

LEADERSHIP IN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

by

GIDEON OMONIYI BAKARE

A Thesis submitted to
The University of Birmingham
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Theology and Religion
College of Arts and Law
The University of Birmingham
September 2017

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

University of Birmingham Research Archive

e-theses repository

This unpublished thesis/dissertation is copyright of the author and/or third parties. The intellectual property rights of the author or third parties in respect of this work are as defined by The Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 or as modified by any successor legislation.

Any use made of information contained in this thesis/dissertation must be in accordance with that legislation and must be properly acknowledged. Further distribution or reproduction in any format is prohibited without the permission of the copyright holder.

‘The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever else you get, get insight’ (Prov. 4:7).

Unless otherwise specified, all Bible quotations in English are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Birmingham. The work is original, except where indicated by special reference in the text, and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any academic award. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

Signed..... Date.....

ABSTRACT

This dissertation suggests that, while the book of Proverbs is sometimes difficult to interpret and its redaction history is clearly complex, it has much to say on the important area of leadership. To test this hypothesis, it applies four steps as its theoretical framework, and these later become part of the contributions of this study. First, its exploration of leadership in the Ancient Near East (ANE) shows that the ANE offers a good background to leadership in ancient Israel. Second, its survey of the scholarly debates on leadership in Proverbs reveals that the question of how Proverbs fosters leadership has been hugely neglected. The previous discussion has centred on the settings that produced the proverbs and the impact of ANE materials on Proverbs.

Third, this enquiry maintains that poetics is an important tool for biblical exegesis and that it can help us to understand the possible meanings of the text. Its contribution lies with the use of exegetical analysis to demonstrate how Proverbs fosters aspects of leadership through the close analysis of poetic devices such as parallelisms, metaphors and imagery. The thesis conducts a detailed exploration of some verses that are judged to contain sayings that are relevant to the theme of leadership in Proverbs, demonstrating their complexity. It proposes a reading strategy of classifying the leadership texts in Proverbs into themes relating to the status, code of conduct, personality, skills and actions of leaders and the community's response to leaders. Fourth, it critically summarises the results of my exegetical findings in Proverbs and their implications for the biblical scholars surveyed, as well as for contemporary leadership scholars. The thesis concludes with the application of my exegetical findings to one aspect of leadership in Proverbs to Christian leadership in Nigeria.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to the glory of God and to those who are seeking good governance within and outside the Church in all the nations of the world.

I dedicate this work to the memory of Elder Joel Omomeji Bakare who was called to glory on 28 May 2013. You were an outstanding father and guardian. You have made a remarkable impact on my life. May your gentle soul rest in peace. I also dedicate this work to my father (Elder Joseph Bakare). You insisted I must carry on with my education at a point when I almost gave up earlier in life.

Finally, I dedicate it to my beloved wife and friend (Mrs. Faith Omowumi Bakare). You are אִשָּׁת־חַיִּיל (a capable woman).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the greatest pleasures of finishing a dissertation like this is the opportunity it provides to thank publicly the people who contributed their time, patience and expertise in enabling it to be better produced than could otherwise have been hoped for. I thank Almighty God who helped me to successfully complete this PhD. Unto him are glory, honour and praise (amen).

I am fortunate in having Rev. Dr. Knut Martin Heim (a fine scholar and teacher) as my supervisor. I have had many wonderful teachers throughout my academic journey in the field of theology, but Dr. Heim surpasses them all. He has rekindled my interest in the Hebrew language and the study of biblical wisdom. I have benefited enormously from our ongoing conversations and supervision sessions. I am very grateful to Dr. Andrew Davies who graciously accepted to guide me through the corrections in the absence of Dr. Heim. He has invested so much in me to ensure that I make the necessary improvements.

I would like to thank Professor Nicola Slee (my research mentor) for her regular pastoral support as well as the entire staff and faculty of Queens Foundation Birmingham. I gratefully acknowledge the occasional research funding for books that I received from the University of Birmingham. It may be small, but it helped me to purchase some valuable resources for my research. I thank the University of Birmingham main library staff and Mr. Michael Gale (the librarian at Queens Foundation Birmingham), who were unfailingly kind and supportive with books all the way. I also thank Dr. Emmanuel Tukasi and Rev. Dr. Karen Durant-McSweeney who graciously agreed to help proofread my work.

I am deeply indebted to my wife (Faith Omowumi Bakare) who supported my study from the beginning to the end. The sacrifices you made so that I could succeed in my doctoral studies were expressions of a love at which I marvel all the time. You are a woman of inestimable value. It is no exaggeration to say that I could not have finished this study without your help. To Faith I am forever grateful. Special thanks also go to my beloved children (Esther Ini-Oluwa and Daniel Anu-Oluwa) for their understanding with daddy during the course.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Elder & Mrs. Joseph Bakare (my parents), Mr. & Mrs. S.S. Ajayi (my parent in-laws), Elder & Mrs. Joshua Olatayo Bakare, Pastor Adebola & Dr. Ore Oni, Dr. & Mrs. Dag Lawale, Dr. Yaya Obuzua, Dr. Femi Ilesanmi, Rev. John Ibidokun, Pastor & Mrs. Joseph Adeyemo, the pastors, elders and members of Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA) East Ham and Lewisham London United Kingdom, my siblings, relations, family friends and all the people who helped me through this research journey. It is impossible to mention your names one by one. Thank you ever so much.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background to Study	1
1.2. Statement of Problem	1
1.3. The Aim of the Study	3
1.4. Scope of Study.....	3
1.5. Outline of Thesis	4
1.6. Definition of Terms	5
1.6.1. Leader (s) or Leadership	5
1.6.2. Wisdom	6
1.6.3. Proverb	7
1.7. Leadership in an African Context	8
1.8. Contemporary Leadership Theories in an African Context	12
1.8.1. The Leader's Personality.....	13
1.8.2. The Leader's Skills	14
1.8.3. The Leader's Actions	15
1.8.4. Leadership Theories in Africa.....	18
1.9. Research Questions	18
CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.....	20
2.1. Introduction	20
2.2. An Integrative Approach	20
2.3. Methods for Exegesis	24
2.3.1. The World Behind the Text.....	24
2.3.2. The World Within the Text.....	25
2.3.3. The World in Front of the Text.....	31
2.4. Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry.....	31
2.5. Redaction and Tradition History of Proverbs.....	39
2.6. Interpreting the Book of Proverbs	45

2.6.1. Interpreting Proverbs as Material Assembled Haphazardly.....	45
2.6.2. Interpreting Proverbs as Material Arranged in Clusters	46
2.6.3. My Interpretive Approach to Proverbs	48
2.6.4. Criteria for Selecting the Texts for Exegesis	50
2.6.5. Exegetical Principles	52
2.6.6. Exegetical Outcomes.....	53
2.7. The Prologue of Proverbs.....	53
2.8. Conclusion.....	55
 CHAPTER 3: LEADERSHIP IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND EGYPT	57
3.1. Introduction	57
3.2. Leadership in Ancient Egypt.....	58
3.3. Leadership in Ancient Mesopotamia.....	63
3.4. Leadership in Ancient Ugarit and the Hittite Kingdom	67
3.5. Leadership in Ancient Israel.....	70
3.6. Conclusion.....	77
 CHAPTER 4: SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP ON LEADERSHIP IN PROVERBS	83
4.1. Introduction	83
4.2. Individual Scholarly Contributions	83
4.2.1. Glendon E. Bryce	83
4.2.2. Lee. W. Humphreys	87
4.2.3. Friedemann W. Golka	91
4.2.4. Bruce V. Malchow	95
4.2.5. Norman R. Whybray	99
4.2.6. Stuart D.E. Weeks	103
4.2.7. William P. Brown.....	105
4.2.8. Katherine J. Dell.....	108
4.2.9. Christine R. Yoder	110
4.2.10. Peter T.H. Hatton	113
4.2.11. Christopher B. Ansberry	115
4.3. Conclusion.....	119

CHAPTER 5: THE STATUS OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS	122
5.1. The King as a Representative of Yahweh (16:10–15)	124
5.1.1. Introduction	124
5.1.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 16:10–15	124
5.1.3. Textual Notes	125
5.1.4. Literary Structure	125
5.1.5. Exegetical Analysis	126
5.1.6. Conclusion	134
5.2. There is a Ruler Above Human Rulers (21:1; 29:25–26)	135
5.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 21:1; 29:25–26	135
5.2.2. Textual Note	135
5.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 21:1; 29:25–26	135
5.2.4. What Can We Learn?	138
5.3. Great Leaders have Many Followers (14:28)	139
5.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 14:28	139
5.3.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 14:28	139
5.3.3. What Can We Learn?	140
5.4. Counterpoint and Conclusion	141
CHAPTER 6: THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEADERS IN PROVERBS	145
6.1. Proverbial Instructions to Budding Court Officials (25:1–7)	145
6.1.1. Introduction	145
6.1.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 25:1–7	145
6.1.3. Textual Notes	146
6.1.4. Literary Structure	147
6.1.5. Exegetical Analysis	147
6.1.6. Conclusion	163
6.2. Admonition to Leaders (31:1–9)	165
6.2.1. Introduction	165
6.2.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 31:1–9	167
6.2.3. Textual Notes	167

6.2.4. Literary Structure and Exegetical Analysis.....	169
6.2.5. Exegetical Analysis.....	170
6.2.6. Conclusion.....	182
6.3. Counterpoint and Conclusion	183
 CHAPTER 7: THE PERSONALITY OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS.....	184
7.1. The Relationship Between Leaders and Followers (20:28).....	184
7.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 20:28.....	184
7.1.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 20:28	184
7.2. The Behaviours of Lower Leaders (23:1–3).....	186
7.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 23:1–3.....	186
7.2.2. Textual Notes	186
7.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 23:1–3	187
7.2.4. What Can We Learn?	191
7.3. The Attitude of the Righteous and Wicked Leaders to the Law (28:4–5).....	191
7.3.1. Introduction.....	191
7.3.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:4–5.....	193
7.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:4–5	194
7.4. The Importance of Integrity in Leadership (28:6–7)	196
7.4.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:6–7.....	196
7.4.2. Textual Note.....	196
7.4.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:6–7).....	196
7.5. The Attitude of Wicked Leaders Towards the Poor (28:8, 15).....	197
7.5.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:8, 15.....	197
7.5.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:8, 15	198
7.6. Counterpoint and Conclusion	199
 CHAPTER 8: THE SKILLS OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS.....	201
8.1. The Necessity of Effective Communication in Leadership (17:7; 29:8–12).....	201
8.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 17:7; 29:8–12.....	201
8.1.2. Textual Note.....	201
8.1.3. Exegetical Analysis Proverbs 17:7; 29:8–12	202

8.2. The Connection between Wisdom and Leadership (8:10–21).....	207
8.2.1. Introduction	207
8.2.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 8:10–21	213
8.2.3. Textual Notes	214
8.2.4. Literary Structure	216
8.2.5. Exegetical Analysis	216
8.2.6. What Can We Learn?	230
8.3. The Responsibility of Good Leaders Towards the Poor (29:13–14)	231
8.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 29:13–14	231
8.3.2. Textual Note	231
8.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of 29:13–14	231
8.4. Counterpoint and Conclusion	233
 CHAPTER 9: THE ACTIONS OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS	235
9.1. Leadership and Bribery (17:8; 23)	235
9.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 17:8, 23	235
9.1.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 17:8, 23	235
9.1.3. What Can We Learn?	238
9.2. Leadership and Anger Management (14:35; 19:12; 20:2)	240
9.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 14:35; 19:12; 20:2	240
9.2.2. Textual Notes	241
9.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 14:35; 19:12; 20:2	241
9.2.4. What Can We Learn?	247
9.3. A Wise Leader Judges the Wicked (20:8, 26)	248
9.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 20:8, 26	248
9.3.2. Textual Notes	248
9.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 20:8, 26	249
9.3.4. What Can We Learn?	253
9.4. The Consequence of Disobedience in Leadership (29:1)	254
9.4.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 29:1	254
9.4.2. Textual Note	254
9.4.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 29:1	254

9.4.4. What Can We Learn?	255
9.5. The Effect of Corruption on Leadership (29:4)	256
9.5.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 29:4	256
9.5.2. Textual Note	256
9.5.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 29:4	256
9.5.4. What Can We Learn?	258
9.6. Counterpoint and Conclusion	258
 CHAPTER 10: THE COMMUNITY’S RESPONSE TO LEADERS IN PROVERBS	260
10.1. The Danger of Plotting Against Leaders (24:21–22)	260
10.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 24:21–22	260
10.1.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 24:21–22	260
10.1.3. What Can We Learn?	265
10.2. The Contrast Between the Righteous and Wicked Leaders (28:1–3, 16)	265
10.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:1–3, 16	265
10.2.2. Textual Notes	266
10.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:1–3, 16	267
10.2.4. What Can We Learn?	271
10.3. The Response of the Community to Good and Bad Leadership (28:12, 28; 29:2, 16) 272	
10.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16	272
10.3.2. Textual Note	272
10.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16	273
10.3.4. What Can We Learn?	276
10.4. Counterpoint and Conclusion	277
 CHAPTER 11: THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR STUDY OF LEADERSHIP IN PROVERBS 278	
11.1. The Implications of this Exegetical Study of Proverbs	278
11.1.1. Spiritual Formation of a Leader	279
11.1.2. Preparation for Leadership	279
11.1.3. Wisdom is the Secret of Successful Leadership	280

11.1.4. The Morality of a Leader	280
11.1.5. A Divine Leader Rules the Human Leader	281
11.1.6. There are Differences between Righteous and Wicked Leaders	282
11.1.7. Leadership and Social Justice	283
11.1.8. The Approach of a Leader to Poverty and Riches	283
11.1.9. The Role of Women in Leadership	284
11.1.10. Followers Should Know How to Relate to Their Leaders	285
11.1.11. Every Leader Needs Discernment.....	285
11.1.12. Miscellaneous Implications.....	286
11.2. The Implications of the Results for the Scholars Surveyed.....	287
11.3. Conclusion	290
 CHAPTER 12: APPLICATION OF PROVERBS TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA.....	 291
12.1. Contemporary Views on Leadership	292
12.1.1. Leaders are Born and not Made	292
12.1.2. Leaders are Made and not Born	293
12.1.3. Some Leaders are Born and Some are Made	294
12.2. Comparative Analysis of Contemporary Leadership Skills and Proverbs.....	298
12.3. Comparative Analysis of Leadership in Ancient Israel and Africa	300
12.4. Christian Leadership in Nigeria	302
12.4. Conclusion	308
 CHAPTER 13: CONCLUSION	 310
13.1. Review and Summary of Results	310
13.2. Directions for Further Research	313
13.3. Final Comments	315
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 318

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

General

Amen.	Instruction of Amenemope
ANE	Ancient Near East
CUP	Cambridge University Press
Eccl.	Ecclesiastes
HUP	Harvard University Press
IUP	Indiana University Press
IVP	Inter Varsity Press
JHUP	John Hopkins University Press
Jpsv	Jewish Publication Society Version
LUP	Leuven University Press
LXX	Septuagint
MSU	Michigan State University
MT	Masoretic Text
MUP	Mercer University Press
NIV	New International Version
NJPS	The New Jewish Publication Translation
NRSV	New Revised Version
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
OUP	Oxford University Press

PIB	Pontificium Institutum Biblicum
Prov	Proverbs
PUP	Princeton University Press
REB	The Revised English Bible
SAP	Sheffield Academic Press
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SPCK	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
TUP	Temple University Press
UCP	University of Chicago Press
UPP	University of Pennsylvania Press
YUP	Yale University Press

Reference Works

AAR	American Academy of Religion
AB	<i>Anchor Bible</i>
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> , Edited by D. N. Freedman et al. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AEL	M. Lichtheim, <i>Ancient Egyptian Literature</i> , 3 Vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975–1980)
AJSL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AJT	<i>Asia Journal of Theology</i>

AnBib	<i>Analecta biblica</i>
ANEP	<i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament</i> , Edited by J. B. Pritchard. Princeton, 1954
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> , ed. J.B. Pritchard, 3rd ed. (Princeton: PUP, 1969)
ANETS	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies</i>
AnOr	<i>Analecta orientalia</i>
AOAT	<i>Alter Orient und Altes Testament</i>
ASTI	<i>Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute</i>
ATD	<i>Das Alte Testament Deutsch</i>
AUP	Associated University Presses
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Oxford, 1907
BES	Biblical Encounter Series
BETL	<i>Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovanniensium</i>
BETS	<i>Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
BHQ	<i>Biblia Hebraica Quinta</i> , Edited by R. Althann and A. Schenker. Stuttgart, 2004
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> , Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983

Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BLS	Bible and Literature Series
BMP	British Museum Press
BR	<i>Biblical Research</i>
BRev	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
BT	The Bible Translator
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
BWL	W. Lambert, <i>Babylonian Wisdom Literature</i> (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960)
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CB	Coniectanea Biblica
CBC	Cambridge Bible Commentary
CBOTS	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
COS	<i>The Context of Scripture</i> , Edited by W.W. Hallo, 3 Vols. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997–2003
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Journal</i>
CTM	<i>Concordia Theological Monthly</i>
<i>CurBS</i>	<i>Currents in Research: Biblical Studies</i>
DCH	<i>Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i> , Edited by D. J. A. Clines, Sheffield, 1993

- DDD *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Edited by K. van der Toorn, B. Becking, and P. W. van der Horst. Leiden, 1995
- DOTHB *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books*, Edited by B. T. Arnold and H. G. M. Williamson. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005
- DOTWPW *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*, Edited by T. Longman, III and P. Enns. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008
- DOP *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Prophets*, Edited by Mark J. Boda and J. Gordon McConville. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2012
- EvQ *Evangelical Quarterly*
- ERT *Evangelical Review of Theology*
- EvTh *Evangelische Theologie*
- ExpTim *Expository Times*
- GTJ *Grace Theological Journal*
- HALOT Koehler, L., W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden, 1994–2000
- HBT *Horizons in Biblical Theology*
- HBIS History of Biblical Interpretation Series
- HeyJ *Heythrop Journal*
- HTR *Harvard Theological Review*
- HUCA *Hebrew Union College Annual*
- IB *Interpreter's Bible*, Edited by G. A. Buttrick et al. 12 vols. New York, 1951–

IBHS	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> , B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990
IBS	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> , Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville, 1962
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
IRM	<i>International Review of Mission</i>
ITC	International Theological Commentary
ITQ	<i>Irish Theological Quarterly</i>
JAAR	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Studies</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Bible Literature</i>
JBR	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
JCT	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JNSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
Joüon	Joüon, P. A. <i>Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> , Translated and revised by T.Muraoka. 2 vols. Subsidia biblica 14/1–2. Rome, 1991
JPC	<i>Journal of Pastoral Care</i>
JPT	<i>Journal of Psychology and Theology</i>
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>

JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSOR	<i>Journal of the Society of Oriental Research</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement Series</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
NCBC	New Century Bible Commentary
NIB	<i>The New Interpreter's Bible</i>
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIDB	<i>New International Dictionary of the Bible</i> , Edited by J. D. Douglas and M. C. Tenney. Grand Rapids, MI, 1987
NIDOTTE	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis</i> , Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBT	<i>Overtures to Biblical Theology</i>
OLZ	<i>Orientalische Literaturzeitung</i> , Berlin e Leipzig
OTA	<i>Old Testament Abstracts</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	<i>Old Testament Studies</i>
<i>OtSt</i>	Oudtestamentische Studiën
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>

RevExp	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
SBLDS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series</i>
SBLMS	<i>Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series</i>
SBT	<i>Studies in Biblical Theology</i>
SDAIK	<i>Sonderschrift des Deutsches Archologisches Instituts, Abteilung Kairo, Mainz.</i>
SJRS	<i>Scottish Journal of Religious Studies</i>
SJT	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
TBC	<i>Torch Bible Commentary</i>
TD	<i>Theology Digest</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> , Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, and D. E. Green. Grand Rapids, MI, 1974–
TLOT	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> , Edited by E. Jenni, with assistance from C. Westermann, Translated by M. E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA, 1997
TNEB	The New Encyclopedia Britannica: Knowledge in Depth, 15 th edition (27 volumes), Encyclopedia Britannica, 2003
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
TQ	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TWOT	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i> , Edited by R. L. Harris and G. L. Archer Jr. 2 vols. Chicago, 1980
TynBul	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>

VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	<i>Vetus Testamentum, Supplement Series</i>
WBC	<i>Word Bible Commentary</i>
WTJ	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
WeBiCo	Westminster Bible Companion

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to Study

There has been leadership in the world since the beginning. The narrator in Genesis 1 and 2 reported that humans were given the responsibility to rule and manage the creation. Humans have continued to rule over themselves through different forms of government throughout history. They include aristocracy, monarchy, fascism, communism, oligarchy and democracy etc (Brisch, 2008: 1).¹ The art of leadership can be found in all walks of life and we all engage in it in one way or another (in family, business, religious settings, and at government level). This is because leadership involves persuasion, negotiation, and managing people and resources, as well as exercising authority where necessary. Yet leadership remains one of the current challenges facing human society. It is now a matter of interest among scholars, religious groups and society at large (especially in developing countries). There is a continuous need for good leaders today.

1.2. Statement of Problem

The prominent leadership scholar James Burns notes that leadership ‘is one of the most observed but least understood phenomena on earth’ (Burns, 1978: 2) because of its occasional complexities. Recent developments involving rebellions against leaders around the world have heightened the need for a critical re-examination of leadership.² The ongoing situation of

¹ Brisch notes that ‘kingship is probably one of the most enduring forms of government in the history of humankind’ (2008: 1).

² For example, the ‘Arab Spring’ that started in 2011 has led to revolutionary protests against rulers in Egypt,

refugees from war zones forcing their way to Europe via the Mediterranean Sea has been attributed to poor governance in their home countries. I originally came from Nigeria and I still monitor the events there. The former president of Nigeria (Goodluck Jonathan) was denied another term in office when the people cast protest votes against his incumbent government during the general election in 2015. Similarly, a number of church denominations in Nigeria have lawsuits pending in courts over the legitimacy of different factional leadership groups. The question that runs through my mind is how does the Hebrew Bible (especially Proverbs) help us in understanding leadership matters?

A problem is that biblical scholars (past and present) have neglected the contributions to different aspects of leadership made in Proverbs. For example, Paul Abramson (2012) omitted the entire wisdom section in his treatment of leadership in the Bible.³ The Jewish biblical scholar Ira Sharkansky, mentioned Job and Ecclesiastes among the books that deal with relevant themes and episodes of leadership and politics in the Hebrew Bible without commenting on Proverbs (Sharkansky, 1996). The danger is that the wealth of relevant leadership material and the wisdom of Proverbs have been missed. Moreover, experts on the book of Proverbs have focused their attention on the different settings that produced the book, rather than addressing the question of how it fosters leadership. Given the growing interest in the subject of leadership, a monograph that addresses this question would make a valuable contribution.

Tunisia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Algeria, Yemen, Syria and other parts of the Arab world. There are other pockets of uprising for change of government in West, East and Central Africa, Asia and South America. Consequently, Col. Muammar Gaddafi was killed after ruling Libya for 42 years (1969–2011). Hosni Mubarak was removed in Egypt after 30 years in office (1981–2011). Zin el-Abidine Ben Ali was removed as leader after ruling Tunisia for 24 years (1987–2011). Ali Abdullah Saleh stepped down after 11 years (1990–2011) at the helm in Yemen and Abdelaziz Bauteflika was forced to resign in Algeria after 2 years (1999–2011).

³ Abramson only focused on selected biblical stories. He identified Moses, Joshua, David, the prophets, Jesus and his disciples as great leaders. He also pointed to Rehoboam and Zedekiah as examples of ineffective leaders.

1.3. The Aim of the Study

The aims of this study are threefold. The first aim is to show how the book of Proverbs fostered leadership skills amongst its readership in Israel. Scholars have shown limited interest in the topic of leadership in Proverbs through the appearance of scant journal articles and brief mentions in their commentaries. Since not much work has been done in this area, this study draws on the body of available scholarly literature and attempts to make a case for leadership being more important in Proverbs than previously recognised. It argues that a number of the proverbial sayings were written to prepare the youth for leadership, either at the royal level (as a king, administrator or noble) or at the family level (as a future father, husband, or leader of an extended family or clan). The second aim is to test whether a thematic reading of Proverbs can open up some texts for new interpretations on leadership. What hermeneutical difference will it make for the study of leadership when Proverbs is read along the lines of related themes? The third and final aim is to show that the book of Proverbs is a valuable resource for fostering leadership skills among modern Christians. In other words, it has some useful things to say about leadership that are relevant today.

1.4. Scope of Study

The discussion of how the theme of leadership developed in the OT and how it was later taken up and reshaped in the NT is beyond my scope here, but is available elsewhere (Abramson, 2012). In contrast to Sharkansky, this investigation has been intentionally restricted to Proverbs because it argues that leadership is one of its important themes. The implied reader is a future ruler or official. The son (the addressee) needs insights that will help him to successfully function as a leader. According to Philip Davies, 'Proverbs is more than a collection of sayings, more than a collection of royal pseudepigrapha. It is a scribal

document that articulates a philosophical theory about the moral structure of society in particular' (Davies, 2002: 120–121) which (in my view) is specifically addressed to future leaders.

1.5. Outline of Thesis

This study is arranged into 13 chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the preliminary issues of problems, aims, scope, definition of terms and a brief discussion of leadership in Africa. Chapter 2 sets the foundation with a critical evaluation of the methodology being used for the research. Chapter 3 provides a brief survey of leadership in the ANE,⁴ and compares the findings with leadership in ancient Israel. Chapter 4 covers a critical review of scholarly debates on leadership in Proverbs. Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 are my exegetical analysis of leadership texts in Proverbs under different thematic themes (status, code of conduct, personality, skills, actions and the community's response to leaders). The longer texts were analysed within their clusters while the shorter ones were interpreted as individual proverbs. Chapter 11 outlines the outcome of my exegetical analysis of Proverbs and summarises some of the implications for the scholars reviewed in chapter 4. Chapter 12 attempts to bridge the hermeneutical gap between the world of Proverbs and our contemporary understanding of leadership, with some applications to Nigeria. It briefly summarises four contemporary leadership scholars and compares their views with my key findings in Proverbs. Chapter 13 sums up my study of leadership in Proverbs and raises suggestions on specific areas for future research.

⁴ This chapter explores the international wisdom from the ancient Near East (ANE) as a possible background for leadership in ancient Israel. Many of the wisdom texts from the ANE were used to train kings, rulers and officials so that they could gain wisdom and skills for leadership. Some of them have striking parallels with Proverbs (for example, *Amenemope* and *Ahiqar*). Similarly, Proverbs was addressed to a son with the aim that he would gain insight and skills for leadership (Proverbs 1:4).

1.6. Definition of Terms

Given the concern of this study and the need to avoid unnecessary confusion, the terms ‘leader (s)’ or ‘leadership’ ‘wisdom,’ and ‘proverb’ will be defined.

1.6.1. Leader (s) or Leadership

It is a huge task to find a definition that says everything about leadership. Joanne Ciulla, whose work has made a huge impact on leadership studies, notes that generations of scholars have attempted to offer different definitions for leadership, but none is conclusive (Ciulla, 2004: 10–11). Eminent leadership expert Joseph Rost claims that scholars and practitioners have not been able to come up with a precise and concise definition of leadership that helps the people to recognise it when it is exercised by or on them (Rost, 1993: 6). After analysing 221 different definitions of leadership, he concludes that ‘leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes’ (1993: 102). This definition is also fraught with difficulty, because it is restrictive in terms of what leaders do.

Leadership specialist Jay Conger defines leaders as ‘individuals who establish direction for a working group of individuals who gain commitment from this group of members to this direction and who then motivate these members to achieve the direction’s outcomes’ (Conger, 1992: 18). This definition is better, because of its emphasis on the direction, motivation and measure of achievement that a leader gives. As we shall see later, leaders in Proverbs are those in positions of authority offering direction to their subjects as well as gaining and relying on their support. Winston and Patterson, who are also authorities in the field of leadership, observe that:

A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and

influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organisation's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organisational mission and objectives (Winston and Patterson, 2006: 7).

In my view, this is an expansive definition. It is not only a definition of a leader but also that of a good leader. However, the difficulty with this definition is that it has not mentioned everything that leadership entails. The term 'leadership' has the capacity to convey more than can be described with a concise definition. Another problem is that leadership can mean different things to different people in different places or contexts. Nonetheless, this definition will serve as my guide in this study because it draws most aspects of leadership together. Leadership is a difficult concept; this is why the definitions proposed by scholars in the field vary considerably. The word is occasionally used as a reference to a trait within a person, but it is used in many cases to describe a communal process requiring influence and persuasion. As Sadler notes, leadership 'involves interaction between people who offer leadership and people who accept the offer and act as followers' (Sadler, 2003: 15).⁵ In my assessment, this acknowledges the necessity of followers being inspired by their leaders.

1.6.2. Wisdom

Biblical scholars in the past have attempted to define wisdom but there is no consensus among them (Crenshaw, 1998: 1–2). As with leadership, it is difficult to find a definition of wisdom that covers its extent and diversity. Dell notes that some of the definitions are either too narrow or too broad. Some suffer from 'overstressing the human aspect of wisdom over the divine' (Dell, 2000b: 348) and vice versa. For example, Childs defines wisdom as a

⁵ For a brief discussion of how thinking about leadership has developed over the years, see Sadler (2003: 10–15).

human ‘rational process of intellectual activity’ (Childs, 1979: 554) that seeks to detect sequence of truth within a practical knowledge that is restricted by God. For Whybray, it is ‘counsel leading to successful action’ (1974: 10). Other scholars have incorporated different categories into their definitions of wisdom.⁶ Crenshaw especially defines wisdom as ‘the quest for self-understanding in terms of relationships with things (nature wisdom), people (juridical and practical wisdom), and the creator (theological wisdom)’ (Crenshaw, 1969: 132).⁷ This will serve as my working definition, because it involves an intellectual and experiential activity that is supported with religious behaviour, in order to provide guidance for living well. What is striking in our discussion of scholars’ views is that, while there is no agreement about many important aspects of the definitions of wisdom, there is a consensus about something: none of them identify the link between wisdom and leadership. As I will argue later, wisdom plays an important role in leadership.

1.6.3. Proverb

It is difficult to find a single definition of a proverb that would satisfy everyone. Generations of philosophers, sociologists, linguists, psychologists, folklorists, paremiologists and biblical scholars have defined ‘proverb’ differently. Archer Taylor offered more than 200 pages of definitions for the term. He eventually concluded that a single meaning is impossible (Taylor, 1931: 3). There have been many questions about what constitutes a proverb and how to recognise it. For the purpose of this study, I shall adopt the definitions of the paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder and biblical scholar R.B.Y. Scott because of their novelty. Mieder defines a proverb as ‘a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth,

⁶ The ‘humanistic, international, nonhistorical and eudaemonistic’ (Waltke, 2004: 51) nature of the wisdom genre has contributed to these variations.

⁷ Crenshaw’s reference to people may highlight an aspect of leadership.

morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation' (Mieder, 2004: 3). Although I disagree with Mieder's view that all proverbs originate from the folk, his description of what makes a proverb and how it is transferred to generations is helpful. For Scott, a proverb is 'a short pregnant sentence or phrase whose meaning is applicable in many situations, with imagery or striking verbal form to assist memory. It has been well described as having shortness, sense, and salt' (Scott, 1971: 58). From these definitions, we can see that paremiologists and biblical scholars see a proverb as a self-contained, individual, short unit. One of the questions that arises in this study is how such proverbs may function within their wider context or when they appear to contradict each other within a canonical collection?

1.7. Leadership in an African Context

Understanding leadership in an African (especially Nigerian) context is crucial for this study. There is no single way of conceiving leadership in Africa because there are variations in practices from one place to another, due to the continent's huge cultural diversity (Jackson, 2004: 3).⁸ There is evidence of hierarchies and leadership structures at most levels, as part of the quest for order within Nigerian society. In most cases, power is concentrated on the leader at the top and those within the corridors of power. It is worth noting that until recently leadership in Nigeria has been male-oriented, as in other traditional African societies (Nagarajan, 2016).⁹ Indigenous African scholars have observed that 'obnoxious social norms,

⁸ It also depends on the nature of leadership (political, religious, organisational and traditional monarchy, etc). As Jackson notes, 'Africa's history, even before the slave trade, is one of cross-cultural interaction and often antagonistic dynamics...normally within systems of power relations...Modern organisations in Africa still contain these diverse cultural elements: ideas and practices as well as people' (Jackson, 2004: 3).

⁹ For example, the administration of President Buhari have been challenged for failing to fulfil its electioneering campaign pledge of implementing the national gender policy that recommends more opportunities for women to fill 35% of elected or appointed positions. As Chitra Nagarajan notes, 'women were 9% of the national assembly

political exclusion and economic lop-sidedness dictate the presence and voice of women in public life’ (Okafor and Akokuwebe, 2015: 2). The situation is now improving, but more still needs to be done regarding the inclusion of women in positions of authority. For example, the political landscape of Nigeria has changed since the beginning of the 4th republic (May 29, 1999–present) with an increase in the number of women in leadership positions as Deputy Governors, Senators, Members of House of Representatives, Cabinet Ministers and Chairpersons of Local Government Councils (Agbalajobi, 2010: 81).¹⁰

Findings from ethnographic research on Nigeria show that leadership is driven by the cultural expectations of the people within the community. The people expect their leaders to promote cultural values and work for the common good of the community. According to Olajubu, ‘embedded in the notion of leadership among the people is the significance attached to an interconnection of individual and communal welfare’ (Olajubu, 2002: 54). In view of the corruption cases against most Nigerian leaders, it seems to me, however, that the discussion about communal values is a theoretical expectation rather than a practical statement of fact.¹¹ Moreover, Olajubu (2002) reports that leaders derive their authority from the people because they make the decision on those who should lead them. Hence, the qualifications expected of

elected in 2007, this figure fell to 7% in 2011. It is at its lowest in the current assembly: only 5.6% of members of the House of Representatives and 6.5% of senators are women.’ She observes further that Nigeria is yet to have a woman governor. ‘As of 2012, only 4% of councillors at the local government level were women.’ In my view, this disturbing trend also manifests in religious and tertiary institutions. This is contrary to Section 42(1) of the 1979 constitution states that no Nigerian citizen shall be subjected to any form of discrimination on the basis of ‘ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion.’

¹⁰ Senator Bucknor Akerele (among others) became Deputy Governor in Lagos State. Chief (Mrs.) Florence Ita Giwa, Mrs. Stella Omu and Hajia Khairat Abdul-Rasaq (among others) were senators. Barrister Iquo Minimah, Lola Abiola Edewor, Gbemi Saraki, Mrs. Patience Ogodo, J.F. Adeyemi, Patience O. Etteh, Dorcas Odurinrin, Binta Garba Kosi, Mercy Almona Isei, Florence Aya, Linda Ikpeazu and Temi Harrinnan (among others) served in the House of Representatives. Some of the influential government ministers include Mrs. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Prof. Dora Akunyili, Dr (Mrs) Grace Ogwuche, Mrs. Aishatu Dikku and many others (Agbalajobi, 2010: 81).

¹¹ For example, many past and current politicians have used public funds to acquire properties around the world.

aspiring leaders include honesty, boldness, maturity or seniority, diplomacy, knowledge of the system and ability to command the respect of others.

The selection of leaders is a collective responsibility (apart from some occasional situations when some have forced their way to leadership through rebellion and military rule). Olajubu rightly notes that the processes of selecting a new king or community leaders in most parts of Nigeria include notification of the public about the vacancy, submission of nominations, screening of nominees by a committee, final selection and installation and consecration of the selected candidate (Olajubu, 2002: 56). In addition, new leaders are expected to get some informal training from retired leaders, fellow leaders and a group of selected advisers. Another aspect of leadership in Africa is its theocratic nature. There is a belief that no one can become a leader without the support of God or the gods (Okafor, 2013: 194). Hence, the people consult with their gods to seek approval before selecting their leaders. The idea of sacral kingship is also common in traditional African societies. For example, dead kings were sometimes worshipped as gods in the South Western part of Nigeria (Isichei, 1997: 250).¹² One more feature of leadership in Africa that needs mentioning is the use of proverbial sayings by leaders to express wisdom, investigate matters and communicate to their followers (Adéèkó, 1998, Orwenjo, 2009b: 123–146).¹³ In view of the above, it seems to me that traditional African societies understood the ideals of leadership (apart from the patriarchal view against women's leadership and their unconscious use of leadership theories).

¹² For example, Sango (the god of lightning) was once a king in ancient Yoruba kingdom. 'The gods of the Yorubaland are sometimes understood as kings who were divinised in cults after their death, sometimes as divinities who have in tradition been given unhistorical face' (Isichei, 1997: 250).

¹³ According to Orwenjo, 'Proverbs are the most widely and commonly used in the continent's longstanding history of oral arts. Proverbs are regarded as repositories of the people's collective social, political and cultural wisdom and as analytic tools of thought' (Orwenjo, 2009b: 123–146).

However, the problem of getting the right people into leadership positions is a general challenge in Africa (Yimer, 2015: 129–137).¹⁴ Nigeria obtained her independence from the British Empire in 1960. After many years of self-governance, the nation still faces the challenge of leadership and good governance (Ebegbulem, 2012, Ogbeidi, 2012, Nwagboso and Duke, 2012).¹⁵ Chinua Achebe (the Nigerian-born, internationally-acclaimed writer) echoes the same view that ‘the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership’ (Achebe, 1984: 1).¹⁶ He concludes that poor leadership has been the major obstacle to the progress of the nation. This view may seem right for Achebe, but he fails to comment on the negative contributions of followers, as well as leaders, to misrule. I would argue instead that the problem with Nigeria is a failure of both leadership and followership.

Ochulor identifies, among other problems in Nigeria, a lack of intellectual training and discipline among leaders; the ideology of leaders approaching the national treasury with the intention to loot; the nonparticipation of many citizens in politics and the political process; unnecessary pressures and demands on public servants; tribalism and ethnic sentiments with a

¹⁴ ‘It will be difficult to address the problems of leadership, corruption and bad governance in Nigeria in isolation of the rest of Africa. Indeed, leadership failure, corruption and bad governance is not just a Nigerian problem; it is a problem for Africa’s development to which African countries collectively lose an estimated 25 percent of GDP or about \$148 billion annually. Nigeria merely illustrates to a scale the problem that confronts every African and indeed developing country’ (Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto, and Nkiah, 2015: 55).

¹⁵ Nigeria has been led through military and civilian rule. The leaders from 1960 to today include Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe (October 1st 1960–January 16th 1966), Major General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi (January 16th 1966–July 29th 1966), General Yakubu Gowon (August 1st 1966–July 29th 1975), General Murtala Mohammed (July 29th 1975–February 13th 1976), General Olusegun Obasanjo (February 13th 1976– October 1st 1979), Alhaji Shehu Shagari (October 1st 1979–December 31st 1983), General Muhammadu Buhari (December 31st 1983–August 27th 1985), General Ibrahim Babangida (August 27th 1985–August 27th 1993), Chief Ernest Shonekan (August 26th 1993–November 17th 1993), General Sani Abacha (November 17th 1993–June 8th 1998), General Abdulsalami Abubakar (June 8th 1998–May 29th 1999), President Olusegun Obasanjo (May 29th 1999–May 29th 2007), Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar’Adua (May 29th 2007–May 5th 2010), Dr. Goodluck Ebele Johnathan (May 5th 2010–May 29th 2015) and President Muhammadu Buhari (May 29th 2015–present). For a socio-economic analysis of political leadership and corruption in Nigeria since 1960, see (Ogbeidi, 2012: 1–25; Ebegbulem, 2012: 221–227; Essoh and Udoh, 2014: 65–78).

¹⁶ He states further that nothing is wrong with the Nigerian character, land, climate, water and air, etc. For Achebe, the Nigerian problem is the unwillingness of its leaders to show responsibility and lead by example ‘which are the hallmarks of true leadership’ (Achebe, 1984: 1).

weak emphasis on the rule of law (Ochulor, 2011: 265–271). Similarly, Lawal, Imokhuede and Johnson rightly observe that the absence of development-oriented leadership, the absence of accountability and transparency, corruption and electoral malpractices (Lawal et al., 2012: 189–190) have all contributed to poor governance in Nigeria. They are right that the insensitivity of past and current leaders has resulted in a lack of socio-economic and infrastructural development (Soniyi, 2017). Nigerians now face the problems of corruption, unemployment, inadequate water supply, poor electricity supply, crude oil theft, a rise in civil strife, substandard road networks, poverty, falling standards in education, a decrepit health sector, an unstable economy, prostitution, democratic instability, godfather-ism in politics, homelessness¹⁷ and insecurity¹⁸ (Anazodo et al., 2015: 43, Olu-Adeyemi, 2012: 167). We shall return to this in chapter 12 of this thesis.

1.8. Contemporary Leadership Theories in an African Context

This section briefly examines the contemporary field of leadership theories and compares it with the idea of leadership in Africa. I draw from (Bass, 1981), (Northouse, 2013) and other scholars for my summary of leadership theories.¹⁹ However, I have rearranged the theories thematically, focusing on the personality, skills and actions of the leader.²⁰ I prefer this methodology because it promotes a more systematic approach to the understanding of leadership theories.

¹⁷ For example, the conflict in the ruling party (All Progressives Congress) has led to the tension between the national assembly (legislators) and the presidency (executive). Many nominees of the presidency for ministerial and ambassadorial assignments have been rejected. Similarly, the national assembly did not pass the 2017 budget until June 2017.

¹⁸ The porous insecurity in Nigeria has led to the rise of the Islamic fundamentalist group ‘Boko Haram’, armed robbery, kidnapping and ritual killing, etc.

¹⁹ I have chosen Bass because he is one of the leading theorists and he has written a compendium on leadership. I also chose Northouse because he has written substantially on the topic. Similarly, his book is among the most recent works on leadership theories.

²⁰ Personality answers the question what makes a leader or who leaders are? Skill checks for leadership skills and action explores what leaders do?

1.8.1. The Leader's Personality

These theories examine the personality of leaders and their supervisory control over their followers. They include the *great man* or *competency*, *trait* and *behavioural* theories of leadership.²¹ The idea underpinning all these theories is that 'great leaders are born, not made.' The *great man or competency theory* emerged before the 1930s. Its practitioners studied the lives of great leaders in history and asked what made them different. Effective leaders are identified through their vision, problem-solving abilities, mentoring and inspiration of others, and for their display of decisive leadership during crises and in decision-making processes (Borgatta et al., 1954: 755–759). The problem with this theory is that it is the individual leader who determines the success of an organisation. Another problem is that it presents leadership as exclusively masculine, because women are not given the opportunity to serve at the highest level (Duerst-Lahti and Kelly, 1995: 69).²²

The *trait theory* emerged in the 1940s and examines the natural personalities, attributes, values, skills and motives of leaders (Derue et al., 2011: 7).²³ Some of the expected character traits include vision, integrity, fairness, good morals and trustworthiness. The limitation of this approach is that its prescriptive universal traits for successful leadership may not be

²¹ Others include environmental, psychodynamic, leader role, humanistic and exchange theories. I have selected the models above for further discussion because they are the most common and important ones (Bass, 1981: 26–39).

²² Georgia Duerst-Lahti and Rita Kelly identified a number of the erroneous factors that contributed to the strong masculine identity of leaders and leadership in the past. First, the expectation that 'men are more likely to be leaders in public and private organisations than women.' Second, the 'expectations about gender or sex roles embedded in our culture lead to a preference for masculine over feminine.' Third, 'governance, politics, and the administrative state reflect the cultural preference for masculine over feminine.' Fourth, 'our cultural preferences for masculine can be seen most clearly in our definitions of leadership and preferences for certain types of leaders' (Duerst-Lahti & Kelly, 1995: 69).

²³ Derue, et al observed that Galton and Eysenck were the first to conduct earlier work on the trait theory in 1869 with their book 'Hereditary Genius' (Derue, 2011: 7).

applicable in other societies (House and Aditya, 1997: 410).²⁴ The flaws of the trait theory and the rise of behavioural sciences led scholars such as Jenkins, Stogdill, Mann and others to examine the implication of leaders' behaviours in leadership success (Jenkins, 1947 : 54–79, Stogdill, 1948: 35–71, Mann, 1959: 241–270). The *behavioural theory* became popular in the 1950s and 1960s. It explores the behaviour of leaders and the way their followers respond to them. Behavioural leadership theorists at that time identified autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire as the three main leadership styles. The weakness of this theory is that again, the growth of the organisation depends on the personality and behaviour of the leader. These theories claim to be prescriptive and many earlier theorists have proposed that they should be used to identify prospective leaders (Bass, 1981: 26–39). However, in my view, other theories are as helpful as the personality theories.

1.8.2. The Leader's Skills

The limitations of the personality approaches have motivated theorists to shift their focus to explore leadership skills and the situation of each organisation. The idea underpinning all these theories of leadership is that 'great leaders are made, not born'. Such an approach gave rise to the *contingency or situational, visionary and pragmatic* theories. The *contingency or situational theory* emerged in the 1970s, when the theorists suggested that a leader's style should depend on the circumstances in the organisation, the people and the targeted goals (Fiedler, 1972: 391–412, Fiedler et al., 1976).²⁵ They argued that this could be achieved through the leader's attitude (love and humility), practical actions (consultation, delegation,

²⁴ According to House and Aditya, 'there developed among the community of leadership scholars near consensus that the search for universal traits was futile' (House & Aditya, 1997: 410).

²⁵ Most scholars recognise Fred Fiedler as the father of the contingency theory of leadership. Fiedler suggests that the leaders' characteristics, behaviour and styles do not automatically shape them. The main factor is the appropriateness of leadership styles to the situations that they face. Other scholars who support this view include Evans (1970), House (1971), and Mitchell (1974), as well as Vroom and Yetton (1974).

participation, negotiation and direction) and other leadership skills. The *visionary theory* focuses on the vision of the leader to drive individual performance in order to effect changes in the organisation (Goleman et al., 2013: 57).²⁶ The visionary leader possesses a high level of reasoning. He conceives a vision and confidently enforces it on the followers. The visionary theorists would argue that this is the only way to get maximum results. *Pragmatic theory* focuses on the leader's functional ways of solving problems. The leaders are pragmatic in dealing with the current issues affecting the organisation (Ruwhiu and Cone, 2013: 25–43, Mumford and J., 2001: 302).²⁷ Their interest is on performance and meeting the needs of the people inside the organisation. The primary criticism of these theories is that some leaders have the skills to lead, but they lack the personality traits needed for successful leadership in difficult places.²⁸

1.8.3. The Leader's Actions

The theories relating to a leader's actions include the *charismatic*, *transactional*, *strategic*, *transformational*, *educative*, *emergent* and *servant leadership* models.²⁹ The *charismatic theory* identifies charisma as the main thing that distinguishes the leader from their followers. Charisma is the ability of leaders to command popular devotion and enthusiasm from their followers (Jacobsen and House, 2001: 75–112). The chief individual characteristics are

²⁶ Goleman et al. note that 'visionary leaders articulate where a group is going, but not how it will get there setting people free to innovate, experiment, and take calculated risks. Knowing the big picture and how a given job fits in gives people clarity; they understand what's expected of them. And the sense that everyone is working toward shared goals builds team commitments: People feel pride in belonging to their organisation' (Goleman et al., 2013: 57).

²⁷ According to Mumford and Van Doorn, the characteristics of pragmatic leaders include 'the exercise of influence through the use of elite social relationships, appeals to existing shared values, effective communication of the merits of a plan, persuasion and negotiation through demonstration projects, and entrepreneurial ability to tap both technical and social opportunities for innovation' (Mumford & Van Doorn, 2001: 302).

²⁸ For example, it would be difficult for a leader without a strong personality to rule Nigeria because of the multiple challenges facing the nation (especially corruption).

²⁹ Others include teacher leadership (which works for administrators in school settings) and organisational leadership theories; but they are not as popular as the ones we have discussed.

speech and eloquence. Charismatic leaders use their persuasive words to ‘weave a spell’ (Roger, 2011: 91) within and outside the organisation.³⁰ The *transactional theory* states that leaders have a responsibility to reward the accomplishments of their followers who meet or exceed the required expectation. It is a motivational strategy by leaders to encourage performance among their subordinates. This is called ‘contingent reward and active management by exception’ (Watkins, 2008: 24). The leader sets goals for the organisation with necessary supervision and offers appropriate rewards.

In *strategic theory*, the leader puts in place achievable goals, visions and strategic plans that will enhance organisational success. They work as a team with those who share their vision to accomplish the goals and improve the fortunes of their organisation (Cannella et al., 2008: 4).³¹ The *transformational theory* is people-oriented in nature. It focuses on the mutual learning, team effort, shared responsibility, management of potential and organisational empowerment of the people. The aim is to transparently inspire the followers through emotional intelligence to be sensitive to the socio-economic and political benefits they will derive from the organisation (Yammarino and Dubinsky, 1994: 790).³² This refers in the first instance to fellow employees and members of the organisation, but it also relates to the customer base or beneficiaries of the organisation. Transformational leaders are role models as they develop their followers into future leaders. They inspire their followers to seek organisational interests before self-interest.

³⁰ Roger thinks this is a good thing.

³¹ Strategy leadership scholars are interested in ‘comprehending the factors that lead to superior organisational performance’. They suggest that ‘performance is determined in great part by the strategic choices and other major organisational decisions made’ by those in positions of authority (Cannella, 2008: 4).

³² For a good summary of the relationship between transformational leadership and charismatic, inspirational and transactional leadership, see (Yammarino, 1994: 787–811).

Educative leadership theory is about culture building. It requires leaders to understand organisational culture and the cultures of individuals within the system (Duignan and Macpherson, 1992). This will help them to engage effectively with others without losing their cultural identity. *Emergent theory* states that leaders should emerge from within the group of people that they serve. They must have the credentials, competence and experience that are relevant to the specific needs of their organisation (Houglum, 2012: 25–39). The *servant leadership theory* (popularly connected with Robert Greenleaf) suggests that a given organisational chart should be turned upside down. It places the customer at the top and the CEO at the bottom. In other words, leadership is about service (Greenleaf, 1977: 16).³³ According to Spears, servant leadership has received huge acceptance among practitioners and it has been able to challenge the dominant, traditional forms of leadership theories since the 1970s (Spears, 2003: 14).

The weakness of these theories is that there is more to successful leadership than the actions of the leader. For example, some leaders may be charismatic, but not ethical. They may use their power for self-interest or personal gain in order to promote their personal vision. They may also ignore or attack the opinions of others and insist on their own decisions. Similarly, some charismatic leaders may exhibit servant leadership outwardly, but they may be proud inwardly. In my view, all these theories are descriptive, but each of them describes only one aspect of leadership. The emergence of theories focusing on leadership skills and actions allows us to doubt the exclusive claim of personality theories. I will return later to the proverbs that resonate with the personality, skills and actions of leaders in my exegetical

³³ The basic assumption of servant leadership is that successful leaders don't use authoritarian power to pursue their own agenda; instead they choose to lead by being the chief servant (Greenleaf, 1977: 16).

section.

1.8.4. Leadership Theories in Africa

Some scholars have attempted to apply Western leadership theories to the African context with a measure of success (Brubaker, 2013: 114–147, Lawal and Owolabi, 2012: 1–12). Others, however, have written extensively on the limitations of Western leadership theories in an African context (Blunt and Jones, 1997: 6–23, Jackson, 2004). They argue that this is a contemporary form of colonialism with the intention of forcing European and North American ideologies onto Africans. Other evidence that they put forward is that leadership theories tend to underestimate the impact of indigenous value systems, knowledge, behaviour and cultural studies in Africa (Kuada, 2010: 9–24, Bolden and Kirk, 2009: 69–86, Hofstede, 1980). Clearly, there are leaders in Africa, just as there are leaders in the rest of the world, and leadership in Africa clearly has many aspects in common with leadership elsewhere. In my view, the practice of leadership is not exclusive to Africa.³⁴ Some elements of the leadership theories explored can therefore be found in Africa either implicitly or explicitly. Hence, the application of Western leadership theories to leadership in Africa is possible as long as it takes seriously the impact of cultural values on African leaders. We shall return to this in chapter 12 of this thesis.

1.9. Research Questions

As John Barton rightly notes, interpreters often ask different questions using the biblical text based on the methods that they choose. This then allows the meaning of the various aspects of

³⁴ For instance, the ‘great man’, ‘trait’ and ‘behavioural theories resonate well with the Nigerian form of leadership because they focus on the leader at the centre. They are also male oriented and they encourage leadership by heredity.

the text to emerge (Barton, 1998: 1).³⁵ This study seeks to respond to questions including: How does the royal ideology in ANE impact on leadership in ancient Israel? How does the book of Proverbs foster leadership in ancient Israel? What sort of leadership does it foster? What interpretative method can one use to uncover the deeper meaning of leadership texts in Proverbs? What valuable lessons or applications can we draw from the positive and negative presentations of leadership in the book of Proverbs? These are the questions that provoked this research and serve as the guide to all that follows.

³⁵ There are different ways of approaching the biblical text. One way is the use of hermeneutical lenses to explore the text. Another way is to come with questions and seeking answers from the text. This interaction has provoked me to seek answers from the book of Proverbs on the theme of leadership.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

2.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the integrative approach that I want to use in this study. It also examines the scholarship of the redaction history of Proverbs, the scholarly debates on how to interpret the book of Proverbs, my interpretative approach, the criteria for selecting the texts and the impact of the prologue of Proverbs.

2.2. An Integrative Approach

Methodology is the theory behind the different methods that are used in a thesis. It is important for every successful enquiry. However, methodology in biblical studies has often been seen as a problem among specialists who seek the most appropriate approach to answer the specific questions that they bring to the text. This has prompted scholars to explore the worlds of the author,³⁶ text³⁷ and reader.³⁸ The world behind the text is a diachronic³⁹ approach and it is motivated by an attempt to recover the intention of the author. It focuses on the historical, textual, religious and cultural backgrounds behind the text as well as the process by which the text gained its final form (Tate, 2000: 1–62). After dominating biblical studies for many centuries, the historical critical approach is increasingly coming under attack and scholars have been bold in exposing its limitations (Childs, 1974, Lemche, 2008: 110–

³⁶ This is called the world behind the text.

³⁷ This is called the world within the text.

³⁸ This is called the world in front of the text.

³⁹ The way something (especially language) has developed and evolved over a period of time.

164).

The world within the text is a synchronic⁴⁰ approach. It is an attempt to engage with the Bible as literature (Tate, 2000: 67–152). According to Kenneth Gros Louis, scholars who use this approach ‘are primarily interested in the literary reality of a text and not its historical reality’ (Gros Louis, 1982: 14). The focus is no longer on the author or editor, but on the text that has been produced. In order to achieve this objective, scholars usually assume that there is unity in the text. They are also interested in how the literary work is structured or organised (1982: 15–17). Therefore, they tend to downplay the necessity of the historical critical approaches. Morgan and Barton, writing on the potential of literary study, note that this approach ‘may prove more important than historical exegesis in the theological interpretation of the Old Testament’ (Barton and Morgan, 1988: 113). In addition, Leland Ryken thinks the literary approach is beneficial because ‘it provides an improved methodology for interacting with a biblical text’. It allows the expositor to ‘include the whole span of the Bible’ in their analysis. For Ryken, this can help to safeguard the unity of the biblical text and offer new insights to scholarly interpretations of the Bible (Ryken, 1990: 12–14). I agree with Morgan, Barton and Ryken that it might be difficult to fully recover the intent of the biblical authors.

Similarly, Brevard Childs (in his canonical approach) urges us to be attentive to the final form of the text. For Childs, an investigation of the history of the development of the biblical text (historical critical method) is not enough for a good understanding of the distinctive nature of Israel’s religious literature. He suggests the need to ‘relate the nature of the literature correctly

⁴⁰ The study of something (especially language) as it exists at a given point in time.

to the community which treasured it as Scripture' (Childs, 1979: 39–41).⁴¹ He also argues that 'the process of religious interpretation by a historical faith community left its mark on the literary text' (Childs, 1984) and provides a normative interpretation after many centuries of reading it as authoritative Scripture. He concludes by finding a canonical connection between the OT and NT (Childs, 1993: 70–76, Lyons, 2002: 34–81).⁴² James Sanders proposes the 'canon-critical approach' which is slightly similar to Childs' canonical approach. However, while Sanders' approach seeks 'to reconstruct the prehistory of the canon with historical-critical interests and tools' (Sanders, 1987, Sanders, 1984, Brett, 1991: 121), the aim of Childs' approach is to produce exegesis for the contemporary Church. Following Childs, this study attempts to offer an exegetical analysis of Proverbs on leadership that may be useful for the Church.

The world in front of the text seeks to answer the question about what happens when a reader reads the Bible (Clines, 1994: 3–27). It explores the presuppositions that the reader brings to the text (Tate, 2000: 157–194). Tate summarises the usefulness of this approach with the following words: 'without an author, there is no text; without a reader, a text does not communicate. In a real sense, an unread text carries no meaning, because it can mean nothing until there is a mutual engagement between the reader and text' (2000: 157). It depends on what readers can make out of it; therefore, the role of the reader is essential.

Contemporary biblical scholars now use a variety of approaches to read the Scripture

⁴¹ For Childs, 'the material was transmitted through its various oral, literary, and redactional stages by many different groups toward a theological end' (1979: 70).

⁴² For a general overview and critique of Childs canonical exegesis, see Lyons (2002: 34–81).

(Thiselton, 1992, Lodge and Wood, 2008).⁴³ This increasing interaction of the older with emerging interpretative methodologies has enriched and illuminated our understanding of the text. As Gowler notes:

Biblical scholars have described this perplexing array of approaches with words like ‘diversity’, ‘variety’, or ‘pluralism’. The best term to capture the true essence of current dialogues and debates, however, is *heteroglossia*. *Heteroglossia*, as used by the philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, describes the dynamic interaction of a number of voices, ideologies, and positions, but none of them is pre-eminent; none rules or controls the others (Gowler, 2000: 443).

As we search for an understanding of leadership in Proverbs, the most helpful method should be one that is flexible enough to respect the variety of the individual proverbs, yet sufficiently definite to deal with them as parts of a whole. Randolph Tate (2000), Susan Gillingham (1998) and Carol Fontaine (1997) are instructive in my choice of methodology for this study. They independently arrived at similar conclusions that allow for a conversation with all the three worlds (author, text and reader). Tate calls it ‘an integrative approach’. For Gillingham, it is reading the Bible ‘in a pluralistic way’. Fontaine, on the other hand, calls it ‘interdisciplinary methodology’. Tate argues that ‘hermeneutics is not a monologue’ and any attempt to use the author-centred, text-centred, or reader-centred methods in isolation will make the entire process unbalanced (2000: 255). For Gillingham, there is ‘diversity in the making of the Bible, and hence the necessity of diverse approaches in the reading of it’ (Gillingham, 1998: 245–246).⁴⁴ In other words, it is difficult to find a single method that will answer all the questions that we bring to a text. Fontaine, writing on proverbs’ performance in

⁴³ These include materialist, stylistic, structuralist, narratological, post-structuralist, rhetorical, psychoanalytic, feminist, ideological, reader response, canonical, cultural, sociological and deconstruction etc (Thiselton, 1992).

⁴⁴ Gillingham maintains that ‘pluralism, as one of the hallmarks of postmodernism, can serve more as friend than foe in relation to biblical studies. Far from threatening and fragmenting our understanding of biblical faith, it offers a more reasonable, open-ended, integrative and ecumenical way forward’ (Gillingham, 1998: 5).

Hebrew poetry, observes that it is difficult to apply the classic historical methods to all the wisdom material. She insists that interpreting the biblical wisdom deserves a diverse approach and that ‘it is appropriate to allow the internal dynamics of wisdom to generate its own models for its study’ (Fontaine, 1997: 318). With Tate, Gillingham and Fontaine, I conclude that there is no perfect singular method. Each method is distinct, but they complement one another.

2.3. Methods for Exegesis

This section explores the terms ‘the world behind the text,’ ‘the world within the text’ and ‘the world in front of the text’ and what they contribute to this research.

2.3.1. The World Behind the Text

Historical criticism in relation to the bible has a history of about 250 years. It has been a dominant tool for biblical exegesis. J.P. Gabler radically declared in 1787 that the theological interpretation of the OT is historical. The method seeks to examine the texts to determine their authorship and authenticity. It seeks to compare the results with internal and external sources or evidence (archaeology and other extra-biblical sources). It also explores the style, vocabulary motives, interests and tendencies within the text. In OT studies, Karl Graf and Julius Wellhausen discovered that the Pentateuch was produced from different sources (JEDP). It went through several stages of development, before reaching its final form around the 4th century BC. They also proposed that the composition of other books took place later than previously thought. Hermann Gunkel (1862–1932) introduced form criticism, focusing on repeated literary classifications that have similar form. He argued that the social situation

that processed the book and the functions the traditions served could be investigated (Sandy-Wunsch and Eldredge, 1980: 133–158).

Applying historical critical methods to Proverbs, I concur with the majority of scholars, who argue that the book of Proverbs (in its final form) was collected and edited during the post-exilic period, when there was no monarchy in Israel (Weeks, 1994: 55; Clifford, 1999: 3–6; Fox, 2000: 6; Hatton, 2008: 165). As part of the world behind the text, I will briefly explore the redaction history of Proverbs.⁴⁵ Moreover, chapter 3 of this thesis will explore leadership in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, the Ugarit and Hittite Kingdoms and Israel. Then, a comparative method will be used to analyse leadership in the ANE and Israel. In addition, other biblical texts outside Proverbs (especially the Pentateuch and historical books) serve as a good background.

2.3.2. The World Within the Text

Biblical scholars who use literary approaches have different strategies for analysing the text. According to Gillingham, other branches of literary criticism include semantic, linguistic, narrative/poetic, structuralist, rhetorical, reader response and holistic readings (1998: 171–186). For the purpose of this study I will turn to poetics for help. Poetics is a loose, abstract term, which can sometimes be difficult to grasp. It is one of the methodological tools used for analysing poetry and narrative. According to Adele Berlin, poetics is ‘an inductive science that seeks to abstract the general principles of literature from many different manifestations of those principles as they occur in actual literary texts’ (Berlin, 1994: 15). She radically

⁴⁵ According to Childs, the final canonical literature of Proverbs ‘reflects a long history of development in which the received tradition was selected, transmitted and shaped by hundreds of decisions’ (Childs 1986: 11). For a comprehensive discussion of the diachronic aspect of the scholarship of Proverbs and the connection between the earlier and final form, see McKane (1970: 1–22), Waltke (2004: 31–37) and Fox (2000: 15–27).

suggests that we cannot know the meaning of a text until we know its process of composition. For Waltke, poetics is the ‘science of literature – a study of how basic components of writing interrelate to create meaning’ (Waltke, 2007: 114). These definitions are correct, but they are abstract discussions of poetics. They only offer a theoretical understanding of poetics. In this study, I am using poetics, not in the specialist sense that Berlin refers to in her concise definition, but rather in a less technical way. I use it in a sense of careful analysis of the linguistic techniques, as discussed in the writings of manuals and handbooks that teach specific techniques relevant to the interpretation of poetry.⁴⁶ I seek to investigate the ‘literary devices’⁴⁷ that the author used in the process of composition.

Modern biblical poetics owes much of its impetus to the earlier efforts of Robert Lowth and later to those of James Kugel, Robert Alter, Wilfred Watson, Luis Alonso Schökel, Adele Berlin and a host of others (Berlin, 2008: xv–xxii). One significant aspect of this approach is that it seeks to analyse a poetic composition as a whole. ‘The doublets, repetitions, contradictions, gaps and inconsistencies in the translated text are included as part of the whole’ (Gillingham, 1998: 179) with the hope that this will enhance the reader’s understanding of the text. Gillingham observes that a ‘holistic’ theology ‘created by the text and not by the author’ can emerge out of this enterprise. Another important feature of this approach is the search for the structure and overall theme of the whole text. It allows the interpreter to see how ‘the variations in the text contribute towards a part of the final whole’ (Gillingham, 1998: 180). I have chosen this approach because the book of Proverbs is an

⁴⁶ The methods that I used in this thesis draw on the various techniques discussed in the typical manual for the discussion of poetry by scholars such as Robert Alter, Wilfred Watson and Luis Alonso Schökel etc.

⁴⁷ This is the technique that the author uses to convey information and stimulate the imagination of the readers.

imaginative poetic collection and poetics allows us to analyse it that way. Therefore, this study of leadership promises to yield exciting results.

Scholars who use poetics have identified some strengths in this approach: Longman claims that it is language based and it ‘reveals the conventions of biblical literature’ (Longman, 1987: 59). It allows for the application of the tools, methods, concepts and techniques found in the study of classical literature in analysing the biblical text. These include the exploration of parallelisms and repeated keywords. The use of these theoretical frameworks helps to illuminate the text and allows it to be read as revealed (word of God) through human language. Moreover, poetics helps the contemporary reader to competently read the biblical poetry in a way that is similar to what the original audience would have heard. This is what Long calls ‘ancient literary competence’ (Long, 1994: 33). This approach can enhance the meaning of the biblical text as a result of the interaction between the reader and text.⁴⁸

Longman also argues that poetics ‘focuses on the reading process’ (Longman, 1987: 61). It helps us to see the aesthetic elements within the text. The reader is able to uncover the artistic language used by the author and appreciate how the words have been beautifully crafted together. In other words, it calls on the interpreter to pay careful attention to what the author says and how it has been said in terms of the relationships between the words. Furthermore, poetics, which is a branch within the literary approaches, compensates for some of the weaknesses of the historical critical approaches. It offers a genuine alternative to the author or reader oriented approaches and increases the interpretative methods available to scholars. It is

⁴⁸ For example, we can glean more from the text when we connect with the imagery used by the poet.

‘an innovation in interpretation and not simply another tool comparable to source, form, or redaction criticism’ (Longman, 1987: 5).⁴⁹

Furthermore, poetics helps the reader to see the theology of a biblical text. According to Osborne, most Semitic poetry originated from the personal or corporate religious life of the ancient peoples (Osborne, 1991: 181). He suggests that ‘theology is central to biblical poetry’ (1991: 186). Similarly, Fisch notes that one of the important purposes of biblical poetry is theological. He argues that biblical authors, beyond the sophisticated presentation of their writings as works of art, were theologically sensitive and tell us something about God (Fisch, 1988: 205). Reading Proverbs using this approach can stimulate insight into the book as it relates to the theological dimensions of leadership.

Waltke, in his *Old Testament Theology*, suggests that the enterprise of poetics should begin by engaging the text with proposals on the functions of the literary devices. Then one can look for ‘textual evidence that confirms or denies’ (Waltke, 2007: 115) the assumptions. He also argues that the use of poetics will yield a different result from the interpretation of those who use the diachronic approach. He concludes that, among other things, scholars who apply poetics will also investigate the motif, sequence of action, refrain, contrast, comparison, logic, climax/intensification, patterns of structure, gap and blank, generalisation and particularisation within the text (2007: 117–134).

It will be difficult to apply all the devices proposed by Waltke in this study because of space limitations. Instead, I shall focus my attention on primary poetic devices such as parallelism,

⁴⁹ For example, poetics helps to answer the question of how the author has structured the text and used imagery and figurative expressions to convey the message. It also shows the significance of the whole text and the various components or parts of the whole.

repetition, terseness and figurative language, which Longman, Lucas and other scholars have classified as the major characteristics of Hebrew poetry (Longman, 2006: 33; Lucas, 2015: 22–26). For Longman, other elements should be classified as secondary poetic devices. The use of this technique is essential for biblical exegesis and particularly the book of Proverbs. My task in this study is to identify some of the literary devices within the text and explore how they function. Using this synchronic method will also help me to interact with the text of Proverbs and uncover its artistic nature.

Despite its popularity and success, it must be pointed out that poetics has its own limitations. The appearance of different terminologies of poetics within the same approach has brought confusion. This has resulted in contradictions and disagreement among experts on how a poetic line should be understood. Ernest Lucas summarises the different scholarly arguments on poetics focusing on ‘the basic unit of Hebrew poetry’, ‘features characteristic of Hebrew poetry and the structure of a Hebrew poem’. He notes that scholars have used terms such as line, verse and stich to refer to the whole poetic sentence. Similarly, they have used terms like colon (cola), verset, line, hemistich, bi-colon, tri-colon and tetra-colon to refer to the subunits of a poetic sentence. He concludes that the different uses of these technical terms can be confusing for non-specialists (Lucas, 2008: 520–525). I agree with Lucas that the lack of common terminology means that some elements about the approach are not conclusive. A further weakness is that poetics, like other literary theories, tends to minimise the role of the author or editor and their contribution to the meaning of the text. This is what Longman calls ‘the danger of moving completely away from any concept of authorial intent and determinant meaning of a text’ (1987: 53). In other words, one needs to explore the world of the author whenever it has the potential to contribute significantly to the meaning of the text.

One more problem inherent in the proposed approach is that a real danger exists when secular poetics are imposed on the biblical text rather than tested against it. This can lead to either over-interpretation or under-interpretation.⁵⁰ Poetics, if applied without an awareness of this deficiency, can mean the interpreter may indirectly impose ‘Western concepts and categories on an ancient Semitic literature’ (Longman, 1987: 50). This may have an impact on the canonical and theological influence of the text. Umberto Eco sums up the problem of poetics in the following words:

Poetics becomes entangled in a paradox; in trying to capture the essence of poetry it misses its most essential feature, namely, its uniqueness and the variability of its manifestations. Every poetics that proposes ideal structures, and chooses to ignore the particularities specific to the individual works is always in the end a theory of the works that the theorists judges best (Eco, 2002: 241).

In spite of the above limitations, poetics remains a valid approach for the analysis of biblical poetry, if it is carefully used. As I mentioned earlier, this study uses an integrative approach that employs different methods eclectically for the purpose of the investigation. As part of my overall methodology, I will focus on the world within the text in chapters 5–10 with my exegetical analysis of some leadership texts in Proverbs. I will explore how some parallelisms, catchwords, variant repetitions, metaphors and imagery enhance our understanding of leadership. I will also be attentive to the above weaknesses in the process of my analysis.

⁵⁰ Over-interpretation is reading more meanings to the clues in the text. Under-interpretation is ignoring some of the important clues that contribute to the meaning of the text. The most exciting work on poetics today is done from secular perspectives and applied to classical texts outside the Bible. The biblical text has the potential to influence Christians positively with regards to formation of Christian leadership from a Christian perspective. An uncritical import of such methodological approaches to the authoritative theological text (like the Bible) runs the risk of stopping application.

2.3.3. The World in Front of the Text

The world in front of the text is a reader-centred method. It focuses on the relevance of the text for the reader.⁵¹ The quest for ‘in front of the text’ hermeneutics for the purpose of pastoral practice is increasing in the Church today. Hence, it is necessary for biblical interpreters to be aware of its prospects and problems (Bartholomew, 2005: 135–152). Of course, the ancient world of the OT was very different from our contemporary world.⁵² The mainly monarchical system of the ancient world has now been replaced with democratically elected governments or other forms of government in most parts of the world. Even in countries where the system of monarchy is still practiced, monarchical powers and influence have been reduced drastically. As such, it would be difficult to use the materials in Proverbs directly to legislate on contemporary issues of leadership. Nonetheless, there are some relevant applications that can be drawn, with due care, for appropriate contemporary equivalents. As Stuart notes, ‘exegesis is patently a theological enterprise, and a theology that is not applied to the lives of God’s people is sterile’ (Stuart, 2001: x). This stimulates me (as a reader) to apply some of the selected verses being analysed. Chapter 11 of this thesis provides the groundwork with the summary of my findings in chapters 5–10. This enables me to apply my learning about leadership to Christian leadership in Nigeria in chapter 12.

2.4. Parallelism in Hebrew Poetry⁵³

Parallelism is an important device in poetry (Longman, 1988: 95).⁵⁴ Since the monumental

⁵¹ For a comprehensive treatment of the contributions of Iser, Eco, Holland, Bleich, Culler and Fish to the reader response theories, see (Thiselton, 1992: 516–555).

⁵² The world of ancient literature is remotely different from that of readers today and any attempt to read the text with a modern mind-set without minding the gap between the original audience and contemporary readers will result in distortion.

⁵³ This section draws on Kuntz (1998a: 31–64) and Heim (2013: 19–32).

⁵⁴ ‘Parallelism refers to the correspondence which occurs between the phrases of a poetic line’ (Longman, 1988:

study of the eighteenth century scholar Bishop Robert Lowth on poetry, different generations of scholars have attempted to make contributions to the discussion of biblical poetry. In his 1753 *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews* and 1778 *Introduction to Isaiah*, Lowth proposed three types of parallelisms:⁵⁵ synonymous, antithetic, and synthetic (Berlin, 2008: 1–3). Scholars such as Kugel, Alter, Berlin, Heim and others have attacked these categories.

Heim notes:

There are three serious problems with this approach: First, it distracts from the meaning of partial lines that make up the poetic line. Second, it distracts from the complex relationships between the partial lines. Third, it distracts from the relationship between the poetic lines and their contexts (Heim, 2012: 22).

Much critical work has appeared in the area of biblical parallelism since the 1980s. Around the same time, Kugel and Alter were not satisfied with the Lowthian categories and independently came to the same conclusion that parallelism can exceed three types. They observe that Lowth's tripartite division of parallelism is too broad and simple and they improve the previous discussion of parallelism by exploring the relationship between poetic lines (verses). They convincingly cast doubt on Lowth's conclusion that the second line of poetry always corresponds to the first. They argue that the second line can also advance the idea of the first line. Kugel especially notes that 'biblical parallelism is of one sort, "A, and what's more, B," or a hundred sorts; but it is not three' (Kugel, 1981: 58). Kugel's insightful contributions include his ability to find parallelisms in Genesis, Exodus and other parts of the Bible, as well as some Ugaritic writings. He insists that parallelisms can be found throughout the Scripture. The limitation of Kugel's analysis is his inability to differentiate between prose

95).

⁵⁵ This is also called *parallelismus membrorum*.

and poetry;⁵⁶ as Alter notes, he is ‘perilously close to concluding that there is no poetry in the Bible’ (1985: 4). Kugel’s popular catch phrase ‘A, and what’s more B’ has also come under attack on the grounds that it ‘restricts the relationship of the lines to those of emphasis, repetition, seconding, and so on’ (Clines, 1987: 95).

Moreover, Alter identifies parallelism as a device or tool being used by the author to intensify meaning between smaller units and larger sections of poetry. He gives some examples of how poetic lines can indicate progression or intensification within the text (Alter, 1985: 11). Unlike Kugel, Alter has been able to differentiate (with examples) between prose and poetry (1985: 50–51). He argues that two parallel lines cannot be saying the same thing. According to Alter, ‘literary expression abhors complete parallelism, just as language resists true synonymy, usage always introducing small wedges of difference between closely akin terms’ (1985: 10). This important discovery has rendered Lowth’s synonymous parallelism questionable. Alter’s significant contribution lies in his close reading of the text and his ability to identify the workings of parallelism within a larger section of the poetry.

However, one weakness with Alter is that the analyses of some of his smaller units of the text are difficult to follow. On the whole, Kugel and Alter have taken Lowth’s analysis further through their modification of the study of parallelism.⁵⁷

Wilfred Watson’s famous *Classical Hebrew Poetry* provides an encyclopaedia of poetical techniques. He sets the stage by finding a broader background to Hebrew poetry in Ugaritic

⁵⁶ For an elaborate critique of Kugel, see Berlin (2008: 4–7).

⁵⁷ For a review summary of Kugel, Alter and others, see Kuntz (1998a: 31–64) and Heim (2013: 19–29).

and Akkadian poetic writings (Watson, 1984: 4–10). Following literary criticism, he suggests that the steps to analysing poetry should include: ‘delimitation, segmentation, inner-strophic analysis, isolation of poetic devices, tabulation, synthesis and comparison with other literature’ (1984: 16). Then he turns his attention to the significance of metre, parallelism, stanza and strophe, verse patterns, sound, imagery and other poetic devices or techniques in Hebrew poetry. Watson identifies different forms of parallelisms, which include: gender matched, word-pairs, number, staircase; as well as other forms (synonymous-sequential, noun-verb, vertical and Janus). He accepts that parallelism is important, but it is not the only feature of poetry. One of the useful insights that can be gained from Watson is his recognition of parallelism within a poetic half-line. Another insight in his work is the establishment of the link between Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry, as well as Akkadian texts (Kuntz, 1998a: 40). However, the limitation of Watson’s effort is his long list of different parallelisms, which can be confusing.

Luis Alonso Schökel, building upon his doctoral dissertation on biblical poetics, emphasises the need to take the poetic style within the text seriously. He argues that it is necessary to read and listen to the biblical poetry for better understanding (1988: 20). This is because it contains a ‘conscious, clever and varied use of sound’ (1988: 33). He identifies sounds, rhyme, parallelism, synonymy, repetition, merismus, antithesis and polarised expression, images, figures of speech, dialogue and monologue as poetic devices that are needed to analyse or interpret biblical poetry. He warns us to be wary of classifications; instead he wants us to focus more on analysing the style of the text itself (1988: 57). On the importance of poetry, Alonso Schökel argues that ‘if theology is speaking about God,’ then, ‘the biblical poets constructed a proto-theology’ (1988: 98). He also laments the lack of imagination in biblical exegesis and suggests that readers and interpreters must use their imagination effectively in

order to understand the text.⁵⁸ He concludes that ‘what has been written with imagination, must also be read with imagination, provided the individual has imagination and it is in working order’ (Alonso Schökel, 1988: 104).

In a similar way, William Brown offers a succinct summary of the imaginative and affective power of poetry citing examples from the book of Psalms (Brown, 2002b: 1–14).⁵⁹ Following Alonso Schökel and Brown, I would argue that the biblical poetry, especially the book of Proverbs, is a product of imagination. Therefore, a poetic analysis of Proverbs with some imagination will help our interpretation and lead to a ‘critical and imaginative’ (Gillingham, 1994 : vii) reading of the text. Alonso Schökel has been criticised by scholars such as Kuntz ‘for failing to incorporate at least some relevant segments of Ugaritic and Akkadian verse’ (Kuntz, 1998a: 37) in his work to reflect the Semitic background. However, it can be argued that this was outside the scope of his interest at that time; his main objective was to write a manual for Hebrew poetics, which he did.

Dennis Pardee views parallelism as a ‘structural device’, which can be found in both Ugaritic and Hebrew poems (Pardee, 1988: xiii). In his comparative analysis of Ugarit and Hebrew Poetry, he suggests four distributions of parallelisms. He argues that the tendency to insist that poetry can only be studied through the analysis of bi-cola and tri-cola distribution should be abandoned. Focusing on individual words and short phrases, he classifies parallelisms as ‘half-line’, ‘regular’, ‘near’, and ‘distant’ (Pardee, 1988: xv–xvi, 168–192). He has been able to show that the previous discussion of parallelism is not conclusive. However, Pardee’s proposal did not gain wide acceptance. The weakness in this approach is its emphasis on

⁵⁸ For Alonso Schökel, ‘images are the glory, perhaps the essence of poetry’ (Alonso Schökel, 1988: 95).

⁵⁹ Brown suggests that imagery is the ‘most basic building block of poetry’ (Brown, 2002: 2).

individual words and short phrases, rather than on entire poetic lines. Another reason why he has found few followers is that most of his examples were taken from Ugaritic and other extra-biblical sources (Heim, 2013: 30).

Gillingham (1994) proposed a tripartite classification of parallelism that is different from that of Lowth. In her analysis of the book of Psalms, she notes that some parallelisms are similar, while others are different. She used the formula $A=B$, $A>B$ and $A<B$. In $A=B$, where the first and second parts of a poetic half-line are related through contrast or repetition of the same idea. In $A>B$, the central idea in the first part of the half-line is being amplified by the second part. In $A<B$, the main idea that started in the first part of the half-line is being consummated in the second part (1994: 78–82). The contribution of this approach is that it allows for the use of creativity and imagination in the analysis of the text. It also offers an interesting alternative to Lowth's classification. Gillingham fails, however, to explain the significance of parallelism between adjacent lines. As we shall see later, understanding this kind of parallelism can enhance meaning within a poetic context.

Adele Berlin sees parallelism as the 'constructive principle on which a poem is built' (Berlin, 2008: 6). Following Roman Jakobson's idea that parallelism is the 'core of poetic language', she argues that it is a 'linguistic phenomenon' (2008: 2). Hence, it can be a good starting point to explore parallelism through its 'morphologic, syntactic, lexical, semantic, and phonological categories' (2008: xvii). She maintains that one of the things that differentiates prose from poetry is the way parallelism is used. For Berlin, 'poetry uses parallelism as its constitutive or constructive device' (2008: 16). She also observes that 'it is not parallelism per se, but the predominance of parallelism, combined with terseness, which marks the poetic expression of the Bible' (2008: 5). She is, however, quick to note that the linguistic aspect of

parallelism can sometimes become complex (2008: 129). On the relationship between word pairs and parallelism, she suggests that ‘it is not word pairs that create parallelism. It is parallelism that activates word pairs’ (2008: 79). This helps the poets match the words together. Berlin’s study allows us to see the dynamics of biblical parallelism from the perspectives of the author, text and the reader (2008: 127). She makes the same point elsewhere, insisting that parallelism serves as an important indication in Hebrew poetry (Berlin, 2004: 2098–2099). Berlin’s work stimulates us to be attentive to the impact of parallelism in a poetical writing.⁶⁰

Knut Heim also contributed to the debate by suggesting that different kinds of ‘parallelism operate at the smallest level of the partial line alongside ascending levels of parallelism from the partial line to the poetic line to adjacent poetic lines to lines that are separated by one or more intervening poetic lines’ (Heim, 2013: 25). Therefore, he puts forward four levels of distributions, which he calls semi-linear, intra-linear, interlinear and trans-linear parallelisms. For Heim, semi-linear parallelism functions within the smallest unit and ‘the first half-line naturally falls into two parallel halves’ (Heim, 2013: 25).⁶¹ He finds this in Watson’s analysis. Intra-linear parallelism works between the first and second line of poetry; this is the area that Robert Lowth and others who came after him have explored over the years. Interlinear parallelism operates within ‘adjacent poetic lines’ (Heim, 2013: 27) and he considers this to be the Alter’s contribution (cf. Proverbs 26: 4–5). Trans-linear parallelism functions between nonadjacent poetic lines. It is the ‘correspondence between poetic lines that are separated by one or more intervening poetic lines’ (Heim, 2013: 32). It is to Pardee and Heim that we owe this valuable insight of dividing parallelism in Hebrew poetry into quadruplet distributions.

⁶⁰ This will be demonstrated in chapters 5–8 in my analysis of first and second half-lines.

⁶¹ For example, ‘a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest’ (Proverbs 6:10 cf. 24:33).

Heim concludes that this fourth level completes the picture of Hebrew poetry. Following Franz Delitzsch, Crawford Toy, Ruth Scoralick, Daniel Snell and others before him, he consistently brings the four together and identifies more variant repetitions in the book of Proverbs.⁶²

The strength of Heim's approach is that it helps to resolve the problem that Lowth's, Watson's and Alter's categories have not addressed in Hebrew poetry: trans-linear parallelism. This helps us to see how poets return to their earlier point within their writings. He has been able to show 'how important it is to reread the book of Proverbs with new eyes and more positive expectations' (Heim, 2013: 634). However, there are possible dangers in this approach if it is not carefully applied. An interpreter might be tempted to want to see parallelism in every poetic line and it may result in finding parallelism where there is none. In addition, Heim's categorisation is unnecessary if the proverbs are interpreted in isolation.

Six important things came out of this review. First, careful analysis of parallelism is a vital tool for biblical exegesis. Second, parallelisms do exist within a poetic half-line and between poetic half-lines. Parallelism can also be found between nonadjacent poetic lines. Third, there is no such thing as synonymous parallelism. Fourth, every part of a poetic line is important because it can offer us clues for deeper meaning of the text. Fifth, the book of Proverbs is a product of imagination and it must be interpreted with imagination. I agree with Barry Bandstra that a biblical poetic line can be understood from different perspectives. It is, therefore, necessary for readers 'to unpack poetic expressions to draw out their nuance and

⁶² Heim identifies 99 variant sets from 223 verses (over 24% of the 915 verses) in the book of Proverbs (Heim, 2013: 3). He has also been able to show that 'the creative combination of repetition with variation is the very essence of Hebrew poetry' (Heim, 2013: 636).

intent’ using their imagination and interpretative skills (Bandstra, 2008: 381). Sixth, there is no consensus among scholars about the distribution of parallelism.⁶³ Nonetheless, this present study on leadership will apply the four levels of parallelism outlined by Heim (combined with imagination and a few other poetic devices) in chapters 5–10 of this thesis.

2.5. Redaction and Tradition History of Proverbs

The authors of the book of Proverbs are unknown. I agree however with Fox that Proverbs is ‘extremely extended and multiplex, residing in innumerable and indeterminable individuals – authors of sayings, collectors and editors, and generations of scribes’ (Fox, 2006: 8)⁶⁴ were actively involved in shaping the book. The question about who wrote or compiled the final form of the book is, however, extremely difficult to answer. With scant evidence for the final editing of Proverbs, it is reasonable to suppose that the book was ‘edited in the same movement as much of Israel’s other sacred literature in the early Second Temple period’ (Clifford, 1999: 6) sometime between the sixth and fourth centuries B.C.E. Moreover, the attempts of scholars to date the book of Proverbs have also produced no consensus.⁶⁵ They have relied on data such as ‘its language, editing devices and themes’ (Clifford, 1999: 4)⁶⁶ but the result is inconclusive.

Redaction criticism is an important tool in biblical interpretation (Fox, 1991: 5).⁶⁷ There are

⁶³ Ernest Lucas surprisingly applied the Lowthian tripartite distribution of parallelism in his recent commentary on Proverbs (Lucas, 2015: 10–13).

⁶⁴ The book of Proverbs is a ‘deliberate work whose growth was controlled by editors, who shaped the work by selection, choosing to incorporate (or compose) sayings that were pertinent to their ideology’ (Fox, 2006: 9).

⁶⁵ This is because of the timeless nature of some of the sayings in their oral form. Most scholars agree that many editors compiled different sections and subsections of the collections over a long period of time.

⁶⁶ For a detailed discussion about the difficulty of assigning a specific date for the final form of Proverbs, see (Clifford, 1999: 3–6).

⁶⁷ Redaction criticism proceeds from source criticism by reversing its thrust. Source criticism moves backward

three major theories regarding the redaction history and critical reconstructions of the book of Proverbs (Snell, 1993: 5–9). The first is by Patrick Skehan, who suggests that a single editor was responsible for the writing of Proverbs (Skehan, 1971a: 9–14, Skehan, 1971b: 15–26, Skehan, 1971c: 27–45, Skehan, 1976: 329–340). ‘He constructs his theory around an elaborate numerical theory in which he argues that the total number of lines is nearly equal to the numeric value of the names, Solomon, David, and Israel from Proverbs 1:1’ (Garret, 1993: 48). He argues that Proverbs 1–9 was structured into seven sections with 22-line columns as they serve both literary and architectural purposes. He notes that these form the columns of Wisdom's house in Proverbs 9:1. His numerological approach leads him to conclude that the ‘entire book of Proverbs was laid out in three series of fifteen columns to form the design of a house’ (Fox, 2009: 482).

Skehan’s theory on the numeric arrangement of Proverbs is interesting but has failed to convince most scholars. One problem with this view is that ‘the text must be rearranged in several places to support the theory’ (Boström, 1990: 5). Fox also observes that it is rare to find ‘examples of pictorial layout of texts on scrolls’ that date back to the time Proverbs was surely written. He also identifies some of the inconsistencies in Skehan’s calculation, insisting that ‘much of his procedure is ad hoc and self-serving’ (Fox, 2009: 482).⁶⁸ In my view, given the many forms and diversities in Proverbs (Delitzsch, 1983: 6–24),⁶⁹ it is not tenable to

from the finished work, segregating its stages of development with a view to retrieving the work of the participants in the creative process. Redaction criticism moves forward from the results of source criticism, reconstructing the process from the parts. Redaction criticism and source criticism are thus two phases of a single operation. Both are oriented to intention – of author and redactor – and both regard literature as a medium and reading as communication’ (Fox, 1991: 5). It seeks to ask questions relating to how biblical materials have been modified, reconstructed and arranged with the purpose of discovering the message and theological viewpoint of the author (s) or redactor (s).

⁶⁸ For a comprehensive critique of Skehan’s theory, see (Fox, 2009: 482).

⁶⁹ Toy classified the thought in Proverbs under ‘ethical,’ ‘religious’ and ‘philosophical’ categories (1977: x–

expect Proverbs to have been written in the way that Skehan suggests.

Norman Whybray represents the second theory, with an evolutionary view of the redaction history of Proverbs (Whybray, 1965: 33–52, Whybray, 1994a). His form-critical approach led him to separate the ‘Ten Discourses’⁷⁰ in Proverbs 1–9 from the rest of the book, noting that the vocative ‘My Son’ opened each section, with admonitions relating to getting hold of Lady Wisdom and avoiding adulterous women, etc. He maintains that the personification of wisdom was part of the later theological addition to the book of Proverbs. He further suggests that Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31 offer a redactional framework for the entirety of Proverbs, demonstrating how the final editors wanted the book to be read. He also notes that the interest in women in Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31 was deliberate. For Whybray, the ‘remarkable feature linking these chapters is that, in contrast to most of the other books of the Old Testament, these female figures are the active and dominant ones compared with their partners’ (1994a: 161).

Whybray then turns his attention to the short sentences in Proverbs 10:1–22:16 and 25–29. He proposes a principle of arrangement that shows that most of the proverbs in these sections are in pairs or small groups with a common theme, verbal repetition, or both (Whybray, 1994a: 62–129). Moreover, Whybray rejects the scholarly idea that 22:17–24:34 depended on the *Egyptian Instruction of Amenemope* and establishes that 22:17–23:11 is comparable to

xvii).

⁷⁰ Whybray maintains that eight out of the ‘Ten Discourses’ were expanded for non-theological reasons and most of them were used to connect the father’s saying with personified Wisdom or Yahweh. The instructions were interrupted by three poems 1:20–33, 3:13–20 and 8:1–36. He argues that the portrayal of Wisdom speaking with a first person pronoun in two of these poems is evidence of expansion in the Prologue and chapter 9 (Whybray, 1994a: 11–56).

Proverbs 1–9 (Whybray, 1994a: 148–153).⁷¹ Whybray also argues that it is impossible to date different parts of Proverbs based on their form and content alone. He discovers some evidence in the arrangement of smaller collections in the various headings,⁷² and concludes that the words of wise men like Agur and Lemuel are later insertions (Whybray, 1994a: 157–162).

This approach is plausible because it offers at least one coherent explanation of the process of the composition of Proverbs. It also offers a logical explanation for the contradictions, complexities and different voices or attitudes that we encounter in the book of Proverbs. However, Whybray's extraction of a single motif 'my son' from Proverbs 1–9 has been criticised by Garret (1993: 49).⁷³ It seems reasonable to agree with Garret because Proverbs is a product of many hands and it allows for more than one motif even in that section.

The third and final theory I will discuss is that the book of Proverbs went through a redaction history that necessitated 'a major revision of early, secular, wisdom material by later scribes of a more religious bent' (Garret, 1993: 49). William McKane (1970) divides Proverbs into two types of literature: wisdom instruction (1–9; 22:17–24:22; 31:1–9) and wisdom sentences (10:1–22:16; 24:23–29:27) with poems and numerical sayings (31:10–31). He attacks the scholarly view that instruction is a later reconstruction of the one-line proverb. For McKane, the literary history of the wisdom instruction emerged from the Egyptian and Mesopotamian instructions for royal officials and was adapted in Israel to instruct individuals about prudent living and Yahwistic piety. He postulates that the wisdom sentences can be divided into three

⁷¹ This is a development from Whybray's earlier view that Proverbs 22:17–24:22 was constructed in correspondence with the thirty chapters of the Egyptian *Instruction of Amenemope* with some additional theological supplements for Yahwistic purposes.

⁷² Whybray notes that the arrangement of Proverbs is based on the textual evidence found in the seven headings (1:1; 10:1; 22:17; 24:23; 25:1; 30:1; 31:1) as presented in the MT.

⁷³ Garret is also critical of Whybray's earlier effort to harmonise Proverbs with the *Instruction of Amenemope*.

groups (classes A, B and C). Class ‘A’ are the older nonreligious proverbs that are written in secular language to address mundane topics relating to individual success and prudent living. Class ‘B’ are the proverbs that deal with antisocial behaviour and its consequences within the community. Class ‘C’ are the proverbs that were written in religious language to instruct individuals on how to live a moral life within the Yahwistic community. They are the theological or Yahwistic reinterpretation of the older wisdom identified as Class ‘A.’ McKane claims that this happened during the later period of the redaction history (McKane, 1970: 17). He suggests that the wisdom sayings originally existed as one-line sayings, and their development into two-line parallel sayings was a result of scribal literary influence.

McKane further argues that the pursuit of wisdom is a secular enterprise in class A proverbs (older wisdom), but is a religious enterprise in class C proverbs (later wisdom). ‘An earlier optimism about learning has given way to a religious anti-intellectualism’ (Garret, 1993: 49). For example, he highlights the similarities and differences between Proverbs 13:14 and 14:27. Proverbs 13:14 lays emphasis on the ‘teaching of the wise’ as the bedrock for life, while Proverbs 14:27 calls attention to ‘the fear of the Lord’ as the foundation for living wisely. He concludes that the latter is evidence of the Yahwistic revision of the older material (McKane, 1970: 18).⁷⁴ Scott shares the same view as McKane, positing that proverbs in their original form were realistic and fully secular before some later religious additions (Scott, 1972: 146–165).

Von Rad and others who reject the sharp separation between secular wisdom and religious

⁷⁴ McKane’s point is that the ‘older, humanistic, intellectually optimistic wisdom was superseded by a later religious revision’ (Garret, 1993: 50).

wisdom in ancient Israel have opposed McKane's theory (Von Rad, 1972: 10–14).⁷⁵ Another problem with this approach is that some of the evidence put forward by McKane does not support his broad hypothesis (Wilson, 1987: 320–327). Wilson, for example, suggests that Proverbs 14:27 could be a variant repetition of 13:14 rather than taking it as a substitution (Wilson, 1987: 323). He also observes that the chastisement of those who are 'wise in their own eyes' (Class C) is not necessarily an attack on wisdom because a number of McKane's Class 'A' wisdom sayings encourage intellectual modesty and caution against arrogance (Wilson, 1987: 323).⁷⁶

Whilst the redactional and compositional history of the book therefore remains unclear, it is evident that there is a long process of *Fortschreibung* (progressive expansion) in the book of Proverbs (Quant, 2014: 1).⁷⁷ In the light of our analysis so far, it is credible to agree with critical scholars that the final form of Proverbs had a complex history that developed, possibly from before the monarchy, until the postexilic period. We have also been able to establish that the textual additions and rearrangements were deliberate. Following Whybray and McKane, we are able to conclude that Proverbs does not have a single author or editor. It is a product of many hands from different 'social contexts' (Whybray, 1995: 1–33)⁷⁸ and 'a long process of

⁷⁵ 'Perhaps, a most significant weakness of redaction histories that propose a movement from an early humanistic to a later religious wisdom is the supposition that it is possible to separate theology from ethics. The study of ethics is in fact a theological enterprise. Certainly, the ancients did not attempt to develop secular ethics apart from religious presuppositions and in the ancient world no nation was more dominated by its theological vision than Israel. The modern attempts to separate right behaviour from duty to God are inadequate for us and unthinkable for those of the ancient near East' (Garret, 1993: 50).

⁷⁶ See Proverbs 12:15; 26:5, 12 and 28:11.

⁷⁷ For a thorough debate about the composition of the Hebrew Bible and the question of redaction, see Quant (2014: 1–6). Quant answered questions such as 'do texts grow? Do they grow when an author uses a pre-existing text as the basis or as an element of a new composition and then adds to it?...Are there redactional stages or a series of editions of a text, each marking a completed stage of growth? Are scribal glosses and insertions to be understood as a continuance of composition, as if it were an on-going process and not a fixed moment or part of the process of transmission, etc.?' (Quant, 2014: 1).

⁷⁸ Proverbs experts have proposed different origins and *Sitz im Leben* for the book. Their conclusions suggest the

compilation, redaction and theological revision’ (Garret, 1993: 48). In the light of the above evidence, I therefore agree with Fox that Proverbs is ‘too multi-complex, the resources too scanty, and the translations too polymorphous and ambiguous’ (Fox, 2015: 2).

2.6. Interpreting the Book of Proverbs

A growing number of scholars have put forward two key approaches regarding how Proverbs 10–29 should be interpreted. Some have argued that the section should be read as material assembled haphazardly,⁷⁹ while others have opted to interpret it as material composed together in clusters.

2.6.1. Interpreting Proverbs as Material Assembled Haphazardly

In his famous work, *Wisdom in Israel*, von Rad argues that most materials in Proverbs are unrelated, but were haphazardly put together in their final form by the editors. He maintains that ‘each sentence, each didactic poem, stands on its own’ (von Rad, 1972: 6)⁸⁰ and that therefore the book must be interpreted that way. Von Rad’s position at that time may have been influenced by his exclusive use of the historical critical methods. Additionally, Tremper Longman is critical of any attempt to interpret Proverbs on the basis that substructures exist within the book. He calls attention to the fact that there is no consensus among scholars who support the existence of substructures. He also observes that there is no agreement on criteria,

idea that Proverbs is the product of an international ANE background, royal court, school, family, folk and the sages, etc. (Whybray, 1995: 1–33).

⁷⁹ Most scholars after McKane’s commentary in 1970 and von Rad’s English translation of *Wisdom in Israel* in 1972 have focused on Proverbs chapters 10–29.

⁸⁰ ‘In fact, when the reader takes up these texts (and this is the way it must be with this type of literature), he must have enough time to reflect contemplatively both on the unit as a whole and on the details of it; for every sentence and every didactic poem is pregnant with meaning and is unmistakably self-contained, so that, notwithstanding the many features common to them all, they strike us as being peculiarly inflexible’ (Von Rad, 1972: 6).

method and scope. Longman points out that ‘the criteria of association are so broad and varied that different scholars will continue to come up with different units’ (Longman, 2006: 40). Following von Rad, he maintains that the task of finding substructures in Proverbs is doomed to fail. He notes that what scholars have suggested so far are products of negative imagination without convincing evidence of the existence of poetic substructures. He concludes that ‘creative minds can create subtle associations between proverbs in a cluster. The human mind, after all, can associate the most disparate facts’ (Longman, 2006: 40). Fox argues further that a ‘proverb is like a jewel, and the book of Proverbs is like a heap of jewels. Indeed, it is a heap of different kinds of jewels.’ He asks ‘is it really such a loss if they are not all laid out in pretty, symmetric designs or divided into neat little piles?’ He concludes that ‘the heap itself has the lushness of profusion and the charm of a “sweet disorder in the dress”’ (Fox, 2009: 481). This reading strategy is commendable for its emphasis on allowing each poetic line to speak for itself. The danger it could bring, however, is that poetic lines that were arranged together will lose their meaning if interpreted as standalone verses. This will be demonstrated later, in my exegetical chapters.

2.6.2. Interpreting Proverbs as Material Arranged in Clusters

Scholars such as Meinhold, Whybray, Garrett, van Leeuwen, Waltke, Hildebrandt and Heim have interpreted Proverbs 10–29 as materials that were arranged together in a whole. For the purpose of this study, I shall briefly focus my attention on Whybray and Heim.⁸¹ Whybray, in response to McKane’s argument that there are no larger structures in Proverbs, argues that most of the collections have either literary or theological contexts and the fact that some

⁸¹ I selected Whybray as a representative of older generation of wisdom scholars and Heim as a representative of new generation of wisdom scholars.

modern scholars cannot find these does not mean they are non-existent (1990: 65). For Whybray, they are intentional patterns that contribute something to the text.

Heim, in his investigation of Proverbs 10:1–22:16, argues that most sayings ‘have intentionally been arranged into small proverbial clusters to provide a context for interpretation, so that taken together they mean more than the sum of the individual parts’ (Heim, 2001: 2, 313–316). He maintains that:

There is no such thing as a fixed meaning of the proverb independent of its context. Even if a proverb’s ‘meaning’ remains stable on the semantic level, notions like reference, connotation and inference significantly alter its pragmatic impact and thus, to a certain degree, its ‘meaning.’ A proverb’s ‘meaning’ is always meaning-in-context (Heim, 2001: 240).

In his book *Poetic Imagination in Proverbs* (2013), Heim continues to push the same line of argument further. Following the earlier work of Daniel Snell on ‘twice-told’ proverbs, but moving beyond him, Heim observes that ‘the repetition of a large number of proverbs in identical or slightly altered form throughout the book of Proverbs is a deliberate editorial technique rather than the result of editorial oversight or error’ (Heim, 2013: 3). The strength of this reading strategy is that it allows the interpreter to uncover deeper meaning within the text by exploring the link between many verses. Fox, despite his rejection of the concept of large clusters, still admits that ‘when thematic clusters do occur, they are relevant to interpretation’ (Fox, 2009: 480).⁸² However, the cluster theory has some problems too. According to Lucas, there is lack of consensus among scholars on the division of the clusters

⁸² Fox maintain that the only acceptable form of grouping in Proverbs 10–29 is thematic clustering. For Fox, ‘thematic clusters are groups of at least two sayings that speak on the same topic or share catchwords’ (2009: 478).

(Lucas, 2015: 15–22).⁸³ Another limitation, in my view, is that interest in the cluster theory could tempt interpreters to force the grouping where it is not appropriate. I agree with Fox that ‘some genuine, functional clusters will appear, but phantom ones will as well’ (2009: 479).⁸⁴ The interpreters may also lose sight of some of the disjunctions within Proverbs and thereby miss its dynamism and diversity.

The difference between the ‘lectures’ in Proverbs 1–9 and the ‘sentences’ in Proverbs 10–31 deserves a brief comment. Proverbs 1–9 logically serves as an introduction for 10–31. It also offers a hermeneutical framework for understanding the rest of the collection. Chapters 1–9 are made up of long and cohesive sections focusing on specific themes and messages. They can exhibit ‘ties to their contexts and can form thematic clusters’ (Fox, 2000: 44). Similarly, the sentences in chapters 10–31 can exhibit ‘immediate’ and ‘distant’ contexts focusing on different topics. ‘The former detects literary organisation by means of paronomasia, word play, catchwords and verbal repetition, while the latter highlights common images, themes or topics within a constituent section’ (Ansberry, 2011: 73).⁸⁵ This will be shown in my analysis later.

2.6.3. My Interpretive Approach to Proverbs

As mentioned earlier, scholars have put forward two major proposals as to how Proverbs 10–29 should be interpreted. The first is to interpret it as clusters and the second is to interpret it as individual proverbs. The debate is inconclusive, with a lack of consensus among commentators. My view is that both approaches are valid. In the light of the analysis of the

⁸³ For example, Ernest Lucas offers a table where he compares his clusters with that of Waltke and Heim with some justification (Lucas, 2015: 15–22).

⁸⁴ For a critical evaluation of the cluster theory, see Fox (2009: 478–479).

⁸⁵ For a good summary of scholarly views on how to interpret Proverbs 1–9 and 10–31, see Hatton (2008: 49–52).

above methods, it is highly unlikely that an agreement would be reached regarding how Proverbs should be interpreted. This present study will attempt to explore both ways and show how they can contribute to the discussion of leadership. This reading strategy is similar to the one adopted by Zoltán Schwáb in his 2013 and 2016 articles (Schwáb, 2013: 59–79, Schwáb, 2016: 31–50). He sets the scene by analysing the various scholarly interpretations of Proverbs 10–29, as well as their strengths and weaknesses. He suggests that maintaining a middle ground between interpretation as individual proverbs and as clusters is the way forward. He calls this interpretative technique ‘associative reading’.⁸⁶ Following Fox and Weeks, he notes that ‘associative thinking’ usually takes place whenever the author or editor is writing.

Schwáb (2013) proposes an approach that is somewhere in between other scholarly opinions. Those who argue that every proverb stands on its own suggest that the proverbs are without context that would control their meaning. Those who argue that proverbs should be read in clusters tend to suggest that those clusters control the meaning of a proverb perfectly and, by studying the cluster, one can arrive at the one and only right interpretation of the proverb. Schwáb argues that clusters are important, they do influence the meaning of a proverb, but this does not mean that a proverb has one, and only one, right interpretation. He maintains that one can construct more than one ‘right’ interpretation of a given proverb (or proverb cluster). However, this does not mean that an interpreter can easily come up with many interpretations. They must use the textual context and the precise meaning of the words in the text and other clues in the text as guiding principles. He concludes by using Proverbs 16:1–3

⁸⁶ Schwáb writes, ‘my approach is somewhere between that of those who say that the reader has to find the meaning that was envisaged by the author/compiler through the links between the sayings, and that of those who say that each proverb carries its own meaning. Instead of finding the meaning or not searching for such a meaning at all, I suggest the reader constructs such meaning(s)’ (2013: 65).

and 26:4–5 to illustrate his method. This approach is beneficial because it compensates for the weaknesses inherent in both cluster and individual readings of 10–29. Following Schwáb, but moving beyond his effort, this study seeks to interpret some selected texts as clusters and others as individual proverbs, laying emphasis on their complex teachings on leadership.

2.6.4. Criteria for Selecting the Texts for Exegesis

The first hermeneutical step that I took for this study was to loosely search for words that correspond or relate to ‘leadership’ in the English language. I found words like guidance, direction, authority, control, management, supervision, headship, governance, power, sovereignty, superintendence, administration and rule. I also scrutinised the vocabulary of leadership in the Masoretic text and in English translations of Proverbs. I identified words such as king, official, leader, prince, ruler, great, counsellor, courtier, royal official and administrator. Then I used these lists to locate the proverbial sayings or groups of verses that are relevant for leadership.

The table below shows that there is a list of representative verses for leadership in Proverbs. On the surface level it may appear that the whole collection of Proverbs is applicable to leadership, since the primary aim of the book is to prepare young men for leadership positions (Proverbs 1:4). However, for the purpose of our study, it is necessary to select some verses as examples for closer analysis, to demonstrate how Proverbs fosters leadership. In order to achieve this goal, I divided some of the identified leadership texts in Proverbs into five thematic themes that have connections with ‘the status of leaders,’ ‘code of conduct for leaders,’ ‘personality of leaders,’ ‘skills of leaders,’ ‘actions of leaders’ and ‘the community’s response to leaders’.

Hebrew Word	Translation	Text in Proverbs	Comments
מֶלֶךְ	King	14:28, 35; 16:10, 12, 13, 14, 15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 21:1; 22:11; 25:1, 2, 3, 5, 6; 29:4, 14; 30:27, 28; 31:1, 3, 4	מֶלֶךְ (commonly translated as king) has the highest occurrence representing a leader in Proverbs. I included all the verses in my exegetical analysis. I used 22:11 as a cross-reference and counterpoint for 23:1–3.
שַׂר	Official or nobleman	19:10; 28:2	19:10 is not part of my exegetical analysis because it cannot be classified under any of the themes that I have examined.
נָדִיב	Prince or nobleman	17:7; 25:7; 19:6	I included all the verses in my exegetical analysis and I used 19:6 to interpret 17:8.
קָצִין	Ruler or prince	6:7; 25:15	I used 6:7 as a counterpoint to discuss the status of leaders in Proverbs and I used 25:15 as a cross reference for 29:8–12.
נָגִיד	Ruler	28:16	I included 28:16 in my exegetical analysis.
מֹשֵׁל	Ruler	6:7; 28:15; 29:12, 26	I included all the verses in my exegetical analysis and I used 6:7 as a counterpoint to discuss the status of leaders in Proverbs.
גָּדֹל	The great or noble	18:16; 25:6	I included all the verses in my exegetical analysis and I used 18:16 as a cross-reference for 17:8.
יוֹעֵץ	Counsellor	11:14; 15:22	I used 11:14 and 15:22 as cross-references for 25:3.
מְשֻׁרְתִּי	Courtier or royal official	29:12	I included 29:12 in my exegetical analysis.

I used both internal and external criteria for selecting some sections of Proverbs for exegesis. The internal criteria allowed me to identify some basic clues or evidence within the text. Therefore, I shall focus on the proverbial sayings about kings, rulers, leaders and administrators etc. The external criteria are based on what commentators have said or have not said about some specific verses in connection to leadership. Hence, I considered the work of previous scholarship and my opinion developed in response to their discussion. This may not guarantee an exclusive test of the text, but it becomes stronger when combined with the first element. On the basis of the above criteria, I have chosen the following key texts as

dominant exemplars for some aspects of leadership that can be found in Proverbs. ‘The status of leaders’ (16:10–15; 21:1; 29:25–26; 14:28), ‘code of conduct for leaders’ (25:1–7; 31:1–9), ‘personality of leaders’ (20:28; 23:1–3; 28:4–5, 6–7, 8, 15), ‘skills of leaders’ (17:7; 29:8–12; 8:10–21; 29:13–14), ‘actions of leaders’ (17:8, 23; 14:35; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26–27; 29:1, 4) and ‘the community’s response to leaders’ (24:21–22; 28:1–3, 12, 16, 28; 29:2, 16). In total, 76 verses will receive an in-depth analysis in this study.

2.6.5. Exegetical Principles

Exegesis as an investigation ‘is a process of asking questions of a text, questions that are often provoked by the text itself’ (Gorman, 2008: 11).⁸⁷ The questions may be historical, literary or theological. The effort that is required for the exegesis of the biblical texts generally depends on the text’s nature. Some texts can be understood relatively easily; while others require more analysis.⁸⁸ My goal in this study is to reach an informed understanding of Proverbs regarding leadership. In order to achieve this goal, my exegetical effort must rest on some theoretical foundations. Firstly, I will translate the selected texts in Proverbs and check the meanings of the words used by the original author. The translations are my own in consultation with some commentators and major Bible translations. The aim of my translation is to reflect the Hebrew in its literal form. Secondly, I take textual criticism seriously and I will draw attention to the relevant textual problems. I will use textual notes to highlight areas of scholarly disagreement. Thirdly, I will attempt to resolve some technical problems in my translation by consulting the

⁸⁷ Gorman notes that it is about ‘asking the right questions’ and ‘not being afraid of difficult questions’. He suggests that this kind of engagement with the text must be carried out ‘carefully, critically, and creatively’ (Gorman, 2008: 11).

⁸⁸ According to Hayes and Holladay ‘some use normal, everyday language, grammar, and sentence structure. Others use specialised vocabulary, involved grammatical and sentence structure and distinctive forms of expression. Some texts employ symbolic and metaphoric language. Others seek to employ language and words so as to limit severely the range of meaning and the potential to persuade. Others seek to merely inform. Some texts are produced to entertain. Others seek to produce some particular response and actions’ (Hayes, 2007: 7).

LXX (Greek Proverbs) where necessary. Fourthly, I will examine some texts contextually (both immediate and remote) and others in isolation in order to gain insights about leadership in Proverbs. Lastly, the theological implications of the text will also be explored, where necessary.⁸⁹

2.6.6. Exegetical Outcomes

My exegetical analysis of selected texts leads to four possible outcomes: Firstly, it arrives at new interpretations of some verses in a way that is different from existing scholarship.⁹⁰ Secondly, it finds new arguments for some existing interpretations. Thirdly, my thesis as a whole achieves something new in what it is trying to propose about leadership.⁹¹ Fourthly, my analysis offers new applications, conclusions and implications for some existing interpretations of Proverbs in the Nigerian context (which can also be adapted for other contexts).

2.7. The Prologue of Proverbs

There is a consensus among most scholars that Proverbs 1:2–7⁹² serves as an introduction for the entire book, stating its purpose and intended audience (McKane, 1970: 262; Murphy, 1998: 3; Clifford, 1999: 32; Fox, 2000: 58). They maintain that the infinitive constructs in

⁸⁹ Longman especially has urged us to appreciate the presence of Proverbs within the canon and acknowledge its theological contributions. According to Longman, ‘the conclusion that the book is not theological is wrong. Proverbs is not rightly understood if it is taken as a book of practical advice with an occasional nod of the head to Yahweh. The book is thoroughly and pervasively theological’ (Longman, 2006: 57).

⁹⁰ For, example, my interpretation of Proverbs 8:4–21 is a new contribution. See my discussion in chapter 5.

⁹¹ For example, it rigorously pursues the theme of leadership and applies it to a wide range of texts in the book of Proverbs. It calls the attention of scholars to the relevance of Proverbs for leadership.

⁹² ‘For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight, for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity; to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young—let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill, to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction’ (Proverbs 1:2–7 NRSV).

verses 2a, 2b, 3a, 4a and 6a, in connection with verse 1, are well crafted together as statements of purpose (McKane, 1970: 263; Whybray, 1994: 33; Murphy, 1998: 3–4; Clifford, 1999: 32; Fox, 2000: 58). Murphy (1998: 4) and Fox (2000: 67) especially refer to the link between the infinitives in verses 2–6 and 7 as the ‘motto’ of the book. Perdue argues that the words פְּתָאִים (simple) and נָעַר (youth) in Proverbs are two groups of addressees. He finds evidence for the use of פְּתָאִים elsewhere in Proverbs 14 (Perdue, 2000: 69).⁹³ Waltke also suggests there is a difference between the teachable young who are willing to learn (נָעַר) and the slightly older people (פְּתָאִים) (2004: 177–178). However, there are still some questions to answer: Are the simple not the same as the youth? Are they not the same young people who will become wise once they imbibe the book? Is the benefit of Proverbs only for the young people willing to learn, or does it also extend to those who are already wise?

Timothy Sandoval has taken the discussion further by arguing that ‘the prologue of Proverbs serves not merely as the book’s introduction but as the hermeneutical key to the entire literary work’ (2007: 456). His main focus is on the final form of Proverbs and the ‘literary-aesthetic structure’ within the prologue. He finds the purpose of the book in 1:2–4. This includes offering ‘instruction in intellectual, practical, and especially social virtue’ (Sandoval, 2007: 462). He then classifies verses 4–6 as an invitation to the intended audience to participate in the purpose. Sandoval puts forward three fresh proposals. First, that the identity of the ‘imagined addressee is more subtly constructed than is usually realized’. Second, that ‘the book’s own articulation of its purpose is to promote certain types of values and virtues, preeminently the social values and virtues of justice, righteousness, and equity (1:3)’. Third,

⁹³ Heim reaches a similar conclusion in his interpretation of 14:16–18 that פְּתִי is not the untutored novice but someone who deliberately rejected wise teaching’ (2001:180). However, his focus is on 14:16–18 and not the prologue.

that the complexity of the literary situation in verse 6 is an indication that the entire book ‘requires a significant interpretive effort’ in order to gain better understanding. He concludes:

Rather than imagining two easily distinguished audiences – the simple youth (v. 4) and the sage (v. 5) – the text’s ideal addressee is more subtly constructed. The prologue’s imagined audience is anyone who is able simultaneously to assume the subject position of one who is in need of instruction and of one who is able to engage in the interpretive work that will be necessary to understand the book’s instruction (v. 6) (Sandoval, 2007: 472).

Sandoval has been able to show that Proverbs is for anyone who meets both person specifications in verse 4. His work focuses on wealth and poverty (Sandoval, 2005, Sandoval, 2008). In contrast to Sandoval, I am interested in leadership.

A righteous leader needs insight and wisdom to successfully function in various roles. The addressee (youth) will eventually become a future father, husband and leader of an extended family, a courtier, or even a king. Proverbs, like other ANE wisdom writings, has been conceived as pedagogical material for the training of royal bureaucrats and administrators (Davies, 1995: 199–211). If this is correct, then part of the book could foster leadership, or at least could be used as a resource manual.

2.8. Conclusion

The biblical poets used few words to convey complex meanings. It is necessary for interpreters to use productive methodologies in order to understand their message. I have explained the rationale behind the methods used for this present study. I have argued that poetical analysis proves to be an effective methodology. I have demonstrated in this chapter that the wisdom writers used different poetic techniques in their writings and poetical analysis

allows us to explore them. As I focus on the theme of leadership in Proverbs, I shall diligently and attentively embark on an imaginative analysis of the poet's use of parallelism, variant repetitions, metaphors, imagery and other poetic devices. I shall return to apply this methodology in my exegesis of selected texts in chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

CHAPTER 3

LEADERSHIP IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST AND EGYPT

3.1. Introduction

I now turn to briefly examine the idea of leadership in the ANE and 'Israel'.⁹⁴ An exploration of leadership in the writings of the ANE is a huge task. Therefore, I will mostly rely on the results of experts in this field. K.A. Kitchen's observation in 1966 that 'Old Testament scholarship has made only superficial use of ancient Near Eastern data' (Kitchen, 1966: 24) is still relevant today. He remarks that:

Geographically and culturally, the ancient Near East is the world of the Old Testament, while humanly speaking the Old Testament is a part of the ancient Near Eastern literature, history, and culture. Therefore, what can be known about the history, literatures, linguistics, religion etc., of the ancient orient will have a direct bearing on the same aspect of the Old Testament (Kitchen 1966: 24).

While this may appear to be an overstatement, some elements in Kitchen's observation are true. As will be seen later, there are some areas of connection and disconnection between the concept of leadership in ancient Israel and her wider neighbours.

Heim's bibliographic summary shows that many monographs and articles have appeared since Kitchen's reflection (Heim, 2015: 559–589),⁹⁵ but more work still needs to be done, particularly in the area of kingship and generally leadership in the ANE.⁹⁶ In this chapter, I

⁹⁴ This refers to other biblical books and the wider culture.

⁹⁵ Heim offers a survey of the wisdom literature in the context of ANE and biblical wisdom books.

⁹⁶ Leadership is broader than kingship but very scanty material is available on leadership in the ancient world. A king in the ANE and Israel is the epitome of leadership. Therefore, kingship offers us the window to explore

propose that an exploration of the wider ANE contexts can help in the quest to understand leadership in the book of Proverbs. Scholars have long been fascinated with the discussion about leadership in the ANE (Heim, 2009: 610–623, Whitelam, 1992: 41–48). An exhaustive survey of the ANE would be impossible in a short section like this. This analysis, therefore, draws heavily on the articles in the one volume edited by John Day (1998), entitled *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, the works of other distinguished scholars in this field and some primary ANE texts. I will examine ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ugarit, the Hittite Kingdom and ancient Israel, and also look closely at the relationship between leadership in the ANE and Israel. I will begin by exploring the duties of kings, the role of religion in ANE leadership, the role of wisdom, and women⁹⁷ in leadership.

3.2. Leadership in Ancient Egypt

Kingship in ancient Egypt started in the fourth millennium BCE,⁹⁸ around the same time that Egypt became a state. There is archaeological evidence for the development of leadership systems in ancient Egypt (O'Connor, 1974: 15–38). According to Baines, kingship was the ‘state’s central institution’ (Baines, 1995b: 2) and it lasted for more than 3000 years. He argues that royal ideology developed through the statements of the elite’s sponsored writings and works of art, which could be architectural, representational or verbal. Following the evidence of Dietrich Wildung and Ali Radwan (Wildung, 1973, Radwan, 1985), Baines concludes that, ‘kingship is so central to Egyptian culture, so complex and multifaceted’, that no singular treatment can thoroughly cover its significance (Baines, 1995b: 4).

leadership. This chapter focuses more on kings, with few references to royal women, royal servants and courtiers etc.

⁹⁷ I deliberately included women in this investigation in order to test the different ANE cultures and their attitudes towards women leadership.

⁹⁸ It started around 4,000 BCE and ended around 3,000 BCE.

David Silverman, relying on texts from the New Kingdom (1550–1070 BCE), argues that throughout all periods there existed a pluralism of views among the Egyptians regarding the nature of kingship (Silverman, 1995: 49–94). The king was conceived as a man, king and god. In other words, he was both mortal and immortal. He expressed his divinity through funerary rites, reference to his divine birth, choice of oracles and reference to the power and authority vested in him by the gods. Following the earlier work of Lanny Bell, Silverman suggests that the king received divinity retroactively after his installation as Pharaoh (Silverman, 1995: 71–72). Similarly, he observes that the ruling of the king through Ma‘at⁹⁹ strengthens the argument for his divinity. However, it must be pointed out that Silverman’s analysis is still open to dispute because there is no consensus among scholars regarding the exact time when the king was considered to have received a divine nature. As Brisch notes, the debate about divine kingship is still ongoing (Brisch, 2008: 1–11).¹⁰⁰

The Egyptian kings often used titles, which were expressions of their ideology and religion, to affirm their legitimacy (Baines, 1998: 17–24). These titles include ‘Horus Incarnate’; ‘Osiris Himself’; ‘King of Upper and Lower Egypt’; ‘Lord of the Two Lands’; and ‘Son of Re’¹⁰¹ or ‘Son of Amon-Re’ (Smith, 1982a: 29).¹⁰² The titles were sources of motivation for the king

⁹⁹ Ma‘at was the goddess of truth, law, balance and universal order in ancient Egypt (Redford, 2001: 319).

¹⁰⁰ Brisch notes that ‘the recent anthropological discourse on kingship is strongly influenced by the findings in the area studied, in this case Africa. While these findings are important for the study of kingship, they are hardly universal or valid for all areas of the world and all periods of history’ (Brisch, 2008: 2).

¹⁰¹ Egyptologists often use the transliteration ‘Re’ or ‘Ra’ interchangeably to refer to the chief god of the Egyptian pantheon. Some of the scholars I have analysed used ‘Re’ while others used ‘Ra’.

¹⁰² Baines’ analysis of the titles of Shoshenq I (who reigned during the New Kingdom) shows that he was called ‘Horus: Mighty Bull, Beloved of Re, whom he caused to appear in order to unite the Two Lands; Two Ladies: Who Appears with the Double Crown like Horus Son of Isis, who propitiated the gods with *ma‘at* (order); Golden Horus: Powerful of Strength, who smites the Nine Bows, great of victories in all lands; Dual King, Lord of the Two Lands, possessor of strength of arm: Hedjkheperre-satepnare (= The White One of the coming into being of Re, whom Re chose); Son of Re, of his body: Shoshenq, beloved of Amun’ (Baines, 1998: 20).

during times of peace and war.¹⁰³ Apart from royal titles, the royal ideology in Egypt was expressed through inscriptions on royal artwork, royal tombs, victory monuments and other local iconographies (Wilkinson, 2000: 23–32).

Moreover, the Egyptian kings performed different duties. Rosalie David notes that the king was in charge of political and administrative matters in Egypt from the early dynasty (c. 3,100 BCE) to the late kingdom (712–332 BCE) period (David, 1998: 17–18). He was the head of state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, but he was not expected to physically appear in most battles. Egyptian monumental inscriptions described him as the ‘king who is valorous like Montu, who captures but no one captures from his hand, who tramples all rebellious foreign lands...’ (COS, 2: 15 cf. ANET, 244).¹⁰⁴ The king was in charge of law and order throughout the land. He was also responsible for relations with other nations (Frandsen, 2008: 47–48). He directed the construction of roads, mortuaries, temples and other important monuments. There were different levels of leadership in ancient Egypt, ranging from king Pharaoh to the senior officials, nobles, religious leaders and administrators. According to Baines, most Egyptian sources did not focus on the relationship between the king and his subjects. The knowledge of governance was restricted to a select few within the hierarchy (Baines, 1990: 1–23, Baines, 2007: 14–17).

¹⁰³ The titularies served as a reminder for the king to discharge his royal responsibilities. They also served as a reminder for the people (subjects) not to undermine the king’s authority.

¹⁰⁴ The heroics and military accomplishments of Thutmose III stated that ‘he is Horus, the strong-armed one, an excellent fortress for his armies, a refuge for the people, one who subdues all lands when they invade, one who rescues Egypt on the field of battle, a defender who is not afraid of ravenous ones’ (COS, 2: 15). The military success of Amenhotep II (1427–1400 BCE) the son of Thutmose III was also recorded: ‘His majesty arrived at Ugarit. He surrounded all those who defied him. He slew them like those who did not exist, being placed beside those who lay prostrate’ (COS, 2: 20). The poem on Ramesses II reported his exploits at battle of Qadesh. ‘His Majesty was a youthful lord, a hero without peer...Mighty in victories over all foreign countries, one never knows when he may begin to fight...Even a thousand men cannot withstand him, hundred thousands despair just at the sight of him...Rescuer of his infantry on the day of battle, great protector of his chariotry. Bringing his followers (safe home), saving his troops, his heart (steady) as a mountain of copper’ (COS, 2: 33).

The influence of religion on leadership in ancient Egypt cannot be underestimated. Hoffmeier, quoting the Greek historian Herodotus, notes that the Egyptians were ‘beyond measure religious, more than any other nation’ (Hoffmeier, 1994: 283). In the Egyptian worldview the king stood as an intermediary between the gods and the people. The principal god of the Egyptians was Re (the Sun god) from whom the king derived his title ‘son of Re’. As Quirke notes, Pharaoh was at the centre of religion within the cult of Ra (Quirke, 2001: 17). Pharaoh used religion and the religious belief of the people to enhance his authority over his subjects. He was believed to be the incarnation of the gods with some divine powers to make physical and divine sanctions; he sponsored the activities of the temple and ensured its smooth running to please the gods; he was the ceremonial ritualist but he delegated the performance of rituals to the priests. Hence, the priests also served as cultic leaders. Robins observes that ‘in reality temple rituals throughout the land were carried out by priests, but temple decorations always showed the king and not priests interacting directly with deities’ (Robins, 1993: 21).

Training was an integral part of leadership in ancient Egypt. Those who were born into the royal family and those who would serve as leaders at different levels were expected to undergo training. They were expected to have a certain level of literacy to be able to function well in their positions. There is consensus among Egyptologists for the existence of schools in Egypt where prospective royals were taught wisdom for leadership. Ray especially notes that some schools were attached to the temple. He suggests that the content of the curriculum included writing systems and traditions as well as the ‘use of proverbs and rules for successful or ethical behaviour’ (Ray, 1995: 18). If this is correct, then there would have been a required level of literacy and hierarchical infrastructure or social system of stratification for those aspiring to be leaders. This form of preparation enabled them to function effectively in their royal duties. The Egyptians had many pieces of literature for the training of kings, queens and

administrators. They included the *Instruction of Merikare*; *Hardjedef*; *Amenemope*; *Advice to the Youthful*; *Ptahhotep*; and *Kagemni* (Ray, 1995: 18–29, Zulu, 2009: 7–63, Pritchard, 1969).¹⁰⁵

Women also participated in economics and leadership in the life of ancient Egypt.¹⁰⁶ According to Schomp, ‘Egyptian women did enjoy more rights than women in most other parts of the world’ (2008: 23). They had the freedom to inherit property, own or sell personal property, lend money and start their own businesses. Some of the educated among them were entrepreneurs. Others were offered official positions such as administrators, supervisors and advisers. Women were also allowed to fight their cases in the law courts. Uneducated women worked as hairdressers, dancers, farm labourers, mourners and housewives (Schomp, 2008: 23). At the leadership level, some women gained high status through their relationship with the king; some queens and queen mothers even rose to the position of Pharaoh through marriage; daughters of immediate past kings were allowed to rule in the absence of a male child; some of the powerful women who ruled in ancient Egypt participated in warfare and were accorded the status of a divinity (Robins, 1993: 23–27).¹⁰⁷ In the light of this summary, we can see that women were an integral part of leadership in Egypt. As we shall see later, the fact that this was possible in other cognate cultures suggests the possibility of women in

¹⁰⁵ For example, *Merikare* was the royal instruction of Khety III to his son Merikare who reigned during the tenth dynasty (2160 to 2025 BC). *Hardjedef* was a prince whose famous teachings and words of wisdom were preserved from the fifth dynasty (2494–2345 BCE). *Amenemope* was compiled around 1100 BCE as a guide for wise living. The thirty chapters contained important principles for good leadership at any level with topics on official procedure, responsibilities of courtiers, good speech and how to behave publicly. *Ptahhotep* was a wise man and a high-ranking official during the reign of King Izezi of the fifth dynasty. His writings and wise sayings were recorded to teach others who aspired to gain knowledge, power and influence (Zulu, 2009: 7–63, Pritchard, 1969).

¹⁰⁶ Virginia Schomp arrived at this conclusion with sufficient evidence from the Egyptian temple inscriptions and funeral inscriptions in tombs etc.

¹⁰⁷ For example, Queen Ahmose Merit Amun (wife and sister of Amenhotep 1) during the 18th dynasty (1545–1525 BCE).

leadership roles in the biblical texts, including Proverbs.

3.3. Leadership in Ancient Mesopotamia

There is an overlap in the history of Mesopotamia covering the early Sumerian history (3000 BCE–1900 BCE), the Babylonian Empire (1900 BCE–732 BCE), the Assyrian reign over Babylonia (732 BCE–625 BCE) and the Neo-Babylonian Empire (625 BCE–539 BCE) consecutively (Schneider, 2011: 17–33). This discussion of kingship in Mesopotamia will also cover ancient Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria. Eminent Assyriologist Wilfred Lambert has been an important voice in his analysis of events in Mesopotamia. Hence, it is important to analyse some of his writings. The Akkad Dynasty (2350 BCE–2150 BCE) and the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112 BCE–2004 BCE) in Sumer were in power for a long period. The Third Dynasty of Ur fell when armed nomadic Amorites invaded Mesopotamia and set up a new capital in a small town called Babylon. This affected the concept of the divinity of kings held by the Akkad Dynasty and the centralised economy at Ur, so giving rise to private ‘capitalism’ within the economy of the state (Lambert, 1998: 60–61). This eventually weakened the indigenous population and allowed the invaders to consolidate their position of authority.

Moreover, Lambert notes that the Assyrians were unusual, especially in their religion and organisation of the state. Akkadian was used as the official language of the administrators and rulers. Assyria became famous for its free international trade with other neighbouring cities in Mesopotamia. This trade produced many rich merchants and aristocrats who became more powerful than the king. According to Lambert, the people accepted the authority of the king as supreme when he ruled and acted in accordance with the ethos of the state. They could also

rebel and remove him from office if he failed to provide good leadership (1998: 67).¹⁰⁸ Olmstead suggests that this form of access to the throne may have influenced the Persians, Hellenistic rulers, Romans and some modern governments (Olmstead, 1918: 63–77). Some individuals seized power and made themselves kings over the land; among them was Sargon, who ruled around 2350 BCE. Lambert confirms that as early as 3200 BCE, writings existed in Mesopotamia but they were ‘restricted to administrative documents’ (Lambert, 1998: 54). He observes that much information about kingship may be unknown because scholars can only rely on the documents that survived destruction.

The king had a specific ‘job description’ in Mesopotamia. Smith notes that the words ‘lord’, ‘one who exercises lordship’, ‘kingship’, ‘the leader of the military forces’,¹⁰⁹ ‘shepherd of the land’ and ‘dispenser of righteous judgment’ were used to describe the duties of the king (Smith, 1982a: 19–20). Mesopotamian kings classified construction projects as part of their achievements. For example, Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562), while commenting on his achievements, declared that ‘what no former kings had done (I achieved): I cut through steep mountains, I split rocks, opened passages and (thus) I constructed a straight road for the (transport of the) cedars’ (ANET, 307).¹¹⁰ Other duties of kings, according to Smith, were expressed through proverbs and wise sayings. In Babylonia, the ‘rulers ruled by the express authority of the gods, and were expected to create a prosperous, well-governed land’

¹⁰⁸ In other words, the aristocrats were the kingmakers in Assyria.

¹⁰⁹ The iconography and words highlighting the achievements of Mesopotamian kings are displayed on monumental inscriptions for the people to see. For example, ‘I am Shalmaneser, the legitimate king, the king of the world, the king without rival, ‘the Great Dragon’, the only power within the four rims (of the earth) overlord of all the princes, who has smashed all his enemies...the strong man, unsparing, who shows no mercy in battle, the son of Ashurnasirpal, king of the world of Assyria’ (ANET, 276). Sennacherib (704–681) said ‘I deprived Luli, king of Sidon, of his kingdom. I installed Ethba’al upon his throne and I imposed upon him the tribute (due to) me (as his) overlord’ (ANET, 288). Esarhaddon (680–669) boasted, ‘(I am Esarhaddon), the conqueror of Sidon, which lies (on island) amidst the sea, (he) who leveled all its urban buildings...’ (ANET, 290). They serve well as propaganda against potential enemies and rebels.

¹¹⁰ Kings were expected to execute their projects with absolute reference to the gods.

(Lambert, 1998: 55).¹¹¹ Their responsibility was to ‘reign wisely, justly and effectively’ (Lambert, 1998: 61) under the supervision of the gods. The subjects also had a duty to the kings: they defended the state and paid taxes in the form of animals and farm produce. Therefore, ‘a bureaucracy was set up to gather and distribute animals as taxes from twelve major cities’ (Lambert, 1998: 60).

Religious belief also played a vital role in leadership in ancient Mesopotamia. The Mesopotamian kings were expected to take their spiritual duties seriously. One of the primary assignments of the kings was to please the gods by participating in the temple rites as stated in the ritual texts. This was the only way to avoid the anger of the gods, rebellion and downfall of the kingdom (Lambert, 1998: 61). Marduk was the chief god of the Babylonians; the ritual texts reveal that most of the religious activities took place at the temple of Marduk in Babylon. According to Lambert, the king was expected to subject himself to public humiliation¹¹² once in a year ‘in return for which prosperity and success against enemies were assured’ (1998: 65). Similarly, the Sumerian kings maintained a close bond with the pantheon deities of the city.¹¹³ They were allowed to conquer other cities and control them without losing their allegiance to the gods. In Assyria, Ashur became an important place and became ‘deified as Ashur, the state god.’ The implication is that ‘the Assyrian state god was a king,

¹¹¹ Lambert, quoting Parpola, summarised the role of an ideal Mesopotamian king with a letter by Adad-shumu-usur to king Ashurbanipal: ‘Ashur, [king of the gods], nominated [the king] my lord to kingship over Assyria, and Shamash and Adad by their reliable extispicy have confirmed the king my lord as king of the world. There is a fine reign: days of security, years of justice, very heavy rains, massive floods, low prices. The gods are propitious, religion abounds, temples are well provided for, the great gods of heaven and netherworld are exalted in the time of the king my lord. Old men dance, young men sing. Women and girls are happy and rejoice. Women are married and provided with (ear)-rings. Sons and daughters are born, procreation flourishes. The king my lord pardons him whose crimes condemned to death. You have released the prisoner sentenced to many years. Those who have been ill for many days have recovered. The hungry have been satisfied, parched ones have been anointed with oil, the naked have been clothed with garments’ (Lambert, 1995:69–70).

¹¹² This public humiliation was a form of ritual before Marduk (the chief god).

¹¹³ The pantheon deities of the Sumerians are the triad Anu, Enlil and Enki. Anu is god of the sky, Enlil is god of the wind and Enki is god of water.

and the human king was his regent' (Lambert, 1998: 68).

Most Mesopotamian kings saw themselves as intermediaries between their subjects and the gods. As Cooper notes, 'kingship in Mesopotamia was always sacred, but only rarely divine' (Cooper, 2008: 261). The two exceptions, according to Cooper, were the kings Naram-Sin of Akkad and Shulgi of the Third Dynasty of Ur. Following Michalowski, Cooper suggests that Naram-Sin was deified after saving the city of Akkad from the confederacy of armies from the South and North of Babylonia. Shulgi, on the other hand, proclaimed himself as a god in order to protect himself from external threats (Cooper, 2008: 261–263). Lambert notes that the idea of kings adding divinity to their titles was not popular during the late Babylonian dynasty between 626–539 BCE (1998: 63–64). In addition, the majority of Mesopotamian kings had the tendency to associate themselves with wisdom and the sponsorship of wisdom writings. According to Lambert, the Babylonian wisdom literature includes, among others: the *Epic of Gilgamesh*; *I will praise the Lord of Wisdom*; the *Theodicy*; and the *Dialogue of Pessimism* (Lambert, 1995: 30–42).¹¹⁴ All these Mesopotamian proverbs, wisdom instructions, numerical sayings and fables were crafted together using different imagery and figurative expressions (Greenfield, 1995: 43–52).¹¹⁵

Sweet notes that Mesopotamian kings who possess 'god given' wisdom often manifested it through temple building and other activities that made the gods happy. They may not

¹¹⁴ The *Epic of Gilgamesh* focuses its attention on the futility of life. *I will praise the Lord of Wisdom* is similar to the biblical story of Job who lost everything. The *Theodicy* analyses the discussion between a 'just sufferer' and his orthodox friend. The *Dialogue of Pessimism* is similar to the book of Ecclesiastes with a focus on the futility of human endeavours (Lambert, 1995: 30–42). The *Wisdom of Ahiqar* is another text from Mesopotamia. It contains a list of reflections for a courtier who wants to be successful.

¹¹⁵ See the full text of these wisdom texts in W.G. Lambert's *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. I will refer to some of them in my exegetical analysis of Proverbs.

necessarily have been literate, yet they could lay claim to wisdom. She suggests that ‘reverence for the gods was the beginning of wisdom’ (Sweet, 1990: 57). Sweet also identifies other categories of wise people in Mesopotamia. They include the cult officials, exorcists, diviners, builders, craftsmen, soldiers, architects, scribes, teachers and counsellors (1990: 45–65). They were all professionals in their own right but were involved in some form of leadership.

Some scholars have written about the legal subordination of women by men in Mesopotamia, focusing on their roles as wives and child-bearers (Lerner, 1989).¹¹⁶ Others have argued for a more prominent role for women. Westenholz especially argues that women were given positions of authority within the temple economy in early Sumer and some women were used as religious icons. Following Lambert and Foster, she maintains that the symbolisation of Ishtar (as goddess of war) and other goddesses within the Sumerian pantheon is significant. She notes that Mesopotamian women were visible at religious centres functioning as priestesses or active worshippers. Westenholz questions the assumption that the legal and administrative texts allowed for full control over women. She maintains that, apart from housewifery and domestic duties, some women gained financial independence and economic status during the Third Dynasty of Ur. She concludes that some royal women influenced the leaders during struggles for succession (Westenholz, 1990: 510–521).¹¹⁷

3.4. Leadership in Ancient Ugarit and the Hittite Kingdom

The idea of leadership in Ugarit is similar to what was found in Mesopotamia as a

¹¹⁶ She observes that ‘women are either totally powerless or totally deprived of rights, influence, and resources’ (Lerner 1989: 239).

¹¹⁷ Christine Roy Yoder has also done some work on the role of women. I shall refer to this in chapter 4.

consequence of the international cultural influence. According to Gurney, a Hittite or Ugaritic king ‘was at the same time supreme commander of the army, supreme judicial authority, and chief priest’ (Gurney, 1958: 105).¹¹⁸ He usually delegated his judicial responsibility to lower officials while he concentrated on military and religious matters that required his involvement. The neglect of his royal duties would have amounted to a serious sin, which may have attracted the wrath of the gods upon the nation (Gurney, 1990: 53). The king was also expected to love justice and righteousness (Day, 1998: 86–88). He had a responsibility to look after widows, orphans and the poor. Day observes that ‘the terminology “just king” and “righteous king” is more suggestive of a Semitic rather than an Egyptian background, and therefore reveals something about the ideals of the Canaanite royal ideology’ (Day, 1998: 86). In terms of succession, it was the prerogative of the reigning king to nominate the one who would rule after him.

The king was not just a political leader; he was also a spiritual leader. He was the ‘chief priest and the central figure’ (Grabbe, 1991: 33) within the cult and was expected to lead during religious celebrations. The Great King Muršili II said: ‘I concerned myself with and performed the regular festivals of the Sungoddess of Arinna, my lady’ (COS, 2: 84).¹¹⁹ This is

¹¹⁸ He was a leader as well as a warrior. Šuppiluliuma gloated, ‘I, the sun Šuppiluliuma, the great king, the king of Hitti land, the valiant, the favourite of the stormgod, went to war...I crossed the Euphrates and invaded the country of Isuwa. The country of Isuwa I vanished for the second time and made them again my subject...The countries which I captured, I set free and they remained in their respective places, but all the people whom I set free, they returned to their people and the Hitti land took over their place’ (ANET, 318). Muršili II, the hero son of Šuppiluliuma also testified ‘then I went forth to Ishupitta. I attacked Palhuissa. The Pishurian enemy stood behind Palhuissa for battle against me. I fought them. The Sungoddess of Arinna, my lady, the victorious Stormgod, my lord, Mezzulla and all the gods ran before me. I destroyed the Pishurian enemy behind Palhuissa, then I burned down the town’ (COS, 2: 85).

¹¹⁹ King Muršili II stated further, ‘I held up my hand to the Sungoddess of Arinna, my lady, and said as follows: ‘O Sungoddess of Arinna, my lady! The enemy foreign lands who have called me a child and belittled me, have begun seeking to take away the borders of the Sungoddess of Arinna, my lady. Stand by me, O Sungoddess of Arinna, my lady. Destroy those enemies from foreign lands before me.’ The Sungoddess of Arinna heard my words and stood by me. After I sat down on my father’s throne, in ten years I vanquished these enemy foreign

evidence of a connection between the king and the gods during the ‘New kingdom’¹²⁰ of the Hittite empire. Gurney notes that regular personal attendance at important cultic festivals was a royal duty (1990: 53). Similarly, the idea of divine kingship was popular in Ugarit. Adela and John Collins observe that the names of dead kings in Ugarit were ‘preceded by the word *il*’, meaning ‘god’ (Collins and Collins, 2008: 9). ‘The statues of dead kings were placed in the temples and offerings were regularly made to them by the reigning monarch’ (Gurney, 1958: 120). This indicates that the kings were deified after death.

Day has suggested that it is natural to ‘look to Canaan/Syria/Transjordan’ as having the most influence on the Israelite monarchy. He finds parallels between Canaanite royal practice and the Hebrew Bible. For example, there are references to the king as a ‘priest after the order of Melchizedek’ and the ‘Jebusite cult of Elyon’. He also mentions the practice of ‘royal anointing’, the pronouncement of the king as ‘son of god and god’, and the king’s ‘alleged immortality’,¹²¹ as well as the use of ‘court officials’. He concludes that the Canaanite position is the closest model for the origins of Israel’s monarchy (Day, 1998: 72–90).

Less is known about the wisdom writings of Ugarit and the Hittites. Marquez Rowe observes that there is no mention of sages like Solomon, the Mesopotamian *Ea*, Egyptian Ma‘at and Israelite Lady Wisdom, who were known to be sources of wisdom in other contexts. He identifies some mythical poems which he claims deal with everyday life. He also identifies some educational texts and institutions in ancient Ugarit (Rowe, 2008 : 95–108). Similarly,

lands and destroyed them’ (COS, 2: 84).

¹²⁰ Great King Muršili II reigned during the ‘New kingdom’ of the Hittite Empire (1321–1295).

¹²¹ As we shall see later in our comparative analysis, reference to kings as gods and their immortality is not practiced in the Hebrew Bible.

Heim, relying on the works of earlier scholars, identifies some texts that confirm the status of kings as ‘gods or sons of the god’. He also identifies two epic texts from Ugarit commanding the king to ‘uphold the rights of the poor and vulnerable’ (Heim, 2009: 612).

Women occupied important positions within the leadership roles of ancient Ugarit and the Hittites. As with other ANE nations, royal women (wives and mothers of the king) played advisory roles in decision-making processes. Trevor Bryce reports that Queen Pudehepa (1275–1250 BCE) of the Hittite kingdom was influential throughout her reign. She collected wisdom and religious writings. She also co-authored some prayer texts with her husband. He concludes that the death of her husband (Great King Hattuşili III) ‘brought to an end one of the closest and most enduring constructive royal partnerships of the ancient world’ (Bryce, 2006: 319). Gurney also notes that the direction of kingship and queenship was from the Sun-goddess of Arinna (1958: 109). This is an indication of a woman offering spiritual leadership among the Hittites.

3.5. Leadership in Ancient Israel

Royal ideology can be found throughout the Hebrew Bible (Salvesen, 1998: 119–141, Smith, 1998: 142–162, Dell, 1998: 163–186, Rooke, 1998: 187–208, Gillingham, 1998b: 209–237, Williamson, 1998: 238–270, McConville, 1998: 271–295, Heim, 1998: 296–322, Joyce, 1998: 323–337, Mason, 1998: 338–364).¹²² The book of Judges, according to Block, is about the ‘Canaanization of Israelite society during the period of settlement’ (Block, 1999: 58). He suggests that the evidence of anarchy and the abuse of women in the book are the

¹²² See the articles by Alison Salvesen, Carol Smith, Katharine Dell, Deborah Rooke, Sue Gillingham, H.G.M. Williamson, J.G. McConville, Knut Heim, Paul Joyce and Rex Mason in (Day, 1998) for the discussion of kingship in the book of Psalms, Isaiah, Ezekiel and post-exilic writings.

consequences of not having a king in Israel (Block, 1998: 45–55). If this is correct, the implication of the book of Judges is that ‘a proper Israelite king would have done an immense amount of good for God’s people’ (Grabbe, 1995: 21). Leadership in ancient Israel was initially theocratic, before it was replaced with the monarchy.

According to the Deuteronomistic history, the rise of kingship in Israel can be traced to the injustice of Samuel’s sons and the need for a strong military leader ‘just like all the other nations’ (1 Sam 8:5). Samuel warned the people about the consequences of having a human king (1 Sam 8:11–18). Some of the consequences include rejecting God, forced military service, the introduction of forced labour and slavery, grabbing of their land and properties, heavy taxation, forced marriage, hereditary kingship and loss of identity as people of the covenant (Bandstra, 2008: 240–259). Saul (the first king of Israel) was a political leader and warrior, and also administered justice (1 Sam 9:1–11:13).

Royal appellations were indicative of the position and responsibilities of a king. For Brettler, the royal appellations in ancient Israel include ‘King’, ‘Divine Designee’, ‘Anointed or Messiah’, ‘The Chosen of the LORD’, ‘Shepherd’, ‘Exalted One’, ‘Head’, ‘Master’, ‘Judge’, ‘Lamp’, ‘Shield’, ‘Branch’ and ‘Ruler’ (Brettler, 1989: 29–49). Whitelam summarises the duties of a king as belonging to two areas: the first involves protecting his people ‘against the internal threat of rebellion or external threat of invasion’; and the second involves being able to ‘ensure the well-being of the nation through the establishment of justice’ (Whitelam, 1979: 17). On the one hand, the king is the leader of all, but on the other hand he is the ‘servant of the people’ (Weinfeld, 1982: 189). The royal Psalms also reveal some of the responsibilities

of an ideal king in ancient Israel (Eaton, 1986: 135–197).¹²³

Brettler's analysis of Israelite society shows that kings used a series of objects that distinguished them from ordinary members of the public. He observes that the items included 'a crown', 'special royal jewellery', 'royal clothing', 'sceptre', 'throne' and 'royal platform'. He notes that all these emblems of Israelite royalty could be 'projected onto God' (Brettler, 1989: 77–87). Salvesen refers to these items as part of the 'trappings of royalty' in ancient Israel (Salvesen, 1998: 119–141).¹²⁴

Like their ANE counterparts, Israelite kings lived in royal palaces. Though the royal court, officials had more access to the palace, while the kings were not completely detached from the people; they interacted with their subjects during judicial services and cultic rituals; they were given appellations such as judges, builders and custodians of royal resources (Brettler, 1989: 89–124). As judges, they had a duty to punish offenders; as builders, they were involved in construction projects; as custodians of royal resources, they were expected to be involved in the redistribution of wealth.¹²⁵

Moreover, an Israelite king was expected to have a good relationship with Yahweh (the national God). A king was called a 'son of God' (Psalm 2, 89 and 2 Sam 2) (Cundall, 1969:

¹²³ See Psalm 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, 144 etc. Moreover, Deuteronomy 17:14–20 portrayed the model of kingship that Yahweh wanted for Israel. First is the king whose power is limited under Yahweh. Second is the king who serves Yahweh with undivided allegiance. Third is the king who is a model in Israel. In my view, most of kings who ruled in Israel and Judah (including Saul, David and Solomon) struggled to match the standards articulated in Deuteronomy 17.

¹²⁴ See Salvesen (1998) for an insightful analysis of the Hebrew words 'nēzer / 'etārā / keter (crown), 'es'ādā (armlet), kissē (throne) ḥdōm (footstool) and šēbet / šarbîṭ (sceptre).

¹²⁵ See Deut 17:1–20; 1 Sam 8:5; 1 Kgs 3:16–28; 1 Kgs 6:1–28; and 1 Kgs 7:1–12.

31–41, Johnson, 1951: 162–209, Clines, 1967: 103–126).¹²⁶ Some passages even appear to refer to the king as a divinity (Psalm 45 and 110).¹²⁷ Some of the kings also served as priests (Ahlström, 1982: 44–74).¹²⁸ The appointment of most of the kings was a spiritual exercise. In the words of De Vaux, ‘accession to the throne (of Judah) implies a divine choice: a man is king by the grace of God not only because God made a covenant with the dynasty of David, but because his choice was exercised at each ascension’ (De Vaux, 1961: 100). The Israelite kings also had officials, as did their ANE counterparts.

Wisdom contributes to successful kingship in Israel. ‘King Solomon’ was reported to be famous for possessing wisdom far beyond his contemporaries. He allegedly spoke 3,000 proverbs and composed 1,005 songs (1 Kgs 4:29–32). Following Brueggemann, it can be argued that ‘Solomon’ was the ‘patron’ of the wisdom tradition in Israel (Brueggemann, 1990: 117–132). Hezekiah was also reported as a sponsor of the collection and editing of earlier wisdom (Prov 25:1). It was a common belief that kings needed ‘wisdom’¹²⁹ in order to

¹²⁶ For a comprehensive survey of scholarly literature on the Old Testament Background to sacral kingship, see (Cundall, 1969: 31–41).

¹²⁷ Sacral kingship is the ‘religio-political concept by which a ruler is seen as an incarnation, manifestation, mediator, or agent of the sacred or holy (the transcendent or supernatural realm)’ (TNEB, 1031). The Uppsala School (of the Uppsala University, Sweden) argues this idea was common during the early part of most ANE cultures. There are three perspectives about the theory of sacral kingship. The first admires the king as god. This is a common practice in Egypt and some African countries. The second conceives the king as semi-divine. He is the mediator between the gods and the people. The third possible explanation is that the king is the human representative of God. He was even called the Son of God in 2 Sam 7:14 and Psalm 2:7. This idea is found in ancient Israel.

¹²⁸ There are different views in terms of what the king does during worship. Whilst there are various roles for the king in the cult, it varies from one nation to another. For example, the king plays the role of a god during New Year’s festival in Egypt. On the other hand, Israel celebrated Yahweh’s enthronement as king during the New Year’s festival, but there were few instances when some kings (Saul, David, and Solomon) presumed that they had the right to offer sacrifices or carry out other priestly duties. For example, David was fully involved in the spiritual life of Israel; he offered sacrifices and organised the materials for the construction of the temple (Grabbe, 1995: 22–23). See Ahlström (1982) for a comprehensive discussion of royal priesthood in ancient Israel.

¹²⁹ The Israelite wisdom writings include the canonical Proverbs, Job, and Qohelet as well as the apocryphal Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) and the Wisdom of Solomon. The question of why wisdom needs to be acquired will be addressed in chapter 5.

make good leadership decisions, as well as to fulfil their judicial functions. Dell argues that kingship, as enshrined in Israelite wisdom, was theologically driven by faith in Yahweh (1998: 163–186) who is the king above human kings. Hence, the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom.

Leaders (kings, priests, prophets, government officials etc.) were not untouchable in Israel. There are many examples of the indictment of kings for their personal sins, the oppression of the poor, or supporting idolatry in the Hebrew Bible. Samuel disowned King Saul when he failed to kill the Amalekites and their livestock (1 Sam 15:1–23). Nathan criticised King David for raping Bathsheba and killing Uriah (2 Sam 12:15). A man of God confronted Jeroboam I when he stood by the altar in Bethel (1 Kgs 13:1–10). Elijah condemned King Ahab for confiscating Naboth's vineyard and executing him (1 Kgs 21:17–24). Hosea indicted the priests and the king for bad leadership (Hos 5:1–2). Isaiah was critical of the foolishness of the kings and their royal counsellors (Isa 1:10 cf. prophecy against Ahaz Isa 7: 1–15). Jeremiah boldly rebuked the last wicked kings of Judah (especially Zedekiah and Jehoiakim) and the lying prophets (Jer 21:12, 22:18–19, 23:9–32). Ezekiel also pronounced judgment on the 'shepherds', which is a metaphor for kings or rulers of Israel and Judah (Ezek 34:1–10). The above examples imply that some kings failed in their duties to serve and protect the people as human representatives of Yahweh. As we shall see later, there are some proverbs indicting leaders in the book of Proverbs.¹³⁰

At this juncture, it could be asked what, the role of women was in leadership in ancient Israel,

¹³⁰There are some passages in the Hebrew Bible that suggest that leadership could be a bad thing as they point to the danger of bad leadership. Some of the examples can be found in Jer 23:1–4; Ezek 34:1–8; Prov 29:2; Prov 16:12; Prov 29:12; 2 Chro 36:11–14; 1 Sam 15:23; Jer 14:14–16; Isa 1:23; Jer 37:1–10 and 2 Kgs 24:18–20.

if they had one at all. In an attempt to answer this question, Grace Emmerson argues that women were influential. She highlights a number of pieces of evidence throughout the Old Testament.¹³¹ She moves on specifically to argue for the communal contributions of women in the Israelite monarchy, prophecy and wisdom. In her analysis of *gēbîrâ* (the title for the queen mother), Emmerson explores the influence of royal women such as Bathsheba, Jezebel, Nehushtah and Athaliah. She also alludes to the contributions of Miriam, Deborah and Huldah in Israelite prophecy. She argues that there is ‘no evidence that female gender was a disadvantage in the exercise of prophetic gifts’ (1989: 376) throughout the Old Testament. In terms of wisdom, she makes reference to the wisdom of the woman of Tekoa (2 Sam 14:2), the woman of Abel (2 Sam 20:16) and others mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. She concludes her study by analysing the importance of women within the Israelite family (Emmerson, 1989: 371–394). I concur with Emmerson that women played some leadership roles in ancient Israel.

Scholars have long debated how the term *gēbîrâ* should be understood.¹³² Andreasen argues that ‘the queen mother was not merely treated with deference by the monarch, but she held a significant official position superseded only by that of the king himself’ (Andreasen, 1983: 179–194). He sees it as an important official advisory role especially during mediation and royal succession. He notes that this role was similar to the Hittite ‘Tawananna’, who was influential in the socio-political life of the nation. He concludes that this ideology does not have any cultic significance in Israel. Similarly, Ben-Barak argues that Bathsheba attained the

¹³¹ For example, the contribution of women during the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem (Neh 3:8); the rebellion of Israelite midwives against Pharaoh’s instruction (Exod 1: 16, 21); and female metaphors used to describe how God and Moses nurtured the Israelites to the Promised Land.

¹³² For example, see the articles of Ben-Barak (1991: 23–43); Andreasen, (1983: 179–194) and Smith, (1998:142–162).

position of queen mother through her personal influence and quest for power. Her analysis of Bathsheba (1 Kgs 2:19), Maacah (1 Kgs 15:13), Hamutal (2 Kgs 23:31), and Nehushta (2 Kgs 24:8) leads her to conclude that 'each of these queens was the mother of a younger son who was without right to the succession, which legitimately belonged to an older brother' (Ben-Barak, 1991: 31). Therefore, the support of these queen mothers was necessary as the power behind the throne. They were ambitious women who used the 'force of their personality and command of power and influence' to gain recognition before and during the reigns of their sons. She also finds some evidence in 'Ahatmilku, Puduhepa, Tm, Sammurama, Naqi'a-Zakfitu, Adad-Gupp and Atossa' (Ben-Barak, 1991: 31–32), who provide similar examples from the wider ANE.

Ackerman (1993: 385–401), following Andreasen and Ben-Barak, but taking their works further, suggests that the queen mother in Israel also had a cultic role. She notes that the devotion of the queen mother to Asherah was 'fundamental to the role accorded her in matters of succession' (Ackerman, 1993: 388). She finds some evidence that Asherah may have been worshipped along with Yahweh within the Judean community. At the cultic level, the queen mother stands as a human representative of Asherah, with political and spiritual influence. She concludes that 'such a divine legitimization would then allow the queen mother to function as the second most powerful figure in the royal court, superseded only by her son, the king' (1993: 401).

However, Carol Smith has challenged this view. Smith thinks that some royal women in Israel publicly displayed some characteristics of kingship. In her analysis, she uses the definition of 'queenship' as her starting point. She identifies the meaning of the words *malkā*

and *gēbîrâ*. For Smith, *malkâ* is used to describe either the wife of the king or a woman who is herself a ruler. This was mostly used for non-Israelite women rulers. She notes that the word *gēbîrâ* has many meanings. Following the scholars before her, she agrees that the word can be used to describe royal women who are wives of a king or the mother of a reigning king (queen mother). She also suggests that *gēbîrâ* was a title given to women who were ‘already influential and powerful’ (1998: 145). In other words, the title was granted in recognition of their power and influence. Therefore, ‘a woman could be a *gēbîrâ* without being the mother of a king or even a member of a royal court’; or she could also be a ‘queen mother’ without being designated *gēbîrâ* (1998: 145). She concludes that, despite the negative picture presented by the Deuteronomistic narrator about the roles of Bathsheba, Jezebel and Athaliah, they all exercised their influence and wielded it very effectively when a ‘male power is absent or negligible’ (1998: 160) in leadership matters (Smith, 1998: 142–162).

Similarly, Shearing thinks that, while the term *gēbîrâ* was not used for Bathsheba, the way Solomon treated her in 1 Kings 2:19 by ‘rising, bowing and sitting her on a throne’, suggests that she was one (Shearing, 1997: 435). Following Smith and Shearing, it is reasonable to conclude that women contributed to successful leadership in ancient Israel in some ways. In spite of the nature of the male dominated society in which they lived at that time, they made use of their influence when it was possible. As we shall see later, some of the texts in Proverbs give at least the possibility of female leadership.

3.6. Conclusion

How can this exploration of leadership in the ANE shed light on leadership in ancient Israel, especially Proverbs? I shall answer this question by examining the relationship between

kingship in Israel and the ANE. Heim notes that leadership in Israel did not exist in isolation; it was significantly influenced by Egypt, Mesopotamia and Canaan. He alludes to the phrase ‘like all the other nations’ (1 Sam 8:5, 20), used by the Israelites to demand a king, as evidence (Heim, 2009: 610). Similarly, Day’s excellent analysis shows that there is a foreign Semitic influence on Israelite wisdom, in addition to the Egyptian influence. He argues that, while there is no consensus among scholars regarding the extent of this influence, the enriching evidence from the Semitic parallels cannot be ignored (Day, 1995: 62–70). If Day and Heim are correct, then some comparisons can be made between kingship in Israel and other ANE nations, and by implication, leadership in general.

This analysis shows that leadership through kingship of one form or another was seen throughout the nations of the ANE. Kings in Israel and the ANE were considered human representatives of the divine powers (Smith, 1982b: 18–38).¹³³ They were instruments under the supervision of the deities. In addition, the use of the royal crown, clothing, sceptre and throne were common to all (Mckay, 1999: 95–100). Particularly noteworthy is the theocratic nature of most ANE monarchies, which has similarities to ancient Israel (Levinson, 2001: 512).¹³⁴ Hence, the use of religion by the kings to prove their divine legitimisation and human assent to the throne was common to all. Most of the kings participated in enthronement rituals before the sovereign god of the city, in the presence of the wider public.¹³⁵ The most

¹³³ In the ANE there was a triangular relationship between the king, his subjects and the gods. The same relationship is found in ancient Israel.

¹³⁴ For example, the king is the ‘adoptive son of the god’ (Levinson, 2001: 512). In ancient Israel, Yahweh was the king, but he had a human representative on the throne. The idea that the king acted as a surrogate of a higher divinity was common throughout the ANE. The gods had the prerogative to appoint kings and the kings had a responsibility to provide for their subjects.

¹³⁵ These were the rites and celebrations surrounding their becoming rulers over the people. ‘Upon accession to the throne, the Babylonian monarch might proclaim a special remission of debts, free slaves, restore land to its owners, adjust prices, and ensure correct weights and measures’ (Levinson, 2001: 516).

surprising thing, as we shall see later in Proverbs, is that this legitimisation and assent do not just depend on the initial ritual but the king's ongoing leadership practice.

Moreover, the 'dual function of the king as both warrior and judge' was known throughout the ANE (Whitelam, 1979: 17). The king was the military commander-in-chief and he was expected to lead the nation during times of both peace and war. The Israelite and ANE kings also offered judicial services to their subjects. 'As judge, the Israelite king was supposed to judge justly and with equity; this would assure him a firm throne' (Brettler, 1989: 114). Other ANE cultures had the same belief. As mentioned earlier, the kings had a duty to maintain law and order. They were to look after the poor and vulnerable within society. Weinfeld, especially, notes that the Mesopotamian kings were required to 'relieve the burden of the poor through royal edicts' (Weinfeld, 1995a: 48). Just as Yahweh gave righteousness and justice (*mišḥpaṭ* and *ṣ^edāqâh*) to the kings in Israel, Re gave *Ma'at* to the kings who ruled in Egypt, and Marduk gave *kittu* and *mēšharu* to the kings of Babylon (Epsztein, 1983: 105). In other words, the kings were patrons of social justice. Furthermore, the kings were involved in at least some building projects. These included the construction of cities, houses, temples, palaces, workshops, roads, walls, water conduits and cisterns.¹³⁶ All the ANE nations examined represented their histories in royal inscriptions, chronicles, king lists or annals, monuments and other local iconographies (Hallo, 1997: xxvi–xxvi, Winter, 2008: 75–101).¹³⁷

¹³⁶ The kings served as defenders and patrons of the cult with their 'diligence in repairing and rebuilding temples' (Levinson, 2001: 517). For an elaborate discussion of the building projects of the Assyrian kings and Solomon, see Ahlström, (1982: 1–6, 27–43). Solomon built representative buildings and he was praised for that (1 Kgs 6:1–28; 7:1–12). Nonetheless, when it comes to the book of Proverbs, this was not important. What Proverbs seems to be drawing attention to is not about status symbols, but virtues. Social justice was more important than representative buildings in Proverbs. For example, we see Lady Wisdom building her house with seven pillars (Prov 9:1–2) and the wise woman building her house (Prov 14:1; 31:10–31).

¹³⁷ The kings in ANE and Israel celebrated their lifetime achievements with 'monumental inscriptions but also in royal hymns, date formulas and statuary' (Hallo, 1997: xxvi). In other words, there was an attempt to keep

Whitelam refers to all these as ‘royal propaganda’ (1992: 47).

A number of kings in the ANE and Israel were referred to as priests for their ‘provision and maintenance of sanctuaries’ (Collins, 2008: 15). The participation of the king in religious activities was also a common practice (Rooke, 1998: 187–208).¹³⁸ In addition, most of the ANE nations had didactic and wisdom literature (ANET, 403–52). The expectation that a king should possess exceptional wisdom to rule wisely was a common phenomenon. Most ANE kings gained respect and acceptance through their displays of wisdom. Kings sponsored wisdom writings and they were attentive to them. They also had wise men as advisers and administrators.

However, there are some differences between Israel and the ANE kings. The affirmation of kings as divine appears to be more common in Egypt than other ANE nations. Walton captures this contrast in the following generalisation: ‘the Egyptian king is almost entirely in the divine realm, the Mesopotamian king is in the middle, the Israelite king is almost entirely in the human realm’ (Walton, 2007: 286). In contrast to Walton, I would argue that there are different traditions within the Hebrew Bible about the status of kings in Israel. Some biblical passages are sympathetic to the monarchy while others suggest that ‘the Deuteronomist was opposed to kingship’ (Gerbrandt, 1986: 38, McKenzie, 2000: 286–314).¹³⁹ Some texts presented the Israelite kings in their human frailties, with restrictions on their royal powers, while others distinguished them as sons of Yahweh, with significant involvement in cultic

records of royal achievements (accountability, heritage and infrastructure).

¹³⁸ For the relationship between the high priesthood and the monarchy in Israel, see Rooke (1998: 187–208).

¹³⁹ Some of the examples include Deut 17:14–20; Judg 8:22–23; 1 Sam 8:11–18 and 2 Kgs 18–23 etc. Gerbrandt especially suggests that ‘the correct question with which to confront the Deuteronomist...is not whether he was anti-kingship or pro-kingship. Rather, we need to ask what kind of kingship he saw as ideal for Israel, or what role kingship was expected to play for Israel’ (Gerbrandt, 1986: 41).

practices.¹⁴⁰

Scholarly opinion is divided concerning the relationship between the king and Yahweh as well as his role to the nation of Israel and the cult. They recognised the difficulty of a precise definition for sacral kingship, the form and nature of cultic ceremony, the place of ‘Royal’¹⁴¹ and ‘Accession’¹⁴² Psalms in ancient Israel (Johnson, 1955, Cundall, 1969: 31–41, Clines, 1998: 639–664, 687–700). The implication of the arguments of these scholars is that there are some passages in the Hebrew Bible that imply there might be sacral kingship in Israel; therefore, biblical interpreters should recognise the diversity. In the same vein, Sigmund Mowinckel observes that the idea of kingship in ancient Israel is fundamentally similar to the rest of the ANE ‘quite naturally, since Israel, according to the testimony of the Old Testament, had adopted the kingship in direct imitation of the Canaanite one’ (Mowinckel, 1959: 283). As we shall see later in the exegetical chapters, the same complexity and pluralism can be found in the book of Proverbs (cf. Prov 16:10–15; 25:1–2).

Another difference is that the Israelite monarchy lacked the ‘long royal titularies, which characterize Mesopotamian inscriptions’ (Brettler, 1989: 29).¹⁴³ In addition, the worship of a dead king as a divinity was apparently not practised in Israel. As mentioned earlier, some of the ANE kings were worshipped as gods by their successors, especially in Egypt (Robins, 1993: 21). This is different from what we find in ancient Israel; Yahweh was the only god that was to be worshipped there. The final difference is that some royal women were sovereign

¹⁴⁰ For example, Israelite kings did not claim to have divine origin, unlike their counterparts in ancient Egypt and a selected few in Mesopotamia; but they were called sons of God like the ANE kings.

¹⁴¹ See Psalm 2, 18, 20, 21, 45, 72, 101, 110 and 132.

¹⁴² See Psalm 47, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98 and 99.

¹⁴³ In other words, the use of long ‘titularies’ that was common in some of the ANE was absent in Israel.

rulers in the ANE, especially in Egypt. This was not common practise in Israel, apart from the instances when ‘Athaliah’¹⁴⁴ and Bathsheba used their own initiative or took advantage of their relationship with a reigning king to influence the succession (Heim, 2009: 610; Smith, 1998: 142–162).

From the preceding discussion, an analysis has been made of aspects of some communities within the ANE context. Common elements have been identified and the areas of differences between ancient Israel and their international neighbours discussed. This exploration of kingship in the ANE has served as a background to understanding leadership in the book of Proverbs,¹⁴⁵ stating the specific points of overlap and areas of difference.¹⁴⁶ The common themes identified in the ANE and Israel include ‘the king as divine representative,’ ‘the king and social justice,’ ‘the morality of the king,’ ‘the role of wisdom in leadership’ and ‘the role of women in leadership’. I will look out for these themes and interact with them in my exegetical chapters.

¹⁴⁴ It must be pointed out that Athaliah was seen negatively as a wicked queen in the Bible.

¹⁴⁵ Proverbs (in its present form) came to its final form after the exile. It nonetheless became almost a timeless piece that represents royal ideology in Israel over time.

¹⁴⁶ Some of the differences include full involvement of the king in cult worship, long royal titularies, worship of dead kings as a divinities and polytheistic worship etc.

CHAPTER 4

SURVEY OF SCHOLARSHIP ON LEADERSHIP IN PROVERBS

4.1. Introduction

Many commentaries and scholarly works on the book of Proverbs have appeared over the past 25 years, but a less sizeable amount of material has specifically focused on leadership or other related themes. In spite of the increase in the scholarship of Proverbs, there is need for more work on its conception of leadership. In this chapter, I shall review existing studies on leadership in Proverbs and consider the main issues. I will summarise and critique the contributions of Bryce, Humphreys, Golka, Whybray, Weeks, Brown, Dell, Yoder, Hatton and Ansberry; then I will justify the focus of this investigation. The rationale for this arrangement is chronological in terms of the year of publication. It is a sequential historical approach, rather than a thematic one.¹⁴⁷ In addition, these scholars have been selected because they give a context for the present discussion of leadership in Proverbs.

4.2. Individual Scholarly Contributions

4.2.1. Glendon E. Bryce

Bryce's 1972 article entitled 'Another Wisdom-“Book” in Proverbs' has made an important contribution to the ongoing discussion of leadership in Proverbs. His study led him to make two proposals regarding Proverbs 25:2–27. Firstly, that the collection was used for the training of courtiers; and secondly, that the collection was carefully arranged and structured.

¹⁴⁷ It is difficult to put the arguments of the scholars under specific thematic categories.

Bryce identifies the connection between the Egyptian wisdom of *Sehetepibre* (Lichtheim, 1973: 125–129)¹⁴⁸ and the book of Proverbs. He argues that understanding the *Sitz im Leben* of *Sehetepibre* can help to determine the context of Proverbs 25:2–27 (Bryce, 1972: 147). Bryce suggests a specific structure for *Sehetepibre*. He notes that two exhortations or clauses within the book show the mutual reliance between the king and his subjects (1972: 146). Pharaoh needs his subjects as much as they need him; he should defend the people and the people ought to pledge their loyalty to him. The first section, according to Bryce, focuses on the duties of the subjects to the crown, while the second section focuses on the duties of a king to his subjects. Bryce suggests that the Pharaohs used the original ‘wisdom-book’ for their self-establishment and to ensure the continuity of their dynasty (1972: 147). He also identifies another Egyptian schoolbook called *Kemyt* (Foster, 2001: 34–35),¹⁴⁹ which contains the educational curriculum for scribes who aspire to work within the royal court. This book exposes the students to the necessary information and skills that they need in order to function well as government officials. He maintains that both *Sehetepibre* and *Kemyt* serve the same purpose for the established government.

Bryce then turns his attention to the book of Proverbs, claiming that these two texts may be compared with the literary composition of Proverbs 25:2–27.¹⁵⁰ He also finds similarity between this small collection and the Sayings of the Wise in Proverbs 22:17–24:22, despite their different structure and content. He claims that the Egyptian *Sehetepibre* and *Kemyt* ‘provide literary models’ (1972: 147) that can illuminate our understanding of the structure and *Sitz im Leben* of Proverbs 25:2–27. He argues that a link is possible because Proverbs

¹⁴⁸ See Lichtheim (1973: 125–129) for a modern translation of *Sehetepibre*.

¹⁴⁹ *Kemyt* is the introduction to writing during the Middle Kingdom in Ancient Egypt (2030–1640 BC).

¹⁵⁰ My own text, translation and exegesis of Proverbs 25:1–7 can be found in chapter 6.

25:2–27 has a similar structure and a summary clause. He also finds a single theme, formal structure and a conceptual unity within the sub-structure of the text. Bryce identifies the ruler (6–15) and the wicked (16–26) as the main subjects of the two sections under one theme, which is leadership.¹⁵¹ He suggests that ‘a careful stylistic analysis of this composition not only establishes the number of units in each section but also strengthens the credibility of the notion that the composer was consciously employing catchwords and word-plays’ (1972: 151). He then moves on to offer a comprehensive analysis of the passage (1972: 151–153).

In his subsequent book, entitled *A Legacy of Wisdom* (1979), Bryce revisits familiar themes from his previous article. He continues to maintain that the Egyptian wisdom has made huge contributions to the wisdom of Israel (Bryce, 1979: 135–155). Bryce identifies the following parallels between *Sehetepibre* and Proverbs: First, they are ‘loyalist texts’ because they have the tendency to indoctrinate officials during the training process.¹⁵² Second, they show high regard for the king, placing him next to God (or a divinity) in his capacity for revelation. Third, the relationship between the king and his subjects is one of mutual support, because they need one another.¹⁵³ Fourth, both the *Sehetepibre* and Proverbs guarantee rewards for courtiers who faithfully discharge their duties. Fifth, the variety of forms and styles displayed in both writings is beneficial to the student.

¹⁵¹ Bryce divides each section into six units (verses 6–7, 8–9a, 9b–10, 11–12, 13–14, and 15) and (verses 16–17, 18, 19–20, 21–22, 23–24, and 25–26). ‘Each verse is linked to its partner within the unit by similar subject-matter by pronominal references, by rhyme or assonance, or even by means of the use of similar words or the same roots employed with different meanings. Although the individual units in this section are not related to each other in a direct way, they do have a common subject. This part of the book deals with the relation of the courtier to his superiors’ (Bryce, 1972: 151). The second ‘section consists of six units also which deal with a series of wicked characters: the hateful friend, the false witness, the faithless man, the tormentor, the enemy, the backbiter, the contentious woman, and the wicked. As Proverbs 23:19–24:2 attests, this subject was a favorite one for such small wisdom-books’ (Bryce, 1972: 152).

¹⁵² In other words, they expect the courtiers to be diligent and loyal in their service to the crown.

¹⁵³ I will discuss the mutual support between the leader and followers in my exegetical chapters.

Bryce's analysis of Proverbs 25:2–27 highlights a number of issues on leadership. It shows the primary duties of a leader; it calls the attention of a leader to the idea that he is in office to protect the interests of his subjects; it also emphasises the importance of the education of courtiers for effective leadership. Bryce notes that the goal of the collection is to help young administrators to succeed in their official duties; hence, they have to undergo some training. He also suggests that the trainees may have copied and memorised Proverbs 25:2–27 as part of the process. In addition, the passage offers practical advice to courtiers on how to behave within the royal court: they should know how to relate to their superiors (which appears five times within the text), their friends and their political opponents (1979: 156).

It is not entirely unreasonable to contemplate the possibility that Bryce is correct in developing the theme of leadership in both *Sehetepibre* and Proverbs 25:2–27. In my view, his statements about the biblical and Egyptological texts are persuasive. Furthermore, I agree with Bryce that there is a possibility that the stylistic elements in this collection are not accidental but always deliberate. His important work has called attention again to the impact of Egyptian wisdom on Israel. He has also provided admirable backing for an appeal to be attentive to Proverbs 25:2–27 on the subject of leadership.

However, Bryce's work has been criticised by the biblical scholar Stuart Weeks, whose work I shall examine in detail later. Weeks warns about the danger of finding Egyptian parallels in Proverbs. He particularly faults Bryce's attempt to find a parallel between *Kemyt* and Proverbs 25:2–27, insisting there is no evidence for finding such a resemblance. For Weeks, 'the resemblance to either work is not close, and one must question the validity of such analogies which depend on cross-breeding of two different works' (Weeks, 1994: 36). In

contrast to Weeks' critique of Bryce, Kenneth Kitchen has drawn attention to the sufficient connections between Proverbs and some wisdom books of the ANE (Kitchen, 1977: 69–114). Nonetheless, as Weeks notes, this calls for caution. Another limitation of Bryce's study is his lack of recognition of the connection between Proverbs 25–27. If Bryce's analysis that Proverbs 25:2–27 was used for the training of courtiers is correct, one wonders why this is not extended to other collections within Proverbs. An interesting study of the context and meaning of Proverbs 25–27, by van Leeuwen (1988), has shown that they are connected. Therefore, with van Leeuwen, it is possible to argue that there is a contextual interpretation for Proverbs 25–27.¹⁵⁴

4.2.2. Lee. W. Humphreys

In his 1978 journal article 'The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Book of Proverbs', one of the questions that Lee Humphreys¹⁵⁵ addresses is whether or not the collections in Proverbs 10–29 were used for didactic purposes by the royal court to train future courtiers (Humphreys, 1978: 177). In his attempt to answer this question, Humphreys explores the content and form of Proverbs 10–29 and compares it with some Egyptian wisdom material. He proposes that if the motif of the 'wise courtier'¹⁵⁶ found in Egyptian wisdom material can be found in Proverbs 10–29, then the collections have a 'courtly-didactic *Sitz im Leben*' (1978: 178).

¹⁵⁴ Following Bryce and van Leeuwen, this present study will use contextual interpretation to analyse the 'core leadership texts' that I have selected.

¹⁵⁵ The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Book of Proverbs originally appeared as a chapter in Humphreys' PhD dissertation presented to Union Theological Seminary New York in 1970, entitled The Motif of the Wise Courtier in the Old Testament. The same chapter was published as a journal article in 1978. For the purpose of this study, I shall focus our analysis on his later article because it represents a revision of his earlier thought.

¹⁵⁶ He is 'one whose life is devoted to the royal service, who would serve in the presence of kings' (Humphreys, 1978: 178).

Humphreys first turns to the Old and New Kingdom¹⁵⁷ Egyptian *Instructions of Ptahhotep*, *Kagemni*, *Ani* and *Amenemope* in order to explore their literary and theological proficiency. The *Instructions* encourage the wise courtiers to show humility before their superiors (*Ani* 29 and *Amenemope* 26–27). They must observe rules and protocols (*Ptahhotep* 38–42); behave wisely (*Amenemope* 9); listen carefully (*Ptahhotep* 17); use positive and effective speech (*Kagemni* 2.1); serve faithfully; maintain honesty (*Ptahhotep* 5); be a good example to others (*Ptahhotep* 18 and *Ani* 49); and be hard working in their duties. They must also avoid oppression and official corruption (*Ptahhotep* 20) (Humphreys, 1978: 178–180). Humphreys quickly points out the theological implication of this for the courtiers. It shows that there is a strong link between Pharaoh and the deities. ‘Pharaoh was the state, the god-king, son of the creator, establisher of *Ma‘at*...it was upon *Ma‘at* that the courtier founded his life, upon that which defined and informed the created universe itself’ (1978: 180). Therefore, serving the king amounted to serving the gods.¹⁵⁸

Humphreys then returns to Proverbs 10–29 to examine the development of the motif of ‘the wise courtier’ in Israelite wisdom. He begins by dividing Proverbs 10–29 into five collections.¹⁵⁹ In Proverbs 10:1–15:33 he identified the motif in a few isolated units, but he finds more parallels in Proverbs 16:1–22:16.¹⁶⁰ Humphreys then calls attention to the group of king sayings in chapters 16, 20 and 21. Following Brunner, (1958: 426–428), he notes that the imagery of the king’s wrath or favour and the establishment of his throne in righteousness are

¹⁵⁷ The Old Kingdom was between 2686 and 2181 B.C.E while the New Kingdom was between 1550 and 1070 BC.

¹⁵⁸ For an excellent discussion of King and Messiah as Son of God in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Judah see (Collins, 2008: 15–38).

¹⁵⁹ Proverbs 10:1–15:33; 16:1–22:16; 22:17–24:34; 25:1–27:27; 28:1–29:27.

¹⁶⁰ For example, there are many instructions on effective speech (16:5, 18–19, 29, 32); self-control (20:1, 21:17); concern for the poor (19:17, 21:23, 22:9); and showing the value of a good wife (18:22; 19:14). All these are very common in the Egyptian materials.

strikingly similar to the Egyptian tradition (1978: 181–182). He also argues that the placement of the Yahweh and king sayings around the curriculum used for the training of future courtiers has a theological significance, similar to the one identified earlier in Egypt (1978: 183).

Humphreys agrees with the scholarly consensus that Proverbs 22:17–24:34 is similar to the Egyptian *Amenemope*. However, he could not find any material focusing on the motif of the wise courtier, apart from the few references to social justice and to the harlot as a deep pit. He also identified more sayings that are clearly addressed to the courtier in Proverbs 25–27. In this collection, the virtues expected of a courtier include self-mastery, clever speech, faithfulness, friendliness, loyalty and self-control. He agrees with Bryce’s proposal that 25:2–27 is a curriculum for the training of future courtiers and attempts to connect it with 16:1–22:16. According to Humphreys, the sayings in Proverbs 28–29, on the other hand, are addressed to the king, and not to the courtiers. The motif is rarely seen in this collection (1978: 185). He suggests that the motif of the wise courtier is ‘most fully developed as an overarching frame of reference’ only in 16:1–22:16 and 25:2–27 (1978: 185).

Humphreys concludes that ‘the role of the royal court has been greatly exaggerated’ (1978: 187) in Proverbs 10–29 for three reasons. Firstly, the proportion of 30 sayings about the courtier within Proverbs 10–29 out of the entire 538 is relatively small. Secondly, the royal court was no longer relevant during the post-exilic period when Proverbs achieved its final form. Thirdly, the motif has limited theological and ethical implications in Israel. Unlike the Egyptians, who saw no difference between the king and the gods, a king was under the authority of Yahweh in Israel (1978: 187).

Humphreys' argument about the motif of the wise courtier in the Egyptian *Instructions* and the book of Proverbs is impressive. In my opinion, his work is one of the largest expanded surveys of Proverbs focusing in many chapters on the question relating to leadership. His examination of 10–29 shows that there is more material about the motif in 16:1–22:16 and 25:2–27 than elsewhere. His comparative analysis of the Egyptian and Israelite writings reminds his readers once again of the international nature of the ANE. In my view, Humphreys' examination shows that courtiers were also leaders within their own jurisdictions.

However, Humphreys' work has limitations in seven different areas. Firstly, his assertion that 'the role of the royal court has been greatly exaggerated' is questionable. As will be seen later, there are many proverbial clusters from different contexts that can be connected directly or indirectly to leadership in Proverbs. Secondly, his argument that the royal court was no longer relevant during the post-exilic period when Proverbs achieved its final form is also questionable. A contrary position was expressed by Weeks. According to Weeks, the Israelite wisdom literature (both the early and the late, post-exilic) are interested in the king and the royal court in spite of their scant mentions of it (Weeks, 1994: 55).¹⁶¹

Thirdly, following Dell, I would disagree that the motif of the wise courtier has limited theological and ethical implications in Israel. For Dell, the mention of Yahweh in Proverbs is significant (Dell, 2006a: 90–124) and the book contains different theological and sociological

¹⁶¹ While I agree with Weeks' point on this, his comment that the wisdom writers did not devote much space to the king and royal court is less obvious than he suggests, as I will show in chapters 5–8. I will use proverbs on wise courtiers as part of my criteria for selection of texts.

contexts (2006a: 125–154). The theology of the Israelites is expressed in their sacred books, including the wisdom literature (Waltke, 2004: 63–132). Fourthly, Humphreys seems to have underestimated the difficulty of using Egyptian wisdom to explain Israelite wisdom. He is right that we can find some links, but the difficulty of knowing the extent of borrowing is huge. With Weeks, it is possible to argue that Humphreys’ oversimplification of the link between the Egyptian and Israelite material is misleading (Weeks, 1994: 53–55).

Fifthly, Humphreys’ analysis is not well rooted in the exegetical analysis of 10–29. Taking a superficial look at the text is not sufficient; there is a need to be attentive to the details within the text.¹⁶² Sixthly, he fails to explore the royal elements in other parts of Proverbs (1–9; 30–31).¹⁶³ Lastly, he ignores the fact that seeking a thematic unity in a larger collection is rather difficult, if not impossible.¹⁶⁴ This present study disagrees with Humphreys’ conclusion that there is nothing relevant to wise courtiers in Proverbs 22–24. As we shall see in our treatment of 23:1–3 and 24:21–22, leadership is also an important theme in this section.¹⁶⁵

4.2.3. Friedemann W. Golka

In his 1983 article ‘Die Israelitische Weisheitsschule oder “Des Kaisers neue Kleider”’, Golka argues against the existence of schools during the pre-exilic monarchy. He maintains that ‘family tradition’ was the medium of training for scribes and courtiers in Israel (Golka, 1983: 257–270). Ten years later, in his book *The Leopard’s Spots*, Golka refuted the royal court

¹⁶² For example, Sandoval analysed the book of Proverbs with respect to poverty and wealth (Sandoval, 2005) and prosperity (Sandoval, 2008). I will use a similar approach for leadership in this study.

¹⁶³ This was outside the scope of his interest at the time when he wrote his article.

¹⁶⁴ This study demonstrates that leadership is an important theme in significant sections of Proverbs (perhaps not in a unifying way).

¹⁶⁵ I will treat these verses below in chapter 8 where I will present a more developed argument in favour of the relevance of wise courtiers. Another important proverb can be found in Proverbs 22:29 ‘Do you see those who are skilful in their work? They will serve kings; they will not serve common people.’

hypothesis as argued by H.J. Hemisson, Skladny and others. He insisted that ‘if we continue to regard Israel’s wisdom through Egyptian spectacles, its indigenous features are unlikely to become much clearer’ (Golka, 1993: 16).

The discussion of the royal court sayings occupies a whole chapter in Golka’s book. He sets out his task by exploring the origins of royal sayings in African proverbs and Proverbs 10–29. He divides the African proverbs into four categories: The first are ‘proverbs critical of the King or Chief’. They focus on the equality of all men, the temporality of life and power, the limitation of the chief’s authority, the ability of subjects to remove a tyrant leader, and the need of every leader to depend on the loyalty of his people (1993: 17–21). The second are the ‘proverbs critical of the court’. They summarise the people’s verdict on courtiers. They are mere servants who can never become king; they are limited, replaceable and unpopular with the people (1993: 22–23). The third are the ‘proverbs sympathetic to the chief’. These include sayings about the authority, justice, knowledge, wisdom and glory of a king, as well as his maintenance of order and mediation of blessing for the people (1993: 23–26). The fourth are the ‘unclear proverbs’. These are the sayings that are neither sympathetic to nor critical of the court (1993: 26–27). His exploration leads him to conclude that African royal and court sayings originated from ordinary people. They are ‘coined by circles which are socially distant from the king or chief’ (1993: 16).

Golka then turns his attention to Proverbs 10–29 in order to explore the origin of the royal sayings within the collections. He divides them into four sections. The first he calls collection A (Prov 10–15). These are proverbs ‘critical of the king’. They remind the reader about the mutual dependence between the king and his subjects. Following McKane, he argues that the

sayings are from ordinary people within the agrarian society, ‘the family, clan, tribe, and work’ (1993: 28). The second he calls collection B (Prov 16:1–22:16). Against Skladny’s position that the collection is used to train ‘diplomats and civil servants’, he maintains that the socio-economic background of the sayings belongs to the common people (1993: 31). The third group is collection C (Prov 25–27), which he claims are folk wisdom for farmers and craftsmen (1993: 32). The fourth group is collection D (Prov 28–29). Despite the various references to rulers in this collection, Golka suggests that these are sayings from ordinary people. He conceives them as ‘secondary usage of original folk wisdom’ (1993: 34). He warns his readers to be ‘wary of ideologically based hypotheses, such as ‘royal court’, ‘schools’, and ‘a professional class of wise men’ (1993: 35). Following the earlier work of his teacher (Claus Westermann), Golka finds more parallels between the biblical and African (central and West Africa) proverbs covering topics such as the rich and poor, law, crime and justice, family and kinship, creation and wisdom (1993: 36–122). In my view, Golka’s main contribution is that there are both positive and negative sayings about kings in Proverbs and Africa.

However, I would like to challenge some of Golka’s viewpoints. He admits that some royal sayings may have been collected or redacted at the court, but argues that they did not originate from the court. The limitation of this argument is that it does not give any room for the possibility that some proverbs were produced at the royal court (Perdue, 2000: xxix). Golka’s classification of proverbs that are critical of kings has been under attack by Fox (2000), who contends that they are not necessarily critical of kingship. For Fox, they only recognise the magnitude of the kings’ ‘power and the damage that they can do, and in any case people close to kings can see them with critical eyes’ (Fox, 2000: 10).

Moreover, many kings in the ANE, as well as in Africa, were known for their wisdom and philosophy. They composed their own proverbs and used the existing ones for speeches (Orwenjo, 2009b: 122–146). They also used proverbs to convey knowledge and settle disputes. Another difficulty with Golka's proposal is that African proverbs are different from one place to another, unlike the Israelite proverbial wisdom. In other words, Israel is a society, while Africa is a group of societies.¹⁶⁶ Coming from an African background, I can argue that some of his arguments about the setting of African proverbs are based on assumptions. His claim about the origin of African proverbs is conjectural, no less than the other alternative views that he condemned.

Furthermore, Golka's comparative studies oversimplify the literary genius behind the writing (literary style) of Israelite wisdom. For example, how many African proverbs have been written down? How many of them have survived until today? How reliable are the oral sayings that have been passed on from one generation to another? How can we be sure that they have not undergone errors of omission or transmission? While it is hard to doubt the similarities between African and Israelite wisdom, it is difficult to accept all of Golka's analysis. Fox has warned us to be 'wary about drawing conclusions from African parallels' (Fox, 1996: 239). In addition, ANE cultures are closer to one another than to the African cultures that Golka uses, because of their Semitic background. Therefore, if the link with Egypt is questionable, then the links with the central and West African proverbs are even more questionable.

¹⁶⁶ Cultures within the African continent differ so widely that no generalisation can be made from just one culture, tribe or language. For example, Nigeria is a combination of many different cultural societies within one country.

Contrary to Golka, Graham Davies has been able to provide a strong argument that the family was not the only training institution in Israel. He relies on the evidence of schools for courtiers and administrators in other ANE nations to argue for the possibility of a similar institution in Israel. He also notes that Israel had the same need for trained administrators as its neighbours. Moreover, Davies finds some connections between the book of Proverbs and the wisdom writings from Egypt and Mesopotamia. He argues that Proverbs may have functioned as an instructional textbook, like other wisdom instructions in the ANE. He concludes that the lack of overwhelming evidence for schools in Israel is due to the perishable writing materials that were used by the Palestinian scribes (Davies, 1995: 199–211).¹⁶⁷ The final limitation that we observe in Golka is that he only offers a basic analysis of Proverbs 10–29, without a deep exegesis. As will be seen later, a closer look at some selected texts in Proverbs will uncover a deeper meaning for leadership in different settings such as family, tribal, royal, school and even among ordinary folk.

4.2.4. Bruce V. Malchow

Following the earlier work of Skladny on wisdom in Israel (Skladny, 1962: 58–62), Malchow argues that the materials in Proverbs 28–29 were collected as a ‘manual for future monarchs’. He also builds on the methodological model of Bryce’s analysis of Proverbs 25:2–27, and proposes that ‘a similar, careful plan of editing’ (Malchow, 1985: 238) can be found in chapters 28 and 29.

¹⁶⁷ For a comprehensive treatment of the contributions of Richter, Nel, Volz, Hermisson, Shupak, Lang, Lemaire, Davies, Weeks and Fox to the debate on schools, see Waltke (2004: 60–62).

Malchow's examination of the form of Proverbs 28–29 leads him to make two important proposals. The first is that Proverbs 28–29 is a unified collection. He observes that most of the verses are 'individual two-line proverbs' with antithetic couplets. His second point is that most of the proverbs revolve around two keywords, *ṣaddîq* (righteous) and *rāšā'* (wicked). The two words were used together at the beginning (28:1) and the end (29:27) of the collection to connect the unit. For Malchow, the two words are deliberately placed within four proverbs (28:12, 28; 29:2, 16) and they 'occur at intervals' throughout the collection. He argues that 'these four are integrally related to each other and form a symmetrical pattern. Thus, the first and third couplets have rather similar first lines' (1985: 239).¹⁶⁸ Then he moves on to show the evidence of the connection of the two words in the four proverbs.

On leadership, Malchow notes that the four couplets uncover the consequences of having a wicked ruler. The reign of the wicked makes the righteous groan when transgression increases. The couplets also express the importance of having a righteous ruler in a position of authority. When the righteous come to power, the people rejoice because the wicked are destroyed. According to Malchow, the aim of this exhortation is to educate future rulers. He suggests that the structure of the 'four proverbs as a unity point out the responsibility of a sovereign to reign righteously' (1985: 239).

He then divides the collection into four units (28:2–11, 13–27; 29:1, 3–15, 17–26) identifying their internal connections. Malchow observes that Proverbs 28:2–11 is about the duty of a future monarch to administer 'law and justice to the poor'. He should judge and defend the weak, poor and needy (1985: 240). Elsewhere, he suggests that the wise are advocates of

¹⁶⁸ See Heim (2013: 592–607) for detailed analysis of the variant repetition in 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16.

social justice through their teachings (Malchow, 1982: 120–124). He also finds unity in the content of 28:13–27. He identifies ‘wicked people’ as the main theme of the section. He suggests that the long description of the wicked in this section ‘is a caution to the future monarch against becoming such a person or an instruction on dealing with such people when they are encountered’ (1985: 241). He also points out other keywords that make the section fit a royal and judicial setting.¹⁶⁹

Malchow observes that 29:3–15 continue to outline the characteristics of a wicked ruler. These include relations with prostitutes; demanding bribes or gifts; accepting flattery; participating in wicked deeds; promoting injustice; oppressing the poor; and expressing anger or ideas without caution (1985: 242). He admits that there is no unity in the content of 29:17–26, but he finds a link between the various topics and the previous sections. He thinks the section offers relevant advice to a future monarch to know that a lack of vision could lead to anarchy. Hence, he should observe the instruction of the wise, express his ideas and anger wisely, serve with humility, rely on Yahweh for wisdom, and understand that consistent justice comes from Yahweh (1985: 242–243).

Malchow sums up his argument by affirming the previous suggestion, by Bryce (1979) that 25:1–27:22 is directed at future rulers. He also proposes that 27:23–27 serves as an introduction to chapters 28–29, after exploring the shepherd imagery and applying it to leadership. Malchow concludes that ‘Proverbs 27:23–29:27 is a unified collection addressed to future monarchs’ (1985: 242–246). The power of Malchow’s proposal lies in his competent

¹⁶⁹ The royal and judicial settings are not the same. However, there are instances when the king can function as a leader as well as a judge.

use of assonance, repetition, sound and other poetic devices to link most of the units together. What is particularly helpful about his analysis is the fact that it allows the evidence to be seen within the text itself. This is illuminating for the present investigation. If Malchow's proposal is correct, then most of Proverbs 25–29 could be about leadership.

However, there are some aspects of Malchow's interpretation that are open to objections. His exploration of the shepherd imagery in 27:23–27 and its application to leadership does not fit the Israelites' belief about the continuity of David's dynasty. The Davidic covenant states that Yahweh gave David and his descendants the throne forever. Malchow's analysis suggests that the covenant is not applicable to the whole dynasty. It is a warning for kings who neglect their people that their reign will be cut short.¹⁷⁰ Many scholars, especially Whybray, are not convinced by his findings on the thematic unity within 28–29 (Whybray, 1994b: 379). The fact that he wants to connect every section to leadership can lead to over-interpretation. There are also a number of questions that Malchow needs to answer: Is it the thematic unity or the theme of the content that makes chapters 28–29 a manual for future monarchs? Are there not sufficient clues in other parts of Proverbs to inform our thinking on leadership? In other words, is there any possibility that other chapters of Proverbs were used to train future monarchs and courtiers? This present study seeks to make a case for leadership in Proverbs, looking beyond chapters 28–29.

¹⁷⁰ There is a difference between dynasty and individual rule. Proverbs suggests that unjust rulers undermine the stability of their kingdom. It is striking to see that in the real world and Israelite politics, unjust rulers did not last for long (1 Kings 15:34; 16:2, 19, 26). The proverb is not making an absolute claim but is pointing out the ideal.

4.2.5. Norman R. Whybray

Whybray was a distinguished scholar, whose works cover different areas of the OT.¹⁷¹ Whybray's 1989 article argues that the sages in Proverbs expressed a variety of attitudes towards poverty and riches (Whybray, 1989a: 332–336). His book entitled *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*, which appeared a year later, pursued the same agenda. His analysis of the vocabulary used for both wealth and poverty shows that there is more emphasis on wealth than poverty in Proverbs (1990a: 11–25). He suggests that the authors were educated, middle-class people who enjoyed relative prosperity but needed to work hard in order to maintain their position. He thinks this is why the society that produced Proverbs appears to be 'uncritical of the status quo' (1990a: 10) between the rich and the poor. As shall be seen, this conclusion is not as self-evident as Whybray has suggested. There are many proverbs on leadership that are critical of the unjust in positions of authority.¹⁷²

Moreover, Whybray attacks the theory that the royal court is the context for the royal as well as other proverbs. He opines that there is no evidence that individual proverbs in the book of Proverbs were composed at the court (1990a: 45–59). He then offers word studies of 'melek' (king);¹⁷³ 'šar' (official or nobleman);¹⁷⁴ 'nādīb' (prince or nobleman);¹⁷⁵ 'qāšîn' (ruler or prince);¹⁷⁶ 'nāgîd' (ruler);¹⁷⁷ 'mōšēl/ mōšēl' (ruler);¹⁷⁸ 'g'dōlim' (the great or nobles);¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ Whybray wrote significantly in 1966, 1974, 1989, 1990, 1994 and 1995. For the purpose of this discussion, I shall focus only on the ones that relate to the question of leadership in Proverbs.

¹⁷² Whybray is right that there are different attitudes towards poverty and riches in Proverbs. In the same vein, there is no singular teaching about leadership in Proverbs. Some proverbs tend to support the status quo while others tend to challenge it.

¹⁷³ Prov 14:28, 35; 16:10, 12, 13, 14, 15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 21:1; 22:11; 25:1, 2, 3, 5, 6; 29:4, 14.

¹⁷⁴ Prov 19:10; 28:2.

¹⁷⁵ Prov 17:7; 25:7; 19:6.

¹⁷⁶ Prov 25:15.

¹⁷⁷ Prov 28:16.

¹⁷⁸ Prov 28:15; 29:12, 26.

¹⁷⁹ Prov 18:16; 25:6.

‘yô‘eš’ (counsellor);¹⁸⁰ and ‘m^ešārēt’ (courtier or royal official)¹⁸¹ (1990a: 13).¹⁸² He also argues that the appearance of *melek* or *m^elākîm* 21 times within Proverbs 10:1–22:16 and 25–29, as well as other proverbs addressing those in authority, is not sufficient to prove their ‘courtly origin’. For Whybray, they are ‘comments and reflections of ordinary citizens on the supreme authority by which they are ruled and by whom their lives are in some measure affected’ (1990a: 47). Surprisingly, he concludes that they are naïve people ‘who had no first-hand knowledge of the reality of Israelite kingship’ (1990a: 47). As will be seen from the evidence, it is not obvious that Whybray is right; he is imprecise in his use of ‘courtly origin’. What does a courtly origin mean? Does it mean the courtiers wrote it, selected it, edited it or used it? Many modern scholars have made similar mistakes, thinking that the kings in ancient agrarian societies lived in isolation from their subjects, like modern monarchs. In fact, in many places in Africa and the ANE, people were able to see the king personally on a regular basis.

Whybray classifies the royal proverbs into four types:

- 1) Proverbs that attribute absolute power to kings or rulers.
- 2) Proverbs that uncritically attribute righteousness and justice to kings.
- 3) Proverbs that regard the power or success of rulers as limited in various ways and/or condemn those rulers who do not recognize or who exceed these limits.
- 4) A few remaining proverbs have been seen as addressed to persons close to kings or rulers (Whybray, 1990a: 48).

Despite the sages’ references to kingship, political power and social status in some passages, Whybray maintains that ‘none of them implies that its speaker was closely associated with the king or with other ruling authorities’ (1990a: 48). He argues that Israelite wisdom originated

¹⁸⁰ Prov 11:14; 15:22.

¹⁸¹ Prov 29:12.

¹⁸² Most of these verses are part of the leadership texts selected for close examination in this study.

in the family, and not in the court, as in other ANE cultures. He states that, even in some ANE literature, there is evidence that some royal proverbs do not have court connections. He calls attention especially to the Egyptian instructions such as ‘*Papyrus Insinger*’ and the ‘*Instruction of Anksheshonqy*’ whose addressees are not members of the ruling class (1990a: 58–59). Whybray acknowledges the link between the ANE materials, but he urges caution with uncritical scholarly presuppositions (Whybray, 1974: 33–43, Whybray, 1990a: 48, Whybray, 1995: 6–13, Whybray, 1989b: 227–250).¹⁸³

Whybray’s thesis that Proverbs uncovers different attitudes to wealth and poverty remains undisputed. His calls for caution on direct application of ANE material to ancient Israel and the need to focus on the internal evidence within the text are valid. His originality of thought, willingness to challenge established opinions, careful attention to detail and clarity of exposition of Proverbs makes his work valuable. In addition, his methodology in studying related words on wealth and poverty convincingly shows that they are among the major themes in Proverbs. His arguments, suggestions and conclusions represent both profound and provocative thought.

However, there are some aspects of Whybray’s analysis that I disagree with. His assertion that none of the royal proverbs ‘implies that its speaker was closely associated with the king or with other ruling authorities’ is debatable, raising some questions. Why would the common people comment on the royal authority without having a basic knowledge about how it

¹⁸³ For example, Whybray argues that the fact that schools existed in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Ugarit does not automatically suggest that Israel had similar institutions. He does not dismiss the possibility of the existence of schools of wisdom in ancient Israel, but he does not attribute all the material to them. In his 1989 article, Whybray also shows that there is no agreement among scholars concerning the social worlds of the sages in Proverbs (1989b: 227–250).

functioned? Is there no possibility that some of the biblical proverbs were produced within the royal court? How do we account for some proverbs that the biblical narrator claimed were spoken (1 Kgs 4:29–34) or sponsored (Prov 25:1) by the court?

Furthermore, Whybray's analysis of how the social origins of the sages in Proverbs led to different attitudes to wealth and poverty is correct, but one is left wondering why the influential royal court was the only institution that was not involved? Decisive action by a leader is needed for the redistribution of wealth among their subjects. The fact that the gap between the rich and poor in society cannot be successfully addressed without an established authority supports my argument that leadership is an important theme in Proverbs. Whybray's method of using word studies helps with understanding the different attitudes to poverty and riches in Proverbs. The same approach can be used to explore the theme of leadership within Proverbs.¹⁸⁴

Following Fox, this present study will argue that Proverbs is a product of different social groups and that it is possible that a fair number of proverbs emerged from the royal court. Fox writes: 'Since we cannot imagine courtly proverbs seeping down to be collected by the "folk" we must presume an upward movement. Everything we have was channelled to the court and through it. The flow cannot be supposed to move in the other direction' (Fox, 2000: 10). I want to quickly comment that Fox's statement, as categorical as it sounds, is broadly justified, even though his absolute exclusion of the possibility of moving in the other direction seems to have been overly confident.

¹⁸⁴ For example, there are 915 verses in Proverbs. Whybray himself conceded to the fact that there are more than 120 verses which directly refer to 'wealth, a comfortable existence, or positions of power and influence' (1990a: 13) in Proverbs.

4.2.6. Stuart D.E. Weeks

One of the questions that Stuart Weeks¹⁸⁵ investigates is whether the ‘contents or presentation of material in any part of Proverbs suggest an origin or redaction within the royal court or bureaucracy’ (Weeks, 1994: 41). In his attempt to answer the question, Weeks calls for caution on the superscriptions in Proverbs 1:1, 10:1 and 25:1, because they involve Solomon. Following Toy (1899) and Baumgartner (1951) he casts doubt on Solomon’s composition of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Psalms 72 and 127. He notes that the pseudonymous ascription of important ‘literature to a famously wise personage’ is a common practice (1994: 42). For Weeks, the arrangement of the titles in Proverbs 1:1; 10:1, 22:17, 24:23; 25:1; 30:1 and 31:1 ‘suggests an artificial classification’ (1994: 43).

Weeks then turns his attention to the question of the relationship between the royal court and the king sayings in Proverbs. He observes the need to challenge the presumptions that the sayings originated in a royal court and that they belong to the Israelite royal court specifically. He identifies 32 sayings that focus on kings and rulers. Weeks is not convinced for two reasons: First, the sayings express different attitudes towards kings and rulers (both positive and negative). Second, most of the sayings are concentrated within specific sections (16:1–22:16 and 25–29). Drawing on the earlier works of Skladny (1962), McKane (1970) and Golka (1986), he suggests that the ‘king sayings may arise readily among the general population’ outside the royal court (1994: 48).

¹⁸⁵ Weeks’ Early Israelite Wisdom is his revised PhD thesis under the supervision of Dr. John Day.

Regarding whether the proverbial sayings originated in the Israelite royal court, Weeks does not think so. He argues that king sayings are found in other post-exilic writings. He also calls attention to other ANE writings such as *Ahikar*, *Merikare*, *Amenemope*, *Kagemni* and *Ptahhotep*. He notes that kingship is a prominent theme in most Egyptian instructions. He also maintains that what is seen in Proverbs is an imitation of ‘conventions, motifs, and actual sayings from other, non-Israelite sources,’ which is not necessarily new (1994: 52). Therefore, there is no need to assume another level of composition within the royal court in order to explain the inclusion of the sayings in Proverbs. Similarly, the location of those sayings outside the beginning and the end of the collection casts more doubt on whether they are of interest to the collector (1994: 53–54).

Contrary to Bryce and Humphreys, Weeks argues that it is difficult to find a thematic structure of king sayings in Proverbs. He suggests that ‘neither the ascriptions nor the court and king sayings in Proverbs are significant evidence for the composition or redaction of wisdom literature in and for the royal court’ (1994: 55). He admits that the Israelite wisdom literature shows interest in the king and the royal court, but he is quick to dismiss the notion that such interest is the province of the courtiers alone. In his book *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (2010), Weeks continues to maintain his position but seems to have softened his tone on the origin of wisdom (Weeks, 2010: 127–144). He concludes that ‘attempts to connect wisdom with royal administrators and education are based on a lot of speculation and a certain amount of misunderstanding’ (2010: 131).

Weeks’ comprehensive analysis of Israelite and ANE material makes his work outstanding. However, some areas need further clarification. After challenging the previous scholarship on

the international nature of Israelite wisdom, he fails to propose an alternative approach that will help in understanding the relationship between Israel and other ANE nations. His inability to offer any alternative approach also leaves him open to criticism. Moreover, he appears to be appealing to the same international parallels that he had earlier questioned. He acknowledges the mutual influence within the Egyptian material, but he fails to clarify how this should be understood.

As mentioned earlier, following Fox but not to the same extent, it is difficult to dismiss the possibility that some sayings may have originated from the royal court. While I agree with Weeks that some proverbs about kings may not have been produced in the royal court, I object to any attempt to leave the royal court out completely. If wisdom is found among the illiterates and farmers, can it not also be found in the royal court? Lastly, Weeks' negative verdict on the differences in contextual studies is unnecessary. According to Heim, the interest and method that each scholar brings to the text is different. There is a need for scholars to explain the high number of linked sayings and so contextual studies may provide the answer (Heim, 2001: 15–19). As will be seen later, there are some contexts to be found in the book of Proverbs on leadership. On the whole, Weeks should be commended for reopening the debate on finding ANE parallels with Israelite wisdom and calling attention to the fact that more work needs to be done.

4.2.7. William P. Brown

In his earlier work titled *Character in Crisis* (1996), William Brown discerns character as the overarching theme that reveals the ethics and ethos of Old Testament wisdom literature. It is the link between the human view and God's view of wisdom. He notes that the descriptive

and prescriptive nature of character in the wisdom writings suggests that there is no single, normative character in the wisdom corpus. For Brown, the descriptive characters include the parental instructions and their communal affirmation in Proverbs. The prescriptive characters, on the other hand, are found in Job and Qoheleth, where the writers challenged the traditional wisdom (Proverbs) with their reformed characters (Brown, 1996: 1–21).

Brown suggests that the book of Proverbs offers the starting point for character. He identifies the virtues of ‘righteousness, justice and equity’ (1996: 25) in Proverbs 1:2–7. These moral virtues, and many more, were highlighted through the admonitions, commands and warnings of the father, mother and Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9 and 31. He maintains that the writers of Proverbs were concerned about the intellectual and moral values within the community (Brown, 1996: 22–49). Brown’s analysis of the book of Job shows that chapters 1–31 are about ‘deformation of character’ and 32–42 are about ‘reformation of character’. Job’s character was reshaped as the narrative developed through the prologue, dialogues with his friends, confrontation with God, Yahweh’s discourse and the restoration of Job (Brown, 1996: 50–119).

Brown argues further that Qoheleth focuses on ‘reconstruction of character’ because he questions the principles of traditional wisdom about the static cosmos, youth, the family, success, time and death. He notes that Qoheleth radically detached himself from character and became an independent observer of trends and events in real life situations. Qoheleth expressed scepticism, but it was mitigated with joy and perseverance (Brown, 1996: 120–147). Brown concludes that the different presentation of character in Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes could be a source of wisdom for individuals and the Church today. The tension

helps to confront, as well broaden, the horizons of traditional wisdom (Brown, 1996: 148–164).

Brown, in his 2002 article ‘The Pedagogy of Proverbs 10:1–31:9’, continues to see other parts of Proverbs through the lens of character formation. He observes that the primary aim of education in the ANE and Israel is about ‘moral formation’ or ‘the building of character’ (Brown, 2002a: 150). He builds on his previous efforts that Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31 ‘have been deliberately placed to exemplify the formation of moral character’ (2002a: 153). His main point is that ‘it would be reasonable, then, to expect a compatible development within the intervening material’ (10:1–31:9) (2002a: 153).¹⁸⁶ He goes further to find ‘pedagogical movement’ of character formation in each collection. According to Brown, ‘the progression of various themes suggests a curricular advancement in such areas as human relations, communication, ethics, money, governance and theology’ (2002a: 158). He argues that the thematic progression can be seen between the first and second half of the Solomonic collections, from family to friendship, character to concept, silence to elocution (2002a: 158–165). He also identifies character formation in the remaining sections through the discussion of wealth and poverty, avoiding wickedness, proper etiquette at the royal table, kingship and God. He concludes that the context gradually moved from the household to the community.

I agree with Brown’s conclusion that character formation is central to the wisdom instruction. I concur that this is a good perspective for analysing the biblical wisdom literature. Brown’s attempt to apply his findings on character in wisdom literature to the Church today is also

¹⁸⁶ Proverbs of Solomon (10:1–22:16), the words of the wise (22:17–24:22), additional saying of the wise (24:23–34), other proverbs of Solomon that were copied by the men of Hezekiah (25:1–29–27), the words of Agur (30:1–33) and the words of Lemuel (30:1–9).

commendable.¹⁸⁷ However, there are some limitations in Brown's analysis. First, he did not elaborate on how the formation of character in Proverbs relates to leadership. In this study, I will argue that the formation of character in Proverbs as expressed by Brown is for the purpose of leadership. Second, he mentioned 'righteousness, justice and equity' as the three main components of character. As we shall see later, these are the virtues needed for successful leadership. Third, his failure to back up his claims with exegetical analysis of the text is not helpful. I shall attempt to offer deep analysis of some of the texts in Proverbs. Fourth, Brown notes that 'the book of Proverbs began with a silent son, instructed in the responsibilities of communal life and family fidelity, and ends with an adult male who has successfully fulfilled them' (1996: 48). I will argue that this is leadership.

4.2.8. Katherine J. Dell

In her book *Get Wisdom, Get Insight* (2000), Katherine Dell¹⁸⁸ argues that Proverbs can be understood through its form, themes, context, social context, literary-critical concerns and theological character. She suggests that the prominent themes in Proverbs include 'order in the world'; 'ambiguity in events'; 'punishment and reward'; 'life as the supreme good'; 'confidence in wisdom'; and the 'personification of wisdom' (Dell, 2000: 18–23). I would argue, therefore, that a leader is needed to maintain 'order in the world' and administer 'punishment and reward'; therefore, leadership is implied.

In *Seeking a Life that Matters*, Dell extends the themes to work; money; planning for good or ill; emotive issues; communication and the power of words; family relationships; husbands

¹⁸⁷ It informs my plan to apply my learning on leadership in Proverbs to Christian leadership in Nigeria.

¹⁸⁸ Katherine J. Dell is another creative scholar whose contribution to the discussion of leadership in Proverbs deserves some comment.

and wives; and friends and neighbours. On leadership, she observes that the ‘wisdom writers were concerned to link authority and wisdom’ (Dell, 2002: 88). Drawing on a number of proverbs on kingship, Dell notes that they can be applied to the contemporary world of politicians and presidents ruling our society. Therefore, the keys to successful leadership in Proverbs would include good treatment of citizens, good communication, wise decisions, justice, honesty and self-discipline (2002: 88–96).

In her book *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*, Dell addresses the question of the origin of Proverbs. Her aim is to explore ‘wisdom’s social context, its theological identity and its relationship to other Old Testament books’ (Dell, 2006a: 2). Following Whybray (1994a), she argues that Proverbs is a product of several social contexts. She divides the book into three sections: 1–9, 10:1–22:16, and 22:17–31:31. In dialogue with scholarly suggestions, Dell proposes that the social context of 1–9 is an educational context, either at the level of family or school. She claims that this has ethical and religious elements, but she is quick to acknowledge that it is open to other options (2006: 18–50). She supports the argument that Proverbs 10:1–22:16 belongs to the family/folk/tribal setting, especially in their oral form. This is also open to legal and cultic contexts (2006: 51–63). Contrary to Humphreys (1978), she rules out the possibility of a royal court setting for this section. She reaches the same conclusion as Whybray (1994a) and Weeks (1994): that mentioning a king in a proverb does not make it belong to a royal court. Her survey of the material in 22:17–31:31 shows that there are different settings, ranging from the educational and royal court to the family/folk/tribal setting (2006: 65–89).

Dell’s exploration of the Yahweh proverbs, and the role of Yahweh in Proverbs, motivates her

to think that the theological context of Proverbs is enormous. She urges her readers to integrate this wisdom theology inherent in Proverbs with other parts of the Old Testament. Dell's analysis of the different contexts in Proverbs is also illuminating; she has shown that it is hard to support any evidence for a single setting in Proverbs. The strength of her analysis lies in her modern application of Proverbs.¹⁸⁹ However, Dell did not analyse the text to justify her claim, as this was not her interest when she wrote. As will be shown in this study, a closer look at some selected passages in Proverbs will provide a deeper understanding of leadership in different contexts.

4.2.9. Christine R. Yoder

Yoder¹⁹⁰ argues that 'wisdom origin lies not in putative mythological antecedent or abstract literary constructs, but in women's concrete, everyday realities' (Yoder, 2001: 111). She pursues this argument further in her 2003 article, but focuses her attention on Proverbs 31:10–31. Yoder identifies leadership in Proverbs 31:10–31. She sets the time of the editorial work of Proverbs within the post-exilic Persian period. She also connects Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31 in order to explore the situation of women during the Persian period. Her socio-economic and historical reading of the text leads her to conclude that the woman of substance is a businesswoman and a leader (Yoder, 2003: 436–437). 'She is a typical Persian period bride' (2003: 432), who brings social, political and economic opportunities to her husband. She is a high-ranking woman within her society and a model for younger women (2003:442–443). She is also an investor (2003: 444–445).

¹⁸⁹ I shall return to this in final chapter 10 of this investigation.

¹⁹⁰ In her earlier book entitled *The Woman of Substance: A Socio-economic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31*.

Yoder concludes that ‘Proverbs 31:10–31 remains a portrait of the most desirable woman, an image of the ideal wife intended for a predominantly male audience’ (2003: 446). She challenges the scholarly opinion on the origin of wisdom personified as a woman in Proverbs 1–9 and calls for a rethink. She thinks that the wisdom origin lies within the ‘activities of and perceptions about real women in the Persian period’ (2003: 447). Yoder challenges the hypothesis that the woman in Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31 is a personification of wisdom, not a real woman. If Yoder’s analysis is correct, one can make a case for the role of women in leadership during the Persian period. This situation is not completely new in ancient Israel.¹⁹¹

Yoder continues to develop a case that helps the present study on leadership in her 2009 article ‘On the Threshold of Kingship: A Study of Agur’. One of her aims is to examine ‘the placement of the sayings of Agur (Proverbs 30) between instructions for an implied reader who is poised to assume leadership (Proverbs 28–29) and instructions to the implied reader as king (Proverbs 31:1–9)’ (Yoder, 2009: 254). The question that she seeks to answer is whether there is any evidence of maturity in this implied reader.¹⁹² The article raises a number of issues that are outside the scope of this investigation,¹⁹³ which is limited to the role of leadership.

Following Bryce, she acknowledges the sages’ use of metaphors from the natural world and human craft to ‘plunge readers into a complex world of kings and nobles, bosses and

¹⁹¹ For example, Deborah was a judge in Israel (Judges 4:4–5); Athaliah ruled for six years (2 Kings 11:1–3; 2 Chr. 22:10–12); and Bathsheba became the power behind the throne when David was very old (1 Kings 1:15–40). I will pay attention to the role of women in the texts analysed in chapters 5–8. I shall return to the role of women in modern leadership in chapter 10.

¹⁹² Yoder followed R. van Leeuwen and W.P. Brown, who argued that the implied reader in Proverbs 10–29 is more mature than the one in 1–9 (van Leeuwen, 1997: 19–264; Brown, 2002a: 150–182; cf. Ansberry, 2011: 71–161).

¹⁹³ One of them is the question about the character of Agur, which has prompted scholars to ask whether Agur is a ‘sceptic’, ‘an agnostic’, ‘a doubting sage’, or ‘an astute fearer of YHWH’ (Yoder, 2009: 254).

neighbours, enemies and friends' (2009: 256). She maintains that the frequent use of the terms 'ruler' and 'official' within Proverbs 28–29 calls for reflection on 'authority and government' and 'exercise and abuse of power' (2009: 256). She offers a detailed analysis of Proverbs 28–29 and discovers that it contains a number of proverbs about leadership. According to Yoder, the main challenge for a leader is to fight against 'economic injustice.' He is expected to protect the interests of his subjects and stand on behalf of the poor and vulnerable.

In the final section of her work, Yoder focuses her attention on Agur in Proverbs 30. She identifies Agur as a non-Israelite who is familiar with Israelite traditions; a fearer of Yahweh and a king who sees God as the only source of wisdom (2009: 259–262). She sums up the implications of Proverbs 30 for leadership in the following words:

Particularly noteworthy for those on the threshold of kingship is Agur's comparison of a king to creatures that are stately in their stride (the lion, rooster, and he-goat, 30:29–31)—which Agur follows immediately with a warning against self-exaltation (30:32–33)—and Agur's description of the royal office as vulnerable to unprepared leaders (30:22) and stealthy infiltrators (i.e., the lizard, 30:28) (2009: 261).

She thinks that the implied reader is King Lemuel in Proverbs 31:1–9. She concludes that the 'juxtaposition of Proverbs 28–29 and Proverbs 30 reinforces tensions and complexities inherent to wisdom' (2009: 255) for anyone at the threshold of power.

Yoder's work is useful for this present study. She is correct that issues of leadership can be found in Proverbs 30; she has also made a strong case for the significance of Proverbs 30, standing in between 28–29 and 30:1–9. She has shown that one can deal successfully with the issues of leadership in Proverbs 30 without being drawn into the question of origin. With

Yoder, it is possible to argue that Proverbs 25–31 offers meaningful instructions about leadership. This gives me confidence that we might find some aspects of leadership in other sections of Proverbs.

4.2.10. Peter T.H. Hatton

Peter Hatton (2008)¹⁹⁴ makes a unique contribution to this discussion in his monograph when he suggests reading Proverbs as a ‘work composed with a subtle didactic purpose’. Following the theoretical frameworks of Shklovsky and Bakhtin, he uses the term ‘heteroglossia’ to describe the approach of the wisdom writers with the aim of ‘teaching for responsibility’. He suggests that the inclusion of ‘complex sayings was part of the book’s didactic strategy’ (Hatton, 2008: 1–4).¹⁹⁵ The aim is to motivate the readers to reflect on the paradoxes and not to confuse them. According to Hatton, ‘Proverbs achieves its goal of awakening its readers to wisdom by introducing contradictions into the flow of its sayings’ (2008: 13). He identifies three important examples of provocative contradictions in Proverbs (*The Act–Consequence ‘Construct’*, *The Powerful in Qohelet and Proverbs*, and *Gifts and Bribes in Proverbs*). Hatton questions the previous scholarly consensus that Proverbs is a supporter of the status quo. He urges us to accept Proverbs as a piece of work carefully crafted together to encourage readers to look beyond the traditional wisdom and develop their critical faculties.¹⁹⁶ He also suggests that the editors of Proverbs deliberately included some contradictory sayings in order to stimulate the readers to think critically, like the sages. Loader shares a similar view with Hatton that the contradictions in Proverbs ‘are no accident or liability, but intrinsic to it’

¹⁹⁴ Peter Hatton’s monograph is entitled *Contradictions in the Book of Proverbs: The Deep Waters of Counsel*.

¹⁹⁵ For Hatton, the final form of Proverbs ‘was written at a time of crisis and breakdown in the social order, perhaps occasioned by exile’ (2008:82). It was ‘carefully composed and crafted’ to deliberately ‘encourage readers to question traditional wisdom and to develop their critical faculties’ (2008:3).

¹⁹⁶ For example, Hatton puts Proverbs on the same level with Qoheleth in terms of its critical assessment of kingship. He claims this will help readers to acquire the type of wisdom described in Proverbs 1:2–7.

(Loader, 2014: 328).¹⁹⁷

In his chapter entitled *The powerful in Qohelet and Proverbs*, Hatton agrees that kingship is ‘an important and sensitive theme’ in Proverbs. His analysis of the derivatives of the root מלך and other related words suggests that ‘75 verses, about 7 per cent of the total number of Proverbs, deal with issues connected with governance’ (Hatton, 2008: 117). Hatton argues that 6:6–8 and 30:24–31 served as opening and closing frame for the discussion of leadership in Proverbs. In the middle of these frames are proverbs that support royal ideology as well as ones that are critical of kings. For Hatton, ‘Proverbs handles this theme in a dialogic fashion facilitating a clash between contrasting views about those who wield power’ (2008: 117). He notes that ‘Proverbs is not a monologic text propounding a settled view of king and those in authority’ (2008: 117).

Moreover, Hatton lists some verses that mention the theme of kingship in Proverbs¹⁹⁸ and how they appear to contradict one another. He also compares them with some selected passages in the *Qohelet* (8:2–9; 10:16–17) and explains how the Greek Proverbs resolves some of the tensions. He agrees with Fox that ‘the most important repository of textual variants for Proverbs is the LXX’ (Fox, 2006: 2) despite the occasional difficulties.¹⁹⁹ Hatton suggests that the contradictions in Proverbs require some deep reflections. He concludes that

¹⁹⁷ Loader views the composition of Proverbs 1–9 from the post-modern perspective of paradox and tension. I would argue that the same could be extended to Proverbs 10:1–31:31.

¹⁹⁸ They include Proverbs 6:6–8; 14:28; 16:10, 14–15; 17:26, 19:10, 12; 20:2, 8–9; 29:4, 12, 14, 26 and 30:24–31 etc. Some of these proverbs will be analysed later in this study. In my view, this is not a full list in comparison to the verses that will be treated in chapters 5–10 of this thesis.

¹⁹⁹ Fox states further that ‘in principle, since the LXX descended from the same ancestor as the MT at some stage, the LXX can be expected to witness to the shared ancestral text from which the MT diverged’ (Fox, 2006: 2).

the book is a ‘politically engaged text’ (2008: 135) because of its criticism of the status quo.

By attending to the complex dialogue in the book; by refusing to jump to premature conclusions; by reading sensitively and holding contradictions together rather than seeking to harmonize them away, the reader can become one of those who are able to act wisely, responsibly, in a complex world (Hatton, 2008: 170).

Hatton’s valuable contribution lies in his attempt to convincingly demonstrate that there is a duality in the book of Proverbs, which he calls ‘provocative contradictions’. He has also been able to explain the connection between Proverbs and other wisdom writings (especially Job and Ecclesiastes). I concur with Hatton that it is necessary for readers to appreciate the dynamism and diversity of wisdom thought in the book of Proverbs. The deliberate ambiguities in Proverbs are evocative and they invite the interpreter to engage carefully with the text. I also agree with him that kingship is an important theme in the book of Proverbs and that there is a need for more effort to uncover the deeper meaning behind the sayings. Following Hatton, but moving beyond his synthesis, this study proposes that Proverbs should be read with nuance in order to understand its contradictory teachings on leadership. It applies different criteria to the selection of leadership texts in Proverbs. It offers exegetical analysis of more verses, in chapters 5–10 of this thesis. It also consults the LXX (where necessary) to investigate some keywords in the exegetical section.

4.2.11. Christopher B. Ansberry

Christopher Ansberry’s²⁰⁰ primary aim was to investigate the nature and function of the book of Proverbs. He notes that there is no consensus among scholars about the social setting of the

²⁰⁰ Ansberry’s work entitled *Be Wise, My Son, and Make my Heart Glad: An Exploration of the Courtly Nature of the Book of Proverbs* was initially presented as a doctoral dissertation in 2009.

whole book and suggests a thorough exploration of the ‘performance setting’²⁰¹ of Proverbs as a whole: that is, ‘in a particular social or dialogical situation that creates a framework through which to identify the function and significance of the discourse’ (Ansberry, 2009: viii). His approach is to ‘examine the discursive, thematic, and conceptual features of ancient oriental instructional texts’ and then to return to investigate ‘the formal features, thematic emphases, and aristocratic elements of the individual collections within the book of Proverbs’ (2009: 12).

Ansberry bases his assumption on the general agreement of the body of scholars that OT wisdom emerged out of the broader international ANE wisdom tradition. He sets the scene by investigating the Egyptian, as well as Mesopotamian and Syrian, instructional literature. His exploration of *The Instructions of Hardjedef*, *Kagemni*, *Ptahhotep Merikare*, *Dua-Khety*, *The Words of Ahiqar* and *Akkadian Advice to a Prince* (2009: 17–52) shows that they are all courtly literature produced within courtly contexts. He suggests that ‘the speaker is either a king or an eminent member of the ruling elite, who transfers advice either to a member of the royal family or to the next generation of bureaucratic officials’ (2009: 20). He also calls attention to common features of the ‘speaker, addressee, and context of the work’ (2009: 18) as well as to the father and son discourses found in most literature. He maintains that the above literature represents the worldview or moral vision of the people in the ANE.²⁰²

For Ansberry, the courtly or royal contexts of the ancient oriental instructional literature

²⁰¹ Performance criticism is an emerging discipline in biblical studies, especially Proverbs (Heim, 2001: 21–25).

²⁰² For example, ‘Egyptian society was dependent upon a set of ethical guidelines that would ensure the continual reciprocation of social life. These guidelines were grounded in the concept of *Ma‘at* (truth, justice), which constituted the veritable foundation of Egyptian ethics’ (Ansberry, 2009: 35).

inform his analysis of Proverbs, because ‘they provide a generic framework through which to read and assess the materials in the work’ (2009: 52). In other words, there is at least a possibility that the biblical proverbial material comes from courtly or royal contexts. He then moves on to investigate the formal, discursive, and thematic features of the various collections and sub-collections within Proverbs. He divides the whole of Proverbs into four sections. He calls chapters 1–9 ‘the value of wisdom,’ 10–24 ‘rudimentary wisdom,’ 25–29 ‘advanced wisdom’ and 30–31 ‘applied wisdom’.

In his analysis of the discourse setting of Proverbs 1–9, he identifies the father-son relationship as the ‘chief literary device’ (2009: 61) throughout that section.²⁰³ Following Nel (1977), he posits that it was a general phenomenon in ANE instructions to use a father to describe any blood relationship or the connection between a teacher and student (2009: 61). Although the document covers various topics, Ansberry identifies the implied Solomon as the principal speaker. He opines that chapters 1–9 offer a hermeneutical framework for how the whole book of Proverbs should be read. They are a ‘series of instructions delivered by a royal figure to a young, noble addressee within a domestic context’ (2009: 119).

He also divides the ‘rudimentary wisdom’ section into ‘elementary wisdom (10:1–15:33),’²⁰⁴ ‘intermediate wisdom (16:1–22:16),’²⁰⁵ and ‘vocational wisdom (22:17–24:34).’²⁰⁶ He finds a

²⁰³ He suggests that this idiom can be found in Prov 1:8, 10, 15; 2:1; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:1, 10, 20; 5:1, 20; 6:1, 3, 20; 7:1, 24.

²⁰⁴ He finds connections in the use of the words wise, fool, righteous and wicked.

²⁰⁵ He calls attention to the reference to the royal institution (16:10–15; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26, 28), the judiciary (17:15, 23, 26; 18:5; 19:28; 21:7, 15), and to public speaking (16:21, 23, 24). For Ansberry, ‘it assumes an addressee familiar with the court, liable to judicial exploitation’ (2009: 322).

²⁰⁶ These are practical matters for those who are in royal service as courtiers, diplomats and ambassadors etc. ‘On the whole, the admonitions assume an addressee who has access to the court (22:29; 24:5–6), judicial

progression within the sub-collections and makes a case for their courtly elements. Moreover, Ansberry refers to 25:1–29:27 as ‘advanced wisdom’ and 30–31 as ‘applied wisdom’, highlighting how the courtly nature of each section contributes to the moral vision inherent in the book. He concludes that ‘the discursive, thematic, and conceptual features of the book of Proverbs suggest the work is a courtly piece, intended to produce a view of the world necessary for those in positions of leadership’ (2009: 329). In other words, ‘the moral vision of Proverbs seeks to reinforce the Deuteronomic paradigm of leadership’ (Ansberry, 2011: 188).

Ansberry’s work is valuable for this present study in many ways. Firstly, his astute investigation of the courtly context behind Proverbs as a whole is novel. Ansberry’s efforts here seem to compensate for what is missing in the works of scholars who wrote before him. Unlike Bryce, Whybray, Humphreys, Malchow, Golka, Dell, Yoder and Hatton, who found leadership in some of the isolated collections, he argues with evidence for a courtly context for the whole book. Following Ansberry, a good case can in fact be made to support the idea of reading Proverbs as a whole from the perspective of leadership; his observation that the courtly language can be seen throughout the book is illuminating.²⁰⁷

Furthermore, his argument that there is a progression of thought from ‘the value for wisdom’ in chapters 1–9, to ‘rudimentary wisdom’ in 10–24, to ‘advanced wisdom’ in 25–29, and to ‘applied wisdom’ in 30–31 is intriguing. Some of the literary devices (e.g. parallelism, variant

authority (22:22–23, 28; 23:10–11; 24:10–12; 24:23b–25), sufficient social standing to dine at a ruler’s table (23:1–3), and the means to consume luxurious commodities (23:20–21, 29–35).

²⁰⁷ As will be seen later in chapters 5–10, there are some verses that focus directly on leadership in Proverbs, there are some indirect verses, and there are some unrelated verses that can be used as resources for a leader.

repetition, ellipsis and figurative language) that he uses to identify the courtly elements in these sections are also worthy of recognition. In my view, this makes a significant contribution and breaks new ground for the study of Proverbs.

While I generally agree with much of Ansberry's analysis, his work is limited in a few areas. Ansberry identifies the basic connections within the sections in Proverbs, but he does not examine the details within the texts or show how they add to an understanding of leadership. Moreover, it is difficult to classify the whole of Proverbs into a courtly setting. Whybray (1989b: 227–250), Golka (1993: 22–23), Waltke (2004: 58–62), Fox (2000: 10) and Dell (2006a: 2) have already shown that Proverbs is not a product of a single setting. Lastly, the allusion to ANE instructional literature is not without its own limitations. As Weeks pointed out, it is impossible to find connections between the royal proverbs in Proverbs and all ANE texts (1994: 52–54; 2010: 127–144). This calls for caution in the analysis of biblical Proverbs.

4.3. Conclusion

At this point it will be helpful to summarise the arguments and observations contained in this chapter, and lay out clearly their consequences for the study of leadership in Proverbs. Bryce's intention is to demonstrate the arrangement and structure of Proverbs 25:2–27 and make a case for its use for the training of courtiers; Humphreys focuses on the motif of the wise courtier in Proverbs and offers conclusions that the motif is clear only in 16:1–22:16 and 25:2–27; Golka, on the other hand, finds a link between Israelite wisdom and the pre-literate African proverbs; Malchow accepts Proverbs 28–29 as a manual for future monarchs; Whybray shows the need to put the royal proverbs in the right perspective; Weeks warns his readers to be sceptical about using Egyptian records to explain Israelite wisdom; Brown

identifies character as the overarching theme in wisdom literature; he calls attention to the relevance of character in biblical wisdom literature; Dell uncovers a fresh approach to the social and theological settings of Proverbs; Yoder concentrates on the significance of Proverbs 30 and 31 for leadership; Hatton finds some leadership texts in Proverbs; while, for Ansberry, the royal court argument is still relevant.

From the above analysis, it has been shown that scholarly opinions about leadership in Proverbs stand in tension against one another. There is denial as well as affirmation. There is common ground between Bryce, Humphreys, Malchow, Brown, Yoder, Hatton and Ansberry. They all acknowledge the contribution of ANE materials to biblical wisdom; they all agree that at least a section of Proverbs was used to train courtiers and future leaders; hence, it is important to be attentive to Proverbs on the theme of leadership. Furthermore, they all offer a close analysis of the text in its original language and also subscribe to the use of poetic devices, in order to bring out the meaning of the text. In my opinion, all the scholars make their points well about leadership in Proverbs. Weeks and Golka, however, raise some objections; they do not completely deny the theme of leadership in Proverbs, but their concern is whether the proverbs originated from within the royal court, the school or from other contexts. It seems to me that their denial of the royal court is insufficiently substantiated; nevertheless, they have successfully challenged the scholarly overreliance on parallels from the ANE.

Various conclusions can be drawn from combining the thoughts of the above scholars. The analyses of Bryce, Humphreys, Malchow, Yoder and Hatton are full of insight, but they are limited in scope to specific passages. Brown and Ansberry covered the entire book of

Proverbs, but their emphasis is on character and royal courts, respectively. I concur with Whybray's findings on the different attitudes expressed in Proverbs towards poverty and riches, but he fails to discuss the role of leaders in the redistribution of wealth. In my view, Golka's appeal to African proverbs is unconvincing, as are the alternative views that he rejected without cause.

The key findings in this chapter show that: 1) There is sufficient scholarly opinion that supports the idea of leadership in some significant sections of Proverbs. 2) There is evidence to suggest that other parts of Proverbs need to be investigated. 3) There is a need for another study that would examine Proverbs with respect to leadership. 4) In my own view, scholars have concentrated for too long on the contexts that produced Proverbs, with less emphasis on the valuable lessons that we can learn about leadership. This present inquiry will now look closely at some representative leadership texts in Proverbs, in the next six chapters.

CHAPTER 5

THE STATUS OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS

Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 offer exegetical analysis of some leadership texts in the book of Proverbs. As mentioned in my chapter on methodology, scholars such as Crawford Toy (1977: 197), William McKane (1970: 413–414), Gerhard von Rad (1972: 6), Claus Westermann (1995: 123) and Tremper Longman III (2006: 40) have argued that the individual sayings in Proverbs 10–29 should be interpreted independently.²⁰⁸ According to McKane, ‘the individual wisdom sentence is a complete entity ... there is, for the most part, no context in the sentence literature’. He accepts that ‘there are editorial principles of different kinds according to which sentences are grouped’ (1970: 10), but he maintains that they only serve secondary purposes. Where there is evidence of clusters, Westermann suggests that it is only a ‘redactive procedure’, revealing the intention of the compiler. ‘It has nothing to do with the original development of individual proverbs; nothing alters the fact that...each saying is an independent unit in and of itself’ (1995: 123).

In contrast, scholars such as Whybray (1990), Waltke (2004; 2005), Heim (2001; 2013) and others have argued for clusters with the intention of finding subtle structure in the text. As mentioned earlier, the debate between scholars who interpret Proverbs as clusters and those who analyse it as individual haphazard poetry is not conclusive. My aim in the following chapters is to interpret some selected proverbs individually, but I will take account of some

²⁰⁸ Fox interprets most of Proverbs 10–29 as individual proverbs apart from some thematic clusters of ‘at least two sayings that speak on the same topic or share catchwords’ that appear occasionally in the collections (2009: 478).

potential clusters where there is reason to suspect that interpreting a passage as a cluster might impact the meaning of individual proverbs and offer additional insight into leadership.

Biblical interpreter Nancy Vynmeister notes that the tasks of exegesis usually includes determining the canonical context, the original text, translation, meaning, the historical and geographical context, original theological meaning and the application for today (Vynmeister, 2001: 117–125). My methodology for the exegesis of leadership texts in Proverbs is similar. Certain portions of Proverbs are filled with textual, grammatical and syntactic difficulties. The problems that are relevant to my investigation on leadership will be dealt with in the textual notes, in combination with the LXX (Tov, 1999: 203–218, Rahlfs, 1979).²⁰⁹ Others will only be mentioned and the reader will be directed to relevant treatments of them. My tasks in chapters 5–10 will be as follows: I will translate the texts, make relevant remarks on their unity and form (if any), offer an exegetical interpretation using poetical analysis and reflect on what we can learn about leadership through a nuanced reading of the text. I will probe beneath the surface of the text to ask critical questions and challenge the assumptions of commentators. Since I acknowledge that there are various counter traditions and diverse perspectives in Proverbs, I will cite at least two examples of counterpoints or contradictions at the end of each chapter.²¹⁰ In accordance with the aspects of leadership theory that I briefly introduced in Chapter 1, I have selected themes relating to the status of leaders, code of conduct for leaders, personality of leaders, skills of leaders, actions of leaders and the community's response to leaders for examination, because they offer a thematic

²⁰⁹ As Emmanuel Tov rightly notes, the Septuagint can impact our understanding of the MT (1999: 203–218). I used Alfred Rahlfs' version of the LXX to analyse the way the translator(s) rendered the parent text.

²¹⁰ The term 'contradiction' in chapters 5–10 refers to implicit or explicit inconsistency discovered within the leadership texts in Proverbs whether it is read as clusters or individual poetry.

understanding of leadership in Proverbs. Of course, this structure is somewhat artificial and there are some passages that could be reclassified elsewhere. In my view, though, this way is also helpful. This chapter focuses on the status of leaders in Proverbs.

5.1. The King as a Representative of Yahweh (16:10–15)

5.1.1. Introduction

There is a close association between the ‘Yahweh-sayings’ (16:1–9) and the ‘royal sayings’ (16:10, 12–15). As Heim notes, ‘the intervening royal saying in verse 10 is placed deliberately to link’ the two clusters together (Heim, 2001: 207). The first cluster is about the Lord, while the second is about the king. This is because the Lord appears in every sentence in 16:1–9, apart from verse 8. The king also appears in every sentence in 16:10–15, apart from verse 11. Interpreting this passage as part of a cluster in the light of this background will elucidate how it adds to our understanding of leadership.

5.1.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 16:10–15

קָסָם עַל־שִׁפְתֵי־מֶלֶךְ	10	Inspired decision on the lips of a king,
בְּמִשְׁפָּט לֹא יִמְעַל־פִּיו :		in judgment his mouth does not sin.
פָּלֶס וּמֵאזְנֵי מִשְׁפָּט לַיהוָה	11	Balance and just scales are from the Lord,
מַעֲשָׂהוּ כָּל־אֲבָנֵי־כִּיס :		his work are all the weights of the bag.
תּוֹעֵבַת מְלָכִים עֲשׂוֹת רָשָׁע	12	An abomination to kings is doing evil,
כִּי בִצְדָקָה יִכּוֹן כִּסֵּא :		for through righteousness a throne is established.
רָצוֹן מְלָכִים שִׁפְתֵי־צַדִּיק	13	Favour of kings to righteous lips,
וְדֹבֵר יֶשְׁרִים יֶאֱהָב :		and the man who speaks rightly they love.
חֲמַת־מֶלֶךְ מְלָאכֵי־מוֹת	14	The anger of a king is a messenger of death;
וְאִישׁ חָכָם יִכְפָּרֶנָּה :		but a wise man appeases him.
בְּאוֹר־פְּנֵי־מֶלֶךְ חַיִּים	15	In the light of a king's face there is life,
וּרְצוֹנוֹ כָּעָב מִלְּקוֹשׁ :		and his favour is like the cloud of the spring rain.

5.1.3. Textual Notes

Verse 12. The Peshitta translates עֲשׂוֹת as referring to the wickedness of the king, while the LXX,²¹¹ Targum and Vulgate use the same word to describe the wickedness of others, which the king must respond to (Waltke, 2005: 5). As we shall see later, it can be both.

Verse 13. The LXX translate מְלָכִים (kings) as βασιλεῖ in the first line as singular instead of plural in order to link it together with יֵאָהֵב (he loves) on the second line. The Vulgate, on the other hand, rightly retains the plural form. In this translation, I have rendered יֵאָהֵב as plural.²¹²

Verse 14. I follow Fox's idea in verse 14 by translating מְלֹאכֵי as singular (Fox, 2009:616–617). This is also in line with βασιλέως (king) in the LXX.

5.1.4. Literary Structure

Waltke recognises 16:10–15 as a cluster with the title 'the mediatorial king'. He also divides it into three sub-topics, which he calls the authority (10–11), moral sensibility (12–13) and power (14–15) of the king. For Waltke, it centres on how God mediates his justice on Earth through a wise and godly ruler (2005: 16–22). Heim, on the other hand, puts 16:10–11 and 16:12–15 under different sub-units following his own delimitation and border markers. He also suggests that the proverbs in 16:12–15 are directed to the courtiers, rather than the king

²¹¹ The LXX renders 'βδέλυγμα βασιλεῖ ὁ ποιῶν κακά' (verse 12a) as 'an evil-doer is an abomination to the king.'

²¹² Fox confirms that this congruence between singular and plural is regular in Proverbs. It seems to be a normal feature of the way grammar is being used. 'Shifts in number happen frequently in Hebrew and were presumably not felt to be awkward' (Fox, 2009:616).

(2001: 210–215). Following Waltke, I have put 16:10–15 together because the theme of kingship runs through the six verses. I follow Waltke by dividing this text into three subunits and each deserves a closer analysis with respect to leadership.

5.1.5. Exegetical Analysis

A. The Authority of a Leader (16:10–11)

קָצַם means ‘prediction,’ ‘divination,’ and ‘decision (by means of an oracle)’ (HALOT, 3: 1115–1116). It can also mean ‘inspired decision,’ ‘God’s verdict’ or ‘divine saying.’ This may include the king’s use of lot casting and other forms of divination in order to get to the root of a legal matter before he passes judgment (Davies, 1980: 555–556, Heim, 2001: 211). Apart from this verse, the use of קָצַם is prohibited elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, because it is associated with false gods.²¹³ What is allowed within the context of Yahwism is the use of Urim and Thummim (Exod 28:30) as well as lot casting (Josh 18:8, 10; 1 Sam 14:42; 1 Chr 24:31; Neh 11:1). Thus, the use of קָצַם in verse 10 is difficult to understand if taken literally. Here, it figuratively ‘points to the belief that a righteous decision uttered by the king is divinely inspired’ (Oesterley, 1929: 130).

שִׁפְתָּי (lips) is a common feminine dual construct form of שִׁפָּה. According to Merrill, it refers to the ‘human lip or lips as synonymous with mouth or as the organ of speech.’ He also notes that the word occurs 45 times in Proverbs; it is a ‘metonymy for verbal communication’ in majority of cases (Merrill, 1996: 1266–1267). פִּי (his mouth) here is a common masculine singular construct with a third person suffix referring to the king. This word ‘is used in a

²¹³ See Num 23:23; Deut 18:10; 1 Sam 6:2; 15:23; 28:8; 2 Kgs 17:17; Ezek 21:26, 44:24–25.

general sense for the mouth of humans and animals’ (Thompson and Martens, 1996: 583). In this case, the king’s mouth that is based on מִקֶּדֶם is a divine communication. In my view, this might be understood as hinting at the teaching of sacral kingship in the book of Proverbs. Moreover, מִשְׁפָּט (judgment) occurs 19 times in Proverbs and in most cases it has ‘judicial connotations.’ This word appears frequently in the prophetic books, especially to challenge corrupt kings and leaders who did not administer proper justice to their people (Isa 1:17, 21; 5:7; 10:2; 59:8–9; Hab 1:4). The consequence, of course, is God’s judgment on the kings (Enns, 1996: 1142–1144).

It is hard to determine whether this proverb is directed to the king or his subjects. On one hand, it ‘glorifies the king’s wisdom and enjoins obedience to his dictates’ if it addresses the subjects. On the other hand, it advises the king to ‘take care in judgment, because his word holds great power’ (Fox, 2009: 615) if it addresses the king. The latter option appears to fit well with the context of this text. It is probably a challenge for leaders to speak positively and justly. Their speech must be full of words of wisdom. They should thoroughly investigate and settle legal disputes relying on available evidence. They should not disappoint their subjects on judicial matters.

In verse 11, we see an example of the normal scales used for economic transaction in the market place. They are ‘two plates or pans suspended from each end of a bar or beam that was either handheld or mounted on a specially built support’ (Shepherd, 1996: 829). This proverb emphasises the need for ‘just commercial transactions’ (Longman, 2006: 332). This shows that, in ancient Israel as in all countries everywhere, the sellers tended to tamper with scales

for their own benefit.²¹⁴ Balance, scales and weights literally refer to instruments of measurement in trading or business transaction. It could also be a metonymy or metaphor for unfair or dishonest economic transactions.²¹⁵ According to Garrett, this imagery of scales and weights ‘teaches that the principle of justice is derived from God. Equity is not a human invention, and thus kings do not have authority to suspend or violate the laws of fairness’ (Garrett, 1993: 156).

Although the king is not specifically mentioned in verse 11, which could be an argument against reading this text as part of a cluster, there is, however, a sense of there being a duty for leaders to represent God in the world through the administration of justice. Heim notes that ‘the repetition of מִשְׁפָּט shows that the Lord is the source of the king’s justice in verse 10.’ He concludes that the use of measuring instruments ‘forms a causal link between the king’s legal activity and his divine source of guidance’ (Heim, 2001: 211). What we learn about leadership is that leaders should take pragmatic action against those who cheat through paying less taxes; those who overcharge for services but deliver less; and those who hike prices and hoard goods.

B. The Moral Sensibility of a Leader (16:12–13)

The appearance of מְלָכִים in the plural form connects verses 12 and 13 together as one pair.

The word תועֵבָה (abomination) in verse 12 occurs 21 times in Proverbs. It is used to describe

²¹⁴ God consistently warns against this fraudulent act of deception within the Torah, Prophets and Writings (Lev 19:35–36; Deut 25:13–16; Amos 8:5; Prov 11:1; 20:10, 23).

²¹⁵ As Waltke notes, ‘if pagan kings had the competence to display justice (cf. 31:4–9), how much more the anointed of Israel (cf. 2 Sam 12:1–14)’ who are meant to represent Yahweh (Waltke, 2005: 17).

what is detestable to God, kings and other humans (Grisanti, 1996: 314–318). This word constitutes a minor ambiguity within the verse; it is not clear whether the detestable actions mentioned here refer to the king or to his subjects.²¹⁶ In my view, this proverb may be open to three possible interpretations. The first option is to view the wicked deeds as those of the king, so that the king causes the abomination. This interpretation forms a close parallelism with the second line (McKane, 1970: 492). It then makes the proverb stand out as an advice to the king to do what is right if he wants his throne to be sustained.

The second option is to view the subjects as doing the detestable actions (Waltke, 2005: 19; Clifford, 1999: 159; Murphy, 1987: 122). In this case, the subjects have transgressed against the king's sense of justice and equity. Longman, especially, makes a case for this approach in his analysis of the phrase **תועבת יהוה** (abomination to Yahweh) in Proverbs 3:32; 6:16; 11:1, 20; 12:22; 15:8, 9, 26; 16:5; 17:15. He concludes that the use of **רצון** (favour) in verse 13 is 'often used in conjunction with abomination' (11:20; 12:22) to describe what the king likes, and is further evidence for this interpretation (Longman, 2006: 332). The strength of this approach is that it allows for interlinear parallelism between verses 12 and 13 with the repetition of the words **מלכים** (kings) and **צדק** (righteous). The problem that arises with this option is how to connect the first line with the second line. The answer to this is that it may be a deliberate ambiguity or that it may be further evidence of complexity in Proverbs. The third option is to interpret the proverb with nuance from both perspectives (Fox, 2009: 615). I lean towards the third option because it means the proverb constitutes advice for the king in both

²¹⁶ Heim offers an excursus on whether or not Proverbs 16:12 is an address to the king? He suggests that it depends on whether the phrase **תועבת מלכים** is understood as objective genitive or subjective genitive. His summary of commentators on the verse shows that there is no consensus (Heim, 2001: 213–215).

ways. The second line of verse 12 reminds the king that his throne will be established in righteousness if he walks righteously.²¹⁷

Verse 13 appears to be more straightforward, with a description of what the king favours and loves. It helps to resolve the ambiguity of the previous verse. The second half-line also helps to illuminate the first. Hence, the catchwords here deserve some comments. רָצוֹן (favour) means ‘goodwill’ or ‘what is pleasing to someone’ (HALOT, 3: 1282). The word is used in this verse in connection with מְלָכִים (kings) as the subject to describe the pleasure that the rulers take in their subjects through different forms of kindness.²¹⁸ שְׂפָתַי (lips) can mean ‘verbal expressions’ and ‘manner of speech’ (HALOT, 3: 1347–1348). Unlike verse 10, which focuses on the king, the lips being described here are those of the subjects. There is a trans-linear parallelism between verses 10 and 13. As the king will not sin through his mouth in judgment, he favours the just and upright who speak what is right. Therefore, as the king attempts to do what is right, he expects his subjects to do likewise.

Els (1996) notes that the root אָהַב can mean love for ‘fellow human beings,’ ‘places or things’ ‘certain actions or behavioural patterns’ as well as ‘abstract qualities or abilities.’ He demonstrates that the majority of the occurrences of אָהַב in Proverbs are associated with right or wrong characters. Furthermore, he argues that, in a theological sense, אָהַב can also describe ‘God’s love for his people’ (Els, 1996: 277–299). אָהַב, in this verse, describes the affection of a leader towards the subject who demonstrates good conduct. There is intra-linear parallelism between the first and second line. רָצוֹן (favour) is parallel to אָהַב (love), while

²¹⁷ The same assurance is repeated in Proverbs 20:8; 25:5; 29:14 (cf. Psalm 72, 101 etc).

²¹⁸ The favour of a king may come in form of promotion and appointment (cf. Psalm 101).

שִׁפְתָּי (lips) is parallel to דִּבֶּר (speaks). In the context of this intra-linear parallelism, good leaders take genuine satisfaction from surrounding themselves with honest people.

This couplet is relevant for leadership as it reminds leaders to be careful with what constitutes an abomination before God and their subjects. They need assurance that those who give evidence in court will not distort the truth. They also need those who speak with virtue for the successful execution of their policies. They should demonstrate moral sensibility, as representatives of Yahweh.

C. The Power of a Leader (16:14–15)

This unit concentrates on the power of a leader. This proverb pair shows the contrast between the king's wrath (14) and the favour (15) that he bestows on his courtiers. מֶלֶךְ appears in the singular form in both verses. Verse 14 focuses on the unpredictability of the king's anger. It can go out of control when it is ignited. The reader is warned to watch out for the king's anger and devise ways to avoid it. ANE kings were powerful and they could make all sorts of decisions (including over life and death). מִלְאָכֵי could mean messengers or angels (HALOT, 2: 585); but following Fox, the latter is most unlikely (2009: 616). Elsewhere, the anger of the king is associated with the growling of a lion as he seeks to maintain law and order (Forti, 2008: 58–62). The phrase 'messenger of death' is a metaphor to describe the king's power.

There are two crucial words in the second half-line. חָכָם (Greek σοφός) means wise, skilful, clever, experienced, acting wisely or being pious (HALOT, 1: 314) and יִכְפֹּרֶנָּה in piel form (Greek ἐξιλάσεται) means to appease, make amends, atone or avert (HALOT, 2: 494). Heim observes that יִכְפֹּרֶנָּה (appeases it) has a 'different connotation restricted to human relations'

(2001: 212). The wise person would appease the king's anger through humility, repentance, confession, loyalty and gentle answers (Waltke, 2005: 21).

According to Fox, this proverb can be interpreted in two ways. It 'extols the efficacy of wisdom' through wise speech 'to calm even an irate ruler'; it also suggests that 'assuaging anger' is a wise action to take (2009: 616). This proverb offers cautionary advice to those who have regular contact with the king, not to take him for granted. A wise servant will use the right speech and actions to avoid bringing wrath upon himself. This proverb is not a *Fürstenspiegel*²¹⁹ for leaders, as Toy (1977: 325) suggests, but I would argue that it contains an important lesson for leaders. As McKane notes, 'even temper and complete self-control are cardinal political virtues' (1970: 488). A leader should be able to know when and how to use them effectively. He must avoid making rash decisions in anger, without thoughtful reflection.

Verse 15 is the final proverb in the king sayings. It forms a contrast with the preceding aphorism. It describes the king as the source of life. אור metaphorically means the benevolence of a king (HALOT, 1: 24) while חיים could mean lifespan, being alive or living well (HALOT, 1: 308). Waltke understands the phrase בְּאוֹר־פָּנָיו (in the light of his face) as a metaphor in most ANE cultures 'to signify the ruler's beneficent favour towards someone' (Waltke, 2005: 21). For Longman, the phrase is a reflection of the king's 'inner happiness'

²¹⁹ *Fürstenspiegel* (mirrors for princes) was a political writing during the Early Middle Ages and the Renaissance period. It was used for the purpose of educating administrators, officials and kings about their roles and responsibilities.

and it ‘implies something more than existence’ (2006: 333). I agree with Longman that it covers all the ways that the servants can benefit from the ruler.

The second half-line sheds further light on the first with the word רִצּוֹנוֹ (favour). The writer reuses רִצּוֹן (from verse 13) in a non-religious context to describe what is pleasing to the king (HALOT, 3: 1282). McKane’s analysis of verse 15 shows that ‘death’ in verse 14 may be metaphorical. He notes that ‘the king is a fountain-head of preferment; when he smiles on an official it is life for him, and when he frowns it is death. Success is life for the ambitious politician and failure death’ (1970: 488). Clifford, on the other hand, offers a literal interpretation. He notes that a royal favour includes being spared the death sentence and the ‘bestowal of position and wealth’ (1999: 159). In my view, it could have both meanings (literal and metaphorical). Therefore, the servant should make every necessary effort to gain the approval of the king and enhance his own career.

The poet links this kind of royal favour with a powerful phenomenon that is beyond human control when the cloud brings the spring rains. ‘These rains are late in the agricultural cycle, coming in March and April and causing a growth spurt of the crops before harvest’ (Longman, 2006: 333). They usually bring refreshment, relief and joy for everyone. There is a similar meteorological imagery for a smile in Job 29:23–24. Following Waltke, this metaphor that is being used for God to signify ‘favour, prosperity, security, victory, and peace’ (2005: 21) also applies to the king. The king’s approval brings fruition to those who win it. As the fertilising showers of spring rain are vital for a successful summer harvest, so too is the king’s approval for the successful career progression of a servant. No one is sure about the specific time when the rains will appear, but the refreshing showers are expected. In the same way, courtiers can expect their reward for acts of dedication and obedience to the king; but no one

knows when the king will make his decision. As Yahweh bestows his favour and blessing on those who fear him, the king should also shower his favour on his deserving servants.

5.1.6. Conclusion

The root מִלַּךְ appears in every verse, with the exception of verse 11. It takes the singular form in verses 10, 14 and 15 and the plural in verses 12 and 13. Moreover, the construction of the phrases in the first half-lines of verses 12 and 14 has negative connotations but the ones in the first half-lines of verses 13 and 15 are positive. There are some aesthetic elements in this passage. The evocative use of the metaphor ‘messenger of death’ (14a) and the simile ‘cloud of the spring rain’ (15b) to describe the king’s anger and favour is an expression of poetic imagination. Heim suggests that the antonyms מָוֶת (death) and חַיִּים (life) indicate coherence (2001: 212). Alonso Schökel also lays emphasis on the wordplay of the root מִלַּךְ – מִלְאךְ and מִלַּךְ – מִלְקָשׁ in verses 14 and 15 respectively (Alonso Schökel, 1984: 350).

As mentioned earlier, the preceding sayings about the Lord in 16:1–9 are closely related to 16:10–15. According to Whybray, ‘the joining of these two groups serves as a double purpose: it teaches, on the one hand, that kings rule by divine permission and are Yahweh’s representatives on earth, but, on the other, that as human beings they have this authority only if they acknowledge their subordinate status and rule righteously’ (Whybray, 1994a: 88–89). Heim also argues that the rest of the chapter can be incorporated into this passage. His contextual approach leads him to suggest that 16:16–30 answers the question on how the courtiers can deal wisely with the king. They must use the ‘wise approach’ (16), follow the ‘right way’ (17–24), display ‘propriety’ (18–19), learn with ‘piety and tenacity’ (20–24) and avoid the ‘corrupt way’ (25, 27–30) when they serve (2001: 215).

Proverbs 16:10–15 captures some essential responsibilities of a ruler. It emphasises the king’s judicial authority (10–11), moral character (12–13) and absolute power (14–15). Ansberry sums it up nicely: ‘The king is YHWH’s official representative, who mediates his judicial authority, regulates his economic standards, emulates his character, and dispenses his just rewards and punishments’ (2009: 179). Every ideal and wise leader is expected to be able to do all of these. Furthermore, this text serves as a reminder for those who are close to leaders to watch their actions and act wisely and righteously.

5.2. There is a Ruler Above Human Rulers (21:1; 29:25–26)

5.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 21:1; 29:25–26

1	פְּלִגֵּי־מַיִם לִב־מֶלֶךְ בְּיַד־יְהוָה עַל־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר יַחְפֹּץ יַטְנוּ :	Stream of water is the heart of a king in the hands of the Lord, he directs it, wherever he wills.
25	חִרְדַּת אָדָם יִתֵּן מִוֶּקֶשׁ וּבֹטֵחַ בַּיהוָה יִשְׁגָּב :	The fear of man lays a snare, but he who trust in the Lord will be safe.
26	רַבִּים מְבַקְשִׁים פְּנֵי־מוֹשֵׁל וּמִיָּהוָה מֵשֶׁפֶט־אִישׁ :	Many seek the face of a ruler, but a man’s justice comes from the Lord.

5.2.2. Textual Note

Proverbs 29:26b. Waltke suggests that ‘a verb of motion is implied’ (Waltke, 2005: 403) by the appearance of the preposition **מִן** just before **יָהוָה**. This is also reflected in my translation.

5.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 21:1; 29:25–26

Proverbs 21:1 gives credence to the influential power of Yahweh over the king. The original sense that the phrase **פְּלִגֵּי־מַיִם** (Greek **ὄρμη ὕδατος**) carries is that of ‘streams of water in a

dry place' (HALOT, 3: 929). It connotes 'productivity rather than flooding and danger' (Fox, 2009: 679). Toy observes that this imagery can only be literally found in Egypt and Mesopotamia, but not in Palestine (1977: 398). However, Murphy and Waltke have been able to show that similar imagery could be found in Palestine. According to Murphy, its primary aim is to contribute to the 'fertility of the difficult soil' (1998: 158). Similarly, Waltke notes that Egyptian and Mesopotamian farmers erected dams and other water obstruction devices to divert water into their gardens and fields. On the other hand, their counterparts in Palestine relied on rain but they had to channel it to where it was needed.²²⁰ He suggests that 'natural streams are not meant, because their direction is fixed'. Therefore, a metaphorical meaning should be sought. He concludes that, 'the Lord is the farmer; the king's heart is the flexible channel; and his well-watered garden is the pious and ethical needy' (2005: 168).

I agree with Murphy and Waltke that the imagery of streams of water could match landscapes to be found in Palestine. The wisdom writer would not have used this image if it did not exist at that time. However, Waltke's interpretation of the well-watered garden as 'the pious and ethical needy' is unclear. יָד (hand) metaphorically expresses possession or control. Kings were known to be powerful in ancient Israel and throughout the ANE, but the conceptions and thoughts on their minds are all in the hands of God. The heart is seen as the seat of human feelings and emotions.²²¹ It is the centre for both positive and negative reactions, yet, it is within the control of Yahweh.

²²⁰ This is about canals and artificial waterways that are put in place for the purpose of irrigation and smooth passage of boats to inland regions.

²²¹ For Europeans, the heart is the seat of the emotions, but in Hebrew it is also the location of thought (HALOT, 2: 514–515).

The second half-line continues the idea in the first. The Lord not only controls the heart of the king; he directs it, wherever he wills. **יְהוָה** is the main subject for the first and second half-line, while **מֶלֶךְ** is the object. The appearance of **יִתְפַּחַץ** (delight or will) as qal imperfect third person masculine singular implies a present and continuous action. In other words, the Lord's exercise of control is a continuous activity. According to Fox, this proverb can be directed to the king and his subjects. It challenges the king to avoid pride and 'make God's will (presumably as taught by the sages and other authorities) his own'. He should be conscious of divine authority over human affairs. The proverb also flatters the king before his subjects 'by equating his intentions with God's' (Fox, 2009: 679).²²² In my opinion, this verse is more applicable to the subjects than to the king. This is because the emphasis lies in the second half-line. As I mentioned earlier, the emphasis is on the Lord who is performing the action, over the king. The aim of this proverb is to glorify the Lord and not the king. Proverbs 21:1 contributes to our discussion of leadership. It is a warning for the king that there is a higher power controlling human affairs.

Moreover, there is a connection between Proverbs 29:25 and 26 with the use of the catchword **יְהוָה** (Lord). Verse 25 introduces us to another element of leadership. The word **תִּירָדָה** (fear) in the first half-line connotes the panic expressed by an individual as a result of human threat. Fox offers one of the best translations of this verse: 'the fear of man sets a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be safe' (2009: 846). Leaders who panic as a result of fear of humans will lose their self-confidence and follow the selfish dictates of others.²²³ As McKane notes,

²²² In other words, 'what the king wants must be what God wants' (Fox, 2009: 679). However, this proverb may not be true in a real life situation where a wicked person is in a position of leadership.

²²³ For example, King Saul twice followed the suggestions of the people around him and disobeyed Yahweh in

trust in Yahweh, ‘if it is thoroughgoing and comprehensive, is incompatible with fearfulness, because whoever relies for safety on Yahweh knows he is safe indeed’ (1970: 639). This looks like an ideal situation, but this is not always the case.²²⁴ The real life consequence is that people should have the courage to intervene even when standing up for justice is dangerous. The parallelism between the ‘fear of man’ and the ‘trust in Yahweh’ allows the reader to see the difference.

In the same vein, those who seek the attention of the ruler through different forms of manipulation should remember that ultimate justice comes from God (verse 26). מִבְּקָשִׁים in this context means to ‘search for, call on, or consult with’ (HALOT, 2: 154). Any attempt to call on the ruler to favourably intervene in legal proceedings may not yield the desired result. In my view, this proverb is about dignity, tenacity and patience. It encourages the righteous not to give up hope when their appeal to the ruler fails.²²⁵ Here, the readers are expected to seek ‘audience with the Lord, presumably through reverential prayer’ (Waltke, 2005: 453). Therefore, Yahweh should be the subject of one’s fear, instead of mortal humans.²²⁶ There is interlinear parallelism between verses 25 and 26, as they both focus on the supremacy of Yahweh over human rulers. He can overrule their decisions, especially on matters of justice.

5.2.4. What Can We Learn?

The above verses can be read, therefore, as implying that the king (on the basis of his status)

an attempt to save his position (1 Sam 13:8–14, 15:10–29). He eventually lost the position because he was ensnared by human fear. In contrast, the proverb admonishes the son to put his trust in Yahweh.

²²⁴ Timothy Sandoval has a good discussion on the differences between the ideal and reality on the discourse of wealth and poverty explaining how scholars have spun out reality from the ideal in the book of Proverbs (Sandoval, 2005: 31–39).

²²⁵ The person who wants something from the ruler may be ensnared to compromise and become corrupt. A better way of going about it is to trust in the Lord in the long term.

²²⁶ Such as influential rulers, magistrates and rich people.

is saddled with the responsibility of rewarding and punishing justly on behalf of Yahweh. They serve as reminders for leaders that God is the ruler above human rulers, in contrast to some proverbs that attribute absolute powers to the king (cf. 16:14).

5.3. Great Leaders have Many Followers (14:28)

5.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 14:28

<p>בְּרֶב־עַם הַדִּרְת־מֶלֶךְ וּבְאַפָּס לְאִם מְחַתֶּת רִזּוֹן:</p>	<p>28 In a multitude of people is the king's majesty, but in end of the people ruins the prince.</p>
--	--

5.3.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 14:28

Verse 28 focuses on what can increase or decrease the dignity of a leader. It reflects the positive impact of population in leadership. In the context of monarchy, a greater population would attract more taxes for the king; he would then be rich enough to embark on various projects. He would also have enough men to defend his city during times of war. There are four important parallels between the first and second half-lines. The first is רֶב (multitude) and אַפָּס (end). The second is עַם and לְאִם (people). Elsewhere, עַם refers to courtiers and soldiers fighting for the king (Judg 20:10; 2 Kgs 13:7 and 18:26). The appearance of לְאִם, however, suggests that it is probably a reference to the same people. The third is הַדִּרְת (majesty) and מְחַתֶּת (ruin). הַדִּרְת generally means dignity, glory, beauty and majesty,²²⁷ but the sense that it carries here is about 'royal majesty' (HALOT, 1: 241). It is the prestige that is attached to the position of a king. The fourth parallel is מֶלֶךְ (king) and רִזּוֹן (prince or dignitary). According to Waltke, רִזּוֹן is 'the poetic equivalent' of מֶלֶךְ (2004: 604).

²²⁷ For a general discussion of the various usages of the word הַדִּרְת, see Waltke (2004: 581).

McKane understands this individual proverb to mean that the rule of a king is based on a ‘wide measure of public support’ (1970: 469). Murphy suggests that verse 28 appears to be ‘a basic observation’ about kingship and kingdoms, if interpreted separately (Murphy, 1998: 107). In other words, a king without subjects does not have a kingdom. Toy observes that this proverb has a timeless application. It ‘refers to industrial activity and international wars, and declares that wealth and military strength are the decisive factors in national political life’ (1977: 298). In the same vein, Fox suggests that ‘a large population redounds to the glory of its ruler, for it attests to his success in securing peace (or victory) and prosperity’ (2009: 583).²²⁸ A ruler who results to brutally killing his subjects out of insecurity would destroy his own kingdom over a period of time.

5.3.3. What Can We Learn?

What this proverb is saying is that the more people leaders get to lead, the more important they become. The antithetic parallelism in Proverbs 14:28 suggests that an increase in population is an indication of successful leadership, while a gross reduction in population can make the influence of a leader to erode. Therefore, it is the responsibility of leaders to empower their subjects and seek the common good of the people by implementing ‘life promoting measures’ (Longman, 2008: 306). They should make the necessary effort to win the support of the people.

²²⁸ The Egyptian instruction of Merikare echoes a similar idea. ‘Powerful is the king who possesses an entourage. Noble is he who is rich in officials’ (XV).

5.4. Counterpoint and Conclusion

It is worth stating explicitly, however, that there is not one single consistent account of the status of leaders in the book of Proverbs, but some diverse and contrasting perspectives are evident.²²⁹ Some proverbs emphasise the importance of kings and rulers as representatives of Yahweh (16:10–15; 21:1; 29:25–26), while others imply that they are unnecessary (6:6–8; 30:24–28). For example, Proverbs 6:6–11 draws an analogy from the animal kingdom to offer wisdom on human behaviour (Whybray, 1994b: 93). Waltke finds the theme of self-inflicted poverty in this cluster and suggests its topic is a ‘warning to the sluggard’. He notes that verses 6–8 are an admonition for the son to learn wisdom from the activities of an ant and that verses 9–11 show the consequences of being a sluggard, who falls into the state of destitution unless he gets up to find work (2004: 335–341).

In contrast to Waltke’s perspective, however, the context of this text suggests otherwise. A brief look at the context of Proverbs 6 shows that verses 6–11 are illustrations and motivation for the action recommended in verses 3–5, to get oneself out of a dangerous obligation. The repetition of the phrase ‘sleep and slumber’ in verses 4 and 10 makes it even clearer. As Heim argues, this is further evidence of variant repetition in Proverbs (2013:162–165). Verses 6–8 present an ant as a model for hard work. The summary description of the beneficial outcome of an ant’s behaviour is a compressed result of what can be learnt by observation over time. An ant is effective and diligent without a קָצִין (chief) or a שֹׁטֵר (officer). The use of these words is helpful for the purpose of our discussion. If ants can do all these things without oversight, then humans are expected to do better. The power of observation that is being

²²⁹ Some proverbs present the king as sacred, while others present the king in his human frailty.

displayed in this section is meant to enforce learning and expresses contradictions to leadership status.²³⁰

Moreover, in Proverbs 30:24–28, Agur recognises four weak but wise creatures that achieve extraordinary things. Ants are small, but they provide food for themselves throughout the seasons. Rock badgers are weak, but they find shelter in the rock. Locusts are without a king, yet they march out in unity to cause ‘devastation of a scale almost beyond imagination’ (Waltke, 2005: 497). Lizards can be captured easily, yet they find their way to the luxurious king’s palace. This subunit is about the importance of wisdom²³¹ but it may apply to leadership because of the reference to the king. Verse 27, especially, suggests that unity can be achieved without a ruler. Therefore, everyone has responsibility for building a better world, and not just the leader.

In my view, the idea that kings are essential is the dominant narrative in Proverbs because of the regular appearance of sayings about leadership and kingship. However, it is interesting to note that it was not universally agreed in ancient Israel. We could certainly argue that Proverbs 6:6–8 and 30:24–28 express some scepticism about the role of kings.²³²

In addition, Proverbs 10:10–15 suggest that the decisions, powers and judgments of the king

²³⁰ In my view, the sluggard mentioned in this text is a metaphor for the son. The father uses three things to impact the son. We can see the conceptual metaphors of wisdom in verse 6, proactive actions and teamwork in verse 7 and effective planning in verse 8. The idea of working effectively without supervision and oversight of leaders is evidence of an ant exhibiting self-leadership. In the real world, there is division of labour in the ant colony. There are soldiers, harvesters and other specialised groups. The ant shows herself as a responsible follower because she does her work without anyone telling her.

²³¹ Paradoxically, the addressee of the proverbs in this subunit may be vulnerable to royal officials who could betray trust; but reliance on wisdom will guarantee victory.

²³² Apart from the most prominent narrative about leadership, it is interesting that there are a few texts that hint at the opposite direction. For example, it is good to have a king who makes good decisions, but the ants are without a king. There is a little counterpoint that leaders do not matter at all.

are absolute, but 21:1 and 29:25–26 recognise the authority of Yahweh over human rulers. Observation led the poets in Proverbs to conclude that having many followers is evidence of majesty or great leadership (14:28). In contrast elsewhere, the size of the population and the number of weapons cannot save the king when disaster strikes (Psalm 33:16). In real life situations, a president with a small population or entourage could be more influential than a president with a huge population. For example, Israel is considered a tiny nation (with 8.5 million inhabitants) in the midst of other nations; yet it is very influential. In contrast, the president of Nigeria, with over 180 million people, arguably does not command quite the same respect or popularity as the Israeli Prime Minister on the world stage.

How do we resolve these and many other contradictions in the book of Proverbs? Michael Fox, writing on the contradictions in Ecclesiastes,²³³ suggests that the biblical writer paired some contradictory statements together to make the reader think deeply on his polemic approach. He may be affirming pluralistic viewpoints or quoting someone else's thought to support his opinion.²³⁴ Another possibility for Fox is that Qoheleth only reported his frustrating observations without attacking the wisdom movement or undermining his teachings: 'He is at a dead-end. He does not even try to solve the problem, but teaches how to live with it' (Fox, 1989: 145). If this is correct, it may be the same situation for the writers of Proverbs. Moreover, Van Leeuwen observes that some of the contradictions in Proverbs may imply that 1) 'all rules have their exceptions', 2) the situation of individuals would determine their actions in specific cases and 3) 'contradictory sayings may reveal basic conflicts within a

²³³ Fox focuses on the contradictions in Qoheleth that relate to toil, pleasure, wisdom, and justice.

²³⁴ Fox writes, 'Qohelet is stating the problem, not solving it. Rather than adjudicating between rival propositions, Qohelet makes them clash, then despairs of rational resolution...two viewpoints confront without invalidating each other' (1989: 22).

worldview' (1992: 25). In the same vein, Hatton urges us to think about the contradictions in Proverbs in the light of its redaction history. He suggests that allowing the proverbs to interact with one another and consulting the LXX when it is helpful can resolve some of the contradictions (2008:150–160). It certainly seems to be the case that Proverbs allows some room for recognition of contrasting perspectives to at least qualify the dominant narrative.

CHAPTER 6

THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LEADERS IN PROVERBS

A code of conduct is a collection of rules and regulations highlighting acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, practices and responsibilities that are expected from an individual, group or organisation. In this chapter, we shall discuss two key texts on the code of conduct for leaders in Proverbs.²³⁵

6.1. Proverbial Instructions to Budding Court Officials (25:1–7)

6.1.1. Introduction

There is a consensus among scholars that there are many ‘royal proverbs’ within Proverbs 25:1–29:27. Bryce and van Leeuwen, especially, have done excellent analyses of the structural unity of this section (Bryce, 1972: 145–157, van Leeuwen, 1988). Similarly, Waltke notes that Proverbs 25:1–7 falls within the proverbial clusters that ‘were originally addressed to budding court officials’ (2005: 302). If this is correct, it is relevant to my discussion of leadership in Proverbs.

6.1.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 25:1–7

1	גַּם־אֵלֶּה מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה אֲשֶׁר הָעֲתִיקוּ אַנְשֵׁי חֶזְקִיָּה מֶלֶךְ־יְהוּדָה:	These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah King of Judah copied and collected. ²³⁶
2	כְּבוֹד אֱלֹהִים הַסֹּתֵר דְּבָר	The glory of God is to conceal a matter,

²³⁵ This chapter examines various interrelated proverbs that are best considered together in the context where they appear.

²³⁶ The Hebrew הָעֲתִיקוּ is only one word, but I have paraphrased it in my translation as ‘copied and collected’, in order to catch its nuance.

וְכָבֹד מְלָכִים חֲקֹר דָּבָר :		but the glory of kings is to search out a matter.
שָׁמַיִם לְרוֹם וָאָרֶץ לְעֵמֶק	3	Heaven is high and earth is deep,
וְלֵב מְלָכִים אֵין חֲקֹר :		and the heart of a king is unsearchable.
הָגוּ סִיגִים מִכֶּסֶף	4	Remove the dross from the silver,
וַיֵּצֵא לְצִרְף כֶּלִי :		and a vessel comes to the refiner; ²³⁷
הָגוּ רָשָׁע לִפְנֵי-מֶלֶךְ	5	Remove the wicked in the presence of a king,
וַיִּכּוֹן בַּצֶּדֶק כִּסְאוֹ :		and his throne will be established in righteousness.
אַל-תִּתְהַדָּר לִפְנֵי-מֶלֶךְ	6	Do not honour yourself in the presence of a king
וּבִמְקוֹם גְּדֹלִים אַל-תַּעֲמֹד :		and do not stand in the place of the great ones;
כִּי טוֹב אָמַר-לָךְ עֲלֵה הִנֵּה	7	For it is better that he says to you, ‘Come up here,’
מִהַשְׁפִּילָךְ לִפְנֵי נָדִיב אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ :		than to humiliate you in the presence of a noble whom your eyes have seen.

6.1.3. Textual Notes

Verse 1. The LXX and the Peshitta replaced the ‘men of Hezekiah’ with οἱ φίλοι Εζεκιου ‘friends of Hezekiah.’ The reason behind this is not clear, but it shows they are associates of Hezekiah.

Verse 3. I follow the LXX division of the first line into two nominal clauses because it allows for easy understanding.²³⁸ I have translated מְלָכִים on the second half-line as singular for the purpose of harmony in the verse.

Verse 7. The last line of verse 7 is difficult to translate.²³⁹

²³⁷ It should be noted that לְ (to) was used to describe the ‘refiner’ instead of מִן (from).

²³⁸ ‘οὐρανὸς ὑψηλός, γῆ δὲ βαθεῖα, καρδία δὲ βασιλέως ἀνεξέλεγκτος.’

²³⁹ The MT connected everything together and Fox’s translation seems to follow it (Fox, 2009: 778). On the other hand, the LXX, Syriac, Vulgate, NIV, NRSV, REB and NJPS opted for connecting verse 7b and 8a together. Scott and Murphy follow this translation (Scott, 1965: 155; Murphy, 1998: 187). However, Clifford and Waltke maintain that the line could stand-alone (Clifford, 1999: 220; Waltke, 2005: 303). Waltke, especially, argues that the relative clause in 7b ‘can function as an object before the predicate’ (Waltke, 2005: 303; Waltke, 1990: 334). My translation is in agreement with Fox because I think separating 7b to stand on its own or connecting it with 8a does not make sense. It will make it difficult to see the contribution of the relative clause here to the proverb. The only problem with this approach is the fact that it disregards the athnach under נָדִיב, which naturally divides the verse into two lines.

6.1.4. Literary Structure

This section can be structured into four parts. The first part is the introduction (25:1), which is the general discussion of verse 1 against its wider historical background. The second part is about the supremacy of God over the leaders (25:2–3). The third part concerns the leader and wicked courtiers (25:4–5). The fourth part is about the behaviour of courtiers before the leader (25:6–7).

6.1.5. Exegetical Analysis

A. Introduction (25:1)

The superscription here has puzzled scholars. Who are the men of Hezekiah? Are these men scribes or counsellors? Michael Carasik's 1994 article has attempted to answer the first question. He describes Hezekiah as the 'second royal possessor and patron of wisdom' after Solomon in Israel (Carasik, 1994: 295). For Carasik, the reference to the 'men of Hezekiah' is exegetical as well as historical (Carasik, 1994: 289–300). He maintains that the superscription here can be compared with 'the historical superscriptions to certain psalms'. He concludes that this text connects well with the siege of Jerusalem in 2 Kings 18 and 19. While I agree with some of Carasik's analysis, it is difficult to accept his historical connections.²⁴⁰ Following McKane, Whybray, Blenkinsopp and Fox, I conclude that the precise identity of 'Hezekiah's men' is unknown. They could be court scribes, courtiers, literate individuals, sages, a private scribal group being supported by the king, administrators, priests or other king's officials serving in various capacities within the royal court (McKane, 1970: 557, Whybray, 1990b: 137–138, Blenkinsopp, 1995: 32–33). A key issue of relevance for our

²⁴⁰ For example, there is no evidence to support his reference to Eliakim the steward, Shebna the scribe and the senior priests as the men of Hezekiah. Fox's comment here is more tenable. He suggests that 'Hezekiah's men were men in the employ of the royal court' (Fox, 2009: 778).

purposes is the employment on behalf of a leader of a group of literate educated people to transmit literary works, to put in place administrative infrastructures and to facilitate the education of leaders and administrators for the good of the community.

The use of the particle **וְ** (also) at the beginning of verse 1 is important. The word appears about 700 times in the Hebrew Bible. The particle can be used to ‘associate,’ ‘emphasise,’ ‘intensify,’ ‘repeat,’ as well as ‘negate’ words (HALOT, 1: 195). In this context, the use of the particle conjunction **וְ** with the adjective **אֱלֹהִים** is to create association. It calls attention to the current compilation as an addition to the previous collection with titles mentioning Solomon in Proverbs 1:1 and 10:1 (Weeks, 1994: 42–43). It may also mean that the origin of the proverbs belongs to King Solomon; or that the proverbs were composed during his reign, but the work of collecting and transcribing was undertaken by the men of Hezekiah. In an attempt to maintain the Solomonic tradition, they ensured that the voice of the wise monarch was heard, just as in the previous sections. In my view, this suggests an attempt by a leader to promote wisdom and sustain its legacy.²⁴¹

The meaning of **הַעֲתִיקוּ** is difficult because it is rare. The word in the qal stem means to ‘move away, grow old or become old’. However, in the hiphil it means to ‘move further, copy or transcribe sayings’ (HALOT, 2: 905).²⁴² There is no consensus among commentators on how **הַעֲתִיקוּ** should be understood. Whybray conceives it as ‘editing’ (Whybray, 1990b: 138). Longman suggests ‘transpose’, because the verb connotes the movement of the proverbs

²⁴¹ This includes songs, artefacts, wisdom sayings and other things to preserve their cultural and religious heritage.

²⁴² The appearance of this word in the hiphil form can also be found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 12:8; 26:22; Job 9:5; 32:15). I will explain later why ‘copy’ or ‘transcribe’ fits best in this verse.

from one source to another (Longman, 2006: 450). Waltke translates it as ‘copied and collected,’ while Fox opts for ‘transcribed.’ Waltke notes that **הָעֲתִיקוּ** means ‘to cause to advance or move’ (Waltke, 2005: 301). Fox notes that the ‘etymology’ of the word ‘suggests the gathering of proverbs from a variety of sources, whether written or oral’ (Fox, 2009: 777). Another reason he gives to support his argument is the appearance of **אֲנָשִׁי** (men) in plural to denote their collective rigorous efforts working on the small collection. In my judgment, these scholars appear to be saying the same thing in different ways. Fox’s translation too would assume that the material was collected before it was transcribed. His use of the word ‘transcribe’ can cover many areas of the literary process. I prefer Waltke’s translation, however, because it is less ambiguous. It spells out the process of copying and collecting, which supports the view that the material was copied. The fact that the word appears in the causative hiphil stem also strengthens my preference for Waltke’s approach. In addition, Scott, writing earlier than Waltke and Fox, points out that Proverbs 25:1 is an example of ‘a school or scribal establishment under royal patronage, where literary records of the past were assembled and new literature was produced’ (Scott, 1965: 155).

Apart from the identity of the men of Hezekiah, there are still many things that we do not know about them: for example, the nature, scope and extent of their scribal work are not clear. According to Schmoldt, the word **הָעֲתִיקוּ**, from the root verb **עֲתַק** implies ‘moved from one place to another’ (Schmoldt, 2001: 456). For Waltke, **הָעֲתִיקוּ** ‘entails transmitting and arranging a select number of Solomon’s 3,000 proverbs, which were in written and/or oral form, as part of a unified appendix to his original collection’ (2005: 301). The notion it appears to convey here has to do with development or advancement, but the extent to which

this is done remains uncertain.

The reference to two influential kings in Israel (Solomon and Hezekiah) in the superscription of verse 1 calls for a careful analysis for our discussion of leadership. It must be pointed out that commentators and scholars doubted the historicity of the historical details and the chronology of the kings, as narrated in 1 and 2 Kings as well as 1 and 2 Chronicles (Japhet, 1993: 1–49, Barr, 2005: 64, Finkelstein et al., 2007: 155).²⁴³ Thiele, especially, argues that some of the historical events about Hezekiah's reforms in Kings and Chronicles are questionable (Thiele, 1983: 174–176). Steven McKenzie also suggests that Chronicles should be seen as a 'theological rewriting of Bible history for instructional purposes' (McKenzie, 2004: 28). He notes that the Chronicler was 'selective omitting material that does not fit his agenda' (2004: 37) and concludes that there were omissions, rearrangements, additions and changes in 1 and 2 Chronicles (2004: 37–41). However, working from a canonical perspective, I would like to deal with the final form of Chronicles, focusing on how the leadership of an effective king such as Hezekiah was envisaged in the period shortly after his reign.²⁴⁴

Another important question to be asked is the significance of the collection for Hezekiah. In other words, why did King Hezekiah embark on this wisdom project? There are three possible reasons: firstly, it may be evidence of Hezekiah's quest for wisdom. Scott's presentation of some parallels between Solomon and Hezekiah may strengthen the historical credibility of Proverbs 25:1b (Scott, 1955: 272–279). Similarly, Crenshaw observes that the wisdom of

²⁴³ There is a consensus in Chronicles' scholarship that it is difficult to determine the historical accuracy of Chronicles.

²⁴⁴ Solomon and Hezekiah were both mentioned as emblematic and idealised leaders to be emulated by others. The Chronicler wrote 2 Chronicles many years after the events it described, with an agenda in mind. The presentation of Hezekiah's 'practical leadership' was probably part of it.

Solomon, as mentioned in 1 Kings 4:30–32,²⁴⁵ may have appealed to Hezekiah (Crenshaw, 1998: 40–46). He suggests that it would be odd to connect Hezekiah with wisdom in ancient Israel if there were no historical evidence to back it up. He concludes that a group of professional sages existed in ancient Israel from the time of David. Elsewhere, Murphy comes to a similar conclusion about the historical basis for the wisdom of Hezekiah (Murphy, 1996: 5, 22). I also share the same view with these scholars. Hezekiah's emphasis on wisdom connects well with the ANE motif of referring to the king as a 'sage'.²⁴⁶

Secondly, it may be evidence of Hezekiah's commitment to the social and religious reforms that he is said to have championed during his reign (2 Chr 29:3–36; 30:13–27; 31:20–21).²⁴⁷

Thirdly, I would argue that the collection was useful as instruction for governance and leadership. It became a 'manual for future monarchs' (Malchow, 1985: 238–245) during the reign of Hezekiah and afterwards. The material calls attention to the basic responsibilities of a king and those who work for him. It makes it possible for them to examine themselves in the light of this manual. It also allows those outside the royal court to evaluate the character of their king and his courtiers.

Apart from engaging in building projects and making royal laws, Hezekiah, as presented in biblical records, exercised practical leadership in seven specific areas: 1) Hezekiah exercised

²⁴⁵ '...so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than anyone else, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, children of Mahol; his fame spread throughout all the surrounding nations. He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered a thousand and five' (1 Kgs 4:30–32).

²⁴⁶ According to Fox, 'the royal administration (including the royal court and the palace and the entire central administration) was a locus of literary activity in both Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Egypt, the palace, closely associated with the temple, sponsored the 'House of Life,' which was a scriptorium, library, and school. In Assyria, Tiglathpileser I (1114–1076) established a royal library in Ashur, and Ashurbanipal (668–27) assembled a great library in Nineveh, some forty years after Hezekiah's death in 687' (Fox, 2009: 777).

²⁴⁷ Solomon and David were successful kings in ancient Israel and therefore Hezekiah wants to be like them by following in their steps. 'He brought out of obscurity both David's psalms (2 Chr 29:30) to reform the nation's worship and Solomon's proverbs to reform national character (2 Chr 31:20–21)' in Israel (Waltke, 2005: 301).

good communication (2 Chr 29:5). He communicated his royal decision with the priests before he addressed the people of Judah. 2) He led positive reforms in order to rectify the errors of previous kings (2 Chr 29:6–9). 3) Hezekiah led the people by example. He was concerned about his own spirituality and the spirituality of his people; he led the people of Judah in the worship of Yahweh (2 Chr 29:20–29). 4) He sponsored the collecting, selecting, copying and editing of the wisdom material (Proverbs 25:1b). The wisdom literature that Hezekiah put together was about educating the class of leadership.²⁴⁸ Hubbard notes that most of the great kings in the ANE, including Israel, were sponsors of wisdom (Hubbard, 1966: 3–33). 5) He employed other people to work on the wisdom material (Proverbs 25:1b).²⁴⁹ 6) He chose material from King Solomon, one of his predecessors. Kitchen suggests that the ‘Solomonic material’ was ‘copied out 250 years later as an entity in Hezekiah's reign’, around 700 BC (Kitchen, 1977: 70). This demonstrates Hezekiah’s resolution to pass on the wisdom tradition from the previous generation. 7). Hezekiah’s actions may have created more jobs during his reign over Israel (Davies, 1995: 199–211).²⁵⁰ As demonstrated by Hezekiah in the above discussion, leadership is therefore about good communication, positive reforms, education, passing on of the wisdom tradition, sponsoring writing and training a class of future leaders. All these are instructive for contemporary leadership.

B. The Supremacy of God over Leaders (25:2–3)

This section focuses on the supremacy of God over kings and leaders. It begins with what is perfectly seen in God and partially revealed in humans. Generally, **כְּבוֹד** means ‘dignity’ or

²⁴⁸ Hezekiah’s educational programme was targeted on education for leadership in order to establish a high standard of professionalism.

²⁴⁹ Hezekiah employed professional educators to carry out the assignment on his behalf.

²⁵⁰ The end result of all these achievements for Hezekiah was the fact that ‘there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon son of King David of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem’ (2 Chr 30:26). The things that were referred to include building projects, job creation, sponsoring wisdom collections etc.

‘high position’ (Collins, 1996a: 580). Theologically, **כְּבוֹד** (Greek **δοξα**) describes the ‘power, authority and honour of God’ (HALOT, 2: 457). It is the ‘essence and power reserved only for God’ in its theological sense (HALOT, 2: 458). God extends this glory to humans through the invitation to rule over creation (NIDOTTE, 2: 574). In addition, it is suggested from a non-theological point of view that **כְּבוֹד** could mean ‘reputation, importance, splendour, distinction and testimonial’ (HALOT, 2: 457).

Another word that requires closer analysis is **דָּבָר** (matter). According to Gerleman, ‘a convincing etymology for *dābār* has not yet been found’ (Gerleman, 1997: 326). He notes that the basic meaning of **דָּבָר** suggests the activity of speaking, the production of words and phrases. It is open to a considerable range of meanings (Gerleman, 1997: 330–336).²⁵¹ There seems to be an ambiguity in verse 2, as it is not clear what the **דָּבָר** (word or matter) constitutes. In addition, it is not clear whether it is the same matter for God and the king. Clifford and Longman think it is the same **דָּבָר** (Clifford, 1999: 222–223; Longman, 2006: 450–451). Clifford, especially, notes that, ‘God’s world is full of conundrums and puzzles beyond the capacity of ordinary people, but the king is there to unravel them and lead people to serve the gods’ (1999: 222). God derives his glory or dignity by concealing a matter (Deut 29:29). The king derives his own honour by searching it out. In other words, the king should be able to search out the same matter that was concealed by God and therefore ought to do so in the conduct of his government. Perdue reaches the same conclusion as Clifford and

²⁵¹ For example, it can also mean a thing (Prov 25:2) or event (Gen 1:20). The LXX renders it as *λόγον*, which means ‘something said (including the thought); by implication, a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive.’ It can also mean ‘account, cause, communication, intent, matter, tidings, treatise, utterance and word’ etc (Strong, 1997: 286).

Longman. He notes that God reveals himself clearly in the Pentateuch, Historical and Prophetic books but ‘in Proverbs, the Deity is more secretive. Yahweh’s nature and divine activity are capable of being known by the cultivation of wisdom and the teachings of sapiential tradition’ (Perdue, 2000: 247).

Waltke and Fox, on the other hand, think that the **דָּבָר** (matter) is not the same. For Waltke, the **דָּבָר** that God hides refers to ‘God’s act of creation’ and the **דָּבָר** that the king hides refers to ‘statecraft’ (Waltke, 2005: 310). Fox also maintains that the antithesis between ‘conceal a matter’ and ‘examine a matter’ is not precise. He concludes that ‘esoteric investigation is nowhere a royal duty or prerogative’ (Fox, 2009: 778). The hiphil infinitive construct **הִסְתֵּר** ‘to hide’, in the first half-line, means to cover or protect a ‘secret conversation’ (HALOT, 2: 771). **חָקַר** in the second half-line means to explore or search out. This has to do with ‘clever investigation’ (HALOT, 1: 348). There is no connection between what God conceals and what the king investigates. It only shows the paradox between the first and second lines of verse two. It ‘catches the antithesis of God and king, of religion and statecraft, of residual mystery and exhaustive investigation’ (McKane, 1970: 579). Ansberry puts it well: ‘God obtains glory by concealing his complex, mysterious activity within the cosmos (25:2a). On the other hand, kings obtain glory by executing their royal prerogatives, searching out and investigating human motives and actions in judicial matters (25:2b)’ (Ansberry, 2009: 224–225). In other words, God gets his glory by not revealing everything to us regarding his creation. The king, by contrast, gets his glory through his exceptional investigation of the things happening within his kingdom.

There is intra-linear parallelism between the first and second lines of verse 2. **כְּבוֹד** is parallel to **דְּבָר**. The repetition of the words **כְּבוֹד** (glory) and **דְּבָר** (matter) in the first and second half-line of verse 2 is significant for two reasons. First, it reinforces the link between the two lines of the poetry. According to Alter, repetition in poetry usually enhances ‘a focusing, a heightening, a concretization, a development of meaning’ (Alter, 1985: 59). Following Alter, I would argue that there is an element of heightening or intensification between the first and second lines of verse 2, as well as between verses 2 and 3. For example, verse 3a intensifies the idea that God is above the king, as stated in 2a and 3b, and intensifies the idea that the king is above his subjects, as stated in 2b. Secondly, the repetition of **כְּבוֹד** (glory) and **דְּבָר** (matter) emphasises the relationship between God and the king, who are both rulers in their own realms. The relationship between God and the king is not pertinent to ancient Israel alone; it was very common in other ANE nations. Weinfeld observes that ‘gods and kings were described as being surrounded with glory’ (Weinfeld, 1995b: 29). He notes that the decoration of their thrones and crowns reflect glory, power and majesty.

The appearance of **מְלָכִים** and **חָקַר** (search out) in verses 2 and 3 show that there is a connection between the two verses. Verse 3 begins with a nominal clause emphasising the supremacy of God over the king. **שָׁמַיִם** (heaven or sky) points to ‘the higher atmosphere below the firmament’ (HALOT, 4: 1560).²⁵² The word **רוֹם** (high), on the other hand, is a ‘symbol of strength and triumph’ (HALOT, 3: 1202). The description of the gap between the sky and the depth serves two purposes here. First, it shows that God is above the king in terms of hierarchy. There is a comparison of contrast between the heavenly king and human kings

²⁵² It brings God and the king closer.

because the gap between them is wide. Second, it suggests that it is far too difficult for anyone to understand the heart, will, or intention of the king. There is interlinear parallelism between verses 2 and 3. God in 2a is parallel to heaven in 3a and the king in 2b is parallel to earth. The contrast between God and the king in verse 2 is recalled in verse 3 as the difference between the heaven and the earth in terms of human searching.²⁵³

The relevance of this unit for leadership is huge. As the gap between the heavens and the earth or height and depth is unfathomable, so the king ought to maintain his inscrutability. He should command the respect of his subjects by selecting what to reveal. He must thoroughly investigate the affairs of the state and evaluate the sources of his information before making a major decision. He should not reveal his security strategies or divulge sensitive information to his opponents.²⁵⁴ Moreover, it is clear from verses 2 and 3 that a king or leader is expected to be skilled in wisdom. He ought to ensure that his wisdom is ahead of the people over whom he rules. He should be able to use wisdom to discover things. Similarly, the reference to Solomon and Hezekiah, who were influential kings in ancient Israel, is also interesting. Solomon is regarded as the ‘grand patron of wisdom’ (Brueggemann, 1990: 117–132) and Hezekiah represents a new generation of royal wisdom seekers (Carasik, 1994: 290).

C. The Leader and ‘Wicked’²⁵⁵ Courtiers (25:4–5)

Verses 4 and 5 are closely related. The appearance of the word **הָגַל** (to expel, remove or

²⁵³ The king was the one searching in verse 2, but he is being searched in verse 3.

²⁵⁴ How might a leader know what to discuss and what to keep secret? In modern society leaders usually make such decisions in consultation with their advisers and in the interest of the nation or organisation. In my view, there should be appropriate secrecy but the leader should also be accountable.

²⁵⁵ The ‘wicked’ are those who are genuinely dangerous for the entire enterprise of government.

break down) at the beginning of each verse is crucial.²⁵⁶ The infinitive absolute here intensifies or affirms the action, despite the absence of a cognate finite verb in the nominal clause. Waltke and O'Connor state that, 'the infinitive absolute may occur syntactically where a noun is expected, namely, as a subject in the nominative or as a genitive, or in an accusative role' (1990: 584). Similarly, they note that 'the infinitive absolute without waw may serve in place of a finite verb in making emphatic expressions and indignant questions' (Waltke and O'Connor, 1990a: 595). On this occasion, **הָגֵן** functions as a subject as well as a verb. Longman puts it well: 'it is an infinitive absolute that has the force of an imperative' (Longman, 2006: 447).

The imagery of the dross coming out of silver and the vessel for the refiner is striking. The dross is that which is being removed from silver or metal and the vessel is the finished product.²⁵⁷ These are the impurities being removed from metal during refining (van Leeuwen, 1986c: 112–113). This conveys the idea of purification, refining or sifting (HALOT, 3: 1057). Van Leeuwen's comment on verse 4 is instructive; he maintains that 'the process of refining and the metalworker's craft are stock metaphors for impure social situations which need purification through judgment. The wicked are dross and judgment is the refiner's fire' (van Leeuwen, 1988: 77).²⁵⁸ One of the responsibilities of leaders is to assess and evaluate the ethical behaviour of the people who contribute to their government. They should remove those who have been discovered to be abusing their office from positions of authority and

²⁵⁶ The verb **טָפַט** in the LXX denotes a 'blow with the hand or any instrument.' It figuratively implies 'to punish, beat, smite, strike, wound' etc (Strong, 1997: 491).

²⁵⁷ The removal of the dross from the silver does not necessarily produce a vessel. It is implied that the materials will be used to create a vessel.

²⁵⁸ A similar idea was expressed in Isaiah 27: 9 to describe God sending Judah into captivity.

influence.

I will now address the question of how the king removes the wicked from the court. Commentators have tried to suggest how the first half-lines of verses 4 and 5 are to be understood. Three possible solutions have been put forward. The first approach is to understand them as imperative; that is, they are commands for the king to remove the wicked from his presence. Clifford (1999: 223) and Fox (2009: 779) support this view. The second approach is to understand them as conditional clauses. If you remove the wicked from the presence of the king, then the consequence is that his throne will be established. Waltke and O'Connor advocate this view. They state that a 'waw conjunctive + prefix conjugation after an imperative signifies purpose' (Waltke, 1990: 262–263). The problem with this approach is that the conditional clause may slightly change its emphasis. This may imply that another senior official does the removal on behalf of the king, or in the presence of the king. The third approach is to understand them as a 'motivative clause' (Nel, 1982: 85) either for the king or his high officials to do the removal. My analysis of this couplet favours the first and second approach. The context of verses 4 and 5 suggests that it is the prerogative of the king to ensure that unrighteous officials are removed from his service.²⁵⁹ It also suggests the seriousness of this admonition. The word לְפָנָי implies that it is a senior courtier who removes another courtier in the presence of the king. He does it in a way that is transparent and accountable.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ In the real world of courtiers, how can the wicked be identified and who makes the decision? In modern society people would only be labeled as criminal or wicked after being tried and convicted by a law court. The things that constitute wickedness would include treason, rebellion, paedophilia, fraud etc.

²⁶⁰ He gives good reasons for the removal. He does not do it secretly and fraudulently.

Verse 5 continues the thought expressed in verse 4.²⁶¹ The word רָשָׁע (wicked) is used to describe a criminal or guilty person who deserves punishment. An interlinear parallelism exists between verses 4 and verse 5. The סִיג (dross) is parallel to רָשָׁע (wicked), which refers to whoever must be removed. The כֶּלִי (vessel) is also parallel to כִּסְאוֹ (his throne). The durability of a vessel depends on the process of production. The durability of the reign of a leader also depends on his action or inaction. כִּסְאוֹ (his throne) is the direct object of בִּצְדָק (established in righteousness). Waltke observes that כִּסְאוֹ (his throne) is a reference to ‘the king’s chair that signified his superiority, honour, and power and symbolised his rule over the realm.’ He also notes that the use of chair to describe his establishment ‘functions as a metonymy for his dynasty’ (Waltke, 2005: 315). A similar notion is conveyed in 1 Kings 2:24, 33; 8:25; 9:5; 2 Kings 11:19; 2 Chr 23:20; and Proverbs 16:2; 29:14. Therefore, the continuity of his reign as a monarch is assured through his descendants. In other words, his influence will last for generations. In a metaphorical way, ‘to be established’ could also mean that the leader is admired, loved and copied. Even in a democratic process, where there is no direct succession, the impact and policies of the leader will not be forgotten. This could also guarantee re-election for the political party.

The metallurgical imagery expressed in verse 4 is a figurative expression of the king’s responsibility to remove wicked officials in his service in verse 5. My analysis of this couplet shows that the ‘refiner’ is the king and the ‘dross’ is the wicked being removed in the process of purification. The conflict between good and evil has persisted in our world and it will

²⁶¹ The LXX renders verse 5 as κτεῖνε ἀσεβεῖς ἐκ προσώπου βασιλέως, καὶ κατορθώσει ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὁ θρόνος αὐτοῦ (see my translation).

continue unless leaders act. Van Leeuwen calls attention to the fact that the tension between רָשָׁע (wicked) and צַדִּיק (righteous), which is very common in Proverbs, especially chapters 10–15, only occurs twice within Proverbs 25–27. It appears in 25:5 and 25:26 (van Leeuwen, 1988: 71). Nevertheless, I would argue that its appearance here is relevant for leadership. A leader should be wary of bad advisers, whose evil advice may endanger his government.²⁶²

Oesterley suggests that this proverb pair may be a possible reference to Shebna in Isaiah 22:15–25 (Oesterley, 1929: 221). This view is not entirely convincing. This is because the proverbs may have been in existence before that historical event in Hezekiah’s time and the prophecy in Isaiah. However, taking the proverbs from their original contexts, they can be applied to other contexts to describe the duties of a king. As Aitken notes: ‘The king has a duty to be well on top of the affairs of state, to keep a close eye on how his ministers are carrying out their duties, and to keep himself well-informed about the circumstances of the common people’ (Aitken, 1986: 216). Similarly, Konkel shows that the process of removing the dross from silver is done in stages (Konkel, 1996a: 244–245). I would argue that the process may be harsh and difficult,²⁶³ but a leader must be courageous enough to carry out the exercise. In addition, a leader should be careful when making decisions and appointments. An insecure and unjust ruler has a tendency to surround himself with sycophants. A king who administers justice does not have any reason to be afraid; he is in power because God wants him to be there. There is a promise that, as long as he discharges his duties in righteousness, God will sustain him (Durant, 2010: 109–122).²⁶⁴

²⁶² This idea is parallel to the Babylonian *Advice to the Prince*, which states that ‘if (a king) heeds a rogue, the status quo in his land will change’ (Lambert, 1960: 113).

²⁶³ It is complex because it calls for accountability, power relations and mutual obligation.

²⁶⁴ The king should represent God on earth in diligent administration of justice. Durant makes a good case for

D. The Behaviour of Courtiers Before a Leader (25:6–7)

This section is an admonition for courtiers who are serving in the presence of the king. They are expected to display humility and modesty. The first half-line can be translated as ‘do not honour or adorn yourself in the presence of the king.’ תתהדר, in its hitpael imperfect form, means ‘to boast’ (HALOT, 1: 240). For Fox, ‘this refers to any type of self-promotion and manoeuvring to reach above one’s station’ (2009: 780). The boastful servant here is the one doing the action. It shows that he has a personal ambition to move beyond his superiors.

There is an intra-linear parallelism between the first and second half-line of verse 6. For example, תתהדר (honour yourself) and תעמד (take a stand) describe the action of the servant, while לפני-מלך (presence of a king) and מקום גדלים (place of the great ones) describe the place of the action. This setting suggests a public place where the king and nobles are gathered, either for a meeting or banquet. The repetition of אל (do not) with a direct object marker in the first and second half-lines also emphasises the seriousness of this prohibition. This is because the self-aggrandisement of the courtier will not only irritate the king; it will displease other courtiers.²⁶⁵

The ‘better saying’ that follows in verse 7 links well with verse 6. It is better to be called up

this in her analysis of Psalm 72 and 101 (Durant, 2010: 109–122). As the king purifies his government by removing wicked officials, God also purifies by enthroning and removing kings. For example, concerning Hezekiah’s reign, the Chronicler recorded that ‘...he did what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God and every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God, and in accordance with the law and the commandments, to seek his God, he did with all his heart; and he prospered (2 Chr 31:20–21).

²⁶⁵ This will lead to envy and other people feeling threatened. This will eventually cause disunity within the court.

than to be asked to go down. Although the verb אָמַר means to ‘mention’, ‘utter’ or ‘say something,’ it can also imply ‘to give an order’ with the infinitive construct (HALOT, 1: 66). Moreover, ‘with accusative of a person’, שָׁפַל could mean to ‘humiliate or put someone in a low position’ (HALOT, 4: 1632) before an audience or at a banquet. The one who does the action here is the king. This idea is similar to Jesus’ statement in Luke 14:7–11. As Beardslee suggests, this is one of the examples of Jesus reusing the Old Testament material as a background to his teaching (Beardslee, 1970: 65). It shows that this kind of behaviour is so important that Jesus referred to it in his earthly ministry. The public humiliation mentioned here is for the arrogant official who exalts himself above his rank.

Scholars such as Garrett, Clifford, Murphy and Waltke want us to read verse 7c as part of verse 8. Waltke, especially, argues that 7c presents the object for the subject and predicate in 8a. He also emphasises the need to allow the parallelism to flow (2005: 317). Fox, on the other hand, cleverly connects the whole of verse 7 together with the phrase ‘whom your eyes have seen’. He suggests that the relative clause may be describing a noble, or the colleague who is being bypassed, or a fragment from a different proverb (2009: 780). I agree with Fox that connecting 7c with 8a is unnecessary.²⁶⁶ However, it is not clear whether the noble who saw the self-elevation of the servant was the same one who witnessed his humiliation. There are similar instructions to this advice in the Egyptian wisdom literature (Lichtheim, 1973: 67, Lichtheim, 1976: 142).²⁶⁷ In other words, servants should wait until they are elevated as a

²⁶⁶ The LXX did not connect the last part of verse 7 (ὁ εἶδον οἱ ὀφθαλμοί σου, λέγε) with verse 8. I therefore stand with the MT and LXX.

²⁶⁷ For example, Ptahhotep counsels servants: ‘If you are in the antechamber, stand and sit according to your rank that was assigned you on the first day. Do not trespass or you will meet with opposition’ (Lichtheim, 1973: 67). Anii also elaborates on this idea when he says: ‘Keep your eye on your position, be it low or high. It is not good to push forward. Proceed in accordance with your rank’ (Lichtheim, 1976: 142). Ben Sira, writing much

result of good service and recommendation, rather than promote themselves.²⁶⁸

The proverb pair shows that the character of those in close association with the king is vital for good leadership. This admonition encourages humility and the recognition of protocol among lower officials. There is nothing wrong in being honoured by others, but honouring oneself through self-aggrandisement is condemned. It is possible for an official to be promoted as a result of his hard work and bravery; but exhibitionist behaviour would result in public humiliation, with the loss of respect and position.

6.1.6. Conclusion

The results so far have shown that this text can mean many things for leadership. The appearance of מֶלֶךְ (king) in each section of my analysis (verses 1, 2, 3, 5, 6) shows its relevance for leadership. In other words, the king is the central focus of this text. Oesterley notes that verses 2–7 all have the king ‘as their subject’ (Oesterley, 1929: 220). Similarly, in verse 1, I identified seven things that distinguished Hezekiah as a paradigmatic leader. Most of them are still relevant for contemporary leadership. Verse 2 shows that it is difficult for the people to understand the mind of a king. This is probably because he has a larger frame of thinking. He focuses on the higher things in heaven and the deeper things in the depths. These may be things that other people do not understand. The king may take advice from many sources, but he will not go around telling people about his leadership strategies or future plans. He must recognise the importance of wisdom for leadership. He also needs to connect himself with God.

later than Proverbs, offers the same wisdom advice to servants in a different way: ‘The wisdom of the lowly man raises his head and seats him among princes’ (11:1).

²⁶⁸ This is recommended elsewhere in Proverbs (Prov 22:29).

Moreover, verses 2, 3 and 5 answer the question about the identity of the one who establishes the king's throne in righteousness. It is God's responsibility. The king's responsibility is to demonstrate God's glory by ruling effectively over the people. He has supreme authority over his subjects, but God has supreme authority over him. As God's earthly representative, he should maintain justice, law and order within his jurisdiction. He should remove bad administrators and advisers within the royal court, in order to successfully administer justice to his people. Then his government will be sustained. McKane observes that:

Success in politics requires a determination to get to the bottom of every affair of state on which a decision has to be taken. Every piece of evidence which is available must be produced and examined, so that every decision taken will be the best possible decision and the king will never be seen to be ignorant or badly informed or unwilling to take the trouble to get at the truth, however complicated or vexatious the process of discovery. A king like this will earn respect and no man will presume to take him for a fool (McKane, 1970: 579).

This is an excellent sentiment, and one with which it is easy to agree. However, in view of this investigation, which has focused on leadership from a broader perspective in other parts of Proverbs, we can now go beyond McKane. Righteousness and justice (which are often the criteria in Proverbs) are rarely talked about in real life in the context of government. The main focus of leaders should be to help the people and protect them.

In addition, verses 6 and 7 also constitute a code of conduct for lower leaders. They instruct courtiers to be careful of boasting in the presence of the king. Every 'strong central government needs an educated class of administrators' (Carasik, 1994: 289) who can competently discharge their duties. Therefore, it is necessary for junior administrators to be professional and conduct themselves well before their superiors. They should work in unity,

embrace teamwork and be trustworthy. From the above discussion, it is reasonable to conclude that leadership is about wisdom and discernment, passing on important traditions, sponsoring wisdom literature,²⁶⁹ good communication, the maintenance of protocol, administering justice, having concern for the people, working with good advisers who also have the good of the people in mind, maintaining confidentiality and not talking too much about governmental affairs.

6.2. Admonition to Leaders (31:1–9)

6.2.1. Introduction

Proverbs 31: 1–9 is my last core text in this investigation. In it, the queen mother gives advice to the crown prince on his royal responsibilities (verses 1–9). It is also possible that she is the speaker of the poem about the capable woman (verses 10–31). This leads to the question of whether there is a link between 31:1–9 and 10–31. Some scholars argue for a separate author on the basis of its separation in the LXX and its different form and structure (McKane, 1970: 665–666; Longman, 2006: 539–542; Fox, 2009: 889–890). Others ascribe Proverbs 31 to Lemuel on the grounds that the superscription in verse 1 covers the whole chapter. Kitchen, especially, argues that both sections are from the same origin (Lemuel's mother). He suggests that:

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 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 (1977: 101).

²⁶⁹ This may include philosophical and educational literature as well as translations from other cultures etc.

Camp also supports this argument. She suggests that the placement of these two units in sequence does not appear to have been coincidental (1985: 317). They both have feminine elements as they are deliberately put together in the form of a mother's teaching.²⁷⁰ In the same vein, Waltke notes, 'if Lemuel is not the author of "The Valiant Wife", it is a unique orphan in Proverbs' (Waltke, 2005: 502). He concludes by pointing to some evidence in the Bible and Ancient Egypt, where different forms do not negate a singular authorship. There is a need for further investigation on the reasons why the LXX separated the two sections. This is, however, outside the scope of my study (Koptak, 2003: 674–675).

In this section, I shall concentrate on 31:1–9. Hatton links 31:1–9 with 6:20–7:27, on the basis of the word *nokriyah* (foreign or strange woman). He suggests that both passages constitute warnings against adulterous women. He also notes that the son is the addressee in both passages and they are the clearest examples of maternal instructions in Proverbs. He concludes that, 'the speaker in Proverbs 31:1–9 is not called a *nokriyah* but her foreignness is clearly flagged up by a number of verbal clues' within the text (2008: 73–75).²⁷¹ While I support Hatton's argument, I would take it one step further by arguing that 31:1–9 is a code of conduct for leaders.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ It is quite possible that the two units were originally independent. The queen mother may have incorporated verses 10–31 as part of her instruction in a similar way to the wisdom interludes in Proverbs 1–9. Because they are now connected with the lectures, they are part of the larger teaching of Proverbs.

²⁷¹ I will discuss some of the clues later in the discussion.

²⁷² Proverbs 31:10–31 is also relevant for our discussion of leadership. The woman who possesses the quality expressed in the text is considered to be a leader in the community. However, I did not treat verses 10–31 in this study for two reasons: First, I have already discussed the substantial contribution of Christine Roy Yoder (Yoder, 2003: 427–447) on the role of the woman of substance 31:10–31 and how that resonates with leadership in the book of Proverbs in chapter 4 of this thesis. Second, there is not sufficient space to deal with it in this PhD thesis.

6.2.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 31:1–9

דְּבָרֵי לְמוּאֵל מֶלֶךְ	1	The words of King Lemuel,
מִשָּׁא אֲשֶׁר־יִסְרָתוּ אִמּוֹ:		an oracle that his mother taught him.
מַה־בָּרִי וּמַה־בֶּרֶךְ בִּטְנִי	2	What, my son? What, son of my womb?
וּמַה־בֶּרֶךְ נִדְרֵי:		and what, the son of my vows?
אַל־תִּתֵּן לְנָשִׁים חֵילְךָ	3	Do not give your strength to women,
וְדַרְכֶיךָ לְמַחֲוֹת מְלָכִין:		and your ways to those who destroy kings.
אַל לְמְלָכִים לְמוּאֵל אֵל לְמְלָכִים שְׁתוּ־יֵין	4	It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings
וְלָרוֹזְנִים אוֹ [אִי] שָׁכָר:		to drink wine,
פֶּן־יִשְׁתָּה וְיִשְׁכַּח מִחֻקֵּךְ	5	and for rulers to desire strong drink;
וְיִשְׁנֶה דִין כָּל־בְּנֵי־עָנִי:		or else they will drink and forget what has been
תִּנוּ־שָׁכָר לְאוֹבֵד	6	decreed,
וְיֵין לְמָרִי נַפְשׁ:		and will pervert the rights of all the afflicted.
יִשְׁתָּה וְיִשְׁכַּח רִישׁוֹ	7	Give strong drink to one who is perishing,
וְעִמְלּוֹ לֹא יִזְכֶּר־עוֹד:		and wine to those in bitter distress;
פִּתְח־פִּיךָ לְאֵלִים	8	let them drink and forget their poverty,
אֶל־דִּין כָּל־בְּנֵי חִלּוֹף:		and remember their misery no more.
פִּתְח־פִּיךָ שְׁפֹט־צָדִיק	9	Open your mouth for those who cannot speak,
וְדִין עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן:		for the rights of all the destitute.
		Open your mouth to judge righteously,
		and defend the rights of the poor and needy.

6.2.3. Textual Notes

Verse 1a. Lemuel: The LXX did not translate לְמוּאֵל as a personal name. Hence it was understood as words ‘from God’ (υπο θεου).²⁷³

Verse 1b. Delitzsch interprets it as ‘king of Massa’ (Delitzsch, 1983: 315), but there is no need for such an interpretation. Many contemporary scholars, including Fox, Murphy and Clifford, have followed the same direction. They disregard the athnach under מֶלֶךְ in the MT

²⁷³ ‘The lamed before Lemuel can be interpreted either as possessive (of), or as the indirect object of the teaching of the queen mother’ (Murphy, 1998: 239). Some of the earliest translations rendered the name Lemuel differently.

(Fox, 2009: 882; Murphy, 1998: 239; Clifford, 1999: 268). However, this translation follows the traditional interpretation of the MT.²⁷⁴ This is because **לֹא** here ‘lacks a definite article and is not followed by a parallel phrase’ (Lucas, 2015: 193). It also offers a good parallelism, by dividing the poetic line into two.

Verse 2a. Commentators are divided on how **לֹא** should be translated. Fox translates it as the negative particle ‘no’ (Fox, 2009: 882), Murphy renders it as ‘what’ (Murphy, 1998: 239), while Waltke opts for ‘listen’ (Waltke, 2005: 503). This translation follows Clifford’s interpretation, and he suggests that **לֹא** functions as a ‘call for attention, after which an admonition is given’ (Clifford, 1999: 269).

Verse 3b. There is evidence of ellipsis between the first and second half-line. Another translation for **וְרִכְיָהּ** could be ‘your strength’, ‘power’, ‘manner or custom’, or ‘business enterprise’ for easy flow of the parallelism (HALOT, 2: 232).

Verse 4a. The appearance of **שְׁתִּי** in the first half-line as an infinitive construct, instead of an infinitive absolute, is unusual. Driver suggests that it should be conceived as an example of defective spelling (Driver, 1951: 194).

Verse 4b. This translation follows the Kethib, and not the Qere, which means ‘where?’²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ ‘The oracle or inspired teaching that his mother taught him.’

²⁷⁵ The Peshitta translates verse 4 as ‘Beware of kings, Muel, of kings who drink wine, and of rulers who drink beer.’ The Vulgate renders it as ‘Give not to kings, O Lemuel, give not wine to kings, because there is no secret where drunkenness reigns.’

Verse 6a. I will discuss the significance of the plural imperative תַּנִּן (give) later, in the body of my analysis. שִׁכָּר refers to intoxicating drink, wine, beer or fermented wine. It is similar to the Greek σίκερα (HALOT, 4: 1501).

Verse 8. The meaning of the phrase כָּל-בְּנֵי הַלּוֹף (sons of passing away or sons of death) is awkward. Oesterley translates it as ‘left desolate or sons of sickness or suffering’ (Oesterley, 1929: 283). Fox, on the other hand, understands it as ‘people on the verge of death whether from starvation or from persecution’ (2009: 888).²⁷⁶

6.2.4. Literary Structure and Exegetical Analysis

Waltke identifies verse 1 as the superscription, and then divides 31:2–9 into four sections under the title of ‘the noble king’ (31:2–9). He conceives verse 2 as the introduction to the admonition. This is followed by an admonition for the son to show restraint regarding women (verse 3) and intoxicants (verses 4–7). Verses 8–9 conclude the section with an ‘admonition to give new edicts for the poor’ (2005: 506). Following Waltke, but with a slight amendment to his structure, I would argue that the coherence of the passage is evident from an examination of its place in the chapter as a whole. The following structural arrangement is observable: verse 1 is the superscription; verse 2 is an admonition to listen and be attentive; then we find an admonition regarding women (verse 3), alcohol (verses 4–7) and the poor (verses 8–9).

²⁷⁶ The LXX translates verse 8 as ‘ἄνοιγε σὸν στόμα λόγῳ θεοῦ καὶ κρῖνε πάντας ὑγιῶς’ (open your mouth with the word of God and judge all soundly). The Peshitta renders the same verse as ‘open your mouth in a word of truth and judge all wicked sons.’

6.2.5. Exegetical Analysis

A. Introduction and Superscription (31:1)

Instructions for kings and princes were common in the ANE. Good examples of wisdom texts are the Egyptian *Merikare* and *Amenemope* (Pritchard, 1969: 414–420) as well as the Babylonian *Advice to a Prince* (Lambert, 1960: 110–115). The mode of address is usually father to son or father and mother advising the son to listen. This instruction to the king by the queen mother is unique (McKane, 1970: 407).

Verse 1 sets the tone for the section under investigation. Scott refers to the first line of this verse as ‘a solemn injunction’ (Scott, 1965: 184). He translates לְמוֹאֵל מֶלֶךְ as ‘words (of advice) to a king acting foolishly’ (Scott, 1965: 184).²⁷⁷ He does not recognise the form ‘Lemuel’ as a proper name. He concludes that a contextual analysis of this form in verse 4 depicts the person described by the word as a fool. I disagree with Scott that Lemuel is less significant for interpretation; our understanding about Lemuel can inform our thinking on the royal instruction. Scholars such as Whybray, McKane, Waltke, Fox and others use the name Lemuel to argue for the foreign element of wisdom in Israelite wisdom. The implication of this is that Israelite wisdom had something to learn from the international wisdom of her ANE neighbours. These foreign proverbs emphasise the roles of kings and administrators, which were also relevant for Israelite leaders.

The sayings in this passage were ascribed to King Lemuel, but he credits them to his mother

²⁷⁷ Scott may have been influenced by the translation of verse 13:1 in the LXX (Οἱ ἐμοὶ λόγοι εἰρηνται ὑπὸ θεοῦ, βασιλέως χρηματισμός, ὃν ἐπαίδευσεν ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ).

and the wise counsel she gave him as king. As Branson notes, the primary aim of this instruction is ‘to communicate knowledge in order to shape specific conduct’ (Branson, 1990: 129). Most scholars agree that the mother of a king in the ANE world played a major role in the palace.²⁷⁸ Andreasen, especially, notes that the queen mother in the ANE held a significant official position, only superseded by that of the king (Andreasen, 1983: 180). McKane and Crenshaw note that this is the only place in Scripture that refers directly to a mother as the primary source of vocation education (McKane, 1970: 407–412, Crenshaw, 1995: 385–395). Camp has built on this clue, and many others, to argue extensively for the feminine aspect of wisdom in ancient Israel (Camp, 1985).

The identity of Lemuel and his mother is unknown. This has led to many imaginative rabbinic traditions that have attempted to fill the gaps by linking the queen mother with Bathsheba and Lemuel with King Solomon (Davis, 2000: 149–150).²⁷⁹ There is, however, insufficient evidence to support this proposal, especially in the Old Testament. It is not based on actual evidence from the Hebrew Bible, but rabbinic imagination. The word מַשְׁכָּל, in verse 1, is also difficult. It could mean a load or burden (Exod 23:5, 2 Kgs 5:17) or ‘pronouncement’ (HALOT, 2: 639). It can also refer to the north Arabian tribe of Massa.²⁸⁰ Some scholars translate מַשְׁכָּל as a location, associating it with Massa, a territory in northern Arabia (Fox, 2009: 884; Longman, 2006: 534). They argue that this location is known for its peculiar wisdom (1 Kgs 4:30; Jer 49:7). In contrast, Whybray and Waltke understand it as an ‘oracle’, or ‘inspired utterance’, in line with 30:1, intentionally ‘disguising the foreign origin of the

²⁷⁸ This is probably ‘because of her longevity, knowledge of palace politics, and undoubted loyalty to her son’ (Clifford, 1999: 270). She therefore was in a good position to offer reliable counsel.

²⁷⁹ There is an imaginative story about when Solomon dedicated the temple and also married Pharaoh’s daughter; he was thought to be celebrating all night, drinking and sleeping late. See Fox (2009: 885).

²⁸⁰ See Gen 25:14, 1 Chr 1:30 and Ps 120:5.

instruction’ (Whybray, 1994b: 422). Against Whybray, I would argue that it is not disguising the foreign origin of the instruction, but elevating it.²⁸¹ In my view, the author acknowledged that it was foreign, but elevated the instruction to be a quasi-prophetic pronouncement, with authority similar to that of a prophet. Waltke, especially, notes that מִשְׁאֵם emphasises what is being said by the queen mother with the verb יִסְרְתוּ (2005: 502–503). Following Whybray and Waltke, the implication of translating מִשְׁאֵם as ‘oracle’ is that the emendation proposed by scholars would become unnecessary and the parallelism would rhyme. Both translations still portray a royal instruction and evidence of how non-Israelite wisdom is reused for Yahwistic purposes in Proverbs.

B. Admonition to Listen and be Attentive (31:2)

Let us now look at the first advice. The word מַה (Greek τί) in verse 2 is grammatically inappropriate, and it continues to generate varying interpretations among scholars. Some have translated it as ‘what,’ ‘why,’ ‘how’ and ‘how much’ (HALOT, 2: 550–555). Others, especially Fox, translate it as a negative particle, ‘no’, (Fox, 2009: 884) because it is rhetorical. For Kidner, the exclamations here are ‘affectionately reproachful’ (Kidner, 1964: 182). Scott opts for ‘how now or now then’ (Scott, 1965: 184). Garrett conceives of it as ‘what should I tell you’ or ‘what will you do as king?’ (Garrett, 1993: 246). I would argue that the repetition of ‘what’ three times shows the importance of the message. Waltke, however, disagrees with the above options on the grounds that they do not fit the expression of this verse. He maintains that, ‘the interrogative has a negative connotation in questions that

²⁸¹ The author would have removed the name of King Lemuel if there had been an attempt to disguise the foreign origin of the instruction.

demand a negative answer' (Waltke, 2005: 503). He writes:

In Proverbs a parent/teacher does not ask the son/student what to say, and this suggestion does not match the certitude of the admonitions that follow. Probably *mah* here is a cognate of Arabic equivalent 'take heed'/'listen.' This felicitous meaning matches the typical introductory calls in wisdom literature to give concentrated attention and receptivity to the teaching (Waltke, 2005: 504).

In my opinion, מַה offers enforcement of the speech of the queen mother. No consensus so far has been reached on how מַה should be understood. Its interpretation still remains open to other possibilities.²⁸² Waltke's position may be valid where the admonitions are only used for preventative purposes. However, wisdom teachings can be preventative as well as corrective. My use of 'what' is most likely a rhetorical question that calls for attention.

The word בֶּר (son) in verse 2 is Aramaic, and this is its only appearance in Proverbs.²⁸³ Waard conceives of בֶּר as 'a pun of the translator' (Waard, 2008: 56). This is very unlikely. In my own opinion, the introduction of this Aramaic word and others in the subsequent verses supports the argument for the foreignness of this wisdom. The choice of 'my son' in Proverbs 1:8 and 31:2 is remarkable.²⁸⁴ The son in 1:8 appears to be a prospective future leader who will occupy a leadership position either at the family, clan, town or national level. The son in 31:2 is a monarch already occupying a leadership position. Thematically, these two verses connect well, especially with reference to the wisdom gained from the mothers. Camp observes; 'it becomes hard to ignore the possibility that these texts were chosen to begin and

²⁸² However, it does not bring any significant change to the meaning of the text and our topic of study.

²⁸³ The second instance where the word is used in the Hebrew Bible is Psalm 2:12 (HALOT, 1:153).

²⁸⁴ What makes it remarkable is that when my son was used in 1:8 and 31:2, they are connected with the teaching of the mother.

end the book of Proverbs by the virtue of this imagery' (Camp, 1985: 188). In other words, these proverbs were carefully and deliberately chosen to serve this purpose. The use of the Aramaic term three times in this verse is also considerable. The repetition is an emphasis and part of the poetry, just like **מָה**. It is a provocative way of communication. The repetition of **מָה-בְּרִי** (what my son) in the first half-line is evidence of semi-linear parallelism. It also offers a hint as to the intra-linear parallelism between the first and second half-lines of this verse. The phrase 'son of my vow' suggests that she made some promises to God before she gave birth to her son.²⁸⁵ This appears to be an over-interpretation, but it makes a good point. **בֶּרֶךְ-יְרֵרִי** is a term of endearment, which shows that the son was special.

C. Admonition Regarding Women (31:3)

The general use of **אַל** is for negation, request, rejection and prohibition. It can be translated as no, not or nothing, depending on the context. If the word is used with a verb, as we have it here in verse 3, it is a prohibition (HALOT, 1: 48). **תַּתֵּן** is a first nun verb and it offers thirteen different possible meanings, including give and surrender (HALOT, 2: 733–735).²⁸⁶ Lemuel was instructed not to give his **חֵיל** to women. **חֵיל** here could mean physical strength, efficiency, sexual power or virility and dignity. Another option is to follow Bauer's interpretation of **חֵיל**, as quoted by Whybray. 'Bauer interpreted MT in a political sense as referring to 'power' and 'dominion'' (Whybray, 1994b: 423). Another meaning of **חֵיל** is

²⁸⁵ This is similar to the story of Hannah, who made a vow to Yahweh before the birth of Samuel (1 Sam 1:11). Davis suggests that the queen mother's reminder to Lemuel about her vow implies that 'his mistake or behaviour might even cast a shadow over her integrity in the eyes of God' (2000: 149).

²⁸⁶ It includes to give, present, offer, set before, hand down, allow, surrender, set, place, or lay something or someone.

‘property’ or ‘wealth’ (HALOT, 1: 311).²⁸⁷ This probably refers to the financial implications of keeping many women, suggesting that it is a waste of resources. We also find an ellipsis at the beginning of the second half-line (do not give).²⁸⁸

Historical and archaeological evidence shows that women contributed immensely to life and society in the ANE. They were involved in domestic duties, the production of bread, the brewing of beer, child bearing and rearing (Nakhai, 2008). However, the women mentioned here have negative connotations. In the imagination of the queen mother, they are too influential and powerful. She is afraid that the young king may lose his sense of judgement as a result of his passion for them. Waltke notes that:

Obsession with such women corrupts the king’s sovereign power, including wasting his money. Gratification of lust distracts his attention from serving his people, blunts his wit, undermines his good judgment, exposes him to palace intrigues, and squanders the national wealth better spent to promote the national good (Waltke, 2005: 507).

This observation by the writer of Proverbs may have been correct at that time, but there is evidence of a gender stereotype against women at work. It is one of the examples of Bible verses that modern readers should be critical of because it may not make sense in real life situations where women are leaders. Similarly, I would like to distance myself from Waltke’s quotation because it expresses prejudicial and misogynistic views. In my view, though, leaders who lust after other people’s partners (male or female) run the risk of losing their integrity.

²⁸⁷ The LXX used **πλοῦτος**, which literally means ‘money, wealth or possessions’ and it figuratively refers to ‘abundance, richness, and valuable bestowment’ (Strong, 1997: 385).

²⁸⁸ Focusing on ellipsis in biblical poetry, Berlin notes that, ‘the words which are gapped or left unparalleled are those which the verse wants to deemphasize; the emphasis is on the words that are repeated or paralleled’ (2008: 96).

One more question needs to be asked about this instruction: is the queen mother advocating celibacy for the king? The answer is no. The practice of celibacy was unknown among kings in the ANE and Israel. In fact, the credibility of a king was judged by his ability to rule his own family (Launderville, 2010: 261). He was expected to lead by example, through his words and actions. Like בֶּרֶךְ (son) in verse 2, the ending of verse 3 with מְלָכִין (kings) is typically Aramaic. This suggests that the queen mother probably speaks Aramaic. It is another deliberate hint that this is a foreign queen mother speaking.²⁸⁹ This verse is not arguing against women in authority; it is a warning against misusing ones' position of authority as a leader. There is interplay between חֵיל (strength), in the first half-line and דְּרָכָיו (ways), in the second half-line. A leader should not lose or give away both of them. דְּרָךְ is a common word in Proverbs. It can literally mean way, journey and distance. It can figuratively mean enterprise, manner, behaviour or action and strength or power (HALOT, 1: 231–232).²⁹⁰ The emphasis of this verse is that leaders should not give away all the things that make them strong, such as honour, reputation, self-respect and respect of others.

D. Admonition Regarding Alcohol (31:4–7)

Verses 4–5 continue with another set of warnings. The queen mother warns about the dangers of the excessive use of alcohol for a king. She challenges her son not to numb his intelligence with alcohol. As McKane observes, 'a king whose vitality is sapped by alcohol and whose mind is never clear will be inconsistent, unpredictable and irresponsible' (McKane, 1970:

²⁸⁹ The contemporary application of this verse will be discussed later, in chapter 10.

²⁹⁰ It also includes conducting oneself in terms of how one pursues relationships towards women members of the opposite sex.

410).²⁹¹

The repetition of the phrase **אֵל לְמַלְכִּים** (not for kings) in verse 4 is awkward. Oesterley suggests that ‘these words should be deleted’ because ‘they overload the line.’ He concludes that ‘this is a case of dittography’ (Oesterley, 1929: 282). Toy and Whybray independently reached a similar conclusion by proposing that the repetition was a ‘scribal error’ (Toy, 1977: 540; Whybray, 1994b: 423). Against the general consensus, I would argue along with Heim that it is deliberate ambiguity and not a scribal error (2013: 6). The phrase is an emphasis to draw the attention of Lemuel to what was being said. The variant repetition is intentional to help the readers know that it is of high importance. There is an ellipsis for **שָׁתוּ** (drink) in the second half-line of verse 4. That is why I use the word desire in my translation. Similarly, there is intra-linear parallelism between **שָׁתוּ-יַיִן** (drink wine) and **שִׁכָּר** (strong drink). **שִׁכָּר** emphasises the kind of drink that is being consumed.²⁹²

There is interlinear parallelism between verses 4 and 5. Verse 5 amplifies the implications of not following the preceding warning. It will affect the execution of the king’s leadership duties. There is consensus among scholars that this instruction is not an absolute prohibition against drinking wine. McKane notes that what is condemned here is addiction to wine (1970: 410). Whybray’s contextual interpretation leads him to conclude that the instruction is a warning to avoid excessive drinking (1994b: 423). In the same vein, Fox suggests that though the formulation of the instruction appears to be a total prohibition, ‘an absolute abstinence’

²⁹¹ There were quite a few notable instances in the Old Testament when strong drink resulted in the neglect of the poor (Isa 28:1; Amos 6:6).

²⁹² As we mentioned earlier in the textual note, **שִׁכָּר** refers to intoxicating drink, wine, beer or fermented wine.

was not expected. He maintains that, while senseless use of alcohol (drunkenness) is prohibited in Proverbs, moderate drinking is not. He concludes that wine was a 'staple of diet', and was used during festivities and 'royal banquets' throughout the ANE (Fox, 2009: 886).

The use of wine or alcohol was common throughout the ANE. It was used for the purposes of medicine, celebration, remuneration, nutrition, pleasure, ritual and funerary rites (Cherrington, 1925: 405). The Sumerians even recognised Ninkasi as the goddess of beer and they had a hymn in her praise (Katz and Maytag, 1991: 24–27). Following this analysis of the use of wine in the ANE, I would argue that the queen mother herself must have drunk wine during festive meals and royal banquets on several occasions. Therefore, a total prohibition would not make sense in this context. What the queen mother is warning against is 'drinking to the point of inebriation' (Waltke, 2005: 507).

The phrase 'give strong drink to one who is perishing' in verse 6 has been a point of scholarly debate. Oesterley refers to this proverb as 'a cynical piece of advice wholly out of harmony with the ideals of the wisdom writers in general' (1929: 282). McKane understands this phrase as an instruction for the king to give wine as an opiate to the people. He notes that the king offers the wine 'so that in sweet oblivion they may have respite from intolerable poverty or from the grind of unbearable toil' (1970: 410). Fox takes the same position when he interprets the phrase as 'an anodyne to dull the pain' of those who are distressed and afflicted to the point of death. He supports his argument by alluding to Psalm 104:15a, Judges 9:13a, Ecclesiastes 10:19a and Sirach 31:36. He also makes reference to the Hellenistic Egyptian book of Phibis and the positive things it has to say about the value of wine. Fox concludes

that ‘its main power is causing forgetfulness, for better and worse’ (2009: 887). This could be further evidence of contradictions regarding the use of alcohol in Proverbs, if this correct.

However, there is a need to allow for dialogue between the two proverbs. Following Garret and Waltke, the queen mother is not prescribing a reckless drinking regime for the poor masses or justifying wine as an opiate to calm them down (Garrett, 1993: 246). Her main aim is to encourage her son to be conscious of the responsibilities attached to his leadership position. He must concentrate on delivering social justice to the poor rather than drunkenness. Waltke, on the other hand, argues that ‘the sarcastic command aims to debunk intoxicants as useless’ (Waltke, 2005: 509). In my view, she only used sarcasm as a rhetorical and literary device to mock the ironic situation of the poor being drunk to suppress their sorrow.²⁹³

The limitations of McKane and Fox’s argument lie in four specific areas. First, giving strong drink to the poor and afflicted will not solve or alleviate their suffering. In fact, it will eventually degenerate into addiction and add more to their woes. To offer strong wine to the afflicted without offering material support would be cynical. Second, a contextual reading of verses 8 and 9 on social justice favours Waltke’s position that the queen mother made use of that negative example to make her point clear. A king turning his subjects into alcoholics would amount to a greater injustice. Third, the use of a plural form for the imperative **תִּנְּנוּ** suggests that the command was not addressed solely to Lemuel. The queen mother may have quoted or reused an already existing proverb in that plural form. A fourth argument against McKane and Fox is that the number of poor people is much higher than the rich in any

²⁹³ Nonetheless, we can see humour here without necessarily undermining the seriousness of her speech.

kingdom. Therefore, giving wine to every poor person would be extremely expensive and practically impossible. The most important thing that the queen mother wanted to achieve was for her son to live up to his royal responsibility by staying sober. The repetition of the word שָׁתָּה (drink) shows the deliberate antithetical elements between verses 4–5 and 6–7. Like verses 4 and 5, interlinear parallelism also exists between verses 6 and 7.

E. Admonition for a Leader Regarding the Poor (31:8–9)

The identity of the group of people designated as לֹא־לֵךְ ‘those who cannot speak’ in verse 8 is not clear. McKane argues for a literal interpretation of the word. He maintains that לֹא־לֵךְ is a literal reference to those who have specific physical impediments (namely deafness and dumbness). As a result, they ‘are obviously grievously handicapped in any legal proceedings in which they may be involved’ (1970: 411). In my view, this interpretation is not plausible.

Against McKane, I would argue for a figurative understanding of לֹא־לֵךְ. Whybray represents the majority of commentators when he refers to the dumb as those who cannot defend themselves at the law court because of the intimidation strategies of their powerful opponents (Whybray, 1994b: 424). They are not literally dumb, but they are forced to keep quiet. In addition, Waltke observes that ‘they are socially and economically too weak to defend themselves against the rich.’ They may also be dumb because ‘they are too ignorant’ to face the opposition, ‘too inarticulate to state their case convincingly, too poor to produce proper evidence, and too lowly to command respect’ (Waltke, 2005: 509). Another possibility is that the powerful people in society may render the poor dumb by bribing the judge and witnesses, in order to escape justice. Those who are in this class include the poor, widows, orphans,

strangers, less privileged people within society, and all who have been ‘deprived of political and social power’ (Fox, 2009: 888). They ‘lack an effective voice in obtaining justice’ (Fox, 2009: 888) and therefore need someone to fight for their rights.²⁹⁴ To judge the poor is to ‘become their champion’ (Clifford, 1999: 271) and act against their oppression. The real life implications of this verse are much wider. They involve taking care of the poor, widows and orphans, feeding the hungry, releasing innocent prisoners and clothing the naked.

The queen mother concludes her instructions to the young king with a positive admonition to speak out on behalf of the unheard voices of the destitute, poor and needy (verse 9). As Weinfeld notes, the principal duty of kings in ancient Israel, and throughout the Ancient Near East was to ensure justice (Weinfeld, 1995a: 45–56). This is among the ‘legal rights’ of the poor (Whybray, 1990a: 108). The king must judge impartially and defend the rights of the weak whenever the rich and powerful classes of society want to oppress the poor. What the queen mother is saying here reflects the ideals of kings in the ANE. The fact that she presents a unique piece of teaching to her son makes it more powerful. It goes beyond the general ideals of kings, into the very value system of a royal family which probably became a royal principle from one generation to another.

There is an ingenious connection between verses 4–5 and 8–9. Verses 4–5 idiomatically imply that the queen mother instructs the king ‘not to open’ his mouth to drink strong drink. But in verses 8–9, she challenges the king ‘to open’ his mouth to speak for the voiceless and poor. The repetition of פִּתַּח־פִּיךָ (open your mouth) in the first half-line of verse 8 and 9 is

²⁹⁴ In my view, it is impossible for the physically dumb to rely on the king because he cannot understand their situation. They would rather rely on their family members, nearest friends or a legal representative.

noteworthy. It is a deliberate poetic device being used for emphasis and a call to take the instruction seriously.

6.2.6. Conclusion

The instructions of the queen mother in 31:1–9 highlight key aspects of what may be generally accepted as the code of conduct for this particular family of rulers.²⁹⁵ Whybray notes that ‘the instruction, probably placed here at the end of the book as summing up the teaching of earlier chapters, presents a picture of a model ruler’ (1994b: 422). This is similar to Sandoval’s argument that the prologue of Proverbs sums up its message (2007: 455–473). The double frame found in the prologue and epilogue, in my view, is a signal that a number of sayings in Proverbs are about leadership.

It is a matter of duty for leaders to live a life worthy of the prestige attached to their office. They should avoid illicit sexual involvements, reckless use of alcohol, drugs and other things that can impair his sense of judgement. They should exercise self-control. They should understand that a lack of self-control will subvert the basis of their ‘personal authority and the principles of sound government’ (McKane, 1970: 409) thereby causing them to lose public respect. They should recognise that their self-indulgence can harm the whole community. They should be aware of the huge expectations and responsibilities attached to their office. They should not ignore the plight of the poor and the oppressed. They should maintain the legal rights of the poor and be their defender (31:8–9).²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ What we see in this text is a number of examples of key values, behaviours and patterns that have been passed on from one generation to another. This may be a summary of the wider code of conduct which we do not know in ancient Israel and the ANE. However, a larger section of the book of Proverbs (especially those areas that are relevant to leadership) can form indirectly as a code of conduct for leaders.

²⁹⁶ I shall revisit the implications of these proverbs for contemporary leadership in the final chapter of this study.

6.3. Counterpoint and Conclusion

Our exploration in this chapter shows that it is part of the code of conduct for leaders in Proverbs to recognise God's supremacy (25:2–3), remove the wicked from their presence (25:4–5) and behave appropriately before a higher leader (25:6–7). In addition, it is part of the code of conduct for leaders to get the right advice (31:1–2), avoid immorality (31:3), restrain themselves from intoxicants (31:4–7), maintain justice and defend the poor (31:8–9).

However, there are some alternative perspectives about the code of conduct for leaders in Proverbs. Proverbs 25:3 expects the king to maintain his inscrutability, as it helps him to successfully function in his leadership role. Elsewhere, however, Proverbs recommends reliance on wise advisers for success (11:14; 15:22; 24:6). Similarly, Proverbs 31: 4–5 admonishes the king not to drink beer, but 31: 6–7 encourages him to give it to those who are in anguish. In addition, the proverbs about the positive use of bribes (17:8; 21:14; 18:16; 19:6) also contradict the code of conduct on the ruler's maintenance of justice (31:8–9). Following Hatton, there is a need to allow the proverbs on alcohol and justice to interact with one another, in order to understand the message of the Queen Mother. Understanding the nuances of these proverbs will help the reader to know that the instructions are not absolute prohibitions. Of course, 'these contradictions are real and striking, but they do not submerge the message that rises to the surface' (Fox, 1989: 9) over the identified variability.

CHAPTER 7

THE PERSONALITY OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS

We now turn our attention to the proverbs that teach us about the personality of leaders in the book of Proverbs.

7.1. The Relationship Between Leaders and Followers (20:28)

7.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 20:28

חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת יִצְרוּ-מֶלֶךְ	28	Kindness and truth preserve the king,
וְסִיעֵד בְּחֶסֶד כִּסְאוֹ :		and he sustains his throne with kindness.

7.1.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 20:28

Proverbs 20:28 states the relationship between the king and his subjects. It expresses confidence in the daily conduct of a wise king and the expected outcome. It indirectly commands future and existing leaders to develop their personalities in order to become wise and effective.²⁹⁷ The pairing of חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת in this verse is very important.²⁹⁸ This can be found elsewhere in the book of Proverbs (cf. Prov 3:3, 14:22, 16:6, 20:6). The first half-line may be open to different interpretations because of the scholarly understanding of the word חֶסֶד as loyalty, goodness, friendship and kindness.²⁹⁹ Following Fox's analysis, חֶסֶד means

²⁹⁷ It can also be an indirect command to the king expressing Yahweh's promise to protect him.

²⁹⁸ In the LXX ἐλεημοσύνη (pity) is a reference to 'compassionateness as exercised towards the poor' (Strong, 1997: 154) and ἀλήθεια means truth or verity (Strong, 1997: 22).

²⁹⁹ For example, Toy translates it as friendship (1977: 384). For Clifford, it is loyalty (1999: 180). Waltke translates it as 'unfailing kindness' (2005: 119) while McKane, Longman and Fox opt for a kind (man). Michael Fox offers a good excursus that solves the problem of חֶסֶד in his analysis of Proverbs 3:3a. He convincingly argues that it means 'kindness'. He has been able to show that Nelson Glueck (1927) and all the scholars who

kindness. אֱמֶת, on the other hand, means firmness, trustworthiness and consistency. It can also be used to describe God's faithfulness and continuous favour (HALOT, 1: 68–69).

The possible application of חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת to both God and humans has opened the verse to different interpretations. McKane, following Gemser, argues that חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת are the 'personified guardian angels of the king' (1970: 546). He finds a number of passages in the Old Testament where this is the case (Ps 61:8; 89:34; 2 Sam 7:12, 15). Hence, the king is expected to express the same kindness to his subjects. Toy, on the other hand, thinks these two terms are combined to express 'high and attractive moral character' (1977: 395). He stands by this argument on the basis of Isaiah 16:5. He concludes that kindness and truth are the ideal virtues of a true king. Scholars such as Clifford, Longman, Waltke and Fox all agree that it can be both. חֶסֶד and אֱמֶת can be a reference to Yahweh and the king. God protects the king in the execution of his royal duties. As 'God's loyalty and fidelity guard the king'...His own conduct also stabilises the throne' (Clifford, 1999: 186). God's covenant is guaranteed as long as the king continues to faithfully discharge his duty.³⁰⁰ As Longman notes, 'productive governance' takes place when all the parties involved have fulfilled their obligations and the 'king himself can avoid usurpation or even assassination' (Longman, 2006: 385). Waltke succinctly sums up the idea in verse 28 when he writes: 'the LORD sustains his king, an exemplar for leaders, by empowering the king to support, uphold, and maintain his throne by helping the deserving helpless in their need' (2005:158).

understand חֶסֶד as 'covenantal loyalty' are wrong (Fox, 2000:144–145). According to Fox, חֶסֶד in Proverbs 20:6 and some other places is not an allusion to the covenant at Sinai as McKane suggests or the new covenant in Jeremiah 31:33 (2000:145).

³⁰⁰ In other words, the fulfilment of the covenant between Yahweh and the king depends on the fulfilment of the covenant between the king and his subjects.

The repetition of **חֶסֶד** (kindness) in the first and second half-line of verse 28 is significant. The king who is guided by lasting loyalty and faithfulness would have his reign sustained by **חֶסֶד**. Fox suggests that the king is the subject of the second half-line and the disappearance of **אָמֶת** does not mean it is not implied (2009: 678). The second half-line is a variant repetition of 16:2b. It shows that the king has a responsibility to protect the righteous with his actions and that guarantees the continuity of his reign (Loader, 1999: 230).³⁰¹ Wise leaders, who treat their subjects with respect, will avoid the risk of rebellion. They will continue to rule for a long time. This verse shows that leaders can be role models to others by displaying their **חֶסֶד** before the people.³⁰²

7.2. The Behaviours of Lower Leaders (23:1–3)

7.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 23:1–3

כִּי־תֵשֵׁב לֶלְחֹם אֶת־מוֹשֵׁל	1	When you sit to eat with a ruler,
בֵּין תִּבִּין אֶת־אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֶיךָ :		discern carefully what is before you.
וְשִׁמְתָּ שִׁכִּין בְּלַעַךְ	2	And set a knife at your throat,
אִם־בַּעַל נַפֶּשׁ אָתָּה :		if you are greedy.
אַל־תִּתְאָוֶר לְמִטְעַמֹּתָיו	3	Do not desire his delicacies,
וְהוּא לֶחֶם כְּזָבִים :		for they are deceptive food.

7.2.2. Textual Notes

Verse 1b. Translating **אֲשֶׁר** as ‘who’ or ‘that which’ is also possible.

³⁰¹ Loader thinks that this proverb probably influenced the older courtiers who advised Jeroboam to treat the people from the North nicely in 1 Kings 12:7 (Loader, 1999: 230).

³⁰² It seems to me that verse 28 reinterprets Proverbs 20:2–8. The throne is sustained if the leader avoids anger and lawsuits, consults widely, shows kindness, pursues righteousness and removes evil from his presence.

Verse 2a. The LXX translates verse 2 as ‘καὶ ἐπίβαλλε τὴν χεῖρά σου εἰδὼς ὅτι τοιαῦτά σε δεῖ παρασκευάσαι’ (and extend your hand since you know that you will have to prepare such things). For details of how the LXX and Syriac misunderstood this metaphor, see Fox (2009: 1033).

Verse 2b. The second half-line can also be translated as ‘if you have a big appetite’ or ‘if you are a possessor of appetite’.

Verse 3: The pronominal suffix **י** is a reference to the ruler.

7.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 23:1–3

Verse 1 is about table manners before the king (Toy, 1977: 428). It begins with the particle **כִּי** (Greek **ἐάν**) which can be translated as ‘if’, ‘when’ or ‘each time’ (HALOT, 2: 471). It offers a casuistic usage to the rest of the poetic line. The particle is followed by an invitation to eat with a superior in the first half-line. **מוֹשֵׁל** (Greek **δυνάστης**) means an official, ruler, king, ‘a vizier or governor,’ or ‘an administrator of a lower rank’ (Fox, 2009: 720). It can also be translated as ‘important ruler’ (HALOT, 2: 647). It is clear that he has some degree of power over the invitee (who is probably a junior staff or an officer). The invitee, on the other hand, is not an ordinary individual. He has the opportunity to be invited to have a meal with the ruler, either regularly or occasionally.

The appearance of **כִּי** and **כִּי־כִי** in the second half-line is there for the sake of emphasis. It is believed that, whenever an infinitive absolute of the same verb is used, it is to emphasise the

meaning of this same verb (Waltke and O' Connor, 1990: 585). It is probably a deliberate wordplay. The phrase **בֵּין תִּבִּין** (understand carefully) is therefore intended to call the attention of those hearing the proverb to take the situation seriously. Scholars have debated what it is that the junior servant is to consider. Toy and McKane think it is a reference to the ruler (Toy, 1977: 428; McKane, 1970: 381). Fox argues that it is a reference to the food items being presented at the table (2009: 720).³⁰³ Murphy and Clifford maintain a middle ground, and suggest that it is a reference to both (Murphy, 1998: 174; Clifford, 1999: 209). According to Clifford, the Hebrew idiom **בֵּין תִּבִּין** 'is inappropriate for food alone' (1999: 209). Although there is no conclusive evidence within the text, Clifford's analysis appears better, because it offers a broader perspective.

This proverb offers advice to those who have access to the ruler not to take this opportunity for granted. They should understand table manners and be able to exercise self-control. Self-control is one of the distinctive features of a wise person. It is also a requirement for successful leadership. A courtier must be able to control his 'emotional expression', 'the frequency and content' of his speech, as well as his appetite (Longman, 2006: 422). His behaviour during the meal may be a revelation of other areas of his life.

Verse 2 instructs the greedy individual to set a knife on his own throat. **לַעַ** literally means throat or gullet and metaphorically means to control oneself (HALOT, 2: 532). **בַּעַל** has varieties of meaning, but the sense that it carries here is associated with greed (HALOT, 1: 143). Another word that carries the same idea is **נַפֶּשׁ** (appetite). If one's appetite for

³⁰³ It is possible to also look at food from a practical perspective. For example, food can be a symbol for pledges, things that people want, for indirect bribery and so on. The delicacies may also include alcohol.

something is huge, it can easily lead to greed. Fox thinks it indicates regular practice rather than occasional behaviour (2009: 720).

Longman takes this proverb literally, to mean it is ‘better to slice one’s throat than to fall into the trap of overeating in the presence of the ruler’ (2006: 423). Contrary to Longman’s view, the imagery of placing a knife on one’s throat in the first half-line is metaphorical. With Murphy, Clifford and Waltke, we are able to ascertain the metaphorical element in this proverb. Murphy accepts that this verse is a metaphor and suggests that it has two interpretations: ‘curb the appetite, or endanger’ your life (Murphy, 1988: 174). Clifford understands it as ‘an idiom for threatening someone with death’ (1999: 209). He also argues that the Hebrew שֶׁכִּין ‘is a table knife, not a dagger’. He agrees that this is the only place where the word is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but following the evidence from Aramaic and Mishnaic Hebrew, ‘it is a knife for cutting meat and vegetables’ (Clifford, 1999: 209). For Waltke, the metaphorical sense means to ‘abstain altogether’ from the meal (2005: 238). I agree with the metaphorical interpretations of Murphy, Clifford and Waltke, because they are logical.

Verse 3 offers a word of caution for those who crave such food. רָחַץ (desire), in its hitpaël form, means to crave something, especially in an unfavourable sense (HALOT, 1: 20). The first half-line expresses a command or strong wish. Scott, Toy and Murphy think this verse is ambiguous because it does not flow with the preceding verses. Scott understands it as ‘pretentious food’ or ‘false hospitality’ (1965:142). For Toy, the verse does not imply ‘treachery or insincerity on the part of the king’ (1977: 428). His concern is with the question of why the food is deceptive. Toy suggests that it means the food was served with a ‘deceitful

purpose' (1977:429). In the same vein, Murphy offers two additional proposals: The deceptiveness of the food 'could be the unpleasant effects of eating too much or a sign that the food is not conducive to good health.' His second proposal is similar to Toy's. It is a reference to the 'character of the host, who is testing the character of the guest' (Murphy, 1988: 174).

Moreover, Longman opines that the food is deceitful because it provides a forum for the ruler to observe and scrutinise the behaviour of everyone present at the table. 'It is a potential trap that would cause the prospective courtier to lose an opportunity' (Longman, 2006: 423). In addition, Fox states that 'the official's food is "deceitful" because the pleasure it gives is fleeting, and it may leave a bitter aftertaste.' For example, the servant's hunger may be construed 'as a symptom of greed and the lack of self-control' (2009: 720). Rabbi Malbim understands the deceptiveness of the meal differently. It is not for the benefit and enjoyment of the invitee, 'but as a preliminary to the business he has in mind' (1973: 236). It is all about the ruler's agenda and what he wants from the invitee. Clifford offers two interpretations that must be taken seriously: it means 'the meal that cannot be eaten because of the need to restrain oneself and the meal that cannot further one's career' (1999: 209). In other words, the opportunity to eat with the powerful ruler could end up with either success or failure. This admonition is parallel to the Egyptian *Instruction of Amenemope*.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ The admonitions in Proverbs 23:1–3 are parallel to some ANE wisdom writings such as the Instruction of Kagemeni 119–125 (Lichtheim, 1973: 60), Ptahhotep 119ff. (Lichtheim, 1973: 65) and Amenemope 23:13–20 (Lichtheim, 1976: 60). In ancient Egypt the observance of table manners was taken seriously. The 'host would signal his favour by the amount of food he distributed to each guest'. If it was within the royal court, the seating arrangements and the size of the meal were usually according to the rank or seniority of each member of staff (Fox, 2009: 720).

7.2.4. What Can We Learn?

Proverbs 23:1–3 gives advice to the courtier to maximise his opportunities before the ruler by putting forward ‘well-proportioned behaviour and self-control’ (McKane, 1970: 381). Verse 1 contributes to our discussion of leadership, with or without the consideration of its context. The invitation to eat with a ruler can be positive, as well as dangerous. This situation requires a demonstration of sound reasoning.³⁰⁵ Verse 1 is about dining etiquette and verse 2 naturally continues with the advice from verse 1. The line of discussion in verses 1 and 2 then progresses into verse 3 with a continuous reference to the **מוֹשֵׁל** in verse 1 with the use of a pronominal suffix. In verse 2, food and appetite became symbols for people’s desires. It has rich metaphorical connotations for desires, life goals and career goals. Therefore, it can be argued that verses 1–3 provide practical social training for young, aspiring leaders.

7.3. The Attitude of the Righteous and Wicked Leaders to the Law (28:4–5)

7.3.1. Introduction

There have been huge scholarly debates on the significance of Proverbs 28–29. Some have suggested a royal setting (Skladny, 1962; Malchow, 1985; Meinhold, 1991; Finkbeiner, 1995) while others have denied it (Fox, 2009; Longman, 2006). As reported by Fox, Skladny was the first to propose that Proverbs 28–29 is a collection of instructions to a prince, before Malchow later referred to it as a manual for monarchs (Fox, 2009: 817). For Skladny, the proverbs ‘are not about the ruler but for the ruler’ (Fox, 2009: 818). As I mentioned in chapter 4, Malchow identifies a ‘thematic unity’³⁰⁶ between Proverbs 28–29, and maintains that they

³⁰⁵ In my view, there is a need to look at the double act situation (the invitation and the food offered). We do not know why the ruler invited the servant and what the ruler wanted from him. There is a need to reflect critically on the power dynamics of this situation.

³⁰⁶ For a summary of the scholarly discussions about the structure of chapter 28 and 29, see Heim, (2013: 600–

were used to train future leaders. Douglas Finkbeiner also supports this idea, suggesting that the two chapters ‘are addressed to kingly prospects within the court setting’. In addition, he argues that they are ‘skilfully arranged around themes pertinent to royalty’ (Finkbeiner, 1995: 1). He then puts forward some evidence to prove that the addressee of the proverbs is a prospective ruler:

First, the direct instruction to rulers is seen in each section (28:2, 3, 15, 16; 29:2, 4, 12, 14, 26 – princes, oppressor, ruler, king, leader). Secondly, there are numerous verses referring to the results of ruling the nation as a whole (28:2, 12, 15, 28; 29:2, 16, 18) and deprived groups (28:3, 5, 21; 29:7, 14). Thirdly, the only two imperatives (28:17; 29:17) in these chapters appear to be addressed to a ruler. Although 29:17 is not very conclusive, 28:17 is. The only one who has judicial authority over people’s response to a murder is a ruler. Fourthly, the recurring themes of impartial social justice and charity for the poor were common in the Ancient Near Eastern setting (Finkbeiner, 1995: 5).³⁰⁷

However, Fox has rejected this overarching position on Proverbs 28–29. He accepts that some royal proverbs were addressed to the king or prince (28:2, 15–16a; 29:2, 4; 14) but they ‘constitute only a small part of the two chapters’ (Fox, 2009: 817). Therefore, the argument that Proverbs 28–29 are royal instruction is weak. Longman, in his attack on Malchow’s position, also reaches a similar conclusion. His analysis of Proverbs 28:1–10 shows that ‘most of the proverbs have nothing to do with leadership (verses 2, 4, 7, 9, 10), and even those proverbs that have to do with the poor are not addressed to the king (verse 3)’ (Longman, 2006: 486). He observes that, while the wisdom expressed in these proverbs can be useful for kings, it is not directly written to them.

601).

³⁰⁷ Finkbeiner fourth point is not clear because he did not relate his discussion of social justice in ANE to kings and rulers. An example that could shed more light to the point is the codex of Hammurabi where the king boasted about the laws that he produced.

This present study supports the view that Proverbs 28–29 may have served as instructions for future leaders, kings and administrators³⁰⁸ but it is difficult to put everything in the two chapters under the theme of leadership. Following Waltke, I would argue that the ‘royal colouring is strong enough in this collection’ (2005: 405). There is evidence of many direct and indirect references to leadership in the two chapters. Most of the four-fold evidence put forward by Finkbeiner appears to be convincing. Van Leeuwen, in his excellent commentary, also confirms these chapters as ‘penetrating gaze at the interaction of government, money, justice, and poverty’ (van Leeuwen, 1997: 245–46).

Whybray’s study offers important evidence to support my view when he concedes that Proverbs 28–29 ‘show awareness of the existence of bad and cruel rulers’ (Whybray, 1994a: 127). Going beyond Whybray, I could say that it also reveals the existence of good leaders in contrast to bad ones. Similarly, Heim notes that the use of different words for rulers in both chapters is notable. He suggests that the poet used the words **שָׂר** (28:2), **מֶלֶךְ** (28:15), **נָגִיד** (28:16), **מֶלֶךְ** (29:4), **מֶלֶךְ** (29:12) and **מֶלֶךְ** (29:14) to address issues of leadership and politics in chapters 28–29 (Heim, 2013: 601).

7.3.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:4–5

4	זְבִי תוֹרָה יְהַלְלוּ רָשָׁע	Those who ignore the teaching praise the wicked man,
	וְשֹׂמְרֵי תוֹרָה יִתְגָּדְדוּ בָם :	but those who keep the teaching contend with them.
5	אֲנָשֵׁי-רָע לֹא-יָבִינוּ מִשְׁפָּט	Evil men do not understand what is just,
	וּמִבְקֹשֵׁי יְהוָה יָבִינוּ כָּל :	but those who seek the Lord understand everything.

³⁰⁸ This includes various kinds of leaders (royal administrators, local leaders and people of importance).

7.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:4–5

The role of תּוֹרָה for leadership can be seen in verse 4. The leader who ignores teaching will encourage oppression in the land. Following Wagner, ‘torah is probably best understood here in its wider sense of “teaching”, “instruction”, rather than in a narrow sense of “legal stipulations” or even “the Pentateuch”’ (Wagner, 1999: 254). Toy thinks the word ‘transgressed’ would have been used instead of ‘forsake’ if it were a specific reference to the Pentateuch (Toy, 1977: 497). I agree with Waltke that it is better understood as ‘the sages’ divine instruction’ (2005: 409). When a leader abandons this instruction, he will praise and promote wickedness.³⁰⁹ In contrast, a leader who abides by the torah will contend against wickedness. The word יִתְגַּבֵּר (contend), in its hitpael form, expresses the excitement associated with the strife (HALOT, 1: 202). If this verse is applied to the king and higher officials, they are expected to carefully investigate and remove corrupt officials in their government.³¹⁰ In modern society, leaders are expected to follow the constitution and abide by the rule of law. The interpretation of שָׁמַר (abide) is crucial. It means to keep, watch over, protect, take care, retain and observe. It can also mean to observe carefully (HALOT, 4: 1581–1584). In this case, it is the torah that must be observed. The implication is that those who study the teaching carefully would tend to contend against the wicked because their character has been transformed.³¹¹

³⁰⁹ The nuance of this verse is that those who abandon the torah tend to praise the wicked.

³¹⁰ This can also include actively opposing corrupt officials.

³¹¹ A careful study of instruction informs the values of people, shapes their character and therefore guides their actions.

There is a relationship between verses 4 and 5. An evil ruler who forsakes the torah will not understand justice. The use of רָע (evil) to describe the ruler suggests that his action is ‘of little worth, not beneficial, contemptible, morally depraved and reprobate’ (HALOT, 3: 1250). But a leader who seeks after Yahweh will pay attention to the torah. יָבִינֵהוּ (understand) appears in both the first and second half-lines. It was used negatively to describe the attitude of the wicked and positively in the second half-line for the righteous.

Verse 5 emphasises the importance of the spirituality of a leader. Von Rad captures the nuances of this verse by connecting it with understanding the fear of Yahweh. He notes that there is a link between the intellect and commitment to Yahweh (the foundation of existence) in Israel. Hence, ‘evil men do not know what is right but those who seek Yahweh understand all things’ (von Rad, 1972: 68). Their understanding of Yahweh helps them to differentiate between what is right and wrong. In the same vein Clifford writes:

People bent on evil are not wise; they do not know judgment in the sense that they do not see the divine justice that eventually will catch up with them. On the other hand, those seeking Yahweh understand ‘all things,’ including Yahweh’s rewarding them and punishing the wicked (Clifford, 1999: 244).

If we interpret verse 5 in the context of verses 1–4, then we can say that it is about a godly leader.

7.4. The Importance of Integrity in Leadership (28:6–7)³¹²

7.4.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:6–7

טוֹב-רֶשׁ הוֹלֵךְ בְּתָמָוּ	6	Better a poor man who walks in his integrity,
מֵעֵקֶשׁ דְּרָכִים וְהוּא עָשִׁיר :		than a man of crooked ways; and he is rich.
נוֹצֵר תּוֹרָה בֶּן מִבֵּין	7	The perceptive son keeps the teaching,
וְרָעָה זִלְזָלִים יִכְלִים אָבִיו :		but he who consorts with gluttons shames his father.

7.4.2. Textual Note

Verse 6. דְּרָכִים (paths or ways) has been vocalised by the Masoretes as dual. As Daniel Bricker notes, the word can also be used as a metaphor for conduct or lifestyle, (Bricker, 1995: 501, 511).³¹³

7.4.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:6–7)

This text focuses on the significance of integrity in leadership. Verse 6 is divided into two poetic lines by טוֹב and מִן, which I have translated as ‘better than’. It is better for a leader to walk in integrity and remain destitute than to amass wealth through crooked means. As Tova Forti notes, ‘the combination of the initial *ṭōb*, which functions as a predicative, and the *mēm* of comparison prefixed to the second noun creates the analogical relations between the two terms’ (Forti, 2008: 17). The word תָּם is connected to being ‘complete, perfect, well-behaved, guiltless and without sin’ (HALOT, 4: 1742–1743). The idea of walking on a crooked path (עֵקֶשׁ דְּרָכִים) is a metaphorical expression of the behaviour of the wicked ruler. This suggests that there are two ways (good and bad, honest and dishonest) and he should make a

³¹² Proverbs 28:6–7 can also be classified under the proverbs that address the actions of leaders. For example, describing someone as a person of integrity is about personality, but acting in integrity is about action.

³¹³ According to Bricker, it was part of the convention of the wisdom writers to communicate concepts in concrete terms that people could easily understand.

choice concerning the one to follow. In my view, the person who has **תָּם** has achieved his integrity through character formation as a result of verses 4b and 5b. As Brown notes, it is not just a simple metaphor for how one behaves; it is a reference to a consistent lifestyle (Brown, 2002a: 174).

In verse 7, the poet praises the son who keeps the torah, in contrast to those who reject it. It also revisits the idea of understanding in verse 2, reusing the word **מִבִּין**. A discerning ruler will make his father happy, unlike the one who befriends gluttons. The words **רֵעָה** and **זֹלְלִים** are pivotal. The participle **רֵעָה** (companion) derives from the root **רעה**, which means to get oneself involved or mixed up with something (HALOT, 3: 1262). It carries the sense of keeping company with certain types of people.³¹⁴ **זֹלְלִים** (gluttons) connotes being ‘thoughtless or rash’ (HALOT, 1: 272). The word can also mean a ‘pursuit of various appetites and dissolute behaviour’ (Fox, 2009: 822). The gluttons have a tendency to oppress the poor in order to maintain their extravagant lifestyle. Therefore, when a leader consults with them, he will end up doing things that are contrary to the Torah.

7.5. The Attitude of Wicked Leaders Towards the Poor (28:8, 15)

7.5.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:8, 15

מִרְבָּה הוֹנוֹ בְּנִשְׁךְ וּבַתְּרִבִּית [וְ] [תְּרִבִּית] לְחוֹנֵן דָּלִים יִקְבְּצֵנּוּ :	8	He who amasses his wealth by interest and usury, gathers it for him who is kind to the lowly.
אֶרֶץ-נֶהָם וְדָב שׁוֹקֵק מִשָּׁל רָשָׁע עַל עַם-דָּל :	15	Like a roaring lion and charging bear, is the wicked ruling over the poor.

³¹⁴ The individual has a deep fellowship with them. He exposes himself to being influenced by their company and values.

7.5.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:8, 15

Verse 8 identifies loans and charging excessive interest as the tools being used by the rich to oppress the poor. תַּרְבִּית (usury) refers to ‘the additional charge which is supplement to loan’ (HALOT, 4: 1787) or extra interest. The rich may be a reference to the leader, or to the aristocrats and officials who benefit under his wicked reign. The proverb emphasises that the illegitimate wealth that has been gathered will be taken away.³¹⁵ Whybray argues that the money extorted from the poor through usury will be returned by the children of the wicked through generous gifts to the poor (Whybray, 1994b: 391). In contrast, Sandoval suggests that a literalistic meaning should not be sought. The ‘act-consequence rhetoric’ in the verse ‘highlight the importance of particular social virtues’ and the ‘notion that justice be shown the poor and that it be embodied in economic practices’ (Sandoval, 2005: 200). For Sandoval, ‘Proverbs 28:8 is obviously a paradoxical statement.’ We may not find real-life examples of when and how the situation described will happen. ‘Rather we should consider how the moral thrust of the verse fits into the broader moral system the sages develop throughout Proverbs’ (Sandoval, 2008: 104).³¹⁶ I agree with Sandoval that verse 8 states an ideal principle that should guide human actions, but it is not an absolute prediction.

Verse 15 reveals another attitude of a wicked ruler. The word נָהָם (roar) in this verse should not be ignored, because it contributes immensely to the meaning. נָהָם is a qal participle singular absolute, signifying the extent or swiftness involved in the rush towards the poor. It literally expresses the noise that a lion makes whenever it seizes its prey. It can also

³¹⁵ ‘The unspoken motivation is that the Lord will act, and will prevent the unjust dealer from enjoying his ill-gotten profits. Instead, they will be returned to a generous person’ (Murphy, 1998: 215).

³¹⁶ ‘The sages here suggest that the effort to gain an economic advantage from others’ need-in this case the need for loan-does not profit; it has no value and thus belongs to the way of folly. By contrast, generosity to the poor does profit, it does have value and hence, belongs to wisdom’s path’ (Sandoval, 2008: 104).

figuratively mean the anger of a king. As David Thomson notes, ‘the lion’s roar provides the image for the terror and havoc produced by a wicked ruler’ (Thomson, 1996: 45). The people hide themselves ‘to avoid harm from wicked authorities’ (Murphy, 1998: 219), but they come out when the righteous are in a position of power.

According to Waltke, the imagery of a lion was common in the ANE: ‘Rulers likened themselves to lions and used their images to adorn their gates, temples, palaces and thrones’ (Waltke, 2005: 420). It usually reminded the subjects about the strength, bravery, ferocity and ravaging destruction of the king. The use of **לִבְיָא** (bear) along with lion in the verse was deliberate. The two other appearances of both words within a verse in the Old Testament (1 Sam 17:34, 37 and Amos 5:19) indicate danger. This verse conveys the same sense. ‘Ironically, the defender of justice and protector against enemies turns on them, a vicious beast who greedily mauls and devours his people’ (Waltke, 2005: 420).³¹⁷

7.6. Counterpoint and Conclusion

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this chapter for our discussion of leadership. First, there is a direct contrast between the attitude of the wicked and the righteous in leadership positions. A righteous leader observes the torah and seeks after Yahweh, keeps the teaching of his father, looks after the poor and allows righteousness to prevail. On the other hand, a wicked leader causes their followers to live in fear; a wicked leader encourages wickedness by supporting those who oppress the poor, rejects the torah and befriends gluttons. Secondly, a majority of the proverbs point out the responsibility of leaders to ‘reign

³¹⁷ This animal imagery suggests that verse 15 may be opened to more imaginative interpretations if it is related to the wider context of Proverbs 19:12, 20:2, 22:13, 26:13 and 30:30 (Forti, 2008: 90).

righteously' (Malchow, 1985: 239). Thirdly, it is necessary for leaders to take their spirituality seriously. This can be achieved through the fear of Yahweh and obedience to teaching. Fourthly, leaders should lead by example, especially regarding their attitude to the poor. Murphy, citing Alonso Schökel, notes that some of the verses examined in chapter 28 'deal with the correct exercise, or abuse, of power, either political or economic. It is as if the instruction were directed expressly to youths destined for positions of power and influence in society' (Murphy, 1998: 212).

We have identified desired personality traits such as kindness and truth (20:28), humility and self-control (23:1–3), keeping the torah and seeking after justice (28:4–5), integrity (28:6–7), and positive attitude towards the poor (28:8, 15). However, there is a multiplicity of views on the personality of leaders in Proverbs. There is an indication of a strong king with a strong personality for leadership in Proverbs 23:1–3 and 28:15; but, elsewhere, the king is just a regent, who can be installed or removed by Yahweh (21:1; 29:25–26). Another contradiction relates to the personality of courtiers or lower leaders. Humble, honest and skilful servants may be ignored or deprived promotion by wicked kings, and so their personality counts for nothing without the favour of the king (19:12). One of the ways to nuance this proverb is to argue that Proverbs is probably stating the problem and not solving it. Therefore, Proverbs is presenting the tension to make the reader think deeply. In modern, real life situations (especially perhaps in cultures such as that of Nigeria) administrators or lower leaders who exhibit humility, self-control, spirituality and positive attitudes to the poor may be classified as weak because they may not be ruthless in the execution of assignments.

CHAPTER 8

THE SKILLS OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS

This chapter focuses on the skills of leaders, with a closer interpretation of Proverbs 17:7; 29:8–12; 8:10–21 and 29:13–14.

8.1. The Necessity of Effective Communication in Leadership (17:7; 29:8–12)

8.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 17:7; 29:8–12

Proverbs 17:7

לֹא־נֹאמָה לְנֹכַח שְׁפַת־יִתְרִי	7	Not fitting for a fool is excessive speech,
אֶף כִּי־לְנֹדִיב שְׁפַת־שָׁקֶר :		how much more lying lips for a nobleman.

Proverbs 29:8–12

אֲנָשִׁי לְצֹן יַפְיחוּ קִרְיָה	8	Scoffers set a city aflame,
וְחַכָּמִים יָשִׁיבוּ אֶף :		but the wise turn away wrath.
אִישׁ־חָכָם נִשְׁפָּט אֶת־אִישׁ אֱוִיל	9	A wise man disputes with a fool,
וְרָגִז וְשָׂחַק וְאֵין נֶחֱת :		ranting and ridicule, and there is no quiet.
אֲנָשִׁי דָמִים יִשְׁנְאוּ־תָם	10	Bloodthirsty men hate the blameless,
וַיִּשְׁרִים יִבְקְשׁוּ נַפְשׁוֹ :		but the upright seek his life.
כָּל־רוּחוֹ יוֹצִיא כֶסֶל	11	A fool expresses all his rage,
וְחָכָם בָּאָחוֹר יִשְׁבְּתָנָה :		but the wise will hold it back.
מִשָּׁל מְקַשֵּׁב עַל־דִּבְר־שָׁקֶר	12	A ruler who listens to a false speech,
כָּל־מְשֻׁרְתָּיו רָשָׁעִים		all his officials are wicked.

8.1.2. Textual Note

Proverbs 29:11. Toy suggests the emendation of **יִשְׁבְּתָנָה** so that it would mean ‘self-control’ (Toy, 1977: 512). McKane, on the other hand, thinks the emendation is unnecessary as he translates it as ‘restrain his temper’. I agree with McKane that no emendation is required

(1970: 635).

8.1.3. Exegetical Analysis Proverbs 17:7; 29:8–12

Proverbs 17:7 begins with the description of what is not suitable for a fool. נָבִל traditionally refers to a foolish or senseless person (either intellectually, morally or socially). In various contexts, it is used to describe a person who ‘counts for nothing, has nothing to offer, gives no help, commands no respect’ and has no influence (HALOT, 2: 663).³¹⁸ Excessive speech is not suitable for a person who has no perception of ethical and religious matters. Scholars have been uncertain about the meaning of the phrase שְׂפַת־יִתְרֹ. Murphy translates it as ‘honest lips’ suggesting that it serves as an antithesis for the phrase שְׂפַת־שָׁקֶר (deceitful lips) in the second half-line (1998: 127). The RSV translators understand it as ‘fine speech’. Toy, following Gemser and Fichtner, (BHS) supports the emendation of יִתְרֹ to yōšer and opts for ‘honest words’ (1977: 338–339). The emendation proposed by Toy is unnecessary because the MT still makes sense. This is part of the attempt to follow the Lowthian categories of *parallelismus membrorum*, which I have criticised as not answering the entire question on Hebrew poetry in chapter 2 of this thesis. A fool will not be capable of honest or upright speech (Waltke, 2005: 43).

My translation follows Nahum Waldman, Fox and HALOT by rendering the phrase שְׂפַת־יִתְרֹ as ‘excessive speech’ or too much speaking. Fox suggests that לֹא־נֶאֱוָה (not fitting) was used

³¹⁸ According to Strong, the Greek ἄφρων is used to describe someone who is mindless, unwise and stupid, ‘(by implication) ignorant, (specially) egotistic, (practically) rash, or (morally) unbelieving’ (Strong, 1997: 82).

as an aesthetic term to express the idea that excessive talk is not appropriate (2009: 627).³¹⁹

Waldman was the first to note that the phrase in Akkadian means arrogant speech with some elements of falsehood (Waldman, 1976–77: 143–145). Fox takes this view further, by suggesting that the phrase is similar to the Akkadian *ša atrāti*, which means ‘one who exaggerates’ or ‘one who lies.’ According to Fox, ‘a person who exaggerates necessarily distorts the truth’. He notes that the speech being condemned in 17:7 is ‘excessive in quantity rather than hyperbolic’ (2009: 627). Fox is correct for two reasons: **יָתֵר** is used to describe anything that is too much or excessive (HALOT, 2: 404) and the second half-line gives us a good hint with the comparison.

The second half-line states that, just as excessive speech is not suitable for a fool, lying lips are also unfit for a nobleman. A fool is thought to be wise when he keeps quiet and a nobleman commands respect through honesty. **שָׁקַר** (lie) appears 20 times in Proverbs and is mostly associated with false words or deceitful statements (HALOT, 4: 1649). The use of **אֵף** (also or indeed) is further evidence that the emphasis of this proverb lies in the second half-line. A leader is expected to be a man of his words in order to be fit to occupy a position of authority. In democratic societies, he should fulfil his election campaign promises. It is noteworthy that the repetition of **שֹׁפֵת** in both lines is deliberate. It is a challenge for leaders to be mindful in their speech.

There is a connection between Proverbs 29:8 and 9. The two verses clearly state the difference between the wise and the fool with emphasis on how they express their anger.

³¹⁹ For a comprehensive treatment of the coherence theory and how it informs the formation of unparalleled sayings in Proverbs, see (Fox, 2009: 967–976).

Words are powerful. In Verse 8, the poet cautions on the use and misuse of language, especially by those in positions of authority. As McKane notes, ‘words are a political instrument’ (1970: 635) and they can easily make a positive or negative impact on the hearers. The good and positive speeches are an expression of wisdom, while arrogant and inflamed speeches are an expression of folly. Van Leeuwen observes that this proverb is a ‘political observation’ (1997: 243) revealing what is happening around the corridors of power. Clifford notes that in six occurrences of the verb **נִפְיֵה** (inflame) in Proverbs, it has lies as its object: ‘As the scoffers exhale their lies, they are actually fanning the flame of popular anger’ (Clifford, 1999: 251). It has long been popular among scholars to connect **לִצְוֹן** (mockers) with Isaiah 28:14.³²⁰ Among those who make this proposal are Murphy, Clifford, Waltke and Fox. Murphy, especially, suggests that it is used for ‘arrogant politicians’ (1998: 221). If this is correct, then those who are in positions of authority should be mindful of what they say so that people are not wounded by their words.³²¹

Another imaginative interpretation that could link well with the real world of leadership is to understand the proverb as a public dispute between the scoffers and the wise people, who both exercise leadership in the community. The scoffers use inflammatory language by gossiping, giving false information and exaggeration, accusing other people falsely and heating up the population against the minority.³²² The wise then step in and engage in a public response to the scoffers. Hence, they are able to turn away the wrath of the general population against the minority group. This is a total departure from the interpretation of previous scholars, but it is plausible.

³²⁰ ‘Therefore hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers who rule this people in Jerusalem’ (Isa 28:14).

³²¹ A similar idea can also be found in the Wisdom of Ben Sira 28:8–14.

³²² The mockers are talking about other people and upsetting many people.

The idea of public dispute between the wise and the fool continues in verse 9. Toy, McKane and Waltke understand נִשְׁפָּט as a reference to legal dispute. Walke particularly argues that the wise express calmness, hoping to be vindicated on account of the evidence, only to realise that the fool is laughing because he knows that the court is corrupt (2005: 437). In contrast, Clifford and Fox think that it refers to a private debate, drawing examples from 1 Samuel 12:7, Jeremiah 2:35, Ezekiel 17:20 and 20:35–36 (Fox, 2009: 837). I agree with Clifford and Fox that there is nothing in the verse to suggest it is a reference to a legal dispute. In my view, the wise in verse 9 are directly and productively opposing the mockers, if our imaginative interpretation of verse 8 is accepted. Therefore, this proverb is encouraging the son to argue with the fool and oppose him, in order to save wrongfully accused people.³²³ Furthermore, the second half-line expresses a deliberate ambiguity, as it is difficult to tell whether the wise person, the fool, or both are the subject. Fox thinks it is the fool because such behaviour is typical of a fool (2009: 837).

Toy proposes a number of emendations in verse 10. He thinks that ‘upright’ may be changed to ‘wicked’ and ‘seek’ to ‘seek out’ (Toy, 1977: 510). Following Waltke, I think Toy’s proposal is unnecessary (Waltke, 2005: 400). The bloodthirsty men hate the men of integrity because they share different worldviews. Another reason is the fear that they might expose their activities. The phrase יִבְקֹשׁוּ נַפְשׁוֹ in the second half-line is very burdensome. It literally means to seek to kill someone, as expressed in Exodus 4:19, 1 Samuel 20:1 and

³²³ Wise leaders should not be intimidated by the antics of the fools (especially about policies and ethical issues).

Jeremiah 19:7. Waltke argues that ‘a broken hendiadys’³²⁴ may have happened between the words ‘blameless and upright’. Hence, the bloodthirsty men are the subjects of the two clauses. They are the ones seeking to kill and destroy (Waltke, 2005: 438). Fox, on the other hand, following Sa‘adia and Rashi, suggests that the phrase ‘must be understood (uniquely) as seeking a life so as to preserve it’ and it is ‘probably a deliberate paradoxical use of the phrase’ (Fox, 2009: 837). Fox’s argument is commendable, as it offers another fresh way of looking at the verse. The people who are setting the city aflame in verse 8 are the same people who hate the blameless in verse 10. The wise who turn away wrath are the righteous who seek to save the life of the blameless.³²⁵ On leadership, the character of a ruler will be reflected by his approval or disapproval of the activities of bloodthirsty men.

There is another contrast between the wise man and the fool in verse 11 on anger management. The fool expresses all his **רִירוֹ** (anger) at once through his words and actions, but the wise man has the wisdom to calm or control it.³²⁶ The implication of this proverb for a leader is that he should learn to calm emotion. He should be reflective regarding his actions and words in times of crisis. Similarly, no decision should be made out of anger. The first half-line of verse 12 describes a negative action of a ruler and its consequence in the second half-line. It shows that the character of a leader will be reflected through the conduct of his officials.³²⁷ As Clifford notes, ‘when rulers heed bad advice, it affects their court. Wicked administrators rise to the top, while the honest and wise are shut out’ (1999: 251). The

³²⁴ I have already argued in chapter 5 of this thesis that hendiadys is a modern scholarly invention.

³²⁵ If we interpret verse 10 in the context of verses 8 and 9, the wise begins to argue with the fool and there is ranting. Nonetheless, the wise should confront the fool because what he is doing is saving the lives of the innocent.

³²⁶ There are parallel instructions in Proverbs 12:16, 23, 16:32, 25:28.

³²⁷ A similar statement can be found in 25:5 and the Wisdom of Ben Sira 10:1–3.

implication of this proverb in real world is that the leader functions as a role model for his officials because they will become like him.³²⁸ Therefore, a good leader should not tolerate falsehood or any form of corruption among the servants.

8.2. The Connection between Wisdom and Leadership (8:10–21)

8.2.1. Introduction

The voices of Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly can be heard in Proverbs 1–9. The character of Lady Wisdom is often presented in contrast to Lady Folly (Yee, 1989: 53–68). The voice of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8 is similar to the one in 1:20–33 and 9:1–6. Who is Lady Wisdom and what is the origin of this personification of wisdom? An understanding of the female voice (personified wisdom), as expressed in this chapter, is crucial. This has been hugely debated among scholars. The major views range from the idea that she was a real woman, to the suggestion that she was divine or mythological, or a literary construct (Fox, 2000: 331–345).

Some scholars have attempted to understand Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8 as a goddess in the light of the ANE background (Camp, 1985: 23–34).³²⁹ For example, Bernhard Lang suggests that Lady Wisdom was one of the goddesses in ancient Israel (Lang, 1986: 57–70) along with Astarte (Queen of Heaven). She has a link with ‘Athirat’, the Canaanite mother goddess. For Lang, she was ‘the divine patroness of the Israelite school system’ (1986: 7) who ‘while remaining on one level as a teacher ... is also a goddess who judges the rulers and dwells in the presence of the creator god’ (1986: 55). Judith Mckinley supports this view when she

³²⁸ A ruler who associates himself with fraudulent schemes (bribery, theft etc.), will cause all his officials to become wicked. When the officials see what the ruler is doing, they will become like him.

³²⁹ This includes the Canaanite wisdom goddess, the Egyptian goddess *Ma‘at* and the Hellenistic Isis.

argues that the metaphorical use of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs reflects an awareness of a female deity (Asherah) in ancient Israel (McKinley, 1996: 32–44). However, this view has not received wide acceptance. Fox especially notes that there is no information about any Canaanite wisdom goddess outside the Bible. He concludes that ‘Lang is explaining the obscure by the unknown’ (2000: 335).

Kayatz notably sees *Ma’at* as a prototype of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8 (Kayatz, 1966: 93–119). Similarly, Nili Shupak suggests that the background of the female imagery found in Proverbs 1–9 connects well with some Egyptian wisdom literature (Shupak, 2011: 310–323). This view too has come under serious attack. In contrast, Fox argues that *Ma’at* is not known for making speeches like Lady Wisdom; ‘in fact she never seems to speak at all’ (2000: 335). Other scholars suggest that personified wisdom emerged in ancient Israel as a result of the ‘reflective mythology’ from the goddesses of the neighbouring nations (Conzelmann, 1971: 230–243, Fiorenza, 1975: 17–41). This has been criticised by Alice Sinnott, who argues that personified Wisdom is not a myth. It was a reinterpretation and transformation of the Jewish tradition, in response to the absence of Davidic monarchy after the Babylonian captivity (Sinnott, 2005: 14–21). She suggests that despite the arguments of scholars for Egyptian and Mesopotamian prototypes such as *Ma’at*, Isis, Ishtar, Inanna, Gula, Asherah and Astarte for the analysis of Proverbs 8, most of the conclusions still stand as a matter of conjecture without consensus (Sinnott, 2005: 7).

Moreover, Philip Nel prefers to use ‘hypostasis’ to describe personified wisdom in Proverbs (Nel, 1982: 107) but the use of this word is very controversial.³³⁰ *The New Standard*

³³⁰ For example, there have been huge controversies regarding the definition of the word hypostasis itself

Dictionary defines hypostasis as ‘the mode of being by which any substantial existence is given an independent distinct individuality’. For Mowinkel, it is ‘a personification of qualities, functions, limbs, of a higher god’ (Mowinkel, 1928: 2065). It can even mean something more. As Heim warns, the use of hypostasis to discuss Lady Wisdom is unclear and controversial. In his reflection on personified wisdom in early Judaism, he notes that Proverbs 8 and other related passages offer an important background. He notes that the idea of personifying wisdom was part of the rabbinic thinking. This explains wisdom’s reification into the Torah and other things. He concludes that Ben Sira, Baruch and the Wisdom of Solomon eventually took up this concept (Heim, 2013: 56–71). A similar way of thinking has been found in Sinnott’s analysis, who suggests that hypostasis is ‘an exilic creation’ as well as ‘reinterpretation of prophetic teaching’ (Sinnott, 2005: 7) during that period.

Thomas McCreesh represents another group of scholars, who argue that personified wisdom is not a real woman or wife but a herald, teacher and prophetic voice. His analysis of the outstanding qualities of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10–31 leads him to conclude that she personifies the wisdom in Proverbs 1–9 (McCreesh, 1985). She is a symbolic figure, representing an abstract world. Hence, Proverbs 31:10–31 is a summary of the entire book of Proverbs. Kathleen O'Connor supports this view, claiming that no real woman in ancient Israel ‘held such a high place in the family, society or economy as the poem imagines’ (O'Connor, 1988: 77). She argues that no real woman matches the virtues described in the passage. It is, rather, a summary of the behaviour of personified wisdom to her disciples (1988: 77–79).

In contrast to McCreesh's view, Christine Roy Yoder, Roy Zuck and Bruce Waltke argue that the woman in Proverbs 31 is a real person.³³¹ Zuck notes that the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 is not personified wisdom because it makes no sense for Lady Wisdom to rely on wisdom before she speaks (verse 26). He therefore concludes that the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 is a 'wise' woman, but not personified wisdom (Zuck, 1999: 237). In the same vein, Waltke argues that the description of the activities of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31 does not suggest that she is fictitious. He also observes that every occurrence of אִשָּׁה in Proverbs is with reference to a real woman. He concludes that McCreesh has undermined his own argument by finding a parallel between Proverbs 31:10–31 and Ruth 3:11,³³² with the use of the words אִשָּׁת־חַיִּל (Waltke: 518–519).

Camp, on the other hand, finds an internal origin for Lady Wisdom in Israel. Writing from a sociological perspective, she suggests that personified wisdom was a social construct of the post-exilic period. For Camp, Proverbs in principle reflects the didactic role of women during the absence of the monarchy (1985: 262–265). It was a 'kingless sociological configuration of the post-exilic era' (1985: 290), which emerged as a result of the efforts of human role models at that time. She insists that Lady Wisdom is an abstraction from female role models, counsellors, influential women and sages of the post-exilic period (Camp, 1987: 45–76). She concludes that the contrast between the אִשָּׁת־חַיִּל (good wife or virtuous woman) and the זָרָה אִשָּׁה (strange woman) was eventually recreated in a literary form to express the contrast between Lady Wisdom and Lady Folly in Proverbs 1–9 (Camp, 1990: 185–203).

³³¹ We have discussed the position of Christine Roy Yoder in chapter 4.

³³² Ruth who had the same title was a real life woman (Ruth 3:11).

Others have identified her as a literary figure or poetic personification. According to Scott, ‘the personification of wisdom in chapter viii is indeed poetic and not ontological’ (Scott, 1965: 71). Murphy also thinks that it is better to conceive of the personification in a literary sense and avoid the complications of other views (Murphy, 1996: 133).

The above summary of the various arguments on personified Wisdom does not purport to offer an exhaustive discussion. All these scholarly efforts may have failed to produce a consensus, but they have yielded exciting results for our study of Proverbs. In my view, Camp has put forward the most persuasive argument so far for personified Wisdom. Following her evidence, it is better to conclude that personified Wisdom is both literary and real. In other words, the historical background of a post-exilic real woman gave rise to the eventual literary construct about Lady Wisdom. Camp interprets the female imagery as the unique symbol that unifies the entire book of Proverbs (1985: 283–291). If she is correct, we can also propose in this study that the poet adopted the metaphor to emphasise the importance of wisdom for leadership, especially in 8:10–21.

Loader refers to Proverbs 8:1–36 as ‘Wisdom’s Eulogy’ (Loader, 2014: 316). The interpretation of this chapter has a long history, beginning with the early Jewish interpretations, through the New Testament, the Ante-Nicene fathers and up to the nineteenth century (Davidson, 2006: 34–37). However, most of the recent studies on Proverbs 8 have focused on the wisdom and creation section, in verses 22–31 (Weeks, 2006, Lenzi, 2006, Brown, 2009, Widdicombe, 2011, DelCogliano, 2008).³³³ I wonder why the claims of Lady

³³³ For example, Weeks’ analysis focuses on the context and meaning of Proverbs 30a (Weeks, 2006). Alan Lenzi, on the other hand, explores three different proposals for the composition of 8:22–31 (Lenzi, 2006). Others have focused on how interpreters (Brown, 2009), theologians (Widdicombe, 2011) and church fathers (DelCogliano, 2008) have understood this passage. However, one wonders why the claims of Lady Wisdom in verses 1–21 have attracted limited scholarly attention.

Wisdom in verses 1–21 have attracted limited scholarly attention. As far as I know, nothing has been specifically written on Proverbs 8:1–21, apart from what we see in commentaries (Fox, 2000: 265–279).³³⁴ There is a need for more work in this area; this present study attempts to make some contribution, especially with regard to leadership.

Fox (2000) divides chapter 8 into five sections following the natural breaks: 1–3, 4–11, 12–21, 22–31 and 32–36. Waltke follows almost the same structure under the main headings of introduction, body/lesson and conclusion. The first part of this chapter presents the imagery of the location of Lady Wisdom where she is making her appeal in a high place very close to the city gate (1–3). She is a ‘public figure’ operating in a ‘public place’.³³⁵ Generally, Proverbs 1–7 echo the voice of the father talking to his son. The father (who himself is a leader and a member of the high class population) is talking to the son (who is a future leader). However, Lady Wisdom is the one talking in Proverbs 8–9. She has not gone to the palace, temple and houses of the rich and important people. She is found on the street talking to members of the public and the simple (including the fools). This is relevant for our present discussion of leadership. The implication is that everybody who acquires wisdom can become a leader. This negates the view of some modern commentators who argue that Proverbs was written by the elite and for the elite to protect their interest (von Rad, 1962: 418–421, Pleins, 2001: 452–483).

³³⁴ I am not aware of the existence of any study devoted exclusively to the study of Proverbs 8:1–21 or 4–21.

³³⁵ In my view, she is in the public place exercising leadership role. The designation ‘gates’ represents ‘the heart of commerce, judicial activity and social exchange’ while the ‘heights’ would suggest ‘the top of the city walls’ (Murphy, 1998: 49).

The second section (4–11)³³⁶ begins with an appeal, in verse 4, by Lady Wisdom, inviting everybody to pay attention to her instruction. She introduces her speech by mentioning her addressees, who are **אִישִׁים** (men).³³⁷ The wisdom speech in this chapter begins in verse 6 with the imperative **שָׁמְעוּ** (listen) followed by **כִּי** clauses in verses 6 and 7. The repetition of **שִׁפְתַּי** (lips) in 6 and 7 informs us about the style of the instruction. She conveys the same idea in verse 8, with the phrase **אִמְרֵי־פִי** (speech of my mouth). She then motivates her hearers to be attentive to her right and positive instructions (verses 8–9).

I shall start my text and translation from verse 10. I agree with the natural breaks, but I have added verses 10 and 11 because of the connection that I found with verse 19, as we shall see later.

8.2.2. Text and Translation of Proverbs 8:10–21

קַחוּ־מוֹסְרִי וְאַל־כֶּסֶף	10	Take my instruction and not silver,
וְדַעַת מִחֲרוּץ נִבְחָר :		and knowledge rather than choice gold.
כִּי־טוֹבָה חֲכָמָה מִפְּנִינִים	11	For wisdom is better than jewels,
וְכֹל־חֲפָצִים לֹא יִשׁוּׁוּ־בָּה :		and nothing desirable compares with her.
אֲנִי־חֲכָמָה שָׁכֵנְתִּי עֲרָמָה	12	I, wisdom, dwell with craftiness,
וְדַעַת מְזֻמּוֹת אֶמְצָא :		and I find knowledge and discretions.
יִרְאַת יְהוָה שִׂנְאָת רָע	13	The fear of the Lord is hating evil,
גִּאָּה וְגָאוֹן וְדֶרֶךְ רָע		pride and arrogance and evil way
וּפִי תִהְפְּכוֹת שִׂנְאָתִי :		and mouth of perversity I hate.
לִי־עֲצָה וְתוֹשִׁיָּה	14	Mine are counsel and success,
אֲנִי בִינָה לִי גְבוּרָה :		I am understanding, mine is might.

³³⁶ I shall begin my analysis from verse 4 but I will lay particular emphasis on verses 10–21 because they answer some of my questions on leadership in Proverbs.

³³⁷ **אִישִׁים** is an unusual plural form of **אִישׁ**. It is only found in Isaiah 53:3, Psalm 141:4 and Proverbs 8:4. All other instances in the Hebrew Bible used **אָנָּשִׁים**. It refers to humankind from ‘all nations and classes and demonstrates the universality of Wisdom’ (Fox, 2000: 267).

15	Through me kings reign, and rulers decree righteousness	בִּי מְלָכִים יִמְלְכוּ וְרוֹזְנִים יַחְקְקוּ צְדָקָה:
16	Through me princes rule, and the nobles, all righteous judges.	בִּי שָׂרִים יִשְׁרוּ וְנֹדִיבִים כָּל־שֹׁפְטֵי צְדָקָה:
17	I love those who love me and those who seek me will find me.	אֲנִי אֶהְבֶּיָהּ [אֶהְבֵּי] אֶהֱבֶה וּמְשַׁחֲרֵי יִמְצְאוּנִי:
18	Riches and honour are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness.	עֲשֹׂר־וְכָבוֹד אִתִּי הוֹן עֲתִק וְצִדְקָה:
19	Better my fruit than gold, than pure gold, and my produce than choice silver.	טוֹב פְּרִי מִחֶרֶץ וּמַכּוֹז וּתְבוּאָתִי מִפָּסֶף נִבְחָר:
20	I walk in the path of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment	בְּאַרְח־צִדְקָה אֶהְלֵךְ בְּתוֹךְ נְתִיבוֹת מִשְׁפָּט:
21	to grant inheritance to those who love me, and to fill their treasuries.	לְהַנְחִיל אֶהְבֵּי יֵשׁ וְאֶצְרֵתֵיהֶם אֲמַלֵּא:

8.2.3. Textual Notes

Verse 10. Waltke reports that the words **וְאֵל** and **מֶן** establish the comparison on the most important thing that must be acquired, which is wisdom (Waltke, 2004: 338).

Verse 12. The Masoretes' use of maqqeph for **אֲנִי־חֶכְמָה** suggests 'an indivisible action or feeling' (Waltke, 1990: 64).

Verse 16b. Toy, following the LXX and BHS, suggests rendering **צְדָקָה** as 'of the earth'³³⁸ rather than 'just or righteousness' (1977: 167–168). Waltke and Fox also agree with Toy in an attempt to achieve strict parallelism. However, Murphy (1998: 46) and Clifford (1999: 91) followed the MT. Our translation also stands by the MT because it makes sense without any emendation.

³³⁸ The LXX translates 16b as 'καὶ τύραννοι δι' ἐμοῦ κρατοῦσι γῆς' (and tyrants through me rule the earth).

Verse 17. This translation agrees with the LXX, Peshitta and modern commentators who follow the Qere reading of אֱהָבֵי (those who love me) instead of the Ketib אֱהָבֶיהָ (those who love her) because it agrees with the rest of the verse.

Verse 18a. Fox (2000) treats עֲשֶׂר־וְכָבוֹד as hendiadys. However, the frequency of hendiadys as a literary device is disputable (Baldick, 2001: 111). We shall discuss this further in our treatment of verse 18.

Verse 18b. Toy (1977: 170) and Waltke's (2004: 390) translations of צִדְקָה as prosperity instead of righteousness are inaccurate. צִדְקָה in Hebrew normally means righteousness.³³⁹ There should be a good reason before it can be translated as prosperity. It is part of scholars attempt to arrive at strict parallelism. Our translation is in agreement with Longman (2008: 201), Fox (2000: 264) and Sandoval (2006: 92–95).

Verse 19. Toy thinks that the precise meaning of the phrase מִתְּרוּץ וּמָפוֹ is uncertain if the words are literally translated individually as than gold and than gold. He suggests that 'their combination may be represented by finest gold' (Toy, 1977: 170). Many English translations including Fox translate מִתְּרוּץ וּמָפוֹ as 'than finest gold.'

Verse 21. In Hebrew, the infinitive construct with לִי suggests that despite the appearance of the sof pasuk (׃) at the end of verse 20, the syntax and grammar continues in verse 21.

³³⁹ In contrast to Toy and Waltke, the LXX translates צִדְקָה in 16b as 'δικαιοσύνην' (righteousness).

8.2.4. Literary Structure

Waltke divides this section into two: ‘Wisdom’s role in civil order’ (12–16) and ‘Wisdom’s gifts of material glory for her lovers’ (17–21). However, with our topic in mind, I can detect the presence of a subtle structure. This passage can be divided into five sub-sections. Verses 10–11 focus on the value of wisdom and 12–13 summarise the characteristics of wisdom. Verses 14–16 address the role of wisdom in leadership and verse 17 emphasises the emotional aspects of learning for leaders. Finally, verses 18–21 point to wisdom as the source of wealth for leaders and potential leaders.

8.2.5. Exegetical Analysis

A. The Value of Wisdom (8:10–11)

Verse 10 constitutes an invitation for the hearers to receive wisdom on the basis of her intrinsic value. Then, verse 11 explains why, because she is more valuable than money or jewels. Verse 10 begins with an imperative statement, similar to the one found in verse 6. The son is being instructed to take מוֹסֵר (instruction or teaching) instead of silver because of its corrective nature. He should also treasure knowledge above gold. קַח (take) in the first half-line elliptically functions in the second half-line. The intra-linear parallelism in this verse shows that ‘instruction’ is parallel to ‘knowledge’ and ‘silver’ is parallel to ‘gold’. The kind of comparison expressed here, according to Waltke and O’Connor, refers to a ‘comparison of exclusion’. This is because ‘the subject alone possesses the quality connoted by the adjective or stative verb, to the exclusion of the thing compared’ (Waltke and O’Connor, 1990b: 265). It is easy for Waltke and O’Connor to think that this constitutes a comparison of exclusion, but it does not. This verse does not teach that the reader should totally reject gold or silver. The aim of the proverb is to emphasise motivation for the imperative that wisdom is more

valuable than things that we consider most valuable (earthly treasures). Silver and gold are durable because they do not rust like other metals. More importantly, they do not lose lustre, shape or weight. Metaphorically, gold and silver can also mean other things that are valuable to us. This invitation from Lady Wisdom offers ‘a great opportunity for learning and personal growth’ (Heim, 2013: 634).

Verse 11 continues the idea from the previous verse. Waltke thinks that it is a gloss from 3:15 (2004: 388). In contrast, I agree with Fox that the verse ‘works well as a proverb cited to support the preceding advice’ (2000: 271). It is also a good conclusion for that section of the wisdom speech. Similarly, Heim identifies the parallelism and variant repetition between Proverbs 3:15 and 8:11. He notes that ‘both half-lines ... are repeated, with three dissimilar words’ (2013: 121). He concludes that this is ‘a deliberate variation of the so-called ‘better’ proverb’ (2013: 122). The point that is being made is that the worth of wisdom is incomparably more valuable than silver, gold and other desired items.³⁴⁰ Therefore, those who aspire to be leaders should recognise the worth of wisdom.

The sudden change from the first person singular personal pronoun by Lady Wisdom to the third person singular has puzzled scholars. While commentators such as Murphy and Waltke say it is unclear or it is a gloss (Murphy, 1998: 50; Waltke, 2004: 251, 388), Heim argues that the change is obvious. Following Heim, Proverbs 8:11 is a variant repetition of 3:15 and it is deliberate. It is the same Wisdom that is still speaking (Heim, 2013: 121–126) to future leaders.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ In other words, wisdom is more valuable than the temporary and perishable riches as well as the durable things that humans usually seek after.

³⁴¹ This is another example of the frequent use of variant repetitions in the book of Proverbs.

B. The Characteristics of Wisdom (8:12–13)

Lady Wisdom's personal introduction of herself, in verse 12, is intriguing. She changes the mode of her speech with the use of a first person singular suffix. The phrase **שְׁכֵנְתִּי** **אֲנִי־חָכְמָה** (Greek *ἐγὼ ἡ σοφία κατεσκήνωσα*) connotes some emphasis. It can also be translated as 'I wisdom, I dwell'. Wisdom describes herself as dwelling with **עֲרָמָה** (shrewdness or craftiness). **שָׁכַן** (dwell) connotes settlement, closeness or association (HALOT, 4: 1497). With the root **שָׁכַן**, **שְׁכֵנְתִּי עֲרָמָה** can also mean 'shrewdness is my neighbour'. This does not imply that wisdom is shrewd. The message she is trying to convey is that there is a connection, as well as a distinction, between her and shrewdness. In other words, 'she has an abiding connection to it but is not precisely equated with it' (Fox, 2000: 271). The second half-line introduces two additional qualities of wisdom, which are **דִּיעָה** (knowledge) and **מְזוּמָה** (discretion). McKane interprets them as 'knowledge of procedural devices or knowledge of expediencies' (1970: 347). Generally, knowledge is the accumulation of skills, facts, information and experience. Prudence, on the other hand, is the 'ability to devise plans' (Waltke 2004: 400). These characteristics connect well with 'mental agility, versatility and adroitness' (McKane, 1970: 347). In the light of our discussion, these qualities are needed for successful leadership.

Scholars such as Toy and Meinhold have been puzzled by the appearance of verse 13 as an obstruction to the flow between verses 12 and 14. Toy, for example, opts to remove it because it does not contribute to the flow of thought (Toy, 1977: 167). On the contrary, Delitzsch thinks there is a connection (Delitzsch, 1984: 178). I would argue that it is part of the deliberate ambiguity in the book of Proverbs. Hence, casting doubt on its originality is

unnecessary, if it is interpreted within the context of this passage. Following Waltke, the different wording of this verse and the logical progression of evil from pride to perverse speech shows that it is not a gloss from Job 28:28, Proverbs 3:19 or 16:6. For Waltke, Lady Wisdom climactically uses שְׂנֵאֲתִי (I hate) ‘to signify that these vices cannot attend her virtues’ (Waltke 2004: 401). Verse 13 may be difficult to divide into two poetic lines, but I agree with Murphy that the second and third lines are explanations of the first (1998: 48). They help the son (the addressee) to know the evils that must be avoided. Verse 13 identifies hatred of evil as identical with יִרְאַת יְהוָה (the fear of the Lord). However the implication and interpretation of this statement is probably its consequence. שְׂנֵא (hate), in its strongest sense, underscores the idea of becoming an enemy of something. It is often associated with the enemies of God or the things that Yahweh dislikes (HALOT, 3: 1254–1256). The second half-line sheds more light on the verse by highlighting three ways by which רָע (evil) manifests itself: the first is through arrogance and pride; the second is through an evil way or action; and the third is through the mouth of perversity. In the context of our discussion, these are three important areas that those who aspire to be leaders should be careful about. They should avoid every form of pride and arrogance. This also suggests attitudes and actions (either by words or deeds). This verse is also relevant to those who are already leaders, because following its advice would help them to become better leaders.

C. The Role of Wisdom in Leadership (8:14–16)

Lady Wisdom continues to make additional claims about her attributes in connection with royalty in verses 14–16. It should be noted that the self-praise approach she adopts is not unique to ancient Israel. It is similar to the speeches that are found in some ANE texts (Davis,

2000: 62). Lady Wisdom makes some interesting claims in verse 14, which require closer analysis. In the first half-line of verse 14, she possesses **עֵצָה** and **תוֹשִׁיָּה**. **עֵצָה** is a first yod noun, from **יעץ**, and can be translated as planning, decision and consultation (HALOT, 2: 422). **תוֹשִׁיָּה**, on the other hand, is difficult to translate because it is rare and it has multiple meanings.³⁴² It has been difficult for scholars to find an equivalent word for it in modern languages. It appears to be another way of describing wisdom in the book of Proverbs. The most acceptable definition that has been put forward so far is the one by Gemser. For Gemser, **תוֹשִׁיָּה** means ‘the promotion of being, encouraging something to exist, allowing the successful outcome of an enquiry; as such it means help as much as cleverness, or skill’ (HALOT, 4: 1714). Hence, I have translated it as success. Drawing on examples from 1 Kings 1:12 and Proverbs 20:18, Waltke suggests that **תוֹשִׁיָּה** may refer to ‘political and military advice given to a king’ (2004: 401). If this is correct, it justifies my argument about the unique role of wisdom in leadership. Similarly, Fox writes, ‘counsel, competence, and power are the faculties of statecraft, wielded by effective rulers to achieve their goals. They are not inherently ethical attributes, though they may and should be employed justly’ (Fox, 2000: 273) as implied in the context.³⁴³

In the second half-line of verse 14, wisdom is **בִּינָה** and she possesses **גְּבוּרָה**. **בִּינָה** appears 22 times in Proverbs, and it is commonly used to express ‘understanding’ (NIDOTTE, 1: 642). **גְּבוּרָה** derives its root from **גָּבַר**, which means to be superior, excel, prevail, rise and strong (NIDOTTE, 1: 792). Anyone who seeks after wisdom will benefit from these characteristics.

³⁴² The LXX translates it as **βουλήν** ‘advise, counsel or will’ (Strong, 1997: 94).

³⁴³ This is contrary to McKane who argues that statecraft has nothing to do with morals. It is all about success (1970: 348).

This verse is parallel to the characteristics of the ideal king mentioned in Isaiah 11:2. He possesses the spirit of the Lord, wisdom and understanding, counsel and power, knowledge and the fear of the Lord. The imaginative interpretation of this verse is that leaders need the mental strength and moral will to be able to successfully execute their policies, especially during difficult times (e.g. economic recession and war). They also need courage to tackle their opponents as well as a good strategy for success.

Wisdom presents herself as the source of leadership influence by highlighting her pragmatic importance in verses 15–16. **בִּי** preceding the verb **יִמְלֹכוּ** emphasises wisdom as an instrument of leadership at different levels: kings, rulers, princes, nobles and judges. In other words, ‘all rulers are the visible tools of her hidden work and the paradigmatic illustration of her activity’ (Waltke, 2004: 402). There is intra-linear parallelism between **יִמְלֹכוּ** (reign) and **יִחְקֹקוּ** (decree) in verse 15. These two verbs indicate what wisdom does for those who are in positions of authority, in an ideal situation. Kings and rulers rely on her for effective governance. **מְלָכִים** (kings) in the first half-line is also parallel to **רוֹזְנִים** (dignitaries, rulers or governors) in the second half-line. This suggests that there is an association between the two. The implication of verse 15 is that leaders who lack wisdom would encounter difficulties throughout their reign (even when they are good leaders).

There is interlinear parallelism between verses 15 and 16. The repetition of **בִּי** at the beginning of both verses is an important poetic device used for the connection. Following the Akkadian word for king (*šarru*), Waltke finds syntactic and semantic matches between the first half-line of verses 15 and 16. He suggests that **מְלָכִים** links well with **שָׂרִים** because they are officials working at the king’s palace (Waltke, 2004: 403). **שָׂרִים** (prince or chief) can also

be translated as a captain or as someone with royal connections. **שָׂרִים** in verse 16 appears to refer to lower rulers because they are mentioned in association with the **נְרִיבִים** (nobles) and **שֹׁפְטֵי** (judges). In my view, verse 16 offers textual evidence with the presentation of the hierarchy: princes, nobles and judges. Therefore, those who aspire to be leaders among the general public can learn from this.

On the whole, verses 15–16 constitute a rhetorical appeal to ambition. They imply that it is impossible to rule well, either as higher or lower leaders, without wisdom. Wisdom is usually associated with kingship and leadership in ANE and ancient Israel.³⁴⁴ The vocabularies of royalty and high officials in these two verses help to focus our discussion on leadership.³⁴⁵ The last couplet of this section shows that wisdom was an important tool for leadership in ancient Israel. Drawing from the exegesis of this text, we may now draw implications from the wider contexts. The leaders need wisdom to be able to govern effectively; they need wisdom to test the reaction of the people towards their government; they need wisdom to put in place infrastructure (such as the judicial system) and for diplomatic relations with other nations and fellow leaders; and they need wisdom to make wise decisions throughout their reign.

D. The Availability of Wisdom to Leaders and Aspiring Leaders (8:17)

How then can wisdom be found, if she has this leadership value? Verse 17 answers this question. Wisdom is universally available to those who seek a relationship with her, whether

³⁴⁴ See my discussion in chapter 4 of this dissertation.

³⁴⁵ In other words, these higher leaders were used as paradigm for lower leadership.

as a leader or as followers who aspire to be leaders. The use of the personal pronoun **אֲנִי** by Lady Wisdom is for the sake of emphasis. **אָהַב** means to love or like. It expresses affection, which may be between God and humans, humans and humans, humans and objects or abstract realities. Generally, it is used to describe friendship or ‘feelings of love’ (HALOT, 1: 18). The **אָהַב** expressed by Lady Wisdom here is reciprocal. Furthermore, **שָׁחַר** means ‘to search for, to turn towards, go around’ something. The word ‘always has a clearly defined object’ (HALOT, 4: 1465) whenever it appears in the Piel form. In this verse, wisdom is the object that is being sought.

מָצָא expresses the outcome of the search. Lady Wisdom is only available to those who seek her. The mutuality between seeking and finding can be found in Deuteronomy 4:29; 2 Chronicles 15:4, 15; Jeremiah 29:13; and Isaiah 55:6; 65:1. The theological dimension is that those who seek Yahweh will find him. Earlier scholars such as Kayatz (1966) and others have argued that this reciprocal love has a striking parallel with Ma‘at in ancient Egypt. However, Fox suggests that this claim is unconvincing and is probably a scholarly assumption. He warns us to be careful of this comparison and concludes that the reciprocity may also be found in Mesopotamian and Hellenistic³⁴⁶ gods (Fox, 1995: 44–47).

There is intra-linear parallelism between the two poetic half-lines with the use of **אָהַב** (love) and **שָׁחַר** (seek).³⁴⁷ The language of loving and searching here is an expression of emotional

³⁴⁶ For example, ‘khonsu loves him who loves him’ and ‘Isis loves the one who loves her’ (Fox, 2000: 276).

³⁴⁷ This is an instance of precise parallelism. Scholars such as Heim have argued that most of the precise parallelisms do not introduce new innovations within the text (2013: 32). However, the power of this parallelism is not in its new information or imagination that it inspires, as Heim would suggest. The precision of this parallelism serves a strong rhetorical purpose.

commitment, effort and motivation. In other words, it is only those who love wisdom who will create the time to seek for her. In his 1988 article, Murphy argues that the ‘erotic’ presentation of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9 is evidence of the relationship between wisdom and eros. He suggests that the description of her value, the need for her to be embraced, loved and found shows that ‘the pursuit of wisdom is clearly erotic’ (Murphy, 1988b: 602). He maintains that the speech was deliberately presented to show the youth the difference between the strange woman and Lady Wisdom. He concludes that it is another way of showing the son that sexual fidelity is a symbol of attachment to Lady Wisdom. This analysis has not received significant acceptance among scholars.

In contrast to Murphy, I agree with Fox that, ‘to love wisdom means to crave knowledge and draw deep satisfaction from attaining it’ (Fox, 2000: 276). The metaphor expresses deep longing, strong motivation and emotional development. Verse 17³⁴⁸ emphasises that learning is an emotional as well as intellectual activity.³⁴⁹ Thus, the son is expected to listen carefully to the wisdom speech and reflect on the proverbs, in order to gain wisdom. A similar idea can be found in Egyptian wisdom literature (Lichtheim, 1976: 140) and Ben Sira.³⁵⁰ However, in reality, not all kings, governors, princes and nobles are making use of this opportunity. Proverbs 8:15–16 implies that leaders who do not decree righteous laws or judge justly lack wisdom. Therefore, leaders and prospective leaders should have a desire for learning.

E. Wisdom as a Source of Wealth for Leaders (8:18–21)

³⁴⁸ There is evidence of trans-linear parallelism between verse 17 and 36 in terms of the reciprocal love or hatred for wisdom.

³⁴⁹ In other words, there is something genuinely exciting and desirable about learning and development.

³⁵⁰ In the Egyptian wisdom literature, Anii urges his audience to ‘penetrate the writings, put them in your heart. Then all that you say will be effective’ (Lichtheim, 1976: 140). Ben Sira later sheds more light on how wisdom can be found through the desire to listen and individual effort (Sirach 6:32–37, 14:20–15:10, 24:1–24).

Verses 18–21 highlight some of the material benefits that wisdom attracts to those who find her. Timothy Sandoval has categorised this section among the proverbs that deal with wealth in Proverbs (Sandoval, 2008: 47–52). Lady Wisdom emphasises that she is ‘fundamental for economic affairs, matters of public justice, and government rule’ (Melchert, 1998: 183). All these areas are covered within the spheres of leadership. Hence, it is necessary for those who aspire to be leaders to listen to her instruction.

Lady Wisdom presents herself as the source of wealth in verse 18. The phrase עֲשֶׂר-יָכְבוֹד (Greek *πλοῦτος καὶ δόξα*), in the first half-line, expresses the association between riches and glory with the use of a maqqeph.³⁵¹ Fox understands this phrase as a pair of hendiadys and suggests that it could mean ‘honourable wealth’ (Fox, 2000: 277). I disagree that the two nouns convey the same idea. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* defines hendiadys as ‘the expression of a single idea by means of two nouns joined by the conjunction “and” rather than by a noun qualified by an adjective’ (Baldick, 2001: 111). In this case, there is a conjunction joining the two nouns together, but that does not make it a hendiadys. This is because the status of hendiadys is uncertain. Rosmari Lillas, in her PhD thesis, has shown that there is no agreement on the definition, function and application of the term ‘hendiadys’ (Lillas, 2012). Her close investigation of about 1,700 examples of so-called hendiadys in the Hebrew Bible shows that it is not specific enough to sufficiently explain the combinations of words. According to Lillas, we do not know how the ancient Semitic people spoke when the text was written. Therefore, it may be wrong to analyse it in the light of the construction of European languages.

³⁵¹ *πλοῦτος καὶ δόξα* is another example where the LXX resolves the ambiguity in the MT of Proverbs.

Toy argues that צדקה in verse 18 should be translated as prosperity, instead of justice or righteousness. Drawing on examples from 1 Samuel 26:23 and Joel 2:23, he concludes that צדקה carries the idea of a ‘just measure of fortune’ (Toy, 1977: 169). Waltke is also in support of this translation (2004: 390). Following Lowth’s *parallelismus membrorum*, he wants עשׂר (riches) to be synonymous with הון (wealth) and כבוד (honour) to be synonymous with צדקה (righteousness). For Waltke, כבוד, which can also mean importance through wealth, would allow for understanding צדקה as prosperity.

However, following McKane and Fox, I have translated צדקה as righteousness. McKane warns that to translate צדקה as ‘success’ or ‘prosperity’ is to ‘over-simplify the relation of rightness to wealth’. For McKane, ‘the paradox is that when wealth is the chief end of life it corrupts, whereas when it is subordinated to wisdom it may be enjoyed as an aspect of welfare and honour’ (1970: 350). Fox also puts forward the argument that some wealth may be acquired through unrighteous ways. He concludes that there is no compelling evidence for translating צדקה as success or prosperity in the light of Isaiah 54:17b, Psalms 112:3, 111:3 and other suggested passages (Fox, 2000: 278). In my opinion, there is nothing in the verse to suggest that צדקה should be rendered as prosperity instead of righteousness. This idea is based on the attempt of previous scholarship to search for ‘better’ parallelism as a ‘methodological fix-all’ (Heim, 2013: 642). With Heim, we are able to argue that there is no real synonymous parallelism. What we have here instead is evidence of variant repetition at a micro level (2013: 24). Another important factor is that there is no other example within Proverbs where צדקה carries the sense of prosperity. Therefore, I disagree with Toy and

Waltke's translations on the basis of this evidence.

The arrangement of verse 18 has a pragmatic impact. עֲשֹׂר (riches) in the first half-line is parallel to הוֹן (wealth) in the second half-line. Similarly, כְּבוֹד (honour) in the first half-line is also parallel to צְדָקָה (righteousness) in the second half-line. The pairing of the material with the non-material is significant. צְדָקָה echoes the idea of social standing with that of social justice. The use of the language of wealth to address the son, as expressed in verse 18, is also common in some Egyptian wisdom literature (Sandoval, 2005: 96). However, it must be noted that this verse is not a guarantee that everyone who seeks wisdom will have material wealth. Garret, for example, understands the wealth being lavished on the lovers of wisdom as being literal rather than metaphorical, but he agrees that not all wisdom benefits 'are material in nature' (1993: 104). Whybray also supports this view. He notes that the wealth in this verse should not be 'understood in the figurative sense but it is quite literally material wealth which, because it is gained through wisdom rather than directly as an end in itself, is more worthwhile than gold and silver obtained in a usual way without regard to her' (Whybray, 1994b: 126). Therefore, this implies that those who seek after wisdom have what is priceless. This may in turn bring them some material wealth and also help them to sustain whatever they have acquired through righteousness.

Lady Wisdom takes up her earlier idea, from verse 10, that she is better than silver and gold in verse 19, which is a reverse chiasm of Proverbs 3:14 (Fox, 2000: 278). This repetition is part of the devices used by the poets for the sake of emphasis. Murphy does not see the need to express the 'better than' element in this verse (Murphy, 1998: 51). In contrast, I think

translating **טוב** and **מן** clearly conveys the main message of Lady Wisdom. **פְּרִי** literally means fruit from a tree, offspring and produce. It also describes ‘the result of an action or behaviour’ (HALOT, 3: 967). **תְּבוּאָה** can be translated as product, yield, income or revenue. Figuratively, it is the ‘gain and profit’ (Delitzsch, 1984: 181) that Lady Wisdom yields to her followers. In this comparative saying, Lady Wisdom presents herself to be ‘qualitatively superior’ (Forti, 2008: 17) to gold and silver. The emphasis is that, although wealth is desirable, it is still inferior to the produce of wisdom, which is ‘intellectual and ethical, not only material’ (Fox, 2000: 278).

Fox observes that this verse ‘weakens the promise of affluence in the next verse’ (Fox, 2000: 278). I do not think that this is necessarily so. Interpreting verse 19 in the wider context of chapter 8, it is better to see it as a reminder for the son (a prospective leader) to recognise that wisdom is more valuable than the accumulation of wealth. **פְּרִי** (fruit) is the positive outcome of yielding to the instruction of Lady Wisdom. Leaders must pursue the intellectual and ethical aspects of their role with less emphasis on financial gratification. Following the precepts of wisdom will eventually help them to gain everything, including wealth.

Righteousness is one of the major topics in the book of Proverbs, and verse 20 supports this claim (Lyu, 2012: 76). Lady Wisdom guides those who follow her on the path of righteousness and judgment according to this verse. **אֶרֶץ** (path) in the first half-line and **נְתִיבָה** (path) in the second half-line are synonyms and they are closely related to **דֶּרֶךְ** (way). **אֶרֶץ** can refer to a way of life, God’s way or human life as a whole. It especially ‘speaks more of one’s condition or state than of action’ (NIDOTTE, 1: 505). **נְתִיבָה**, on the other

hand, is used as a ‘metaphor for lifestyle, pattern of behaviour, or course of life’ (NIDOTTE, 3: 202). The use of the word **אָהֵלֵךְ** (I walk) is significant. As Delitzsch notes, this form of Piel expresses a ‘firm, constant action’ (1984: 182). For Delitzsch, **בְּתוֹךְ** also means that the line of conduct that wisdom turns to is only one way (1984: 182). In a similar vein, Waltke suggests that with the use of **אָהֵלֵךְ** (what is being done) is frequentative (Waltke, 1990: 414–415). For Fox, it refers to a constant or habitual mode of behaviour (Fox, 2000: 278). The parallelism between **צִדְקָה** (righteousness) and **מִשְׁפָּט** (judgment) is particularly noteworthy. These actions are associated with each other and they point in the same direction. As Longman succinctly notes, ‘a successful ruler is an ethical ruler, one who is characterised by justice and righteousness’ (206: 202). Therefore, as Lady Wisdom walks in the path of righteousness and justice, leaders are expected to follow the same way; they must choose the path of honesty in their quest for power, wealth and prosperity.

There is a greater reward for those who follow the path of wisdom in verse 21. The language of love in verse 17 is repeated in verse 21. The *inclusio* (love) was used as a poetic device. There is another link between verse 17 and the second half-line of verse 21. Lady Wisdom will fill the storehouse of her lovers with ‘monetary earnings’ (Yoder, 2001: 99). This is an instance of trans-linear parallelism. Here, wisdom showers wealth and honour on those who love her. The sense **נָחַל** (inheritance) carries here suggests a permanent transfer of ownership ‘so that it may be passed on in inheritance’ (Fox, 2000: 278).³⁵² How does she honour those who love her? One of the possible ways is that the possessor of wisdom will catch the

³⁵² Toy sees a strong connection between the first and second half-line of verse 21. He argues that the ‘initial particle in verse 21 expresses purpose (in order that I may),’ and the second half-line is ‘equivalent to result (so that I do)’. Toy paraphrases this verse as; ‘since I am just, my friends will be properly rewarded’ (1977: 170).

attention of others and be considered for higher leadership responsibilities. Another question that needs to be asked is how we should understand wisdom as a source of wealth in modern day terms. As mentioned earlier, the wealth here is not necessarily financial. Wealth for leaders may be in the areas of peaceful governance, good investments and high quality decisions that are beneficial to the people.

8.2.6. What Can We Learn?

We have gained some insights from the preceding analysis of Proverbs 8:10–21. First, we learnt that the role of wisdom in leadership should not be underestimated. Leaders need wisdom to be able to function well in their roles. Wisdom is the ‘majestic patron and benefactor’ (Fox, 2000: 278) of those in the corridors of power. Second, when leaders rigorously pursue wisdom, additional benefits, such as power, cleverness, riches, dominion and glory, will follow.³⁵³ Third, leadership is not just about being successful; it is about being a leader in a moral and ethical sense. Justice and moral values are clearly emphasised as necessary tools for leadership in verses 15, 18 and 20. Fourth, wisdom is not just for people who are already leaders; it is for all who aspire to be leaders.³⁵⁴ In my view, this is the main motivation behind the speech of Lady Wisdom.

It should be noted that the repetition of **אני** in verses 12, 14 and 17 by Lady Wisdom is for the purpose of emphasis, to draw attention to herself. Her invitation is a generous one, without

³⁵³ For example, this is well illustrated by the wisdom King Solomon displayed. It was followed by abundant wealth, power and added skills (1 Kgs 3:1–15).

³⁵⁴ Lady Wisdom is using her value to motivate ordinary people so that they can move up in the hierarchy of society. It is not about how the elites can become better elites; it is also about how ordinary people can join the elites.

any plan of exploitation. It is filled with passion, but is optional to those who willingly seek her. According to Clifford, the relationship between Lady Wisdom and her followers is expressed in the ‘traditional biblical language of love: seeking and finding’ (Clifford, 1999: 95). She is self-sufficient and not in need of anything. She is the one who lavishes wealth and substance on her followers, in contrast to the manipulative actions of Lady Folly in chapters 5 and 7, who makes heavy demands. The principle of seeking and finding wisdom is relevant for anyone who wants to lead. Leaders who seek wisdom diligently will find her. This implies that wisdom is not only intellectual; she is also attractive.

8.3. The Responsibility of Good Leaders Towards the Poor (29:13–14)

8.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 29:13–14

רָשׁ וְאִישׁ תְּכַכִּים נִפְגָּשׁוּ	13	A poor and oppressor meet,
מֵאִיר־עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם יְהוָה:		the Lord gives light to the eyes of both.
מֶלֶךְ שׁוֹפֵט בְּאֵמֶת דְּלִים	14	A king who judges the poor with truth,
כִּסְאוֹ לְעַד יִכּוֹן:		his throne will be established forever.

8.3.2. Textual Note

Verse 13. The LXX translates the phrase רָשׁ וְאִישׁ תְּכַכִּים as (δανιστοῦ καὶ χρεοφειλέτου) which means ‘creditors and debtors’. My translation stands by the MT, ‘a poor and oppressor’ because it explains the nuances of this proverb. In my view, the LXX may be misleading, because not all creditors are oppressors.

8.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of 29:13–14

There is interlinear parallelism between verses 13 and 14, with the use of רָשׁ and דְּלִים,

respectively. The proverbs are not critical of the status quo as they recognise social classes. The contrast between the poor and the oppressor in the first line of verse 13 is significant. It implies that not all the people who are rich and influential are oppressive. The proverb warns any prospective oppressor that God creates all humans. He ‘permits them to exist and controls them’ (Toy, 1977: 511). There is an implicit warning in the information given by the proverb that Yahweh has created all human beings (rich and poor). They are all created in the image of God.³⁵⁵ מַאֲיֵר (to give light) in hiphil carries the idea of illumination (HALOT, 1: 24)³⁵⁶ and it also means physical life. As Waltke notes, it is ‘a metonymy of ‘to give life’ in contrast to death’ (2005: 441).

Verse 14 introduces the king as God’s representative on Earth, with the responsibility of maintaining law and order. He must take action against those who oppress the poor and the powerless in society. שׁוֹפֵט is a qal participle masculine singular absolute. It means to judge or give justice to the poor ‘defending their rights and securing their mišpaṭ, their due, what is justly theirs’ (Fox, 2009: 839).³⁵⁷ He may not be able to attend to individual cases, but he must be an instrument of regulation. The aim of this proverb is to remind the king that part of his royal duties is to protect the rights of the poor and the consequence is that his throne will be established forever.³⁵⁸ What is new in my interpretation of this couplet is my understanding of 13a. Most scholars translate נִפְגְּשׁוּ as ‘meet together’, to mean that the poor

³⁵⁵ It implicitly warns that Yahweh will not tolerate any form of injustice against the poor. A similar idea can be found in Proverbs 22:2.

³⁵⁶ This verse could mean that the rich observe the poor when they meet and observe their vulnerability. The rich person feels sorry for the poor because the Lord has opened his eyes. It can also mean the poor see the oppressor as a powerful and untrustworthy person. They defend themselves to ensure they are not being exploited.

³⁵⁷ The direct object of מִלֵּךְ is not the wicked people, but the poor. Therefore, judging the poor is not in a sense of condemnation but in the sense of treating them fairly before the courts. Similarly, the idea of taking action against those who oppress the poor and powerless is only implicit.

³⁵⁸ For a discussion of how a king’s throne is established forever, see my interpretation of 25:5.

and oppressor are the same or have something in common. Following the MT, it could also mean the poor and oppressor meet or have interaction, but they should remember that God created all. There is trans-linear parallelism between verses 12 and 14. The negative imagery of a ruler who listens to falsehood (12) is taken up again, with the use of positive imagery for the ruler who judges the poor fairly and faithfully (14).

8.4. Counterpoint and Conclusion

In the light of the above analysis, I can conclude that the proverbs analysed in this chapter are instructive for leadership from the perspective of a ruler, as well as for the officials working under him. A leader is expected to exhibit the skills of good communication; to have the ability to know when to speak or be silent;³⁵⁹ to consult widely; to display wisdom for leadership; to connect well with the people and to discharge responsibility to the poor by defending their rights.

However, there are tensions concerning the skills of leaders in Proverbs. For example, Proverbs 22:29 claims that diligence (hard work) is what courtiers need to succeed in the presence of the king, but 16:15 seems to suggest that it still depends on the king's discretion.³⁶⁰ Some proverbs suggest that skills alone are not enough for successful leadership progression. There is a need for the exhibition of character and leadership action (28:6–7). In addition, Proverbs 29:8–12 emphasises the necessity of effective communication in

³⁵⁹ A wise leader knows when it is necessary or unnecessary to answer a fool according to his foolishness (Prov 26:4–5).

³⁶⁰ In real life situations, some skilful and humble staff fail to get the promotions they deserve; instead, lazy but pragmatic people are preferred.

leadership, but 17:7 warns against the use of excessive speech. The clearest contradiction about communication can be found in 26:4–5: ‘Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you yourself become like him; but rather answer a fool according to his folly, lest he appear wise in his own sight.’ Following Hatton’s dialogue theory and analysis of the LXX, these two verses offer ‘two strategies for dealing with the one fool – one that will fail and one that will be successful’ (2008: 156). Finally, Lady Wisdom boasts about her ability to support those in positions of authority (8:10–21), but she does not clearly state how, apart from the fact that ‘the fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom’ (9:10). As discussed in chapter 2, some of the variations in Proverbs may be attributed to the fact that some of the sayings were written by later editors, rather than the original authors.

CHAPTER 9

THE ACTIONS OF LEADERS IN PROVERBS

This chapter focuses on the sayings that relate to leadership actions in the book of Proverbs.

9.1. Leadership and Bribery (17:8; 23)

9.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 17:8, 23

אֶבֶן-חַן הַשָּׁחַד בְּעֵינֵי בָעָלָיו	8	Precious stone of favour is a bribe in the eyes of the master,
אֶל-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר יִפְּנֶה יִשְׁכִּיל :		wherever he turns, he prospers.
שָׁחַד מִחֵיק רָשָׁע יִקַּח	23	A wicked takes bribe from the secret, ³⁶¹
לְהַטּוֹת אֲדָחוֹת מִשְׁפָּט :		to pervert the path of justice.

9.1.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 17:8, 23

Verse 8 shows that a bribe can yield a positive effect. It can help the giver to achieve his goal.

שָׁחַד (bribe) has a number of usages in the Bible. It may refer to a gift that is given to express love or allegiance. It can also be used to describe a gift that is ‘intended to secure favour’ (HALOT, 4: 1457). A bribe is said to be like a magic stone, and the phrase אֶבֶן-חַן is used figuratively to express the result that it can produce. The noun בָּעָלָיו indicates the owner of the object or the giver of the bribe and יִשְׁכִּיל (to achieve success) explains its capability.

Scholars are divided on the interpretation of this verse. Farmer thinks ‘the speaker does not

³⁶¹ There is an enjambment with one part of the first half-line running into the second.

ask us to believe that the giving of bribes will guarantee anyone's prosperity,' but from personal observation and experience, that may be the case (Farmer, 1991: 88). He argues further that another way of reading this verse is to conceive of it as irony. A bribe appears to be a precious stone, but in reality it is not. Hence, the intention of this proverb is not to recommend the act of bribery, but to express its irony. In the same vein, David Montgomery argues that to say a 'bribe is a charm' is a statement of observation and not affirmation of the practice. He identifies villains as the subjects of most of the sayings on bribes in Proverbs (Montgomery, 2000: 134–149). Waltke supports this view with his understanding of **בְּעֵינָי** (in the eyes of) as a 'fool's state of self-delusion and reliance on his own opinion' (2005: 49).³⁶²

Robert Alden and John Lange understand **שֶׁחָר** as a 'gift' and not a bribe. According to Alden, this proverb stresses the positive perspective of a bribe because it promises success. It is used to induce others to support one's effort to achieve success. The gift only becomes a bribe when it becomes a source of temptation for the receiver to engage in illegal activities (Alden, 1983: 133–134). Similarly, Lange argues that **שֶׁחָר** in this verse is a lawful present or gift (Lange, 1960: 161). Hence, there is no reason for the giver and the receiver to feel uncomfortable about it. It neither condemns nor affirms bribery; it only highlights its effectiveness for those who use it.³⁶³

In contrast, Spence, McKane and Hatton maintain that **שֶׁחָר** is a bribe. According to Spence,

³⁶² A further ambiguity can be found in verse 23.

³⁶³ A positive picture of a bribe can also be found in Proverbs 18:16 and 21:14. It enhances favour and helps the giver to gain friendship and recognition in high places. It also has the tendency to smooth anger.

the giving of a bribe was part of the customs of the ancient people. It was common to offer attractive gifts to those in authority, in order to seek their attention (Spence, 1974: 351). McKane argues further that wise and pragmatic people would know when ‘it is wisdom to employ a bribe’ (1970: 485). The intention here is not to harm anyone; it is an expression of pragmatism on the part of the giver; the action is informed by practical wisdom without any evil intention against others.³⁶⁴ Hatton observes that Proverbs 17:8 ‘offers an enthusiastic endorsement of bribery’ (Hatton, 2008: 144) contrary to the high-toned condemnations that are available elsewhere. He notes that the Greek translator captures the nuance of the proverb well with ‘μισθὸς χαρίτων ἢ παιδεία τοῖς χρωμένοις, οὗ δ’ ἂν ἐπιστρέψη, εὐδοωθήσεται.’ For Hatton, this is one of the instances where the LXX helps us to understand the MT better. A similar positive view is expressed in Proverbs 21:14: ‘a gift in secret subdues anger, and a bribe in the bosom, strong wrath’ (cf. 18:16; 19:6). In my view, any attempt to use linguistics to conceive מַחָבֶה as gift and not bribe is fraught with weaknesses, because it fails to account for the way the word is used elsewhere in Proverbs.

Verse 23 continues the discussion of bribery with a specific focus on the one who receives it. The repetition of מַחָבֶה reflects a trans-linear parallelism with verse 8, as the poet returns to the previous discussion about bribes. He expresses a different attitude towards it, however. The bribe in verse 23 is associated with the wicked people, for the purpose of wickedness. It describes the receiver of the bribe as רָשָׁע (wicked) because he understands the expectation of the giver (to stretch the way of justice). A similar negative view of bribery can also be found in Proverbs 15:27: ‘those who are greedy for unjust gain make trouble for their households,

³⁶⁴ For example, the aim may be to secure one’s success or foster a budding relationship.

but those who hate bribes will live' (15:27).

There are three vital elements in this verse. The first is the timing of the bribe; יָקַח (receive) appearing in the third person qal imperfect implies a present or continuous action. The second is the location of the bribe; the fact that the action takes place in secret place (חֵיכָה) makes the bribery suspicious. The context of this bribe (a secret place) suggests the illegality of the action. The third is the purpose of the bribe; the use of the word הִטּוֹת (to turn aside) suggests the bribe is being used to 'twist' (HALOT, 2: 693) things around.³⁶⁵ The appearance of מִשְׁפָּט (justice) in the second half-line suggests that the act of bribery took place in a judicial or legal setting (Murphy, 19998: 131; Longman, 2008: 350). אֶרְחֹת (path) is a metaphorical description of the 'process of judgment' (HALOT, 1: 87) and רִשֵּׁעַ is a 'metonymy' describing the official in charge of the 'judicial procedure' (Waltke, 2005: 61). רִשֵּׁעַ is the subject performing the actions in both the first and second half-lines. This verse condemns the use of bribes for perverting justice. It lays emphasis on the moral implications of a bribe and exposes the bribe as a tool that is being used by wicked people for their personal gains. Fox points it out that what is wrong in this verse is the idea of giving or receiving a 'gift for corrupt purposes' (2009: 635).

9.1.3. What Can We Learn?

In view of our discussion, the one who receives the bribe is a leader. The one who gives the bribe may be a lower leader or a member of the public. Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the

³⁶⁵ For example, using it to get unmerited favour or justice.

giving and receiving of bribes by administrators to pervert judgment is condemned.³⁶⁶ A similar idea can also be found throughout the ANE (Noonan, 1984: 5).³⁶⁷ The book of Proverbs expresses both positive and negative attitudes towards bribes (15:27; 17:8, 23; 18:16; 21:14). Proverbs 17:8 and 17:23, especially, express both ‘enthusiasm and doubt about bribery’ (Hatton, 2008: 144). It is even intriguing for me to note that there are more positive sayings about שֹׁחַד than the negatives in the book of Proverbs.³⁶⁸ Following Hatton, the tension and complexity regarding the giving and receiving of bribes were deliberately mixed together ‘to goad the wise to reflect on the merits and demerits of this practice’ (Hatton, 2008: 137). For Hatton, the wisdom writers used this contradictory attitude towards gifts and bribes to provoke their readers to think carefully about the prospects and problems of the practice. His synchronic reading of Proverbs leads him to conclude that the book ‘attempted to promote a dialogue between elements of wisdom which saw bribes as useful and others that believe them to be ineffective’ (2008: 148).³⁶⁹

Verses 8 and 23 express different attitudes to bribery. As McKane notes, ‘if this is not evidence for interpretation, it is at least irreconcilable with the view that all the material in Proverbs can be accommodated within a single theological structure or unitary ethos’ (1970: 18). On one hand, the act of giving out a bribe to pervert justice is as bad as receiving it.³⁷⁰ It

³⁶⁶ See Deut 27:25; 1 Sam 8:3; Job 15:34; Ps 15:5; 26:9–10; Prov 29:4; Eccl 7:7; Isa 1:23; 5:23; 33:15; Ezek 13:19; 22:12; Amos 5:12; Mic 3:10–11.

³⁶⁷ For example, King Hammurabi was known to have issued a penalty against corrupt judges who abused their positions of authority to encourage injustice (Pritchard, 1969: 166).

³⁶⁸ Unlike other books of the Hebrew Bible, the book of Proverbs has more positive verses about שֹׁחַד than the negatives.

³⁶⁹ As mentioned earlier, in chapter 4, the tension between gifts and bribes is one of the examples of provocative contradictions that Hatton finds in Proverbs. He has been able to show that Proverbs is indeed a ‘unified text, pervaded by contradictions’ (2008: 10).

³⁷⁰ It must be stated that God detests bribery and oppression of the poor. It was one of the reasons for the

motivates the giver to violate the law and pushes the receiver to break the rules; both the giver and receiver become corrupt and the chain of corruption continues. On the other hand, there is nothing wrong with giving or receiving a gift. It is right if the aim is to build a relationship and it does not affect others. In real political situations, such as in Great Britain, there is a code of conduct for Members of Parliament (MP) to publicly declare individual or corporate donations over a threshold.³⁷¹

9.2. Leadership and Anger Management (14:35; 19:12; 20:2)

9.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 14:35; 19:12; 20:2

Proverbs 14:35

<p>רָצוֹן־מֶלֶךְ לְעֶבֶד מְשָׁפִיל וְעִבְרָתוֹ תִּהְיֶה מִבִּישׁ׃</p>	35	<p>The favour of a king is to a prudent servant, but his wrath is for a shameful one.</p>
---	----	---

Proverbs 19:10, 12

<p>לֹא־נֶאֱוָה לְכָסִיל תַּעֲנוּג אֶף כִּי־לְעֶבֶד מִשָּׁל בְּשָׂרִים׃</p>	10	<p>Not fitting for a fool is luxury, also for a slave to rule over princes.</p>
<p>נֹהֵם כִּכְפִּיר זַעַף מֶלֶךְ וְכֹטֵל עַל־עֵשָׂב רָצוֹנוֹ׃</p>	12	<p>Like the roaring of a lion is the rage of the king, but like a dew over the grass is his favour.</p>

Proverbs 20:2

<p>נֹהֵם כִּכְפִּיר אֵימַת מֶלֶךְ מִתְעַבְּרוֹ חוּטֵא נַפְשׁוֹ׃</p>	2	<p>Like the roaring of a lion is the anger of a king, whoever angers him forfeits his life.</p>
---	---	---

Babylonian captivity (Ezek 22:12).

³⁷¹ The threshold for reporting individual or corporate donations from a 'permissible source' is £1,500 in a calendar year. 'When accepting benefits worth more than £500 but below the registration threshold of £1,500, Members should bear in mind the need to ensure they are from permissible donors and keep records as they may be reportable when combined with other donations from the same source in a calendar year. Donations over £500 that are from an unidentifiable or impermissible source should be returned and reported to the Commission within 30 days'.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmcode/735/735.pdf> page 12 (accessed on 17/08/16).

9.2.2. Textual Notes

Proverbs 14:35. Murphy suggests that the lamed in 35a also functions in 35b (1998: 102). Similarly, Waltke notes that the preposition לְ in 35a ‘implies a verb of motion’ (Waltke, 2004: 609).

Proverbs 19:12a. The LXX renders it as ‘βασιλέως ἀπειλή ὁμοία βρυγμῷ λέοντος’ the threat of a king is like a bite of a lion’.

Proverbs 20:2a. Clifford’s suggestion that אִי־מַת (anger) requires emendation before it can conform to 19:12 is unnecessary (1999: 181). As we shall see later, it is another example of variant repetition.

9.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 14:35; 19:12; 20:2

The saying in Proverbs 14:35 focuses on the behaviour of the king towards his servants. It shows that there are prospects and problems in serving at the royal court (McKane, 1970: 470). Honest and competent courtiers are rewarded but the incompetent and unfruitful ones will face the king’s anger. עֶבֶד can be used to describe a slave, a servant, a military subordinate, a political subject, a dependant or anyone who subjects themselves to the lordship of Yahweh. The noun appears about 800 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is the equivalent of παῖς and δοῦλος in the LXX (HALOT, 2: 775–776). It could be a reference to ‘an actual slave or a freeborn man’ (Fox, 2009: 578). Of course the meaning of עֶבֶד could be extended to cover all the king’s subjects throughout the kingdom. Its appearance here in

the singular, however, makes this unlikely.³⁷²

There are a few issues of poetics in this verse. First, the hiphil masculine participle מְשִׁפִּיל (prudent) modifies עֶבֶד (slave) to describe the servant as wise, insightful and acceptable to the king. In other words, the goodwill of a king is reserved for the wise. Secondly, עֲבָרָתוֹ (his wrath) implies judgment. This also ‘implies a righteous king’ (Longmann, 2006: 309) overseeing the affairs of the nation. The third issue is the hiphil participle masculine construct מְבִיֵּשׁ in the second half-line. It clearly shows that the servant is acting shamefully or bringing shame on himself through his actions. This proverb can be applied to the king and his courtiers. It could be a warning for the servants to watch their actions. It could also be an instruction for the king to appoint the right people. Its significance for leadership can still be conveyed in both ways.

Proverbs 19:10 begins with the phrase לֹא-נֶאֱוָה (not fitting).³⁷³ This phrase negates the nominal clauses in the first and second half-line. It is also elliptical in the second half-line. This verse is a statement of fact: it is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury or pleasure. כָּסִיל (fool) is used to describe those who are stupid in practical things or insolent in terms of spiritual matters. It appears 40 times in between Proverbs 1:22 and 29:22 (HALOT, 2: 489). Another thing that is not fitting is for a slave to rule over princes. שָׂרִים (prince) has its root from the Akkadian ‘šarrum’, meaning king, prince or governor. In ancient Israel שָׂרִים was used for a person of note, an overseer, a chief administrator in charge of royal goods, or other

³⁷² In my view, the servant mentioned here has regular contact with the king (possibly a courier).

³⁷³ I have discussed the significance of this phrase in my analysis of 17:7.

important person in a position of authority (HALOT, 3: 1352). עֶבֶד (slave), on the other hand, is a servant who is subject to subordination. He has no self-worth because he is a possession of his master. מִשַּׁל (to rule) is a qal infinitive construct verb and it indicates the one exercising leadership. Ironically, it is עֶבֶד (slave) who is the infinitive subject here.

In terms of parallelism, the relationship between a fool and a slave in this verse is unclear. What is clear is the unfitting situation of both. It is a serious situation when a fool can afford to live in luxury, but the intelligent and hard working people cannot. The implication is that the fool would think that 'it is an approval of his (false) way of life' (Murphy, 1998: 143). Similarly, the situation is a provocation for those who acquired their wealth through intelligence or hard work, when faced with those who did not (Fox, 2009: 652).

The emphasis of this proverb lies in the second half-line, as it presents an even more serious and disastrous situation. If it is not proper for a fool to live in pleasure, 'it is unthinkable that a slave, who is not even fully a member of the community, should ever leap the formidable and social and constitutional barriers which block his path to advancement and power' (McKane, 1970: 528). In other words, it is a tragedy to see a slave ruling over the princes and governors. If Hatton's proposal that Proverbs was 'written at a time of crisis and breakdown in the social order, perhaps occasioned by exile' (2008: 82) is correct, then this proverb may be an example of such a situation. Agur shares a similar conservative view within the numerical sayings of Proverbs 30:21–22, that it is not suitable for a slave to become king or for a fool to

have enough food to eat. Qohelet offers a similar sentiment regarding Ecclesiastes 10: 5–7.³⁷⁴

How, then, should we understand the second half of this poetic line? Van Leeuwen thinks that this proverb has ‘anti-revolutionary thrust’ (1997: 179) if it is placed within a royal context. He thinks the agenda of the writer is to maintain the usual status quo and promote a royal, hierarchical view of society. He finds a connection between Proverbs 19:10 and 30:21–22. Viewing this proverb from a royal perspective, he describes the situation as a ‘chaotic world upside down’ (van Leeuwen, 1986a : 602). He concludes that the images used are examples of real-life situations in the ANE.

Contrary to van Leeuwen, Waltke and Fox argue that the notion of social revolution in this verse is not accurate. Waltke’s analysis of different passages in the Hebrew Bible (especially the book of Proverbs) shows that the proverb does not envision revolution on the part of ‘the competent royal servant’ or ‘the prudent household slave’ (2005: 104). Similarly, Fox notes that such revolution was rare in the ANE. He observes that ‘armed bands of disaffected and marginalized men’ did embark on looting and achieved ‘occasional power’. For Fox, ‘what this proverb envisions is the case of a slave gaining power for himself, rather than a shift in class structure’ (Fox, 2009: 653). Following Waltke and Fox, I would conclude that the proverb describes the situation of an incompetent slave who was given the responsibility to oversee some assignments on behalf of his master (the king). Since the slave is incompetent ‘by disposition and training’ the outcome for the community would be ‘mismanagement,

³⁷⁴ There is a consensus among scholars that Job and Qohelet express radical wisdom, in contrast to the traditional wisdom enshrined in Proverbs. Yet the radicalism of Qohelet does not extend to leadership. Qohelet writes: ‘There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, as great an error as if it proceeded from the ruler: folly is set in many high places, and the rich sit in a low place. I have seen slaves on horseback, and princes walking on foot like slaves’ (Eccl 10: 5–7).

abuse of power, corruption, and injustice; in brief, social chaos' (Waltke, 2005: 105).

The implication of this proverb for leadership suggests that delegation of authority is one of the things expected of a great leader. However, it is the responsibility of the leader to supervise the delegates and ensure that they are competent for the assignment. Leaders can achieve this practically if they base the selection or appointment of their staff on merit (qualifications, experience, person and communication skills etc.) and not sentiment.³⁷⁵ There is evidence of people being selected or appointed, rather than elected, for leadership positions in the Ancient Near East (Clark, 2013: 169, Bang, 2013: 437).³⁷⁶ By implication, in the light of what has been identified in this verse, it is important that people receive training for modern leadership, both before and after selection (continuing professional development).

Verse 12 is about the 'wrath and favour of royalty' (Murphy, 1998: 143). **רָעַף** (Greek *ἀπειλή*) is an emotional expression through rage or anger. It refers to the state of being furious. The wisdom writer used a simile to liken the rage of the king to the roaring of a lion in the first half-line. A similar idea is expressed in Proverbs 16:14, 20:2 and 28:15. The emphasis is on how **כַּפִּיר** (lion or young lion) looks for food with his distinguished mane (HALOT, 2: 493). The use of **נָהַם** (growl) rather than **רָעַף** (roar) is significant. According to Fox, **נָהַם** offers a quieter sound. It is like a reference to the ordinary murmuring of the sea, in contrast to a storm. Therefore, the king merely needs to growl in order to be menacing. He should not be allowed to roar in fury (2009: 654). This is a warning for potential rebels, offenders and

³⁷⁵ They should not put people forward because they are members of their families or because they have received a bribe.

³⁷⁶ This is an interesting topic but there is need for further research in ANE studies.

lawbreakers. They should not be seen offending whenever the king looks around. Toy thinks the description of the king's anger here can be fully understood in the light of the time when the Jews were under the control of foreign rulers (1977: 372).

In contrast to the king's anger, his favour is like dew or light rain. 'The dew in dry, arid Palestine brought life to vegetation' (Longman, 2006: 368). רְצוֹנוֹ (favour) here is a non-religious expression of the king's pleasure or goodwill. Furthermore, עֵשֶׂב literally means grass or plant. It is a metaphor in this verse, as it presents an image of abundant growth (HALOT, 2: 889). As the dew refreshes the grass, the king's favour is refreshing for those who receive it. This may come in terms of promotion within the royal court or a public recognition of service, for example.

There is intra-linear parallelism of contrast between זַעַף (rage) and רְצוֹנוֹ (favour). The imagery of a growling lion and dew for the king shows that he holds the power to punish and reward. It expresses the two sides of leadership. This proverb is a reminder for those dealing with people in positions of authority to act wisely. They must remember that their actions will lead to a positive or negative reaction from the ruler. This proverb, if interpreted on its own, addresses issues of leadership for courtiers and administrators.³⁷⁷

The king's אֵימָה (wrath) in Proverbs 20:2 is compared with the roaring of a lion in the first half-line. אֵימָה, in my view, is a strong word because it describes the terror that the king

³⁷⁷ It also helps those who are not in leadership to know how to behave when they interact with those who are in positions of authority over them.

inspires in others when he is angry. The simile illustrates the power of the king as well as his ability to exercise judgment. This lion imagery was very common in the ANE, as it expresses ‘a king’s majesty and danger to ordinary mortals’ (Clifford, 1999: 182). The fact that he would not just make empty threats often ‘inspires awe and dread’ (McKane, 1970: 543). The second half-line elucidates the idea of the first. The hitpael participle (מִתְעַבֵּר) implies that he was caused to be angry. The root **עב** means to sin, miss a target or do what is morally wrong (HALOT 1: 306).³⁷⁸ Waltke suggests that the roaring of a lion in the context of Proverbs may include the removal of courtiers from their positions, or even death (2005: 128). In my view, this proverb is clearly a variant repetition of 19:12 with a few minor changes. In the real world of courtiers, officials should be able to know when a leader is angry through verbal expression (words), volume and body language. This verse emphasises the development of leadership skills in Proverbs, with special reference to self-management and anger management.

9.2.4. What Can We Learn?

In my view, Proverbs 14:35 can help to build and develop leadership skills for lower leaders serving under the king. A wise courtier would avoid anger while relating with others and restrain himself in the presence of the king (Prov 19:10). Heim’s analysis of the context of Proverbs 19:11 and 12 leads him to conclude that the royal saying in verse 12 is ‘directed at the king himself’. For Heim, verse 11 focuses on forbearance as a virtue that can enhance one’s social status. It is therefore an indirect encouragement for the king to let his ‘social interactions be guided by benevolence (approval) rather than vitriol’ (2013: 459). In the same

³⁷⁸ It can also mean to forfeit one’s life when it is followed by **נפש** as direct object.

vein, Fox notes that reading verse 11 together with 12 ‘puts courtiers on guard but also encourages a king to be patient and forgiving’ (2009: 654) irrespective of whatever justification he has for his wrath. Fox may not be too keen to find deep contexts in Proverbs, but he agrees to short connections such as this. In contrast, Proverbs 20:2 appears to justify the anger of the king, rather than condemn it, in order to nuance the other proverbs. Hence, effective leaders should know when to use a gentle tongue as well as anger effectively.

9.3. A Wise Leader Judges the Wicked (20:8, 26)

9.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 20:8, 26

<p>מֶלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא-דִין מְזַרְהָ בְּעֵינָיו כָּל-רָע:</p>	<p>8 A king sits upon the throne of judgment, to scatter all evil with his eyes.</p>
--	--

<p>מְזַרְהָ רָשָׁעִים מֶלֶךְ חָכָם וַיָּשָׁב עֲלֵיהֶם אִוֶּן:</p>	<p>26 A wise king scatters the wicked, and returns a wheel over them.</p>
---	--

9.3.2. Textual Notes

Verse 8. The LXX renders 8a as ‘ὅταν βασιλεὺς δίκαιος καθίσῃ ἐπὶ θρόνου’. It adds the adjective ‘wise’ to describe the king, but it is already implied within the context in the MT.

Verse 26. The emendation of אִוֶּן (wheel) to אִוֶּנָם (their iniquity) by the BHS because of Psalm 94:23 is unnecessary.³⁷⁹ Moreover, there is no textual evidence for the change among the earlier versions. According to David Freedman, ‘conjectural emendation, whatever their basis or source, are inevitably suspect, and few have survived critical scrutiny’ (Freedman, 1980: 49). For Freedman, emendation is an expression of the state of scholarship at that time

³⁷⁹ One of the reasons why scholars want to emend here is because of the strength and boldness of the metaphor.

(in the past) and there is now a need to seek fresh ways of approaching the text. One of the reasons why scholars want to emend here is because the metaphor is so strong.

9.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 20:8, 26

Verse 8 ends the partial subunit. It reiterates the point that was made in verse 2 about the king's ability to root out evil when he sits on his throne to judge. It 'constitutes a warning' (Heim, 2001: 274) as it emphasises the judicial function of a king. The proverb also implies the hope that a wise king is capable of delivering justice effectively and impartially (Whybray, 1994b: 291). As mentioned earlier, this probably informed the addition of the adjective 'wise' to the king in the LXX (cf. 20:28). The word **מְזַרְה** literally means to scatter or winnow. Its appearance as piel participle masculine absolute expresses the intensification of the action. **מְזַרְה** can also be used as a metaphor to express the process of chastisement or purification. It involves the act of 'separating the good from the bad' (Clifford, 1999: 180) or to 'separate and drive off in various directions' (Waltke, 2005: 134). As we shall see later, the word **מְזַרְה** (scatter) is also used to describe the action of the king in verse 26. Another significant point to note is that the king is so powerful and effective that he can spot and remove evil with his eyes. How can this be possible since **עֵינַי** (eye) refers to whatever he can see or perceive around him? Fox thinks this is psychologically possible through the king's 'penetrating and fear inspiring glance' or through the special application of wisdom (2009: 666). In addition, Heim argues, 'the expression "with his eyes" suggests that his discernment is based solely on observation rather than more aggressive means of interrogation' (2013: 478).

In contrast, Waltke suggests that this is possible with the help of Yahweh, who installed the king as his ‘vice regent’. Therefore, his ability to quickly and keenly discern things is a special gift from God (2005: 133–134). I think it is a combination of both.³⁸⁰ This verse describes how the king scatters the evil ones. What we have here are two mixed metaphors referring to two separate actions. One is about detection and the other is about dispersion. The leader identifies evil (people and activities) with his eyes. Then, he disperses them from his presence.³⁸¹

I now turn my attention to the role of the king in exercising judgment over the wicked in verse 26. מֶלֶךְ חָכָם (a wise king) is the subject of the first and second half-line. He is the one performing both actions. He scatters the wicked and rolls a wheel over them. The repetition of the word מִזְרָה (scatter) in the first half-line of verse 26 in connection with the king and what he does to the wicked is crucial. It shows that verse 26 is a variant repetition of verse 8.³⁸² There is also trans-linear parallelism between verses 8 and 26, as we see the poet taking up his earlier point. In addition, ‘there is a metaphorical, idiomatic, and conceptual connection between ‘winnowing’ and driving a wheel’ (Heim, 2013: 479). Unlike what we encountered in verse 8, the use of the adjective חָכָם (wise) to describe the king suggests that it is only a foolish king who would allow wicked people to spread in his kingdom. The evocative use of the metaphor אֶפֶן (wheel) on the second half-line has been the subject of different scholarly

³⁸⁰ A parallel of Proverbs 20:8 can be found in 25:5. It is hard to find a literal parallelism in this verse (20:8). But as Heim notes, there are some metaphorical connections: The first half-line is partly metaphorical...While it describes quite literally where the king is –he is sitting on the ‘seat of judgment’– his location and posture are symbolic of the activity he is engaged in: he is adjudicating a legal matter. The second half-line then reinforces the first half-line in a grave warning to would-be criminals. The king has the instruments and methods that will enable him to find them out (Heim, 2013: 478).

³⁸¹ This may imply the removal of power structures that support evil from the seat of power.

³⁸² For the variations and similarities between verses 8 and 26, see (Heim, 2013: 480–482).

interpretations. Commentators such as Toy (1977: 395), McKane (1970: 544–545), Alonso Schökel (1984: 392–393) and a host of others in the past, have applied this imagery of a wheel to an agricultural setting. They maintain that the rolling of a wheel breaks the husks, while the wind separates the grain from the chaff.

However, Daniel Snell has challenged this consensus in his 1989 article. He identifies some parallels in three Hittite legal texts, where the imagery of a wheel represents judgment or is an instrument of punishment. According to Snell, ‘the wheel appears to be somehow an instrument of execution or perhaps merely a symbol of authority’ (Snell, 1989: 505). He suggests that there is no connection between Isaiah 28:27 and Proverbs 20:26 on the grounds that the wheel in Proverbs is only used for threshing. He concludes that his interpretation is probable if the Israelite kings also functioned like their Hittite counterparts on judicial matters. Similar to Snell’s analysis is Rabbi Malbim’s view: that the wheel was an instrument of torture to force offenders to confessions (1973: 207). This interpretation has not gained much acceptance among scholars.

Over and against Snell, Majella Franzmann has put forward further evidence supporting the agricultural imagery. Her study of the Ode of Solomon³⁸³ 23:11–16 leads her to suggest that the agricultural setting is more probable than the wheel being an instrument of torture. She cites examples such as the reference to the kingdom, to mowing or reaping and uprooting as the imagery relating to the wheel within the text (Franzmann, 1991: 121–123). Whybray also suggests that it is necessary to go back to the text for clues after surveying the various scholarly proposals. He argues that the verbs and keywords in the verse have connections

³⁸³ The Ode of Solomon is one of the pseudo-epigraphal texts. It was written around AD 100.

with an agricultural setting (1994b: 302–303). Following Whybray, it is safe to conclude that the imagery of the second half-line is a continuation of the first. With this, he has added some insight to our understanding of the wheel.

Clifford, Waltke, Fox and Heim have contributed to the debate sustaining the agricultural imagery. Heim, especially, identifies two metaphors in this verse. He interprets the wheel as a ‘threshing wheel’ and the items being threshed as the ‘entourage of the royal court’. Drawing from a similar metaphorical comparison of humans with different agricultural produce in Isaiah 28:23–29, he maintains that the ‘royal court is envisaged as grain that is firmly encapsulated in the husk in which it grows’ (2013: 479). He concludes:

This image contains two metaphorical equations: grain = positive members of the court and husk = wicked people (sycophants, opportunists, cheaters, etc.). To separate the two, a robust method is needed—namely, the heavy threshing wheel, which is repeatedly rolled over the wheat until the exerted pressure separates the kernel from the husk. Once they are separated, the winnowing process proper can begin and the wicked can be removed from the court (Heim, 2013: 479).³⁸⁴

Of course, Snell has made a valuable contribution to the study of Proverbs 20:26 with his exploration of an alternative way to understand אִוֶּפֶן. His analysis, however, suffers from the following weaknesses: Firstly, most versions and translations to date still render אִוֶּפֶן as a wheel being used for agricultural purposes. Secondly, contrary to Snell’s view, Franzmann’s evidence from the Ode of Solomon 23:11–16 makes the agricultural imagery more plausible. Thirdly, the fact that Snell himself is unclear about the extent of the influence of Hittite texts makes his analysis even more questionable. As Fox notes, the Hittite texts ‘are completely

³⁸⁴ Heim suggests that discernment is envisaged and not punishment. In the knowledge of verse 8 ‘winnowing with eyes’, the king is expected to engage in a repeated action of constant vigilance in verse 26.

obscure’ (2009: 676). Fourthly, Heim has been able to demonstrate that the metaphorical use of agricultural imagery is consistent with Isaiah 28:27–28 (2013: 479). Fifthly, Oded Borowski’s insightful description of the practices and methods of farming in Iron Age Israel also support the agricultural imagery; according to Borowski, the cracking of the husk takes place as the animal draws the two heavy wheels with the frame over the grain (Borowski, 1987: 65). Therefore, we agree with Waltke that the wheel ‘depicts the sharp and vigorous separation of the godless, not torture’ (2005: 157). As Fox notes, ‘there is no evidence for judicial torture in Israel’ (Fox, 2009: 676); neither is the wheel used for a similar purpose elsewhere.

I support the view that **גָּלָל** (wheel) figuratively refers to the process of separating the good servants from the evildoers by the king. It is not ‘a metaphor for punishment and destruction’ (Fox, 2009: 676). This proverb is applicable to courtiers serving at the royal court as well as the larger population because it constitutes a warning on what the king can do. It also challenges wise and righteous leaders to remove sycophants and corrupt officials before they destroy their administration. In a modern democracy, this can happen through cabinet reshuffle or the dismissal and appointment of staff.

9.3.4. What Can We Learn?

The verses under investigation state that the intervention of the king is required for the removal of all evil people (verse 8b). They encourage leaders to see themselves as agents of justice who have been ‘commissioned and equipped by divine decree’ (Heim, 2013: 481) to root out all evil. Therefore, they should develop the skills of discernment to identify those officials who are negative influence around the seat of power. They should also demonstrate

their wisdom and righteousness by boldly removing wicked officials from their presence.³⁸⁵

9.4. The Consequence of Disobedience in Leadership (29:1)

9.4.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 29:1

אִישׁ תּוֹכַחֹת מִקְּשָׁה-עֶרְךָ	1	A man who is reproved yet stiff-necked,
פֶּתַע יִשָּׁבֵר וְאֵין מְרַפָּא :		suddenly will be broken and without remedy.

9.4.2. Textual Note

Verse 1a. The translation of the first half-line as a better than proverb in the LXX is not necessary because the MT does not have מֵן and טוֹב.³⁸⁶

9.4.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 29:1

Proverbs 29: 1 is about the consequences of disobedience. תּוֹכַחֹת (reproof)³⁸⁷ is essential to the meaning of the first half-line of verse 1. The root of this word is connected to wisdom instruction and legal settings. It appears 26 times in Proverbs out of a total of 87 occurrences in the Hebrew Bible. In some contexts, תּוֹכַחֹת means to call someone to account. Its use has been broadened to mean correct, reprove and rebuke. What it means in this verse is ‘a reproved man’ or ‘someone who has experienced reproof’ (HALOT, 4: 1699). The interpretation of the phrase אִישׁ תּוֹכַחֹת (man of reproof) is difficult. It may be used to describe the one doing the action (subject) or receiving the action (object). However, the

³⁸⁵ In other words, competent leaders will remove the wicked before being influenced by them; they will not allow wickedness to spread.

³⁸⁶ It reads, ‘κρείσσων ἀνὴρ ἐλέγχων ἀνδρὸς σαληροτραχίλου’ (better a man who reproves than a stiff-necked man.)

³⁸⁷ A similar idea can be found in Proverbs 12:1 and 15:10.

phrase **מִקְשָׁה-עֶרְךָ** (stiff-neck) allows me to interpret it as objective genitive. The hiphil participle masculine singular absolute also shows that he is doing the action on himself. According to Longman, **מִקְשָׁה-עֶרְךָ** is an idiomatic expression that means ‘extremely stubborn’ (Longman, 2006: 499). The Targum captures the nuances of the clause when it renders it as ‘a man who does not accept chastisement’. It shows the ‘figure of one who defies authority’ (Waltke, 2005: 430).

The verb **שָׁבַר** (broken), in the second half-line, carries the sense of a grain being ‘threshed’ or someone being ‘shattered’ or ‘destroyed’ (HALOT, 4: 1403). Waltke thinks the phrase **אֵין מִרְפָּא** (without remedy)³⁸⁸ implies that there is no solution ‘when the door of opportunity to repent finally shuts, probably at death’ (2005: 430). It will be impossible to consider a reversal.³⁸⁹ A more plausible way to understand this proverb in the context of leadership is that when a leader is removed he cannot return to the position. This verse focuses on the consequences of not listening to constructive criticism. It cautions a wise leader to listen attentively and work on the excesses of his government before any situation gets out of control.³⁹⁰ A case can be made that this saying is about leadership within the wider aim of Proverbs (which is to teach the youth).

9.4.4. What Can We Learn?

We have seen that the failure of leaders to listen to advice will lead to their destruction

³⁸⁸ The positive use of **מִרְפָּא** is medicinal (HALOT, 2: 638).

³⁸⁹ The man who is stiff-necked will have his neck broken by other people or by circumstances surrounding his stupidity. A similar proverb can be found in Proverbs 6:15b.

³⁹⁰ Leaders should not make themselves stiff-necked. They should remain open to correction and develop the attitude to learn.

without remedy. Tolerance or involvement in corruption will pave the way for their downfall. The proverb teaches leaders to surround themselves with wise advisers and to be willing to ask for help.

9.5. The Effect of Corruption on Leadership (29:4)

9.5.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 29:4

מֶלֶךְ בְּמִשְׁפָּט יַעֲמִיד אֶרֶץ וְאִישׁ תְּרוּמוֹת יִהְרָסֶנָּה :	4	A king with justice builds the land, but someone who makes heavy demands ruins it.
---	---	---

9.5.2. Textual Note

Verse 4b. תְּרוּמוֹת literally means a cultic offering or contribution. The use of this word in Proverbs has puzzled scholars and various proposals have been put forward for it, as will be seen later.

9.5.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 29:4,

The meaning of תְּרוּמוֹת in Proverbs 29:4 has been hugely debated by scholars. The word is from תְּרוּמָה and is generally used to describe cultic contribution and offerings in Leviticus 10:12–13 and Numbers 18:8–19 (HALOT, 4: 1789–1790). It is, however, difficult to follow a cultic idea in this verse, because the context is about leadership. Apart from Fox and a few scholars who have translated the word תְּרוּמוֹת as ‘man of deceit’, most commentators relate it to taxes. Fox, especially, insists that there is no evidence within the text to suggest it refers to taxes. He argues for the possibility of a scribal corruption in the verse. Instead, he proposes an emendation so that it could mean ‘man of deceit’. He concludes that ‘in parallel to the

king' in the first-half line, 'the deceitful man is a deceitful ruler' because he is the only one who can 'undermine the realm of his corruption' (Fox, 2009: 835). The difficulty with this interpretation is that תְּרוֹמוֹת has to be emended before a parallelism can be possible.

In contrast, I would argue that the emendation is unnecessary. Longman suggests that the phrase אִישׁ תְּרוֹמוֹת (man of tribute) 'is a person whose influence and motivation are defined by taxes' (Longman, 2006: 502). Clifford refers to it as 'confiscatory taxes'. He maintains that 'the metaphor of high and low for prosperity and decline is employed to differentiate between good and bad governance' (Clifford, 1999: 250). This may include heavy and unjust taxation on the citizens. In addition, Waltke posits that 'the cultic term is probably a metaphor for bribes, blackmail, and all sorts of ill-gotten money' (Waltke, 2005: 433). Van Leeuwen even opts for a middle ground when he argues that תְּרוֹמוֹת refers to 'the government's misuse of income (perhaps intended for the sanctuary) in a way that compromises its responsibility to do justice' (1997: 242).

I agree with the interpretations of Longman, Clifford, Waltke and van Leeuwen because they reveal the strategies of corrupt leaders who love to enrich themselves and impoverish their subjects. In other words, the problem is not tax collection, but its use for corruption. Fox is correct that there is no evidence of a cultic contribution in the text but there is also no evidence of scribal corruption within the text. My translation of תְּרוֹמוֹת as 'heavy demands' offers a more plausible alternative. The parallelism in this verse reveals the contrast. מִשְׁפָּט (justice) is parallel to תְּרוֹמוֹת (heavy demands), while יִעֲמִיד (stability) is parallel to יְהָרֵסָנָה (ruins).

9.5.4. What Can We Learn?

One of the easiest ways by which many leaders around the world enrich themselves is through corruption. They should discharge their responsibility to the poor by defending their rights. They should ensure a fair tax system and avoid heavy demands.

9.6. Counterpoint and Conclusion

On the basis of our analysis of leadership actions in Proverbs, the profile of a good leader includes the avoidance of anger, recognition of the positive and negative use of bribes, avoidance of corruption, confidence, maturity, showing kindness, pursuing righteousness and removing evil from one's presence.

However, there is a plurality of ideas about the actions of leaders in Proverbs. Some proverbs recommend the pragmatic use of bribery (17:8 18:16; 19:6; 21:14) while others condemn it as detestable to Yahweh (15:27; 17:23). Proverbs teaches that leaders should be people of integrity (28:6–7), but it is interesting that it also affirms bribery.³⁹¹ This may mean that sometimes pragmatism overrules integrity and sometimes it is a way to make things work. Following Hatton, we can respond to the complexity by allowing a dialogue between the proverbs that express positive and negative views of bribes (2008:144–148).

³⁹¹ I observed earlier that there are more verses that justify bribery in the book of Proverbs (only two verses are against it). This leads to the question of what it is about the ethics of the book of Proverbs that makes bribery acceptable. Our analysis shows that bribery is justified on one occasion but is not justified on another. It is a pragmatic book that says if there is an obstacle in your way that is very important, it is acceptable to use bribery if really necessary.

Another tension that can be seen about leadership actions in Proverbs is about anger management. Some proverbs describe the anger of a king as uncontrollable (16:14; 20:2) while others analyse the contrast between the anger and favour of a leader (14:35; 19:12). Proverbs 23:1–3 states that the actions of kings are unpredictable, but 14:35 predicts positive action towards the wise and humble courtiers (cf. 22:11). Proverbs 20:8 and 26 instruct leaders to remove the wicked from their presence. In contrast, 24:21–22 states that no one knows when the king will act and, by implication, the wicked may be tolerated for a while. When these proverbs are read together with nuance, they may point to the use of anger and favour as instruments of effective leadership.³⁹²

³⁹² ‘A fool expresses all his rage, but the wise will hold it back’ (Prov 29:11).

CHAPTER 10

THE COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO LEADERS IN PROVERBS

We now turn our attention to the proverbs that address the community's response to leaders in the book of Proverbs.

10.1. The Danger of Plotting Against Leaders (Proverbs 24:21–22)

10.1.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 24:21–22

יִרְאֵת אֶת־יְהוָה בְּנִי וּמֶלֶךְ עִם־שׁוֹנִים אַל־תִּתְּעָרֵב׃	21	My son, fear the Lord and the king, ³⁹³ with those who change do not join.
כִּי־פֶתְאֵם יָקוּם אֹיְבָם וּפִיד שְׁנֵיהֶם מִי יוֹדֵעַ׃	22	For suddenly shall arise their disasters, and who knows the ruin both can bring? ³⁹⁴

10.1.2. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 24:21–22

In Hebrew, the most important thing often comes first. Verse 21 begins with יִרְאֵת (fear). The qal imperative masculine singular verb means 'to tremble for' or 'to honour' (HALOT, 2:433). בְּנִי (son) is the subject and the one doing the action. The direct object marker אֶת shows that the Lord and the king are to receive the action. The first half-line amplifies the close relationship between the Lord and the king but it displays the line of hierarchy being followed: God comes first and then the king (a human leader).

³⁹³ Longman thinks that this 'proverb presumes a godly king who would reflect God's kingship'. (Longman, 2009: 441).

³⁹⁴ For a comprehensive analysis of the different emendations that have been proposed for this by previous scholarship, see (McKane, 1970: 406).

The second half-line is difficult. The meaning of the word שׁוֹנִים especially has been the subject of scholarly debate. The verb qal participle masculine plural absolute means to change or ‘to be different from’. It can also mean ‘those who think differently’ (HALOT, 4:1598). From a broader perspective, שׁוֹנִים may include detractors, political agitators, discontents and those who have a different mind against Yahweh and the king (Toy, 1977: 450). Most scholars think that שְׁנִיתִי is from the root שָׁנָה. However, Ryan Stokes, in his analysis of Malachi 3:6, proposes that ‘if one merely reads the שׁ in שְׁנִיתִי as a sin rather than as a shin, the word becomes the qal perfect שָׁנָא “to hate”’ (Stokes, 2008: 268). For Stokes, it is a matter of שָׁנָא being mistaken for שָׁנָה. He suggests that if this is accepted as a solution to the difficulty in Malachi 3:6, it could shed some light on the interpretation of Lamentations 4:1 and Proverbs 24:21–22. On Proverbs 24:21–22, he identifies the translation of שׁוֹנִים as the major problem of this verse. He asks, ‘who are these “changers” and what do they have to do with fearing Yhwh and the king?’ He notes that the translations put forward by the LXX, KJV, NIV, NASB, NAB, RSV and NRSV ‘have no lexical basis’ (2008: 272). He concludes that שׁוֹנִים is a qal participle of שָׁנָא meaning ‘one who hates’ or an ‘enemy’.

Stokes translates Proverbs 24:21–22 as ‘Fear Yahweh, my son, and the king; with enemies do not associate. For their disaster will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin of their enemies?’ This translation is not without its problems. The fact that a third person masculine plural pronominal suffix is missing raises more questions for Stokes. Another problem is that his translation does not link well with שְׁנֵיהֶם (both of them) in the next verse. Above all, Stokes’ interpretation has not gained acceptance among scholars.

Another word that influences the second half-line is **תִּתְּעָרֵב**. In its hitpa'el form it means to 'join', 'to get involved with someone', 'to be mixed up with', 'to combine with' or 'to interfere' (HALOT, 2: 877). Commentators differ in their translation of verse 21b. Fox, following the LXX '**καὶ μηθετέρῳ αὐτῶν ἀπειθήσης**,' translates it as 'do not anger either of them' (2009: 751). Toy, following the MT, renders it as 'and with those who change have naught to do' (1977: 449). Waltke, on the basis of the difficulty of **שׁוֹנִים**, opts for 'with (intriguing) officials do not get involved' (2005:279). Longman translates it as 'don't associate with those who rebel' (2006: 440). Murphy agrees that this translation is possible, but he quickly concedes that 'there are uncertainties' (1988: 180) concerning how **שׁוֹנִים** should be understood. Longman and Murphy's translations help our discussion of leadership but require some caution due to the uncertainty surrounding the use of **שׁוֹנִים**.

My translation stands by the MT. It makes sense in its final form without emendation or reading too much into it.³⁹⁵ This proverb is an instruction for the son to always be on the side of Yahweh and the king. Its main point is that he must recognise the extent of their powers. According to Clifford, this kind of sentiment is common in Egyptian wisdom writings. People are expected to accept the reality of their situation and not make any attempt to change it.³⁹⁶ Then, they must 'stay away from dissidents who will suffer royal and divine wrath' (Clifford, 1999: 216).

³⁹⁵ 'My son, fear the Lord and the king; with those who change do not join'. It seems to me that the LXX is not helpful on this occasion.

³⁹⁶ It must be pointed out that this kind of approach is not acceptable in modern society, where everyone is free to aspire to break social barriers and to rise to their desired level in life.

Verse 22 is a continuation from the previous verse. The adverb פְּתָאִם (suddenly or surprisingly) describes the speed of the actions of Yahweh and the king. They cannot be predicted. They can react quickly ‘in no time at all, in a flash, really as quick as the blink of an eye’ (HALOT, 3: 984). Clifford thinks, ‘what takes place “suddenly” or “who knows when” is by definition abnormal and perhaps of divine origin’. He also notes that the idea of ‘juxtaposing God and king is unusual in biblical literature’ (1999: 216). However, the appearance of אֲיָרָם (calamity or disaster) in construct form suggests otherwise. In addition, the third plural masculine suffix at the end of the word presents it as a combination of disaster coming from both the Lord and the king.

The second half-line begins with פִּיֹּד, meaning ‘misfortune’, ‘distress’ or ‘disaster’ (HALOT, 3: 925). It offers a rhetorical question for the reader with the phrase מִי יוֹדֵעַ (who knows). Crenshaw identifies ten occurrences of this phrase in the Hebrew Bible. Five of them give room for the possibility of a happy ending, while the remaining five point to a dead-end situation (Crenshaw, 1986: 274–288). According to Waltke, Proverbs 24:22 belongs to the latter category. Hence, this phrase, ‘close the door to any redeeming situation’ (Waltke, 2005: 288). The root of the word יוֹדֵעַ is nuanced with different meanings. This verb qal participle masculine singular absolute means to know something ‘by observation and reflection’ (HALOT, 2: 391). Two things cannot be predicted in this verse: the first is the timing of the disaster; the second is the extent of the crushing.³⁹⁷ Murphy identifies one important comparison between the Lord and the king. He notes that neither of them is predictable

³⁹⁷ In other words, it is hard for the one facing their wrath to determine the fate that awaits (see 2 Sam 18:7, 8; 20:1, 2, 22; 1 Kgs 2:22–46; Eccl 8:2–5).

(Murphy, 1998: 182). It is hard to predict their actions when there is evidence of rebellion or any activity that could interrupt their governance. Therefore, anyone caught plotting against them should be afraid because of the possible punishment they would impose (ranging from suspension, demotion, imprisonment to even death).³⁹⁸ McKane succinctly sums it up:

Noblemen who are not above intrigue, and who plot to undermine the regime because they are greedy for power, play a dangerous game for high stakes and expose themselves to the sudden onset of disaster. They are bad risks, for calamity overtakes them in mysterious circumstances which defy rational analysis, and the course of their careers is dangerously unpredictable' (1970: 406).

Waltke finds two reasons for the admonitions in verse 22. The pronoun 'their' and 'the two of them' show that 'both the Lord and the king will inflict on intriguing nobles disaster that is so certain, sudden, and extensive that no one knows its limits' (Waltke, 2005: 286). Waltke identifies the king as the Lord's regent in the world saddled with the responsibility of effecting his rule and upholding his principle of retribution. He also points out that 'the identification of the king with the Lord shows that the sage regarded the king's throne on earth as the legitimate representation of God's throne in heaven'. In this case, the king is presented as 'the guarantor of social order' (Waltke, 2005: 287). Therefore, the son's reference to the Lord and the king would automatically make getting involved with

³⁹⁸ The Syriac and Targum render **שְׁנֵי יָמָיו** as 'their years' instead of 'both of them'. Toy suggests that 'who can know the destruction of their years' 'is unnatural in the OT' (1977: 450). But McKane thinks this could possibly mean 'who knows when their life will be cut off?' (1970: 406). The LXX added five more verses (eleven lines) after 24:21–22 with special focus on the king's power and responsibilities (22a. **λόγον φυλασσόμενος υἱὸς ἀπωλείας ἐκτὸς ἔσται, δεχόμενος δὲ ἐδέξατο αὐτόν.** 22b. **μηδὲν ψεύδος ἀπὸ γλώσσης βασιλεῖ λεγέσθω, καὶ οὐδὲν ψεύδος ἀπὸ γλώσσης αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ ἐξέλθῃ.** 22c. **μάχαιρα γλώσσα βασιλέως καὶ οὐ σαρκίνη, ὅς δ' ἂν παραδοθῇ, συντριβήσεται.** 22d. **ἐὰν γὰρ ὀξυνθῇ ὁ θυμὸς αὐτοῦ, σὺν νεύροις ἀνθρώπους ἀναλίσκει.** 22e. **καὶ ὅσῃ ἀνθρώπων κατατρώγει καὶ συγκαίει ὥσπερ φλόξ ὥστε ἄβρωτα εἶναι νεοσσοῖς ἀετῶν).** However, this did not appear in the MT and Syriac (Fox, 2009: 1039–1040). According to McKane, additional text in the LXX can be found at the end of the section, because it is the natural place to insert further explanation (1970: 308ff, 406).

disgruntled nobles unattractive.³⁹⁹

10.1.3. What Can We Learn?

Verses 21 and 22 highlight the consequences of conspiring against the king. It encourages its readers to show respect and loyalty to the king and Yahweh. The word שְׁנֵיהֶם (both of them) in the second half-line is compelling. The repetition of the third plural masculine suffix הֶם, along with the adjective masculine dual construct שְׁנֵי (two) refers back to the Lord and king in verse 21. There is also intra-linear parallelism between אִידָם (disaster) and פִּיר (ruin), which links well with verse 21. Most commentators agree that 24:21–22 stands together as a proverb pair, and it could yield great results if interpreted that way. Although it has technical and interpretive difficulties, it still conveys a clear message. It is necessary to demonstrate ‘obedience to God as supreme religious authority, and to the king as supreme civil authority’ (Toy, 1977: 450). Any act of disobedience or rebellion attracts punishment.

10.2. The Contrast Between the Righteous and Wicked Leaders (Proverbs 28:1–3, 16)

10.2.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:1–3, 16

1	נָסוּ וְאִין־רֹדֶף רָשָׁע וְצַדִּיקִים כַּכֶּפִּיר יִבְטָח:	1	The wicked fled while there is no pursuer, but the righteous are as confident as a lion.
2	בַּפֶּשַׁע אֶרֶץ רַבִּים שָׂרִיָּה וּבְאֵדָם מִבֵּין יָדַע כֵּן יֵאָרִיךְ:	2	For the transgression of a land, its princes are many, but through an understanding man honesty endures.
3	גֹּבֵר רָשָׁע וְעַשֵּׂק דֹּלִים מִטֶּר סַחַף וְאִין לֶחֶם:	3	A strong poor man who oppresses the weaker poor: a torrential rain and without grain for bread.
16	נָגִיד חֲסֵר תְּבוּנוֹת וְרַב מַעֲשָׂקוֹת	16	A ruler who lacks understanding, and much

³⁹⁹ He notes that similar passages in the book of Proverbs include 14:35; 16:10–15; 19:12; 20:2, 8; 22:11; 25:2–5.

שְׁנַיִי [שֵׁנָא] בְּצַע יֶאֱרִיךְ יָמָיו : oppression;
he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.

10.2.2. Textual Notes

Verse 1. Murphy supports Fichtner's argument that the use of נִסְרִי in the plural form instead of the singular is evidence of dittography in the verse. However, the LXX reads it as singular (Murphy, 1998: 212).

Verse 2. The LXX renders this verse as δι' ἁμαρτίας ἀσεβῶν κρίσεις ἐγείρονται, ἀνὴρ δὲ πανοῦργος κατασβέσει αὐτάς (because of the sins of the wicked disputes arise, but an intelligent person will extinguish them). I, however, follow the MT in this translation because it retains the ambiguity and helps readers to think deeply.

Verse 3. The idea of the poor oppressing the poor has puzzled scholars. McKane has proposed the emendation of שֶׁרֵץ (poor) to רֹאשׁ (chief or principal) for the verse to make sense (McKane, 1970: 628–629). The NIV and NRSV interestingly support this view by translating שֶׁרֵץ as 'a ruler'. It must be pointed out that this emendation tends to further support my argument in this thesis. However, I think the emendation is unnecessary because we can resolve the verse without it.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, גִּבּוֹר sometimes has a nuance of a 'strong man' (HALOT, 1: 175).

Verse 16. Murphy follows the LXX translation of תְּבוּנוֹת (understandings) as 'revenues'. I

⁴⁰⁰ There has been minimal support for McKane's proposed emendation. Hence, I stand by the MT.

have followed the MT in this translation, because it still makes sense without making changes.

10.2.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:1–3, 16

The poem is introduced by a contrast between רָשָׁע (wicked) and צַדִּיק (righteous). This contrast appears to be implied throughout this chapter. In verse 1, the poet observes that the wicked have the tendency to run without anyone pursuing. רָשָׁע is the subject of the verb נָסוּ. The word נָסוּ (fled) is a qal perfect verb, which suggests that the action has taken place. רָדַף (pursue) can also be a metaphor to describe the attitude of the unjust person. The flight of the wicked could be the result of a ‘guilty conscience and awareness that many enemies have been made’ (Garrett, 1993: 221). The wicked may also have become fearful and paranoid because of legal punishment by a higher authority or for other personal reasons. In contrast, the righteous people are fearless and bold like lions. Waltke calls it ‘the psychological insecurity of the wicked with the psychological confidence of the righteous’ (2005: 406). Thus, the verb ‘flee’ in the first half-line is parallel to ‘confidence’ in the second half-line. The imagery of a lion here is also very impressive. The poet uses the figurative expression to describe the righteous as fearless.⁴⁰¹ The emblem of a lion may be a symbol for leadership.

A thorough analysis of verse 2⁴⁰² is necessary for this study. פְּשָׁע (transgression) includes criminal actions and wrongdoings that can ‘break relationships within the community and with God’ (HALOT, 3: 981). The identity of the פְּשָׁע is ambiguous. Is it the leader who

⁴⁰¹ ‘The comparison implies that they are well prepared to take care of any assault that comes their way’ (Longman, 2006: 487).

⁴⁰² There is a strong transition between verse 1 and 2 because courage links the two verses together.

transgresses and thereby creates opposition or the lack of understanding of the leader that allows other people to transgress (in the second half-line)? In my view, it could be both ways. **שָׂר** is an official ‘representative of the king’, as well as ‘a group or district leader’. It is also used for ‘a higher being,’ or ‘a guardian angel’ (HALOT, 3: 1351–1352). The earlier description fits this context. It appears to be a reference to reckless and wicked administrators in the land. As Longman notes, the presence of oppression in the land will lead to the ‘proliferation of leaders’. The end result will be rebellion, national insecurity and instability. ‘The many leaders may point to the fragmentation of a previously united land or perhaps to a succession of leaders as they violently jockey for power’ (Longman, 2006: 487).

In contrast, an understanding leader will rule over a united country where there is peace, security and stability. According to Goldberg, **בִּיָּן** (understanding) ‘refers to knowledge which is superior to mere gathering of data’. Similarly, it is ‘a power of judgment and perceptive insight and is demonstrated in the use of knowledge’ (Goldberg, 1980: 103). In other words, there will be stability of governance when a good or competent ruler is in charge but there will be regular changes of government and instability when oppressors are in power. The addressee of this proverb is expected to uphold what is right ‘and not tolerate legal offenses either in himself or in his subjects’ (Waltke, 2005: 407)⁴⁰³ in order to continue in office. He should rigorously fight against social corruption.

Verse 3 is arguably the most difficult in this section, with the idea of the **רָשָׁע** (poor) oppressing the **דִּלְיִים** (poor) in the first half-line. **עָשָׂק** (oppress) may include brutal oppression,

⁴⁰³ In modern democracy, leaders that are voted into power are expected to lead by example and stand against social corruption and injustice.

exploitation and extortion of ‘a debtor unable to pay’ or ‘a weaker party in a business contract’ (HALOT, 2: 897). There are different scholarly views on how this verse should be understood. Crawford Toy proposes a change of vowel in the first half-line and translates it as ‘a wicked ruler who oppresses the poor’. He finds evidence for this in verse 15 of the same chapter (Toy, 1977: 496). McKane goes so far as to emend רָשׁ (poor) to רֹאשׁ (chief or principal) (McKane, 1970: 628–629). The NIV and NRSV translators opt for this translation. On the contrary, Murphy, Waltke and Fox stand by the MT by translating it as ‘the destitute’ and the ‘poor’. Following these scholars, I think the emendation is unnecessary because גִּבּוֹר can also mean a ‘strong man’ (HALOT, 1: 175). Murphy, especially, suggests that the poor mentioned here were ‘formerly poor’ but they refused to sympathise with the poor after getting their wealth (1998: 214). This view may be plausible, but its weakness is that it lacks any evidence within the text. I would rather suggest that this is further evidence of the use of deliberate ambiguities by the wisdom writers (cf. 16:12; 25:2; 29:9 etc).

It may be difficult for most North American and European biblical scholars to capture the nuances of this proverb.⁴⁰⁴ In contrast to Murphy’s interpretation, I would argue that the poet wants us to see the irony. Following Heim, the ‘skilful poetic creativity’ of this verse can be determined through the ‘interpreter’s imagination’ (Heim, 2013: 640). As an African reader and interpreter, I know that it is possible for the poor to oppress the poor. The poor are able to oppress others because there is bribery and lawlessness in the land. The leaders who are supposed to be instruments of justice may have ignored the situation because they are benefiting from it (cf. verse 2). In Africa and other Third World countries where people live

⁴⁰⁴ It is unthinkable for modern Western scholars like Murphy to conceive of the poor oppressing the poor.

in serious poverty, the poor often oppress other poor people for their own survival.⁴⁰⁵

There appears to be a difference between רָשׁ and דָּל, but most English translations use ‘poor’ for both. דָּלִים (poor) are the lowly, helpless, powerless and insignificant groups of society. The word emphasises the level of helplessness that goes with poverty. It may also be a reference to those who are weak socially, ethnically, economically, politically and spiritually. Whybray, in his study of poverty in Proverbs, shows that the wisdom writers made use of the different terms to express their message. He finds different instances in the Hebrew Bible when poverty has different meanings.⁴⁰⁶ Similarly, Domeris notes that:

Where Western thinking stresses the economic aspect of poverty, the Ancient Near East understood poverty in the context of shame and honour. So the possession of land, power, economic security, and social status made a person rich, and the absence of these facts made a person poor (Domeris, 1997: 226).

Generally, the main words used for the poor in the Old Testament are עָנִי, דָּל, and אֲבִיּוֹן which Ernest Bammel suggests are synonyms. He points out that the use of רָשׁ for the poor is very common in the wisdom writings. Another word with a similar meaning is מְסֻכֵּן, which he thinks means the ‘dependent’ or ‘socially inferior’. He concludes that there are usually distinctions when two of these words are used together in the same verse (Bammel, 1968: 888–889).

Therefore, as the rain sweeps away the crops in the natural world, so it is when a strong poor

⁴⁰⁵ For example, some individuals earn their living as political thugs in Nigeria. If the agrarian world of the wisdom writer is closer to the situation in Africa, then the interpretation I have offered is likely.

⁴⁰⁶ For example, David hyperbolically referred to himself as poor in 1 Samuel 18:32. See Whybray, (1990a: 15–19) for a critical analysis of the different uses of the word poor in the Bible including its hyperbolic usage.

person oppresses the weak poor. Clifford suggests that this proverb should be understood in the light of ‘tax-farming’ (Clifford, 1999: 243). Another possibility is to interpret it within the context of a lower leader (administrators or civil servants) oppressing the citizens during the execution of their duties. Waltke sums it up in the following words:

The imprecise parallelism suggests that the competent man is starving because the tyrant, probably through corrupt courts, has plundered the food he produced; ironically, both the rain and the ruler were expected to nurture and promote what is good and strong (cf. Ps. 72:6), but the betrayers brought ruin and squalor instead (Waltke, 2005: 409).⁴⁰⁷

נָגִיד (ruler, prince or leader) in verse 16 appears only once in the book of Proverbs.⁴⁰⁸ It was used to designate ‘a military commander’ or ‘palace official’ in ancient Phoenicia and Aram respectively. According to Kenneth Aitken, the word could mean a tribal chief, military commander, palace official or temple official, as well as a king, throughout the OT (Aitken, 1996: 21). Thus, when a leader lacks understanding he resorts to oppressing or exploiting his people. מַעֲשֵׂקוֹת is a noun common plural absolute of the root עֲשָׂק (oppression or exploitation). In contrast, those who hate unrighteous gain will prolong their days.⁴⁰⁹ שָׂנֵא (hate) ‘may simply express the most intense hatred of the enemies of God (Ps 139:21–22), or that of a violent enemy (25:19), but it may simply express that which is to be avoided’ (Konkel, 1996b: 1257). The latter fits well in this context.

10.2.4. What Can We Learn?

These proverbs reveal the characteristics of righteous leaders for the recognition of their followers. Righteous leaders are confident, considerate and execute their business with

⁴⁰⁷ Following our contextual interpretation, all these are the consequences of verse of verse 2.

⁴⁰⁸ See Waltke, (2005: 420–421) for a comprehensive discussion on the different uses of the word נָגִיד.

⁴⁰⁹ They are able to prolong their days in their leadership role through selfless service.

honesty, but wicked leaders are insecure, fearful, oppressive and lack understanding.

10.3. The Response of the Community to Good and Bad Leadership (Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16)

10.3.1. Text and Translation of Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16

Proverbs 28:12, 28

בְּעֹלָץ צְדִיקִים רָבָה תִּפְאָרֶת וּבְקוֹם רָשָׁעִים יִחְפֹּשׂ אָדָם:	12	When the righteous triumph, great is glory, but when the wicked arise, people hide.
בְּקוֹם רָשָׁעִים יִסְתֵּר אָדָם וּבִאֲבָדָם יִרְבוּ צְדִיקִים:	28	When the wicked arise, people hide; but when they perish, the righteous increase.

Proverbs 29:2, 16

בְּרַבּוֹת צְדִיקִים יִשְׂמַח הָעָם וּבִמְשָׁל רָשָׁע יֵאָנַח עָם:	2	When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rules, the people groan.
בְּרַבּוֹת רָשָׁעִים יִרְבֶּה-פֶּשַׁע צְדִיקִים בְּמַפְלֹתָם יֵרְאוּ:	16	When the wicked increase, transgression increases, but the righteous will see their downfall.

10.3.2. Textual Note

Proverbs 29:2. Toy suggests the emendation of בְּרַבּוֹת in the first line so that it could mean ‘rule’ (Toy, 1977: 507). He argues that this will add weight to the meaning of the second half-line and allow the parallelism to flow. The KJV, REB and NRSV translators also emend

בְּרִבּוֹת to mean ‘authority or power’ (Waltke, 2005: 399). However, I think the parallelism flows without the emendation. In addition, the word רָשָׁע in the second half-line is singular, but it carries a collective sense.

10.3.3. Exegetical Analysis of Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16

A similar proverb to 28:12 can be found in 28:28, 29:2 and 29:16. A number of commentators, including Murphy, Waltke, Fox and Heim, have highlighted the variant repetition of some phrases and catchwords in these verses. Heim suggests that they ‘are so similar that they shed further light on the similarities and variations’ (Heim, 2013: 603–604). עָלָי (triumph) in 28:12 means ‘exult or rejoice’ (HALOT, 2: 837). Millard observes that, whenever this word occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it has ‘a context of victory, a victory won or to be won by God, giving his people liberty to rejoice’ (Millard, 1975: 88). It may therefore refer to the ascension of a good leader. This beneficial social situation then transforms to תִּפְאָרָה (glory) for the subjects. John Collins notes that this word תִּפְאָרָה can be used in different ways: the first is beauty or adornment; the second is glory and dignity; the third is glorying, boasting or glory, as in the divine presence (Collins, 1996b: 573). I follow Clifford’s idea that it implies the ‘public celebration’ at the enthronement of a king (Clifford, 1999: 245) because it fits this context. A similar proverb is repeated in verse 28. ‘The imprecise parallelism implies that when the righteous increase in number and power, the people come out of their hiding’ (Waltke, 2005: 429).

In contrast to the first half-line, the second half-line and the first half-line of verse 28 capture the response of the people to bad leadership. The people respond by hiding themselves when a

wicked leader rises to a position of authority. The idea of ‘hiding’ and ‘coming out’ in this verse is both literal and metaphorical in the context of power and leadership.⁴¹⁰ To come out metaphorically mean to flourish, develop and make progress in society. This can be understood in the light of public values and how it shapes attitudes and actions of the population by giving them a sense of identity. To hide, on the other hand, could mean to pretend or hide their true character. What does it mean for the righteous to rise or increase (קום) and the wicked to perish (אבד) in verse 28? To increase could metaphorically mean they increase in confidence and influence because the people want to serve under the righteous. To perish could mean reduction in the influence of the wicked or being removed from office. קום (rise up) may function idiomatically as to ‘begin to do something’ or ‘rise up, sit enthroned’ (Martens, 1996: 903). Therefore, עֲלֵךְ in the first half-line is parallel to קום in the second half-line.

Fox notes that this proverb can be directed to both the king and the subjects. It may be used to challenge the king to carefully appoint honest administrators and judges to carry out the affairs of his government in order to avoid the political embarrassment of people withdrawing in fear. On the other hand, it may be an instruction to the people to hide away whenever wicked rulers are in power (Fox, 2009: 832–833). In my opinion, the earlier interpretation is better, because it supports the overarching idea of the chapter. There is evidence of trans-linear parallelism in 28:12 and 28. We can see the authors or editors going back to an earlier reference to the community’s response to good and bad leadership.

⁴¹⁰ An example of people hiding in modern political situations is when people leave their countries and go into self-exile in order to avoid oppressive governments. As I mentioned in chapter 1, the political situation in Libya, Iraq, Syria and other countries has led to the influx of migrants into Europe in the face of persecution. An example of people coming out is when they choose to return (from self-exile) to their countries after a change of government.

Proverbs 29:2 focuses on the consequences of good and bad leadership for the citizens. As mentioned earlier, the language and thought of this proverb is parallel to 28:12, 28:28 and 29:16. Verse 2 shows the response of the citizens to the leadership of good and wicked rulers. The parallelism reveals the contrast between their reactions. As Longman notes, the people ‘rejoice when the righteous are in control because they will lead the community with wisdom and with justice’. This brings prosperity to the community. However, the people moan when the wicked are in power because they will make ‘foolish decisions’ and ‘exploit the people’ (Longman, 2006: 501). Heim notes that the phrase ‘people rejoice’ ‘envision[s] the emotions that would accompany the well-being and high social status that righteous people would have in a just society’ (2013: 594).⁴¹¹

There is a parallelism between שִׂמְחָה (rejoice) and אֲנָחָה (groan). שִׂמְחָה ‘often refers to the expression of an emotion and not just the inner feeling’ (Clifford, 1999: 250). It also implies to rejoice arrogantly or satisfactorily as a result of one’s current experience. Waltke suggests that the ‘flourishing righteous are magistrates who serve their subjects and do not abuse their power to serve themselves’ (2005: 431). אֲנָחָה, on the other hand, describes the physical distress of the people when they groan outwardly. This proverb calls on leaders to be self-critical of how their policies impact on the citizens when they are in positions of authority.⁴¹²

The antithetical proverb in 29:16 returns to the idea already expressed in 28:12, 28 and 29:2.

⁴¹¹ It describes the ‘open celebrations of justice and happiness that might accompany the liberation of an oppressed society’ (Longman, 2013: 594).

⁴¹² ‘Proverbs 29:2 needs to be interpreted in the context of a future ruler’s preparation for government. This person is encouraged to foster the spread of virtue throughout the population in order to bring contentment to the country’s citizens’ (Heim, 2013: 601).

The first half-line suggests that an increase in the number of wicked rulers would lead to a multiplicity of transgressions within society. This implies that the righteous people are relegated to the background and left to hide in fear; but the situation will be reversed when the righteous eventually witness the downfall of the wicked. The word רָאָה means ‘to see with one’s eyes’ (HALOT, 3: 1158). The righteous will see that the wicked will fail in their designs and aims. They will derive satisfaction in their vindication by Yahweh’s timely intervention. This proverb reassures the righteous that wickedness will not go unpunished forever. It is also instructive for the righteous leaders to ensure that wickedness does not prevail in the land.⁴¹³

10.3.4. What Can We Learn?

The implication of these proverbs is that they challenge both higher (king, queen) and lower (administrators, royal officials) leaders to reflect critically on their practice. This will motivate them to make informed decisions about how they want their tenure in office to be remembered. The proverbs teach that those who are in leadership positions should be sensitive to the will of the people.⁴¹⁴ The people will hide themselves when a wicked ruler allows wrongdoing to prevail in the land,⁴¹⁵ but the righteous will rejoice and increase when a righteous ruler has power and influence.

Whybray’s study offers important evidence to support my view when he concedes that Proverbs 28–29 does ‘show awareness of the existence of bad and cruel rulers’ (Whybray,

⁴¹³ In other words, righteous leaders who are not directly affected by injustice should not stand to watch injustice happening to other people.

⁴¹⁴ In other words, they should test the popularity of their policies through people’s reactions.

⁴¹⁵ In real world, there may also be social unrest as a result of having wicked people in positions of authority.

1994a: 127). But, going beyond Whybray, I see that it also reveals the existence of good leaders in contrast to bad ones. Similarly, Heim notes the use of different words for rulers in both chapters. He points out that the poet used the words **שָׂר** (28:2), **מִשָּׁל** (28:15), **נָגִיד** (28:16), **מֶלֶךְ** (29:4) **מִשָּׁל** (29:12) and **מֶלֶךְ** (29:14) to address issues of leadership and politics in chapters 28–29 (Heim, 2013: 601).

10.4. Counterpoint and Conclusion

I have been able to show in this chapter that leadership is incomplete without the mutual support of followers. The proverbs I have analysed acknowledge the sharp difference between righteous and wicked leaders. They also mentioned the possible responses of followers to good and bad leadership. Proverbs 24:21–22 appears to support the continuity of the status quo in Proverbs. It warns followers about the danger of protesting or rebelling against their leaders and the possible punishments that could follow.

In contrast, the sayings in 28:12, 28; 29:2 and 16 recommend the approval of righteous leaders and the rejection of wicked leaders through non-violent actions. In my view, this would constitute a challenge to the status quo if the proverbs are read together.⁴¹⁶ It seems to me that reading these proverbs together with nuance will help the reader to discern how they complement, confirm, complete and compare with one another.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁶ Proverbs 28:12, 28; 29:2, 16 appear to indirectly recommend withdrawal when the wicked is in power and jubilation when the righteous is installed. In my view, these actions are revolutionary.

⁴¹⁷ According to Fox, ‘an author creates the surface as well as the depths of the work and knows that the surface will be seen first. But there are meanings beneath the surface: obscure teachings that can be clarified, unspoken assumptions that can be made explicit, unsystematic ideas that can be organised, and concepts, even clear ones, whose interpretation can be fine-tuned’ (Fox, 1989: 10).

CHAPTER 11

THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR STUDY OF LEADERSHIP IN PROVERBS

This study has been able to show how significant sections of the collections in Proverbs have fostered leadership in ancient Israel. This argument was supported by my thematic reading of proverbs relating to the status, code of conduct, personality, skills and actions of leaders, as well as the community's response to them. My exegetical analysis has opened up the book of Proverbs to new interpretations on leadership. This chapter seeks to highlight the implications that unfold from my study. It also explores how they impact on the views of the biblical scholars expressed in chapter 4.

11.1. The Implications of this Exegetical Study of Proverbs

The following implications have emerged from the arguments I have pursued through my exegetical study of leadership in Proverbs: First, Proverbs emphasises the spiritual formation of leaders. Second, it draws attention to the need for preparation or training for leadership. Third, it stresses that wisdom is the secret of successful leadership. Fourth, Proverbs shows that leadership requires taking responsibility for personal morality. Fifth, it recommends that human leaders should recognise Yahweh as the divine leader ruling over human affairs. Sixth, it informs us about the differences between righteous and wicked leaders. Seventh, it emphasises that good leaders are champions of social justice. Eighth, it teaches that good leaders alleviate poverty (they bridge the gap between the poor and the rich). Ninth, Proverbs underscores the role of women in leadership. Tenth, it informs followers as to how to relate to their leaders. Eleventh, it stresses the importance of discernment in leadership. Twelfth,

Proverbs identifies other miscellaneous implications about leadership.

11.1.1. Spiritual Formation of a Leader

Proverbs teaches that leaders should take their spiritual formation seriously. In Proverbs 25:1–3 the king is able to search out hidden things, but his heart is unsearchable by humans. This cannot be possible without spiritual formation. Leadership can be stressful. Making important decisions during difficult situations can be unpopular. Standing on integrity in the midst of corrupt officials may be a lonely journey. These challenges and many others contribute to the complexity of leadership. Proverbs emphasises the importance of a relationship with God and offers some wisdom for spiritual growth. The elements of spiritual formation include recognising the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom (1:7; 9:10). We now live in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural society; this, however, should not stop leaders from professing and practising their religion (Hunter, 2010).⁴¹⁸

11.1.2. Preparation for Leadership

I discussed the role of personified wisdom in the analysis of 8:4–21. This wisdom is for daily living. The ‘young’ and the ‘immature’, who are the implied audience in Proverbs, are expected to learn from her, in order to guarantee a successful future as leaders. The essence of these proverbs is to enhance the learning and personal growth of the reader. The entire book of Proverbs is didactic in nature. The implication is that it offers an opportunity to prepare the

⁴¹⁸ As James Hunter notes, Christians are ‘world changers’ and we should be willing to shape our world positively (2010: 4). We can learn many things from Proverbs about the connection between spiritual formation and leadership. A politician who wants to be a Christian can use the Bible (especially Proverbs) as a resource for leadership. Proverbs can be motivational in taking personal devotion seriously with the aim of helping to discern hidden things and make wise decisions. Moreover, a party could use specific lessons from Proverbs to foster the development of younger people within a Christian constituency and promote them into leadership. A party with a strong Christian orientation may decide to consult the Bible as a resource towards the development of its party manifesto.

young for leadership. Training is a vital aspect of leadership in Proverbs. Education at an early stage among the Israelites was ‘largely informal and related to the family unit’ (Culpepper, 1982: 21). Others may have to undergo additional training for specific roles and duties (Crenshaw, 1985: 601–615). In other words, training towards leadership is a lifelong journey in Proverbs. Parents who are involved in public life and want to encourage their children to continue at that level can make use of this wisdom by grooming and developing them for future leadership. The content of the training may include character formation, spiritual formation, communication skills and understanding protocols (Hauerwas, 1981: 5, 166).

11.1.3. Wisdom is the Secret of Successful Leadership

Another implication is that wisdom offers essential skills for leadership. In my analysis of Proverbs 8:4–21, Lady Wisdom emphasises that most of the things about leadership centre on her. I observed that the text emphasises wisdom as a necessity in the making of a leader.⁴¹⁹ I also argued that the book of Proverbs contains nuggets of wise information (wisdom for leadership) that a leader can pass on to the next generation. In other words, the main essence of leadership is wisdom. Regardless of the gender or social status of its possessor, it is a suitable skill for the duties of leaders.

11.1.4. The Morality of a Leader

The essence of the book of Proverbs is about character formation within the family and community (Brown, 1996: 22–49). The family (as an institution) was given the responsibility to instruct the young to live ‘morally responsible lives’ (Bland, 1998: 236). The morality of a

⁴¹⁹ Wisdom is needed in relation to problem-solving and interpersonal skills.

leader is taken seriously in Proverbs. The book addresses a number of moral issues that can easily undermine the authority, integrity, credibility and effectiveness of a leader. First, relationships outside marriage and sexual immorality should be avoided (31:3 cf. 5:1–11). Second, warnings about the excessive use of alcohol should be heeded (31:4–5). Third, there should be sensitivity about the ambiguity involved in giving and receiving gifts (17:8, 23).⁴²⁰ Fourth, leaders are expected to lead by example, both publicly and privately.⁴²¹ Following the moral instructions in Proverbs will help a leader to live a distinguished life. It will also help those who aspire to occupy leadership positions to critically examine themselves before and during office. It could also influence the selection of candidates for positions of authority.

11.1.5. A Divine Leader Rules the Human Leader

The supremacy of Yahweh over human leaders is implied throughout Proverbs. My exegesis of 21:1 shows that there is a divine leader implied in it, ruling and controlling the hearts of human leaders. Similarly, people can seek the favour of rulers but the ultimate verdict comes from Yahweh (29:25–26).⁴²² Human rulers are not on the same level as Yahweh in Proverbs; they are representatives of the divine. Their reign could be cut short through death or removal from office if they fail to protect the rights of the poor, widows, orphans and strangers. The same idea is found in the ANE, where the gods were known to be directing human affairs (Budge, 1988: 351).⁴²³

⁴²⁰ See Hatton (2008: 10) and Scherer (1997: 65–66).

⁴²¹ Nelson Mandela is a modern example in political leadership.

⁴²² The implication is that some situations are generally beyond human control and they require divine intervention.

⁴²³ There are two implications for leaders who want to appropriate the teachings of Proverbs here: First, they need to display some sense of responsibility to the Supreme Being and accept that they are subject to his control. Second, they should remain humble as a human ruler (Proverbs 3: 5–6).

11.1.6. There are Differences between Righteous and Wicked Leaders

The tension between רָשָׁע (wicked) and צַדִּיק (righteous) can be seen throughout Proverbs. This study of Proverbs shows that righteous rulers encourage righteousness and remove the wicked from their presence. Wicked rulers promote wickedness and oppress the righteous people around them. The sharp differences between righteous and wicked leaders are documented in Proverbs 28:1–3, 16. For example, righteous leaders are humble and full of wisdom. They foster ethical economic policies and encourage ethical business practices. They have good advisers and they are trustworthy. Righteous leaders are not corrupt. They walk in integrity and lead by example. They install righteous officials and remove the bad ones (Proverbs 25:4–5) (Durant, 2010: 109–116, 225–227). They care for the justice of the poor. They are as bold as a lion, showing courage in removing bad officials. They rule with discernment and knowledge. The people usually rejoice whenever righteous leaders are in power; there is peace and stability during that time because those leaders are secure.⁴²⁴

On the other hand, wicked rulers encourage the use of dishonest scales. They are corrupt and immoral. They are unsecured, proud, foolish and stiff-necked. They listen to lies and tolerate or even promote unsuitable officials. They are greedy for bribes and they supervise the oppression of the poor. The city and its people groan when wicked rulers are in power. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, the recent rise of cruel leaders has led to political unrest since 2011 in Africa, the Middle East and other areas (Katongole, 2011: 125–134).⁴²⁵

⁴²⁴ These are typical things that ensure re-election in well-established democratic societies.

⁴²⁵ This may be an example of the proverb that says the ‘people groan when the wicked are in power’ (29:2). In addition, some of the lessons that Katongole draws from Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu about the past groaning in South Africa are similar to those mentioned in the book of Proverbs (2011: 172–173).

11.1.7. Leadership and Social Justice

Social justice is one of the key issues in Proverbs and other books of the Hebrew Bible (Malchow, 1996, Houston, 2006). I encountered the word מִשְׁפָּט (justice or judgment) on many occasions in my investigation of leadership in Proverbs. As I observed earlier in this study, maintenance of justice is one of the responsibilities of leaders in Israel and the ANE (Epsztein, 1983, Houston, 2006: 134–159). מִשְׁפָּט appears 425 times in the Hebrew Bible and it connotes a legal process in most instances. It can also describe a situation before and after a judicial process (HALOT, 2: 652). This justice is theologically well rooted in Yahweh and his character. My analysis of Proverbs 16:10–15; 20:8; 25:4–7; 31:8–9 shows that it is the responsibility of leaders to maintain social justice. As Malchow notes, the voice of the sages in Proverbs against social injustice is as strong as that found within the prophetic corpus (1996: 63). Leaders are agents of social justice. They have a responsibility to oversee the implementation of justice within their jurisdictions. They are defenders of the poor and voices for the social outcasts within society. In Proverbs, leaders (especially kings) represent Yahweh in socio-economic, political, judicial and cultic matters. They guard against the economic exploitation of their subjects.

11.1.8. The Approach of a Leader to Poverty and Riches

Another important implication arising from my study is about the attitude of leaders to poverty and riches. Scholars have long identified poverty and wealth as a significant theme in Proverbs (Whybray, 1990a, Washington, 1994, Sandoval, 2005). Proverbs identifies indiscipline, love of sleep, oppression, laziness, injustice, taking surety and other factors as causes of poverty. It accepts the state of being rich or poor as facts of life without condemning or affirming either. Hence, it encourages mutual respect between the two groups. Proverbs

gives specific instructions to the rich to show mercy to the poor.⁴²⁶ The poor also have a responsibility to work hard, make wise decisions and improve themselves. There are a number of passages regarding poverty and wealth in Proverbs that are directly relevant to leadership. My analysis of 29:13–14 shows that leaders are instruments of the redistribution of wealth. The establishment of their kingdom is determined by their attitude to the poor. In summary, Yahweh is concerned about the plight of the poor and he relies on human leaders to put in place poverty alleviation programmes. They should also address the problem of oppression and injustice.

11.1.9. The Role of Women in Leadership

As mentioned in chapter 4, women were involved in leadership in ancient Israel and throughout the ANE. According to Grace Emmerson, ‘women of distinction influenced the cause of Israel’s history by their role in the community’ (Emmerson, 1989: 372). They made significant contributions to leadership, in spite of the limited evidence within the biblical text. She notes that the patriarchal culture at that time had a tendency to express reality from a male perspective. The results of my analysis show that Proverbs attaches some importance to the role of women in leadership. Scholars may differ regarding the level and mode of education in ancient Israel, but there is a consensus that some form of education actually took place (Crenshaw, 1985: 601–615). The family occupied an important position as an educational institution in ancient Israel and the mother had a special responsibility as the first teacher. The description of wisdom as a female figure (8:4–21) and as the power behind the throne is also significant. Proverbs 31:1–9 is another example of a woman teaching a leader. As I mentioned in my summary of Yoder in chapter 4, if her argument on the socio-economic

⁴²⁶ See Proverbs 14:21, 31; 17:5; 19:17; 22:9, 16, 22.

position of the woman in 31:10–31 is correct, then that woman is a leader (2003: 427–447).⁴²⁷

11.1.10. Followers Should Know How to Relate to Their Leaders

Relationship is another important theme in Proverbs. The book advocates good relationships within the family, religious groups and society at large. The discussion of leadership in Proverbs is not just about the leader; it is also about the followers. It is not only about the behaviour of the ruler, it also focuses on the behaviour of the subjects. There are many instructions on how subjects should relate to their leaders, as well as how officials should relate to their superiors.⁴²⁸ Moreover, Proverbs 23:1–3 offers relevant instructions for officials and lower leaders on knowing how to behave whenever they are invited for a meal with the ruler or a rich and powerful person. They should not appear to be greedy and their body language should be positive. They must be patient and gentle before the ruler (25:15). The opportunity to stand before the king should not be taken for granted. Therefore, understanding how to relate to those in positions of authority is necessary because two valuable things are at stake: self-preservation and self-advancement.⁴²⁹

11.1.11. Every Leader Needs Discernment

A leader needs discernment to recognise bad advice in the midst of several suggestions on offer. Discernment is needed to differentiate between true and false witnesses in complex

⁴²⁷ In many cultures (especially in Africa) women were thought of as spectators when it came to matters of leadership. The result of my analysis does not support this notion. In fact, women were significant actors in Proverbs. They made substantial contributions as wives, advisers and teachers in ancient Israel. Some even exercised control and power especially during the transition from one king to another.

⁴²⁸ For example, they should watch what they say behind the ruler's back because the message will eventually filter back (13:3; 22:29). They should not undermine the authority of the leader. They should not join with rebels to destabilise the leader and his policies (24:21–22). This is an important aspect, as in most cases rebels are sponsored by external interests that aim to weaken and economically exploit the government in order to destabilise it.

⁴²⁹ See Jesus' statement about choosing the lower seat in a banquet (Luke 14:7–14).

judicial matters (Prov. 16:10). If the use of **חָזַק** (inspired decision) was necessary for difficult judicial matters in the context of the Israelite theocracy, then an equivalent is needed for modern leadership systems.⁴³⁰

11.1.12. Miscellaneous Implications

There are miscellaneous implications emerging from this study of leadership in Proverbs. While these are summary and brief comments, the practical implications of their significance can be seen in the detail discussion of my exegetical chapters. I shall now examine some of them: 1) Leadership is influence and it is about the people (14:28); a leader must be able to command the respect of their followers and influence them positively. 2) Leadership is about team development (20:26); a good team enhances successful leadership but a bad team corrupts and destroys the system. 3) Leadership requires taking good counsel (29:12); it is not practical for a leader to think through all the issues without the support of good advisers. 4) Leadership is about service without exploitation or manipulation (16:10); it requires kindness and compassion. 5) Leadership is about setting a standard for others to follow (16:12–13, 20:8). 6) Leadership is about self-control (16:14–15, 19:12). 7) Leadership is about good communication (17:7). 8) Leadership is about humility before God (21:1); hence, leaders are expected to submit to Yahweh. 9) Leadership is a learning process that helps leaders to gain experience (25:3). 10) It is about taking the right step in honesty and integrity (29:12). Drawing from the above insights gained from the book of Proverbs, I have been able to show

⁴³⁰ Should leaders of democratic governments consult religious authorities? Should they pray to God for guidance? Is there any means of discernment that leaders can legally use in making decisions? The answer to these questions will depend on many factors. Firstly, it depends on the personal spirituality of the leader in question; secondly, it depends to what the constitution of the land permits; and thirdly, it depends on the religious and cultural composition of the group being led. Western democracy, for example, is currently seeking to be nonreligious, but most of the Western leaders have Christian values. The leaders may choose to follow their own religious belief and they can also consult other religious leaders on specific matters. There is evidence of international flavour in the book of Proverbs. The wisdom and religion mentioned are not exclusive to the Israelites. Proverbs appears to model that openness.

that it has many interesting things to say about leadership.

11.2. The Implications of the Results for the Scholars Surveyed

Having presented the implications of my exegetical analysis of leadership in Proverbs, I will return briefly to the implications of the results for the scholarly contributions of Bryce, Humphreys, Golka, Whybray, Weeks, Brown, Dell, Yoder, Hatton and Ansberry. Bryce (1972; 1979) argues that Proverbs 25:2–27 is about leadership. He finds a connection between Proverbs and some wisdom writings from the ANE (especially Egyptian wisdom material) and suggests that this wisdom section was used for the purpose of training officials. My exploration of leadership in the ANE shows that many wisdom writings were composed for this purpose. Most ANE kings were patrons and sponsors of wisdom writings. In this study, I have made a case that 25:1–7 are instructions for budding court officials. Moreover, Humphreys (1978) argues that the motif of the wise courtier in Proverbs 10–29 is more prominent in 16:1–22:16 and 25:2–27 than other places. He concurs that some proverbs can be used for the purpose of training future officials. He observes that the addressee of 28–29 is a king and not courtiers. He demonstrates that ANE wisdom materials make a valuable contribution to the Israelite wisdom. In this study, I have argued that courtiers and officials are also leaders at their own level.⁴³¹

Golka (1993) was the most prominent among those who attacked the royal court hypothesis for the proverbial sayings. He argued that the family was the only institution for education and the training of scribes and courtiers in Israel. He denies that the sayings about the king are

⁴³¹ Leadership in Proverbs includes the roles and responsibilities of courtiers.

from the court and claims that they are from ordinary people in Israel. Contrary to Golka, I have argued that training for leadership is also part of the leadership process. Although scribes and courtiers are royal servants, they are lower leaders overseeing some matters on behalf of the king. My exploration of the social contexts of Proverbs revealed that the royal court couldn't be ruled out completely. As mentioned in chapter 4, it is difficult to deny the persuasive argument of Davies about the possibility of schools in ancient Israel (Davies, 1995: 199–211). Nonetheless, Golka has been able to call attention to the contradictions within the royal proverbs. I agree with this view and I have mentioned some examples at the end of chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Furthermore, Malchow's bold claim that chapters 28–29 foster leadership is commendable. This study has gone further to demonstrate (through various themes) how they contribute to the larger picture of leadership in Proverbs.

Whybray's examination of the individual proverbs leads him to argue that the royal and other proverbs were not composed at the court. However, he does not deny the theme of leadership in Proverbs. His examination of the Hebrew words used for king, official, nobleman, prince and ruler is another indication that these keywords are important to the sages in Proverbs. My findings in this study have shown that some of these keywords were used along with some underlying metaphors to foster complex teachings about leadership in Proverbs. Whybray's agreement that there are some parallels between Proverbs and a number of ANE wisdom texts backs my claim about leadership in Israel and the ANE. The implication of my results for Weeks lies in his denial of a thematic structure for the king's sayings in Proverbs. Following Whybray, Waltke, Heim and others in my exegetical analysis of some leadership texts, I have

been able to find a number of linked sayings about the king in Proverbs.⁴³² Therefore, the reading strategy of analysing some proverbs as individual poetry and as clusters has contributed to my understanding of leadership in Proverbs.

Brown's argument is that character formation is an important theme in the book of Proverbs. He demonstrates how each section of the collection contributes to this theme. Moving beyond Brown, I have shown in this study that the essence of the character formation in Proverbs is for effective leadership. Moreover, Dell identified different social contexts in Proverbs (including the royal court). She did not offer exegetical analysis of specific texts but she would not deny that leadership is an important theme in the book of Proverbs. This current study has been able to provide what is missing in Dell through my exegesis of selected texts. Her claim that many biblical Proverbs are applicable to our contemporary society has motivated me to apply my findings on the leadership texts to Christian leadership in Nigeria. Yoder finds leadership in Proverbs 30 and 31. She argues that the sayings of Agur are royal instructions. Her examination of the socio-economic context of Proverbs 31 allowed me to conclude that the role of women in ancient Israel cannot be underestimated. This study has demonstrated that women made meaningful contributions to leadership in Israel and throughout the ANE. Beyond Yoder's effort, it has shown that Proverbs 8:10–21 could be another example of female leadership in other sections of Proverbs.

Hatton's exploration focused on the deliberate ambiguity or contradictions between some leadership texts in Proverbs. He would limit his claim to 75 verses or about 7% of verses in the book of Proverbs. However, it remains to be seen why the criteria of the root מלך alone

⁴³² See especially Proverbs 16:10–15; 25:1–7 and 31:1–9.

was used to classify them as leadership texts. As mentioned earlier, Hatton's original interest was not about leadership. His aim was to answer the question of contradictions in Proverbs;⁴³³ he only used the leadership texts as one of his examples. In contrast, this present study used different criteria for the selection of the leadership texts.⁴³⁴ Ansberry suggests a court setting for the whole of Proverbs. In contrast, I follow Dell's idea that Proverbs is a product of multiple contexts. Some sections of Proverbs may have been produced at the royal court, but not all.

11.3. Conclusion

This chapter has summarised what we can learn about leadership in the book of Proverbs. It has also identified some of the gaps that I have observed in the previous efforts of scholars and how this present study has addressed those areas through my exegetical analysis. The implication of my findings about leadership is particularly important for Golka and Hatton because they help us to see the contradictions relating to royal sayings in the book of Proverbs. I have been able to rearrange some of the leadership texts following some thematic themes. I have offered a fresh way of looking at leadership in Proverbs through this perspective.

⁴³³ It is to Golka, Whybray and Hatton that we owe the idea that there are contradictions on the sayings about leaders in the book of Proverbs.

⁴³⁴ The criteria have been determined largely by the questions we have put before the text.

CHAPTER 12

APPLICATION OF PROVERBS TO CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN NIGERIA

‘The book of Proverbs is a resource for people today. Within the framework of belief in the God of Israel, it is both a visionary writing and a practical manual’ (Clifford, 1995: 6).

Having established that Proverbs fosters leadership through my exegetical analysis, I will now address the question of how my findings in Chapters 5–11 of this thesis can help the understanding of Christian leadership in Nigeria.⁴³⁵ It is not easy to move from the exegesis and interpretation of the leadership texts in Proverbs to contemporary application. Hermeneutically, there is a need for readers to ‘mind the gap’ (Morrison, 2014: 34–35)⁴³⁶ between the ancient world and our contemporary world. In this chapter, I will use the methodological framework offered by Craig Broyles on interpreting and applying the Old Testament (Broyles, 2001: 13–62). The strategy includes identifying the general principles that arose from the analysis of the texts, finding core values that flow out of the text, distinguishing timeless principles that are not culture bound, discerning the similarities and differences between the Bible and modern context, and differentiating between ‘what is culturally relative and what is theologically binding’ (Broyles, 2001: 60). Stephen Fagbemi used a similar approach in his monograph ‘Who are the Elect in 1 Peter? A Study in Biblical Exegesis and Its Application to the Anglican Church of Nigeria’ (Fagbemi, 2007: 219–256).

⁴³⁵ In other words, if we want to apply what the book of Proverbs teaches about leadership to its ancient original audience for today, what method (s) should we use?

⁴³⁶ The problem of the distance of time, culture, location and language between the contemporary and ancient readers are the challenges of applying the biblical text. The same challenges should be expected in applying the leadership principles in Proverbs to our contemporary context.

My attempt to bridge the hermeneutical gap between the ancient world of Proverbs and the world today on the subject of leadership will be achieved through four steps: Firstly, I will briefly examine the work of some leadership experts, as examples of contemporary ways of conceiving leadership. Secondly, I will evaluate and compare their discussion about leadership skills with my findings in Proverbs. Thirdly, I will perform a brief comparative analysis of leadership in ancient Israel and Africa. Fourthly, I will explore how the identified contemporary leadership skills could shed light on my application of Proverbs to Christian leadership in Nigeria, with the help some ‘imagination’ (Bartholomew, 2015: 1).⁴³⁷

12.1. Contemporary Views on Leadership

How do postmodern people perceive leadership? I will return to my discussion of leadership theories in chapter 1 as a basis for my answer. I have summarised the theories under three headings: ‘Leaders are born and not made,’ ‘leaders are made and not born’ and ‘some leaders are born and some are made’. This section draws on the contributions of Richard Davis, Brian Tracy, Edwin Locke and Peter Northouse. I have chosen them because they are currently among the leading experts in this area.

12.1.1. Leaders are Born and not Made

Richard Davis understands leadership from the perspective of traits. He argues that ‘leaders are born not made’ in his book titled *The Intangibles of Leadership* (2010). Davis notes that people must exhibit certain characteristics or traits before they can lead (2010: xvi). He

⁴³⁷ I will identify and define my context; then I will apply some of the leadership lessons that I have discussed in Proverbs to my context. As Bartholomew notes, ‘if for a moment we defamiliarize ourselves with these texts, step back, and quietly reflect on them, we begin to sense the enormity of their claims’ (Bartholomew, 2015: 1).

identifies ten qualities of leaders in politics, business, schools and other areas of life. They include wisdom (reflection, perception and application of experience); will (making use of available opportunities through self-discipline and vision); executive maturity (ability to control one's emotions); integrity (being consistent without abusing positions of trust); social judgment (ability to analyse and make good decisions as well as connecting with people); presence (outward expression of authority through reputation, identity, charisma and communication); self-insight (recognition of their own strengths and weaknesses); self-efficacy (self-assurance and ability to achieve set objectives); fortitude (courage in the face of obstacles); and fallibility (recognition and admittance of imperfection). For Davis, these are the attributes that determine those who will fail or succeed in leadership (Davis, 2010: 1–222). The limitation of Davis' analysis is that it fails to recognise the role of leadership development. Following Gill, it is reasonable to concur that leadership potential is a mix of genetics and childhood development (2006: 271). Another limitation is that Davis' view does not acknowledge the difficulty of finding a universal set of leadership traits in different contexts (DuBrin, 2012: 62).⁴³⁸

12.1.2. Leaders are Made and not Born

In contrast, Brian Tracy understands leadership from the perspective of skills. His starting point in the book *Leadership* is that 'leaders are made, not born' (2014: 5).⁴³⁹ They are individuals with specific skills who get power through the cooperation of the people they

⁴³⁸ For example, what are considered as good leadership traits in Africa may not be acceptable in the Western world (and vice versa). As DuBrin notes, 'a limitation of the trait approach is that it does not tell us how much traits are absolutely needed in which leadership situations. We also do not know how much of a trait, characteristics, or motive is the right amount' (DuBrin, 2012: 62).

⁴³⁹ Tracy summarised the biography and leadership qualities of Hannibal of Carthage, Scipio, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Wellington and Abraham Lincoln. His study shows that none of these great leaders was born a natural leader. He therefore concludes that this is true for leadership in general.

lead, irrespective of factors such as gender. He dedicates the entire book to the discussion of the skills and attitudes expected of leaders. For Tracy, the essential leadership qualities include: a sense of mission; courage; timely action; strategy; the ability to inspire and motivate; commitment to winning; good communication; the ability to learn from adversity; team building; focus on results; the desire to lead successfully; positive self-esteem; leading by example; self-motivation; self-development; leadership through consensus; good listening skills; living like a leader; and integrity (Tracy, 2014: 9–100). He argues that the integrity of a leader ‘is simply the value that guarantees all the other values’ (2014: 5). Tracy can be criticised for failing to acknowledge the possibility that some people within a society are naturally gifted leaders (Gill, 2006: 270–272). Roger Gill, quoting Nigel Nicholson from London Business School notes that, ‘the new science of behavioural genetics is steadily accumulating evidence about how much individual character, style, and competence is inborn’ (2006: 271).⁴⁴⁰

12.1.3. Some Leaders are Born and Some are Made

Edwin Locke’s interest is in the area of business and organisational leadership. However, his observations are also applicable to political, religious and other forms of leadership.⁴⁴¹ For Locke, leadership is a combination of traits and skills. He proposes what he calls ‘four keys’ that can help leaders to lead successfully. The first key is about ‘motives and traits’. He notes that the motives of leaders are often driven by ‘achievements, ambition, energy, tenacity and initiative.’ He also identifies ‘honesty/integrity; self-confidence (including emotional

⁴⁴⁰ Roger Gill also alludes to the works of Hilarie Owen, stating that ‘leadership cannot be taught as a list of skills. Nor can it be bolted on to management development, as leadership is totally different from management and requires different thinking. Leadership potential is already in the individual and therefore requires recognition, development, growth and practice’ (2006: 272).

⁴⁴¹ In my view, Locke’s observations are applicable to leadership in general because the practicality of the issues raised could enhance leadership in different contexts.

stability); originality/creativity; and flexibility/adaptability and charisma' as the traits of effective leaders (Locke, 1999: 13–34). The second key is 'knowledge, skills and ability'. The knowledge may include technological expertise, knowledge of the organisation or industry where the leaders are serving and the knowledge they have gained through experience. Leaders also exhibit people skills (listening, oral communication, networking/network building, conflict management, assessment) and management skills (problem-solving, decision-making, goal setting, planning) (Locke, 1999: 35–47). They consistently show greater cognitive ability or intelligence than the people they lead.

The third key in Locke's view is vision. This concerns what the organisation wants to achieve. He observes that it is the duty of the leader to define, articulate, formulate, promote commitment and develop a strategic vision (1999: 49–62). The fourth key is 'implementing the vision'. The leader has the responsibility to structure, select and motivate their subordinates to do this successfully. The leader is also required to spearhead management of information, build their team and promote necessary changes within the organisation (Locke, 1999: 63–99). Locke concludes that these four keys are the important characteristics that differentiate leaders from non-leaders.⁴⁴² Locke's acknowledgement that some potential leaders were born with the traits and that others can learn some leadership skills compensates for the weaknesses in the earlier opinions expressed by Davis and Tracy. However, the problem with this view is that it is difficult to ascertain the extent of the impact of heredity and environment on potential leaders (Zaccaro et al., 2004: 101–124).⁴⁴³ A similar difficulty

⁴⁴² Locke claims that the four keys discussed are similar to the strategies used by most successful corporate giants and manufacturers in Japan and America.

⁴⁴³ In other words, it could not classify the products of heredity and the products of environment in the making of a leader. According to Zaccaro et al., 'the question of how leaders differ from non-leaders is one of the oldest in psychology, yet it remains a source of disagreement and controversy in the leadership domain. A consensus

is the scholarly confusion of mixing leadership traits and skills together (Lafreniere, 2008: 22–35).⁴⁴⁴

Peter Northouse, who is presently a leading leadership theorist, also supports the idea that leadership is a blend of traits and skills.⁴⁴⁵ His book *Leadership* (2013) addresses a number of topics covering different aspects of theory and practice in leadership.⁴⁴⁶ He highlights many theoretical approaches to leadership, but I will only examine his discussion of the traits and skills of leaders. Northouse sets the scene by summarising various studies on leadership traits in the twentieth century, laying emphasis on the efforts of Stogdill (1948)⁴⁴⁷, Mann (1959)⁴⁴⁸, Stogdill (1974)⁴⁴⁹, Lord, DeVader and Alliger (1986)⁴⁵⁰, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991)⁴⁵¹ and Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader (2004)⁴⁵². Northouse's survey of previous studies leads him to identify intelligence (intellectual and verbal ability); self-confidence (self-esteem and assurance as a result of personal competencies and skills); determination (getting the job done

remains elusive regarding the magnitude of leader trait effects on leadership, and, if a large magnitude is conceded, what specific and critical attributes contribute to such effects' (Zaccaro, 2004: 123).

⁴⁴⁴ 'The difference between the trait theory and skills theory is that unlike trait theory, which assumes that a leader is born with the traits necessary for leadership, skills theory proposes that leadership skills can be learned and achieved' (Lafreniere, 2008: 24).

⁴⁴⁵ Peter Northouse has written a compendium on leadership.

⁴⁴⁶ According to Northouse, his book offers 'in-depth presentation of leadership theory and a discussion of how it applies to real situations' (2013: 15). The areas covered include, trait approach, skills approach, style approach, situational approach, contingency theory, path goal theory, leader member exchange theory, transformational leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, team leadership, psychodynamic approach, women and leadership, culture and leadership and leadership ethics.

⁴⁴⁷ Stogdill identifies 'intelligence, alertness, insight, responsibility, initiative, persistence, self-confidence and sociality' out of 124 trait studies (Northouse, 2013: 20).

⁴⁴⁸ Mann discerns 'intelligence, masculinity, adjustment, dominance, extraversion and conservatism' out of 163 trait studies (Northouse, 2013: 21).

⁴⁴⁹ Stogdill finds 'achievement, persistence, initiative, self-confidence, responsibility, cooperativeness, tolerance, influence and sociality' out of 1,400 findings (Northouse, 2013: 21).

⁴⁵⁰ Lord, DeVader and Alliger recognise 'intelligence, masculinity and dominance' as the key traits (Northouse, 2013: 21–22).

⁴⁵¹ Kirkpatrick and Locke single out 'drive, motivation, integrity, confidence, cognitive ability and task knowledge' as the dominant traits (Northouse, 2013: 22).

⁴⁵² Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader name 'cognitive ability, extraversion, conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness, agreeableness, motivation, social intelligence, self-monitoring, emotional intelligence and problem solving' (Northouse, 2013: 23).

through initiative and persistence); integrity (honesty and trustworthiness); and sociability (being friendly, sensible, courteous, caring, outgoing, tactful, approachable and diplomatic) as the traits expected of a good leader (Northouse, 2013: 23–26). For Northouse, these five traits ‘contribute substantially to one’s capacity to be a leader’ (2013: 26).

Following Katz (1955), Northouse sums up the skills needed for leadership as technical, human and conceptual. The technical skill is about the leader’s understanding of the job and the technicalities involved. The human skills refer to the leader’s ability to relate to people and manage them effectively. The conceptual skill is about the leader’s ability to work with creative ideas and concepts (Northouse, 2013: 44–46). The strengths of Northouse’s argument lie in two areas: the first is his balance of theory and practice (with many case studies); the second is his recognition of other approaches in addition to the theories relating to traits and skills.

What then can be said about these four scholars? Davis understands inborn traits as the bedrock of leadership. Tracy conceives leadership as skills that can be learned. For Locke and Northouse,⁴⁵³ leadership is a mixture of inborn traits and learned skills. Nonetheless, it is striking that all the four scholars include integrity in their list. Hence, we can conclude that integrity as character and as skill is an important quality that is expected in contemporary leadership.⁴⁵⁴ According to Davis, ‘it is about doing the right things, being consistent and

⁴⁵³ Northouse’s critique of the trait approach is that it fails to take followers and different leadership situations into account. Similarly, it fails to examine the connection between traits and leadership outcomes on groups or organisations. Neither is the approach useful for training and developing others for leadership (Northouse, 2013: 30–32). Therefore, there is a need for other approaches that will take other areas of leadership seriously.

⁴⁵⁴ Modern people expect their leaders to be persons of integrity (personality or character). They also expect their leaders to practice (display some levels of) integrity (skills). For example, many politicians in the Western world have been forced to resign after revelations of their private lives in the newspapers or evidence of their abuse of

leading with those values' (2010: 90). For Northouse, the followers trust leaders with integrity because they are 'loyal, dependable and not deceptive' (Northouse, 2013: 25).

12.2. Comparative Analysis of Contemporary Leadership Skills and Proverbs

This section compares the contemporary discussion of leadership with the leadership dynamics that I have uncovered in Proverbs. I will attempt to integrate the results of Davis, Tracy, Locke and Northouse with my exegesis of the book of Proverbs.

There are four areas of common ground that can be identified between contemporary leadership scholarship and Proverbs. The first is the individuality of leadership and the cultivation of leadership skills. The king in Proverbs is an individual who is expected to cultivate certain leadership skills;⁴⁵⁵ contemporary scholars also emphasise the personal skills necessary for good leadership. The second area revolves around leadership skills and communal responsibility. In Proverbs the king has a responsibility to the community; while leadership skills are acquired as an individual, the leader's duty is to the community. In the same vein, a business leader's responsibility is to the organisation, and individual skills are employed to suit the purpose of the organisation. The third similarity is that integrity in leadership is paramount in both Proverbs and contemporary leadership discussion.⁴⁵⁶ The fourth area is that Proverbs retains its diversity, as it supports the idea that successful leadership is a merger of inborn traits and learned skills, with its emphasis on different forms

position.

⁴⁵⁵ Courtiers and administrators were expected to demonstrate some skills too. 'Do you see those who are skilful in their work? They will serve kings; they will not serve common people' (Prov 22:29).

⁴⁵⁶ Why is a nation corrupt? A nation is corrupt because the leaders and some of the people are corrupt. Integrity is acquired individually. Proverbs may not have explained it within its own social milieu in the same way as contemporary scholars; nevertheless the need for integrity has always been there. Therefore, the leader must cultivate it.

of training. Similarly, current thinking about leadership favours both trait and skill-based theories (Gill, 2006: 36–62).

However, my analysis of Proverbs and contemporary scholarship shows that there are some areas of difference too. The writers of Proverbs have been accused for their predisposition towards male leaders with occasional references to female leaders (Brenner, 1995: 11–13, Fontaine, 1995: 29–49). In contrast, the contemporary approach is gender inclusive focusing on the equality of male and female figures in leadership. The scope of the authority of the leaders in Proverbs and in the contemporary context is also different. The book of Proverbs presents the authority of the king as absolute. There is also a degree of authority in contemporary leaders, but theirs is limited; contemporary leadership in the Western world is typically democratic to some extent, with checks and balances.⁴⁵⁷ In addition, leadership positions may be inherited in Proverbs, but in contemporary leadership anyone can aspire to be leaders if they match the person specification for the role.⁴⁵⁸

Furthermore, contemporary leadership scholars do not mention some of the skills and attitudes that I identified in Proverbs: for example, the attitude of the leaders to the Torah focusing on their spirituality (29:4–5); recognition of Yahweh as the ruler above the king (21:1; 29:25–26); regular display of righteousness (29:2); and the differentiation between righteous and wicked leaders (28:1–5, 16, 28; 29:1). I also flagged up wisdom as an important skill for leadership in my exegetical analysis of Proverbs 8:10–21, where Lady Wisdom

⁴⁵⁷ The four contemporary scholars that I analysed are democratic, Western theorists. Some African, Russian, Hindu, Islamic, and Korean theorists may have a different world-view that is based on their socio-economic and political contexts.

⁴⁵⁸ The person specification may include nationality (for political leadership), educational qualifications and experience etc.

emphasised her necessity for successful leadership. In contrast, only one contemporary scholar mentions wisdom in the discussion of leadership (Davis, 2010: 4–9).⁴⁵⁹

In light of the above evidence, the writers of Proverbs have mentioned some of the leadership skills long before these contemporary scholars. There are also some modern leadership skills that are missing or only implied in Proverbs.⁴⁶⁰ This suggests that the way people today think of some aspects of leadership has a different emphasis from Proverbs. It also implies that the writers of Proverbs did not envisage some of the skills mentioned by contemporary scholars when they wrote.

12.3. Comparative Analysis of Leadership in Ancient Israel and Africa

There are some striking similarities between leadership in ancient Israel and Africa (especially Nigeria). First, the appointment of kings or leaders is often a spiritual exercise. There are some interesting instances of Yahweh appointing kings through the prophets. Some of the examples include Saul, David and Jehu (1 Sam 9:1–10:27; 1 Sam 16:1–23; 2 Kgs 9:1–13). Africans also seek the help of the ‘supreme being’ depending of their religious affiliation (Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religions). Second, leadership is for the common good of the people in both contexts. Ideal leaders are required to put community development before their personal interests.⁴⁶¹ Third, leaders are expected to recognise and promote the cultural and religious values of the people. Fourth, leaders in ancient Israel and modern Africa

⁴⁵⁹ Davis used philosophical and psychological perspectives to analyse wisdom. He notes that wisdom ‘begins with basic intellect, but it also involves the ability to synthesize information and be analytical while remaining tied to reality’ (2010: 7). In contrast, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom in the book of Proverbs.

⁴⁶⁰ For example, skills such as a sense of mission, commitment to winning, focus on results, desire to lead successfully, self-motivation, leadership through consensus, living like a leader, determination, vision and implementing vision are either only implied or are missing in the proverbs analysed.

⁴⁶¹ As I mentioned in chapter 1, this ideal expectation is not fully practiced in Nigerian context.

are conceived as defenders of and providers for their followers. Fifth, leaders also need the support of their followers in order to successfully function, in both contexts. Sixth, it is difficult to challenge the status quo of the upper class in both traditional African societies and ancient Israel. Seventh, there are contradictions in the sayings about kings and leaders in both contexts (Golka, 1993: 17–27; Whybray, 1990a: 48).⁴⁶² Eighth, the use of proverbs for leadership communication and the expression of wisdom is common to both contexts (Adéèkó, 1998; Orwenjo, 2009: 123–146). Ninth, instructions for leaders to adhere to the ethics of leadership are also available in ancient Israel and Africa (either orally or in writing). The above analysis confirms an aspect of Golka’s thesis that there are parallels between ancient Israel and African culture (Golka, 1993: 36–122).

However, there are a few indications of distinctions between leadership in ancient Israel and Africa. The idea that some leaders are born and others are made is common in my analysis of Proverbs. In contrast, many African societies (especially Nigeria) reserve positions of leadership for selected families and a few elites. In addition, the monotheistic and Yahwistic worldview expressed in ancient Israel is radically different from the polytheistic worldview found in Africa.

In view of my analysis so far, I will now apply my findings to Christian leadership in Nigeria. I will follow the book of Proverbs and contemporary leadership scholars. However, I would like to state that it is impossible to draw applications from all the skills that I have highlighted in Proverbs and in current leadership thinking. As such, I shall limit my scope to one example

⁴⁶² Some proverbs in ancient Israel and Africa referred to kings as divinities while others referred to them as mere humans. There are proverbs that support leaders, critical of leaders and the proverbs that neither affirm nor condemn leaders.

where the contemporary scholars are in agreement with the ancient text. As mentioned earlier, Proverbs and the four scholars all mentioned the relevance of integrity in leadership. In other words, it is in the nature of leadership that integrity is conceived as important throughout all ages. Therefore, this framework shall be applied to Christian leadership in Nigeria in the next section. I will narrow down my discussion to the value of the book of Proverbs in guiding Christian leaders to reflect critically on bribery and corruption.

12.4. Christian Leadership in Nigeria

This section reflects on what we have learnt about leadership from the writers of Proverbs and the writings of contemporary scholars, showing how they can be helpful in discussing Christian leadership in Nigeria today. I have chosen to apply this study to Nigeria for the following reasons: First, I originally came from Nigeria and still desire to make a future contribution in building the nation with my reflections on leadership. Second, Nigeria is among the richest nations in Africa (in terms of revenue)⁴⁶³ but she ranks among the poorest because of ‘the number of people who live without basic needs such as jobs, clean water and good-quality housing. An estimated one-fifth of children die before their fifth birthday and millions of people are thought to be HIV positive’ (Peel, 2006: 1). Third, corruption has become an endemic situation affecting the behaviour of many people (at various levels) in Nigeria (Tanzi, 1998: 8, Hardoon and Heinrich, 2013: 7, 33–40, Transparency, 2013: 5, Raimi

⁴⁶³ Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa, with over 180 million people. The country is located within the West African region with the landmass covering about 923,768 km². Nigeria is a multicultural and multi-lingual nation, with over 500 languages and different ethnic groups. Since the nation obtained her independence from Great Britain in 1960, the issue of leadership at the centre has been a challenging one. Nigeria endured a mixture of military rule and democracy before the present democratisation process that began in 1999.

et al., 2013: 111).⁴⁶⁴

Corruption has been the biggest threat to the actualisation of sustainable development in Nigeria. This prompted the government of former president Olusegun Obasanjo (1999–2007) to put in place watchdogs and whistle-blowing agencies against corrupt civil servants and public officials.⁴⁶⁵ His government also established two agencies to prosecute them⁴⁶⁶ (Raimi et al., 2013: 105–122). However, these agencies have not made much progress since their establishment, because of the government's lack of political will to fight the war against corruption. Instead, the agencies have been successfully used by different regimes to prosecute selected individuals (especially political opponents). It is ironic that the very system put in place under the guise of opposing corruption is being used to create further corruption.⁴⁶⁷

I visited Nigeria in November 2014 and discovered that bribery was widespread. Many politicians, political parties, law enforcement agents, judges and teachers, as well as other public and private workers, cannot operate without bribery. Some religious institutions that

⁴⁶⁴ For a general review of different scholarly definitions of corruption, see (Balía, 2009: 3–4). Balía defines it as the 'misuse of public office for private gain' (Balía, 2009: 4). This may include gifts, bribery, fraud, extortion and embezzlement. Corruption is a global phenomenon. The World Bank defines it as 'abuse of public power for private benefit' (Tanzi, 1998: 8). The abuse can also be for the benefit of family, friends, class and status quo, a tribe or a political party. According to the research conducted by Transparency International, bribery and corruption are on the increase in Nigeria (Hardoon, 2013: 7, 33–40). Nigeria is 144th (the same level as Cameroon, Central African Republic, Iran, Papua New Guinea and Ukraine) on the list of corruption free countries in the world (Transparency, 2013: 5). Another report identifies Nigeria 'as one of the notorious 23 countries that did not cooperate with the fight against money laundering' (Raimi, 2013: 111).

⁴⁶⁵ The Anti-Corruption and Transparency Monitoring Units and Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

⁴⁶⁶ The Independent Corrupt Practices and other Offences Commission (ICPC) and The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC).

⁴⁶⁷ How can this situation be avoided in the future? The independence of such prosecuting agencies from any government operating at a given time is vital. Even when the government wants to abuse such agencies, they should have the courage and integrity to say no as followers. In my view, good followership can sometimes mean not following a bad leader. Apart from the description of the people hiding when the wicked are in power (Proverbs 28:12, 28), the book of Proverbs appears to be silent on what to do as a follower when you have a bad leader. This is actually an important area that Proverbs lacks.

are supposed to set a good example are also corrupt.⁴⁶⁸ Moreover, there was controversy before and after the 2016 election of the national president of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) because of allegations of bribery, fraud and election malpractices by different contestants, Church leaders and denominations. Many factors contributed to the situation of bribery and corruption in Nigeria, including poverty, the desire to get rich quickly, unrealistic expectations from family, friends and the community and a lack of retribution for previous corrupt leaders.

I have already discussed the positive (17:8) and negative (17:23) uses of bribes in chapter 9 of this thesis. The question that must now be answered is whether it is right or wrong for Christian leaders to give or receive bribes. I shall begin with the English definition of a bribe and show how scholars have understood the word שֹׁחַד. Harrison defines a bribe as ‘the bestowing of money or favour upon a person who is in a position of trust (for example, a judge or government official) in order to pervert his judgment or corrupt his conduct’ (Harrison, 1987: 44). This is connected with court favour. For Hanke, it is ‘anything given to a person to induce him to do something illegal or wrong, or against his wishes’ (Hanke, 1976: 653). John Noonan’s definition of a bribe is basic but instructive. It is ‘an inducement improperly influencing the performance of a public function meant to be gratuitously exercised’ (Noonan, 1984: xi).⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ For example, there are lawsuits pending in courts against some Church denominations in Nigeria over allegations of fraud during the election or selection process of their national and regional leaders. It was alleged also that some politicians offered money to some influential leaders of large denominations in return for the votes of their Church members during elections. Similarly, some pastors will not pray for their parishioners unless they ‘sow a seed’ (give money in advance).

⁴⁶⁹ Noonan goes on to state that ‘society has at least four definitions of a bribe: that of the more advanced moralists; that of the law as written; that of the law as enforced; and that of common practice’ (1984: xii). The book of Proverbs seems to address all of these.

Gregory Nichols argues that שֹׁחַד (bribe) can sometimes be translated as gift, ransom or present. He identifies two principles in the Hebrew Bible: The first is the condemnation of bribery for those who are in authority; they must be ‘embodiment of impartial justice’ because they make decisions affecting the lives of others. The second is that there are some sayings that did not condemn giving a gift or bribery in Proverbs (cf. 18:16, 21:14). He makes a case that giving gifts is a common practice around the world. Writing as a missionary in the former Soviet Union, he concludes that ‘God’s compassion and wisdom are found in His not forbidding a bribe’ when seeking favour from ungodly rulers and unjust decision makers. In other words, it depends on the cultural context (Nichols, 1999: 30–37). Nichols’ analysis shows that some forms of gifts are unavoidable; but bribing an official for the purpose of injustice is not appropriate.

In contrast, Falkner⁴⁷⁰ argues that bribes cannot be classified as gifts. He suggests that a gift is an expression of feelings within the context of a healthy relationship. For Falkner, the size of a gift does not matter because it is a token of love. A bribe, on the other hand, is a tool for exploiting others for selfish gain. A big bribe is expected to attract a big favour as ‘it creates an overriding obligation to perform a task’. He concludes that a gift is ‘known and consented to’ by others, but a bribe is given secretly and hidden from the public domain (Falkner, 1999: 25–26). In the same vein, Noonan argues that there is a distinction between a bribe and a gift. He succinctly sums it up with the following words:

A bribe expresses self-interest, a gift conveys love; a bribe subordinates the recipient to the donor, a gift identifies the donor with the recipient. A gift brings no shame; a bribe must be secret. A gift may be disclosed;

⁴⁷⁰ Steven Falkner himself was a victim of corrupt government officials when he was a missionary in Nepal. His family was forced to return home in May 1997 because they refused to offer bribes to secure the extension of their visas to live in that country.

a bribe must be concealed. The size of a gift is irrelevant; the size of a bribe is decisive. A gift does not oblige, a bribe coerces (Noonan, 1984: 697).

As I mentioned in my analysis of Proverbs 17:8 and 17:23, any attempt to use linguistics to resolve the tension in the use of **תָּחָן** is fraught with difficulties. **תָּחָן** means bribe or gift and it can be used positively or negatively. The LXX used **μισθός** in 17:8 (Strong, 1997: 310)⁴⁷¹ and **δῶρα** in 17:23 (Strong, 1997: 134).⁴⁷² In my view, the LXX probably used the two words to resolve the tension about bribery while the MT retains the complexity. Proverbs is spiky and complex in the way it handles different themes. A number of the sayings may be contextual, encouraging them to recognise the pragmatic use of gifts or bribes. I agree with Falkner and Noonan that gifts can be used to reward good works and foster relationships; but a bribe given to individuals with ‘discretionary powers’ will pressure them to attempt what is illegal. However, this is a grey area and should be handled carefully. One important reason why bribery is wrong is because it can be a means of oppression. It oppresses the righteous who consider it immoral, as well as the poor and powerless who cannot afford to give bribes. In Nigeria the bribers are served immediately, while those who deserve to get the service on merit are denied or have to wait.⁴⁷³

Bribery and corruption cannot be addressed in Nigeria without leadership integrity within society as well as in the Church. Reflecting on Proverbs, political leaders must condemn the

⁴⁷¹ The LXX used **μισθός** in 17:8, which can literally or figuratively mean to ‘pay for good or bad service.’ It also means hire, reward or wages (Strong, 1997: 310).

⁴⁷² The LXX used **δῶρα** from **δῶρον** in 17:23, which means a ‘present, gift or offering’ (Strong, 1997: 134).

⁴⁷³ For example, parents of students with good A-level results must bribe officials to get their children into some Nigerian public universities. Some students have to bribe their lecturers before they can pass exams. Job seekers have to bribe their prospective employers in order to secure jobs. Contractors have to bribe government officials in order to get contracts and so on.

act of bribery within and outside the law courts. They must educate their officials to recognise the tension between a gift and a bribe. They should avoid corrupting gifts that could manipulate them and their officials through discernment. Christian leaders in Nigeria should see themselves as the prophetic voice for change. Many politicians who are Christians or who go to churches asking for votes should be informed about the expectations of the electorate. They should speak against structural injustice, impunity and the witch-hunts of political opposition members. They should not collect donations from corrupt officials.

Furthermore, the Church in Nigeria cannot shy away from the subject of leadership. It is her responsibility to prepare members for leadership at various levels. Most of the early missionaries in Nigeria discouraged their members from participating in politics because it was termed ‘a dirty game’ (Imo, 2008).⁴⁷⁴ Now though, religious leaders should encourage their followers to participate in the leadership of their country by standing for elections or voting during elections. In addition, mentoring was an important aspect of leadership in Proverbs (31:1–9). The Church should be the educational hub for leadership development in Nigeria. Christian leaders should mentor and prepare the younger generations for future Christian leadership.⁴⁷⁵ Parents and churches, on discovering the importance of spiritual and other leadership formation, may find rich resources and guidelines on how to do this in Proverbs (8:15–17; 31:2–3; 1:8–9 cf. 4:1–9; 6:20–21).

⁴⁷⁴ As a result, since independence, Nigeria has produced more Muslim presidents or heads of state than Christian ones.

⁴⁷⁵ Churches who want to foster responsibility among their young generation could use Proverbs to encourage them to develop the right disposition and attitudes towards leadership. In other words, the churches in Nigeria can develop discipleship, leadership development and training programmes that may use the book of Proverbs as a resource within the lines that I have suggested in this thesis.

The principle of seeking and finding wisdom is also relevant for leadership today. Leaders who seek wisdom diligently will find her (Proverbs 8:10–21). The love of gold and silver at the expense of wisdom is one of the reasons why many leaders in Nigeria are involved in bribery and corruption. Therefore, the challenge for contemporary leaders is to place more value on wisdom than riches (Balía, 2009).⁴⁷⁶ Wisdom is needed to preserve the wealth of any nation but ignorance and lack of wisdom could put the economy in danger. I observed in my analysis of Proverbs 28:8 that wealth gained by leaders through corruption and impropriety may not last (cf. 20:21, 23:4–5, 28:22).⁴⁷⁷ Therefore, leaders or followers who have been tempted by bribes or pressured to be corrupt should feel motivated to resist the pressure, because what looks like gain in the short term is likely not to turn out well for them in the long term.

12.4. Conclusion

I have applied leadership in Proverbs to the area of integrity, focusing on bribery and corruption, and have shown that there is clear relevance for today. While it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to do this for all aspects of leadership mentioned by Davis, Tracy, Locke and Northouse, nonetheless, the findings in this one area suggest that, if similar work were to be undertaken in some of the other areas, it might also lead to the same conclusion that there is relevance in Proverbs for leadership today. In my view, it is clear that the writers of Proverbs were concerned with issues relating to governance, just as contemporary writers are today. As Heim notes, Proverbs ‘can speak with insight and authority to many of the

⁴⁷⁶ Daryl Balía’s analysis of corruption in South Africa is an example of how some leaders have sought to enrich their pockets rather than help the people they claim to be serving.

⁴⁷⁷ For example, some of the wealth accumulated by former politicians and public servants was returned to the government treasury after their prosecutions. In contrast, wealth that is gained through justice, righteousness and good governance will endure to the next generation.

challenges that modern societies face' (2013: 634). I would argue that this includes the challenge of leadership. Despite being an ancient writing, the book of Proverbs offers valuable pieces of information that are applicable for leadership today.

CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSION

This concluding chapter is divided into three sections. The first presents an overview of my discussion so far and the summary of my results; the second suggests new areas for further studies; and the third consists of my final comments.

13.1. Review and Summary of Results

This study has set out to determine some of the important things that Proverbs teaches about leadership, and how the book fosters leadership. It has contributed to the discussion of relevant themes in Proverbs. Chapter 1 sets the scene by establishing the rationale, background, problems, aims, and scope of my enquiry, as well as an overview of leadership in African context and theories of leadership. It identified leadership as an important topic throughout human history. I singled out three areas for investigation at the beginning and they served as my guide in the course of this research. First, how did Proverbs foster leadership skills amongst its readership in Israel?⁴⁷⁸ Second, how can contemporary readers of Proverbs reflect on the poetic devices used by the wisdom writers to convey their message and understand the meaning within the text on leadership? Third, how can Proverbs be used as a valuable resource for fostering leadership skills among modern Christians? I have answered these questions in the course of this research.

Chapter 2 provided a methodological framework for this research. I observed that there are

⁴⁷⁸ In other words, what lessons can we learn about leadership in Proverbs?

various approaches for interpreting biblical poetry, depending on the question we bring to the text.⁴⁷⁹ I introduced the integrative approach and how I have applied it to this research. I indicated a preference for the literary approach in analysing the leadership texts. I also analysed the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. While I acknowledged that the literary approach (especially the use of poetical analysis) has its own limits, I concluded that its results have contributed immensely to biblical scholarship. It has introduced an imaginative reading of the text, which has led to an enhanced understanding.⁴⁸⁰ I briefly examined the distribution of parallelism in Hebrew poetry. I also evaluated the Lowthian classification of parallelism and the recent scholarly re-classifications.⁴⁸¹ I adopted Heim's four levels of parallelism (semi-linear, intra-linear, interlinear and trans-linear).

Furthermore, I examined the redaction and tradition history of Proverbs. I concluded that the book of Proverbs is complex, expressing more than one view on different themes. Then, I observed that there are two major ways of interpreting the book of Proverbs: the first is to interpret it within its contextual clusters as materials arranged together in unity; the second is to interpret it as materials put together haphazardly.⁴⁸² Following Zoltán Schwáb, I observed that the debate is not conclusive and I therefore resolved to be open to both possibilities. I also explored the vocabulary of leadership in Proverbs and presented my criteria for selecting the texts for exegesis, as well as my exegetical principles for the study.

⁴⁷⁹ I discussed the world 'behind the text', 'within the text' and 'in front of the text'.

⁴⁸⁰ I made a strong case for poetics as a tool for biblical exegesis. I argued that it helps in the overall exegetical process and lays a good foundation for a better understanding of Proverbs.

⁴⁸¹ I supported (with evidence) the view that the Lowthian tripartite classification of parallelism should be abandoned.

⁴⁸² It should be noted that this issue only applies to chapters 10–29 and not the rest of Proverbs.

In chapter 3, I discussed the concept of leadership in ancient Israel and tested it against the background of the wider ANE contexts (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ugarit and Hittite Kingdoms). I identified some areas of similarity and difference. I discovered that the wisdom tradition and the idea of kingship and courtiers could be traced back to the ANE. Therefore, the writers of Proverbs were just a medium for transmitting the long existing tradition of leadership within the context of Yahwism. In chapter 4, I reviewed the scholarly contributions of Bryce, Humphreys, Golka, Whybray, Weeks, Brown, Dell, Yoder, Hatton and Ansberry with respect to the debate of leadership in Proverbs. I summarised the insights gained from their efforts and used them as a foundation for this study. I observed that previous scholarship had relegated leadership in Proverbs to the margins, but this dissertation constitutes a voice from the margin.

The next six chapters (5–10) were devoted to the analysis of leadership texts in Proverbs.⁴⁸³ The exegetical methods used in those chapters included the historical critical method; reflection on the poetic devices (parallelism, metaphor, repetition and so on); and thematic concentration, highlighting some leadership aspects and paying attention to individual sayings and clusters (where they were obvious). I delved into the nuanced meanings of some leadership keywords in the Masoretic Text of Proverbs, in consultation with the LXX. I was able to arrive at new interpretations on how some of the verses analysed foster leadership in Proverbs. I used the counterpoints at the end of each chapter to highlight that the book of Proverbs did not present simplistic maxims concerning leadership; rather, it expresses a

⁴⁸³ I specifically focused attention on ‘the status of leaders’ (16:10–15; 21:1; 29:25–26; 14:28), ‘code of conduct for leaders’ (25:1–7; 31:1–9), ‘personality of leaders’ (20:28; 23:1–3; 28:4–5, 6–7, 8, 15), ‘skills of leaders’ (17:7; 29:8–12; 8:10–21; 29:13–14), ‘actions of leaders’ (17:8, 23; 14:35; 19:12; 20:2, 8, 26–27; 29:1, 4) and ‘the community’s response to leaders’ (24:21–22; 28:1–3, 12, 16, 28; 29:2, 16).

plurality of ideas about leadership, which in my view require nuanced understanding.⁴⁸⁴

In chapter 11, I summarised the implications of what I had learnt about leadership from my exegetical interpretation of selected texts in Proverbs. I tested them against the arguments of the Proverbs experts whose work I surveyed in chapter 4. I concluded that in future it would be an injustice to the text for scholars to read some portions of Proverbs without reflecting on what they say about leadership. My finding in the exegetical chapters shows that some parts of Proverbs were helpful for the training of those who took up leadership positions in the family, clan, town and national level, as well as for those who were interested in gaining wisdom.

In chapter 12, I analysed some contemporary views about leadership skills and compared them with the book of Proverbs. I discovered that there are areas of continuation and discontinuation. My reflections on the real world show that some of the insights and assumptions of Proverbs on leadership do not resonate as being relevant for us today in our postmodern society. I observed that there is a need to recognise the gap and identify when a proverb is relevant. I then used the analysis as a theoretical framework for my application of Proverbs to Christian leadership in Nigeria; I focused on one example of the integrity of leaders in responding to bribery and corruption in Nigeria.

13.2. Directions for Further Research

This study does not claim to have answered all the questions on leadership in Proverbs. It has

⁴⁸⁴ There are different teachings about leadership in the book of Proverbs. Some teach that leaders are essential while others imply that leaders are unnecessary.

generated additional questions and perhaps opened up new areas within the topic. Seven areas of interest are discussed here as potential suggestions that may be explored when conducting similar studies in the future:

First, are there other leadership texts in Proverbs that could be explored? I stated the rationale for the selected texts in chapter 2 of this study, but a future study with different criteria might generate more or different texts in Proverbs that are significant for leadership. In addition, a subsequent investigation may focus on other thematic themes relating to leadership in the book of Proverbs (for example, delegation of authority, mentoring, managing conflict, networking and time management etc.). Second, future research in this field could focus more on the role of women as leaders in the book of Proverbs. How does Proverbs portray a woman in a position of authority?⁴⁸⁵ Third, there is now a growing shift among biblical scholars away from historical critical methods to other approaches. Those who use different interpretative methods could explore the same topic and compare their results with the outcomes of this study.⁴⁸⁶ Fourth, future research could use an interdisciplinary approach to investigate in more detail the relationship between leadership in Proverbs and contemporary leadership theories. What are the similarities and differences?⁴⁸⁷

Fifth, other themes within the book of Proverbs could be explored. Some scholarly books and monographs have appeared focusing on specific themes from Proverbs. Whybray, Washington, Pleins and Sandoval have called attention to the discussion of 'poverty and wealth' (Whybray, 1990a, Washington, 1994, Pleins, 2001, Sandoval, 2005). Tova Forti

⁴⁸⁵ Such investigation may rely substantially on the analysis of Proverbs 31:10–31.

⁴⁸⁶ The approaches may include cognitive linguistics, sociological approach and feminist reading of Proverbs etc.

⁴⁸⁷ More work is required in this area. This is a task for practical theologians.

found ‘animal imagery’ (Forti, 2008) and Peter Hatton examined the ‘contradictions in Proverbs’ (Hatton, 2008). Kim Sung Jin mentioned ‘friendship’ (Jin, 2012), Sun Myung Lyu explored ‘righteousness’ (Lyu, 2012), while Anne Stewart discussed moral ethics in Proverbs (Stewart, 2016).⁴⁸⁸ This present study has reflected on the theme of leadership. Other important themes that could be explored in Proverbs may include education, the significance of דֶרֶךְ (way) and the tension between רָשָׁע (wicked) and צַדִּיק (righteous). Sixth, the scope of the future analysis of leadership could be extended to other wisdom writings. Apart from the book of Proverbs, how do other wisdom books foster leadership?⁴⁸⁹ Seventh, I emphasised the importance of application and the need to use a proper methodology and intelligent hermeneutics in this study. Future research may adopt an approach similar to what I have done in chapter 12 of this thesis with reference to the application of leadership texts in Proverbs to one particular modern setting (namely Nigeria) and apply the findings to other modern settings.⁴⁹⁰

13.3. Final Comments

Leadership has generated great interest among anthropologists, sociologists, theologians and others, and will continue to generate more discussion in the future. I will now return to the question I asked at the beginning of this research. How does Proverbs foster leadership? On the basis of the evidence and the results of my investigation, Proverbs fosters leadership if it is read in line with its intended purpose of teaching knowledge and prudence to the young and

⁴⁸⁸ She attacked the ‘simplicity thesis’ of some previous scholars and maintained that ethical issues in Proverbs are more complex than previously thought.

⁴⁸⁹ Another research for example can explore leadership in the book of Job, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, Ben Sira and Baruch etc.

⁴⁹⁰ This may include applications to other countries in Africa, Asia, Australia, Middle East, Europe, North and South America etc.

the wise (1:2–4). It fosters leadership at various levels if it is read along with my proposed themes for the leadership texts (status of leaders, code of conduct for leaders, personality of leaders, skills of leaders, actions of leaders, and community's response to leaders). It fosters leadership if the catchwords, repetition, metaphors and other poetic devices in the selected texts are carefully analysed. Furthermore, Proverbs fosters leadership if it is read in the context of the use of proverbs for the development of leaders in the ANE. It also fosters leadership if it is read in the context of the father speaking to his son so that he would pass on the family tradition to the next generation. Another question concerns the sort of leadership that Proverbs fosters. My analysis so far shows that the book of Proverbs is a product of different contexts. Therefore, it has the potential to foster leadership in a variety of contexts (family, political, religious, organisational and educational etc.).

I agree with the paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder that proverbs are not dead, because they 'help us in our everyday life and communication to cope with the complexities of the modern human condition' (Mieder, 1993: xvii). Following Mieder, I would conclude that the wisdom in Proverbs is still speaking today to anyone who wants to approach its complexities with nuance. Leadership is a problem that presses upon us today, just as it did for the writers of Proverbs. The sages used some aphorisms to teach their audience to be better leaders, as well as followers. Yet the book is still relevant for those who want to apply its wisdom to today's leadership settings and systems. The teachings of Proverbs on leadership were set in an ancient system that was quite different from our own. Therefore, its application needs to be done with due caution, a proper hermeneutical approach and good methodology.

Word count: 79,951 (excluding tables, Hebrew texts and translations, references, footnotes and bibliography).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramson, P. A. (2012) *Politics in the Bible*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.
- Achebe, C. (1984) *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Oxford: Heinemann.
- Ackerman, S. (1993) 'The Queen Mother and the Cult in Ancient Israel', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 112, 385–401.
- AdéèKò, A. (1998) *Proverbs, Textuality, and Nativism in African Literature*. Florida: University Florida Press.
- Agbalajobi, D. T. (2010) 'Women's Participation and the Political Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects', *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, 4, 75–82.
- Ahlström, G. W. (1982) *Royal Administration and National Religion in Ancient Palestine*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Aitken, K. (1996) 'נגד', in Vangemeren, W.A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 20–21.
- Aitken, K. T. (1986) *Proverbs*. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew.
- Alden, R. L. (1983) *Proverbs*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Alonso Schökel, L. (1984) *Proverbios*. Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad.
- Alonso Schökel, L. (1988) *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*. Roma: Editrice pontificio Istituto biblico.
- Alter, R. (1985) *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books.
- Anazodo, R. O., Igbokwe-Ibeto, C. J. & Nkah, B. C. (2015) 'Leadership, Corruption and Governance in Nigeria: Issues and Categorical Imperatives', *African Research Review: An International Multidisciplinary Journal, Ethiopia*, 9, 41–58.
- Andreasen, N. E. (1983) 'The Role of the Queen Mother in Israelite Society', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 45, 179–194.
- Ansberry, C. (2009) *Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad: An Exploration of the Courtly Nature of the Book of Proverbs*. Wheaton: Wheaton College.
- Ansberry, C. B. (2011) *Be Wise, My Son, and Make my Heart Glad*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Baines, J. (1990) 'Restricted Knowledge, Hierarchy, and Decorum: Modern Perceptions and Ancient Institutions', *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt*, 27, 1–23.
- Baines, J. (1995b) 'Kingship, Definition of Culture, and Legitimation', in O'Connor, D. & Silverman, D. P. (eds.) *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 3–48.
- Baines, J. (1998) 'Ancient Egyptian Kingship; Official Forms, Rhetoric, Context', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 16–53.
- Baines, J. (2007) *Visual and Written Culture in Ancient Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Baldick, C. (2001) *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Balia, D. (2009) *Making Corruption History*. London: SPCK.
- Bammel, E. (1968) 'The Poor in the Old Testament', in Friedrich, G., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 888–894.
- Bandstra, B. L. (2008) *Reading the Old Testament: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

- Bang, P. F. (ed.) (2013) *The Roman Empire II: The Monarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Barr, J. (2005) *History and Ideology in the Old Testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bartholomew, C. G. (2005) 'In Front of the Text: The Quest of Hermeneutics', in Ballard, P. & Holmes, S. R. (eds.) *The Bible in Pastoral Practice: Readings in the Place and Function of Scripture in the Church*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 135–152.
- Bartholomew, C. G. (2015) *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Barton, J. (1998) 'Introduction', in Barton, J. (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–8.
- Barton, J. & Morgan, R. (1988) *Biblical Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bass, B. M. (1981) *Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research*. London: Collier Macmillan Publishers.
- Beardslee, W. A. (1970) 'Uses of the Proverbs in the Synoptic Gospels', *Interpretation* 24, 61–73.
- Ben-Barak, Z. (1991) 'The Status and Right of the Gēbîrâ', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 110, 23–34.
- Berlin, A. (1994) *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Berlin, A. (2004) 'Reading Biblical Poetry', Berlin, A. & Brettler, M. (eds.) *The Jewish Study Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2097–2104.
- Berlin, A. (2008) *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Bland, D. (1998) 'The Formation of Character in the Book of Proverbs', *Restoration Quarterly* 40, 221–237.
- Blenkinsopp, J. (1995) *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Block, D. (1998) 'Unspeakable Crimes: The Abuse of Women in the Book of Judges', *The Southern Baptist Theological Journal*, 2, 46–55.
- Block, D. (1999) *Judges, Ruth: New American Commentary*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman.
- Blunt, P. & Jones, M. (1997) 'Exploring the Limits of Western Leadership Theory in East Asia and Africa', *Personnel Review*, 26, 6–23.
- Bolden, R. & Kirk, P. (2009) 'Cultural Perspectives: African Leadership: Surfacing New Understandings through Leadership Development', *International Journal of Cross-Cultural Management*, 9, 69–86.
- Borgatta, E. F., Bales, R. F. & Couch, A. S. (1954) 'Some Findings Relevant to the Great Man Theory of Leadership', *American Sociological Review*, 19, 755–759.
- Borowski, O. (1987) *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Boström, L. (1990) *The God of the Sages: The Portrayal of God in the Book of Proverbs*. CBOTS 29, Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell.
- Branson, R. D. (1990) 'Yāser', in Botterweck, G. & Ringgren, H., *The Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Brenner, A. (1995) 'Introduction' in Brenner, A. (ed.) *Feminist Companion to Wisdom Literature*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 11–23.
- Brett, M. G. (1991) *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brettler, M. Z. (1989) *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Bricker, D. P. (1995) 'The Doctrine of the "Two Ways" in Proverbs', *JETS*, 38, 501–517.

- Brisch, N. (2008) 'Introduction', in Brisch, N. (ed.) *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1–11.
- Brown, W. P. (1996) *Character in Crisis*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Brown, W. P. (2002a) 'The Pedagogy of Proverbs 10:1–31:9', in Brown, W. P. (ed.) *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 150–182.
- Brown, W. P. (2002b) *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor*. Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Brown, W. P. (2009) 'Proverbs 8:22–31', *Interpretation*, 63, 286–288.
- Broyles, C. C. (2001) 'Interpreting the Old Testament: Principles and Steps', in Broyle, C. C. (ed.) *Interpreting the Old Testament: A Guide for Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 13–62.
- Brubaker, T. A. (2013) 'Servant Leadership, Ubuntu, and Leader Effectiveness in Rwanda', *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, 6, 114–147.
- Brueggemann, W. (1990) 'The Social Significance of Solomon as a Patron of Wisdom Tradition', in Gammie, J. & Perdue, L. G. (eds.) *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 117–132.
- Bryce, G. E. (1972) 'Another Wisdom-Book' in Proverbs', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 91, 145–157.
- Bryce, G. E. (1979) *A Legacy of Wisdom*. London: Associate University Press.
- Bryce, T. (2006) *The Kingdom of the Hittites*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Budge, W. E. A. (1988) *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Burns, J. M. (1978) *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers
- Camp, C. V. (1985) *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Camp, C. V. (1987) 'Woman Wisdom as Root Metaphor: A Theological Consideration', in Hoglund, K. E. A. (ed.) *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honour of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 45–76.
- Camp, C. V. (1990) 'The Female Sage in Ancient Israel and in the Biblical Wisdom Literature', in Gammie, J. G. & Perdue, L. G. (eds.) *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 185–203.
- Cannella, B., Finkelstein, S. & Hambrick, D. C. (2008) *Strategic Leadership: Theory and Research on Executives, Top Management Teams, and Boards*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carasik, M. (1994) 'Who Were the Men of Hezekiah? (Proverbs XXVI)', *VT*, 44, 291–300.
- Cherrington, E. H. (1925) 'Alcohol in Ancient Near East', in Cherrington, E. H., *Standard Encyclopedia of the Alcohol Problem*. Westerville: American Issue Publishing Co, 405–406.
- Childs, B. S. (1974) *Biblical Theology in Crisis*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press.
- Childs, B. S. (1979) *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*. London: SCM Press.
- Childs, B. S. (1984) *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*. London: SCM Press.
- Childs, B. S. (1993) *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Ciulla, J. B. (2004) 'Leadership Ethics: Mapping the Territory', in Ciulla, J. B. (ed.) *Ethics, the Heart of Leadership*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 3–24.
- Clark, P. (2013) *The Oxford Handbook of Cities in World History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Clifford, R. J. (1995) *The Book of Proverbs and our Search for Wisdom*. Milwaukee: Milwaukee University Press.
- Clifford, R. J. (1999) *Proverbs*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Clines, D. J. (1967) 'Psalm Research Since 1955', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 18, 103–126.
- Clines, D. J. A. (1987) 'The Parallelism of Precision', in Folis, E. R. (ed.) *Directions in Biblical Poetry*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 173–184.
- Clines, D. J. A. (1994) 'Why is There a Song of Songs and What Does it Do to You When You Read it', *Jian Dao: A Journal of Bible and Theology*, 1, 3–27.
- Clines, D. J. A. (1998) *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays 1967–1998*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Collins, A. Y. & Collins, J. J. (2008) *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Collins, C. J. (1996a) 'כבוד', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 577–587.
- Collins, J. (1996b) 'פאר', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 572–574.
- Conger, J. A. (1992) *Learning to Lead: The Art of Transforming Managers into Leaders*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Conzelmann, H. (1971) 'The Mother of Wisdom', in Robinson, J. M. (ed.) *The Future of our Religious Past*. New York: Harper and Row, 230–243.
- Cooper, J. S. (2008) 'Divine Kingship in Mesopotamia, A Fleeting Phenomenon', in Brisch, N. (ed.) *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 261–268.
- Crenshaw, J. L. (1969) 'Method in Determining Wisdom Influence upon Historical Literature', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 88, 129–142.
- Crenshaw, J. L. (1986) 'The Expression *mî yōdēa* in Hebrew Bible', *VT*, 36, 274–288.
- Crenshaw, J. L. (1995) 'A Mother's Instructions to Her Son', in Crenshaw, J. L. (ed.) *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions*. Macon: MUP, 385–395.
- Crenshaw, J. L. (1998) *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Culpepper, R. A. (1982) 'Education', in Bromiley, G. W., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Cundall, A. E. (1969) 'Sacral Kingship—The Old Testament Background', *Vox Evangelica*, 6, 31–41.
- David, R. (1998) *The Ancient Egyptians Beliefs and Practices*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Davidson, R. M. (2006) 'Proverbs 8 and the Place of Christ in the Trinity', *Journal of Adventist Theological Society*, 17, 33–54.
- Davies, E. W. (1980) 'The Meaning of Qesem in Proverbs 16:10', *Biblica*, 61, 554–556.
- Davies, G. I. (1995) 'Were There Schools in Ancient Israel', in Day, J., Gordon, R. P. & Williamson, H. G. M. (eds.) *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: CUP, 199–211.
- Davies, P. R. (2002) 'The False Pen of Scribes: Intellectuals Then and Now', in Clines, D. J. A. & Davies, P. R. (eds.) *Sense and Sensitivity*. JSOT Supplement 348, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Davis, E. F. (2000) *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Davis, R. A. (2010) *The Intangibles of Leadership*. Ontario: Jossey-Bass Publication.

- Day, J. (1995) 'Foreign Semitic Influence on the Wisdom of Israel and its Appropriation in the Book of Proverbs', in Day, J., Gordon, R. P. & Williamson, H. G. M. (eds.) *Wisdom in Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 55–70.
- Day, J. (1998) 'The Canaanite Inheritance of the Israelite Monarchy', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 72–90.
- De Vaux, R. (1961) *Ancient Israel*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Delcogliano, M. (2008) 'Basil of Caesarea on Proverbs 8:22 and the Sources of Pro-Nicene Theology', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 59, 183–190.
- Delitzsch, F. (1983) *Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Delitzsch, F. (1984) *Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Dell, K. J. (1998) 'The King in the Wisdom Literature', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 163–186.
- Dell, K. J. (2000) *Get Wisdom, Get Insight*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Dell, K. J. (2000b) 'Wisdom in Israel', in Mayes, A. D. H. (ed.) *Text in Context*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 348–375.
- Dell, K. J. (2002) *Seeking a Life that Matters: Wisdom for Today from the Book of Proverbs*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- Dell, K. J. (2006a) *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Derue, S. D., Nahrgang, J. D., Wellman, N. & Humphrey, S. E. (2011) 'Trait and Behavioral Theories of Leadership: An Integration and Meta-Analytic Test of their Relative Validity', *Personnel Psychology*, 7–52.
- Domeris, W. R. (1997) 'ebyon', in Vangemeren, W. A. (ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis (NIDOTTE)*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Driver, G. R. (1951) 'Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs', *Biblica*, 32, 193–197.
- Dubrin, A. J. (2012) *Leadership: Research Findings, Practice, and Skills*. Mason: Cengage Learning.
- Duerst-Lahti, G. & Kelly, R. M. (1995) *Gender Power, Leadership, and Governance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Duignan, P. A. & Macpherson, R. J. S. (1992) *Educative Leadership: A Practical Theory for New Administrators and Managers*. London: Falmer.
- Durant, K. E. (2010) *Imitation of God as a Principle for Ethics Today: A Study of Selected Psalms*. PhD, University of Birmingham.
- Eaton, J. H. (1986) *Kingship and the Psalms*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Ebegbulem, J. C. (2012) 'Corruption and Leadership Crisis in Africa: Nigeria in Focus', *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3, 221–227.
- Eco, U. (2002) *On Literature*. Orlando: Harcourt.
- Els, P. J. J. S. (1996) 'אֶהָב', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 277–299.
- Emmerson, G. I. (1989) 'Women in Ancient Israel' in Clement, R. E. (ed.) *The World of Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 371–394.
- Enns, P. (1996) 'מִצְפָּט', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1142–1144.
- Epsztein, L. (1983) *Social Justice in the Ancient near East and the people of the Bible*. London: SCM.

- Fagbemi, S. A. (2007) *Who are the Elect in 1 Peter? A Study in Biblical Exegesis and Its Application to the Anglican Church of Nigeria*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Farmer, K. A. (1991) *Proverbs & Ecclesiastes: Who Knows What is Good*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Fiedler, F. (1972) 'Personality, Motivational Systems and Behaviour of High and Low LPC Persons', *Human Relations*, 25, 391–412.
- Fiedler, F., Chemers, M. & Mahar, L. (1976) *Improving Leadership Effectiveness: The Leader Match Concept*. New York: John Wiley.
- Finkbeiner, D. (1995) 'An Analysis of the Structure of Proverbs 28 and 29', *Calvary Baptist Theological Journal*, 11, 1–14.
- Finkelstein, I., Mazar, A. & Schmidt, B. B. (2007) *The Quest for the Historical Israel*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Fiorenza, E. S. (1975) 'Wisdom Mythology and the Christological Hymns of the New Testament', in Wilken, R. L. (ed.) *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 17–41.
- Fisch, H. (1988) *Poetry with a Purpose: Biblical Poetics and Interpretation*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Fontaine, C. R. (1995) 'The Social Roles of Women in the World of Wisdom', in Brenner, A. (ed.) *Carole R. Fontaine, The Social Roles of Women in the World of Wisdom*, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 24–49.
- Fontaine, C. R. (1997) 'Proverb Performance in the Hebrew Bible', in Clines, D. J. A. (ed.) *The Poetical Books: A Sheffield Reader*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 316–332.
- Forti, T. L. (2008) *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs*. Leiden: Brill.
- Foster, J. L. (2001) *Ancient Egyptian Literature: An Anthology*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Fox, M. V. (1989) *Qohelet and His Contradictions*. Sheffield: Almond.
- Fox, M. V. (1991) *The Redaction of the Books of Esther: On Reading Composite Texts*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Fox, M. V. (1995) 'World Order and Ma'at: A Crooked Parallel', *JANESCU*, 23, 44–47.
- Fox, M. V. (1996) 'The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs', in M. V. Fox, E. A. (ed.) *Texts, Temples, and Traditions*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 227–239.
- Fox, M. V. (2000) *Proverbs 1–9*. New York: Doubleday.
- Fox, M. V. (2006) 'Editing Proverbs: The Challenge of the Oxford Hebrew Bible', *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*, 32, 1–22.
- Fox, M. V. (2009) *Proverbs 10–31*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fox, M. V. (2015) *Proverbs: An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary*. Atlanta: SBL Press.
- Frandsen, P. J. (2008) 'Aspects of Kingship in Ancient Egypt', in Brisch, N. (ed.) *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 47–73.
- Franzmann, M. (1991) 'The Wheel in Proverbs 20:26 and Ode of Solomon 23:11–16', *Vetus Testamentum*, 41, 121–123.
- Garrett, D. A. (1993) *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon (The American Commentary)*. Nashville: Broadman Press.
- Gerbrandt, G. E. (1986) *Kingship According to the Deuteronomistic History*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.

- Gerleman, G. (1997) 'דָּבָר', in E., J. & Westermann, C., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Gill, R. (2006) *Theory and Practice of Leadership*. London: Sage Publication.
- Gillingham, S. E. (1994) *The Poems and Psalms of the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gillingham, S. E. (1998) *One Bible, Many Voices: Different Approaches to Biblical Studies*. London: SPCK.
- Gillingham, S. E. (1998b) 'The Messiah in the Psalms: A Question of Reception History and the Psalter', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 209–237.
- Goldberg, L. (1980) 'בִּיָּן', in R. Laird Harris, E. A., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago Moody Press.
- Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R. E. & McKee, A. (2013) *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Boston: Harvard Business Press.
- Golka, F. W. (1983) 'Die Israelitische Weisheitsschule oder Des Kaisers neue Kleider', *VT*, 33, 257–270.
- Golka, F. W. (1993) *The Leopard's Spots*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.
- Gowler, D. B. (2000) 'Heteroglossic Trends in Biblical Studies: Polyphonic Dialogues or Clanging Cymbals', *Review and Expositor*, 97, 443–466.
- Grabbe, L. L. (1995) *Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-Historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel*. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International.
- Greenfield, J. C. (1995) 'The Wisdom of Ahiqar', in Day, J., Gordon, R. P. & Williamson, H. G. M. (eds.) *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 43–52.
- Greenleaf, R. K. (1977) *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Grisanti, M. A. (1996) 'תַּעֲבֹה', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 314–318.
- Gros Louis, K. R. R. (1982) 'Some Methodological Considerations', in Gros Louis, K. R. R. & Ackerman, J. S. (eds.) *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narrative*. Nashville: Abingdon, 13–24.
- Gurney, O. R. (1958) 'Hittite Kingship', in Hook, S. H. (ed.) *Myth Ritual and Kingship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 105–121.
- Hallo, W. W. (1997) 'Introduction: The Bible and the Monuments', in Hallo, W. W. (ed.) *The Context of Scripture: Canonical Compositions, Monumental Inscriptions and Archival Documents from the Biblical World*. Leiden: Brill, xxvi–xxvi.
- Hanke, H. A. (1976) 'Bribery', in *Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 653.
- Hardoon, D. & Heinrich, F. (2013) *Global Corruption Barometer 2013*. Berlin: Transparency International.
- Harrison, R. K. (1987) 'Bribery', in Harrison, R. K., *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics*. Nashville Thomas Nelson Publishers, 44.
- Hatton, P. (2008) *Contradiction in the Book of Proverbs: The Deep Waters of Counsel Source*. Ashgate: Society for Old Testament Study monographs.
- Hauerwas, S. (1981) *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

- Heim, K. M. (1998) 'The (God)Forsaken King of Psalm 89: A Historical and Intertextual Enquiry', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 296–322.
- Heim, K. M. (2001) *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver: An Interpretation of Proverbial Clusters in Proverbs 10:1–22:16*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Heim, K. M. (2009) 'Kings and Kingship', in Williamson, H. G. M. & Arnold, B. T., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books (DOTH)*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press.
- Heim, K. M. (2013) *Poetic Imagination in Proverbs: Variant Repetitions and the Nature of Poetry*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Heim, K. M. (2015) 'The Phenomenon and Literature of Wisdom in Its Near Eastern Context and in the Biblical Wisdom Books', in Sæbø, M. (ed.) *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 559–593.
- Hoffmeier, J. K. (1994) 'Egyptians' in Hoerth, A. J., Mattingly, G. L. & Yamauchi, E. M. (eds.) *Peoples of the Old Testament World*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 251–290.
- Hofstede, G. (1980) *Culture's Consequences: International Differences in Work-related Values*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Houglum, D. (2012) 'Myth-Busters: Traditional And Emergent Leadership', *Complexity and Organization*, 14, 25–39.
- House, R. J. & Aditya, R. N. (1997) 'The Social Scientific Study of Leadership: Quo Vadis?', *Journal of Management*, 23, 409–473.
- Houston, W. J. (2006) *Contending for Justice: Ideologies and Theologies of Social Justice in the Old Testament*. London, T&T Clark.
- Hubbard, D. A. (1966) 'The Wisdom Movement and Israel's Covenant Faith', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 3–33.
- Humphreys, W. L. (1978) 'The Motif of the Wise Courtiers in the Book of Proverbs', in Gammie, J. G. E. A. (ed.) *Israelite Wisdom*. Missoula: Scholars, 177–190.
- Hunter, J. D. (2010) *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Imo, C. (2008) 'Evangelicals, Muslims, and Democracy: With Particular Reference to the Declaration of Sharia in Northern Nigeria', in Ranger, T. O. (ed.) *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 37–66.
- Isichei, E. (1997) *A History of African Societies to 1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jackson, T. (2004) *Management and Change in Africa: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. London: Routledge.
- Jacobsen, C. & House, R. J. (2001) 'Dynamics of Charismatic Leadership: A Process Theory, Simulation Model, and Tests', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 75–112.
- Japhet, S. (1993) *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Jenkins, W. O. (1947) 'A Review of Leadership Studies with Particular Reference to Military Problems', *Psychological Bulletin*, 44, 54–79.
- Jin, K. M. (2012) *Teaching on Friendship in the Proverbs of Solomon (Prov 10:1–22:16 and Prov 25–29): A Text-Linguistic Study*. Ph.D Trinity International University.
- Johnson, A. R. (1951) 'The Psalms', in Rowley, H. H. (ed.) *The Old Testament and Modern Study*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 162–209.
- Johnson, A. R. (1955) *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

- Joyce, P. M. (1998) 'King and Messiah in Ezekiel', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 323–337.
- Katongole, E. (2011) *The Sacrifice of Africa: A Political Theology for Africa*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Katz, S. H. & Maytag, F. (1991) 'Brewing an Ancient Beer', *Archaeology*, 44, 24–27.
- Kayatz, C. (1966) *Studien zu Proverbien 1–9: Eine Form- und Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung Ägyptischen Vergleichsmaterials*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener.
- Kidner, D. A. (1964) *The Proverbs*. TOTC, Downers Grove: IVP.
- Kitchen, K. A. (1966) *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*. London: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Kitchen, K. A. (1977) 'Proverbs and Wisdom Books of the Ancient Near East: The Factual History of a Literary Form', *Tyndale Bulletin*, 28, 69–114.
- Konkel, A. (1996a) 'יִי', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 244–245.
- Konkel, A. H. (1996b) 'יְהוָה', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1256–1260.
- Koptak, P. E. (2003) *Proverbs*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Kuada, J. (2010) 'Culture and Leadership in Africa: A Conceptual Model and Research Agenda', *African Journal of Economic and Management Studies*, 1, 9–24.
- Kugel, J. L. (1981) *The Idea of Biblical Poetry*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kuntz, J. K. (1998a) 'Biblical Hebrew Poetry in Recent Research, Part I', *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies*, 6, 31–64.
- Lafreniere, S. L. (2008) *Navigating the Labyrinth: A Study of Gender and Positional Effects on Individuals' Perceptions of Ideal Leadership Qualities Within Evangelical Christian Higher Education*. PhD, Azusa Pacific University.
- Lambert, W. G. (1960) *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lambert, W. G. (1995) 'Some New Babylonian Wisdom Literature', in Day, J., Gordon, R. P. & Williamson, H. G. M. (eds.) *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 30–42.
- Lambert, W. G. (1998) 'Kingship in Ancient Mesopotamia' in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Lang, B. (1986) *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs: A Hebrew Goddess Refined*. New York: Pilgrim.
- Lange, J. P. (1960) *Commentary on the Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Launderville, D. (2010) *Celibacy in the Ancient World: Its Ideal and Practice in Pre-Hellenistic Israel, Mesopotamia, and Greece*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press.
- Lawal, T., Imokhuede, K. & Johnson, I. (2012) 'Governance Crisis and the Crisis of Leadership in Nigeria', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2, 185–191.
- Lawal, T. & Owolabi, D. (2012) 'Leadership Debacle: The Bane of Good Governance in Nigeria', *Afro Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, 3, 1–12.
- Lemche, N. P. (2008) *The Old Testament Between Theology and History: A Critical Survey*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Lenzi, A. (2006) 'Proverbs 8:22–31: Three Perspectives on Its Composition', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 125, 687–714.
- Lerner, G. (1989) *The Creation of Patriarchy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Levinson, B. M. (2001) 'The Reconceptualization of Kingship in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History's Transformation of Torah', *Vetus Testamentum*, 51, 511–534.
- Lichtheim, M. (1973) *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lichtheim, M. (1976) *Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Lillas, R. (2012) *Hendiadys in the Hebrew Bible: An Investigation of the Applications of the Term*. PhD Dissertation, University of Gothenburg.
- Loader, J. A. (1999) 'Wisdom by (the) People for (the) People', *ZAW*, 111, 211–233.
- Loader, J. A. (2014) *Proverbs 1–9: Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*. Leuven, Peeters.
- Locke, E. A. (1999) *The Essence of Leadership: The Four Keys to Leading Successfully*. Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Lodge, D. & Wood, N. (eds.) (2008) *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Long, V. P. (1994) *The Art of Biblical History*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Longman, T. (1987) *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*. Leicester: Apollos.
- Longman, T. (1988) *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press.
- Longman, T. (2006) *Proverbs*. Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Lucas, E. C. (2008) 'Poetics, Terminology of', in Longman, T. & Enns, P., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Wisdom, Poetry and Writings*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 520–525.
- Lucas, E. C. (2015) *Proverbs*. Cambridge: WM.B Eerdmans.
- Lyons, W. J. (2002) *Canon and Exegesis: Canonical Praxis and the Sodom Narrative*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Lyu, S. M. (2012) *Righteousness in the Book of Proverbs*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Malchow, B. V. (1982) 'Social Justice in the Wisdom Literature', *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 12, 120–124.
- Malchow, B. V. (1985) 'A Manual for Future Monarchs', *CBQ*, 47, 238–245.
- Malchow, B. V. (1996) *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible: What is New and what is Old*. Minnesota: Liturgical Press.
- Mann, R. D. (1959) 'A Review of the Relationships between Personality and Performance in Small Groups', *Psychological Bulletin*, 56, 241–270.
- Martens, E. A. (1996) 'קָוָה', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 903–905.
- Mason, R. (1998) 'The Messiah in the Post-exilic Old Testament Literature', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 338–364.
- Mcconville, J. G. (1998) 'King and Messiah in Deuteronomy and Deuteronomistic History', Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 271–295.
- Mccreesh, T. (1985) 'Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10–31', *Research Bulletin*, 25–46.
- Mckane, W. (1970) *Proverbs*. London: SCM.
- Mckay, H. A. (1999) 'Gendering the Body: Clothes Maketh the Woman', in Hannaford, R. & Jobling, J. (eds.) *Theology and the Body: Gender, Text and Ideology*. Leominster: Gracewing, 84–104.
- Mckenzie, S. L. (2000) 'The Trouble with Kingship', in Pury, A. & Al, E. (eds.) *Israel Constructs Its History: Deuteronomistic Historiography in Recent Research*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 286–314.

- Mckenzie, S. L. (2004) *1–2 Chronicles, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Mckinley, J. E. (1996) *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Melchert, C. F. (1998) *Wise Teachings: Biblical Wisdom and Educational Ministry*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Merrill, E. H. (1996) 'חֲכָמָה', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 1266–1267.
- Mieder, W. (1993) *Proverbs are Never Out of Season: Popular Wisdom in the Modern Age*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mieder, W. (2004) *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press.
- Millard, A. (1975) '(to Exult) עֲלֵץ', *JTS*, 26, 87–89.
- Montgomery, D. J. (2000) 'A Bribe is a Charm: A Study of Proverbs 17:8', Packer, J. I. & Soderlund, S. J. (eds.) *The Way of Wisdom: Essay in Honour of Bruce Waltke*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 134–149.
- Morrison, K. F. (2014) *I Am You: The Hermeneutics of Empathy in Western Literature, Theology and Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mowinkel, S. (1959) 'General, Oriental, and Specific Israelite Elements in the Israelite Conception of the Sacral Kindgom', Brill, E. J. (ed.) *Studies in the History of Religions: The Sacral Kingship*. Leiden: Brill.
- Mowinkel, S. (1928) 'Hypostasen', in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2065–2068.
- Mumford, M. & J., V. D. (2001) 'The Leadership of Pragmatism: Reconsidering Franklin in the Age of Charisma', *The Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 279–309.
- Murphy, R. E. (1988b) 'Wisdom and Eros in Proverbs 1–9', *CBQ*, 50, 600–603.
- Murphy, R. E. (1996) *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Murphy, R. E. (1998) *Proverbs. WBC*, Dallas: Word.
- Nagarajan, C. (2016) *What has President Buhari Delivered for Nigerian Women? No Change* [Online]. London: Guardian Newspaper. Available: <https://http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/16/president-buhari-nigeria-women-politics> [Accessed 15 June 2017].
- Nakhai, B. A. (ed.) (2008) *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Nel, P. J. (1982) *The Structure and Ethos of the Wisdom Admonitions in Proverbs*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Nichols, G. (1999) 'A Case for Bribery: Giving Versus Taking', *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 35, 30–37.
- Noonan, J. T. (1984) *Bribes*. New York: MacMillan.
- Northouse, P. G. (2013) *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. London: Sage Publication.
- Nwagboso, C. O. & Duke, O. (2012) 'Nigeria and the Challenges of Leadership in the 21st Century: A Critique', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2, 230–237.
- O' Connor, K. M. (1988) *The Wisdom Literature*. Wilmington: Michael Glazier.
- O'Connor, D. (1974) 'Political Systems and Archaeological Data in Egypt: 2600–1780 B.C.', *World Archaeology*, 6, 15–38.
- Ochulor, C. L. (2011) 'Failure of Leadership in Nigeria', *American Journal of Social and Management Sciences*, 2, 265–271.

- Oesterley, W. O. E. (1929) *The Book of Proverbs*. London: Methuen.
- Ogbeidi, M. M. (2012) 'Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-economic Analysis', *Journal of Nigeria Studies*, 1, 1–25.
- Okafor, E. E. & Akokuwebe, M. E. (2015) 'Women and Leadership in Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects', *Developing Country Studies*, 5, 1–11.
- Okafor, V. O. (2013) *A Roadmap for Understanding African Politics: Leadership and Political Integration in Nigeria*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Olajubu, O. A. (2002) 'Conceptual Analysis of Leadership Structures in Yoruba Religion and Christianity in Nigeria', *Dialogue & Alliance*, 16, 52–61.
- Olmstead, A. T. (1918) 'Assyrian Government of Dependencies', *The American Political Science Review*, 12, 63–77.
- Olu-Adeyemi, L. (2012) 'The Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria', *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 3, 167–171.
- Orwenjo, D. O. (2009b) 'Political Grandstanding and the Use of Proverbs in African Political Discourse', *Discourse & Society*, 20, 123–146.
- Osborne, G. R. (1991) *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. Downers Grove: IVP.
- Pardee, D. (1988) *Ugaritic and Hebrew Poetic Parallelism*. Leiden, E.J. Brill.
- Peel, M. (2006) *Nigeria-Related Financial Crime and Its Link with Britain*. Chatham House: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
- Perdue, L. G. (2000) *Proverbs*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Pleins, J. D. (2001) *The Social Visions of the Hebrew Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Pritchard, J. B. (1969) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Quant, J. F. (2014) *Rewriting Scripture Inside and Out: A Typology of Rewriting in Variant Editions and Rewritten Scripture*. PhD, Emory University.
- Quirke, S. (2001) *The Cult of Ra: Sun-Worship in Ancient Egypt*. New York: Thames and Hudson.
- Radwan, A. (1985) Einige Aspekte der Vergöttlichung des ägyptischen Königs. *Ägypten, Dauer und Wandel*. Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 53–69.
- Rahlf, A. (1979) *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum Graeca Juxta LXX Interpretes*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
- Raimi, L., Suara, I. B. & Fadipe, A. O. (2013) 'Role of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) at Ensuring Accountability and Corporate Governance in Nigeria', *Journal of Business Administration and Education*, 3, 105–122.
- Ray, J. D. (1995) 'Egyptian Wisdom Literature' in Day, J., Gordon, R. P. & Williamson, H. G. M. (eds.) *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 17–29.
- Robins, G. (1993) *Women in Ancient Egypt*. London: British Museum.
- Roger, G. (2011) *Theory and Practice of Leadership*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Rooke, D. W. (1998) 'Kingship as Priesthood: The Relationship between the High Priesthood and the Monarchy' in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 187–208.
- Rost, J. C. (1993) *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*. Westport: Praeger Publishers.
- Rowe, I. M. (2008) *Scribes, Sages, and Seers in Ugarit and Syria*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & co.
- Ruwhiu, D. & Cone, M. (2013) 'Pragmatic Leadership: A Return to Wisdom', *Journal of Management and Organization*, 19, 25–43.

- Ryken, L. (1990) 'The Bible as Literature (Part 1)', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 147, 3–15.
- Sadler, P. (2003) *Leadership*. London: Kogan Page.
- Salvesen, A. (1998) 'The Trappings of Royalty in Ancient Hebrew', Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 119–141.
- Sanders, J. A. (1984) *Canon and Community: A Guide to Canonical Criticism*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Sanders, J. A. (1987) *From Sacred Story to Sacred Text: Canon as Paradigm*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press.
- Sandoval, T. J. (2005) *The Discourse of Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*. Leiden: Brill.
- Sandoval, T. J. (2007) 'Revisiting the Prologue of Proverbs', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 126, 455–473.
- Sandoval, T. J. (2008) *Money and the Way of Wisdom: Insights from the Book of Proverbs*. Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing.
- Sandy-Wunsch, J. H. & Eldredge, L. (1980) 'J.P. Gabler and the Distinction between Biblical and Dogmatic Theology: Translation, Commentary and Discussion of His Originality', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 33, 133–158.
- Schmoldt, H. (2001) 'עֵתֶק', in Botterweck, G. J., Ringgren, H. & Fabry, H., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Schneider, T. J. (2011) *An Introduction to Ancient Mesopotamian Religion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Schomp, V. (2008) *The Ancient Egyptian*. New York: Marshall Cavendish.
- Schwáb, Z. (2013) 'The Sayings Clusters in Proverbs: Towards an Associative Reading Strategy', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 38, 59–79.
- Schwáb, Z. (2016) 'I, the Fool: A “Canonical” Reading of Proverbs 26:4–5', *Journal of Theological Interpretation*, 10, 31–50.
- Scott, R. B. Y. (1955) 'Solomon and the Beginnings of Wisdom in Israel', in Noth, M. & Thomas, D. W. (eds.) *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East*. Leiden: Brill, 262–279.
- Scott, R. B. Y. (1965) *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation and Notes*. Garden City: Doubleday.
- Scott, R. B. Y. (1971) *The Way of Wisdom in the Old Testament*. London: Collier-Macmillan.
- Scott, R. B. Y. (1972) 'Wise and Foolish, Righteous and Wicked', *VTSup*, 23, 146–165.
- Shankansky, I. (1996) *Israel and Its Bible: A Political Analysis*. New York: Garland.
- Shearing, L. S. (1997) 'A Wealth of Women: Looking Behind, Within and Beyond Solomon's Story', in Handy, L. K. (ed.) *The Age of Solomon: Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*. Leiden: Brill, 428–456.
- Shepherd, J. E. (1996) 'מֵאֵזֶן', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 829–830.
- Shupak, N. (2011) 'Female Imagery in Proverbs 1–9 in the Light of Egyptian Sources', *Vetus Testamentum*, 61, 310–323.
- Silverman, D. P. (1995) 'The Nature of Egyptian Kingship', in O'Connor, D. & Silverman, D. P. (eds.) *Ancient Egyptian Kingship*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 49–94.
- Sinnott, A. N. (2005) *The Personification of Wisdom*. Hants: Ashgate.
- Skehan, P. W. (1971a) 'A Single Editor for the Whole of Proverbs', *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*. CBQMS 1, Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 15–26.

- Skehan, P. W. (1971b) 'The Seven Columns of Wisdom's House in Proverbs 1–9', *Studies in the Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*. CBQMS 1, Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 9–14.
- Skehan, P. W. (1971c) 'Wisdom's House', *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*. CBQMS 1, Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 27–45.
- Skehan, P. W. (1976) 'A Single Editor for the Whole Book of Proverbs', in Crenshaw, J. L. (ed.) *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*. New York: KTAV, 329–340.
- Skladny, U. (1962) *Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen in Israel*. Gottmgen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- Smith, C. (1998) 'Queenship in Israel? The Case Bathsheba, Jezebel and Athaliah', Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 142–162.
- Smith, G. V. (1982a). 'The Concept of God /The Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible', *Trinity Journal*, 3, 18–38.
- Smith, G. V. (1982b) 'The Concept of God/the Gods as King in the Ancient Near East and the Bible', *Trinity Journal*, 3, 18–38.
- Snell, D. C. (1989) 'The Wheel in Proverbs 20:26', *Vetus Testamentum*, 39, 503–507.
- Snell, D. C. (1993) *Twice-told Proverbs and the Composition of the Book of Proverbs*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Soniya, T. (2017) *As APC Nears Boiling Points* [Online]. Available: <https://http://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2017/03/13/as-apc-nears-boiling-points/> [Accessed 21 June 2017].
- Spears, L. C. (2003) 'Understanding the Growing Impact of Servant-Leadership', Greenleaf, R. K. (ed.) *The Servant-Leader Within: A Transformative Path*. New York: Paulist Press, 13–27.
- Spence, H. D. M. (1974) *The Pulpit Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Stewart, A. W. (2016) *Poetic Ethics in Proverbs: Wisdom Literature and the Shaping of the Moral Self*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stogdill, R. M. (1948) 'Personal Factors Associated with Leadership: A Survey of the Literature', *Journal of Psychology*, 25, 35–71.
- Stokes, R. E. (2008) 'I, Yhwh, Have Not Changed? Reconsidering the Translation of Malachi 3:6; Lamentations 4:1; and Proverbs 24:21–22', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 70, 264–276.
- Strong, J. (1997) *Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*. Albany: Books for the Ages
- Stuart, D. (2001) *Old Testament Exegesis*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Sweet, R. F. G. (1990) 'The Sage in Akkadian Literature: A Philological Study', in Gammie, J. G. & Perdue, L. G. (eds.) *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 45–65.
- Tanzi, V. (1998) *Corruption Around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope, and Cures*. France: Fiscal Affairs Department, International Monetary Fund.
- Tate, W. R. (2000) *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach*. Peabody: Hendrickson.
- Taylor, A. (1931) *The Proverb*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Thiele, E. R. (1983) *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Thiselton, A. C. (1992) *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

- Thompson, J. A. & Martens, E. A. (1996) 'פָּה', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 583–584.
- Thomson, D. (1996) 'נִהָם', in Vangemeren, W. A., *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 44–45.
- Tov, E. (1999) *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint*. Leiden: Brill.
- Toy, C. H. (1977) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*. ICC, Edinburgh: T&T Clark.
- Tracy, B. (2014) *Leadership*. New York: AMACOM Books.
- Transparency, (2013) *Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index 2013*. Berlin
- Van Leeuwen, R. C. (1986a) 'Proverbs 30:21–23 and the Biblical World Upside Down', *JBL*, 105, 599–610.
- Van Leeuwen, R. C. (1986c) 'A Technical–Metallurgical Usage of *ys*', *ZAW*, 98, 112–113.
- Van Leeuwen, R. C. (1988) *Context and Meaning in Proverbs 25–27*. Atlanta: Scholars Press.
- Von Rad, G. (1962) *Old Testament Theology*. New York: Harper.
- Von Rad, G. (1972) *Wisdom in Israel*. London: SCM.
- Vynmeister, N. J. (2001) *Quality Research Paper for Students of Religion and Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Waard, J. (2008) *Biblia Hebraica Quinta (Proverbs)*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.
- Wagner, J. R. (1999) 'From the Heavens to the Heart: The Dynamics of Psalm 19 as Prayer', *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 61, 245–261.
- Waldman, N. M. (1976–77) 'A Note on Excessive Speech and Falsehood', *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 67, 142–145.
- Waltke, B. K. (2004) *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 1–15*. NICOT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Waltke, B. K. (2005) *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15–31*. NICOT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Waltke, B. K. (2007) *An Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Waltke, B. K. & O'connor, M. (1990a) *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Waltke, B. K. & O'connor, M. P. (1990b) *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Walton, J. H. (2007) *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*. Nottingham: Apollos.
- Washington, H. C. (1994) *Wealth and Poverty in the Instruction of Amenemope and the Hebrew Proverbs*. SBL 142, Atlanta: Scholars.
- Watkins, D. (2008) *The Common Factors Between Coaching Cultures and Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, and High-performance Organizational Cultures*. Ann Arbor: ProQuest.
- Watson, W. G. E. (1984) *Classical Hebrew Poetry: A Guide to Its Techniques (JSOTSup 26)*. Sheffield: JSOT Press.
- Weeks, S. (1994) *Early Israelite Wisdom*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Weeks, S. (2006) 'The Context and Meaning of Proverbs 8:30a', *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 125, 433–442.
- Weeks, S. (2010) *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature*. London: T & T Clark.
- Weinfeld, M. (1982) 'The King as Servant of the People: The Source of the Idea', *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 33, 189–194.

- Weinfeld, M. (1995a) *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*. Jerusalem: Magnes.
- Weinfeld, M. (1995b) 'דָּבָר', in G.J. Botterweck, Ringgren, H. & Fabry, H., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 22–38.
- Westenholz, J. G. (1990) 'Towards a New Conceptualization of the Female Role in Mesopotamian Society', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 110, 510–521.
- Whitelam, K. W. (1979) *The Just King: Monarchical Judicial Authority in Ancient Israel*. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Whitelam, K. W. (1992) 'King and Kingship', in Freedman, D. N., *The Anchor Bible Dictionary (K–N)*. London: Doubleday, 41–48.
- Whybray, R. N. (1965) *Wisdom in Proverbs (Study in Bible Theology)*. London: SCM.
- Whybray, R. N. (1974) *The Intellectual Tradition of the Old Testament*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Whybray, R. N. (1989a) 'Poverty, Wealth, and Point of View in Proverbs', *Expository Times*, 100, 332–336.
- Whybray, R. N. (1989b) 'The Social World of the Wisdom Writers', in Clements, R. E. (ed.) *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 227–250.
- Whybray, R. N. (1990a) *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Whybray, R. N. (1990b) 'The Sage in Israelite Royal Court', in Gammie, J. G. & Perdue, L. G. (eds.) *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 133–140.
- Whybray, R. N. (1994a) *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*. Sheffield: JSOT.
- Whybray, R. N. (1994b) *Proverbs*. NCBC, London: Marshall Pickering.
- Whybray, R. N. (1995) *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study*. Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Widdicombe, P. (2011) 'A Trinity of Delight: Proverbs 8:30–31 and its Theological Interpretation in Patristic Thought', *Theoforum*, 42, 119–133.
- Wildung, D. (1973) 'Gottlichkeitsstufen des Pharao', *OLZ*, 69, 549–565.
- Wilkinson, T. H. A. (2000) 'What a King is This: Narmer and the Concept of the Ruler', *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 86, 23–32.
- Williamson, H. G. M. (1998) 'Messianic Texts in Isaiah 1–39', in Day, J. (ed.) *King and Messiah in Israel and the ancient Near East*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Wilson, F. M. (1987) 'Sacred and Profane?: The Yahwistic Redaction of Proverbs Reconsidered', in K. Høglund, E. A. (ed.) *The Listening Heart: Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honour of Ronald Murphy*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 313–334.
- Winston, B. E. & Patterson, K. (2006) 'An Integrative Definition of Leadership', *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 1, 6–66.
- Winter, I. J. (2008) 'Touched by the Gods: Visual Evidence for the Divine Status of Rulers in the Ancient Near East', in Brisch, N. (ed.) *Religion and Power: Divine Kingship in the Ancient World and Beyond*. Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 75–101.
- Yammarino, F. J. & Dubinsky, A. J. (1994) 'Transformational Leadership Theory: Using Levels of Analysis to Determine Boundary Conditions', *Personnel Psychology*, 47, 787–811.
- Yee, G. A. (1989) 'I have Perfumed my Bed with Myrrh: The Foreign Woman in (ʾišša zārâ) Proverbs 1–9', *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 13, 53–68.

- Yimer, M. (2015) 'Governance and Leadership Challenges in Africa', *International Journal of Political Science and Development*, 3, 129–137.
- Yoder, C. R. (2001) *The Woman of Substance: A Socio-economic Reading of Proverbs 1–9 and 31:10–31*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Yoder, C. R. (2003) 'The Woman of Substance: A Socio-economic Reading of Proverbs 31:10–31', *JBL*, 122, 427–447.
- Yoder, C. R. (2009) 'On the Threshold of Kingship: A Study of Agur (Proverbs 30)', *Interpretation*, 63, 254–263.
- Zaccaro, S. J., Kemp, C. & Bader, P. (2004) 'Leader Traits and Attributes', in Antonakis, J., Cianciolo, A. T. & Sternberg, R. J. (eds.) *The Nature of Leadership*. London: Sage Publications, 101–124.
- Zuck, R. B. (1999) 'A Theology of the Wisdom Books and the Song of Songs', Zuck, R. B. (ed.) *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody, 219–232.
- Zulu, I. M. (2009) *Axioms of Kemet: Instructions for Today from Ancient Egypt*. Los Angeles: Amen–Ra Theological Seminary Press.