

Large-Scale Transposition as an Editorial Technique in the Textual History of the Hebrew Bible

Ville Mäkipelto, Timo Tekoniemi, Miika Tucker¹
University of Helsinki

Abstract: This article examines the editorial technique of large-scale transpositions through three case studies from the Hebrew Bible. There is documented evidence from various textual witnesses that Josh 8:30–35, 1 Kgs 22:41–51, and the oracles against the nations in Jeremiah have been transposed during the transmission of these books. Insights gained from these cases illuminate the use of this editorial technique. All three transpositions reflect theological motivations related to meanings attributed to certain places, events, people, and revered texts. Transpositions of large textual units were generally achieved by two scribal methods: swapping the order of two sequential textual units or relocating a textual unit to a new context. The latter procedure led to compensatory revisions both within and around the texts. The article also discusses the methodology of studying transpositions and their text-critical evaluation.

Introduction

In recent biblical studies there has been an increasing interest in investigating the editorial techniques used by ancient scribes in the light of “hard” evidence. Several new publications focus on the documented or “empirical” evidence of various editorial techniques employed by scribes involved in the creation and transmission of the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Near Eastern literary works.² Documented or “empirical” evidence refers to texts of which several variant editions survive, either within one textual tradition (e.g., Ps 18 MT and 2 Sam 22 MT) or between multiple different textual traditions (MT, LXX, SP, Qumran, etc.). In such instances, one can compare the variant text forms and observe the differences. Therefore, conclusions are on more solid ground than in literary and redaction criticism where assumptions of editing are often made based on clues within only one text. This trend also means that the influence of textual criticism in the diachronic study of biblical texts has grown since textual criticism, by definition, deals with documented textual changes. Despite this growing interest, many single editorial techniques remain understudied. This study contributes to this task by examining the editorial technique usually called *transposition*.

¹ Authors are listed in alphabetical order. Every author contributed an equal amount to this article. The authors would like to thank Tuukka Kauhanen and Juha Pakkala for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article.

² See, for example, R. Müller, J. Pakkala, and B. ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014); R. F. Person Jr. and R. Rezisko, eds., *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016); S. J. Milstein, *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (Oxford: University Press, 2016); and R. Müller and J. Pakkala, eds., *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, CBET 84 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017).

Transposition is a well-documented editorial phenomenon in the textual witnesses of the Hebrew Bible. Textual evidence, especially from the Septuagint and Qumran, reveals that sometimes single words, phrases, sentences, and larger textual units have been transposed in the transmission of several texts in the Hebrew Bible.³ This study illuminates various aspects of large-scale transpositions as an ancient editorial technique. By large-scale we refer to the transposition of one or more verses. Why did scribes relocate textual units? How did scribes execute a transposition and what were the requirements for these types of changes? How did transpositions affect both the transposed text and the surrounding context? Would it be possible to recognize a transposition without documented evidence? While aspects of transpositions have been previously studied in some detail, this study offers new insights by bringing together different kinds of texts and textual witnesses.

In this contribution, we also address questions related to the study of large-scale transpositions. When scholars are confronted with two or more textual witnesses, in which a certain textual unit is found in different locations, how can they evaluate what has happened to the text? While transpositions themselves are quite easy to locate with textual evidence, it is often much harder to assess the question of the *more original placement* of the moving textual units. The three cases in this study will offer guidelines for determining the more likely direction of change.

The aims of this study will be accomplished through the analysis of three documented cases of transpositions. The case examples from Joshua, 1 Kings, and Jeremiah are transpositions of larger textual units. Such transpositions often have major consequences for the text and narrative. However, the lengths of the transposed textual units also differ from two verses to several chapters allowing us a glimpse at different kinds of textual contexts and different kinds of techniques of transposing. The nature of the texts is also different making it possible to reach some generalizations on the technique of large-scale transposing. Furthermore, in all three cases we conclude that the LXX reflects a different Hebrew *Vorlage* which preserves the earliest discernible sequence. Given the literal translation profile of the LXX translators of Joshua, 1 Kings, and Jeremiah, one should not assume that the translators would have changed the sequence of the text. Such radical editorial intrusions did not belong to the toolbox of these translators.⁴ Thus, the transpositions have taken place in the proto-MT phase of editing. We are therefore most likely observing transpositions made quite late by scribes in the last two centuries of the Second Temple period.⁵

³ See, for example, E. Tov, “Some Sequence Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint and Their Ramifications for Literary Criticism,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, VTSup 72 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 411–18; Müller, Pakkala, and ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence*, 206–8; and J. Trebolle, “Division Marker as Empirical Evidence for the Editorial Growth of Biblical Books,” in Person and Rezetko, *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism*, 165–216.

⁴ See, e.g., E. Tov, “Literary Development of the Book of Joshua as Reflected in the MT, the LXX, and 4QJosh^a,” in *The Book of Joshua*, ed. E. Noort (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 66–67; Tov, “Three Strange Books of the LXX: 1 Kings, Esther, and Daniel Compared with Similar Rewritten Compositions from Qumran and Elsewhere,” in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)*, Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006, ed. M. Karrer and W. Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 372–74; and A. G. Shead, “Jeremiah,” in *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, ed. J. K. Aitken (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 474, 479.

⁵ K. De Troyer, *Rewriting the Sacred Text: What the Old Greek Tells Us about the Literary Growth of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 57; A. Schenker, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher: Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004), 185–94; and A. Aejmelaeus, “Jeremiah at the Turning Point of History: The Function of Jer XXV 1–14 in the Book of Jeremiah,” VT 52 (2002): 460.

Transposition Related to the Altar Scene in Josh 8:30–35

Joshua 8:30–35 describes the construction of an altar by Joshua at Mt. Ebal followed by the writing and reading of the law. The scene is a fulfillment of the commandment given by Moses in Deut 27:1–8. Parts of the altar scene are found in three different locations in various textual witnesses. First, in the MT the altar scene is situated after the destruction of Ai (Josh 8:1–29) but before the notice that kings united to fight against the Israelites (Josh 9:1–2). Second, in OG the altar scene is located in Josh 9:2a–f after the kings have united to fight against the Israelites.⁶ Third, 4QJosh^a locates the reading of the law (Josh 8:34–35) early in the sequence of Joshua immediately after the crossing of Jordan and just before the circumcision scene in Josh 5:2ff. According to 4QJosh^a, the reading of the Torah and possibly the building of the altar therefore took place at Gilgal.⁷ However, the latter part of Josh 8 and the whole of Josh 9 is not preserved in the Qumran material; thus, it is not clear whether the altar scene was also located later. Moreover, the Old Latin *Codex Lugdunensis* (OL) follows the OG order but duplicates the report of the kings uniting to fight against the Israelites by giving a new translation of it after the altar scene.⁸ In this way, in OL the altar scene is enveloped within two similar reports.⁹

OG	MT	OL	4QJosh ^a frgs. 1–2
Destruction of Ai (8:1–29)	Destruction of Ai (8:1–29) Altar scene (8:30–35)	Destruction of Ai (8:1–29)	End of the altar scene (8:34–35)
Kings unite against Israel (9:1–2)	Kings unite against Israel (9:1–2)	Kings unite against Israel (8:29b)	Transitional clause (5:X)
Altar scene (9:2a–f)		Altar scene (9:2a–f)	Circumcision at Gilgal (5:2–7)
Gibeonites (9:3ff.)	Gibeonites (9:3ff.)	Kings unite against Israel (9:1–2)	
		Gibeonites (9:3ff.)	

⁶ The OG sequence is preserved in the majority of the LXX manuscripts, including the important witnesses B-120 and the Antiochene subgroup 54-75. There are twenty Greek manuscripts that follow the sequence in the MT. This is likely due to late Hexaplaric revision since the MT sequence is found in the Hexaplaric manuscripts 19-376-426.

⁷ 4QJosh^a is fragmentary, and it is not certain whether the whole altar scene or only parts of it were located at this point. In frg. 1, one can read the last word of verse 8:34 and most of verse 8:35. This is followed by a unique transitional clause (usually called 5:X) and the beginning of the circumcision scene in 5:2–3, which then continues in frg. 2. For a reconstruction of 4QJosh^a see E. Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Developmental Composition of the Bible*, VTSup 169 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 50–51.

⁸ For a comparison of the duplicate translations in Josh 8:29 OL and Josh 9:1–2 OL, see M. Margolis, “Additions to Field from the Lyons Codex of the Old Latin,” JAOS (1913): 257–58. According to Margolis, the duplication is a late insertion intended to bring the text closer to the MT.

⁹ Moreover, according to Josephus (*Ant.* 5.16–19), Joshua built an altar right after crossing the Jordan and again later after the tabernacle was set up at Shiloh (Josh 18:1). Pseudo-Philo also recalls that Joshua built an altar at Gilgal (LAB 21.7), but also knows of an altar built later at Shechem. It is questionable whether these quite free retellings of biblical history by Josephus and Pseudo-Philo can be used as central arguments in the text-critical discussion.

It is most likely that OG preserves the earliest location for the altar scene. The locations in 4QJosh^a and MT are a result of later scribal editing. This most probable textual development is revealed by distinct ideological concerns and literary features related to MT and 4QJosh^a.

First, Kristin De Troyer has illustrated that MT has undergone editing that wishes to highlight the function of Gilgal as Joshua's base camp. OG reflects an earlier Hebrew version, which had not yet undergone this editing. Gilgal plays an important role in the book of Joshua as the first place that the Israelites encountered after crossing the Jordan. A comparison of the OG and MT versions of Josh 10 reveals that several annotations of the return of Joshua to Gilgal after various battles have been added in the proto-MT phase of editing.¹⁰ We can assume that Josh 9 was likewise important for this editor because the chapter describes the initial encounters with the coalition of kings at Gilgal (9:6). Since the proto-MT editing was concerned with the importance of Gilgal, there would have been a motive to remove the mention of Mt. Ebal further away from the chapters dealing with Gilgal (9–10) since Mt. Ebal had a negative connotation as the mountain of curses.¹¹ In addition, the OG sequence is more intrusive in the narrative since the altar scene disrupts the notice that the kings united to fight (9:1–2) and the beginning of the Gibeonites' effort (9:3ff). Therefore, it is more probable that a late transposition would wish to bring Josh 9:1–2 and 3ff. closer to one another rather than further away. This assumption is corroborated by the late mixture of readings in OL which reveals that subsequent editors perceived Josh 9:1–2 as an integral part of Josh 9:3ff; that is, while following the OG, the OL held it necessary to repeat Josh 9:1–2 after the altar scene.

Moreover, Josh 8 has also undergone thorough editing in the proto-MT phase, which has given the capture of Ai a more theological nature: the MT depicts the battle as a “theological story of divine command and judgment against the city.”¹² A suitable conclusion for this theologizing editing of chapter 8 was the building of the altar and reading of the law. Therefore, the transposition of the altar scene to an earlier location in the narrative seems to be connected not only with Gilgal but with wider ideological motivations behind the proto-MT editing of Josh 8–10.

Second, 4QJosh^a conforms exactly to Deut 27 in that the reading of the law takes place immediately after the crossing of Jordan. If the location of the scene in 4QJosh^a was the earliest, there would have been no reason for a Hebrew editor to move it away from a position that perfectly executes the commandment in Deuteronomy. The other way around, however, a transposition is plausible as a harmonization towards Deuteronomy.¹³ In fact, Josh 5 seems to have been a junction in the book of Joshua which attracted the attention of editors who wanted to show that the Israelites were faithful to the law before the successful taking of the land. This is apparent in the comparison between Josh 5 OG and MT, which reveals that the circumcision account has been edited in the proto-MT phase to conform more closely to Deuteronomy.¹⁴ In

¹⁰ K. De Troyer, “Reconstructing the Older Hebrew Text of the Book of Joshua: An Analysis of Joshua 10,” *Text* 26 (2013): 1–33.

¹¹ K. De Troyer, “Building the Altar and Reading the Law: The Journeys of Joshua 8:30–35,” in *Reading the Present in Qumran Library: The Perception of the Contemporary by Means of Scriptural Interpretations*, ed. K. De Troyer and A. Lange (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 158.

¹² T. B. Dozeman, *Joshua 1–12: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, The Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 366–67. See also S. Holmes, *Joshua: The Hebrew and Greek Texts* (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), 41–46, and De Troyer, “Reconstructing,” 23–33.

¹³ Thus also R. D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 117.

¹⁴ See, e.g., Nelson, *Joshua*, 71–83; A. G. Auld, *Joshua Retold: Synoptic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1998), 12–14; and L. Mazor, “The Septuagint Translation of the Book of Joshua,” *BIOSCS* 27 (1994): 36.

addition, the evidence from 4QJosh^a is not sufficient for arguing that the whole altar scene was located at this point, nor that the altar scene was not located also in Josh 8 or 9.¹⁵ Feldman, for instance, has argued that in 4QJosh^a only the reading of the law was narrated in Josh 5 in order to fulfill Josh 4:10. Therefore, if Feldman is correct, 4QJosh^a is not a witness to a transposition but to a duplication.

In the discussion related to Josh 8:30–35 it has often been assumed that the altar scene was simply transposed from one location to two other locations. The evidence, however, attests to more complex editorial processes. The nature of 4QJosh^a as a witness to a transposition is dubious.¹⁶ The clearest transposition took place at the juncture of chapters 8–9 between the Hebrew *Vorlage* of OG and proto-MT. But the coin has two sides; it was not only Josh 8:30–35 that was transposed but also Josh 9:1–2. Moreover, it is possible that both or either one of these textual units are late additions to these chapters which would partly explain why they ended up in a different sequence in different textual traditions. “Movable units” in the textual witnesses are often late material.¹⁷

Lastly, when evaluating the earliest location of Josh 8:30–35, the argument from narrative logic has a central role in various models. Eugene Ulrich, for instance, has argued for the priority of the sequence in 4QJosh^a noting that it reads as “the simplest and most natural narrative.”¹⁸ To be sure, the “three-stage solution” advocated by Ulrich is a cumulative argument combining several text- and redaction-critical points.¹⁹ However, at the core of his argument is the assumption that the most simple and logical narrative is the earliest. Thus, the location of the altar scene between chapters 8 and 9 is deemed as secondary because it does not fit the “narrative logic” of chapter 8.²⁰ It seems that the argument from structural patterns or narrative logic can be used to defend the priority of different textual traditions. For example, while Samuel Holmes argues that the MT secondarily transposed the altar scene at the end of chapter 8 where a pause in the narration offered a better position,²¹ Richard Nelson notes that the structural function of 9:1–2 and 3–4 as preparing for the Gibeon story “is a forceful argument in favor of the MT order.”²² Consequently, narrative and structural observations cannot serve as the main text-critical argument.

¹⁵ See, for example, Michaël N. van der Meer, *Formation and Reformulation: The Redaction of the Book of Joshua in the Light of the Oldest Textual Witnesses*, VTSup 102 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 513; A. Feldman, *The Rewritten Joshua Scrolls from Qumran*, BZAW 438 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014), 117.

¹⁶ Van der Meer, *Formation*, 431–34, 452–78.

¹⁷ On “movable units” see Julio Trebolle, “Textual Criticism and the Composition History of Samuel. Connections between Pericopes in 1 Samuel 1–4,” in P. Hugo and A. Schenker, eds., *Archaeology of the Books of Samuel: The Entangling of the Textual and Literary History* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 261–64. Auld, *Joshua*, 110 notes that the altar scene is “a latecomer looking for a suitable home.”

¹⁸ Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 60.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, 48–49. In the first stage, Deut 27 did not read any locale, and the altar was built immediately after crossing the Jordan. 4QJosh^a preserves this earliest and most logical actualization of the command. Second, “Mount Gerizim” was inserted into Deut 27:4 OL, which, in the book of Joshua, caused the transposition of the altar scene after the destruction of Ai. Third, “Mount Gerizim” was replaced with “Mount Ebal” in Deut 27:4 MT, which led to a similar addition in Josh 8:30.

²⁰ Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 52–3.

²¹ Holmes, *Joshua*, 45–46.

²² Nelson, *Joshua*, 117.

Chronological Transposition in 1 Kgs 22:41–51

The narrative of King Jehoshaphat's reign, found in 1 Kgs 22:41–51 in MT, is given by all but one Greek witness (the Hexaplaric manuscript A) already after the regnal narrative of Omri (16:23–28) and is commonly marked as 16:28a–h. That this was indeed the position where the OG translator found the narrative in their *Vorlage* can be seen in the translation technique of 16:28a–h.²³ It is not likely that OG had this narrative again in 22:41–51. As chapter 22 is where the Hebraizing *kaige*²⁴ revision starts in 1 Kings, it is no wonder that the narrative of Jehoshaphat's reign is once more recounted where MT has the narrative as well.²⁵ The text of this duplicate also has a clear *kaige* flavor. Furthermore, the Antiochene text (L) does not have this *kaige* narrative in 22:41–51, which indicates that it was indeed missing from the OG translation.²⁶

OG (L)	MT	Kaige-text (B)
Omri (16:23–28)	Omri (16:23–28)	Omri (16:23–28)
Jehoshaphat (16:28a–h)		Jehoshaphat (16:28a–h)
Ahab (16:29–22:40)	Ahab (16:29–22:40)	Ahab (16:29–22:40)
	Jehoshaphat (22:41–51)	Jehoshaphat (22:41–46, 51 kaige revision) ²⁷
Ahaziah (22:52ff.)	Ahaziah (22:52ff.)	Ahaziah (22:52ff.)

It is likely that in this case OG has retained the original order of the regnal narratives.²⁸ The transposition in MT has been made on chronological and especially theological grounds and has affected the text both in and around the transposed unit.

²³ For instance, there are multiple historical presents ($\beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\nu\iota$, $\theta\acute{\alpha}\pi\tau\epsilon\tau\alpha\iota$) in these verses and some translation equivalents ($\epsilon\nu\omega\pi\iota\omega\kappa\upsilon\pi\omega$, $\theta\acute{\omega}\omega$) that clearly come from the OG translator. See J. D. Shenkel, *Chronology and Recensional Development in the Greek Text of Kings* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 47–60.

²⁴ The *kaige* revision was a revision of the OG towards the proto-MT text form, likely made during the first centuries BCE and CE. The revisers both added and omitted text and used standard translation equivalents. See J. Aitken, “The Origins of KAI ΓΕ,” in *Biblical Greek in Context*, ed. J. Aitken and T.V. Evans (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), 21–40.

²⁵ Also the source text of the Chronicler seems to have had the Jehoshaphat narrative in this earlier position. R. F. Person, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles: Scribal Works in an Oral World* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 119–21, notes that Jehoshaphat is brought twice into the story, first in 2 Chr 17:1 and then in 20:31–37, similarly to the *kaige*-text (B).

²⁶ Thus also J. Trebolle, “Textual Criticism and the Literary Structure and Composition of 1–2 Kings / 3–4 Reigns: The Different Sequence of Literary Units in MT and LXX,” in *Die Septuaginta—Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte: 3. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 22.–25. Juli 2010*, ed. S. Kreuzer, Martin Meiser and M. Sigismund (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 63. It may also be noted that the OL witness Lucifer of Cagliari does not seem to have been aware of this later version of the Jehoshaphat narrative either, as he only quotes the one in 16:28a–h. This is especially interesting since it has been noted by T. Kauhanen, *Lucifer of Cagliari*, SCS (Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming) that Lucifer’s source text was a text very close to OG. This, of course, is partly an argument from silence—but what a suspicious silence it is.

²⁷ Verses 47–50 are missing from the majority text. They are secondarily imported into manuscript A from Aquila.

²⁸ This view is favored by many of the older commentators: see, e.g., A. Klostermann, *Die Bücher Samuelis und Könige* (Nördlingen: Beck, 1887), 362; and B. Stade, *The Books of Kings* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1904), 148–49.

The transposition may have been motivated solely by the chronology articulated in 1 Kings, as argued by most scholars.²⁹ In this case the transposition of Jehoshaphat's reign may have been mandated by a change in king Omri's accession date in 16:23: while both OG and MT have the same synchronism (thirty-first year of king Asa of Judah), MT begins to count Omri's regnal years already from verse 16:21 onwards, where the kingdom of Israel is said to have split between two rivaling factions, one led by Omri and the other by Tibni. This split happened, according to MT, in the twenty-seventh year of Asa³⁰ when the previous usurper Zimri died (16:10–18) after a reign of only seven days. This chronological change would have then led to a chronological alteration of five years also inside the transposed text itself: the chronological note concerning Jehoshaphat's accession in 16:28a/22:41 changes between OG (eleventh year of Omri) and MT (fourth year of Ahab, son of Omri). Because the Israelite king during whose reign Jehoshaphat ascends the throne changes, his whole regnal narrative has to be transposed accordingly after either Omri's or Ahab's narrative. Both notes work well in their respective chronological contexts, although the logic of MT's chronology is somewhat counter-intuitive.³¹

It is clear that this transposition has also affected the texts around it: at least the other chronological notes near the transposed narrative were changed when the transposition was made. In fact, MT also shows signs of an abnormal accession formula near the units 16:28a–h and 22:41–51. In verses 16:29, 22:41, 52—the exact hinge-points of the transposing action—MT curiously changes the normal formula of the kings to an uncommon one.³²

While many attempts have been made to account for these peculiar formulae and their even more peculiar locations on the basis of MT,³³ the textual evidence lets us see that these features of MT could be simply due to a secondary transposition. However, this “formal abnormality” of MT cannot alone be used as evidence, as the more common formulae of OG may, reversibly, be simply due to the scribal harmonization of chronological and formulaic data.³⁴ In this case, however, the sudden appearance of such abnormality in the used formulae would still evoke unanswered questions.

²⁹ See, e.g., D. W. Gooding, “Problems of Text and Midrash in the Book of Reigns,” *Textus* 7 (1969): 13–16; R. Hendel, “The Two Editions of the Royal Chronology in Kings,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scroll Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera: Florilegium Complutense*, ed. A. Piquer and P. Torijano (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 99–114.

³⁰ Interestingly, OG has no mention of this synchronism in either 16:10 or 15 (where OG has no synchronism whatsoever). It is debatable whether a “hypercorrecting” tradition such as OG, as argued by Hendel, would deliberately omit such important chronological information—no less than twice—without in turn adding its own synchronism(s).

³¹ The chronological system of 1 Kings OG is generally somewhat more coherent than that of MT from Omri onwards, which leads many scholars to propose that MT should be taken as a *lectio difficilior* of sorts; see, e.g., Hendel, “Two Editions of the Royal Chronology,” 104–5. However, scholars are often forced to propose coreigns for certain kings, their predecessors, and successors in order to facilitate the MT chronology. In turn, the evidence for such coregencies is tenuous and easily leads to circular argumentation. See A. Piquer, “Hebrew Bible(s) and Greek Witnesses? A First Look at the Makeup of 2 Kings for the Oxford Hebrew Bible,” in *XIV Congress of the IOSCS Helsinki 2010*, ed. W. Kraus, SCS 59 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 703. In addition, chronological data as such is a reversible argument (see discussion below).

³² For further analysis of these formulae see Trebolle, “Textual Criticism and the Literary Structure,” 59–69. The usual form of an accession formula (e.g., 1 Kgs 15:33) is the following: [synchronism] [verb] [PN] [kingdom]. Abnormal formulae (e.g., 16:28, 22:41, 52), on the other hand, use the order [PN] [verb] [kingdom] [synchronism] [verb].

³³ See, e.g., S. Bin-Nun, “Formulas from royal records of Israel and Judah,” *VT* 18 (1963): 414–32.

³⁴ As argued by Hendel, “Royal Chronology,” 111–12.

While the chronological repercussions of the transposition are indeed the most notable differences in the text, the underlying reason for the transposition was probably of a theological nature in this case as well: already James Shenkel has noted that the identity of the “king of Judah” in the Moab campaign in 2 Kgs 3:4–27 changes between MT (Jehoshaphat) and OG (Ahazyah, the grandson of Jehoshaphat).³⁵ This is probably due to Ahazyah (who was a son of Ataliah, the daughter of Omri/Ahab, and was thus told to have “walked in the way of the house of Ahab” in 2 Kgs 8:26–27) being a theologically awkward reading in verse 3:14, where the revered prophet Elisha is told to help the two kings only because he “regards highly” this idolatrous king of Judah (explicated in 3:14 MT as Jehoshaphat but remaining anonymous in OG). Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, is told to have been a pious king, doing right in the eyes of YHWH like his father had done (1 Kgs 16:28b/22:43). It is unlikely that OG later changed the ideologically well working name of MT to the theologically offensive Ahazyah.³⁶ The reversal of the argument seems difficult, especially since a similar interest in Elisha’s deeds seems to be at play elsewhere in MT as well.³⁷

While textual adjustment often happens at the seams of different narratives, it can also happen inside the transposed texts, as already seen. In this case it seems that also in 22:50 MT the text has slightly been adjusted to its new context. The MT text reports that Jehoshaphat refused a proposition of naval trade collaboration from “Ahazyah, king of Israel.” In 16:28g OG, however, Jehoshaphat’s colleague is an anonymous “king of Israel.” Although it is possible that a reviser in the OG tradition simply omitted the name of the king when transposing the narrative,³⁸ it is more likely that in such a (chronologically hypercorrecting) transposition the name would not have been simply omitted but either left intact or substituted with a new one—especially if OG is indeed argued to be the one deliberately changing the order of the narratives and the name of the king also in 2 Kgs 3. It seems more likely that MT has instead added the identification to construe a textual link between verses 22:50 and 22:52, where Ahazyah is indeed told to ascend the throne of Israel. This way the transposed narrative becomes

³⁵ Shenkel, *Chronology*, 104–6. OG is represented only by the Antiochene text (*L*). Ahazyah is also mentioned by the OL witness La^M in verse 3:9.

³⁶ Hendel, “Royal Chronology,” 107, admits that this change of names is indeed one of the bigger problems in a theory of purely chronological change. See also A. Schenker, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher: Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher* (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2004), 86–107, who argues that the swapping of the order of chapters 1 Kgs 20 and 21 by MT is also connected to the chronological (and theological) problems of Omride Israel.

³⁷ 2 Kgs 2:14 OG has the plus “but (the water) did not separate” after the first mention of “and he struck water.” The few scholars who comment on this usually deem it an explicating addition, see, e.g., Stade, *Kings*, 183. However, the OG plus is theologically problematic since, if the waters did *not* part, it implies that Elisha did not inherit the powers of Elijah. It is more likely that MT has gone through a change in order to polish the depiction of Elisha by omitting the plus that diminished the authority of the great prophet. It is very unlikely that such a problematic plus would have been made by later scribes. Similar polishing can be observed in 2 Kgs 13:20–21 MT where the OG preserves the earlier version; see J. Trebolle, “Dos Textos para un relato de resurrección: 2 Re 13,20–21 TM LXX^B/LXX^L VL,” *Sefarad* 43 (1983): 3–16.

³⁸ Thus G. Galil, *The Chronology of the Kings of Israel and Judah* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 143, and A. Turkanik, *Of Kings and Reigns: A Study of Translation Technique in the yy Section of 3 Reigns*, FAT 30 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 76. There would be no apparent reason for this omission, however, as the reigns of Jehoshaphat and Ahazyah overlap also in the OG chronology.

more tightly linked with its new context. A similar phenomenon can be independently seen in some Greek manuscripts.³⁹ In OG there is no such linking to other textual units.

Transposing Oracles in Jeremiah

The two main textual witnesses to the text of Jeremiah, MT and LXX, place the oracles against the nations (OAN) in different locations within the book. MT locates them at the end of the book, between chapters 45 and 52, while LXX places them in the center of the book, after 25:13,⁴⁰ which should be considered their location in OG. Differences between the two textual witnesses are not limited to the arrangement of the text, but are characterized by quantitative variants as well. The text of the LXX is significantly shorter than the MT.⁴¹

OG	MT
Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (1–24)	Oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (1–24)
Judgment oracles against Jerusalem and the nations (25:1–13)	Judgment oracles against Jerusalem and the nations (25:1–14)
OAN (25:14–31:44)	
Cup of wrath: judgment of Jerusalem and the nations (32:1–24)	Cup of wrath: judgment of Jerusalem and the nations (25:15–38)
Fall of Jerusalem and flight to Egypt (33–51)	Fall of Jerusalem and flight to Egypt (26–45)
Destruction of Jerusalem (52)	OAN (46–51)
	Destruction of Jerusalem (52)

The placement of the OAN in Jeremiah LXX should be considered the earlier arrangement of the text in comparison to the MT. This conclusion may be drawn from three main arguments: (1) the close contextual relationship between Jer 25 and the OAN, (2) small details in the latter half of the book that presuppose the OAN as antecedent, and (3) shared redactional features of the MT additions in Jer 25 and the placement of the OAN in the MT that posit a close redactional connection between the two.

Jeremiah 25 and the OAN are inextricably linked by their content. Judgement is proclaimed to the nations surrounding Judah for the first time in the book in 25:9–13. In LXX, this is followed by the OAN (25:14–31:44 LXX), whose content chiefly comprises judgement oracles against the nations surrounding Judah. The cup of wrath sequence occurs immediately after, in verses 25:15–29 (32:1–15), and depicts a prophetic act of symbolism in which

³⁹ Manuscripts 56 158, which often make independent free changes, insert the proper name Ahab in 16:28g, since Ahab is said to have become king a few verses later in verse 16:29. According to Galil, *Chronology*, 143, this indicates that LXX (or rather, the plus of the two quite dubious manuscripts) is late, but he does not note that the same phenomenon is even more pronounced in MT.

⁴⁰ Textual references to Jeremiah refer to MT. When LXX reference is different, it is placed in parentheses.

⁴¹ Tov has published two articles in which he classifies the variants that are found in Jeremiah MT in comparison to Jeremiah LXX: “Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Le Livre de Jérémie*, ed. P.-M. Bogaert, BETL 54 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1981), 145–67, and “The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in Light of Its Textual History,” in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*, ed. J. H. Tigay (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 211–37. Tov considers the plusses in Jeremiah MT to be of similar character to the extent that they may be collectively ascribed to their own editorial layer.

Jeremiah is to take a cup of wine and give it as a drink to all the listed nations. YHWH has appointed these nations to be punished along with Judah, and their punishment is inevitable. The nations that are listed in 25:19–26(32:5–12) are mostly those that are also judged in the OAN. Jeremiah LXX groups all the Jeremianic material concerning the nations in the same context, chapters 25–32.

Jeremiah MT, on the other hand, separates the material that discusses YHWH's judgement against the nations. The judgement proclaimed in 25:1–14 is directly followed by the prophetic act of the cup of wrath. The OAN are located at the end of the book, save for Jer 52, which severs the bond between prophetic message and prophetic act. The material preceding the OAN in Jeremiah MT is an account of the destruction of Jerusalem, the murder of Gedaliah, and the flight of the Judean refugees to Egypt (Jer 39–45[46–51]). These chapters end with an account of Jeremiah condemning the refugees' decision to go down to Egypt, claiming that it is against the will of YHWH and that YHWH will send Nebuchadrezzar to punish Egypt as well (Jer 44 [51:1–30]). After a short oracle of hope for Baruch the scribe (45 [51:31–35]), the OAN commence with the oracle against Egypt (46 [26]) and end with the oracle against Babylon (50–51 [27–28]).

Small details in the text of Jeremiah imply that the location of the OAN in Jeremiah LXX is more original. First, the point where the OAN begin in LXX, Jer 25:13 (25:13–14), is textually the same in both the MT and the LXX except for the last words. According to MT, the phrase is a relative clause modifying the preceding sentence “which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations.” In LXX, however, the phrase is the beginning of the oracle against Elam: “What Jeremiah prophesied against the nations of Elam.”⁴² The only difference is the Hebrew word “all” in the MT and the Greek word “Elam” in the LXX. The MT consequently adds the following verse, 25:14 (–), which stands in the place where the OAN are located in the LXX. The addition of 25:14 MT⁴³ and the tendency of the MT to add the word “all”⁴⁴ suggest that the MT reading in 25:13 and 14 is secondary and is associated with the relocation of the OAN to the end of the book.

Second, the placement of the OAN in Jeremiah LXX forms a progression within the book from the prophetic message, the oracles themselves, to the associated prophetic act. As noted above, the OAN and the cup of wrath sequence roughly name the same nations that are to bear YHWH's judgement. When the OAN occur just before the cup of wrath sequence, the OAN give more substance to the prophetic act. The purpose of a prophetic, symbolic act is to convey a message, but only in the LXX is this message clear: it is the preceding OAN. The MT placement of the OAN disrupts the natural connection between the prophetic act and the message which it is supposed to convey.⁴⁵

Third, there are details in the later chapters that also allude to oracles against nations, which imply that the oracles have occurred earlier in the book. One such example is in Jer 36 (43), which details how Baruch the scribe wrote Jeremiah's prophecies on a scroll at Jeremiah's dictation. “Take a scroll and write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel and Judah and all the nations” (36:2 [43:2]). The text refers to words of YHWH which were previously

⁴² Similarly Tov, “Some Aspects,” 152 n. 20.

⁴³ Aeijmelaeus, “Jeremiah,” 479, argues that Jer 25:14 MT serves as a “patch” in the place from which the OAN have been removed.

⁴⁴ G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1973), 65–67.

⁴⁵ The close connection in content between the OAN and the cup of wrath sequence as an indication that the LXX position of the OAN is the more original one is maintained by, among others, Tov, “Some Aspects,” 152 n. 20; R. P. Carroll, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 758; and W. L. Holladay, *Jeremiah 2* (Philadelphia: Hermeneia, 1990), 313.

spoken against all the nations. The cup of wrath sequence is merely a prophetic act without the message itself, and is therefore most likely not the antecedent of 36:2 (43:2). The most plausible referent is the OAN as they are located in Jeremiah LXX, after 25:13.⁴⁶

Finally, redactional features may be used to determine the direction of change between the varying texts of the two witnesses. Redactional features are characterized as a number of differences that share identical or similar concerns, such as theological concerns. When such shared concerns are found in a number of differences, they are most likely the result of editorial work in the text rather than scribal or textual differences.⁴⁷

A major characteristic of the MT additions in Jer 25 is the revelation that Babylon, and its king Nebuchadrezzar, is the foretold enemy from the north. These additions are in verses 9, 11, and 12. Two themes within these additions are also found in the MT additions of Jer 27 (34), which clearly mark them as redactional features. These themes are the proclamation that Nebuchadrezzar is the servant of YHWH (25:9, 27:6 [34:5], 43 [50]:10)⁴⁸ and the prediction of the downfall of Babylon (25:12 and 27:7[–]). Later in chapter 25, in the cup of wrath sequence, the cryptic name “Sheshach” is added in MT to the end of the list of nations that are to drink from the cup (25:26 [32:12]). This name appears elsewhere only as an MT plus within the oracle against Babylon (51 [28]:41) and is employed as an Athbash code name for Babylon (שֵׁשָׁךְ=בָּבֶל).⁴⁹ These additions in Jer 25 MT serve to shift the emphasis away from the destruction of Judah toward the eventual destruction of the agent which YHWH has appointed to carry out his judgement. This shift incidentally conveys a subtle message of hope to all those who have been submitted to the rule of Babylon.

A similar message is conveyed by the MT when the effect of the location of the OAN on the texts of the MT and the LXX is compared to one another. The final chapters of Jeremiah LXX recount the destruction of Jerusalem and the flight of the Judean refugees to Egypt (39–44 [46:1–51:30]), a statement by YHWH that he will not revoke his punishment on Judah (45 [51:31–35]), and a second account of the destruction of Jerusalem (52). The emphasis at the close of Jeremiah LXX is clearly on the judgement and destruction of Judah. The MT, however, ends differently. Following the flight of the refugees to Egypt, the reader comes upon the OAN section, and the emphasis shifts to YHWH’s condemnation of other nations. The climax of the oracles is the lengthy oracle against Babylon (50–51), which also includes a few oracles of salvation addressed to Judah.⁵⁰ After the prediction of the fall of Babylon, the final event of the book (the release of Jehoiachin from prison) can be interpreted in a more positive light in the anticipation of the fulfillment of the previously predicted fall of Babylon.

The differences portrayed by Jeremiah MT in comparison to Jeremiah LXX in chapter 25 and in the placement of the OAN share features that are clearly redactional. In both cases, the MT emphasizes YHWH’s intent to eventually punish Babylon, the agent he has sent to judge other nations, including Judah. In both Jer 25 MT and the placement of the OAN at the end of

⁴⁶ A similar reference is found in Jer 45:2 (51:31), but this too is located before the OAN in Jeremiah MT. W. McKane, *Jeremiah 26–52* (London: T&T Clark, 1996), 1099–104.

⁴⁷ J. W. Watts, “Text and Redaction in Jeremiah’s Oracles against the Nations,” *CBQ* 54 (1992): 442.

⁴⁸ The case of 27:6 (34:5), however, is different, as the LXX reflects the Hebrew reading “to serve him.” Most seem to agree that the variant has come about through a waw/yod interchange at the end of the word. See, e.g., Janzen, *Studies*, 54–57 and A. Aeijmelaeus, “Nebuchadnezzar, My Servant,” in *Interpreting Translation*, ed. F. Garcia Martínez and M. Vervenne (Leuven: Leuven University Press 2005), 13–17.

⁴⁹ W. McKane, *Jeremiah 1–25* (London: T&T Clark, 1986), 640.

⁵⁰ Oracles of salvation to Judah within the oracle against Babylon: Jer 50 (27):4–5, 17–20 and 33–34.

the book, these differences alleviate the immediacy of the judgement and destruction of Judah and Jerusalem and bring into focus a hope for the Judeans.⁵¹

The context of Jer 25, small details in the text of Jeremiah, and shared redactional features among the differences of Jeremiah MT in comparison to Jeremiah LXX all point toward the placement of the OAN in Jeremiah LXX as the more original location of the OAN. Not only have the OAN been relocated in Jeremiah MT, but their order has been rearranged as well. The list of nations in the cup of wrath sequence most probably served as the organizing principle for rearranging the oracles in the MT, as the list of nations (25:19–26) and the oracles against each nation (46–51) occur in roughly the same sequence. The order of the latter half of Jeremiah MT is made to follow the order of judgement of the nations listed in the cup of wrath, beginning with Judah, followed by Egypt, and concluding with Babylon.

Though most scholars agree that the plusses in Jeremiah MT are later additions, there is no consensus regarding the textual arrangement of the witnesses. The changing location of the OAN should be seen as closely related to the quantitative differences in the texts. Because the differing locations of the OAN are inseparably bound to the same witnesses that convey quantitative differences, it should not be assumed that the two issues are separate.

What Do These Three Cases Tell Us about Transpositions?

A large-scale transposition is a relatively radical intrusion in the transmission of a text. It not only changes the flow and features of the text and narrative itself but more often than not it also changes the meaning and theology conveyed by the text and the material surrounding it. In light of the three cases discussed above, we can now return to the research questions presented at the beginning and discuss (1) why and (2) how scribes involved in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible performed these changes. This discussion will also have implications for how transpositions are researched (3).

1. Why did ancient scribes relocate large textual units? The three cases underline that theological reasons seem to have often been at the core of transposing interventions in the latest stages of the formation of the Hebrew Bible. The developing theological meaning of certain events, places, and people in the Second Temple period may have motivated transpositions. In Joshua MT, the transposition is related to the central theological value attributed to Gilgal. The scribe wanted to make a clearer distinction between Gilgal and the mountain of curses, Mt. Ebal. The altar scene also constituted a suitable ending for the theologizing reworking of Josh 8 by the proto-MT editor highlighting the power of YHWH. Moreover, 4QJosh^a reveals that authoritative Pentateuchal texts may have motivated reworking in other texts. Deuteronomy was especially important in Second Temple Judaism.⁵² Similarly, the theological problem in the earlier text (OG) that the holy prophet Elisha revered the evil Omride king of Judah in 2 Kgs 3:14, resulted in a change in the chronological system of the latter part of 1 Kings. In Jeremiah, the transposition is connected to the fate of the Judean community in exile. The proto-MT editor wanted to make it clear that Babylon was the enemy from the north, YHWH's appointed instrument to punish the Judeans, by shifting the emphasis to the eventual destruction of this enemy. While the earlier form of the text of LXX emphasizes the punishment of Judah at the close of the book, the transposed and redacted version in the MT ends with more hope for the community in exile.

⁵¹ For similar conclusions, cf. M. K. Chae, “Redactional Intentions of MT Jeremiah concerning the Oracles against the Nations,” *JBL* 13 (2015): 590–92.

⁵² See, e.g., S. W. Crawford, “Reading Deuteronomy in the Second Temple Period,” in *Reading the Present in Qumran Library: The Perception of the Contemporary by Means of Scriptural Interpretation*, ed. K. De Troyer and A. Lange (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 127–40.

In addition to ideological and theological reasons, transpositions sometimes served to remove literary or logical problems and to smooth out a text. The many changes made to the chronological system of 1–2 Kings are good examples of such a tendency. Joshua 9 OG preserved the earliest sequence of the text which had been made cumbersome perhaps due to the secondary addition of the altar scene and the notice that the kings united to fight against the Israelites. The transposition of the altar scene to the end of Josh 8 MT served to solve a problem in the narrative of chapter 9 by bringing verses 9:1–2 and 3:1ff. together.

When explaining why a transposition may have taken place, it is good to keep in mind that we cannot get into the minds of the ancient scribes. The scribes did not necessarily perceive themselves as making changes out of “narrative logic” or “theological motivations.” The scribes may have simply thought that something does not work in the text, which subsequently prompted a change. So, while some arguments on scribal motivations are likely in light of the evidence, in the end there may have been as many reasons for a transposition as there were transpositions.

2. How did ancient scribes relocate textual units? What repercussions did a transposition have for the text? In light of our three cases, transpositions seem to have been made in two different manners. First, the locations of two adjacent textual units could be *swapped* with each other. This is the case in Joshua where the locations of Josh 8:30–35 and 9:1–2 were interchanged. This is often the mechanism used also in smaller transpositions where, for example, two words change places within a sentence. Second, textual units have been *relocated* into entirely new contexts. This is how the transpositions in 1 Kings and Jeremiah were achieved. The latter mechanism is more demanding than the former, especially when textual units are moved many chapters away from their earlier location as is the case in Jeremiah. While the swapping of textual units may be performed locally taking into account just the near context, the latter mechanism necessarily involves considerations entailing the structure of the whole composition. The case of 1 Kings is a good example of this: the relocation of the Jehoshaphat narrative forced the reviser to reform not only some of the chronology of 1 Kings, but the chronology of the first chapters of 2 Kings as well.

Such substantial transpositions have often resulted in the editing of both the text around the transposed material and inside the material itself. This seems to be especially the case with textual units that are moved to a completely new context. For instance, in 1 Kgs 22:41–51 the text of MT has been affected both around the material (the regnal formulae of 16:29 and 22:52) and inside the transposed material itself (in 22:41 and 48). Similarly, in Jeremiah, the relocation of the OAN from chapter 25 to the end of the book has occasioned a series of compensatory revisions. The most obvious of these is the MT plus 25:14, which stands in the place where the LXX locates the OAN. Moreover, the reordering of the oracles has prompted small revisions in the headings of the oracles (e.g., 46:1 [–], 47 [29]:1, 50 [27]:1) and at the end of the OAN (51:64b [–]). These examples show that especially the hinge-points of the original text and the relocated text are often textually active.⁵³

However, it should also be noted that it is not always easy to decide which came first: the small textual changes or the large transposition. In the case of Joshua, the transposition was associated with the minor changes in textual evidence relating to Gilgal. It seems that the minor changes pertaining to the theological meaning of Gilgal in the proto-MT editing phase may have either caused the transposition, or they were made in conjunction with the transposition.

⁵³ This point has been previously emphasized by Trebolle, “Textual Criticism and the Literary Structure,” 76–77: “Textual variants … pile up at the junctures of the literary units. … When two pericopae get juxtaposed or when one is introduced inside the other, their text undergoes an adaptation.”

This illustrates that while transpositions are regularly related to other editorial changes, it is not always possible to evaluate the order of changes.

Finally, one should also consider the material and social prerequisites for transpositions. When assessing the material actions required for these changes, the extensive nature of this editorial technique should be highlighted: for example, the relocation in Jeremiah required careful and systematic planning on how the whole composition would work after the intrusion. The scribe had to carefully plan how much material was physically needed in order to rewrite the text. Since the process is materially demanding and thus expensive, it is probable that large transpositions would have required the wider support of a community or at least its leaders. While minor additions or transpositions—and especially the “swapping” of smaller textual units—could have been easily made by individual scribes in every stage of textual transmission, large transpositions and relocations likely required wider support involving a great deal of planning and decision making. Therefore, transpositions may also be indicative of ideological meanings attributed to certain texts by a community. Thus, whenever a large transposition is found in textual material, we can assume that the text may have undergone ideologically motivated editing that was also approved by a larger community.

3. How can modern scholars best explain what has happened to the text when they are confronted with textual evidence of a transposition? Through the case studies in this article it has become clear that narrative arguments alone cannot settle the question of the direction of transpositions. While in Joshua the narrative of chapter 9 was made smoother by the secondary transposition in the MT, sometimes later editing disrupts a narrative or makes it more cumbersome. This is why narrative arguments used in textual analysis are often *reversible*.⁵⁴ The argument of greater narrative logic or coherence, for instance, can be used both ways: the order of the pericope may have been either harmonized or the originally lucid narrative was later hindered by the transposition. A prime example is to argue for the priority of the placement of the OAN in Jeremiah based on the narrative logic of the MT and the LXX: it can be argued both ways and should be used mainly in support of other arguments.⁵⁵ Therefore, while it is good to discuss the narrative repercussions of a transposition, one needs to find cumulative evidence for the direction of the change.

Our analysis has demonstrated that sometimes theological motivations may override literary considerations. Therefore, one has to ask *how*—or more properly *why*—does the character (narrative logic, for instance) of the textual unit change with the transposition? Especially if one can observe in one witness a theologically somehow problematic reading that is missing from the other, it becomes very likely that the problematic reading is the more original one—even if this happens at the expense of the overall readability of the text or the narrative logic. For example, even though the transposition in Joshua removed literary problems within Josh 9, the altar scene remains disruptive at the seam of Josh 8–9 in the MT. For the proto-MT edi-

⁵⁴ A. Schenker, “Man bittet um das Gegenargument! Von der Eigenart textkritischer Argumentation,” *ZAW* 122 (2010): 53–63.

⁵⁵ Stipp, *Legenden*, 485–87, refers to *das eschatologische Schema*, a notion of the structure of prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Isaiah, Ezekiel, Zephaniah), according to which prophetic anthologies are composed of (1) oracles of judgement against Israel/Judah, (2) oracles against the nations, and (3) oracles of salvation. On the one hand, the priority of the MT arrangement in Jeremiah is asserted by claiming that the change in the direction of the LXX is more sensible than the other way around and that the change was affected by a desire to conform to the structure of other prophetic books. See A. Rofé, “The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah,” *ZAW* 101 (1989): 397; C. Seitz, “The Prophet Moses and the Canonical Shape of Jeremiah,” *ZAW* 101 (1989): 6, 24. On the other hand, the priority of the LXX arrangement of Jeremiah has been argued by claiming the structure of the LXX to be the more original structure of the book. See Carroll, *Jeremiah*, 497.

tor the theologically loaded altar scene remained a good ending for the theologically expanded conquest of Ai despite the literary problems in transitions between the chapters. Similarly, the transposition of the Jehoshaphat narrative from 1 Kgs 16 to 22 makes the text theologically sound, but creates several chronologically and stylistically stressing readings in MT that are hard to explain otherwise.

If, then, a transposition is either ideologically motivated or has theological repercussions to the text, it becomes clear that merely the tools of traditional textual criticism are not sufficient to tackle the question of textual originality. They need to be supplemented with literary and redaction critical considerations.⁵⁶ However, literary and redaction critical arguments alone cannot unambiguously show the direction of the change. Quite the contrary, some arguments can in fact generally be used to support either literary form. One such *reversible argument* is the already mentioned narrative logic: whether the general logic of the narrative is harder or smoother cannot be unequivocally used as an argument, as the logic may have been either hindered or eased by a secondary scribal intervention. Furthermore, since redactional theories have been usually advanced solely on the basis of MT, one may even fall into circular argument when backing up text-critical theories with redactional models.

Determining the direction of change is thus not a straightforward process. Similar to narrative arguments, it is not unusual for scholars to argue for opposing solutions to textual problems based on the exact same textual evidence or based on evidence of different types. The range of evidence for these arguments may consist of types such as thematic, structural, literary, redactional, contextual, textual, and intertextual. Nevertheless, the critical method anticipates that one hypothesis of textual change is more plausible than the rest, a state that is reached by the weighing of arguments for and against each hypothesis, based on all available evidence. Through this process evidence will accumulate to the point that most, if not all, arguments and counterarguments can be properly evaluated, which is a vital step in the study of textual problems, as it is a means of deducing what actually happened to the text. All differences between textual witnesses, even the smallest mistakes, have the potential to reveal the causes and motives behind a change in the text. The final conclusion on the direction of change is largely dependent on the best possible explanation for how the change happened. After all arguments are sifted through the textual evidence, it is expected that one of them persists as the most viable solution to the problem; that is, it supplies the most plausible reason for why and how the change has occurred. Other arguments fall out of consideration because they fail to show an explanation for change that encompasses all the evidence.⁵⁷

This leads us to the last research question posed at the beginning of our study: would it be possible to discern a transposition if documented evidence of editing was not preserved? Literary and redaction criticism often supposes that editorial changes were made on the basis of

⁵⁶ See also G. J. Brooke, *Reading the Dead Sea Scrolls: Essays in Method*, EJL 39 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2013), 16. Literary criticism often assumes that texts have been expanded by resumptive repetition (*Wiederaufnahme*). Sometimes what looks like a transposition by swapping, might in fact be a result of earlier resumptive repetition. In other words, the earliest text repeated an element twice, while later witnesses omitted one of the repetitions. See J. Trebolle, “The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in the Books of Kings,” in *VII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, ed. C. E. Cox, SCS 31 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 285–99.

⁵⁷ For similar methodological considerations, see A. Aejmelaeus, “Corruption or Correction? Textual Development in the MT of 1 Samuel 1,” in *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera: Florilegium Complutense*, ed. P. A. Torijano Morales and A. Piquer Otero (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 1–4; R. Hendel, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 141–45.

theological motivations. In one way, the textual evidence analyzed in this study offers positive validation for this assumption and the possibility of reconstructing transpositions without textual evidence. Indeed, it seems that wider theological motivations for editing are visible in texts and they may have sometimes caused transpositions of textual units. In addition, transpositions are often connected with minor textual variants and textual activities at the hinge-points of the transposed unit. Therefore, it is possible to propose a model which assumes a transposition without variant textual witnesses of a particular text if it seems to best explain other evidence of editing. Furthermore, it has also become very clear from the evidence that transposition was a common editorial technique even at the latest stages of the textual formation. However, it is also clear that the transpositions analyzed in this study are complex and would have been hard to recognize if we did not possess some piece of the textual evidence. For instance, if only the MT edition of Jeremiah would have survived, would a scholar have dared to propose that an earlier version of Jeremiah situated the OAN in a different location after Jer 25:13?⁵⁸

The outcomes of text-critical evidence for literary and redaction criticism are therefore twofold: on the one hand, there are sometimes traces in single texts that might be enough to suggest a transposition; but, on the other hand, one has to accept that such transpositions may have taken place that are untraceable for modern scholars whose textual evidence is only randomly preserved.

Conclusions

Insights gained from the textual evidence witnessing the transpositions of Josh 8:30–35, 1 Kgs 22:41–51, and OAN in Jeremiah illuminate large-scale transposition as an ancient editorial technique. All three transpositions reflect theological motivations. Meanings attributed to certain places, events, people, and revered texts (especially Deuteronomy) have caused these changes. Transpositions of large textual units were generally achieved by two scribal methods: swapping the order of two sequential textual units or relocating a textual unit to a new context. Especially the latter procedure led to compensatory revisions and other textual variants both within and around the texts. When studying transpositions, scholars should propose cumulative arguments which are evaluated on the basis of their explanatory power in relation to the relevant evidence. There are no simplistic rules that would alone tip the scale when evaluating the direction of a transposition (e.g., narrative logic or *lectio difficilior*). Sometimes even minor hints in the textual evidence might help in illuminating what has happened to the text.

⁵⁸ Thus also H.-J. Stipp, “A Semi-Empirical Example for the Final Touches to a Biblical Book: The Masoretic *Sondergut* of the Book of Jeremiah,” in *Insights into Editing in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East: What Does Documented Evidence Tell Us about the Transmission of Authoritative Texts*, ed. R. Müller and J. Pakkala (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 317.