have attracted particular attention. One such is the personification of wisdom in Solomon I (Pr. 1:20-33; 8-9), often treated in the past as indicative of late (i.e., post-exilic) date, or even attributed to Greek influence.⁸⁰ The error of this last point is sufficiently shown up by the ubiquitous attestation of such personifications throughout the biblical Near East in the 3rd, 2nd, and 1st millennia alike, up to 15 centuries before the birth of Solomon, rendering appeal to Greek parallels wholly superfluous.⁸¹

Another is that of 'covenant' (Pr. 2:17). For a century now,⁸² it has been dogma that both word (*berūt*) and concept are alike 'late' (exilic/post-exilic) in Israel, therefore any

⁷⁷ Any fuller treatment must await the work foreshadowed, initial note * above.

⁷⁸ Theological principles of one kind or another are visibly operative in various ancient Near-Eastern 'instructional' books, and can form part of the explicit subject-matter — e.g., Merikare, third text-segment (*ANET* 417:123ff.), or Aniy a millennium later (*ANET* 420, at iii 5; iv, 1; vii, 12), among others. The idea in Old Testament studies that ancient wisdom-literature moved from the secular to the religious plane (or even vice-versa) is a baseless myth.

⁷⁹ As is judiciously set forth by F. D. Kidner, *Proverbs* (Tyndale OT Commentaries, 1964) 31ff.

⁸⁰ Typical are: W. O. E. Oesterley, *Proverbs* (1929) xiii, xxvi; R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the OT* (1941) 659; Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das AT*, (1964) 640, or *The OT, an Intr.* (1965) 473, etc.

⁸¹ A point already made elsewhere; cf. with references, Kitchen, *Tyndale (House) Bulletin* 5/6 (1960) 4-6, and *Ancient Orient & Old Testament*, (1966) 126-7. By the mid-1st millennium, personifications and allegories of wisdom had already reached a stage of subtlety far beyond that of Proverbs; cf. the Saite Instruction (E.22) for an example.

⁸² Dogma laid down by J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (1885), repr. 1957) 417-9 (7th century BC onwards, from Josiah's time).

references to such must likewise be 'late'.⁸³ Again this misconception stands directly refuted by first-hand evidence from at least the 14th/13th centuries onwards, for both word and concept, among Western Semites and non-Semites alike.⁸⁴ Hence, the occurrence in Proverbs 2:17 (10th century or after) has no value as a criterion of date.⁸⁵

II. Linguistic.

(a) *Aramaisms*. Alleged Aramaisms (both true and false) have been adduced in favour of a late date for Proverbs, especially for Solomon I (1-24). In the latter, only four isolated words are usually offered⁸⁶ to support an exilic or later date⁸⁷ for that composition. As has been repeatedly made clear,⁸⁸ Aramaisms *per se* are *not* automatically evidence for 'late' date (i.e., exilic or later). Hence, their mere presence in Proverbs is of itself of no necessary chronological value, particularly as Aramean settlement in and near both Mesopotamia and the Levant grew steadily from c. 1100 BC onwards,⁸⁹ with still earlier beginnings.⁹⁰

Of the four words in Solomon I (*qbl*, *nh̄t*, *r''*, *h̄sd*), the verb *qbl*, 'to accept, receive', is not in the first instance Aramaic at

⁸³ Cf. latterly, L. Perliitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (1969) already criticised by D. J. McCarthy, *Biblica* 53 (1972) 110-121; denial of the proper meaning 'covenant' for *berit* by E. Kautsch, *Verheissung und Gesetz* (BZAW, 131, 1972, revised from papers in ZAW), duly criticised by M. Weinfeld, *Biblica* 56 (1975) 120-128, and by McCarthy, *VTS*, XXIII (1972) 65-85.

⁸⁴ On *El-brt* in Ugarit, cf. E. Lipiński, *Syria* 50 (1973) 50-51, and P. C. Craigie, *Ugarit-Forschungen* 5 (1973) 278-9; *brt* occurs as a West-Semitic loanword in Egyptian in the Nauri Decree of Sethos I, c. 1300 BC, and in the 'Miscellanies' of the later 13th century BC (refs., Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (1954) 55); cf. also Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* (1976) 79-80. See Kitchen, 'Egypt, Ugarit, Qatna and Covenant', *Mélanges Schaeffer* (forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Some commentators have simply related this reference to the marriage bond, e.g. B. Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos* (1963) 26.

⁸⁶ Cf. (e.g.) Eissfeldt, *Einleitung* (1964) 641, or *The OT, an Introduction* (1965) 474.

⁸⁷ "... dass man die Sammlung kaum aus vorexilischer Zeit ('scarcely before the exilic period') herleiten darf", *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Cf. (e.g.) R. Wilson, *A Scientific Investigation of the Old Testament*, (1926, repr. 1959) 112, 126; Kitchen, *Ancient Orient & OT* (1966) 145-6; A. Hurwitz, *IEJ* 18 (1968) 234ff.

⁸⁹ Refs. Kitchen, *op. cit.*, 146, n.28.

⁹⁰ The Syrian toponym 'Aram is clearly attested in an Egyptian topographical list of Amenophis III (c. 1400 BC), cf. E. Edel, *Die Ortsnamenliste aus dem Totentempel Amenophis III* (1966) 28; it probably recurs in "fields of Arameans" at Ugarit, 14th/13th centuries BC (Nougayrol, *Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, III (1955) 148), and again in central Syria in the Egyptian 'Miscellanies', 13th century BC (Pap. Anastasi III, vs. 5, 5; Caminos, *op. cit.*, 109-'Pirem'), often wrongly emended to Amurru.

all (still less, 'late') since it is attested — in a proverb! — in a letter by the Canaanite prince of Shechem in the 14th century BC (Amarna letters).⁹¹ Hence, this verb is initially Common West Semitic of relatively early date, surviving into the 1st millennium. Then, this verb *remains a rarity* both inside and outside the Hebrew Bible until c.500 BC. It occurs once in Prov. 19:20, twice in one verse (2:10) of the virtually undatable Job, — and seemingly nowhere in Old-Aramaic inscriptions.⁹² Thereafter, remarkably enough, this verb is better attested in 5th/4th-century biblical Hebrew (8 times in Ezra, Esther, Chronicles), hardly at all in biblical Aramaic (thrice in Daniel — 2:6; 6:1; 7:18), and most rarely in the great body of Imperial/Standard Aramaic papyri. There, it occurs twice in one passage of the Cowley corpus (No. 37:3), but is totally missing from the Kraeling, Driver and Hermopolis collections. Only three other possible occurrences are booked by Jean/Hoftijzer. Thus, *qbl*, 'to receive', is simply a relatively rare Common-West-Semitic word of relatively early origin, attested sparingly in both Hebrew and Aramaic, and is *not* specifically an Aramaism at all.⁹³

Nht (Pr. 17:10), 'go down', is likewise a Common-West-Semitic word already attested in the later 2nd millennium BC (in Ugaritic).⁹⁴ In biblical Hebrew, it recurs almost only in *poetic* contexts (psalms, prophets), and is simply a 'vestigial' word from the West-Semitic poetic heritage of the later 2nd millennium. But in Aramaic, this word remained in current, everyday use, as shown by its usage both in biblical Aramaic and in the Standard Aramaic of the papyri in prose and prosaic contexts respectively. In short, *nht* continued into both Hebrew and Aramaic, but with differing fields of use in

⁹¹ First pointed out by Albright, *BASOR* 89 (1943) 31, n.16; cf. briefly, Kitchen, *Ancient Orient & OT*, 145.

⁹² No pre-Persian reference occurs, for example, in C. F. Jean & J. Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire des Inscriptions sémitiques de l'ouest* (1965) 248, II, 2, 1/2.

⁹³ Contrast the use of *qbl* in the prepositional construction *l-qbl*, which is abundantly attested in Standard and biblical Aramaic alike, and not at all in Biblical Hebrew; *qbl* the verb and *l-qbl* the preposition are strangely confused in the otherwise valuable study by A. Hurwitz, *HTR* 67 (1974) 21-23. Again, the verb *qbl*, 'to complain', is common in Standard Aramaic, but entirely absent from biblical Hebrew and Aramaic alike. In biblical Hebrew, one finds only the two rare words *qebol* in Ezek. 26:9, and Hiph. pl. participle *maqbilot* in Ex. 26:5, 36:12. The latter probably is linked with the old verb *qbl*, 'receive', but the former perhaps to prepositional *qbl*. Neither recurs outside the Old Testament (e.g. epigraphically).

⁹⁴ Cf. refs. and notes, Kitchen, *Ancient Orient & OT* (1966) 145, n.26.

each case; to call it an Aramaism *tout court* is misleading.

R“ (Pr. 18:24) is a dubious entity. It has been taken⁹⁵ as the Aramaic reflex of Hebrew *רָסַס*, ‘to crush/shatter’; its epigraphic equivalent in Old and Standard Aramaic would then be **rqq*, for **rdd*. However, *r*“ occurs sufficiently frequently in biblical Hebrew (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, Psalms) to be either a relatively early loan from Aramaic, or more likely a by-form, used alongside *r*ס. ⁹⁶ In Old and Standard Aramaic, epigraphic *rqq* is (so far) not satisfactorily attested. The example in Sfiré stela III, 6, is now oftener attributed to *rqh* (reflex of *rsh*),⁹⁷ while the form in *Ahiqar*, 134, is probably from *rwq*, ‘to spit’.⁹⁸ In other words, if *r*“ has been correctly identified in our passage, it is a word fully naturalised in biblical Hebrew from at least the 8th century (and possibly long before), and is actually better attested there than in *any* Aramaic source in pre-Hellenistic times!⁹⁹ But in fact, it is not certain that *r*“ has been correctly identified. In Proverbs 18:24, one might as easily have a *hithpo*‘*lel* form from the denominative verb *r*“ I, ‘to be evil, bad’ — thus, one might read “a man of (too many) acquaintances will make trouble for himself”; other interpretations are not lacking.¹⁰⁰ In such a case, the question of an Aramaic origin would simply vanish.

Hsd (Pr. 14:34), ‘reproach’, is a totally unsatisfactory case, on existing evidence. This much-trumpeted ‘Aramaism’ is totally lacking from all known Aramaic texts (Old or Standard) of the pre-Hellenistic period, including biblical Aramaic, and in fact from all external sources whatsoever in the pre-Hellenistic era.¹⁰¹ In short, it is merely a rare West-Semitic term, specific to neither Hebrew nor Aramaic until Graeco-Roman times, when it then became current in later

⁹⁵ Cf. Brown, Briggs and Driver, *Lexicon*, 949b, II *r*“.

⁹⁶ Some would also find *r*“ in epigraphic Hebrew, e.g. in the Lachish ostraca (c.590 BC), cf. Jean & Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire* . . . , 281:*r*“.

⁹⁷ Cf. Jean & Hoftijzer, *op. cit.*, 282:*rqy* II; J. M. Fitzmyer, *The Aramaic Inscriptions of Sefire* (1967) 109f.; J. C. L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 2 (1975) 53:6. In *Ancient Orient & OT* (1966) 145 and n.27, I had earlier followed Dupont-Sommer’s view that *rqq* was involved.

⁹⁸ Cf. Jean & Hoftijzer, *Dictionnaire* . . . , 276:*rwq*.

⁹⁹ Even in biblical Aramaic, it occurs but twice in a single verse (Dan. 2:40)!

¹⁰⁰ As (e.g.) RSV, following Toy in Brown, Briggs, Driver, *Lexicon*, 945b end, emending as from *r*“.

¹⁰¹ Within biblical Hebrew, the noun and verb occur but once each, in Lv. 20:17 and Pr. 25:10 respectively.

Aramaic dialects (so late as to be irrelevant to previous periods).

From these pseudo-Aramaisms, one may turn to better-grounded examples: *bar*, 'son', and *melakîn*, 'kings', in Proverbs 31:2, 3. Significantly, both cases belong to one of the works from Massa — that of Lemuel — from a desert-fringe country in which Aramaic linguistic influence was likely to have been strong (cf. *n*-plurals in Moabite). Needless to say, the dating-value of these two forms is *nil*, as *bar* is known epigraphically from the 9th century BC, and *n*-plurals from the early 8th century onwards, and obviously they were not then mere novelties.¹⁰² In short, Aramaisms are clearly a false trail in attempting to date any part of Proverbs.

(b) *Other supposed loans.* The word *'etûn*, 'yarn' (Pr. 7:16) is otherwise unattested. So far from being Greek *othone*, the contextual connection with Egypt has suggested a derivation from Egyptian *'idmy*, 'linen',¹⁰³ to mention no others. No indication of dating can be gained here.

(c) *N.W. Semitic background.* In that same passage (7:16), *marbaddîm*, 'coverlets', is a word of undoubted antiquity in N.W. Semitic, being clearly attested in Ugaritic in the 14th/13th centuries BC.¹⁰⁴ In the realm of going surety, *'arrabon*, 'pledge', likewise goes back to Ugaritic and the late 2nd millennium,¹⁰⁵ while the ancestry of *'arubbâ*, also 'pledge', can be traced back to Old-Assyrian *erubbâtum*,¹⁰⁶ a millennium before even Solomon. Idioms such as offerings or vows being 'upon' (=due from) someone, using *'l* (Pr. 7:14),¹⁰⁷ likewise go back to the 2nd millennium, as illustrated

¹⁰² *Br.* in *Br-Hdd*, the Melqart stela, Gibson, *op. cit.*, 1, 3; *n*-plurals in Zakir and Sfiré stela, *ibid.*, 8/9ff., 28/29ff.

¹⁰³ Ermân & Grapow, *Wörterbuch der Aegyptischen Sprache*, I, 153:14-18; cf. T. O. Lambdin, *JAOS* 73 (1953) 147, who still attempted to make the Hebrew word dependent on a Greek loan from Egypt — needlessly, as the word could pass more directly from Egyptian into neighbouring Late Canaanite/Phoenician, and thence separately into Hebrew and (later) into Greek.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, III (1965) 482:2300 (Viroilleaud, *Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, II (1957) 145, No. 111:11, and *ib.*, V (1965) 65, No. 50:9).

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Ug. *'(u)r(u)banu*, Viroilleaud, *op. cit.*, II, 188f., No. 161:17 (cf. Nougayrol, *op. cit.*, III, 220 (re. 37), 306); also use of *'rb-b* in Viroilleaud, V, 152, 'rb II, refs.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, Vol. 4/E (1958) 327; W. von Soden, *Akkadische Handwörterbuch*, I/3 (1960) 248, for refs.

¹⁰⁷ Already noted by Brown, Briggs, Driver, *Lexicon*, 753, 1c.

by Ugaritic account-tablets.¹⁰⁸ In short, the ordinary vocabulary of Proverbs (not least Solomon I, 1-24) stems from the common heritage of (N) West Semitic of the 2nd millennium BC,¹⁰⁹ which persisted into the 1st-millennium dialects that we call Hebrew, Phoenician, Aramaic and the rest.

Thus, neither in the field of concepts nor in that of linguistic features is there to be found any definite indication for the dating of any part of Proverbs during the period from 1000 BC onwards.

III. Results for conventional hypotheses.

From the total evidence of all the data discussed, it should be clear that the views of conventional Old Testament scholarship on the supposed history of the book of Proverbs receive no support whatsoever from the wider range of factual information now available, be it literary, linguistic, conceptual or other. In fact, rather the contrary obtains. In the literary realm, the theory of separate origins and dates for Prov. 1-9 and 10-24 is refuted by the direct comparative testimony of some 15 works of all periods, while the supposed 'late' linguistic and conceptual evidence on dating turns out to be fallacious — again, set aside by well-dated external reference-material. When one probes further into reasons offered by conventional scholarship in support of 'accepted' views, the results can be surprising to say the least: not only mistaken, but occasionally hilariously comic. Thus, half a century ago, so sober a commentator as Oesterley¹¹⁰ could not conceive why Solomon should be so precisely defined ('son of David'; 'king of Israel') in the title-lines of Proverbs (1:1ff.), except to suppose that his theoretical late editor wished thereby to identify Solomon to Hellenistic readers! The closely-similar title-lines of most ancient 'instructional' works cited in the present paper were already available to scholars even 50 years ago — but, seemingly, Oesterley never thought to enquire what ancient usage actually *was*, in framing titles for works like those in Proverbs. Equally quaint and fanciful is

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Virolleaud, *Palais Royal d'Ugarit*, II, 130, No. 103.

¹⁰⁹ Which in some measure ultimately reaches back into the 3rd millennium BC, as the new data from Ebla now tend to show; cf. Kitchen, *The Bible in its World* (1977) ch. III.

¹¹⁰ *Proverbs*, 1929, xxvii.

(e.g.) the view of Toy,¹¹¹ that advice on sexual morality in Prov. 1-9 reflected the onset of vice in the growing city life of post-exilic Judea in contrast to earlier periods! Unfortunately for this rather innocent view of antiquity (redolent of rustic idylls?), lust can be documented for most periods and places in human history, including the Near East long before the Persian period. And any Palestinian archaeologist could confirm that the density of settlement in the Persian sub-province of Judea was below that of the united/divided monarchy periods — it was scarcely teeming with metropolitan life. Scholarship that operates on the basis of this class of speculation can hardly be expected to retain serious credibility.

6. *Upon the Nature of Factual Evidence*

One final issue remains to be stressed in conclusion. The methods and findings of this study differ not merely in degree but in kind from the procedures so commonly found in Old Testament scholarship. In the latter, *Formgeschichte* is predominantly a theoretical exercise and largely myopic. Hebrew books are rarely considered as wholes, or in terms of the larger units, but instead attention is concentrated on the differentiation of very small units of various types, whose evolution and agglomeration are alike set out upon theoretical grounds. Cultural contexts (“Sitz im Leben”) are invented at will. No attempt is made to establish a true literary history of genres anchored in a firm frame of factual evidence.

The materials that form the indispensable basis for this study were unknown to modern man 200 or even 150 years ago. Like other Old Testament books, Proverbs stood alone, a contextless entity from a vanished ancient world. Since then, several thousand years of ancient Near Eastern culture have emerged in great detail, including the literatures. Restored to that context, the four works in Proverbs resume their rightful place as part of a large and distinctive family of ‘instructional’ wisdom books. They are the specifically Hebrew contribution to that large circle. Thus, from literary and other technical vantage-points, it is no longer possible to pursue truly critical study of Proverbs without submitting

¹¹¹ Toy, *Proverbs* (ICC, 1899) xxii.

oneself to the external context, and still claim to be in any sense 'scientific'. The old-style guessing games must be given up for good; the comparative materials yielded up by the ancient Near East are here to stay, and cannot be accepted or dismissed at a whim — they are here for all time.

Excursus I: Examples of Titles and Sub-titles

(a) 'Short', 'Medium' and 'Long' Titles.

(1) *Short*: "Beginning of the Instruction made by
a Man for his Son.

He says: . . ." (E.9)

(2) *Medium*: "[Beginning of the letter-writing Instruction
made by the Treasury-Scribe *Qagabu*
for his apprentice the Scribe *Inena*, Year 1, 4th month
of Summer, Day 15.

[He says:] . . ." (E.i)

(3) *Long*: "Beginning of the Instruction for Life,
of Training for Well-being,

All the rules for mixing with the grandees,
the procedure of the courtiers:—

— (to) be able to counter the accusation of him who
utters it,

— to return a report to him who sends one,

(. . . *two more couplets* . . .) — made by

(*19 titles and epithets*), *Amenemope* son of *Kanakht*

(. . . etc.), (for) his son (*10 titles and epithets*),

Horemakheru by his proper name (*2 epithets*).

He says: . . ." (E.21)

(b) *Sub-titles and cross-headings*.

(1) Titular interjection, *Khety* son of *Duauf* (E.7):

"Let me/I shall tell you of further matters,
to teach you (what) you should know . . .".

(2) Titular interjections, *Aniy* (E.18):

(i) "[See, I tell you these] excellent 'things', which should
weigh with you;

do them, desire them, and all evil shall be far from you"
([I]-II, 1).

(ii) "See, I tell you these excellent things, which should
weigh with you;

do them, it will go well with you, and all evil shall be far
from you" (V, 4-5).

Excursus II: 'Instructional' Wisdom-books

This list is not a bibliography, but a simple *vade-mecum* to give quick access (so far as possible) to versions, etc., of the group of texts considered in the foregoing paper.¹¹²

A. Egypt (E)

Third Millennium BC

1. *Imhotep*. Text not yet recovered; mentions, see *ANET*, pp. 432a, 467a, cf. G. Posener, *RdE* 6 (1949) 31, No. 1, and H. Brünner, *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, I:2 (1952) 96-97:a.

2. [*Kairos?*] for *Kagemni*. Only end of text survives; transl., refs., Simpson in *LAE*, 177-9, and Lichtheim, *AEL*, I, 59-61.

3. *Hardjedef*. Text very incomplete; recent transl., Simpson, *LAE*,² 340, Lichtheim. *AEL*, I, 58-9.

4. *Ptahhotep*. Complete. Edition, Z. Žába, *Les maximes de Ptahhotep* (1956); transl., refs., Faulkner, *LAE*, 159-176, Lichtheim, *AEL*, I, 61-80.

5. *Khety I*. Text not yet recovered; for a mention, cf. Posener, *RdE* 6 (1949) 33, No. 9.

6. [*King X*] for *Merykare*. Text largely complete; transl., Faulkner, *LAE*, 180-192, Lichtheim, *AEL*, I, 97-109. Recent edition, W. Helck, *Die Lehre für König Merikare*, Wiesbaden 1977.

Early 2nd Millennium BC

7. *Khety son of Duauf* (or, 'Dua-Khety'). Complete; transl., *LAE*², 329-336, and *AEL*, I, 184-192; recent edition, W. Helck, *Die Lehre des Dw3-Htjj*, I-II, (1970).

8. "*Sehetepibre*" (*Ptah-em-Djehuty?*). Incomplete. Edition, see G. Posener, *L'enseignement loyaliste, Sagesse égyptienne du Moyen Empire* (1976); only extracts in *LAE*, 198-200, and *AEL*, I, 126, 128 (*Sehetepibre's* stela).

9. *Man for his Son*. Incomplete; text, transl., Kitchen, *Oriens Antiquus* 8 (1969) 189-208, cf. *LAE*², 337-9. Includes 11 and 12, according to Posener.

¹¹² Abbreviations used:

AEL — M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, I-II (1973-6).

BWL — W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (1960).

LAE — W. K. Simpson, R. O. Faulkner, E. F. Wente, *The Literature of Ancient Egypt* (1972, ²1973).

RdE — *Revue d'Égyptologie*.

For textual criticism of E.4, 6, 7, 9, 10, see G. Burkard, *Textkritische Untersuchungen zu Ägyptischen Weisheitslehren des Alten und Mittleren Reiches*, Wiesbaden, 1977.

10. *Amenemhat I*. Complete. Transls., *LAE*, 193-7 and *AEL*, I, 135-9; recent edition, Helck, *Der Text der "Lehre Amenemhats I für seinen Sohn"* (1969).
11. *Counsels of Prudence*. One fragment only. Text, transl., Kitchen, *Oriens Antiquus* 9 (1970) 203-210. (Part of 9, *q. v.*)
12. "*Sagesse inconnue*". End of text only; text, transl., Posener, *RdE* 7 (1950) 71-84. (Part of 9, *q. v.*)
13. *Ashmolean Writing Board*. One fragment; text, transl., J. W. B. Barns, *JEA* 54 (1968) 71-76.
14. *Amherst Fragment*. Small fragment; cf. Posener, *RdE* 6 (1949) 39, No. 32, on Pap. Amherst III.
Later 2nd Millennium BC
15. *High Priest of Amun, Amenemhat*. Incomplete. Text, transl., A. H. Gardiner, *Zeitschrift für Ägyptische Sprache* 47 (1910) 87-99; text also in Helck, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Heft 18 (1956) 1408-11, with transl., *Urkunden . . . Deutsch* (1961) 82-3.
16. *High Priest of Amun, Ahmose*. Unpublished, incomplete; cf. Helck, in O. Firchow (ed.), *Ägyptologische Studien (FS Grapow)* (1955) 110.
17. *According to Ancient Writings*. Small fragments. Title, etc., Posener, *RdE* 6 (1949) 42, No. 54, to which add: Ostrakon Petrie 11 (transl., Gardiner, *Wiener Zeitschrift für den Kunde des Morgenlandes* 54 (1957) 43-45), Ostr. Turin 6391 (Posener, *RdE* 8 (1951) 184-5, and *RdE* 10 (1955) 72, n.1), plus other fragments.
18. *Aniy*. Largely complete, except near beginning. No complete modern version; most of it, in *AEL*, II, 135-146.
19. *Amennakhte*. Incomplete. 'Part A', text, transl., Posener, *RdE* 10 (1955) 61-72; 'Part B' may be the praise of sages, Pap. Chester Beatty IV — transl., *LAE*,² 341-2, *AEL*, II 176-8.
20. *Hori*. Brief text; Ostr. Gardiner 2 (Černý & Gardiner, *Hieratic Ostraca* I (1957) pl. 6:1); no translation.
21. *Amenemope*. Complete. Transls., *LAE*, 241-265, and *AEL*, II 146-163; excerpts only by Wilson, *ANET*, 421-4 (as of other works).
- i-v. Five 'letter-writing Instructions: (i) of Qagabu, (ii) for Pentaweret, (iii) of Nebmare-nakht (all transl., R. A. Caminos, *Late-Egyptian Miscellanies* (1954) 125ff., 303ff., 373ff.); (iv) of Piay, title-lines and part of text, hierogl. eds.

only; part-parallel, Pap. Lansing 8:8ff. (Caminos, *op. cit.*, 400ff); (v) of Setekhmose, title-line, in hierogl. only, W. Spiegelberg, *Hieratische Ostraka* (1898) pl. 1:4.

vi. *Onomasticon of Amenemope*. Complete. Full edition, Sir A. H. Gardiner, *Ancient Egyptian Onomastica*, I-III (1947); its long title, see Vol. I, pp. 1*-3*.

First Millennium BC

22. *The Saite Instruction*. Much is lost; unpublished; cf. Posener and J. S. F. Garnot, in *Les sagesses du Proche-orient ancien* (1963) 153-7.

23. *Ankh-sheshonqy*. Largely complete (beginning lost). Full edition, S. R. K. Glanville, *Catalogue of Demotic Papyri in the British Museum*, II (1955); for some further refs., cf. B. Gemser, *VTS*, VII (1960) 105.

24. *Chief of the D1* — Pap. Louvre D.2414. Edited by A. Volten, in *Studi in Memoria di Ippolito Rosellini*, II (1955) 271-280.

25. *Papyrus Insinger and Parallels*. Largely complete. Cf. Volten, *Das Demotische Weisheitsbuch: Studien und Bearbeitung, Analecta Aegyptiaca II* (1941) German transl. and earlier refs.

26. *Amenothès son of Hapu*. Fragment in Greek. Greek text, Wilcken, in *Aegyptiaca (FS. Ebers)*, (1897) 142-152. (Other various fragments are here omitted.)

B. Mesopotamia and the Levant (M,L)

Third Millennium BC

1a/b. *Shuruppak* (Old-Sumerian versions). Incomplete, from Tell Abu Salabikh (AS) and Adab. See next entry.

Early 2nd Millennium BC

1c. *Shuruppak* (classical Sumerian version). Largely complete. Full edition, transl., B. Alster, *The Instructions of Shuruppak* (1974) and cf. Alster, *Studies in Sumerian Proverbs* (1975).

2. *Shuruppak* (Akkadian version). Initial fragment only. Edited with transl., W. G. Lambert, *BWL*, 92-95; transliteration only in Alster, *Instructions . . .*, pp. 121-2.

3. *Sumerian precepts*. Edited in part, J. J. A. van Dijk, *La sagesse suméro-accadienne* (1953) 102-7 (but omit TRS 93, which belongs to Shuruppak); cf. on sources, E. I. Gordon,

Bibliotheca Orientalis 17 (1960) 148:A.2, and nn. 246-7.

4. *Sumero-Akkadian precepts* (bilingual). Sources, cf. Gordon, *op. cit.*, 148:B.1, and n. 248; not edited.

Later 2nd Millennium BC

5a. *Shube-awilim* (Akkadian version). Incomplete. Edited, J. Nougayrol, in C. F. A. Schaeffer (ed.), *Ugaritica V* (1963) 273-290, No. 163.

5b. *Shube-awilim* (Hittite version). Very incomplete. Edited by E. Laroche, in Schaeffer, *op. cit.*, 779-784.

6. *Akkado-Hurrian precepts* (bilingual). Excerpt only. Edited, Nougayrol and Laroche, *Palais Royal D'Ugarit*, III (1965) 311-324; English transl. of Akk. section, Lambert, *BWL*, 116.

7. *Counsels of Wisdom* (Akkadian). Not complete; edition, Lambert, *BWL*, 96-107.

8. *Counsels of a Pessimist* (Akkadian). Excerpt from a longer work? Edited, Lambert, *BWL*, 107-9.

9. *Akkadian precepts*. Sundry fragments. Cf. (e.g.) Lambert, *BWL*, 117, and E. Reiner, *JNES* 26 (1967) 183.
First Millennium BC

(10a/b/c/d. *Proverbs* 1-24; 25-29; 30, 31 (Hebrew). Hebrew Bible, English Old Testament, numerous versions available.)

11. *Advice to a Prince* (Akkadian). Complete; edited, Lambert, *BWL*, 110-5.

12. *Ahiqar* (Aramaic). Incomplete. Edited, E. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka aus Elephantine* (1911) 147-182, pls. 40-50, and A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century BC* (1923) 204-228. Recent transl., H. Ginsberg in *ANET*, 427-430 (long extracts only), and P. Grelot, *Documents araméens d'Égypte* (1972) 432-452.