

JOSEPH L. JUSTISS

Scribal Change
and Strategic Sequencing
in the Hebrew Source
of G Proverbs

Forschungen
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe
168

Mohr Siebeck

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2. Reihe

Herausgegeben von

Corinna Körting (Hamburg) · Konrad Schmid (Zürich)
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To Ronnie Smith (1980–2013)
who opened his pockets to support my schooling.

To my wife, Laura,
who opened her magnanimous, sacrificial, and patient heart to enable and endure it.

To my children, Reagan and Piper,
whose childhoods were altered in the pursuit of it.

כי ברב חכמה רב כעס ויוסיף דעת יוסיף מכאוב

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List of Abbreviations

A	Codex Alexandrinus (5 th Century)
AA	Alphabetic Acrostic
AC	Alphabetic Composition
B	Codex Vaticanus (4 th Century)
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>BHQ</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i>
<i>BrillDAG</i>	Franco Montanari, <i>The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek</i> , 2nd printing with corrections. (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CAL	The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon
<i>DCH</i>	David J.A. Clines et al., eds., <i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> , 8 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993).
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
G Proverbs	The ancient Greek translation of Proverbs
<i>GKC</i>	Wilhelm Gesenius, <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> , ed. E. Kautzsch, trans. A.E. Cowley, 28th ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909).
GVor	G's <i>Vorlage</i> (The Source Text of G Proverbs)
<i>HALOT</i>	Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , 5 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2000).
HB	Hebrew Bible
HBCE	Hebrew Bible Critical Edition
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IW	Industrious Wife (The Female Figure of Proverbs 31:10–31)
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
L	The Leningrad Codex
<i>LSJ</i>	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
MA	Message Acrostic
M Proverbs	The Book of Proverbs in the Masoretic Tradition
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament

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Scribal Change and Strategic Sequencing

OG	The Old Greek reading (The Presumed Pre-Hexaplaric Text Form)
Ra	Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., <i>Septuaginta: Id Est Vetus Testamentum Graeca Iuxta LXX Interpretes</i> , rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).
S	Codex Sinaiticus (4 th Century)
S Proverbs	The Peshitta of Proverbs
TC	<i>TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism</i>
T Proverbs	The Targum of Proverbs
V	Codex Venetus (8 th century)
V Proverbs	The Vulgate of Proverbs
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WA	The Words of Agur Text-Block (Proverbs 30:1–33)
WW	The Words of the Wise Text-Block (Proverbs 22:17–24:22)
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

Introduction

1. Background and Research Problem

Certainty concerning the compositional processes and textual development of individual books of the Hebrew Bible (HB) is notoriously elusive. Most books in the HB are anonymous (e.g., Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Ruth, Psalms, Job, etc.), their sources varied and interwoven, and their dates of composition debated. Furthermore, explicit statements like those found in Jer 36 detailing the mechanics of composition are few; and even what seem like authorial attributions in superscriptions like Prov 1:1 and Song of Songs 1:1 are widely seen as something other than strict authorial attributions in a modern sense.¹

The issues of (1) how biblical books were composed and (2) what forms they might have taken over time are further complicated when the ancient Greek translation, often our oldest witness to the existence of a biblical book, comes to us with large-scale differences in the arrangement of text-blocks vis-à-vis our main Hebrew witnesses to a biblical book, be they ancient (e.g., the Judean desert manuscripts) or Medieval (e.g., Masoretic manuscripts).²

The ancient Greek translation of Proverbs (henceforth G Proverbs) is one such case. Therefore, its compositional history presents a key area of debate.³ G Proverbs is famous for the large-scale order differences in two text-blocks (30:1–14 and 30:15–31:9) in contrast with the Masoretic form of the book (henceforth M Proverbs) as represented in the Leningrad Codex (B19).⁴ What

¹ See Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (The Anchor Yale Bible 18A. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 56–58, for a discussion of how the superscription of authorial attribution in Prov 1:1 has been variously interpreted.

² See Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), 286–305. Tov helpfully presents the “literary (editorial) variants” between G and M in Jeremiah, Joshua, Ezekiel, 1 Samuel, and Proverbs. Tov thinks the differences between G and M in these books attest to “different stages in the literary development of the books...[and] these stages may be named editions [284].”

³ See James K. Aitken and Lorenzo Cuppi, “Proverbs,” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (ed. James K. Aitken; London: Bloomsbury, 2015), for a summary of the general characteristics and research challenges of G Proverbs.

⁴ All verse numbers in this dissertation are according to M’s numbering unless otherwise noted. For instance, when I refer to G Prov 30:1–14, I mean the location of this text-block in G

or who caused the two variant sequences of text-blocks? When did the differences arise? What motivated the variant arrangements? Did two Hebrew recensions exist in antiquity? Is G Proverbs' arrangement of material to be ascribed to G's translator who moved material in his source? Is the order difference a result of mechanical accident in transmission? Unfortunately, the translator's often periphrastic and expansionistic approach to his source text at a micro-level makes it difficult to know if any given variant between G and M at a macro-level is to be attributed to the translator's source text (recensional) or to the translator (translational).⁵

Scholars have given different answers to these questions. Emanuel Tov has argued that the translator worked from a Hebrew version of Proverbs that differed recensionally from M, with the large-scale arrangement differences already present in his source text.⁶ He provides examples of pluses in G at the verse level which witness to a different *Vorlage* because these pluses have parallels in other biblical books or are repeated from other places in Proverbs where the Greek is rendered differently in each instance.⁷ This works against a theory that would contend that these pluses and repetitions occurred on the inner-Greek level since one would expect more uniformity in the Greek of the parallel passages if the translator or a later Greek scribe had been responsible for the pluses. Rather, the examples of pluses in G vis-à-vis M which Tov cites in which G translated the same Hebrew clause slightly differently in each instance (see Prov 3:8 and 3:22a) strongly suggests that "the discrepancies between the two texts most likely derived from different translations of the same Hebrew text."⁸ Next, Tov provides examples of transpositions of verses

which follows on 24:22e in most manuscripts of G. *Ra* makes it easy to appreciate the variant order of these text-blocks because it honors the order of textual material in G while maintaining the verse numbers of M. See Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: Id Est Vetus Testamentum Graeca Iuxta LXX Interpretes* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

⁵ The text-critical value of G Proverbs is sometimes downplayed because scholars in my view have often overstated the translator's "freedom." I agree with Fox's verse-by-verse text-critical approach who notes that the translator is "flexible" rather than "free," meaning that he could make use of a variety of techniques from close mimetic mapping of source text elements onto the Greek translation in one verse to opting for a "broad mapping in [another] verse, grasping the meaning of a Hebrew proverb in a Greek sentence that does not align neatly with the components of the source." He then rightly maintains that one must proceed *verse by verse* [emphasis mine] to note how closely or broadly the translator maps the source text onto the target text. Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary* (Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 39–40. In chapter 2 on methodology, I will discuss the way I make use of Fox's controls for spotting real variants in a translation like G Proverbs.

⁶ Emanuel Tov, "Recensional Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (Boston: Brill, 1999), 459–82.

⁷ Tov, "Recensional Differences," 421–24.

⁸ Tov, "Recensional Differences," 425.

and groups of verses in several chapters which come from the sections of Proverbs which contain rather loose collections of Proverbs noting that, “two different editorial traditions could have existed concerning their sequence.”⁹ Finally, after describing the large-scale arrangement differences in the final third of the book, Tov argues that neither order should be preferred and “the connection between the sections is such that both can be equally correct.”¹⁰ In chapters 4 and 6, I intend to explore literary strategies motivating the alternative juxtaposition of text-blocks to demonstrate that the sequencing of text-blocks impacts meaning.

Johann Cook contends that the difference in sequence toward the end of the book should be attributed to G’s translator which was motivated by a “fundamentally conservative Jewish religious attitude” which led to “the deliberate removal of the names of other authors than Solomon as creators of the Proverbs.”¹¹ Cook then proceeds to make a case that thematic considerations motivated the rearrangement of these final chapters. For example, G’s translator identified the theme of “God and king” in Proverbs 24:21 and inserted Proverbs 30:1–14 immediately following this section in Proverbs 24 because Proverbs 30:1–14 also concentrates on the “God” theme.¹² He admits that this example of thematic correspondence between segments of text is not as obvious as other examples he gives concerning the motivation for rearranging elements in Proverbs 31 and then proceeds to argue that the themes addressed in the second half of Proverbs 30:1–14 concerning the “wicked progeny” (ἔκγονον κακόν) more clearly contrasts with the descriptions of the wise found in the second half of Proverbs 24.¹³ Thus, Cook builds a case for deliberate rearrangement of Proverbs 30:1–14 by the translator on the grounds that it is a large-scale example of the translator’s tendency to explain and interpret, in this case by means of the juxtaposition of text-blocks based on similar or contrastive themes. I intend to show in chapters 3 and 4 that Cook is correct to look for literary and hermeneutical motivations for the variant text order in G. However, I provide evidence that a recensional explanation for the differences in arrangement better explains all the text-critical, editorial, and composition critical data. In other words, a scribal scholar working in Hebrew

⁹ Tov, “Recensional Differences,” 427.

¹⁰ Tov, “Recensional Differences,” 429. Tov also notes many instances where G Proverbs is shorter than M and asserts that, “The number of these examples is too large to assume a scribal phenomenon (*parablepsis*).” Tov, “Recensional Differences,” 431.

¹¹ Johann Cook, “The Greek of Proverbs,” in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom M. Paul, Robert A. Kraft, Lawrence H. Schiffman, and Weston W. Fields; *VT Supplements* 94; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 605–18, at 607–8.

¹² Cook, “The Greek,” 612–14.

¹³ Cook, “The Greek,” 614.

better explains what is going on at the seams of the juxtaposed units in question.

Michael V. Fox agrees with Cook that G's translator has deliberately eliminated any reference to authors other than Solomon in passages like 30:1.¹⁴ However, he remains unconvinced that the thematic contrastive motivation can explain the large-scale dislocations of text, seeing the literary gains as "too trivial."¹⁵ Fox explains his view as to what created the dislocation of two large blocks of text:

In G-Proverbs, there are in fact only two large blocks of text differently located: 30:1–14 (15 verses) and 30:15–31:9 (28 verses). It is likely that the Septuagint's order resulted from accidental displacement of these blocks...Possibly a copyist in Greek or Hebrew skipped over major blocks (perhaps by rolling up his scroll then reopening too far along), after which he returned to incorporate the skipped material. In any case, the different large-scale ordering seen in G-Proverbs has no inherent connection to the translator's other changes and shows no signs of being the translator's doing.¹⁶

Fox's mechanical accident explanation is hard to imagine. Let us outline what Fox maintains might have taken place. First, the copyist copies up to Proverbs 24:22 and rolled up his scroll for a break. Next, he returned to the copying task and unrolled *five and a half* chapters of text too far and copied only Prov 30:1–14 – a major oversight indeed! After realizing this mistake, he copies the remaining verses from chapter 24 (vv. 23–34) and presumably pauses again only to return later and unroll way too far again to copy 30:15–31:9. This attempt by Fox to make the large-scale differences the result of pure accident rather than the result of some kind of scribal strategy is hard to imagine. Indeed, both orders have a strategy, as Tov and Cook try to explain, even if one strategy (either M's or G's) is not necessarily to be preferred over the other. Discerning the cause of the variant sequences and the strategy bringing these textual units together are the primary concerns of this study.

The above brief survey of the major views as to the cause of the variant orders makes clear our problem: we lack consensus as to (1) who created the text form of Proverbs to which G witnesses – a scribe working in Hebrew or a translator working in Greek – and (2) what potential interpretive strategies motivated the variant arrangements?

¹⁴ See Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition*, 379, and Johann Cook, "Exegesis in the Septuagint of Proverbs," in *Stimulations from Leiden: Collected Communications to the XVIIIth Congress of the International Organization for the Study of the Old Testament, Leiden 2004* (ed. H.M. Niemann and Matthias Augustin; Berlin: Lang, 2006), 187–198, at 189.

¹⁵ Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition*, 38. I concur with Fox that Cook has not demonstrated the robust nature of the literary gains which I intend to show in chapters 4 and 6.

¹⁶ Fox, *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition*, 38.

2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

While acknowledging the likelihood of an actual Hebrew recension behind G's text form, scholars like Fox see the different arrangements as "trivial." I propose that major strides forward toward solving the problem of what caused the variant orders (a different Hebrew recension or a hyper-interpretive translator) can be made by exploring the question of the editorial logic that would draw 30:1–14 and 30:15–31:9 to their respective locations in G's sequencing of units. In this way we can ascertain if the literary payoff is indeed trivial, or if there is a payoff that is consequential enough to motivate a Hebrew scribe to create an edition which betrays a literary strategy in a specific arrangement. If G's arrangement evidences a literary logic and cohesion heretofore downplayed (overlooked?) by scholars, then the likelihood of a variant and non-proto-Masoretic Hebrew recension serving as G's source becomes more likely. Furthermore, if the literary cohesion binding G's text-blocks together coherently is rooted *in Hebrew* and at times goes unnoticed by G's translator, this would be strong evidence that the juxtaposition was not the work of the translator's text-rearranging impulse. The purpose of this study is to examine the editorial activity and the literary cohesion between the text-blocks in question and to ascertain any possible editorial logic/literary strategy which might have motivated the variant sequencing of textual units.

Why is such a study needed? First, it is widely acknowledged that Prov 30:1–14 is perhaps the most difficult passage to interpret in Proverbs.¹⁷ It is likely that ancient readers also had difficulty making sense of the passage. Could its location in G represent an ancient attempt to make sense of the unit? Could the difficulty and somewhat cryptic nature of the unit have inspired changes to the unit so that it could live in sequence with a difficult passage in Prov 24 and thereby allow the two units to help interpret one another through the dialogic relationship of juxtaposition? I explore these questions in detail in chapters 3 and 4. In this way, my study helps us to understand better the earliest history of interpretation of the juxtaposed units.

Secondly, my study has the potential to inform our knowledge of the literary development of Proverbs and ancient scribal practices. As each text sequence is analyzed text-critically and literarily (i.e., diachronically and synchronically) in its respective textual environment, clues as to which text form was likely primary and which was secondary i.e., which order of text-blocks came first and which order amounts to a rearrangement of an older order, might emerge. Therefore, my study will combine and constantly keep in

¹⁷ See, for instance, Whybray's comments concerning the difficulty of Prov 30:1 that the text is, "completely obscure, some would say meaningless, as the text stands." R.N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 88.

mind both diachronic and synchronic questions regarding the text's development and its nature as a literary whole. Text-and redaction-critical questions about chronological development (diachronic analysis) will inform our understanding of scribal motivations for moving a text-block from one location to another within the work. If there is evidence, for instance, that the edges of text-blocks have been changed to accommodate a new literary environment and to create cohesion with that environment, this evidence can inform our knowledge of the textual history of Proverbs and the scribal practices responsible for variant editions of the same biblical book.

3. Overview of Methodologies

My study will combine diachronic and synchronic methodologies to help answer my research questions: (1) Is G's sequencing of 24:21–22 with 30:1–14 and 29:22–27 with 31:10–31 caused by a variant *Vorlage* (recensional) or by a creative translator (translational), and (2) Is there a discernable literary strategy motivating the variant sequences?

3.1. Diachronic Methodologies

My textual analysis begins with Rahlfs' (*Ra*) form of the OG of Proverbs while making any text-critical adjustments to its readings as manuscript evidence may warrant. Only then can I attempt a detailed reconstruction of the Hebrew form of G's source. I rely on the principles outlined by Tov and Van der Louw for the text-critical use of Greek scripture for identifying and reconstructing real variants.¹⁸ I rely on Fox for the text-critical use of G Proverbs in particular.¹⁹ I will discuss each author's contribution to my methodology in more detail in chapter 2.

"Redaction criticism seeks to distinguish the various editions that a single text or a single composition may have experienced...[It] asks whether a work of literature has been further edited or reworked and, if so, attempts to decide the extent and nature of that reworking."²⁰

¹⁸ Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 3rd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2015). T.A.W. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint of Proverbs* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007). Van der Louw's work is specifically focused on transformations in G Proverbs, but his principles for determining the cause of any given variant in G is informative for the text-critical use of G in general.

¹⁹ Michael V. Fox, "LXX-Proverbs as a Text-Critical Resource," *Textus* 22, no. 1 (August 2005), 95–128.

²⁰ John H. Sailhamer, *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 99–100.

Redaction criticism is concerned with various types of literary revision which took place after the creation of a written form of a book whether that form be provisional or final.²¹ Furthermore, “Regarding changes to the text of units, these can be in the adding of marginal, contextual, or interlinear glosses, or of large additions (e.g. the hymnic material in Amos), in conscious interventions in the textual elements or in *textual rearrangements* [emphasis mine].”²² For obvious reasons, the concerns of redaction/editorial criticism are at the heart of this study because I will deal extensively with variant arrangements of textual material (transposition) as well as scribal additions and replacements.

In this dissertation, I explore the extent, type, and manner of change along the seams uniting juxtaposed units in G Proverbs. For the types of revision, I am guided by the work of Müller and Pakkala on editorial techniques in the HB.²³ For the extent and manner of change, I am helped by Ghormley’s insightful work on “scribal scholars” and their skill in “textual divination.”²⁴ Ghormley’s work will help us appreciate the way that scribes could transpose textual material and modify the dislocated unit to do interpretive work in a new literary context. I will explain the contribution of all these works to my methodology in detail in chapter 2.

3.2. Synchronic Methodologies

Having reconstructed the likely form of G’s source text through textual and redaction criticism, I will take help from composition criticism in my attempt to appreciate the literary strategies which emerge from the interaction of juxtaposed units. “Composition criticism aims to explain the manner in which units were brought together and, where appropriate, the manner of changes carried out by a compiler and sections he may have inserted.”²⁵ This is a synchronic analysis because, though dependent on insights from

²¹ “...umfasst die Redaktion die literarische Bearbeitung im Anschluss an die Verschriftung von mündlich überliefertem Gut sei sie vorläufig oder endgültig.” Georg Fohrer et al., *Exegese des Alten Testaments: Einführung in die Methodik, durchgesehene und überarbeitete ed.* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1976), 137. “Redaction includes literary revision subsequent to the writing down of orally transmitted Material be it provisional or final.”

²² “Diese kann bei Änderungen im Text von Einheiten im Hinzufügen von Rand-, Kontext- oder Interlinearglossen oder von größeren Zusätzen (z. B. Hymnenteile im Amosbuch), in bewußten Eingriffen in den Textbestand oder in Text-umstellungen bestehen.” Fohrer et al., *Exegese*, 138.

²³ Reinhard Müller and Juha Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible: Toward a Refined Literary Criticism* (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2022).

²⁴ Justus Ghormley, *Scribes Writing Scripture: Doublets, Textual Divination, and the Formation of the Book of Jeremiah* (Leiden: Brill, 2022).

²⁵ Fohrer et al., *Exegese*, 138.

editorial/redaction criticism, its focus is on the “complete literary whole” created by the juxtaposed units with a sensitivity to the interpretive effects of juxtaposition.²⁶ Furthermore, the composition critic seeks to discern a “direction, goal, and tendency of the author of the whole work,” to the degree such a strategy can be ascertained.²⁷ The composition critic asks questions like, “How were the Abraham and Jacob cycles, the narrative threads of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch, the first composed collections of Proverbs and Song of Songs, or the Books of Kings put together? Which paths did the composers take? What function does the unit being exegeted have within the composition?”²⁸ The composition critic seeks to detect any potential strategy influencing the way the larger whole was woven together from smaller units, i.e., an editor’s hermeneutical motivation guiding their combinatory choices.

As subcomponents of the overarching task of composition criticism, I draw on the discipline of text-linguistics in a search for text-immanent cohesion and coherence, discourse analysis to compare the discourse topics of juxtaposed units, dialogic analysis to explore the strategy of juxtaposition, and studies on wordplay and literary devices to note any special literary art on the seams of combined units. In chapter 2, I will outline the authors whose work in each of these disciplines guides my analysis.

4. Units of Analysis

I will investigate G’s sequence of Prov 24:21–22[e] to 30:1–14 and G’s sequence of Prov 29:22–27 to 31:10–31 diachronically and synchronically from a text-critical, redaction critical, and composition critical perspective making use of text-linguistic, discourse, dialogic, and literary analysis. These juxtaposed units have in common the fact that, in G’s sequence (contrary to M’s sequence), they both come at the end of major collections, namely, the Words of the Wise (WW, Prov 22:17–24:22) and the Hezekiah text-blocks (Prov 25:1–29:27), suggesting a scribal desire to make these units a part of these respective collections. In other words, their locations suggest a desire to include the Words of Agur (WA, Prov 30:1–14) and the acrostic to the Industrious Wife (IW, Prov 31:10–31) in the Words of the Wise and the Hezekiah text blocks respectively, making them prime candidates to reveal a

²⁶ Sailhamer, *Introduction*, 98.

²⁷ Sailhamer, *Introduction*, 98.

²⁸ “Sie untersucht die Frage, wie der Abraham- und der Jakobzyklus, die Erzählungsfäden des Pentateuchs/Hexateuchs, die ersten komponierten Sammlungskomplexe von Sprüchen und Liedern oder die Königsbücher zusammengestellt worden sind. Welche Wege haben die Kompositoren dabei beschritten? Welche Funktion hat die zu exegetierende Einheit innerhalb der Komposition?” Fohrer et al., *Exegese*, 138.

potential editorial or compositional strategy guiding the scribe who (re?)sequenced these units.

5. Procedure for Analysis

For each sequence investigated, I will devote a chapter to the diachronic methods of analysis mentioned above (text-critical reconstruction of G's source and redaction critical appreciation of scribal activity). These two methodologies are intimately linked and are complicated enough to require their own chapter. I will then devote a chapter to the synchronic analyses mentioned above (composition criticism based on the subdisciplines of text-linguistic, discourse, dialogical, and literary analyses).

6. Limitations

The major limitation of my study is the lack of a Göttingen edition of G Proverbs. This will require that I use *Ra* as a base text and exercise text-critical judgements of my own in reconstructing the most likely form of the Old Greek (OG). I will make use of Peter Gentry's methodological guidelines for establishing the earliest attainable form of the Greek text along with Lagarde's axioms which help guide the detection of inner-Greek scribal activity and/or Hexaplaric influence on G Proverbs' text-form.²⁹ I will say more about Gentry's methodology in chapter 3 on methodology.

Lagarde stresses three main axioms for the use of the Septuagint in textual criticism. When evaluating deviations from M's readings present in G, one must (1) be sensitive to the translator's overall style, (2) prefer the freer as the genuine OG over the mechanically literal when these two kinds of translation exist side-by-side for the same verse, and (3) only when a Greek reading cannot be explained with reference to M should we posit a different Hebrew *Vorlage* behind G's rendering.³⁰ All of these rules are general guides and must not be applied mechanically. Various factors related to literary context can necessitate the departure from strict application of these rules as the art aspect of textual criticism informs the reconstruction of the most "contextually appropriate reading" in any given verse.³¹

²⁹ Peter J. Gentry, *Text History of the Greek Ecclesiastes: Introduction to the Göttingen Septuagint edition of Ecclesiastes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022), 155–56.

³⁰ See Paul de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur Griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1863), 3.

³¹ Tov rightly argues for the selection of the most contextually appropriate reading as the basic task of textual criticism. See Tov, *Text-Critical Use*, 232.

Another obvious limitation is the lack of ancient Hebrew documentary evidence witnessing to G's sequence of material. Furthermore, no ancient version agrees with G's arrangement. This means that detailed, careful, and cautious text-critical and editorial arguments are necessary for any claim that G's source witnesses to a different Hebrew recension of the text. It is the task of this study to provide such evidence and arguments.

7. Restrictions in Scope

My study will be limited to large-scale order differences between G's and M's text-form. There are some small-scale order differences between the two in the arrangement of individual sayings in chapters 15 and 16. A similar study as mine could also prove fruitful for discerning any compositional strategy in the choice of order on this smaller scale. However, I will limit myself to the above-mentioned sequences. The other large-scale sequence differences are G's sequence of 24:32–34 to 30:15–31:9 to 25:1ff. G's readings at the seams of these juxtaposed units evidences some interesting translational choices and/or possible source text variants which could prove fruitful for a study like mine. For sake of length, however, I will not be treating these sequences.

8. Assumptions

8.1. Proverbs 30 and 31 are Movable Units

In my view, previous treatments of the text-critical problems in Prov 24:21–22 and 30:1 have not taken seriously the very different literary contexts as witnessed in G's and M's arrangement, specifically G's sequence of (1) 24:22 to (2) the plus of 24:22[a–e] followed by (3) 30:1–14. The location of 30:1–14 and 30:15–31:9 before the Hezekiah text-block in G rather than immediately following it as per M's arrangement, justifies seeing these verses as constituting “movable units” i.e., units that show up in different places in the various witnesses to the Hebrew text (e.g. M, G, Qumran manuscripts, etc.) i.e., units which “appear loose or without a clear connection with their contexts, which could have facilitated their relocation.”³² I agree with Fox who seems to

³² Müller and Pakkala, *Editorial Techniques*, 466. See, for example, Josh 8:30–35 concerning Joshua's altar on Mt. Ebal which is found in different locations in M, G, and Qumran. For Sumerian proverb collections, Jon Taylor notes that, “Numerous proverbs (sometimes parts of them) and sequences of proverbs are attested in more than one collection.” See Jon Taylor, “The Sumerian Proverb Collections,” *Revue d'Assyriologie et d'archéologie orientale* 99 (2005): 25. He also notes evidence in these collections for the duplication and reuse

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