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Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit

Essays in Honor of
Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.

EDITED BY
Jeremy Corley
and
Vincent Skemp

The Catholic Biblical Quarterly
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Foreword

It is indeed a great privilege for me to contribute a Foreword to this Festschrift in honor of The Reverend Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M., on the occasion of his 75th birthday. It is my hope that highlighting his achievements in this heartfelt expression of appreciation will serve as a tribute to my esteemed senior colleague to whom the biblical studies program at The Catholic University of America owes so much.

The Reverend Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M., was born in Paterson, New Jersey, on August 14, 1929. He received his B.A. degree from St. Bonaventure University in 1952, an S.T.L. and a Ph.D. in Semitic Languages from The Catholic University of America in 1959 and 1962, and an S.S.L. from the Pontifical Biblical Institute in 1964. He was a professor in the Department of Semitic and Egyptian Languages and Literatures at Catholic University from 1966 to 1976, when he transferred to the newly formed Department of Biblical Studies in the School of Religious Studies as professor of Old Testament, being awarded the Andrews-Kelly-Ryan Distinguished Professor of Biblical Studies chair in 1992. He received the Catholic University of America Alumni Achievement Award in the field of Religious Education in 1990 and the papal Benemerenti Medal in 1995. During many of these years he also taught at Holy Name College and in the Education for Parish Service program at Trinity College.

In the Department of Biblical Studies, Professor Di Lella taught doctoral-level exegetical seminars in Genesis 1–11, Daniel, Tobit, and in the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament, especially Ben Sira, as well

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as in Textual Criticism and Old Testament Theology. He directed many outstanding doctoral dissertations and served faithfully on school committees. Heir to the traditions established at Catholic University by Msgr. Henri Hyvernât and Msgr. Patrick W. Skehan, Professor Di Lella trained more than a generation of scholars in the careful text-oriented studies necessary for effective teaching, research, and publication in the biblical field.

Professor Di Lella has been a very active member of the Society of Biblical Literature and of The Catholic Biblical Association of America, of which he served as President 1975-76 and as a long-time Associate Editor of *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* and of *Old Testament Abstracts*. He has also served as editor of other journals.

A highly respected scholar internationally, Professor Di Lella is listed in reference works such as *Who's Who in America*, *Contemporary Authors*, *The Writers Directory*, *Dictionary of International Biography*, *Directory of American Scholars*, and *International Who's Who of Contemporary Achievement*. In the course of his work, he was also the recipient of a Fellowship at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem 1962-63, a Guggenheim Fellowship 1972-73, and a Fellowship of the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada 1979-80.

Author of ten books, including major works on Daniel and Ben Sira, and some fifty scholarly articles and more than seventy reviews, Professor Di Lella also devoted himself to making the Bible accessible to the general reading public by contributing translations to the revision of the *New American Bible*, for which he has served as Chair of the Board of Control since 1988, and by serving as a member of the Old Testament section for the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, of which he edited a Catholic Edition of the Old and New Testaments published in 1993.

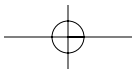
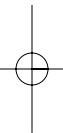
In addition to all his scholarly work, Professor Di Lella also served the Church in pastoral ministry, helping out regularly at Holy Family parish in Davidsonville, Maryland, and officiating at many weddings and baptisms. Always conscious of community needs, Professor Di Lella committed himself to serve as a member of the Institutional Review Board of the Dubroff Eye Center, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1984-94, of the Oncology Unit Advisory Committee of George Washington University Hospital Center, 1985-92, and of the Cancer Care Continuum

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Group of The Washington Cancer Institute at Washington Hospital Center, 1995-96.

As a scholar, teacher, and priest, Alexander Di Lella has been a major influence for good in the lives of so many people. His contributions to The Catholic University of America over a tenure of thirty-eight years can hardly be overestimated. His mentoring of students and devotion to their intellectual advancement is legendary. And his service of the people of God in parish education and ministry is yet another vehicle by which he presents to others the living word of God to which he has dedicated his life. He has gained the great respect of all by the magnificent way he has accomplished this task. May he continue to enjoy many more fruitful years of productive scholarship and ministry.

FRANCIS T. GIGNAC, S.J.



Introduction

This volume focuses on two deuterocanonical books, Tobit and Ben Sira. The particular topic was chosen because the honoree has been a pioneer in adopting a literary approach to these books. Indeed, some of his most distinctive contributions have been intertextual studies in Ben Sira and Tobit. On Ben Sira see, for instance, “Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom,” *CBQ* 28 (1966) 139-54, and “Women in the Wisdom of Ben Sira and the Book of Judith: A Study in Contrasts and Reversals,” *Congress Volume 1992* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 61; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 39-52. On Tobit see “The Deuteronomic Background of the Farewell Discourse in Tob 14:3-11,” *CBQ* 41 (1979) 380-89, and “The Book of Tobit and the Book of Judges: An Intertextual Analysis,” *Henech* 22 (2000) 197-206.

Both deuterocanonical books were probably composed within a century of each other in the years around 200 B.C.E. Moreover, both works share a theology based on the Deuteronomic system of rewards and punishments, whereby the devout are eventually rewarded even if they have first to undergo probationary suffering. The influence of Deuteronomy on both texts is also apparent in the emphasis on almsgiving. There are additional similarities between Tobit and Ben Sira in the textual situation. In both cases the books were long known through two major Greek recensions, while in the twentieth century substantial Semitic fragments were discovered among ancient scrolls found in the area of the Dead Sea. To be sure, Tobit and Ben Sira differ in some respects; for instance Tobit is mainly a work of prose, whereas Ben Sira consists entirely of poetry. Moreover, Tobit is much shorter than Ben Sira; accordingly fewer articles are devoted to Tobit in this volume.

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Both Tobit and Ben Sira were influenced in different ways by the earlier biblical writings. In this volume readers can compare, for example, the use of Genesis or Job in both these later books. This Festschrift also includes treatments of how certain NT texts handle themes found in the two works. However, no attempt has been made in this volume to impose a unified understanding of intertextuality (although a few contributors outline a specific understanding of it). In many cases contributors will refer to the dependence of Tobit or Ben Sira on earlier biblical material. In other cases, however, later texts (e.g., from the NT) may exhibit some indirect dependence on Tobit and Ben Sira. In further cases, the two texts (e.g., Ben Sira and *1 Enoch*) may be independent but sharing common motifs. Moreover, some articles offer a global survey of interconnections between Tobit or Ben Sira and the chosen intertextual partner text, while other contributions focus on a single motif or theme.

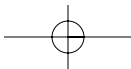
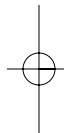
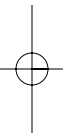
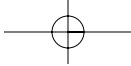
This collection of essays clearly has gaps. It would have been good to include contributions on Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom, or on Tobit and Ben Sira. The section on Tobit could have been expanded with studies of Tobit in relation to the biblical prophets, or of Tobit in relation to Homer. But these essays are presented to show the possibilities of such an approach. The editors are grateful to all contributors who wrote articles to honor the dedicatee. Other scholars wished to contribute but were prevented by lack of time and the pressure of previous commitments.

On a personal note the editors would like to thank Joseph E. Jensen for guidance in the planning of the volume, and Deirdre Brennan for expert computer assistance. In addition, we are in debt to Patrick Welsh for help with proofreading. Gratitude is due to the editorial board of the Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series for accepting this volume for publication. Above all, this volume is offered in grateful tribute to Professor Alexander Di Lella, teacher, mentor, and friend.

JEREMY CORLEY AND VINCENT SKEMP, editors

Part One

Tobit and the Biblical Tradition



The Book of Tobit: An Ancestral Story

IRENE NOWELL, O.S.B.

Our enjoyment of the recent film, *Brother, Where Art Thou*, is enhanced if we recognize the Cyclops and the sirens and realize that this is a remake of the *Odyssey*. The classic musical, *Kiss Me Kate*, is more delightful if we have read Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The dependence of the Book of Tobit on Genesis is a commonly accepted fact. Over a century ago Abrahams outlined the relationship between the two books.¹ Scholars have emphasized various passages, characters, or themes as the key to this relationship.² I propose that the

¹ I. Abrahams, "Tobit and Genesis," *JQR* 5 (1893) 348-50.

² Paul Deselaers (*Das Buch Tobit: Studien zu seiner Entstehung, Komposition und Theologie* [OBO 43; Freiburg (Schweiz)/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982] 292-303) argues that Genesis 24 is the foundation story for the plot. Lothar Ruppert ("Das Buch Tobias—Ein Modellfall nachgestaltener Erzählung," *Wort, Lied, und Gottesspruch: I. Beiträge zur Septuaginta* [FS J. Ziegler; ed. J. Schreiner; FB 1; Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972] 109-19, esp. 114-17) finds the model for Tobit in the Joseph story. George W. E. Nickelsburg ("Tobit, Genesis, and the *Odyssey*: A Complex Web of Intertextuality," *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* [ed. Dennis R. MacDonald; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001] 41-55) finds a web of relationships between Tobit, Genesis, *Jubilees*, and the *Odyssey*. Andrew Chester ("Citing the Old Testament," *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* [FS Barnabas Lindars, SSF; ed. D. A. Carson and H.G.M. Williamson; Cambridge, UK: Cam-

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Book of Tobit, particularly in regard to the description of characters and the flow of the plot, is modeled on Genesis as a whole, telling the story of two patriarchs who “sojourn” outside the land of promise.³ The marriage of their children links the two families and carries forward the hope of a return to the “land of Abraham” (Tob 14:7).⁴

Several time periods are layered in this story. The remembered ideal is the time of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their families. The story itself is set in the eighth or seventh century B.C.E. The story forms a model of righteous living for an audience living in the Diaspora during the second century B.C.E. and for all the generations between their time and ours.

Tobit and Raguel: the Patriarchs

Both Tobit and Raguel are modeled on the patriarchs, especially Abraham. At the beginning of Tobit’s self-introduction he declares that he has “walked all the days of [his] life on paths of fidelity and righteousness” (δικαιοσύνη, Tob 1:3).⁵ Others know him as righteous (Tob 7:7; 9:6).⁶ He exhorts Tobiah and his grandchildren to live in righteousness (Tob 4:5-6; 14:8, 9). Abraham is known through the tradition as one who is righteous. “Abram put his faith in the LORD, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness” (Gen 15:6). God declares, “Indeed, I have singled him out that he may direct his sons and his pos-

bridge University Press, 1988] 141-69, here 156) notes that “the use of Scripture in Tobit is multi-layered and multi-faceted.”

³ Steven Weitzman (“Allusion, Artifice, and Exile in the Hymn of Tobit,” *JBL* 115 [1996] 49-61, here 59) points out that “Tobit’s progressive echoing of Genesis and then Deuteronomy evokes the entirety of pentateuchal history . . . almost as if to enclose the experiences of Tobit within pentateuchal bookends.”

⁴ Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M., points out, however, that “land of Abraham” is a Deuteronomic phrase (“The Deuteronomic Background of the Farewell Discourse in Tob 14:3-11” *CBQ* 41 [1979] 380-89, esp. 381-82).

⁵ All citations from the Book of Tobit are from the revised OT of the *New American Bible*. All other biblical citations are from the *New American Bible* unless otherwise noted. The Greek text used is based on G¹¹ except where there are lacunae (4:7-19 and 13:6-10).

⁶ The Aramaic 4QTob^a adds another “righteo[us]”: “[You are the] so[n of] a righteous man.” See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (CEJL; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2003) 228.

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terity to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD may carry into effect for Abraham the promises he made about him" (Gen 18:19). He "walked" in the ways of God (Gen 17:1; 24:40; 48:15).

The ancestors were people of prayer. Abraham frequently converses with God (e.g., Gen 15:1-5; 18:22-33). Isaac prays for his wife and Rebekah herself consults the Lord (Gen 25:21-23). God speaks to Jacob and he responds with a vow (Gen 28:13-15, 20-22).⁷ The Book of Tobit is characterized by prayer. Every character prays except Anna. Tobit prays for death (Tob 3:2-6) and in thanksgiving for healing (Tob 11:14-15). At the end of the book he sings a long hymn of praise (Tob 13:1-18).⁸

Raphael reveals that God sent him to test Tobit (πειράσαι Tob 12:14). God's testing of Abraham by asking for his son Isaac is the climax of the patriarch's life (Gen 22:1).⁹ All that remains of Abraham's story after that event is the burial of his wife and the obtaining of a wife for his son. At the end of Abraham's testing, the messenger (מַלְאָךְ; LXX ἄγγελος) who stops his hand says, "I know now how you fear God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son" (Gen 22:12; my translation). Tobit too is known for his fear of God: after his testing was over, "he continued to fear God and give thanks to the divine majesty" (Tob 14:2).¹⁰

Tobit is known for his concern for proper burial of the dead (see Tob 1:17-18; 2:4-8; 12:12-13), and twice he asks Tobiah to bury him with Anna in the same grave (4:3-4; 14:10). Tobit's concern reflects Abraham's care for the burial of Sarah (Gen 23:3-20) and his burial with her at Machpelah (Gen 25:9-10). Like Abraham, Tobit lived to a ripe old age. Abraham died at the age of 175 (Gen 25:7), Tobit at the age of 112 (Tob 14:1).¹¹

There are also similarities between Tobit and the other patriarchs. Like Isaac, he was blind (Tob 2:10; Gen 27:1). Isaac sent his son on a journey as did Tobit (Gen 28:2; Tob 4:20-5:2).¹² At the end of his life

⁷ See Patrick J. Griffin, *The Theology and Function of Prayer in the Book of Tobit* (Unpublished dissertation; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America, 1984) 27-28.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 50-67.

⁹ This is the only use of נִסָּה in the piel in Genesis, and of πειράζω in LXX Genesis.

¹⁰ 4QTob^c reads, "and he continued to fear God"; see also G¹ (Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 319).

¹¹ See 14:11 G¹, which gives Tobit's age at death as 158 years.

¹² Only in Vg does Tobit explicitly send Tobiah on the journey (Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 179).

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Tobit summons his son and grandchildren to describe his vision of the future and give them final instructions (Tob 14:2; cf. 4:2-3).¹³ Jacob summons his sons for a similar purpose (Gen 48:1).¹⁴ Like Joseph, Tobit found favor with and served under a foreign ruler (Tob 1:13; Gen 39:2-4; 41:38-44).

The other “patriarch” in the Book of Tobit is Raguel. It is in the area of hospitality that Raguel is most like Abraham. After Raguel welcomed Tobiah and Raphael, he “slaughtered a ram from the flock and gave them a warm reception” (Tob 7:9). The next day he began preparations for the wedding feast: “He asked his wife to bake many loaves of bread; he himself went out to the herd and brought two steers and four rams, which he ordered to be slaughtered” (Tob 8:19). After greeting the three men who appear before him, “Abraham hastened into the tent and told Sarah, ‘Quick, three seahs of fine flour! Knead it and make rolls.’ He ran to the herd, picked out a tender, choice steer, and gave it to a servant, who quickly prepared it” (Gen 18:6-7). Like Abraham, Raguel has welcomed “angels unawares” (see Heb 13:2).

The title, “God of heaven” is used in connection with two prayers of Raguel, his petition for the newlyweds and his prayer of thanksgiving (Tob 7:12; 8:15).¹⁵ It is a title used by Abraham as he sends his servant to find a wife for his son (Gen 24:3, 7).

Thus it is not difficult to see Tobit and Raguel as seventh-century embodiments of Abraham: righteous, hospitable fathers, interested in the welfare of their children and their people, and faithful to God through thick and thin.

Anna, Edna, and Sarah: the Matriarchs

Sarah has several characteristics of the matriarchs. She is beautiful (καλός Tob 6:12) like Sarah (Gen 12:14), Rebekah (Gen 24:16), and Rachel (Gen 29:17).¹⁶ Like them, she is childless and her situation

¹³ 4QTob^a mentions Tobiah’s seven sons as does VL; G^{II} mentions only Tobiah (Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 324-25).

¹⁴ See Di Lella, “The Deuteronomic Background,” 380-81.

¹⁵ In Vg Raguel invokes the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob instead of the God of heaven (Vg 7:15).

¹⁶ In 4QTob^b and MS 319 Sarah’s beauty is also mentioned in 6:11 (Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 210).

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seems beyond hope (Tob 3:9, 15; see Gen 11:30; 18:11; 25:21; 29:31; 30:1). But Sarah is most like her namesake. Like her, she proposes a solution to her difficulty, but God has other plans. Raguel's daughter asks God for death (Tob 3:13); Abraham's wife asks him to give her a son through Hagar (Gen 16:2). God will give each woman a child by her own husband. Raguel's daughter "had to listen to reproaches from one of her father's maids" (Tob 3:7); Abraham's wife was scorned by her maid Hagar (Gen 16:4). Sarah also has similarities to the little-honored matriarch Tamar. Like Tamar, Sarah has been widowed more than once. Both women wait for a husband through the custom of levirate marriage (Gen 38:6-11; Tob 3:8, 15). Both women are suspected of killing their husbands (Gen 38:11; Tob 3:8).

Anna is like Rebekah. She has a blind husband. She is falsely accused of deceiving her husband in the matter of a young goat (Tob 2:12-14), whereas Rebekah does deceive Isaac with two young goats (Gen 27:9-13). Both women must endure the departure of their beloved sons (Gen 27:42-46; Tob 5:18-22).¹⁷ Rebekah will not see Jacob again, but Anna will have the joy of reunion with her son. In that reunion she uses the words, not of a matriarch but a patriarch: "Now that I have seen you again, son, I am ready to die!" (Tob 11:9; see Jacob in Gen 46:30).

Edna is the woman who, like Abraham's wife, bakes many loaves to feed the guests (Tob 8:19; Gen 18:6). She is also linked to the story in Genesis 18 by her name. The name "Edna" (Heb. עדנא) is not otherwise attested in biblical literature, but it echoes Sarah's response to the news that at last she will have a son (Gen 18:12): "Am I still to have sexual pleasure?" (היתדלי עדנא).

Thus the women in the Book of Tobit are modeled on the matriarchs. They are beautiful, resourceful, devoted to their children, and feisty.

Beloved Children: Hope for the Future

Tobiah and Sarah are only children, beloved by their parents. Their status as only children is mentioned by Sarah (Tob 3:10, 15), Raphael

¹⁷ Anna weeps; in the Pseudepigrapha Rebekah also weeps (*Jub.* 27:13-14; see Carey A. Moore, *Tobit* [AB 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996] 193).

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(6:12), Tobiah (6:15), and Raguel (8:17). An only child is the parents' sole hope and thus is deeply loved. Raguel "loves [Sarah] dearly" (6:12);¹⁸ Edna weeps over her daughter and prays for her joy (7:16-17). Anna declares that Tobiah is the "staff of [their] hands," weeps over his departure, and watches for her son's return with devotion (5:18; 11:5); Tobit's concern to find a trustworthy guide (5:11-14), his worry when Tobiah is late (10:1-3), and his delight at seeing him (11:14) show his love for his son. Both Anna and Tobit call Tobiah "the light of [their] eyes" (10:5; 11:14). This love for an "only child" is common in the ancestral stories. Abraham loves his son Isaac deeply (Gen 22:2); in her devotion to her only child Sarah drives away Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 21:9-10). Jacob loves Joseph and Benjamin, the only children of Rachel, with a special love (Gen 37:3; 44:30-31).

Each child knows this love. Sarah decides not to kill herself lest she bring her father "laden with sorrow in his old age to Hades" (Tob 3:10). Tobiah is afraid to marry Sarah lest he "bring the life of [his] father and mother down to their grave in sorrow" (Tob 6:15). Their words reflect Jacob's grief over Joseph (Gen 37:35) and his concern for Benjamin (Gen 42:38; 44:29).

In every other way Tobiah's connection to the ancestral story has to do with his journey to find a wife (although he does not know that is its purpose) and his wedding. His father has instructed him specifically to model his marriage on that of the patriarchs: "Noah prophesied first, then Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, our ancestors from the beginning of time. Son, remember that all of them took wives from among their own kindred and were blessed in their children, and that their posterity would inherit the land" (4:12).¹⁹ Raphael reminds him of this instruction (6:16). Marriage within the clan is a major concern of the patriarchs. In Genesis it is reported that Sarah is Abraham's half-sister (Gen 20:12). Abraham is insistent that the servant find a wife for Isaac in his own land and among his own kindred (Gen 24:4). Rebekah tells Isaac that she will die if Jacob marries a Hittite so Isaac sends him off to find a wife "from among Laban's daughters" (Gen 27:46-28:2).

¹⁸ This phrase is not in G^{ll} but is found in 4QTob^b and VL (Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 212).

¹⁹ The only mention of Noah's wife as his relative is in *Jubilees*: "Noah took a wife for himself, and her name was Emzara daughter of Rakeel, daughter of his father's brother" (*Jub.* 4:33; Moore, *Tobit*, 169; cf. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 173). Note in Tob 4:12 the hope for children and the hope to return to the land.

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Abraham assures the servant as he sets out on his journey: “The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and the land of my kin, and who confirmed by oath the promise he then made to me, ‘I will give this land to your descendants’ — he will send his messenger before you, and you will obtain a wife for my son there” (Gen 24:7). The servant repeats the reassurance to Laban and to his household (Gen 24:40).²⁰ On his journey Jacob has a dream where he sees God’s messengers going up and down a stairway (Gen 28:12).²¹ Tobiah is accompanied throughout his journey by an angel.

The parallels between the arrival at Raguel’s house in Tobit 7 and the betrothal scenes in Genesis 24 and 29 are the most striking links between the Book of Tobit and Genesis. The initial conversation between Tobiah and Edna closely resembles Genesis 29:²²

LXX Genesis 29:4-6

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς Ἰακωβ ἀδελφοί
πόθεν ἐστὲ ὑμεῖς οἱ δὲ εἶπαν ἐκ
Χαρραν ἐσμέν

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς γινώσκετε Λαβαν
τὸν υἱὸν Ναχωρ οἱ δὲ εἶπαν
γινώσκομεν

εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς ὑγιαίνει οἱ δὲ
εἶπαν ὑγιαίνει καὶ ἰδοὺ Ραχηλ ἡ
θυγάτηρ αὐτοῦ ἤρχετο μετὰ τῶν
προβάτων

Tobit 7:3-5

καὶ ἠρώτησεν αὐτοὺς Ἐδνα καὶ
εἶπεν αὐτοῖς πόθεν ἐστὲ ἀδελφοί;
καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῇ Ἐκ τῶν υἱῶν
Νεφθαλὶμ ἡμεῖς τῶν αἰχμαλω-
τισθέντων ἐν Νινευή

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς γινώσκετε
Τωβιν τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν; καὶ
εἶπαν αὐτῇ γινώσκομεν ἡμεῖς
αὐτόν

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὑγιαίνει; καὶ
εἶπαν αὐτῇ ὑγιαίνει καὶ ζῇ καὶ
εἶπεν Τωβίας ὁ πατήρ μου ἐστίν

²⁰ Gen 24:40 marks one of the occurrences of εὐοδοῦν, a word common to the journeys of Tobit and the servant. See the analysis of the use of εὐοδοῦν by Merten Rabenau, *Studien zum Buch Tobit* (BZAW 220; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994) 104-7.

²¹ In each of these passages from Genesis the Hebrew is יְסָדִים and the LXX has ἄγγελος.

²² For a discussion of the Qumran witness to this passage, see Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 227-28. Compare also Gen 37:14; 43:27-30.

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Genesis 29:4-6

Jacob said to them, "Brothers, where are you from?" "We are from Haran," they replied.

Then he asked them, "Do you know Laban, son of Nahor?" "We do," they answered.

He inquired further, "Is he well?" "He is," they answered; "and here comes his daughter Rachel with his flock."

Tobit 7:3-5

So Edna asked them, saying, "Where are you from, brothers?" They answered, "We are descendants of Naphtali, now captives in Nineveh."

She said to them, "Do you know our kinsman Tobit?" They answered her, "Indeed we do know him!"

She asked, "Is he well?" They answered, "Yes, he is alive and well." Then Tobiah said, "He is my father."

Not only is the wording similar in these two passages, but several other similarities between these two scenes should be noted. After the question about someone's health, there is mention of a relative, suggesting that the custom of endogamy can be followed (Gen 29:6; Tob 7:5). In both scenes the conversation is followed by kissing and weeping. Jacob kisses Rachel and bursts into tears (Gen 29:11). Raguel kisses Tobiah and Raguel's whole family weeps (Tob 7:6-8). In both stories a wedding follows the arrival, and in each case there is a threat to the marriage on the wedding night. Jacob is deceived by being given Leah instead of Rachel (Gen 29:25); Tobiah, with Raphael's aid, must banish the demon Asmodeus (Tob 8:2-3).

Some links between the Book of Tobit and the betrothal scene in Genesis 24 have already been mentioned: the parent's concern for endogamy and the assistance of God's angel on the journey. The similarities in the descriptions of betrothal and marriage confirm the connection. In Genesis 24 Abraham's servant is in a hurry. He will not eat until he has told his tale (Gen 24:33). Even though Laban and his household try to persuade him to stay after the marriage is settled, he begs to be allowed to return to his master Abraham (Gen 24:54-56). Tobiah also refuses to eat or drink until Raguel agrees to his marriage with

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Sarah (Tob 7:11). He is not quite so anxious to leave, but at the end of the fourteen-day wedding feast he also begs to be allowed to go home (Tob 10:7-9). The newlyweds depart with half of Raguel's property: "male and female slaves, oxen and sheep, donkeys and camels, clothing, money, and household goods" (Tob 10:10; cf. Gen 24:35). In both scenes it is acknowledged that this marriage is a gift of God. Laban and his household say to the servant: "This thing comes from the LORD; we can say nothing to you either for or against it" (Gen 24:50). Raguel says to Tobiah, "Your marriage to her has been decided in heaven" (Tob 7:11).

The relationship between the Book of Tobit and Genesis is most evident in the stories of Tobiah and Sarah. Their portrayal is modeled on the stories of Isaac and Jacob. Like Isaac, each of them is a beloved only child. They are obedient to their parents regarding marriage to a close relative. Their children are the hope for the future of the people, just as the children of Isaac and Jacob are. Their descendants will return to the land of Abraham (see Tob 14:7).

Allusions to the Creation Story

The ancestor stories are not the only link between Tobit and Genesis. There are strong connections to the creation story also. The anthropology of Genesis 2 seems to be assumed in the first prayer of Tobit. When he prays for death, he asks: "Command my life breath to be taken from me, that I may depart from the face of the earth and become dust" (Tob 3:6). He understands human beings to be made from the dust of the earth, enlivened by the breath God blew into them (Gen 2:7). He considers death to be the return to the dust from which he was made (Gen 3:19).²³

Again it is in the context of Tobiah's marriage to Sarah that we find the clearest reference to the creation story. On the wedding night Tobiah prays with Sarah (Tob 8:6):²⁴

You made Adam, and you made his wife Eve
to be his help and support;
and from these two the human race has come.

²³ See Griffin, *Theology and Function of Prayer*, 117-18, 358-59.

²⁴ See Griffin's excellent analysis of this prayer (*ibid.*, 136-85, esp. 177-81).

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You said, “It is not good for the man to be alone;
let us make him a help like himself.”

Eve is to be Adam’s “help and support” (βοηθὸν στήριγμα; compare βοηθὸν in LXX Gen 2:18).²⁵ God decides to make a “help” for Adam because “It is not good for the man to be alone” (see Gen 2:18). In Tobiah’s prayer the Greek is virtually identical to the Septuagint Genesis:

Gen 2:18: καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεός οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον
ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν κατ’ αὐτόν

Tob 8:6: καὶ σὺ εἶπας ὅτι οὐ καλὸν εἶναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μόνον
ποιήσωμεν αὐτῷ βοηθὸν ὅμοιον αὐτῷ

Only the comment about the woman’s likeness to the man is slightly different: “like to him” (ὅμοιον αὐτῷ) instead of “corresponding to him” (κατ’ αὐτόν; Hebrew כְּנָדָו).²⁶ Tobiah recognizes Sarah as a gift from God, given to him as a help and support for his life. He acknowledges her as an equal partner in the marriage, “like to himself.” His comment that from Adam and Eve “the human race descended” suggests his hope for children (cf. Tob 10:11, 13).

There are some differences in the situation of Tobiah and Sarah compared to that of Adam and Eve. Sarah, not Tobiah, will leave father and mother (see Gen 2:24). Sarah and Tobiah have seven sons, whereas we only know of three for Adam and Eve. But as Sarah and Tobiah have difficulty with a demon (Tob 8:1-3), Adam and Eve will also face the challenge of evil (Gen 3:1-7).

The understanding of marriage in the Book of Tobit is clearly based on the theology of the creation narrative. What is missing here in comparison with the Genesis story, however, is even more significant. There is no mention of sin or disobedience in Tobiah’s prayer (compare Genesis 3); there is no turning away from God. There is no mutual recrimination or “curse.” The creation story is retold in the context solely of blessing. Just as the Priestly tradition in the Pentateuch, edited during the exilic/postexilic period, surrounds the story of sin and curse

²⁵ This is the only mention of Eve in the OT outside the Primeval History.

²⁶ See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 245.

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with blessing, so blessing renders the curse invisible in this postexilic story of Tobiah and Sarah. The blessing of marriage has been freed from the curse of sin just as Asmodeus has been banished by the smoke, the prayer, and the power of God in his angels.

Conclusion

The Book of Tobit is modeled on the stories in Genesis, primarily the ancestor stories but also the creation stories. The ancestors sojourned in a land not their own; the characters in Tobit are also sojourners, exiles from their land.²⁷ The ancestors were bound to God by the covenant and walked in righteousness before him. They persevered in marriage and in their hope for children. The characters in Tobit are righteous people, walking before God in obedience. They are hospitable, generous, and loving in their relationships to one another. They understand marriage to be given by God and regulated by the Law. They love their children and entrust the future to them. The ancestors lived in hope that God's promises of land and descendants would be fulfilled for their descendants. The Book of Tobit ends with a promise that God's people will again flourish in the land of Abraham.

The Book of Tobit brings encouragement to its audience, Jews living in the Diaspora. God's promises to the ancestors have not failed; the ancient stories are still reflected in the daily lives of faithful people. "Blessed be God who lives forever" (Tob 13:1).

It is with gratitude that I dedicate this article to Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M. His support through my graduate study was unflinching. His suggestions and critique during the writing of my dissertation were prompt and always helpful. I could not have found a better *Doktorvater*. Thank you, Alex!

²⁷ Weitzman ("The Hymn of Tobit," 60) notes that all the pentateuchal episodes reflected in Tobit "take place *outside* the land of Israel!"

“Eyes to the Blind”: A Dialogue Between Tobit and Job

ANATHEA PORTIER-YOUNG

God chooses to test God’s faithful servant, sending an angel to oversee the trial. Afflicted in body and soul, derided by those around him, the righteous man suffers because he is righteous. Even his wife rebukes him, yet the humbled servant remains faithful. God acts to restore his health, blessing him also with new family, renewed prosperity, and a long life. This is part of Job’s story; it is also part of Tobit’s.

The Vulgate (Vg) of Tobit recognizes and names some of the similarities between the two tales. Following Tobit’s report of his blindness in 2:11, Vg contains a substantial plus, interpreting Tobit’s suffering by comparison with Job’s (Tob 2:12-18 Vg).¹

According to the narrator in Vg, God permitted Tobit to suffer this attack (*temptationem*, also meaning “trial”) on his body in order that Tobit, like Job, might provide future generations with a model of patient endurance (2:12 Vg). Tobit had kept the commandments from his youth, and (like Job) had ever feared God (2:13 Vg). Even in his sufferings Tobit did not grow bitter (*contristatus*, also meaning “darkened” or “clouded”) against God. He would continue to fear and give thanks to God all the days of his life (2:14 Vg). Though Tobit, like Job,

¹ See discussion in Vincent T. M. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit Compared with Other Ancient Witnesses* (SBLDS 180; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000) 86-87, 93.

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suffered insult from kings (cf. Job 2:11 LXX) and from family (Tob 2:15 Vg), yet he persevered in the hope of life from God (2:17).

We recall nonetheless that for a time Tobit, like Job, wished only for death (Tob 3:6). Tobit was indeed darkened by his suffering, for in his time of blindness he could not see the workings of providence. Yet he was not darkened against God, for in acknowledging his sinfulness and that of his people, he could uphold God’s justice and hope for mercy. His exemplar Job, by contrast, knew of no sin to confess, and voiced only his bitter complaint against the creator turned destroyer.² Their tales are similar, but not the same.

Modern scholars have noted both similarities and differences between the two. Andrew Chester points out that the author of Tobit used biblical books such as Job not simply by way of allusion, but as raw material for constructing the narrative itself.³ Robert Pfeiffer, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Irene Nowell, among others, have identified numerous plot elements in Tobit borrowed from Job.⁴ Nowell also points to a common narrative structure and shared imagery of light and darkness.⁵

Carey Moore finds that the “basic problem and imagery” of Job influenced the author of Tobit.⁶ Yet, as an example of how they differ,

² But see the comments of Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*Tobit* [CEJL; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003] 138), who notes that the Vg plus reflects the attitude displayed by Job in 2:10.

³ Andrew Chester, “Citing the Old Testament,” in *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture, Essays in Honour of Barnabas Lindars, SSF* (ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988), 141-69, esp. 154.

⁴ Robert H. Pfeiffer (*History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha* [New York: Harper & Bros., 1949] 267-68), writes, “In both cases a devout and innocent man is afflicted undeservedly through loss of property and illness, is greatly irritated by his wife, whose rebuke only enhances the hero’s faith, and at the end obtains through God the restoration of wealth and health.” Fitzmyer (*Tobit*, 36), notes these and other similarities, including the portrayal of God and the death wish. Cf. Irene Nowell, “The Book of Tobit,” *NIB* 3 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999) 973-1071, esp. 982.

⁵ Nowell, “Book of Tobit,” 982.

⁶ Carey A. Moore, *Tobit* (AB40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996) 21. Yet Moore (32) also notes that suffering is not the main problem for Tobit. Moore discusses Tobit’s dependence on Job (8, 21, 32, 135, 141, 289). He notes in passing such shared motifs as the heroes’ preference for death over life and the description of the grave/Sheol as an eternal resting place (140); the demon Asmodeus and “the Satan” (146); the idea of an angelic mediator (270); the material restoration of the heroes (289); and the seven sons

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we see that Tobit takes the problem of suffering in a new direction, offering models for both a passive and active human response, while also affirming God's response.⁷ As Nowell notes, in the borrowing of patterns and motifs, it is above all "the variations that are significant."⁸ As we attend to both similarities and differences between the two books, these insights will help to focus our understanding of the intertextual relationship between Tobit and Job.

By re-using elements of the structure, plot, and imagery of the Book of Job, the author of Tobit enters into dialogue with the earlier book and invites the reader to do the same. The Book of Job speaks to the agony of the human heart when God remains hidden and friends become enemies, when no reasons can make sense of suffering, and no one acts to lift up the one brought low. Job holds God accountable for his suffering. Though God does appear and answer Job, restoring his health and fortune, yet many questions remain unanswered. The reader wants to know, like Job, how do we make sense of suffering? What can we know about God and God's ways in the world, about God's disposition toward the faithful?

In Tobit, the author addresses many of the questions raised in Job, returning to traditional answers, but developing them in new ways.⁹ Tobit affirms the theology of retribution that the Job poem calls into question.¹⁰ Yet the author's understanding of God's justice, providence, and presence with God's people differs from that of the Book of Job to the extent that it is shaped by a diaspora mentality and an apoc-

of Job and Tobiah (290). While noting the oft cited parallel between the wives' rebukes in the two books, Moore identifies key differences which he argues should be determinative for viewing one in light of the other (135).

⁷ Moore, *Tobit*, 32.

⁸ Nowell, "Book of Tobit," 982. Nowell (983) attributes differences between Tobit and its biblical models to changing times and circumstances.

⁹ Tobit focuses less on the reasons for suffering, though it does affirm the idea of testing (12:14) and chastisement (13:14), than on responses to it, i.e., how God acts to sustain, heal, and empower in the midst of adversity, how humans are to act in the face of suffering, and what resources God provides to bring grace to those who suffer.

¹⁰ Cf. Alexander A. Di Lella, "The Deuteronomistic Background of the Farewell Discourse in Tob 14:3-11," *CBQ* 41 (1979) 380-89; Will Soll, "Misfortune and Exile in Tobit: The Juncture of a Fairy Tale Source and Deuteronomistic Theology," *CBQ* 51 (1989) 209-31; Steven Weitzman, "Allusion, Artifice, and Exile in the Hymn of Tobit," *JBL* 115 (1996) 49-61.

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alyptic worldview. Fitzmyer compares the portrayal of God in the two books, citing God’s similar involvement in the lives of those who suffer.¹¹ Yet the *manner* of God’s involvement differs considerably from one to the other, and this is one of the key contributions of Tobit to the question of human suffering.

The analysis that follows focuses on the following related themes: the imagery of sight and blindness, light and darkness, and God’s hidden presence; the role of the mediating angel; mastery over forces of chaos; and exile and restoration. I will ask how the author of Tobit develops each of these themes in conversation with the Book of Job. We see that Job’s experience of God’s hiddenness is recast in Tobit’s experience of blindness. To see is finally to see the many ways God acts in the world for God’s people, through forces of creation and chaos, through angels, through the human community, and through the marvelous tale that tells the story of their encounter. Raphael’s parting speech reveals that even in a chaotic world, in a time of seeming darkness, God is ever present, ever sustaining, and enacting God’s plan for healing and restoration. Tobit also knows that just as God has restored Tobit, Sarah, and their families, so God will restore Jerusalem, leading her exiled children home in safety.

I. Blindness, Sight, and the Hidden Presence of God

Imagery of light and darkness, sight and blindness, pervades the Book of Job. Sight symbolizes knowledge, understanding, and the perception of reality (Job 4:8; 5:3; 9:11; 11:11; 22:12; 32:1); the apprehension of revelation (4:16); and human experience (3:10; 7:7; 9:25; 15:17). To see God is to experience God’s presence (42:5). Light symbolizes good fortune, security, and hope (11:17-18); life (3:20); divine guidance (19:3); and clarity (12:22). God punishes the wicked with blindness and darkness (5:14; 12:24-25; 18:18; 38:15); they grope without understanding (12:24-25). Darkness symbolizes death (38:17). It disorients and frightens (22:11), hiding God from view (37:19-24).

For Eliphaz, Job’s anger toward God can only mean Job’s sight has failed (15:13). He sees neither his own sinfulness nor the consolations God offers. Job does not disagree. Undeserved suffering has wearied

¹¹ Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 36, 46.

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his eyes (17:2).¹² Mocked and derided (17:2-6), he says, “my eye has grown blind with anguish” (17:7).¹³

The friends argue that Job’s blindness, indeed all his suffering, owes to sin. According to the traditional view upheld by Zophar and Eliphaz, God rewards the righteous with light and sight, but punishes the wicked with darkness and blindness (11:14-18; 22:4-11). Job too held this view. But he perceives that he is righteous (32:1), and says, “When I expected light, then came darkness” (30:26). Challenging Job’s innocence, Zophar assures him that if he removes sin from his life (11:14), it will brighten: “its gloom shall become as the morning” (11:17). The light of a new day will bring security and hope (11:18).

Yet just as Job’s experience reverses the traditional expectation of reward and punishment, so Job reverses the traditional associations of light and darkness, night and day. Job curses the day of his birth, lamenting that he ever saw light (3:10, 16). Even in the light of day, the path of humans and God’s ways with them remain hidden from sight (3:23). Such light is worse than darkness, and life worse than death (3:20-22).

Job knows that God established the boundaries of dark and light (26:10), and Job himself, for all his cursing, can neither shift nor reverse them. Yet God has done so, obscuring light with clouds (26:9; 37:21) and veiling Job’s path in darkness (19:8). In the past God’s watchful care had illuminated Job’s way like a lamp in the darkness (29:2-3). Now that light is gone. Though others seek to “change the night into day” with talk of approaching light (17:12), only God can lift from Job the veil that has come to feel like a shroud. Yet the very God who transforms the darkness to reveal what is hidden (12:22) remains hidden from Job’s sight (13:24).

This theme of the hiddenness, and the hunger for God’s presence, runs throughout Job.¹⁴ Though Job acknowledges God’s wondrous deeds, they are mysterious, past finding out (9:10). If God passes over

¹² On difficulties with the reading in the MT and proposed emendations, see David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989) 372.

¹³ English biblical quotations/citations are from NAB unless otherwise noted. Note that Tobit’s blinding also follows immediately upon his being ridiculed by those around him. While it is not clear whether Job’s failing sight in this passage is physical, metaphorical, or both, yet the author of Tobit may have drawn inspiration from these verses.

¹⁴ Job 9:10-11; 10:12-13; 11:7; 13:24; 23:3, 8-14; 24:1; 26:14; chap. 28; 33:13; 34:29; 37:19-24; 38:33.

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him, Job cannot see him; though God has been near, Job does not perceive him (9:11). East, west, north, and south, nowhere does God appear (23:8-9). Job suffers in this eclipse of God’s presence,¹⁵ fearing what God has in store (23:14-16).

Tobit, like Job, languishes in the dark, unable to discern God’s plan. His days are darkness without light; he counts himself among the dead and prays for release from a life in shadows (Tob 3:6; 5:10).¹⁶ Hope and comfort are never denied Tobit (we know of his nurturing nephew and supportive wife, 2:10-12; God’s plan to heal him, 3:17; and his obedient son, 5:1), yet for a time he renounces both (5:10). Tobit’s blindness comes to symbolize his failure not only to envision God’s plan for his healing (he thinks only of death), but also the failure to recognize that God sustained him through his family even in his years of suffering (3:6; 5:10).¹⁷

Tobit clung to a myth of self-sufficiency (1:6), which blinds him even to God’s workings in the world.¹⁸ His infirmity renders him dependent on others, but he places little confidence in them (3:13-14). Referring to his blindness, Tobit twice describes himself as ἀδύνατος τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς (2:10; 5:10).¹⁹ Ἀδύνατος signifies weakness or infirmity, powerlessness, inability, even impossibility. The doctors failed to restore his sight (2:10), and Tobit has accordingly surrendered all hope for a better life. The angel Raphael counters Tobit’s grim attitude with words of courage and a promise of healing. Tobit asks if Raphael will be able (δυνήσῃ) to accompany his son Tobiah on his quest for their family fortune. Raphael answers that he will be able (δυνήσομαι, 5:10).

¹⁵ James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (rev. ed.; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 105.

¹⁶ For the Greek texts of Tobit I rely on the critical edition of Robert Hanhart, *Tobit* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum 8/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983). References to the Greek text are to G^{II}, the text-form represented by Codex Sinaiticus, miniscule 319, and OL, unless otherwise noted. Following Hanhart, the designation G^I refers to the text-form represented by the majority of Greek witnesses, including Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, and Codex Venetus. G^I and G^{II} correspond in large part to the texts designated by BA and S respectively in the edition of Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (2 vols.; 8th ed.; Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt; 1935; repr. 1965).

¹⁷ Anatheia Portier-Young, “Alleviation of Suffering in the Book of Tobit: Comedy, Community, and Happy Endings,” *CBQ* 63 (2001) 35-54.

¹⁸ Had Job? Compare Tobit’s reports of his charitable works and observance of the law in chap. 1 with Job 29 and 31.

¹⁹ The phrase translates literally, “powerless/disabled with respect to the eyes.”

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Raphael's ability will counter Tobit's inability, and will empower Tobiah to be the agent of a healing and restoration that Tobit had thought impossible.

Though Tobit cannot see Raphael, he hears him make the promise that he will go with his son, and knows that it will be so (5:10, 17, 22). Out of the terrifying darkness shared by Tobit and Job, the Book of Tobit affirms God's presence with God's people, and promises that light to all (13:11). After the restoration of his sight, family, and fortune, Tobit sings to the Israelites that even in exile, when God has scattered them in the four directions, God "has shown you his greatness even there" (13:3-4).

"Oh that today I might find him," Job cried (23:3). He vowed that he would see God with his own eyes (19:26-27), and in the end he did (42:6). Yet Elihu suggested that even when Job could not see him, God was neither absent nor silent: "For God does speak, perhaps once, or even twice, though one perceive it not" (33:14).²⁰ The author of Tobit gives to the reader who has felt with Job the sting of absence, darkness, and silence, a new understanding of how God speaks to God's people and walks among them even when they do not perceive it. Tobit and Tobiah do not set out to find God, nor do they see God directly. Yet they see God's works revealed to them, encountering God in disguise throughout the story (12:11-22).

Three occurrences of the verb "to find" (εὕρισκω) in Tobit show the forms God's mysterious presence takes among a people in exile. Tobiah "finds" three things: a dead man, family, and an angel.

Tobit sends Tobiah to find the poor; he finds a dead man in need of burial (2:2-3). Tobit counsels his son to practice almsgiving, or acts of charity (ἐλεημοσύνη), for God will not turn God's face from those who turn their faces toward the poor (4:7 G¹). Almsgiving, he tells Tobiah, delivers from death and keeps one from entering darkness (4:10 G¹; cf. 12:9). Yet when Tobit buries the dead man (an act he earlier counted as ἐλεημοσύνη, 1:16-18) on the day of his feast, he is rewarded with blindness, entering a state of darkness that is death to him. To what end? Raphael later tells Tobit that when he buried the dead man, God decided to test him (12:13-14). In this trial Tobit learns that his understanding of God's ways in the world, like Job's, is too narrow. Not only light but also darkness serves God's ends (cf. Job 38:8-11, 16-17, 19-

²⁰ Elihu has in mind Job's dreams (33:15).

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21). As unfathomable as darkness and the mystery of innocent suffering is the mercy of God. The plan that is hidden from view is God’s plan to heal the wounded, reunite God’s faithful people, and restore their good fortune; this is what Tobit in his trial learns to see.

The active presence of God also manifests itself to them in family, especially in children, a joy in the present and a promise for the future. When Tobiah goes in search of his family fortune, what he *finds* first is kin (7:1).²¹ Finally, Tobiah searches for a guide, and finds an angel (5:4, 9).²² When Raphael has revealed his identity and ascends to heaven, Tobit and Tobiah understand that God worked wonders for them through the presence of this angel. They proclaim the “marvelous deeds God had done when the angel appeared to them” (12:22).

II. Advocate and Accuser

Before Raphael came to earth to help and to heal Tobit, Sarah, and their families, he interceded for them in the heavenly court, presenting

²¹ In Tobit language of seeing is used to symbolize the recognition of God’s grace embodied in the human community, above all in one’s children. Whereas Sarah’s maid insults her by saying, “may we never see your son or daughter” (3:9), following her marriage, her parents each express a fervent wish to see Sarah and Tobiah’s children before they die (10:11, 13). The hope they express echoes the good fortune of Job himself, who lived to see children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren before he died (42:16). Job complained that as the wicked grow old, “their progeny is secure in their sight; they see before them their kinsfolk and their offspring” (21:8). Job thought this blessing should be reserved for the righteous, yet the righteous Job had lost his children. Where was God’s justice? Tobit finally sees that it is less a question of justice than of grace. Only by God’s mercy can he see his son again (11:15). Knowing (and surely sharing) Anna’s anxiety to see their son Tobiah return safe from his journey, Tobit assures her, “your own eyes will see the day when he returns to you” (5:21). Tobit knows and promises that an angel will ensure his safe return (5:22). Naming his parents’ fear that they will never see him again, Tobiah urges Raguel to let him go home (10:7). Anna, who as she pined for him called Tobiah “light of my eyes” (10:5), exclaims on his return, “Now that I have seen you again, son, I am ready to die!” Tobit too, when he regains his sight, exclaims, “I can see you, son, the light of my eyes!” (11:14). He praises God’s mercy for restoring his sight and allowing him to see his son again (11:15).

²² The author uses sight language in reference to the angel, but here the act of seeing is more ambiguous. Raphael tells them that when they saw Azariah eating and drinking among them, they were seeing a vision (12:19). When he ascends to heaven they see him no longer (12:21).

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to God a record of their prayers and deeds (3:16-17; 12:12-14). The motif of the interceding angel complements that of the accuser, or Satan.²³

Both accuser and advocate figure in the Book of Job. The Satan enters the scene in Job 1:6, “when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord” (cf. Job 2:1; Tob 12:15). God asks the Satan to consider Job, who is “blameless and upright” (Job 1:8). The Satan challenges God to test Job’s piety by removing the hedge of blessing God has placed around him (1:9-11). God agrees, and twice sends the Satan to afflict Job.

If Job suspects the Satan’s role in bringing about his suffering, he does not speak of it. Yet for a time he is certain he has an advocate in heaven, ready to help him in his trial. “Even now,” he proclaims, “my witness is in heaven, and he that vouches for me is on high” (16:19).²⁴ Elihu also speaks of such a figure, in a passage that resonates strongly with Tobit. Such an angel helps to ensure the efficacy of the sinner’s prayer, instructing one in righteousness and allowing one to experience healing, the joy of God’s presence, light, and new life (33:23-30).

Raphael fulfills just such a role in Tobit. God commissions Raphael to heal Tobit and Sarah (Tob 3:17; 12:14). Through Raphael the author of Tobit illustrates and emphasizes God’s healing and life-giving power. Raphael’s very name (literally “God heals”) underscores the point. Whereas in Job, God sent an angel to strike his servant, in Tobit, God sends an angel to heal. Advocate takes the place of accuser. Through this advocate, God heals the afflicted, raises up the downcast, and gives new life to those who longed for death.

III. Chaos, Providence, and Holy Help

God accomplishes this work not only through Raphael, but also through Tobiah, whom Raphael instructs and empowers. Raphael teaches Tobiah how to repel the demon that afflicts Sarah by means of

²³ Both the angelic advocate and the accuser appear in the heavenly court scene of Zechariah 3, where they wrangle over the fate of Joshua the high priest. The motif of the angelic intercessor and record keeper is also prominent in apocalyptic literature contemporary with the Book of Tobit. See esp. *1 Enoch* 9; 15:2; 89:70-71, 76-77; 90:14, 17.

²⁴ Cf. also Job 9:33; 19:25. For discussion of Job’s shifting hopes for heavenly intercession, see Carol A. Newsom, “The Book of Job,” *NIB* 4 (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996) 319-637, esp. 478-79.

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a fish’s heart and liver (and by prayer, 6:8, 17-18). He teaches him how to heal his father Tobit’s blindness by rubbing the fish’s gall on his eyes (6:9; 11:8).

As Tobiah, angel, and dog set out on the journey to retrieve the family fortune, night overtakes them, and they make camp beside the Tigris river (6:2). They have left the safety of home behind them. Night and water, by contrast, symbolize their encounter with the chaotic and the unknown (though there is greater depth to each; see below). As Tobiah dips his foot into the water, a great fish leaps up to devour his foot (or, according to G¹, his entire self, 6:3). Raphael empowers Tobiah in the struggle that ensues, calling out to him, “Seize the fish and become its master!” (6:4)²⁵ Tobiah masters (ἐκράτησεν) the fish and brings it up onto the ground. Following Raphael’s instructions, he cuts it up for food and saves its vital organs for the healings he will later perform (6:6).

Nowell has noted that Tobiah’s struggle with the fish symbolizes and anticipates the struggle with death he will soon undertake when he faces the demon Asmodeus.²⁶ Language denoting first downward (κατέβη) and then upward (ἀνήνεγκεν) motion images this struggle in terms of descent (as into the netherworld, a motif repeated several times in Tobit) and ascent (returning to the earth, dry land, place of life, light, and order). The forceful language of power and mastery in both the Greek and Aramaic suggests that in this symbolic act Raphael empowers Tobiah in a greater battle against death, darkness, and chaos.

In another context, God asked Job whether he could master the great sea creature Leviathan (Job 40:25-41:26 [NRSV 41:1-34]). Will

²⁵ Author’s translation of S: ἐπιλαβοῦ καὶ ἐγκρατῆς τοῦ ἰχθύος γενοῦ. Fitzmyer (*Tobit*, 206) offers this literal translation: “Take hold and become dominator of the fish.” The fragmentary 4QTob^b ar (4Q197) preserves a portion of this line in Aramaic. Fitzmyer (“Tobit” *Qumran Cave 4 XIV* [DJD 19; ed. M. Broshi et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995] 1-76, here 44) has reconstructed the verb ܦܪܬܐ [8] (in 4 i 7), corresponding to the command in Greek to seize the fish. Fitzmyer (*Tobit*, 206; “Tobit,” 45) translates the verb “overpower.”

²⁶ Nowell, “Book of Tobit,” 985, 1029. On this passage Bede (*On the Book of the Blessed Father Tobit*, 12.3-5, tr. Seán Connolly, *Bede on Tobit and on the Canticle of Habakkuk* [Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1997] 46) writes, “the huge fish . . . represents the ancient devourer of the human race, i.e. the devil” (12.3). The swift river Tigris “intimates the downward course of our death and mortality” (12.5).

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Leviathan serve him (40:28 [NRSV 41:4])? Will Job capture the beast and trade him to merchants to cut up (40:30 [NRSV 41:6])? The unspoken answer is no, Job is powerless before him. None on earth can dominate him (41:25 [NRSV 41:33]),²⁷ for Leviathan is king of the proud creatures of chaos (cf. 41:26 [NRSV 41:34]). Job must learn the place of the chaotic in God's creation, so he may understand that not all God's works fit neatly into Job's vision of the world.

Tobiah's great fish may not match the terror of Leviathan, yet it partakes of the traditional symbolism of the chaos monster.²⁸ Job and his readers have learned their lesson: chaos is real and humans are small; God has created both. The author of Tobit takes the conversation in a new direction. Human creatures do not have an arm like God's, to be sure, and alone cannot overcome the powerful elements of chaos in the world. Yet the very name Azariah ("Yh[wh] helps"), assumed by Raphael when he takes human form, promises God's assistance to the faithful in their time of need. With the aid of God and the angels, they can overcome the forces of chaos, darkness, and despair that threaten their existence as a holy people.²⁹

²⁷ For this understanding of *אֵין מַשְׁלִי*, see Newsom, "Job," 625.

²⁸ Nowell ("Book of Tobit," 1029) writes, "the fish recalls the traditional association of water and water monsters with chaos, which, once conquered, become the means for creation."

²⁹ Tobiah's expulsion of Asmodeus represents the same. Raphael instructs and enables Tobiah to create and enforce a boundary that the demon cannot cross, driving him from the intimate space of Sarah's chamber to a desert location where no humans dwell. Tobiah need not have an arm like God's to keep the demon at bay, for it is not his task to wrestle and bind him. That is the angel's task, performed far away and out of sight, almost on another plane, with such speed that the reader cannot doubt that the angel's strength is far superior to that of any demon. This is good news for one who fears demons and the chaos they represent, and relies for safety and strength on the help of God and God's angels. As we consider the role of Asmodeus in the light of Job, we may note that the demon, whose name as transliterated in Aramaic could be taken to mean "Destroyer" (from the root *שָׁמַד*), takes on the Satan's role (and God's, as far as Job saw it) as supernatural tormentor. Yet consistent with apocalyptic dualism, this demon does not act with God's permission (so far as we are told), but of its own accord. By replacing the Satan with the advocate, and relegating the destroyer to the realm of lesser demons, the book paints a world in which God is on the side of God's people rather than against them. The biblical portrayal of God as wounder and healer asserted so boldly in Deut 32:39 was influential for both Job (e.g. 5:18) and Tobit (11:15; 13:2; see further Weitzman, "Allusion, Artifice and Exile"). Though God heals Job in the end,

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Tobiah's victory over the fish also points to the surprising ways God uses these forces to God's own providential ends.³⁰ Amy-Jill Levine has noted that the great fish that attempts to swallow part or all of Tobiah on his journey from Nineveh also recalls the fish appointed by God to swallow Jonah whole as he flees his call to preach to that same city (2:1).³¹ Repetition in Jonah of the verb *נִמָּן*, “to appoint” (2:1; 4:6, 7, 8) illustrates how God turns the wild and sometimes destructive forces of nature, even the smallest little worm, to serve the aims of providence and divine mercy. Levine's comparison helps us to see more clearly the way in which the author of Tobit continues the conversation with Job in the wake of God's speech from the whirlwind.

In that speech, God not only confronted Job with the mysteries of creation, but also assured him that what humans perceive as unfathomable, God comprehends and orders. Light and darkness each has its proper place (38:19). Though they venture forth, God leads them back (38:20). Both serve God's purposes. Darkness swaddles the sea (38:9), and enforces the limit upon the water that would otherwise threaten humankind (38:8-11). Water can symbolize either chaos and danger (the mighty sea and swift river) or stability and sustenance (rain, drink, source of fertility). In either form it serves God's purposes. So too do water creatures and the darkness from which they strike.³²

IV. From Exile to Restoration

The setting of exile accounts for many of the new ways in which the Book of Tobit develops the themes it shares with Job. Both Levine and Will Soll identify the condition of exile as the underlying problem addressed by Tobit.³³ As Levine writes, “Tobit attempts to uphold

the book leaves the reader with a far more vivid sense of God's destructive nature than of God's tender healing. While Tobit can confess, like Job (19:21), “it was he who scourged me” (Tob 11:15), yet this book's main emphasis is on God's healing mercy, as Tobit proclaims in his joyful song of praise (13:2).

³⁰ Cf. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 205.

³¹ Amy-Jill Levine, “Tobit: Teaching Jews How to Live in the Diaspora,” *Bible Review* 42 (1992) 42-51, 64, esp. 46.

³² Blindness and the birds that cause it (like the worm that strikes Jonah's gourd) similarly serve God's purposes. On this interpretation of the fish, cf. Nowell, “Book of Tobit,” 985, 1029.

³³ Levine, “Tobit”; Soll, “Misfortune and Exile.”

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Jewish traditions in a land where governmental hostility to such piety is rampant.”³⁴ They struggle there with “the apparent absence of God and the impression that the world is a place of chaos.”³⁵

In this topsy-turvy foreign land kings murder, demons destroy, and neighbors deride. In exile the Israelites can no longer seek God in the temple. Instead they find God in the practices of piety and charity, in family, in community, in sacred writings (like the Book of Tobit itself) that teach and give hope.³⁶ Through these they are sustained and sustain one another. Raphael intervenes not only to guide Tobiah in the conquering of the fish and the healing of Sarah and Tobit, but also to remind them of those enduring helps God has given the faithful so they may maintain their identity, their strength, and their joy in a threatening world. God has given them the law, their community and families, the promise that prayer will be heard. The author gives this happy tale as well, with its call to joy and laughter, and its bright hope for the future.

The Book of Job ends with Job’s restoration, including reconciliation with his friends, family, and wider community (42:7-11), restoration of his material fortune, (42:10, 11-12), and the birth of seven sons and three beautiful daughters (42:14-15). He lives to a glorious old age, and before he dies sees not only his children, but also grandchildren and great-grandchildren (42:16-17).³⁷ The restoration of the fortunes of Tobit and his family parallels Job’s in many ways.³⁸

Yet just as the author of Tobit develops the theme of chaos common to Job and Tobit to symbolize the condition of exile, so the author

³⁴ Levine, “Tobit,” 44. Levine (49-50) also speaks to the element of chaos in this environment, manifested in the blurring of boundaries between life and death, human and supernatural.

³⁵ Levine, “Tobit,” 51.

³⁶ Tobit twice refers to the biblical prophets, citing Amos (Tob 2:6, quoting Amos 8:10) and Nahum (G^{II} Tob 14:4; G^I refers to Jonah). He expects all the words of the prophets of Israel to be fulfilled (14:4), and it is from this source that his hopes for the future restoration of Jerusalem are drawn. It is by such hopes as these, and those provided in the story of Tobit, that Scripture sustains as well as instructs.

³⁷ Cf. the motif of seeing one’s children and grandchildren in Tobit, discussed in n. 21 above. Cf. also Ps 128:6; Gen 50:23.

³⁸ Common elements include restoration of bodily health (this is implicit in Job), reunion of family, the restoration of wealth and prosperity (compare even the description of livestock, Job 42:12, Tob 10:10), Tobiah’s seven sons, and Tobit’s old age and living to see his grandchildren.

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expands this theme of restoration to include the restoration of Israel.³⁹ The safe return of Tobiah and the restoration of Tobit and his family prefigures and gives surety for the ingathering of God’s people, when they will return to rebuild Jerusalem and dwell secure in their ancestral land (14:3-8). In that day the light of God’s presence will shine forth from Jerusalem to all the corners of the earth (13:11).⁴⁰ The Book of Tobit gives new sight to a people blinded in the darkness of exile, to see God, to know God will deliver and restore them, and to know that God works among them and strengthens them in every place and every hour. As Tobit sees, so we too see, and rejoice.

³⁹ The promise of restoration resonated for Jews in Palestine as much as for Jews in the diaspora. In the period of Tobit’s composition, long after many had returned from exile and the temple was rebuilt, Jews in Palestine continued to understand the narrative of exile as their own, finding in the promises of restoration promises for their own future. See Michael Knibb, “The Exile in the Literature of the Intertestamental Period,” *HeyJ* 17 (1976) 253-72. Knibb discusses Tobit’s last testament on pp. 266-68.

⁴⁰ Cf. Isa 49:6, of the servant, “I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth” (see also 42:6); as well as 60:1, “Rise up in splendor! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you”; and 60:3a, “Nations shall walk by your light.” That this light in Tobit originates from God’s own presence can be inferred from the reference to the rebuilding of God’s tent in Tob 13:10.

The Psalms and the Book of Tobit

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Given the importance of the Psalms in Second Temple Judaism, it is not surprising that the influence of the Psalter appears in the Book of Tobit. While there are no actual quotations of the Psalms in the original texts of Tobit (in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek), there are numerous instances where the author of Tobit either alludes to or uses language reminiscent of the Psalms.¹ This paper examines the reception history of inner-biblical echoes and allusions to the Psalms in the later versions of Tobit.²

¹ Although there are no studies devoted to Tobit's use of the Psalms, most commentaries on Tobit provide a list of possible allusions. W. Dittmar (*Vetus Testamentum in Novo. Die alttestamentlichen Parallelen des Neuen Testaments im Wortlaut der Urtexte und der Septuaginta* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903] 351) notes parallels with the Psalms in Tob 12:20; 13:6, 10, 11. F. Vattioni ("Studi e note sul libro di Tobia," *Aug 10* [1970] 241-84, here 262-63) does not refer to any links with the Psalms in his list of 18 OT books on which the author of Tobit draws. Similarly G. Priero (*Tobia* [2d ed.; Turin: Marietti, 1963] 32-35) makes only passing reference to the Psalms in his list of biblical parallels (1st ed., p. 28, referring only to Tob 13:13ff; 2d ed., p. 34, referring only to Tob 3:2 and 3:11-12), though his commentary regularly cites parallels with the Psalms. Clearly the Psalms are not a biblical source for Tobit in the way that Genesis, Deuteronomy, or Judges are. Since in the present paper particular attention is given to the reception of allusions to the Psalms in the later translations of Tobit (e.g., in the VL, Vg, Ethiopic, and medieval Semitic versions), a complete study of the use of the Psalms in the original texts of Tobit remains a desideratum. For a discussion of the original language of composition and the complex textual history of Tobit, see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *Tobit* (CEJL; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2003) 3-27.

² I adopt here a slightly broader definition of biblical allusion than that given by

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Because the language of the Psalms was so familiar to late biblical authors, particular caution is required in speaking of intentional inner-biblical allusion in this context. Mark Biddle, in a recent discussion of intertextuality in 1 Samuel 25, refers to “the difficulty in determining whether similarities are the result of literary dependence (and, if so, the direction of the borrowing) or reflections of a common repertoire of narrative conventions.”³ In many cases Tobit uses stock religious language, especially when depicting his characters in prayer, language which often has parallels not only in the Psalms but in other biblical and extra-biblical texts as well. Patrick Griffin, in his fine study of the prayers of the Book of Tobit, summarizes the influence of the Psalms on these prayers: “The prayer style of the psalms influenced all later biblical prayer, and the prayers of Tobit are no exception. As an educated Jew, the author knew the elements involved in the psalm style of prayer and was capable of constructing his own psalms.”⁴ As Griffin suggests, the author of Tobit used psalmic language without necessarily intending thereby to call to mind the full original context of a phrase taken from a particular psalm.⁵ As J. C. Dancy has observed

Steven Weitzman (“Allusion, Artifice, and Exile in the Hymn of Tobit,” *JBL* 115 (1996) 49-61, here 50 n. 3): “a tacit reference to a biblical text intended to form an intertextual connection between that text and the alluding composition.” I shall use the term to refer to literary dependence but will not argue that in each instance the author developed a discernible pattern of allusions to a single psalm or that he intended that all allusions be recognized as such by his readers. Michael Floyd (“Deutero-Zechariah and Types of Intertextuality,” in *Bringing out the Treasure, Inner Biblical Allusion in Zechariah 9-14* [ed. M. Boda and M. Floyd; JSOTSup 370; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2003] 225-44, here 226), in referring to this broader definition of allusion, notes that “[t]he term ‘echo’ has gained recognition as a name for textual connections of this sort.” For a useful discussion of the terms intertextuality and allusion in biblical studies see Benjamin Sommer, “Exegesis, Allusion and Intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible: A Response to Lyle Eslinger,” *VT* 46 (1996) 479-489, here 486, and Mark Biddle, “Ancestral Motifs in 1 Sam 25: Intertextuality and Characterization,” *JBL* 121 (2002) 617-638, esp. 619-21.

³ Biddle, “Ancestral Motifs,” 620. For useful guidelines in distinguishing between quotations, allusions, and the use of characteristic biblical imagery see Bonnie Kittel, *The Hymns of Qumran* (SBLDS 50; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981) 48-52 (I am grateful to Christopher Frechette, S.J. for the reference to Kittel’s discussion); and Susan Fournier Matthews, “A Critical Evaluation of the Allusions to the Old Testament in Apocalypse 1:1-8:5” (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1987) 10-14.

⁴ Patrick J. Griffin, C.M., “The Theology and Function of Prayer in the Book of Tobit” (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1984) 359.

⁵ In a recent article Esther Chazon (“The Use of the Bible as a Key to Meaning in

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about the author of Tobit: "It was not that he quoted from the Bible; rather he thought and felt naturally in biblical terms."⁶

In his study on the use of the Psalms in the Book of Wisdom, Patrick Skehan observed that "the Psalms constitute something of a repository of the religious concepts of the Old Testament."⁷ In many instances Skehan found that the Book of Wisdom reflected both the language of the Psalms and the language of other portions of the OT. Skehan limited his examination to instances in which it is clear that the Book of Wisdom was dependent on the Psalms alone, or at least primarily.⁸ Skehan's approach has much to recommend it, but this investigation will not be limited to cases in which it can be determined definitively that Tobit depends exclusively or at least primarily on the Psalms. The first text discussed, Tob 3:2, illustrates some of the difficulties of determining the sources of Tobit's biblical language. The reception of this verse in some of the later versions is illustrative of one of the ways in which an allusion to a psalm in the original version of Tobit can become a lengthy quotation in later versions. The other texts discussed in this paper are drawn from four different chapters and from a variety

Psalms from Qumran," in *Emanuel, Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* [ed. S. Paul, et. al.; Leiden: Brill, 2003] 85-96, here 86) poses the question, "How much of the biblical context does a biblical allusion pull into the new work and under what conditions?" While this question is not explored in the present paper, my working assumption is that the author of Tobit alludes to the Psalms unconsciously without intending to "pull in" the biblical context of the phrase. This type of allusion has been described by Laurent Jenny as "simple allusion or reminiscence." See Trygve N. D. Mettinger, "Intertextuality: Allusion and Vertical Context Systems in Some Job Passages," in *Of Prophet's Visions and the Wisdom of Sages: Essays in Honour of R. Norman Whybray on his Seventieth Birthday* (ed. H. A. McKay and D. J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 257-80, here 258. Daniel Boyarin (*Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990] 12), in listing types of intertextuality, refers to both "conscious and unconscious citation of earlier discourse."

⁶ J. C. Dancy, "Tobit," *The Cambridge Bible Commentary on the New English Bible: The Shorter Books of the Apocrypha* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) 1-66, here 6.

⁷ Patrick W. Skehan, "Borrowings from the Psalms in the Book of Wisdom," *CBQ* 10 (1948) 384-97, here 384; cf. Judith Newman, "The Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation* (FS James L. Kugel; ed. Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman; JSJSup 83; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 309-28, esp. 312.

⁸ Skehan, "Borrowings from the Psalms," 384.

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of genres (i.e., narrative and poetry): 6:17 (Vg), 8:7 (Vg), 12:10, and 13:11.⁹

1. Tobit 3:2 (G^{II})

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. δίκαιος εἶ, κύριε, | You are righteous, O Lord, |
| b. καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα σου δίκαια, | and all your deeds are just; |
| c. καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοί σου | and all your ways |
| ἐλεημοσύνη καὶ ἀλήθεια· | are mercy and truth; |
| d. σὺ κρίνεις τὸν αἰῶνα | you judge the world. |

The third chapter of Tobit contains prayers by Tobit (vv. 2-6) and Sarah (vv. 11-15). Tobit's prayer begins in v. 2a with a doxology (δίκαιος εἶ, κύριε) found elsewhere in the OT in three places (Ps 118[119]:137, Jer 12:1, and Est 14:7).¹⁰ Similar language is found also in Dan 9:7a (לְךָ הַצִּדִּיקָה / סוֹדֵי הַצִּדִּיקָה / לְךָ הַצִּדִּיקָה / לְךָ הַצִּדִּיקָה) and 4Q504 frg. 2, col. 6 (לְךָ הַצִּדִּיקָה / לְךָ הַצִּדִּיקָה).¹¹ Since the words used here appear to be drawn from the common language of biblical prayer, we cannot be certain that Tobit alludes to one of these texts in particular. It is possible, however, to

⁹ Throughout this paper the Greek text of Tobit is drawn from the critical edition of G^I and G^{II} by Robert Hanhart, *Tobit* (Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum 8/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983). All biblical translations are taken from the RSV and the NRSV, with occasional changes. Chapter and verse enumeration follows the NRSV, except when citing the LXX and Vg, in which case I follow the editions of the Greek and Latin texts. All citations of the LXX other than Tobit are from the edition of Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979). These citations have been checked with the Göttingen critical editions of the Septuagint, where they are extant. In a few instances I have adopted the critical text in the Göttingen edition and indicated this in the notes. Translations of the Greek Psalms follow A. Pietersma, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title: The Psalms* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁰ Sönke von Stemm (*Der Betende Sünder vor Gott, Studien zu Vergebungsvorstellungen in urchristlichen und frühjüdischen Texten* [AGJU 45; Leiden: Brill, 1999] 151 n. 21) notes that similar wording occurs in several late extra-biblical texts, e.g., *Pss. Sol.* 2:32; *Adam and Eve* 27:5.

¹¹ Dennis T. Olson, "Words of the Lights (4Q504-506=4QDibHam^{a-c})," in *The Pseudepigraphic and Non-Masoretic Psalms and Prayers* (Dead Sea Scrolls, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations 4a; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997) 107-153, here 134-35.

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suggest that Tobit is more likely to have relied here on Psalm 118(119) than on the other texts listed above. The first reason is that the Psalms, in general, were the better known texts. With regard to Jer 12:1, the context in Jeremiah 12 shares little in common with the prayer of Tobit. With regard to Est 14:7 the problem of dating arises. It would be difficult to establish that this Greek addition to Esther was composed prior to the earliest Greek text of Tobit. If one were to argue that Tobit were alluding to an earlier biblical text, the strongest case could be made for an allusion to Ps 118(119):137. The doxological language found in Ps 118(119):137 offers the closest parallel to Tob 3:2. Several other links with Psalm 118 (119) will be discussed below. As we shall see, some of the later textual traditions did recognize an allusion to Ps 118(119):137 and expanded upon it.

Tobit 3:2bc in G^{II} is close to the language of the Prayer of Azariah in the Theodotion text of Dan 3:27:¹²

Tob 3:2bc (G^{II})

καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα σου δίκαια,
καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ σου ἐλεημοσύνη
καὶ ἀλήθεια·

θ Dan 3:27

καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα σου ἀληθινά
καὶ εὐθεῖαι αἱ ὁδοί σου
καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ κρίσεις σου ἀλήθεια

It is impossible to determine definitively which text is earlier, but an argument could be made that the Greek text of Dan 3:27 is older than the Greek text of Tobit (G^{II}).¹³ While scholars have argued for an orig-

¹² Here and throughout the paper underlining of texts in Greek, Hebrew, or Latin is used to help draw attention to similarities of language in texts which have language in common with Tobit. Regular underlining is used to indicate identical language. Broken underlining (e.g., κρίσεις) is used to indicate very similar language in the passage being discussed or in the lines immediately preceding or following. Dotted underlining (e.g., οἰκουμένην) is used to indicate language that is related but not very similar, including the use of synonyms.

¹³ The original composition of the Book of Tobit has been dated by Jonas Greenfield ("Studies in Aramaic Lexicography I," *JAOS* 82 [1962] 290-99, here 293) to the Persian period (5th-4th century), while Carey A. Moore (*Tobit* [Anchor Bible 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996] 42) prefers a date "no earlier than ca. 300 B.C.E." Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*Tobit*, 52) argues for a later date, preferring a date toward the end of the period between 225 and 175 B.C. The date of the Greek translation of G^{II} is not known. The Greek additions to Daniel are generally dated to a period after ca. 164 B.C.

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inal Semitic composition underlying the Greek Prayer of Azariah, the existence of such a text is still disputed, and it is difficult to argue for the dependence of one text on the other.¹⁴

Baruch 2:9 (ὅτι δίκαιος ὁ κύριος ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ ἃ ἐνετείλατο ἡμῖν) contains similar language and themes but is not as close to the language of Tob 3:2 as is Dan 3:27.

Compounding the difficulty in establishing dependence on Daniel or Baruch here is the fact that very similar language is found in several Psalms: καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ σου ἀλήθεια (Ps 118[119]:151 reading ὁδοὶ with S); δίκαιος κύριος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅσιος ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἔργοις αὐτοῦ (Ps 144[145]:17); and πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ κυρίου ἔλεος καὶ ἀλήθεια (Ps 24[25]:10). The language of Ps 144(145):17 is closer to Tobit than Dan 3:27 in that it uses a form of the adjective δίκαιος, a major theme of Tobit's doxology.¹⁵ Psalm 35(36):6-8 links similar attributes in direct address to God, but in a different order (ὡς ἀλήθειά σου, . . . ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου, . . . τὸ ἔλεός σου). While these phrases from the Psalms demonstrate parallel use of stock religious language, Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M. has recently noted that Deut 32:4 would also seem to be a possible source for Tobit's language.¹⁶

Tob 3:2bc (G^{II})

καὶ πάντα τὰ ἔργα σου δίκαια,
καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ σου ἐλεημοσύνη
καὶ ἀλήθεια·

Deut 32:4

θεός, ἀληθινὰ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,
καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ αὐτοῦ κρίσεις·
θεὸς πιστός, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀδικία
δίκαιος καὶ ὅσιος κύριος.

Steven Weitzman has shown Tobit's dependence on Deuteronomy 32 in the composition of Tobit 13.¹⁷ Although there is limited verbal cor-

¹⁴ On the question of Semitic *Vorlage* for the Prayer of Azariah, see John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 199.

¹⁵ On the significance of this term in Tobit see Griffin, "The Theology and Function of Prayer," 98-99.

¹⁶ On the connections with Deut 32:4 here see Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M., "Two Major Prayers in the Book of Tobit," in *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel and J. Corley; Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004) 95-115. I am grateful to Fr. Di Lella for providing me with a copy of this paper prior to its publication.

¹⁷ "Allusion, Artifice, and Exile in the Hymn of Tobit."

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respondence in this instance, it is clear that elsewhere Tobit draws on Deuteronomy 32 and it is possible that here also he has been influenced by this text in composing the prayer in Tobit 3.

The final phrase of Tob 3:2d in G^{II} (σὺ κρίνεις τὸν αἰῶνα) differs from the longer ending found in G^I (καὶ κρίσιν ἀληθινὴν καὶ δικαίαν σὺ κρίνεις εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα). While some scholars understand the longer reading of G^I to be original, I follow the majority of commentators who understand G^{II} to preserve the original reading. A possible source for the expanded reading in G^I can be found in the Psalms. The text in G^I shares language with Ps 118(119):142 (ἡ δικαιοσύνη σου δικαιοσύνη εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ὁ νόμος σου ἀλήθεια) and Ps 9:9 (καὶ αὐτὸς κρίνῃ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ).

This case illustrates some of the difficulties in tracing the sources of Tobit's language, particularly when the texts involved reflect the standard language of prayer. This verse finds parallels not only in the Psalms, but in Baruch, the Song of Moses, and the Prayer of Azariah as well.

We noted above that Tob 3:2 begins with a phrase also found in Ps 118(119):137 (δίκαιος εἶ, κύριε). A further link with Psalm 118(119) is found in the Vg. In Tob 3:2b the Vg reads "all your judgments (*iudicia*)," rather than "all your works (*opera*)" (πάντα τὰ ἔργα σου).¹⁸ Skemp suggests that Jerome's deviation from the Greek can be explained either by positing that his *Vorlage* read *iudicia* or that Jerome changed the verb *iudicas* toward the end of the verse in the VL to the noun *iudicia* and rearranged the wording.¹⁹ While these alternative explanations are plausible, I would suggest an additional consideration. It is possible that Jerome uses *iudicia* instead of *opera* because of the occurrence of *iudicium* in the Latin texts of Ps 118(119):137. The identical language in Tob 3:2a and Ps 118(119):137 could well explain Jerome's (unconscious) substitution of *iudicia* for *opera*.

¹⁸ I have used the critical edition of the Vg text in *Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam vulgatam versionem* (Rome: Vatican Polyglott Press, 1950) and the edition of the VL by P. Sabatier in A.E. Brooke, N. McLean, and H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Old Testament in Greek 3/1* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1940) 123-44. Translations of the Vg and VL are taken from Vincent T. M. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit Compared with Other Ancient Witnesses* (SBLDS 180; Atlanta: SBL, 2000). In the few instances in which Skemp does not provide translations of texts discussed here I have supplied my own translations.

¹⁹ Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 98.

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The medieval Hebrew versions known as Münster (HM), Fagius (HF), and London (HL) expand on the connections between Tob 3:2 and Ps 118(119):137.²⁰ All three texts add the words “and your judgments are right (וְיִשָּׁר בְּשִׁפְטֶיךָ),” after the opening words of Tob 3:2a.²¹ In doing so these late traditions recognize an allusion to Ps 118(119):137 (צָדִיק אֱתֵה יְהוָה) in their varied *Vorlagen* and add to the allusion by quoting the next few words of the Psalm.

2. Tobit 6:17 (Vg)

*hii namque qui coniugium ita
suscipiunt ut Deum a se sua mente
excludant et suae libidini ita
vacent sicut equus et mulus in
quibus non est intellectus habet
potestatem daemonium super eos*
(Tob 6:17, Vg)

For those who undertake marriage in such a way that they exclude God from themselves [and from] their mind, and devote themselves to their lust like a horse and a mule, who have no understanding, the demon has power over them.

Tobit 6:17 in the Vg is part of a section of Jerome’s translation that is not found in any other version (Tob 6:17-22 Vg).²² In Tob 6:17 (Vg) part of Raphael’s instructions to Tobias (“*sicut equus et mulus in quibus non est intellectus*”) are a quotation of Ps 31(32):9 (“*sicut equus et mulus quibus non est intellectus*”).²³ While some scholars have argued

²⁰ For the text of HM I have used the text in Adolph Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit: A Chaldee Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1878). For the text of HF I have used Walton’s Polyglot (*Biblia Polyglotta Waltoni*, Vol. 4; London: Roycroft, 1657). For the text of HL I have used Moses Gaster, “Two Unknown Versions of the Tobit Legend,” in *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology* (3 vols.; New York: Ktav, 1971) 3.1-14. Some of the readings of HM and HF are given in the apparatus of D. C. Simpson, “The Book of Tobit,” in *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (ed. R. H. Charles; 2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913) 1. 174-241. The propensity of HF to add biblical allusions and quotations was noted by Simpson, “The Book of Tobit,” 180. Meinrad M. Schumpp, O.P. (*Das Buch Tobias* [EHAT 11; Münster: Aschendorff, 1933] xxxix) noted the same propensity in HL.

²¹ Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit*, 21. On Ps 119:137 MT see GKC §145r.

²² I am grateful to Rabbi Matthew Kraus, Vincent Skemp, and Catherine Brown Tkacz for their sage advice in my analysis of Jerome’s Tobit.

²³ In this paper the Latin text of the Psalms is taken from the Gallican Psalter in

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that Jerome found this material in his Aramaic *Vorlage*, many conclude that it stems from Jerome himself. Skemp has recently pointed out that Jerome employs this same citation of Ps 31(32):9 in his tract *Contra Vigilantium* (PL 23.388-89). There, in a discussion of asceticism and marriage, Jerome writes: "This is what the Holy Spirit says by the mouth of David: 'Be not like horse or mule that have no understanding.'" ²⁴ As Skemp correctly notes, this suggests, at the very least, that Jerome himself espoused the teaching found in the plus in Tobit 6. While there is no apparent lexical link with Psalm 31(32) that would explain why Jerome quotes this verse, the words of the psalm do help to give a scriptural basis to what may well be Jerome's own addition to the Bible. The observations of Michael Fishbane, made in reference to early editing of the Hebrew Bible, are apposite here: "Each new textual level thus shows the power of *traditio* to transform (and so reinvent) the *traditum*. Paradoxically, the tradents' interpretations have become scripture—even the (new) divine word."²⁵

3. Tobit 8:7 (Vg)

<i>dixitque Tobias</i>	Tobias said,
<i>Domine Deus patrum nostrorum</i>	"Lord God of our fathers,
<i>benedicant te caeli et terra et mare</i>	may the heavens and the earth
<i>fontes et flumina et omnis</i>	and the sea, fountains and
<i>creatura tua quae in eis sunt</i>	rivers and every creature of
	yours that is in them, bless you."

Language drawn from the Psalms has also been added to at least two different Latin translations of Tob 8:7, the beginning of the prayer of Tobias on his wedding night. Let us examine the VL in the Alcalà translation first.²⁶ The majority of VL manuscripts have a text that is

Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem, ed. R. Gryson (4th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994).

²⁴ Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit*, 228.

²⁵ Michael Fishbane, "Inner-Biblical Exegesis," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, The History of Its Interpretation*, Vol. 1: *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)*, Part 1, *Antiquity* (ed. M. Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996) 33-48, here 37.

²⁶ I have used the text published in F. Vattioni, "Tobia nello Speculum e nella prima Bibbia di Alcalà," *Aug* 15 (1975) 169-200.

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very close to the Greek of G^{II}.²⁷ A very different reading is found in the often expansive and periphrastic *Prima Biblia de Alcalà*: “Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all ages. Let the heavens and every creature of the whole earth bless you, because you spoke and all things were created, and you established all things by your word (*Benedictus es deus patrum nostrorum et benedictum nomen tuum in omnia saecula saeculorum. Benedicant te celi et omnis creatura totius terre quia dixisti et facta sunt omnia et confirmans universa verbo tuo*).” Here the translator has significantly expanded his text. Entirely new is the final phrase: *totius terre quia dixisti et facta sunt omnia et confirmans universa verbo tuo*. While this is not a biblical quotation, it does echo the language of several psalms. The phrase “*dixisti et facta sunt*,” which recalls the biblical creation accounts, is found in a similar form and in a similar context in both Ps 32(33):9 and Ps 148:5 (*dixit et facta sunt*). The closest parallel, however, is found not in the Psalter but in Judith’s psalm of thanksgiving in Jdt 16:14: “*tibi serviat omnis creatura tua quia dixisti et facta sunt misisti spiritum tuum et creata sunt et non est qui resistat voci tuae*.” The text from Judith appears, in turn, to be modeled in part on Ps 103(104):30 (*emittes spiritum tuum et creabuntur et renovabis faciem terrae*).²⁸ This lone VL manuscript (Alcalà) has expanded the opening of Tobias’ prayer with words that appear to be modeled on Judith’s psalm of thanksgiving and other OT prayers.

Jerome’s translation of Tob 8:7 (Vg) also employs psalmic language, but from different sources. The first verse of Tobias’ prayer in the Vg reads (8:7): “Tobias said, “Lord God of our fathers, may the heavens and the earth and the sea, fountains and rivers and every creature of

²⁷ The Greek text in G^{II} (Tob 8:5) reads: “Tobias began by saying: ‘Blessed are you, O God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all generations forever. Let the heavens and the whole creation bless you forever’” (καὶ ἤρχατο λέγειν Εὐλογητὸς εἶ ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν καὶ εὐλογητὸν τὸ ὄνομά σου εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας τῆς γενεᾶς· εὐλογησάτωσάν σε οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ κτίσις σου εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας). Most VL manuscripts of verse 8:7 read: “And they said: ‘Blessed are you, O Lord God of our ancestors, and blessed is your name in all ages. Let the heavens and all your creatures bless you.’” The Latin: *Et dixerunt Benedictus es, Domine Deus patrum nostrorum, et benedictum nomen tuum in omnia saecula saeculorum; et benedicant tibi caeli et omnis creatura tua*.

²⁸ The final phrase of the Alcalà translation of Tob 8:7 is similar to Wis 9:1: “*qui fecisti omnia verbo tuo*.”

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yours that is in them, bless you (*dixitque Tobias Domine Deus patrum nostrorum benedicant te caeli et terra et mare fontes et flumina et omnis creatura tua quae in eis sunt*).” Here the Vg finds a close parallel in Ps 68(69):35: “Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them (*laudent illum caeli et terra mare et omnia reptilia in eis*).” Similar language is found in Ps 95(96):11 (*laetentur caeli et exultet terra commoveatur mare et plenitudo eius*). The final phrase seems to reflect Ps 145(146):6 (*qui fecit caelum et terram mare et omnia quae in eis*). In this instance Jerome’s translation appears to creatively weave together language from the Psalms to create an expression that is both new to the Bible and at the same time heavily dependent on biblical language.

4. Tobit 12:10 (G^{II})

οἱ ποιοῦντες ἁμαρτίαν καὶ
ἀδικίαν πολέμοι εἰσιν τῆς
ἑαυτῶν ψυχῆς

but those who commit sin and
do wrong are their own worst
enemies.

Tobit 12:10 is part of the angel Raphael’s instruction of Tobit and Tobias. This sapiential aphorism finds its closest parallel in the Greek text of Ps 10(11):5 (ὁ δὲ ἀγαπῶν ἀδικίαν μισεῖ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν) and Prov 29:24 (ὃς μερίζεται κλέπτῃ μισεῖ τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν). The lexical and thematic similarities suggest that Tobit has been influenced by either the psalm or the proverb. The text of Tob 12:10 in G^I (οἱ δὲ ἁμαρτάνοντες πολέμοι εἰσιν τῆς ἑαυτῶν ζωῆς) rephrases the text of G^{II} and, in the process, loses some of the lexical links with these texts. This is of interest for the reception history of allusions to the Psalms, in that it suggests that the author of G^I either was not aware of the links with the psalm or the proverb, or else was not averse to diminishing them in his revision of the longer text.

The Ethiopic text of Tob 12:10 in Dillmann’s critical edition follows G^I closely: ወእከ ደኡብሉሉ ደጸለሉ ለፍሶሙ :: (*Wä-ʾellä yäʾebbäsu-sä yäṣalläwa lä-näfsomu*; “Those who do evil hate their souls”).²⁹ The one deviation from the Greek of G^I in the Ethiopic is the use of the

²⁹ A. Dillmann, *Veteris Testamenti aethiopici tomus quintus* (Berlin: Asher, 1894) 11-27, here 22.

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verb **ደጸልኡዋ** (*yəṣallə'wa*- “they hate”), which reflects the Greek verb of Ps 10(11):5 and Prov 29:24 (μισέω) rather than the Greek adjective of Tob 12:10 (πολέμιοι). A collation of the Ethiopic manuscripts of Tobit reveals that all of the earlier manuscripts have a different reading (**ጸብኡ**- from the root *ṣab'a*), one that is closer to the Greek text of Tobit.³⁰ The text printed in Dillmann’s edition reflects what became the standard Ethiopic text of Tob 12:10 from the 18th century on. It is possible that this late reading represents a simple scribal error, though this is unlikely since the two letters which differentiate the forms are not easily confused. The close parallels between Tob 12:10 and Ps 10(11):5 and Prov 29:24 suggest rather a different explanation. The new text represents an assimilation to the Ethiopic text of the psalm or the proverb, both of which read a form of the same verb (**ጸልኡ**- *ṣal'a*). The Ethiopic text may well be another instance in which language of the Psalms has influenced the transmission of the text of Tobit.

5. Tobit 13:11 (G^{II})

... ἔθνη πολλὰ μακρόθεν ἦξει σοι
καὶ κάτοικοι πάντων τῶν ἐσχάτων
τῆς γῆς πρὸς τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ἅγιόν σου
καὶ τὰ δῶρα αὐτῶν ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν
αὐτῶν ἔχοντες τῷ βασιλεῖ τοῦ
οὐρανοῦ γενεαὶ γενεῶν
δώσουσιν ἐν σοὶ ἀγαλλίαμα

... many nations will come to
you from far away, the inhabi-
tants of all the remotest parts
of the earth to your holy name,
bearing gifts in their hands for
the King of heaven. Generation
after generation will give joyful
praise in you.

Tob 13:11, part of Tobit’s prayer of thanksgiving, contains echoes of both Isaiah and the Psalms. Tobit’s references to a bright light (φῶς

³⁰ Early manuscripts reading the form closer to the Greek of Tobit include EML 57, EML 1768, Davies 95, EML 1481, and BN Éth. 50. The same reading is found in two manuscripts cited in Dillmann’s apparatus: BL Orient. 505 and Orient Rüpp II, 2. Later manuscripts reading the assimilated text with Dillmann’s edition include BN Abb 35, EML 6285, EML 6379, EML 6529, Jerusalem Eth. Arch. 1E, and Or Var 8° 37 Heb. Univ. I am grateful to the directors of the Ethiopic Manuscript Microfilm Library (EML) at the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library, St. John’s Abbey and University, in Collegeville, Minnesota and to the A. A. Heckman Fund for facilitating access to these manuscripts.

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λαμπρὸν λάμψει), and peoples coming to Jerusalem from afar (ἔθνη πολλὰ μακρόθεν ἥξει σοι), recall Isa 60:3 (καὶ πορεύσονται βασιλεῖς τῷ φωτί σου καὶ ἔθνη τῇ λαμπρότητί σου).³¹ One theme of Tob 13:11 that is lacking in Isa 60:3, the bearing of gifts, is found in Ps 71(72):10 (δῶρα προσοίσουσιν . . . δῶρα προσάξουσιν). Tobit 13 and Psalm 71(72) both refer to peoples coming to Jerusalem from afar and to the bearing of gifts.

The expansive translation of this verse found in the Alcalà text of the VL reads: “they will worship in you the King of heaven, offering their sacrifices in joyfulness” (*adorabunt in te regem celi offerentes in laetitia oblationes suas*).³² The insertion of the verb *adorabunt*, which is not derived from the Greek texts of Tobit and is not found in the main VL tradition, can be explained by reference to the Latin text of Ps 71(72):11. The Latin text of Ps 71(72):11 in the Gallican Psalter reads “and all kings will worship him” (*et adorabunt eum omnes reges*).³³ The reading in the Alcalà VL text may reflect the language of Ps 71(72):11. Another possibility is that the Alcalà text has been contaminated by the Vg text of Tobit, for Jerome’s translation of Tob 13:14 also reads *adorabunt* (*adorabunt Dominum in te*). Skemp notes the correspondence of the Vg with the Alcalà translation but does not offer an explanation for either reading. One possible explanation is that one or both readings derive from the influence of the language of Psalm 71(72).

The links between Tob 13:11 and Ps 71(72):10 were developed by the late Hebrew version HF, which cites long sections from this psalm and other psalms. In the following translation of the text of Tob 13:11 in HF I have indicated in parentheses the likely sources of the expansions and italicized citations from the Psalms:

“Many nations will pray for your peace (Jer 50:4-5) and seek *the name of the Lord Most High* (Ps 7:18). *The kings of Tarshish and the islands will bring tribute, the kings of Sheba and Seba will*

³¹ Similar language about foreigners coming to Zion to worship God is found also in Zech 8:20-22, Mic 4:2, and Ps 21(22):27.

³² Most VL manuscripts read “joyfully offering gifts to the King of heaven and earth” (*regi caeli et terrae in laetitia offerentes*).

³³ See also the similar language in Ps 85(86):9 (*omnes gentes quascumque fecisti venient et adorabunt coram te Domine*).

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offer gifts (Ps 72:10). For all generations *those who love you will rejoice and be joyful in your midst* (Ps 40:17). *May all who hate you be put to shame and turned backward* (Ps 129:5).³⁴

HF's version of Tobit's psalm of thanksgiving begins with conventional phraseology about Zion, continues with a short citation of Ps 7:18, and goes on to cite Pss 71(72):10; 39(40):17; and 128(129):5. We may note that in this example HF not only picks up on the links with Psalm 72 in the original text of Tobit, but skillfully weaves in citations from several other psalms that treat similar themes.

Conclusion

In editing the Syriac text of Saint Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto*, David Taylor observed that whenever the Syriac translator recognized a biblical citation he replaced the Greek biblical text with a citation drawn from the contemporary Syriac version. While the translator was adept at recognizing NT citations, he was less successful in recognizing citations drawn from the OT. The one exception was the Psalms. Remark- ing on the translator's ability to recognize the language of the Psalms in Basil's text, Taylor writes: "I was taken aback, however, by his intimate knowledge of the Psalms. Not only was he able to recognize the smallest Psalm citation and give the correct Peshitta form, but when this was at such variance to the LXX text that it was no longer compatible with the original argument he was able to replace it with a more appropriate citation from a different Psalm."³⁵

An example of this phenomenon from an earlier period may be found in the scroll of the Twelve Minor Prophets from Wadi Murab- ba'at (MurXII), which has been dated to the 2nd century B.C.³⁶ In citing

³⁴ גוים רבים ישאלו בשלומך ויבקשו שם יהוה עליון מלכי תרשיש ואיים מנחה ישיבו מלכי שבא וסבא אשכנז יקריבו לדור ודור ישישו וישמחו בקרבך כל אוהבך יבושו ויסוגו כל שונאך

³⁵ David G. K. Taylor, "The Manuscript Tradition of Daniel of Salah's Psalm Commentary," in *Symposium Syriacum VII: Uppsala University, Department of Asian and African Languages, 11-14 August 1996* (ed. R. Lavenant; Orientalia christiana analecta 256; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 1998) 61-69, here 61.

³⁶ See Heinz-Josef Fabry, "The Reception of Nahum and Habakkuk in the Septuagint and Qumran," in *Emanuel, Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. S. Paul et. al.; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 241-256, here 256.

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portions of Habakkuk 3 MurXII col. XIX replaces a phrase of Hab 3:10 (זֶרַם מִים עֲבָרָה) with a phrase drawn from Ps 77:18 (זֶרְמוֹ מִים עֲבֹתָ).³⁷ Although this reading in MurXII can be explained in several ways, one possibility is that the scribe of MurXII replaced the less familiar text of Habakkuk with the similar and more familiar passage from the Psalms. In the words of J. T. Milik, the editor of MurXII, “Le souvenir d’un passage des Psaumes a fait changer une expression analogue du Cantique d’Habaquq.”³⁸

This paper has suggested that the far-reaching influence of the Psalms can be seen at work in the transmission of the Book of Tobit. I have adduced several examples in which language from the Psalms has been added to a translation of Tobit or may have influenced the lexical choices made by the translators. Textual critics will no doubt reject such latter day readings as secondary, and that they clearly are. But these late readings are of interest for the reception history of the Book of Tobit because they bear witness to the pervasive influence of the Psalter on the transmission of the biblical text. They witness also to one of the subtle ways the transmitters of the text drew new connections between the Psalms and the Book of Tobit.

³⁷ P. Benoit, J. T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabba’at* (DJD 2; Oxford: Clarendon, 1961) 200. For a different evaluation of the reading in MurXII see Theodore Hiebert, *God of My Victory: The Ancient Hymn in Habakkuk 3* (HSM 38; Atlanta: Scholars, 1986) 30.

³⁸ Benoit, Milik, and de Vaux, *Les Grottes de Murabba’at*, 183.

Avenues of Intertextuality between Tobit and the New Testament

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Scholars have long recognized that the Book of Tobit and NT texts share themes, motifs, idioms, social knowledge, and cultural values.¹ Tobit has rightly taken its place within the Septuagint and Qumran literature as providing an invaluable resource for study of the Greco-Roman era Jewish matrix from which sprang the Jesus movement and then the NT. The problem lies in discerning whether a given parallel between Tobit and a NT text is the result of direct dependence on a form of the Tobit story or coincidence born of a common culture. Many parallels, such as light and darkness as a symbol of good and evil (Tob 14:10; John 1:5; 12:46; 2 Cor 4:6; 6:14; Eph 5:8; 1 Pet 2:9), are not the result of direct dependence on Tobit but of NT authors sharing the

¹ Usually connections between Tobit and the NT are noted piecemeal, scattered in commentaries and articles. Studies that treat Tobit's influence on the NT include M. M. Schumpp, *Das Buch Tobias übersetzt und erklärt* (EHAT 11; Münster in Westf.: Aschendorff, 1933) LXI-LXII; Daniel J. Harrington, *Invitation to the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 25-26; David A. deSilva, "Tobit," in his *Introducing the Apocrypha. Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002) 63-84, esp. 81-84; Carey A. Moore, *Tobit. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996) 46; J. Rendel Harris "The Double Text of Tobit: Contributions toward a Critical Inquiry," *AJT* 3 (1899) 541-54; *ibid.*, "Tobit and the NT," *ExpTim* 40 (1928) 315-19; David C. Simpson "The Book of Tobit," *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (ed. R. H. Charles; 2 Vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913) 1:174-241, esp. 198-99.

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same cultural milieu. Other parallels, however, are more difficult to categorize with certainty. Scholars disagree whether Raphael's self-revelation and ascension in Tob 12:11-21 affected the composition of Jesus' resurrection appearances and ascension in Luke 24. Also disputed is whether John's Apocalypse found inspiration in Tob 13:16-17 for his description of the New Jerusalem. Other intriguing points of contact with Tobit occur in Q material (beatitudes and the golden rule), the Letter of James, First Peter, Paul's epistles, and the Pastorals.

The first section of this study will explain the methodology I use to establish the necessary distinction between direct dependence and coincidental echo. Since the Tobit story survives in more than one form, it is important to identify which form of the Tobit story (the Qumran Aramaic and Hebrew fragments, Greek G^I, G^{II}, and G^{III}, and the Old Latin) is an intertext of a specific NT passage.² The intertextual connections explored here will be divided into two categories: oral-scribal and cultural intertextures. Oral-scribal intertexture is the name given to those parallels that point to a form of the Tobit story as a conscious literary influence on a NT text. Cultural intertexture is the term applied to shared allusions and echoes that are without evidence for direct literary dependence.³ For the latter instances, various texts lie in the background of a NT text, one of which is Tobit.

Intertextuality: Criteria for Assessment

Explicit citation of a sacred text, the easiest form of intertextuality to recognize, is only one form of intertexture. John's Apocalypse, for

² For the three Greek forms of Tobit, I use the eclectic critical edition by Robert Hanhart, *Tobit* (Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum graecum 8/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983). The Hebrew and Aramaic fragments: J. A. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4. XIV. Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (DJD 19; ed. M. Broshi et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1995) 1-76 (+ plates I-X). T. Nicklas and C. Wagner ("Thesen zur textlichen Vielfalt im Tobitbuch," *JSJ* 34 [2003] 141-59) emphasize the need to recognize the various forms of the Tobit story.

³ The terminology and definitions for "oral-scribal intertexture" and "cultural intertexture" derive from Vernon K. Robbins, *Exploring the Texture of Texts. A Guide to Socio-rhetorical Interpretation* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1996) 40-62; idem, *The Tapestry of Early Christian Discourse: Rhetoric, Society, and Ideology* (London: Routledge, 1996) 97-115. Oral-scribal intertexture concerns how a text used sources. There are various types of oral-scribal intertexture, including recitation (ranging from exact quotation to omission of some words), recontextualization, amplification, and thematic elaboration.

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instance, does not contain a single explicit quotation from the OT yet it abounds in OT allusions and echoes. There is little consensus, however, on what precisely constitutes an allusion and how an allusion differs from an echo.⁴ Dennis R. MacDonald presents useful criteria to assess a conscious allusion to a text: density, order, distinctive traits, interpretability, and accessibility.⁵ The criterion of density assesses the number of parallels between two texts.⁶ The criterion of order asks whether there is a similar sequence. Distinctive traits criterion looks for unusual characteristics that betray an author's dependence on a text. Such unusual details are "intertextual flags" that alert readers to the presence of the hypertext being used. Interpretability looks for authorial motive. The criterion of accessibility asks whether a text was available to an author.

The accessibility of some form or forms of the Tobit story to NT authors is beyond question. Anachronistic notions of a fixed canon in

⁴ See the overview regarding OT allusions in Revelation by Jon Paulien, "Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions to the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," in *Studies in the Book of Revelation* (ed. Steve Moyise; New York: T & T Clark, 2001) 113-29. The literature on the problem of what constitutes an allusion is enormous. Studies include, Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989) 29-31; and Michael J. Gilmour, *The Significance of Parallels Between 2 Peter and Other Early Christian Literature* (SBL 10; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003) 48-58. Paulien ("Criteria and the Assessment of Allusions," 119) distinguishes allusion from echo: the former is intentional on the part of the author, while in an echo language and themes from the OT are used but no intentional reference to any particular OT text is made. He (p. 127) calls for scholars to adopt consistent terminology that distinguishes probable allusion, possible allusion, and echo. While I appreciate Paulien's efforts for more uniform criteria, Robbins' efforts to categorize multiple intertextures allows for awareness of social and cultural intertextures that might otherwise be less appreciated.

⁵ Dennis R. MacDonald, "Introduction" in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (ed. Dennis R. MacDonald; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2001) 2-3. MacDonald's conscious allusion would be a probable allusion in Paulien's categories. MacDonald also includes a criterion of analogy, which seeks examples of imitation of the same story by other authors.

⁶ An isolated verbal parallel does not demonstrate conscious literary mimesis. For example, the famous aphorism "eat, drink, be merry" occurs in Tob 7:10 (G¹ and G¹), Luke 12:19 (cf. Sir 11:19; Eccl 8:15; Isa 22:13; 1 Cor 15:32), and Greek literature (e.g., Euripides, *Alc.*, 788). See I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 524; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (CEJL; Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 2003) 230; Moore, *Tobit*, 220.

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the first century must be discarded to appreciate the place of Tobit in first-century C.E. Judaism. The discovery of the Aramaic and Hebrew fragments of Tobit in Qumran Cave 4 and the various forms of the story in Greek indicate that Tobit was among the sacred texts for at least some first-century Jews in both Palestine and the Diaspora.⁷ That some early Christians considered Tobit a sacred text is clear from Clement of Alexandria who quotes the negative form of the Golden Rule when referring to Tobit as “scripture.”⁸ Polycarp of Smyrna also refers to Tob 4:10; 12:9 (*Phil.* 10.2).

A NT author may use biblical language and rhetoric without intending allusion, in George W. E. Nickelsburg’s analogue, “the equivalent of a preacher speaking King James English.”⁹ Nickelsburg further notes, “We may well find intertextual relationships that are firm and verifiable. But we need to imagine the atmosphere and the process by which they got there and not jump too quickly to notions of intertextuality that emphasize the text as written, whether consulted or consciously remembered.”

In addition to a text’s interactive relation to other writings, texts have an interactive relation to cultures of various kinds. Vernon Robbins refers to such interactive relation as “cultural intertexture,” which can occur through allusion or echo. He defines an allusion as “a statement that presupposes a tradition that exists in textual form, but the text being interpreted is not attempting to ‘recite’ the text. . . . The

⁷ Schumpp (*Tobias*, LXI) commented in 1933, “Da aber die Verfasser der neutestamentlichen Schriften zumeist die griechische Bibel benutzten, so ist von vornherein anzunehmen, dass sie mit dieser auch das Buch Tobias aufgenommen haben.”

⁸ Clement, *Strom.* 2.23 §139 [PG II.23.97-98 §181]: τοῦτο βραχέως ἡ γραφή δεδήλωκεν εἰρηκῦα· ὁ μισεῖς, ἄλλω οὐ ποιήσεις, “Scripture has shown this briefly in the words, ‘That which you hate, do not do to another.’” Both Clement (*Strom.* 2.23 §139 [PG II.23.97-98 §181]; 6.12 §102 [PG VI.12.62 §282]; *Paed.* 2.28 [PG II.2.44-45 §67]) and Origen (e.g., *De oratione* 11:1; 14:4; 31:5) cite Tobit as Scripture more than once. Moore (*Tobit*, 53) notes that Hippolytus of Rome (170-235) refers to Tobit as canonical (cf. *Commentary on Daniel* 1.28). For the use of Tobit among the Apostolic Fathers, see E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Goodman; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986) 3.1.227; Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985) 388-89.

⁹ George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Tobit, Genesis, and the Odyssey: A Complex Web of Intertextuality” in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity* (ed. D. R. MacDonald) 41-55, here 53.

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text interacts with phrases, concepts, and traditions that are ‘cultural’ possessions that anyone who knows a particular culture may use.”¹⁰ Such allusions interact with cultural concepts or traditions. “Various texts rather than one text lie in the background, with the result that interpreters regularly may disagree over whether or not a particular text lies in the background.”¹¹ Robbins defines an echo as a subtle and indirect word or phrase that “evokes, or potentially evokes, a concept from cultural tradition.”¹² Two points are important about this understanding of an echo: the author may not have directly intended the echo and no single text undeniably lies in the background. When a NT text has a cultural intertextual echo with Tobit, the echo often extends to several other texts, both Hellenistic-Jewish and Greco-Roman. Since there are innumerable cultural resemblances between the NT and Tobit, it is not possible to present a comprehensive survey in this brief article.

This study analyzes eight intertextual connections between Tobit and the NT. For each connection I will assess whether there is enough evidence to place the intertext in the category of oral-scribal intertexture, which refers to a probable allusion to Tobit by a NT author, or in the category of cultural intertexture, in which there is a shared cultural allusion or echo but the evidence does not permit the conclusion of direct dependence on Tobit. This study thus explores intersecting avenues of intertextuality that find Tobit’s influence on the NT is sometimes conscious mimesis and other times coincidental shared cultural echoes.

1. New Jerusalem Motif

A lemma at Rev 21:19 in the 27th edition of Nestle-Aland cites Tob 13:17, but the literature on John’s Apocalypse often gives short shrift to the possibility that Tobit’s description of the New Jerusalem could have directly influenced John of Patmos.¹³ The parallels are underlined:

¹⁰ Robbins, *Texture of Texts*, 58.

¹¹ Ibid., 59.

¹² Ibid., 60.

¹³ David Aune (*Revelation* [3 vols.; WBC52; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997-98] 3.1163-64) does not mention Tobit as an influence on Revelation 21. G. K. Beale (*The*

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Tob 13:16b-17 (G^{II} = S; G^I lacks this part of v 16): “And the gates of Jerusalem will be built with sapphire and emeralds, and all your walls with precious stones; the towers of Jerusalem will be built with gold [and wood, added in 4Q196], and their battlements with pure gold; (v 17a G^{II}) the streets of Jerusalem will be paved with [G^I adds: beryl] ruby and stone of Ophir.”

Rev 21:18-21: “The upper part of its wall was jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. (v 19) The foundations of the city wall were decorated with every precious stone; the first course of stones was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, (v 20) the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh hyacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. (v 21) The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made from a single pearl; and the street of the city was of pure gold, transparent as glass.”

John drew on several New Jerusalem traditions to create his own unique account in Rev 21:10-21; in particular, he was influenced by Isa 54:11-12 and several Ezekiel texts (Ezek 40:2-16; 41:4-5; 42:15-20; 43:2-5; 45:2; 48:18,20,30-35).¹⁴ Although a full analysis of this passage is not

Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999] 1086-87) notes the numerous parallels between Tobit 13 and Rev 21:18-21 but thinks the parallels are likely coincidental. Surprisingly, Beale's monograph (*John's Use of the Old Testament in Revelation* [JSNTSup 166; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998]) rarely mentions Tobit. On the problem of limiting the boundaries of intertextual interpretation, see Robbins, *Tapestry*, 96-101. In contrast to Beale and Aune, Schumpp (*Tobias*, LXII) and R. Royalty (*The Streets of Heaven. The Ideology of Wealth in the Apocalypse of John* [Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1998] 74) argue that Tobit, along with other eschatological texts, likely was an influence on Revelation 21.

¹⁴ See A. Vanhoye, “L' utilization du livre d' Ezéchiel dans l'Apocalypse,” *Bib* 43 (1962) 436-76. Also, J. Lust, “The Order of the Final Events in Revelation and in Ezekiel,” in *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (ed. Jan Lambrecht; BETL 53; Gembloux: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1980) 179-83. On the importance of the Qumran Aramaic New Jerusalem texts, such as 5Q15 and 11Q18, see É. Puech, “À propos de la Jérusalem Nouvelle d'après les manuscrits de la Mer Morte,” *Semitica* 43 (1995) 87-102; J. Maier, *Die Tempelrolle vom Toten Meer und das “Neue Jerusalem”* (UTB für Wissenschaft 829; Munich: Reinhard, 1997).

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feasible here, distinctive traits and word order in Rev 21:21b make it possible that John drew inspiration directly from the architectural tradition in Tob 13:17-18a.¹⁵ Both John and Tobit place the street tradition last in their outline of the city. Fekkes rightly points out here, “It is most unlikely that each [author] would also have taken the first element in Isaiah’s description and moved it to the end of their building inventories. It is more natural to assume that John’s inclusion of the street motif and its position presuppose the interpretation of Isa 54:11b given in Tob 13:17a.”¹⁶ Moreover, John’s association of the street with “pure gold,” χρυσίον καθάρων, in 21:21 points to the influence of Tobit where the words “pure gold” (13:16) χρυσίω καθαρῷ, immediately precede “streets” (13:17), αἱ πλατεῖαι.¹⁷

The criterion of density comes into play in Rev 21:18a with a possible allusion to the wall made of “most precious stone” in Tob 13:16b. In Rev 21:18a, the ἐνδώμησις of the wall is made of jasper. The ἐνδώμησις seems to refer to the part of the wall built on and rising above the foundation.¹⁸ A few verses earlier John calls jasper a “most precious stone” (21:11, λίθω τιμιωτάτῳ); the plural “stones” of the wall in Isa 54:12a (MT לִשְׂבָּנִי; LXX λίθους) may indicate a closer affinity in this instance between Rev 21:18a and Tob 13:16b than between Revelation and Isa 54:12.

Revelation 21 shares additional common imagery and themes with Tobit 13, including the ideas of the nations bearing gifts (Rev 21:24,26; Tob 13:11) and the future rebuilding of the tabernacle (Rev 21:3,22; Tob 13:16; 14:5). Both texts refer to “Jerusalem, the holy city” (Tob 13:9 [G^{II} and G^I]; Rev 21:2,10), a motif common to many texts such as Isa 52:1. The “precious stone,” λίθω ἐντίμῳ (G^I) // λίθω τιμίῳ (G^{II}), occurs with

¹⁵ See Jan Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions in the Book of Revelation. Visionary Antecedents and their Development* (JSNTSup 93; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 239-46. Fekkes states (p. 247) regarding Rev 21:18-21: “John draws not only on the New Jerusalem prophecy of Isa 54:11-12, but also Tob 13:16-17, which reaffirms and extends the original oracle of Second Isaiah. Building on this double foundation, he combines their basic ingredients with his own colorful detail to achieve a creative synthesis of past and present prophecy.”

¹⁶ Ibid., 245.

¹⁷ Royalty (*Streets of Heaven*, 74) notes that the “stones of Ophir” in Tob 13:17 (G^{II}, G^I) are likely gold. Ophir was known for its gold (1 Kgs 9:28; Isa 13:12; 2 Apoc. Bar. 10:19; Ps 45:9; Job 28:16; Sir 7:18).

¹⁸ Fekkes, *Isaiah and Prophetic Traditions*, 239-40.

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“finest gold,” χρυσίῳ καθαρόῳ in Tob 13:16 (G^{II} and G^I); essentially the same phrases occur in Rev 21:18-19,21, as well as the common elements of walls and streets.

An additional distinctive trait occurs in Tobit and Revelation: the threefold “hallelujah” of the heavenly multitude in Rev 19:1-6 parallels the hallelujah shouted by the houses (G^{II}) or lanes (G^I) of Jerusalem in Tob 13:18. In both Revelation and Tobit the hallelujahs in praise of God are sung at the same time, viz., at the establishment of the New Jerusalem.

John of Patmos was likely attracted to the Book of Tobit for at least two reasons. First, Tobit offers a guide to faithful adherence to Mosaic instructions in the Diaspora in spite of government hostility.¹⁹ Given John’s message of non-assimilation into Gentile culture (Rev 2:10; 18:4), he would have approved of Tobit risking his life and losing everything (Tob 1:19-20) in order to keep the Torah.²⁰ John of Patmos, a conservative Torah observant Jew,²¹ considered the Roman Empire hostile to faithful adherence to God and the Lamb. Second, Tobit incorporates motifs, forms, and formulae that recur with some frequency in apocalyptic literature.²² Tobit contains prophecy with the motif of promise and fulfillment, as well as supernatural motivation for composing a text (Tob 12:20; Rev 1:11). Among the less obvious literary parallels

¹⁹ See Amy-Jill Levine, “Tobit: Teaching Jews How to Live in the Diaspora,” *Bible Review* 42 (1992) 42-51,64.

²⁰ The corpse exposure scenes of Rev 11:8-10 and Tob 1:17b-18, from John’s perspective, would have attested to Gentile hostility toward the halakic need for honorable burial (Gen 23:4-20; Deut 21:23; cf. *b. Meg.* 3b) and were indications of the utter depravity of the governing authorities. Bringing shame upon one’s enemy through corpse exposure is a motif found in both Greek and Hebrew literature. For instance, in Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Creon forbids burial to the traitor Polyneices (20-31; 199-210), although his daughter Antigone disobeys the edict; and in Homer’s *Iliad* (22.396-410) Achilles drags Hector’s corpse outside the city walls. Remaining unburied was among the Deuteronomic curses for covenant disobedience (Deut 28:26), and is the shameful apocalyptic end of God’s enemies in 1QM 11:11 and Rev 19:17-21.

²¹ David Frankfurter, “Jew or Not? Reconstructing the ‘Other’ in Rev 2:9 and 3:9,” *HTR* 94 (2001) 403-25. Tobit’s deep concern about fellow Israelites abandoning an halakic diet in an effort to survive in Gentile surroundings (Tob 1:10-11) would have resonated with John of Patmos (Rev 2:14,20).

²² George W. E. Nickelsburg, “Stories of Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Times,” in *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT 2/2; ed. M. Stone; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984) 33-87, here 46.

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between Tobit and Revelation: Rev 16:5b-6, 7b, and 19:1-2 belong to the *Gattung* “judgment doxology” which often begins with the phrase “righteous are you, Lord.” This form is found often in the LXX including in Tob 3:2. Rev 16:5b and Tob 3:2 are two of a number of Jewish texts affirming God’s proper dispensing of judgment. Moreover, the wording of Rev 15:3b, “great and marvelous are your works, Lord God,” find close parallel in Tob 12:22 G^I “the great and marvelous works of God” (G^{II} is not as close: “these his great works”).

To summarize, the evidence indicates that John of Patmos likely drew some inspiration from the depiction of the New Jerusalem in Tob 13:16b-17 as part of his creative synthesis of several Jewish sacred texts that contain the New Jerusalem motif. The criteria of density, order, and distinctive traits warrants the conclusion that John used Tob 13:15-17 in Rev 21:18-21 as part of his recontextualization of the New Jerusalem motif.

2. Angelic Traditions and Motifs

Scholars have long noted that parallels between Tobit and NT texts are particularly prominent in the realm of angelology. Raphael (Tob 12:15 G^{II} and G^I) refers to himself as one of the seven angels (G^I refers to “holy angels”) who stand in attendance in the presence of the Lord (G^{II}) or Holy One (G^I).²³ This notion of angels standing in the presence of God is found elsewhere (*T. Levi* 3:4-8; Luke 1:19; and Rev 4:5; 8:2), sometimes with the precise phrase “angels of the presence” (*Jub* 2:2,18; 1QH 14:13; 1Q28b 4:25-26).²⁴ The tradition of an especially distinguished order of seven angels is not found in the OT but does appear in John’s

²³ On the different tendencies among the forms of the Tobit story regarding angels, see Helen Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit* (HTKAT; Freiburg i.B./Basel/Vienna: Herder, 2000) 159; Loren Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology. A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (WUNT 2/70; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995) 166-67. G^I, for instance, tends to use the term “angel” more often than G^{II}, strengthen its meaning through adjectives (e.g., G^I adds “holy” to “seven angels” in 12:15), and put special emphasis on the subordination of angels to God (so 8:15; 11:14).

²⁴ See the discussions in Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 159-60; Carol A. Newsom and Duane F. Watson, “Angels,” *ABD* 1. 248-55; Theodor H. Gaster, “Angels,” *IDB* 1.128-34; Harold B. Kuhn, “The Angelology of the Non-Canonical Jewish Apocalypses,” *JBL* 67 (1948) 217-32.

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Apocalypse (Rev 8:2; cf. 1:4; 4:5) and other Jewish literature of this period (so *T. Levi* 3:5; *1 Enoch* 71:8-9).²⁵ The motif of a commission to write a book accompanying revelatory discourse by a supernatural being in Tob 12:20 (G^{II} and G^I) parallels Rev 1:11,19 (1:19 is a commission of the risen Jesus Christ). Rev 19:10 and 22:8-9 indicate that John of Patmos was aware of the tradition found in Tobit 12:16-18 (G^{II}, G^I) and other texts such as the *Ascension of Isaiah*,²⁶ in which a human attempts to worship an angel but the angel rebuffs obeisance toward anyone but God.²⁷ The seven angels, the commission to write down, and the angelic refusal of obeisance are parallels between Tobit and Revelation that are common in Jewish and Christian literature. Such parallels support the view that John of Patmos likely knew of and approved of the traditional Jewish piety in the Book of Tobit. However, unlike the New Jerusalem passage, these examples lack further corroboration of oral-scribal intertexture, that is, of direct dependence on Tobit. They therefore fall under the category of shared cultural intertexture. These parallels are more likely echoes than direct dependence.

a. Guardian Angels: Another example of cultural echo concerns the angel Raphael, who, in the Tobit story is sent from heaven to protect Tobiah on his journey and to heal Tobit (Tob 3:16-17; 5:4-5a). The motif of angels as guardians protecting individuals also occurs in Ps 91:11 (cf. Exod 14:19-20), *Jubilees*, and *1 Enoch* 100:5. In an ambiguous reference to angels in Matt 18:10, Jesus teaches the disciples not to despise “the little ones,” because “their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.” A less ambiguous reference to angels as protectors occurs in Matt 26:53, a passage unique to the Matthean passion narrative. Jesus rebukes an unnamed disciple for attacking those arresting him: “Or do you think I am unable to call upon my Father and he will send me at once more than twelve legions of angels?” In

²⁵ Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 296; cf. Athanasius Miller, *Das Buch Tobias übersetzt und erklärt* (HSAT 4/3; Bonn: Hanstein, 1940) 95.

²⁶ For other Jewish texts that feature this tradition, see Beale, *Book of Revelation*, 946.

²⁷ Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 270-71, cf. 166-67. Richard Bauckham (*The Climax of Prophecy* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993] 124-25) calls the refusal tradition in Tob 12:16-22 the earliest and mildest angelic refusal of obeisance. Of the forms of the Tobit story, the refusal tradition in Tobit 12 of Sinaiticus is milder than that of G^I.

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the story of Peter's angelic rescue from prison in Acts 12:6-15, "his angel" (v 15) refers to Peter's angel. Thus Acts 12:15 and Matt 26:53, and possibly Matt 18:10, stand with Tobit and other Jewish texts that share the motif of guardian angels.

b. Angels as Mediators and Intercessors: The motif of angels as mediators of prayers in God's presence, found in Tob 3:16 (G^I), 12:12 (G^{II} and G^I) and 12:15, also occurs in the dramatized heavenly liturgy of Rev 8:3-4 and other Jewish literature such as 3 *Apoc. Bar.* 11:4 and 1 *Enoch* 9:3.²⁸ In Rom 8:34 Paul refers to Christ "who intercedes for us." The idea of the risen Christ as intercessor may derive from the Jewish idea of supernatural intercessors found in texts such as Tobit. Hebrews 7:25 refers to Jesus as "always able to save those who approach God through him, since he lives forever to make intercession for them." Hebrews 1:4,7-8 puts forth a sustained effort to clarify that Jesus' mediating activity is superior to angelic mediation.²⁹ Revelation 5:11-14 (where both God and the Lamb are worshipped) in connection with the angelic refusal of obeisance (Rev 19:10 and 22:8-9) indicates John also felt the need to distinguish between angels and Jesus. In Rev 22:9 the angel tells the seer, "Worship God. Witness to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Luke also distinguishes between Jesus and angels in his resurrection narrative when he has Jesus eat (Luke 24:43). Some early attempts to elaborate on Jesus' function as supernatural agent understandably borrowed from Jewish literature describing the intermediary role of angels.³⁰

²⁸ For angels as intercessors and mediators in early Jewish and Christian literature, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch* 1. *A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 208-10.

²⁹ Concerning the rhetorical device of *synkrisis* (comparison) in Hebrews, see David deSilva, *Perseverance in Gratitude. A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Epistle "to the Hebrews"* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 92-105; cf. 54-55. *Synkrisis* compares the lesser to the greater; in Hebrews the lesser mediators, angels, are compared to the greater mediator, Jesus, the Son. On Christ's superiority to angels in John's Apocalypse, see Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 232-33.

³⁰ In Logion 13 of the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus asks his disciples to compare him to someone, "and tell me whom I am like." Simon Peter responds, "You are like a righteous angel." Translation by Thomas O. Lambdin, "The Gospel of Thomas (II,2)," in *The Nag Hammadi Library* (ed. James M. Robinson; 3d rev. ed.; New York: Harper-SanFrancisco, 1990) 126-38, here 127. Early christologies wrestled in different ways with speaking about Jesus in analogy with angelic supernatural intermediaries. See especially Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration*, 218-65; Alan F. Segal, "The Risen Christ and the

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c. Revelatory Discourse and Ascension: NT authors try in various ways to put Jesus' transit to God into words. Some passages refer to a passive assumption in which the divine passive occurs (Luke 24:51 "he was taken up [by God] into heaven"; Acts 1:9 "he was lifted up [by God]"; Mark 16:19 "the Lord Jesus . . . was taken up [by God] into heaven"), while others refer to an active ascension (Eph 4:8 "one ascending on high"; John 20:17 "I am going up to my Father and your Father"). Raphael's sudden departure from Tobit and Tobiah in Tob 12:20-21 contains interesting parallels to NT ascension passages. The most striking verbal connection occurs in John 16:5 "But now I am going (ὑπάγω) to the one who sent me," an active ascension that clearly echoes the language of Tob 12:20, "Behold, I am ascending (G^I and G^{II} ἀναβαίνω, Aram.4Q196 ܦܠܝܢ) to him who sent me." Such language, which also occurs in the Fourth Gospel at 7:33 (cf. 13:36), is best understood as an echo within cultural intertexture; it is an aspect of complex Johannine Christology, the vocabulary of which has roots in revelatory texts such as Tob 12:20 where a supernatural being returns to God's heavenly court.³¹

Raphael's revelatory discourse and departure in Tob 12:11-21 has several similarities with the Lucan articulation of Jesus' transit to the Father and departure from the disciples (Luke 24:51-53; Acts 1:9).³² Although Luke 24 lacks the precise verbal connection with Tobit found in John 16:5 and 7:33, the cumulative affinities are greater between Tob

Angelic Mediator Figures in Light of Qumran," in *Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. James H. Charlesworth; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 302-28. For the boundaries of such analogues within Jewish monotheism of the Roman period, see Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) 18 (n.38) and 46-50.

³¹ Contrary to later attempts to neatly separate christological moments, the Fourth Gospel seems to view Jesus' death-resurrection-ascension-exaltation as a complex schema that is also linked to the event of coming down from heaven (e.g., John 3:13-14). It goes without saying that the Tobit story has nothing equivalent to the death-resurrection aspect of the Fourth Gospel. The similarity in language should be considered along the same lines as the parallel idiom "do the truth" in Tob 4:6 (Hebrew 4Q200; G^{II} and G^I) and John 3:21 "the one who does the truth." An echo within cultural intertexture rather than direct mimesis is the best explanation.

³² DeSilva ("Tobit," 83): "Raphael's revelatory discourse in 12:17-20 might well have provided a model for the NT authors who spoke of Jesus' mission, his return to the Father, and his ascension from the sight of the disciples."

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12:11-21 and the Lucan Jesus' resurrection appearances, in particular his appearance on the road to Emmaus and ascension (Luke 24:13-53). These affinities were recognized long ago by J. Rendel Harris and D. C. Simpson,³³ although not everyone was convinced of the saliency of the parallels. Meinrad Schumpp, for instance, considered the agreements merely a matter of a few obvious phrases.³⁴ There are compelling reasons, however, as David Catchpole has shown,³⁵ to reconsider the parallels.

Luke 24 uses language reminiscent of angelic appearances with the result that Luke presents the appearance of the risen Jesus in angelic terms.³⁶ The following are some of the most noteworthy parallels between the Tobit story and Luke 24:13-53:³⁷ (1) In both, sadness (Luke 24:17 σκυθρωποί, "full of gloom"; Tob 3:1 G^{II} περίλυπος . . . τῇ ψυχῇ, "grief stricken in spirit"; 3:10 G^{II} ἐλυπήθη ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, "grieved in spirit"; G^I ἐλυπήθη σφόδρα, "deeply grieved") is overcome by the intervention of the supernatural being: God sends Raphael to help Tobit (in his blindness) and Sarah (whose husbands have been murdered). The Emmaus travelers are downcast on account of Jesus' seeming failure to redeem Israel. (2) The supernatural being reveals the solution to the travelers' problem by pointing to Mosaic writings (Tob 6:13 and Luke 24:27). (3) In both the true identity of the traveling companion is withheld in the story but disclosed to the audience (Tob 5:4 and Luke 24:15-16). (4) At the moment of revelation, the supernatural being issues comforting words to calm the recipients' fears. In the appearance to

³³ Harris, "Tobit and the NT," 315-19; idem, "The Double Text of Tobit," 541-54; Simpson, "Tobit," 1.199 and 234.

³⁴ Schumpp, *Tobias*, LXI.

³⁵ David Catchpole, *Resurrection People. Studies in the Resurrection Narratives of the Gospels* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 2000) 88-102.

³⁶ Catchpole, *Resurrection People*, 98, 93. DeSilva ("Tobit," 83) writes, "The description of the angel's departure [in Tobit] . . . may have provided a model for expressing the events in Luke 24:51-53 and Acts 1:9." Harris ("Tobit and the NT," 319): ". . . We see that the first idea of what we call the Ascension is that of the return of a celestial messenger." Harris goes beyond the evidence, however, when he writes (ibid.), "It is Jesus as Angel rather than Jesus the Son that is being contemplated by the NT writers in the first instance."

³⁷ Catchpole's list (*Resurrection People*, 94-98) of fifteen "salient and shared features of the two stories" has several excellent parallels as well as some that are less convincing as examples of direct dependence on Tobit.

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the disciples in Jerusalem in Luke 24:36 two important MSS (W, P) read, “Do not be afraid,” the same words as Raphael utters in Tob 12:17. Both Luke 24:37 and Tob 12:16 have the narrator relate the recipients’ fear. Both revelatory disclosures include the words, “Peace be with you!” (εἰρήνη ὑμῖν, Tob 12:17 G^{II} and G^I // Luke 24:36). (5) Both refer to food (Tob 12:19 and Luke 24:43). In Tobit, Raphael insists that he never ate when he was with Tobiah. A stock motif in Jewish literature was that angels do not eat.³⁸ In light of Luke’s use of stock elements of angelic revelatory disclosure known to his ancient audience, Luke likely had the risen Jesus eat to clarify that he is not an angel.³⁹ (6) After the identity of the fellow traveler is disclosed, the supernatural being suddenly departs, ascending to God (so G^{II} Tob 12:21 and Luke 24:51). “And he ascended” (G^{II} Tob 12:21 and Hebrew 4Q200 6.1); “he was parted from them and was taken up into heaven” (Luke 24:51). (7) In both the joyful reaction to the ascension is noted: the recipients praise God (G^{II} Tob 12:22 // Luke 24:53).⁴⁰

There are two obstacles to claiming Luke’s direct dependence on or conscious mimesis of Tobit. First, some of the parallels are stock motifs in ancient literature. The human response to a supernatural revelation was awe, which is usually followed by the command not to fear (Judg 6:21; 13:20; Dan 10:11-12; Tob 12:16-17; Matt 17:6-7; Rev 1:17).⁴¹ Raphael’s injunction to Tobit and Tobiah, “Do not be afraid” (12:17), also parallels a resurrection appearance of the Matthean Jesus (Matt 28:10) and in the Lucan infancy narrative, angels use these words to

³⁸ The motif that angels do not eat human food is found in Philo’s discussion of Genesis 18 (*Abr.* 115-118) and in the *Testament of Abraham* (*T. Ab.* 4:15-22, recension A), as well as in Tob 12:15,19. Cf. Anitra Bingham Kolenkow, “The Angelology of the Testament of Abraham,” in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham* (ed. George W. E. Nickelsburg; SBLSCS 6; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976) 153-62.

³⁹ Charles Talbert (*Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* [Leiden: Brill, 2003] 128) also notes Luke’s apologetic intentions in having Jesus say, “Have you anything to eat?” He writes, “The significance of this act for Jewish sensitivities is clear: Angels do not eat.” Similarly, Luke clarifies that the risen Jesus is not a ghost (24:39) when the disciples can touch him. Similar to later apophatic theology, Luke presents or infers what the risen Jesus is not rather than explaining what the risenness of Jesus is.

⁴⁰ Blessing or praising God recurs often in Tobit (3:11; 4:19; 8:5-6; 11:1,14,16,17; 12:6) and in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:64; 2:13,20,28; 19:37; Acts 2:47; 3:8,9).

⁴¹ In contrast to the Matthean Jesus (Matt 17:7), neither in Mark 9:6 nor in Luke 9:34-35 does Jesus tell the disciples not to fear.

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Mary (1:30) and the shepherds (2:10).⁴² A supernatural visitor vanishing after being recognized (Luke 24:31; Tob 12:21) also occurs in Virgil's *Aen.* 9:657 and frequently in the OT (Gen 17:22; 35:13; Jdg 6:21; 13:20; 2 Macc 3:34);⁴³ in fact, the sudden departure of a supernatural visitor recurs often in Luke-Acts (Luke 1:38; 2:15; 9:33; 24:31; Acts 10:7; 12:10). As G. Lohfink has shown,⁴⁴ ascension motifs are ubiquitous in antiquity; Luke would also have been familiar with stories about the assumption or ascension of Romulus, Heracles, Enoch, Moses, and Elijah. Moreover, the presence of direct verbal contacts with Sir 50:20-22 in Luke 24:50-53 demonstrates Luke's dependence on Sirach for those verses.⁴⁵ If Luke had been consciously drawing on Tobit, one might expect more significant verbal contact. Second, the parallels fail the criterion of order because they span two Lucan pericopes (the appearances on the road to Emmaus and then to the disciples in Jerusalem) and separate sections of Tobit (the journey to Media in Tobit 6 and Raphael's revelation and ascension in Tobit 12). Nonetheless, the Tobit story in general and the stock motifs of angelic appearances in texts such as Tobit 12 were familiar to Luke and his audience. Luke likely has Jesus

⁴² Luke is fond of type-scenes: annunciation (Luke 1:26-38); epiphany in the field (Luke 2:8-15); testament or farewell discourse (Luke 22:14-38). See William Kurz, "Luke 22:14-38 and the Greco-Roman Farewell Address," *JBL* 104 (1985) 251-68; Jerome Neyrey, *The Passion According to Luke: A Redaction Study of Luke's Soteriology* (New York: Paulist, 1985) 5-48. The presence of a farewell speech is not surprising in Tob 4:2-21 and 14:3b-11. On Tob 14:3-11, see A. A. Di Lella, "The Deuteronomistic Background of the Farewell Discourse in Tob 14:3-11," *CBQ* 41 (1979) 380-89. The authors of Tobit and of Luke would have been familiar with this type-scene in the OT (Genesis 49; Deuteronomy 31-34; 1 Kgs 2:1-10; 1 Sam 12:1-25; 1 Macc 2:49-70; Joshua 23-24; 1 Chronicles 28-29). For stock motifs in ancient type-scenes, see Robert Alter, "Biblical Type-Scenes and the Uses of Convention," in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981) 47-62.

⁴³ Marshall, *Luke*, 898. Joseph A. Fitzmyer (*The Gospel according to Luke X-XXIV* [AB 28A; New York: Doubleday, 1985] 1568) notes that the adj. ἄφαντος (Luke 24:31) was used of disappearing gods in classical Greek (cf. Euripides, *Hel.* 606).

⁴⁴ Gerhard Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu. Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (Munich: Kösel, 1971) 32-79. See also James D. Tabor, "Heaven, Ascent to," in *ABD* (ed. David Noel Freedman; 6 vols.; New York: Doubleday, 1992) 3:91-94.

⁴⁵ Lohfink, *Himmelfahrt*, 167-69. For the clear verbal contacts, see Lohfink's chart on p. 168 and his conclusion (169): "Als literarisches Vorbild diente ihm der liturgische Schlußsegen des Hohenpriesters Simon aus Sir 50,20-22."

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request food so the audience would not mistakenly understand the risen Jesus to be an angel. In this case, direct mimesis is possible but not probable. Nonetheless, Raphael's revelation and ascension is clearly a cultural intertext for Luke 24. The echoes are unmistakable regardless of whether Luke consciously drew on Tobit 12.

3. Demonic Activity, Exorcism, and Healing

There is a strong correspondence between human acts of exorcism and spiritual warfare in both Tobit and the NT. As David deSilva puts it: "This active spiritual realm is very much the world in which the NT authors and their audiences live and move."⁴⁶ Prayer plays a central role in the expulsion of Asmodeus by Tobiah. The footnote to the NAB translation of Tob 8:2-3 declares, "The author places primary emphasis on the value of prayer to God (6:18; 8:4-8), on the role of the angel as God's agent, and on the pious disposition of Tobiah."⁴⁷ Similarly, Mark implies that prayer is an important aspect of Jesus' activity as an exorcist. The Marcan Jesus' daily routine is to rise before dawn and pray in a deserted place (Mark 1:35); on such a typical day, Jesus was brought people "who were ill or possessed by demons" (Mark 1:32). This implicit connection between prayer and exorcism is made explicit in Mark 9:29, where Jesus tells the disciples who had been unsuccessful in driving a demon out, "No one can drive out this kind except through prayer."

In the Tobit story, the demon is expelled through a mix of prayer and magic (Tob 6:8,17-18; 8:2-3); the latter element is notably absent from exorcisms in the Synoptic Gospels and is reduced to some extent in G¹ of Tobit which tends to excise certain magical elements such as reference to fish parts as "useful medicine" (6:5; cf. 2:10; 6:7; 11:8,11). We can only infer this concern in the Synoptic Gospels on the basis of the sparse descriptions of Jesus' exorcisms and the absence of the tradition of Jesus as exorcist in the Fourth Gospel. If this inference is valid, G¹ shares with the Gospels a reticence toward magical elements.

⁴⁶ DeSilva, "Tobit," 79. See also B. Otzen, *Tobit and Judith* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 47; P.-E. Dion, "Raphaël l'exorciste," *Bib* 57 (1976) 399-413.

⁴⁷ The notes to the NAB of Tobit were composed by the honoree of this Festschrift, Fr. Di Lella.

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In Tobit, striving for good health, both spiritually and physically, and overcoming illness with God's help (the angel Raphael's name means "God heals") is an overarching theme that connects the evil eye parenthesis (4:7, 16 G¹),⁴⁸ Tobit's blindness, Sarah's inability to marry (because each of her seven husbands died prematurely through demonic influence), and the divine intervention to aid in the defeat of ill health and demonic harassment.⁴⁹ After Tobiah drives away the harassing demon through the fish odors per Raphael's instructions, the demon flees to "Upper Egypt," where Raphael pursues and binds him (8:1-3). The desert as the dwelling place of demons is a common motif (e.g., Isa 13:21; Matt 4:1; 12:43; Luke 11:24; Rev 18:2), as is the binding of a demon (Rev 20:2b; 1 *Enoch* 10:4,10-12; cf. Rev 9:14).

Sarah's problem of demonic obsession⁵⁰ prevents her from fulfilling her expected duty in life as a wife and mother. Her inability to produce children causes her great distress because it affects her father's honor (3:15; cf. Luke 1:25) and prevents her from taking her place in the domestic setting, the proper sphere for women in that culture.⁵¹ In Luke 4:38 Peter's mother-in-law is afflicted with a fever that had prevented her from performing her household tasks. Jesus rebukes the fever and thereby drives out the spirit causing the problem so that she can wait on them.

Several other women in Luke-Acts are troubled by demons: the stooped-over woman was bound by Satan for eighteen years (Luke 13:16); some of the women who follow Jesus were freed from evil spirits and infirmities (Luke 8:2-3); Paul commands an oracular spirit to come out of a slave girl (Acts 16:16-24). Such parallels between exor-

⁴⁸ John H. Elliott ("The Evil Eye and the Sermon on the Mount," *Biblical Interpretation* 2 [1994] 51-84, here 53) makes a connection between the evil eye and health: "Evil Eye possessors were thought capable of damaging or destroying through malignant eye the life and health, means of sustenance and livelihood, familial honor and personal well-being of their unfortunate victims."

⁴⁹ On the importance of the verb ὑγιαίνω in Tobit, see Alexander A. Di Lella, "Healing and Health in the Book of Tobit," *TBT* 37 (1999) 69-73, esp. 71-72.

⁵⁰ John P. Meier (*A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* [3 vols.; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1991, 1994, 2001] 2. 405) remarks that demonic activity in Tobit is "more properly called a case of demonic obsession (attack from without) than possession."

⁵¹ See John J. Pilch, *Healing in the New Testament. Insights from Medical and Mediterranean Anthropology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000) 75-117.

cism in Tobit and those in the Synoptics and Acts, as well as the binding of demons, are best seen as part of the larger cultural mosaic of demonic activity that becomes prominent in postexilic Jewish literature.

4. Wisdom Parenthesis Regarding Righteousness

a. Righteousness According to Tobit and the Matthean Jesus: The wisdom parenthesis in chaps. 4, 12, and 14 of Tobit contains remarkable parallels with certain NT passages, in particular the Sermon on the Mount.⁵² A central theme in the teachings of both the Sermon on the Mount and the Book of Tobit is righteousness, δικαιοσύνη (Matt 5:6,10,20; 6:1,33; Tob 1:3; 2:14; 4:5,6; 12:8bis; 13:6bis [G¹]; 14:7,9), which primarily refers to conduct conforming to God's will in the Torah and prophets.⁵³ Like Tobit, the Matthean Jesus is scrupulously Torah observant. Tobit and the Matthean Jesus follow Jewish dietary teachings (Tob 1:10-11; cf. the redaction of Mark 7:1-23 in Matt 15:1-20, where Matthew omits "thus he declared all foods clean").⁵⁴ Even Tobit's pious concern for burying the dead, in disobedience to Gentile law (Tob 1:17b-20), is not contradicted by the famous Q saying in Matt 8:22 // Luke 9:60 (Q 9:60) "let the dead bury their dead," since there Jesus is likely echoing Elijah's call of Elisha (1 Kgs 19:20); the Q saying there-

⁵² Nickelsburg ("Stories," 44) writes that one of the purposes of Tobit is parenetic "as is evident from the several sections of formal *didache*." Philip R. Davies ("Didactic Stories," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism. Volume 1 – The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism* [ed. D.A. Carson, P. T. O'Brien, M. Seifrid; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001] 108-13) categorizes Tobit among didactic stories of Second Temple Judaism. On Tobit and wisdom instruction, see Merten Rabenau, "Das Sprachgut des Tobitbuches," in his *Studien zum Buch Tobit* (BZAW 220; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994) 27-65. Rabenau points out the numerous parallels between Tobit, Ben Sira, and Proverbs. See also Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism. An Intellectual History, From Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) 124-131, esp. 128-29.

⁵³ See William D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (3 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988, 1991, 1997) 1.452-53. For the complexities of righteousness language, see Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, 415-42.

⁵⁴ Jewish dietary regulations were also a concern in the post-resurrection Jesus movement, especially apropos the problem of Gentile inclusion into Israel (Acts 10:13-14; 15:20-21,29). See Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 113.

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fore concerns the radical demands of discipleship.⁵⁵ The Matthean Jesus and Tobit are kindred spirits in Torah observance.

Tobit's acts of righteousness, such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked (Tob 1:17; 4:16ab; cf. Isa 58:7; Ezek 18:7,16; Deut 10:18) find correspondence in Matt 25:35.⁵⁶ The pillars of righteous conduct, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, occur together as a threesome only in Tob 12:8 (G^I, VL) in the OT, but are also present in Matt 6:2-18.⁵⁷ According to G^I: "Prayer with fasting, almsgiving, and righteousness is good; a little with righteousness is better than much with wickedness." Tobit acts with righteousness and gives alms (1:3,17), teaches Tobiah to do the same (4:5-11) and instructs him to teach this wisdom to his children (14:9 G^{II}).⁵⁸ The Matthean Jesus' teaching his disciples the three pillars of Jewish conduct (Matt 6:2-18) echoes the teaching in the Book of Tobit.⁵⁹

b. Proper Disposition When Giving Alms: Both Tobit and the Matthean Jesus stress the need for the proper disposition when performing a righteous act: G^I Tob 4:7,16d and Matt 6:22-23 mention not letting the eye be envious in the context of almsgiving (Matt 6:19-21,24). These passages concern the "evil eye," a cultural reference to a selfish and envious disposition toward others, particularly in the use of pos-

⁵⁵ See William Loader, *Jesus' Attitude Towards the Law. A Study of the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) 410.

⁵⁶ So also Schumpp, *Tobias*, LXI.

⁵⁷ Schumpp, *Tobias*, LXI; cf. Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 292; deSilva, "Tobit," 81; Nickelsburg "Stories," 44 n. 59. G^{II} Tob 12:8 reads "prayer with truthfulness and almsgiving with righteousness is better than wealth with wickedness." Cf. Helmut Engel, "Auf zuverlässigen Wegen und in Gerechtigkeit. Religiöses Ethos in der Diaspora nach dem Buch Tobit," in *Biblische Theologie und gesellschaftlicher Wandel: Für Norbert Lohfink SJ* (ed. G. Braulik et al.; Freiburg im B.: Herder, 1993) 83-100.

⁵⁸ See the seminal study by Di Lella ("The Deuteronomic Background," 386) in which he points out the literary inclusion with the terms ἀλήθεια, δικαιοσύνη, and ἐλεημοσύνη in Tob 1:3 and 14:9. See also Beate Ego, *Das Buch Tobit* (JSRHZ 2/6; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1999) 890-93.

⁵⁹ Of the numerous parallels between Matthew and Tobit, perhaps the easiest to miss is that the Gospel of Matthew follows the same initial sequence found in the Book of Tobit – both open the story with genealogy to root the main character in family honor. K. C. Hanson and Douglas E. Oakman (*Palestine in the Time of Jesus. Social Structures and Social Conflict* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998] 51-57) discuss the importance of genealogy in light of the social value placed on kinship and descent.

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sessions.⁶⁰ Matt 6:22-23 says: “The light of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is sincere your body is whole. If however your eye is evil (ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου πονηρός) your whole body is dark. If then the light that is in you is dark, how great a darkness [it is]!” Similarly Tob 4:7 urges: “Give alms from that which belongs to you, and do not let your eye be envious (μὴ φθονεσάτω σου ὁ ὀφθαλμός) of your almsgiving. Do not turn your face from any poor person; from you then the face of God will not be turned away.” Moreover, Tob 4:16 urges: “Give from your bread to the poor and from your clothes to the naked. In whatsoever way you have an overabundance of anything, give alms and do not let your eye be envious (μὴ φθονεσάτω σου ὁ ὀφθαλμός) when you give alms.”

Paul also teaches a proper attitude when giving, although without reference to the evil eye: “Let each [give] as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or from necessity, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:7). Harris and deSilva regard Gal 6:10, “for while we have time, let us do good toward all, but especially the household of faith,” as parallel to Tob 4:11, “almsgiving is a good offering to all who do them before the Most High.”⁶¹

c. The Proper Use of Wealth and the Effectiveness of Almsgiving: Both narrative and parenthesis in Tobit say much about the proper use of wealth.⁶² Tobit teaches Tobiah to give alms in proportion to his ability

⁶⁰ Elliott, “The Evil Eye and the Sermon on the Mount,” 51-84. Elliott writes (p. 77): “The eye functions properly as the lamp of the body. An Evil Eye reveals an owner who is stingy with his own possessions and resents the success of others, even to the point of wishing to see this bounty destroyed. . . .” He adds (p. 78), “the contrast of good and Evil Eye [in Matt 6:22-23] replicates the contrasts of 6:19-21 and 6:24 which also concern attitude toward and use of one’s possessions.” Both Matt 6:22-23 and the evil eye saying in Tobit draw a direct link between the evil or good eye and laying up treasure. For other evil eye passages in Scripture, see Elliott, “Matt 20:1-15: A Parable of Invidious Comparison and Evil Eye Accusation,” *BTB* 22 (1992) 166-78; J Duncan Derrett, “The Evil Eye in the NT,” in *Modelling Early Christianity. Social-Scientific Studies of the NT in its Context* (ed. P. Esler; New York: Routledge, 1995) 65-72; Bruce Malina and Chris Seeman, “Envy,” in *Handbook of Biblical Social Values* (ed. John Pilch and Bruce Malina; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998) 59-63, esp. 62. Other relevant NT texts include Mark 7:22; Matt 20:15; Gal 3:1.

⁶¹ Harris, “The Double Text of Tobit,” 54. DeSilva (“Tobit,” 80) writes, “Almsgiving is especially encouraged toward the company of the righteous; in Tobit the Law-observant Jews, in the NT the ‘household of faith’ (Tob 4:6b-7a; Gal 6:10; cf. Heb 13:1-3).”

⁶² Nickelsburg, “Stories,” 40 n. 44.

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and station in life (Tob 4:8), an ethical teaching also found in Sir 35:9-10 and 2 Cor 8:12-14.⁶³ Both Tobit and Paul contrast spiritual wealth and material poverty (Tob 4:21; 2 Cor 6:10), a motif also present in Jas 2:5.

The effectiveness of almsgiving expressed through the idiom of laying up or storing treasure is found in Tob 4:9, Sir 29:11-12, 1 Tim 6:19, and Matt 19:21 (// Mark 10:21 // Luke 18:22; cf. Matt 6:20; Luke 12:33; 16:9). 1 Tim 6:19 reads, ἀποθησαυρίζοντας ἑαυτοῖς θεμέλιον καλὸν εἰς τὸ μέλλον, ἵνα ἐπιλάβωνται τῆς ὄντως ζωῆς, “[by being rich in good deeds and sharing] laying up for themselves a good foundation for the future, so that they may grasp that which is truly life” (RSV “so that they may take hold of the life that really is life”);⁶⁴ Tob 4:9, θέμα γὰρ ἀγαθὸν θησαυρίζεις σεαυτῷ εἰς ἡμέραν ἀνάγκης, “for [by giving alms] you store up a good prize for yourself on the day of necessity.”⁶⁵ Note the idioms in First Timothy and Tobit do not refer to a positive afterlife. Although First Timothy, unlike the Book of Tobit, carries a belief in a life after death (e.g., 1 Tim 1:16 “for everlasting life”), the idiom in 1 Tim 6:19 echoes the meaning in Tob 4:9 without explicit mention of afterlife.⁶⁶ Thus 1 Tim 6:19 uses a common cultural idiom in a way that maintains the original meaning despite the different eschatological context. The idiom in First Timothy therefore stands in contrast with the eschatology in Matt 6:20 and 19:21, both of which refer to “treasure(s) in heaven.”

This idiom is found in the judgment warning in Jas 5:3, ἐθησαυρίσατε ἐν ἐσχάταις ἡμέραις, “You [the rich] have stored up [treasure] in the last days,” where the metaphor shames the wealthy in the

⁶³ Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 170; deSilva, “Tobit,” 81.

⁶⁴ 1 Timothy 6:19 is an even closer parallel to Tob 4:9 if one reads θέμα λίαν καλόν, “an exceptionally fine prize,” instead of θεμέλιον καλόν, “good foundation,” but the emendation is poor Greek with little textual support. Cf. I. Howard Marshall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999) 670; Luke Timothy Johnson, *The First and Second Letters to Timothy* (AB 35A; New York: Doubleday, 2001) 311.

⁶⁵ Harris (“Tobit and the NT,” 317) argues that Tob 4:9 is “almost exactly the language of the passage in 1 Timothy.” Harris’ conclusion (317) is too ambitious: “the text of the Pastoral Epistles has been affected by the text of Tobit.” There is no evidence for direct dependence on Tobit in this case; the parallel should be considered cultural intertextuality.

⁶⁶ Later copyists (e.g., D²) insert αἰωνίου to make the vague clause explicitly refer to an afterlife, a notion strikingly absent from the idiom as it stands.

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community for their stinginess. James 5:4 continues, “Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud,” paralleling the didactic parenesis in Tob 4:14 (based on Lev 19:13; Deut 24:15), “Do not keep with you overnight the wages of any man who works for you, but pay him immediately.” Other parallels exist between Tobit and the Letter of James. For instance, the concern for widows and orphans in their affliction in Jas 1:27 echoes Tobit’s instruction to Tobiah to honor his mother when she is a widow (Tob 4:3; cf. Mark 7:10-12 concerning honoring parents in need of support from their children). Moreover, negative consequences of arrogance are noted in Tob 4:13 and Jas 3:16. Although direct dependence on Tobit is difficult to establish in light of the numerous parallels for such wisdom parenesis outside of Tobit, the author of James clearly had religious convictions remarkably similar to the author of Tobit. The evidence at hand allows the conclusion that the author of James was a Jewish Christian who likely derived his love of the ethical wisdom in Jewish sacred texts independently from Tobit. It would not be surprising, however, if the author of James knew the Book of Tobit well, perhaps similar to the Qumran sectarians who kept several copies of Tobit, four of which survived in Aramaic, one in Hebrew.

The effectiveness of almsgiving, that such charitable work frees one from “going into the Darkness” (Tob 4:10), may very well find echoes in Matt 25:35 and Luke 16:19-31. DeSilva has noted⁶⁷ that Luke “portrays giving of alms as the way a certain rich person might have avoided ‘going into Darkness’, now in the framework of an afterlife of conscious torment or happiness. The parable gives the sense, as does Tobit, that this is a major and essential lesson to be learned from the law of Moses and from the prophets.” The righteous actions in Matt 25:35 result in entering the kingdom of heaven.

d. The Golden Rule: Tob 4:15 and Q: Another obvious cultural intertext is the negative form of the Golden Rule in Tob 4:15 and its Q parallels in Matt 7:12 and Luke 6:31—the positive form of the widespread Jewish ethical teaching. The negative form is also found in Philo (*Hypoth.* 7.6), Hillel (*b. Shab.* 31a), the *Didache* (*Did.* 1:2), and a western addition to Acts 15:29 (codex D). The negative forms in *Didache* and Acts are striking in light of the positive formulation in Q.

⁶⁷ DeSilva, “Tobit,” 82.

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Rather than positing direct literary dependence on Tob 4:15, the negative formulation in early Christian literature outside of Q is the result of how well known the saying was in Jewish ethics, as Philo, Hillel, and Tobit attest.⁶⁸

e. Concern for Honorable, Holy Marriage and Avoidance of Porneia: Concern for an honorable and holy marriage, accompanying warnings against sexual immorality, is an important theme in Tobit (4:12; 8:7) and finds an unmistakable echo in 1 Thess 4:3b-5 and 1 Cor 7:2. As O. Larry Yarbrough has shown, the same concern with holiness and the dangers inherent in the sexual conduct of outsiders found in 1 Thess 4:3b-5 and 1 Cor 7:2 occurs in Tob 4:12 and *T. Levi* 9:9-10.⁶⁹ 1 Thessalonians 4:3b-5 parallels Tob 4:12 both in literary form (parenesis) and in the desire to distinguish boundaries with the surrounding world.⁷⁰ While a Pauline allusion to Tobit is possible, it is difficult to determine whether Paul draws directly from Tobit or merely echoes traditional Jewish themes. Certainly Paul shares the concern found in Tobit and other Jewish literature to avoid *porneia*.⁷¹ When Tobiah prays, however, in 8:7, “I take this wife of mine not out of lust (διὰ πορνείαν), but for a noble purpose,” the noble purpose is procreation, an issue of little concern for Paul in light of the eschatological urgency of the parousia (cf. 1 Cor 7:26, διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην, “because of the impending crisis”).

Both the Marcan Jesus (Mark 10:6-9 // Matt 19:4-6) and Tobiah (Tob 8:6) point to Genesis in backing up the theological notion that God brings husband and wife together. Tobiah’s prayer evokes Gen 2:7, 18-23 in the context of their wedding night expulsion of the demon, whereas the Marcan Jesus points to Gen 1:27 and 2:24 in his public riposte to a Pharisaic question on divorce. Despite these different contexts, Mark

⁶⁸ On the negative form of the Golden Rule, see Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 175; Moore, *Tobit*, 178-80; Schüngel-Straumann, *Tobit*, 103; Albrecht Dihle, *Die Goldene Regel. Eine Einführung in die Geschichte der antiken und frühchristlichen Vulgärethik* (Studienheft zur Altertumswissenschaft 7; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 82-84.

⁶⁹ See O. Larry Yarbrough, *Not Like the Gentiles. Marriage Rules in the Letters of Paul* (SBLDS 80; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985) 17-18, 66-87, esp. 69-70; Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (AB 32B; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 226-38.

⁷⁰ Malherbe, *Thessalonians*, 224, 237-38.

⁷¹ Wayne Meeks, *The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven: Yale University, 1983) 100.

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10:6-9 echoes Tob 8:6 in looking to sacred creation stories as a theological basis for the marriage bond.

To summarize, there are numerous echoes in the NT of the teachings in Tobit concerning righteous conduct (δικαιοσύνη). Righteousness is the basis of the conduct and teaching of Tobit and the Matthean Jesus. Only in Tob 12:8 and Matt 6:2-18 do the three pillars of righteous conduct (prayer, fasting, almsgiving) occur together. Both Tobit and the Matthean Jesus provide specific instruction on the proper disposition when giving alms, viz., avoid the evil eye (Tob 4:7,16 and Matt 6:22-23). Paul shares the concern in Tobit for the proper use of wealth (Tob 4:8 and 2 Cor 8:12-14); Paul and James share the motif of contrasting spiritual wealth and material poverty found in Tob 4:21 (2 Cor 6:10; Jas 2:5). The effectiveness of almsgiving is evident in the idiom regarding storing up treasure (Tob 4:9 and 1 Tim 6:19; cf. Matt 6:20; 19:21). The Golden Rule in Q (Matt 7:12; Luke 6:31) frames ethical conduct in a positive way, whereas it is elsewhere phrased negatively, as in Tob 4:15, *Did.* 1:2, and the addition to Acts 15:29 in Codex Bezae. Finally, we have seen that righteous conduct is part of the instruction for an honorable and holy marriage that avoids *porneia* (Tob 4:12; 8:7 and 1 Thess 4:3b-5; 1 Cor 7:2). Jesus in Mark and Matthew (Mark 10:6-9 // Matt 19:4-6) and Tobiah (Tob 8:6) point to Genesis 2 to bolster the conviction that God brings a husband and wife together.

5. Beatitudes

In his hymn of praise, Tobit blesses those who show affection and concern for Jerusalem (G^{II} Tob 13:14-16). “Blessed are those who love you, and blessed are those who shall rejoice in your peace. And blessed are all people who will grieve over you because of all your afflictions, for they will rejoice over you and will forever look upon every joy. My soul, praise the Lord, the great King.” Although numerous NT passages employ this literary form of the beatitude or makarism (e.g., Matt 16:17 [M]; Luke 11:28; 14:14; 23:29 [L]; John 13:17; Rom 14:22; 1 Pet 3:14; 4:14;⁷² and John’s Apocalypse [7 times]), the makarisms in the Q

⁷² Fitzmyer finds at least forty-one beatitudes in the NT. See Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “A Palestinian Jewish Collection of Beatitudes,” in his *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (SDSSRL; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 111-18, here 111. John H. Elliott (1 Peter [AB 37B; New York: Doubleday, 2001] 782) sees Tob 13:14 as a prototype of the makarisms in 1 Pet 4:14 and 3:14.

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Sermon on the Mount/Plain (Matt 5:3-6; Luke 6:20-22; cf. Q 6:20-22) share features with Tob 13:15-16 that call for special consideration. John Meier has noted the following striking commonalities: “the joining together of three or more eschatological beatitudes in a series, the paradoxical idea of the happiness of those who grieve, the express mention of the reason for the happiness in a *ὅτι* (“for”) clause indicating a reversal of fortune, and a reference to God as king.”⁷³ Other important parallels between Q material and Tobit’s hymn of praise include calling God “our Father” (Tob 13:4; Matt 6:9; cf. Luke 11:2b; Q 11:2b);⁷⁴ invoking God’s “holy Name” (Tob 13:18; Matt 6:9; Luke 11:2b; cf. Tob 11:14 “great name”); and praising God’s “kingdom” (G^{II} and G^I Tob 13:1 “blessed be God who lives forever, and his kingdom”) recalls Matt 6:10 // Luke 11:2b, “may your kingdom come!” Since Tobit is one of many texts that lie in the background for the NT use of the makarism, references to God as “Father,” invocation of the holy Name, and praising God’s kingdom are examples of echoes within cultural intertexture.⁷⁵

6. Restoration of Scattered Israel

The endtime gathering of the scattered tribes of Israel, found in Tob 13:5b, 13 and 14:7 is a common motif in postexilic literature.⁷⁶ This hope is found in numerous NT texts. John of Patmos envisions the eschatological realization of the restoration (Rev 21:12c, “and names were

⁷³ Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2.325. The stringing together of beatitudes is more common in the intertestamental period (so Sir 14:1-2, 20-27; 25:7-10; Qumran fragment 4Q525). God is often referred to as King in Tobit (11:18; 10:14), including six times in chapter 13 (“king of the ages” in vv. 6, 10; “king of heaven” in vv. 7, 11, 16; “the great king” in v. 15). Cf. Gottfried Vanoni, *Das Reich Gottes. Perspektiven des Alten und Neuen Testaments* (NEchtB; Themen 4; Würzburg: Echter, 2002) 9-60, esp. 45-46.

⁷⁴ God is often called “Father” in Jewish literature: e.g., Wis 14:3; Sir 23:1; 51:10; 3 Macc 5:7; 6:3,8.

⁷⁵ A fuller study of the cultural intertexture between Tobit and the NT could broaden the scope to include the shared echoes with Greco-Roman culture, where, for instance, the god Zeus was referred to as “Father” (e.g., Homer *Il.* 4.235) and the makarism was not uncommon.

⁷⁶ David Flusser (“Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers,” *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* [CRINT 2/2; ed. M. Stone; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress; Assen: van Gorcum, 1984] 551-77, here 555-56) categorizes Tobit’s hymn in 14:4-7 as an Eschatological Psalm.

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inscribed on the gates, the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel”), as does Paul in Rom 11:12.⁷⁷ The Matthean Jesus’ promise to the Twelve in Matt 19:28 (a Q passage) also reflects this eschatological hope.⁷⁸

7. Universalism

Another prominent theme in postexilic Judaism is the eschatological conversion of the Gentiles to worship the God of Israel (Tob 13:11; 14:6). In Rev 21:3, all humanity becomes God’s people, which is also the case in Tob 14:6-7, among other OT texts (cf. Isa 19:25; 25:6; 56:7; Ps 47:8-9).⁷⁹ Moreover, Rev 21:24-26 envisions Jerusalem and the temple as gathering places for Israel and all nations, as is the case in Tob 13:8,11. The notion of Gentiles abandoning idols at the endtime (Tob 14:6) is also found in 1 Thess 1:9 and Gal 4:8-9 (cf. Acts 14:15).⁸⁰ The idea that idolatry led Gentiles into error, found in Tob 14:6b (“all shall abandon their idols which have deceitfully led them into error”) is an attitude Paul shares (Rom 1:22-33). The similarity here is a cultural echo rather than a specific borrowing.

8. Promise and Fulfillment

The use of *vaticinia ex eventu* in Tob 14:4-5 is a common literary device in Second Temple Judaism and also the NT. This device in Tob 14:4-5 is similar to the approaches to prophecy embraced in certain NT texts. David deSilva writes,

Nahum’s oracles . . . against Nineveh must become reality, and Tobias and Sarah plan for their future accordingly. This is a conviction shared by the early Christians, as they read their own past, present, and future history from those same oracles of God. Indeed, the claims of 14:4 and 8 are vindicated in the world of the

⁷⁷ William D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism. Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology* (London: SPCK, 1948; repr. Mifflintown, PA: Siegler, 1998) 81.

⁷⁸ Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 3.137: “Such a hope fit perfectly into Jesus’ proclamation of the coming of God’s kingly rule.”

⁷⁹ Bauckham, *Climax of Prophecy*, 311.

⁸⁰ E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985) 214.

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narrative, which does not close with the death of Tobit but with the fall of Nineveh in 14:15.⁸¹

There is a direct link between the approach to prophecy in Tobit and that found at Qumran and in the NT where Israel's sacred prophetic texts are recontextualized as referring to events affecting the community in their own time. For instance, 1QS 8:14-15 and Mark 1:3 (// Matt 3:3; Luke 3:4-6) read Isa 40:3, each in their own way: the Community Rule interprets the Hebrew of Isa 40:3 as referring to their community in the desert preparing Yhwh's way through Torah study; Mark 1:3 reads LXX Isa 40:3 as referring to John the Baptist as the voice shouting in the desert. Similarly, Tob 2:6 applies Amos 8:10 to events in Tobit's life, and as noted above, Tob 14:4 regards the prophecy of Nahum (G¹ Jonah) as soon to be fulfilled. The idea of fulfillment of time in Luke 21:24 closely echoes G¹ Tob 14:5.⁸²

Conclusion

This intertextual study explored eight areas wherein NT texts contain evidence either for direct mimesis via oral-scribal allusions to Tobit or cultural echoes of Tobit derived from a common socio-cultural milieu.⁸³ The overview of parallels examined here is not exhaustive. The strongest case for direct oral-scribal dependence on Tobit, i.e., for a probable allusion, occurs in the use of the New Jerusalem motif in John's Apocalypse (Rev 21:18-21). Paul may have been consciously aware of the Tobit teaching in Tob 4:12 that parallels his instructions in 1 Thess 4:3b-5. I categorize this allusion as possible rather than probable.

⁸¹ Cf. deSilva, "Tobit," 80.

⁸² Tob 14:5 G¹ ἕως πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος, "until the times of the age will be complete" // Luke 21:24 ἄχρι οὗ πληρωθῶσιν καιροὶ ἐθνῶν, "until the times of the Gentiles will be complete." Luke also begins his Gospel (1:1) with the idea of fulfillment. See William Kurz, "Promise and Fulfillment in Hellenistic Jewish Narratives and in Luke-Acts," in *Jesus and the Heritage of Israel* (ed. David Moessner; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999) 147-70.

⁸³ In a graduate seminar on the Book of Tobit, Fr. Di Lella would note connections between the Tobit story and the NT. I am grateful to him for helping his students appreciate the importance of the deuterocanonical books in their own right and in relation to the NT.

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Important cultural echoes of Tobit occur with the language Luke uses to describe Jesus' resurrection appearances and ascension. The evangelist borrows from stock motifs common to angelic appearances and departures found in texts such as Tobit. Some of the analogues between Tobit and the NT regarding angelology and demonology concern the classic problem of theodicy: the difficulty of living a pious life in a hostile diaspora is paralleled by the spiritual warfare occurring between the agents of an all-powerful and good God working in the world against malevolent demonic forces hostile to human well-being. In both Tobit and NT texts, prayer to God is central to achieving restoration of good health.

This study has also explored the parallels between Tobit and NT texts concerning wisdom parenesis to live life in righteousness, δικαιοσύνη. Both Tobit and NT authors are concerned about right use of wealth, proper attitude toward possessions (storing up treasure of a different kind), and correct disposition when giving alms (avoidance of the evil eye).

Significant parallels between Tobit and NT texts include the literary form of the beatitude/makarism, the themes of the eschatological restoration of scattered Israel and conversion of the Gentiles, and the motif of promise and fulfillment.

While these cultural parallels are widespread, the evidence for direct borrowing from Tobit by NT authors is generally weak. These NT parallels with Tobit are nonetheless valuable because they allow us to highlight and appreciate the thoroughly Jewish framework of early Christianity.

The Medieval Hebrew and Aramaic Texts of Tobit

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Jerome's claim to have translated his version of Tobit indirectly from a "Chaldean" original, first turned into Hebrew for him,¹ long reinforced the belief that the earliest version of the book was composed in a Semitic language. This belief has, in recent years, become something

¹ Jerome's Latin text (PL 29.23) is cited by Adolf Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit. A Chaldee Text from a Unique Ms. in the Bodleian Library with Other Rabbinical Texts, English Translations and the Itala* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1878) v: "Mirari non desino exactionis vestrae instantiam: exigitis enim, ut librum Chaldaeo sermone conscriptum ad Latinum stylum traham, librum utique Tobiae, quem Hebraei de catalogo divinarum Scripturarum secantes, his quae Agiographa memorant, manciparunt."

This article is a short companion piece to the multilingual text edition edited by Dr. Simon Gathercole (Aberdeen) and ourselves. See S. Weeks, S. Gathercole, and L. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions, with Synopsis, Concordances, and Annotated Texts in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac* (Fontes et Subsidia 3; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004). With the exception of the North French Miscellany (British Museum Add. 11639), we have been able to consult directly all manuscripts discussed below. The verse numeration used in the present discussion follows that of our synopsis, and generally, though not always, corresponds to the versification given by R. Hanhart, *Tobit* (SVTG, 8/5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983).

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closer to a certainty, with the discovery of five very fragmentary manuscripts corresponding to the book at Qumran, one in Hebrew (4Q200) and four in Aramaic (4Q196-199).² Any dispute that remains now centers more simply on the question of whether the Hebrew or the Aramaic is earlier. Such a development is, of course, to be welcomed by those whose primary interest lies in uncovering the origins and earliest form of the book. It has, however, displaced a fascinating branch of Tobit scholarship, which raises important questions about the subsequent spread and development of the text, and offers unusual insights into Jewish use of the apocryphal books, and even into aspects of Jewish-Christian relations.

The Qumran manuscript fragments are hardly the only Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Tobit: in fact, there are five other texts or—better—textual traditions known in Hebrew, and one in Aramaic. Several of these can be traced back as far as the twelfth century, and may be considerably older. None, however, is obviously a direct descendant of the Qumran materials and it is difficult to pin down an earlier text that would have provided a direct source for any of them. Even the relationships between the various versions remain obscure, and no serious attempt has been made in recent years, since the shift of scholarly focus, to establish the origin or purpose of any of them. Indeed, they have fallen from favor to such an extent, that new textual discoveries have remained unedited, and older publications somewhat misrepresented in recent scholarship. It is beyond the scope of this short article to undertake an investigation of the many historical and textual questions that surround these versions. Instead, we shall attempt here simply to describe the materials, and point out some of their most interesting characteristics, in the hope of advertising their existence more widely, and of attracting some of the scholarly attention they deserve.

The most famous of the texts is, perhaps, the least needy in this respect. The Hebrew version published by Sebastian Münster, in certain editions of his Hebrew grammar,³ went on to be reprinted in

² Published by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Tobit," in *Qumran Cave 4: XIV. Parabiblical Texts, Part 2* (DJD 19; ed., M. Broshi et al.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 1-76 (and Plates I-X).

³ Münster published his Hebrew text of Tobit under the title ספר טובי. *Historia Tobiae iuxta hebraismum versa*, beginning in 1542. Including a corresponding Latin translation and annotations, this publication was presented as a reading exercise to

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Walton's *Polyglott* (1657),⁴ and also in some Jewish works;⁵ a new, if rather unreliable, edition was published by Neubauer in 1878.⁶ It is well known that Münster's version itself derives from an earlier publication of the text at Constantinople, in 1516,⁷ but it is less commonly stated that Münster's 1542 text is extensively adapted from that earlier version, with numerous minor changes and some rather significant ones. Neubauer's claim to be presenting the Constantinople text is not entirely true, and no full edition of that text currently exists.⁸ It is clear, indeed, that much modern comment on the text, is actually comment upon the very derivative and occasionally faulty reprint by Walton of Münster's reworking of the text.

There is some justification for all this, as the text of Constantinople 1516 is itself not an easy read. It is important to be clear, though, that

accompany his grammar, *מלאכת הדקדוק השלם*, *Opus grammaticum consummatum* (Basel: H. Petrum, 1541, with later editions in 1556, 1570, 1576, etc.). The date of 1542 assigned to Münster's initial publication of the text derives from the book as held in the Cambridge University and Oxford Bodleian libraries.

⁴ B. Walton, SS. *Biblia Polyglotta complectentia textus originales hebraicos cum Pentat. Samarit.: Chaldaicos graecos versionumque antiquarum samarit. graece. Sept. chaldaic., syriacae, lat. Vulg. Arabicae, aethiopicae, persicae* (6 vols.; London: Roycroft, 1653-1657) 4. 35-63.

⁵ The text given by Münster was, in turn, picked up by a number of subsequent publications; see e.g. M. Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum* (Berlin: Friedlaender, 1852-1860, repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olm, 1964), ## 1346-1348.

⁶ Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit*, 17-35.

⁷ A copy is kept in the British Museum; see J. Zedner, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Books in the Library of The British Museum* (London: Longman & Co and B.M. Pickering; Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1867; repr. Norwich: Jarrold and Sons, 1964) 564. This Constantinople text was picked up in later editions as well, e.g., those by Widmannstadt [Venice, 1544]; Adhan [Amsterdam, 1735]; and Gottschalk [1843]; cf. *ibid.* 36, 564 and Jacob Leeven, Joseph Rosenwasser, and David Goldstein, *Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Gaster Collection, The British Library, London* (London: Hebrew Section, Oriental and India Office Collections, 1996) sub # 10635. Moreover, it, or a Münster derivative, probably served as the basis for a Yiddish version of the story (no date) entitled *במעשה פון טובי בן טוביאל*, and shelfmarked 1945.e.8 in the British Library.

⁸ Neubauer (*The Book of Tobit*, xii) claims to be publishing "the Hebrew text from the first edition printed at Constantinople in 1516." In fact his text deviates frequently and substantially from that edition, without always indicating that it is doing so. On many of the occasions when it does so, Neubauer actually appears to be correcting or drawing on one of the witnesses to the tradition, and thereby creating an eclectic text. This makes it difficult to interpret and to use the collations he supplies, and these are, anyway, presented in a fashion that is eccentric, and sometimes ambiguous.

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we possess earlier manuscript witnesses to the same version. Neubauer himself offers collations from two Hebrew manuscripts from Paris and Parma, respectively, and from a slavish Persian translation in Paris, although the value of these as independent witnesses is open to question.⁹ More recently, and more significantly, photographs have been published of two leaves from a 13th century manuscript, found in the Cairo Genizah, that contain portions of chaps. 5–6 and 9–11.¹⁰ These not only testify to the existence of the same text-type some centuries before the Constantinople publication, but also show that the tradition was still changing and evolving. Though it has been suggested that this version ultimately originated somewhere between the 5th and 7th centuries,¹¹ such changes make it extremely difficult to be precise about the date.

The content of what we may call the “Münster” version (since that name, though misleading, is established) cannot easily be characterized in terms of the more familiar Greek and Latin texts. There are some very obvious peculiarities, such as the extended historical reflections toward the end of the first chapter (1:18). Here Tobit first of all blames the destruction of the Northern Kingdom on the failure of its people to grieve properly for the damage done to Judah by the invasion of Sennacherib. A little further on (1:21), Tobit explains the assas-

⁹ Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit*, xii–xiii. The texts are: (a) Hebrew MS # 1251 in the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris); (b) # 194 of the De-Rossi Catalogue (Parma); and (c) a slavishly literal translation into Persian, in Hebrew MS # 130 in the Bibliothèque Nationale. See J. Taschereau, *Catalogue des Manuscrits Hébreux et Samaritains de la Bibliothèque Impériale* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1866) 14 and 228 for (a) and (c); and for (b), see *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma: Catalogue* (ed. B. Richler; Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, 2001) 148. It is important to note that the Cairo Genizah text (see n.10 below) hardly ever supports the distinctive readings of the texts from Paris and Parma collated by Neubauer, and that the Parma Hebrew manuscript apparently contains a sequence of materials found, in the same order, in the Constantinople printing.

¹⁰ Under the designation T-S A 45.26, see Simon Hopkins, *A Miscellany of Literary Pieces from the Cambridge Genizah Collection. A Catalogue and Selection of Texts in the Taylor-Schechter Collection, Old Series, Box A 45* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library, 1978) 98–101 (the leaves correspond to 5:17–6:13 and 9:6–11:5).

¹¹ See, e.g., D. C. Simpson, “The Book of Tobit,” in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. Vol. 1: Apocrypha* (ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913) 174–241, here 179.

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sination of Sennacherib by telling a story. After asking his advisors why God had so zealously protected Israel ever since their time in Egypt, Sennacherib was (mis?)informed that it was because of Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. Sennacherib thereupon decided to gain similar divine favour by sacrificing two of his sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer who, however, heard about their father's plan and ambushed him when he went to pray to Dagon. All this, of course, is regarded as having been brought about by God, when the widows and orphans of Israel cried out on behalf of the fugitive Tobit (1:20). The rest of the story offers little scope for such historical musings, although there is a notable concern with historical precision. Tobit's captivity is associated specifically with the reign of Hoshea (1:2), for instance, and Jeroboam is said to have made two calves, at Bethel and Dan (1:5; cf. 2 Kgs 10:29) respectively, rather than at just the one place, Dan, mentioned in the Greek and Latin texts.

Other significant peculiarities include a distinctive ending, which omits the details of Tobit's subsequent life and death, finishing instead with an exhortatory speech that interweaves motifs from chaps. 13 and 14. Most memorably, perhaps, the expulsion of Asmodeus is here accomplished by burning the heart of the fish under Sarah's skirt (8:2), so that the demon is not so much exorcised as fumigated, and the sexual character of Sarah's affliction arguably highlighted. Some details vary between the different texts, of course, but the tradition as a whole has a highly distinctive character, which sets it firmly apart from the Latin and Greek versions of the story, even though it remains very close to them in terms of storyline and narrative order.

Given the many differences, it is not easy to establish the nature of any relationships between the "Münster" version and those early versions, and the initial genealogy in 1:1-2 is interesting in this respect. One of the chief differences between the Greek and Old Latin traditions is the appearance of an Ἀδουήλ between Ἀνανιήλ and Γαβαήλ in the versions of both Vaticanus and Sinaiticus; this figure is lacking in all the Old Latin texts, but most of these later have a figure *Gadalel*, or *Gabaliel*, after *fili Asihel*, where the Greek texts have none. The "Münster" version has אריאל where the Greek has Ἀδουήλ, and then גתריאל (גתריאל in the Paris text) where the Latin has *Gadalel*. It is difficult to know how much to make of this, especially when the possibility exists that the genealogy has been expanded during the course of

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transmission, but a comparison would seem to suggest a knowledge of both Latin and Greek texts, or of some text in the Old Latin/Sinaiticus tradition which contained both elements. Elsewhere in the list, בן עשאל would seem to reflect the *fili Asi(h)el* of the Latin more closely than the σπέρματος Ἀσιήλ of the Greek. Generally, however, the complicated nature of the Greek and Old Latin traditions and the close relationships between them make it difficult to determine whether one or the other provided a model for the “Münster” version. This is an area for which fuller investigation is still required. No single text has been identified as an obvious prototype, and an argument could still be made for quite an early origin of the version.

Another version of Tobit has circulated under the name of Paul Fagius, a famous Jewish convert, whose version of the text, published in 1542,¹² was later taken up in Walton’s *Polyglott*, alongside the text of Münster.¹³ In this case, a text published in Constantinople in 1519¹⁴ served as the basis for that of Fagius, whose transcription of it along with a Latin translation, introduced many orthographic changes and minor variants that increased in number by the time the version reached the *Polyglott*. The proto-Fagius Constantinople manuscript is, again, simply the first printed form of a rather older tradition, and fragments from earlier manuscripts in this tradition are once more to be found among the Cairo Genizah materials.¹⁵ As with the Münster

¹² Fagius’ publication was in two parts; the title page reads as follows: *Sententiæ Morales Ben Syrae vetustissimi authoris Hebraei, quia Iudæis nepos Hieremiae prophetae Suisse creditor, cum succincta commentaria; and Tobias Hebraice ut adhuc hodie apud Iudæos invenitur, omnia ex Hebraeo in Latinum translate in gratiam studiosorum linguae sanctae per Paulum Fagium* (Isny im Allgäu: P. Fagius, 1542).

¹³ See n. 4 above.

¹⁴ We have thus far not been able to find any evidence of a Constantinople publication of the “Fagius” text in 1517, as asserted by some scholars; e.g., E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)* (rev. and ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman; 3 vols. in 4; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1987) 3. 230; B. Ego, *Buch Tobit* (JSRZ II/6; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1999); and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (CEJL; Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2003) 14. This appears to be an error for 1519, which is the date given by all standard catalogues and bibliographical sources.

¹⁵ The facsimiles of two fragments from manuscripts of Tobit (A 45.25 and A 45.29, respectively) are published in Hopkins, *A Miscellany of Literary Pieces from the Cambridge Genizah Collection* (cf. n. 10 above) 96-97 and 105-6. Since the copyist for A 45.29 was Joseph b. Jacob ha-Bavli, the fragment may be dated to around 1200 C.E.

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tradition, these manuscript fragments preserve a number of mostly minor readings that diverge from the Constantinople printed text. Thus, although subsequently less influential than the text adopted by Münster,¹⁶ this second text-type has had a very similar history.

The “Fagius” text is, with some exceptions, more austere than the “Münster” version, which is partly due to the fact that its affinities seem to lie more with the shorter Greek version (preserved in most LXX manuscripts and daughter versions) than with the longer one (known principally through Codex Sinaiticus and the Old Latin).¹⁷ However, if the text is ultimately reliant on that tradition, it does not possess so much a translational as a paraphrastic character, in which the text is deliberately recast into a biblicizing form of Hebrew.¹⁸ In addition, this text, unlike the other versions, has the characters adhere strictly to legal rulings wherever possible, showing a concern that details in the story be in conformity to legal propriety. Thus the text specifies, for instance, that Tobit washes his hands before he returns to his meal, after having buried a corpse (2:4). Moreover, Raguel, Sarah’s father, slaughters a ram and has it prepared “according to what is seemly to eat in the evening” (7:9) and pronounces that his daughter is to become Tobiah’s wife not only “according to the Torah” but also “according to *halakah*” (7:11). Tobiah is told, Sarah “will sanctify you according to the law of Judah and Israel” (7:12). Accordingly, particular interest is shown in the enduring significance of the Jerusalem cult, which was made pure “for the name of ***** Sabaoth for his name to dwell there forever and ever” (1:4). The text also reflects an accommodation of place names to settings which were perhaps more familiar to the communities within which the version was circulating. This seems clear from the shift from Elymais in 2:10 (Sinaiticus Ἐλυμαίδα; Vaticanus Ἐλυμαίδα; Regius “Limaidam”; Reginensis “Elimaida”; cf. *Otsar Haqqodesh* אֶלִימַיִם) to אֶלִמַיִם, which is a transliteration of “Allegmania” (Germany); the addition of “the city of לְדִיקְיָאָה” at 6:2 is more difficult to interpret—it is not clear whether the reference is to Laodicea in western Turkey or to another place of the same name. It is

¹⁶ As is suggested by the catalogues in the British Museum and the Bodleian Library: Zedner, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Books*, 564; and Steinschneider, *Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum*, cols. 201-2.

¹⁷ So Simpson, “The Book of Tobit,” 180.

¹⁸ So, e.g., Sarah’s prayer in 3:5-6 and Tobit’s instruction to Tobiah in 4:13,19.

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also difficult to know whether such details were present in the original of this text-type, or introduced during the course of its transmission and development.

The two versions associated with Münster and Fagius were the only Hebrew versions widely available until late in the 19th century, and the comparative rarity of the Constantinople editions meant that they were best known in the revised forms published by those scholars. Neubauer's 1878 edition of the "Münster" text, for all its faults, did usefully draw attention to the existence of manuscript witnesses. However, a much more important contribution was published alongside it in the same book: an edition of a medieval Aramaic text, found in the Bodleian collection. Written in an oriental hand, probably from the 15th (or possibly late 14th) century, this text contains another, rather different version of Tobit, as the fifth piece in a collection of midrashim.¹⁹

The introduction to the text, which is in Hebrew, reads as follows:

והוא כתוב במדרש רבה דרבה פרשת ויצא יעקב פרשתא ע גבי וכל אשר
תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך. עשר תעשר אמן[ר] להם משה עשר ברכות תשלו אם
תעשרו וכן יעקב אומן[ר] וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך עשר ברכות
שתתן לי כמו שברכני אבי בזכות מה בזכות אעשרנו לך:

The text is here cited as being from a *Midrash Rabbah de Rabbah*, as is another piece in the collection, from the story of Bel and the Dragon; since the latter is apparently identical to a version cited by Raymund Martini in the 13th century as being from a *Midrash Bereshit*, Neubauer argues that the Tobit story must also have been drawn from that source, and that it would have been known as early as the beginning of the 11th century. Indeed, he claims more generally that it may have been derived from the Aramaic Tobit used by Jerome.

This last claim is now generally rejected on the basis of the text's linguistic features, as well as the fact that it shares little in common with

¹⁹ Opp. Add. 4°128 (= Neubauer MS # 2339) in the Bodleian Library on folios 14r-22v in "Greek rabbinical characters"; cf. Neubauer, *The Book of Tobit*, vii and n 2. Elsewhere, however, Neubauer adduces that the watermarks in the manuscript resemble those in another Sephardic manuscript dated 1372-1376, thus suggesting the possibility of a late 14th century date; cf. Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896) cols. 815-16 and Malachi Beit-Arié, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library. Supplement of Addenda and Corrigenda to Vol. 1* (A. Neubauer's Catalogue) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994) 456.

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the Vg.²⁰ A very early origin for the version in the Bodleian text seems improbable, therefore, unless we suppose that the text has been comprehensively reworked and rewritten. The content might, in fact, allow such a supposition: by comparison with other versions, this text demonstrates some peculiar arrangements of material, and it forgoes the revelation of Raphael's identity by the angel (12:15), along with the final speech of Tobit, emphasising instead the importance of tithes for which Tobit has served as an example. It seems probable, therefore, that we are dealing with a version in which the story has been adapted and revised, perhaps even rewritten, for particular reasons, and the language may, correspondingly, represent the time of this adaptation. Any suppositions about earlier stages, however, move firmly into the realm of speculation. If this version is really a descendant of Jerome's "Chaldean text," it probably bears no more than a passing resemblance to that text.

We have already mentioned some of the distinctive features of the text. After chap. 11, there is very little in common with any of the other versions. Instead of deciding to give a half share to Raphael, Tobit merely decides to pay him a bonus (12:1); instead of Raphael revealing himself to be an angel, Raphael himself simply disappears, and it is left to Tobit to work out his identity (12:15). Tobit's deathbed speech is then transformed entirely into a sermon about the importance of tithes (cf. 4:8-13). It might well be said, then, that this version may be concerned to play down aspects of miraculous divine intervention in favour of a worldview in which God more simply rewards charity. That theme is occasionally prominent also in earlier parts of the book: Tobit's almsgiving is emphasised in 1:7-8, and his speech to Tobias in chap. 4 has an extensive section on the subject (4:8-11, esp. v. 11), complete with biblical references. Another feature which differentiates this version from most others is a slight rearrangement of speeches in chap. 6, where Raphael volunteers information about the uses of the fish, rather than being asked (cf. 6:5,8). A number of the characteristics of this text are also to be found in one of the Hebrew texts described below.

²⁰ So, e.g., Gustav Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch* (2nd ed.; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1905) 36-37, and now Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 11-13. Regarding the Aramaic, Fitzmyer emphasises the transliteration of Greek and Latin terms (see his examples on p. 12), which would support the translation's derivation from a Greek *Vorlage*.

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Except in minor details, the content of the text is otherwise most noteworthy for its brevity: it is a concise, almost summarizing version of the story. This does not, of course, make it easy to identify affinities with other versions. Apart from the Hebrew text just mentioned, no other version is strikingly similar. The mention of Thisbe in 1:2 suggests a link with the Greek, but the mention shortly afterward of Jeroboam's two calves, at Bethel and Dan (1:5) offers rapid confirmation of Neubauer's claim, that this text has links with the Hebrew tradition represented by Münster's text (see above). Other details point in the same direction, not least the use of a "bag," instead of a token, to be used for reclaiming the money from Gabael (9:5), the identification of Asmodeus as "king of the demons" (3:8; 6:14), which is derived from later Jewish traditions (e.g., *b. Pes. 110a*), and the expulsion of Asmodeus by burning the fish's heart under Sarah's skirt (8:2). Neubauer's assertion that the "Münster" tradition translates an earlier, fuller version of the Aramaic²¹ is hard to prove or disprove, but there is clearly a close link between the two.

In 1897, two further texts in Hebrew were published by Moses Gaster.²² The first of these is to be found in a very beautiful 13th century manuscript known as the "North French Miscellany" (Add. 11639 in the British Library), where it is written in the outer and bottom margins on folios 708a-725a around commentaries on *piyyutim* for Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur, respectively.²³ There are good reasons to believe that this version of Tobit may be a copy of an older text, possi-

²¹ *The Book of Tobit*, x.

²² See M. Gaster, *Two Unknown Hebrew Versions of Tobit* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1897), with these Hebrew texts on pp. I-XI (from the "North French Miscellany") and XI-XIV (the so-called "Gaster Hebrew"); Gaster's initial articles on the "Two Unknown Hebrew Versions of the Tobit Legend," in *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology* 18 (1896) 208-22, 259-71 and 19 (1897) 27-33, only provided an introduction with English translation.

²³ A facsimile edition of the manuscript is currently being prepared for publication. For a full description of the fifty-five groups of texts in the main body and of the twenty-nine in the margin of the manuscript (of which Tobit is the last), see G. Margoliouth, *Catalogue of the Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts in the British Museum, Part III* (London: Lowe & Brydone, 1909-1915), # 1056 (pp. 402-27, with p. 422 on Tobit). The calendar reckonings, which commence on folio 543a, start with the year [50]38 (i.e., 1278 C.E.; *Catalogue*, p. 403), while the calendrical table on folio 563b is assigned to the year 5036 (= 1276 C.E.; cf. Gaster, *Two Unknown Hebrew Versions*, 6).

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bly from the 11th century,²⁴ which was probably incomplete (the account finishes abruptly just before the end of the story), and which the scribe sometimes found difficult to read. Gaster argued that this version was almost certainly of much greater antiquity still, and that its many points of contact with the Vg pointed to it being a much more direct witness to Jerome's Chaldean text than was Neubauer's Aramaic version. Subsequent commentators, however, have tended to turn this argument on its head, and to maintain that those points of contact actually demonstrate dependence on the Vg.²⁵

Gaster's emphasis on the basic antiquity of this version may have led him to play down some of its most distinctive characteristics in favor of highlighting its similarities with other versions. Perhaps the most striking feature which has, however, attracted little comment, is the alphabetic acrostic in 8:6:

(absent ל)	אלוה על כל
מורה לכל	בורא הכל
נותנין לו שבח הכל	גדול על כל
סומך הכל	דורש הכל
עונה לכל	הוא כל יכול
פודה שבויי כל	ומרום על כל
צדיק וחסיד לכל	זמר יתנו לו כל
קרוב יהוה לכל	חק ומצוה לכל
רחום יהוה ורחמיו על כל	טוב לכל
שירה יתנו לו כל	ישר וצדיק לכל
תומך שמו הכל	כל יכול

This occurs within the context of a wedding prayer (8:5-7), a lengthy expansion of which in this manuscript draws heavily on liturgical sources. While providing evidence that the text, at least in its current form, cannot simply be a direct translation from another language, the

²⁴ If the manuscript is a copy of one containing the same materials, then the date of [4]828 or [4]858 (= 1068/1098 C.E.) given on folio 568b may suggest the date of the *Vorlage* for this text of Tobit; cf. Gaster, *Two Unknown Hebrew Versions*, 6. This is far from certain, however, as the date applies to the commentary on a poetical piece in the main body of that part of the manuscript, and not necessarily to the manuscript as a whole.

²⁵ So, e.g., Simpson, "Tobit," 180; Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 14.

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acrostic also illustrates vividly its literary and intellectual ambitions; even beyond such set-pieces, the writer has filled his work with biblical and other references or reminiscences.

This tendency complicates any attempt to assess the affinities of the version. Where, for instance, other texts in 1:2 locate Naphtali in the Galilee above “As(s)er” or “Naasson,” this text puts it on the river Pishon, a strange reference to Gen 2:11. None of this, however, can completely disguise the strong links between this text and the Vg. Just in the first chapter, we find not only a third-person account in both texts (so 1:3–3:6), but also references to Tobias’ upbringing and subsequent abstention from sin (1:9) and to Tobit’s nudity during his flight (1:20), along with many other minor details common to these versions alone. It is thus difficult to resist the conclusion that one version is drawing upon the other, or both on some common source. This conclusion is reinforced time and again later in the book, perhaps most notably when both versions include, in chap. 6, the angel’s advice that Tobias and Sarah should spend three nights together in abstinence before driving away the demon (6:18; cf. 8:4). Gaster is surely right, though, to point out that this Hebrew version cannot simply be viewed as a translation of the Vg.²⁶ Not only does it contain a great deal of detail which is not supplied by Jerome, but it also agrees at times with other versions against the Vg. Indeed, this happens in the very first verse, when we are given a genealogy similar to those in the other versions (and perhaps closest to the Old Latin or “Münster” texts), despite the fact that no manuscript of the Vg contains such a genealogy. Just as conspicuously, the text avoids the confusion of names which bedevils the Vg account, distinguishing properly between Tobit *père* and Tobiah *fils*. While Gaster’s hypothesis should not be ruled out too promptly, it does seem most likely that we have here a version in which the Vg has served as a skeleton, to be fleshed out with material from other versions, from biblical and liturgical sources, and from the writer’s own understandings of law and custom. In short, it is a very ambitious and erudite, thoroughly Jewish work built around the standard Western Christian text.

The second of Gaster’s Hebrew texts is very different, and has a somewhat complicated origin. Gaster tells us that he found it in a man-

²⁶ See Gaster, *Two Unknown Hebrew Versions*, 9.

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uscript belonging to a private collector, which was written in a 15th-century Spanish hand, and which contained “a collection of homiletic interpretations of the Pentateuch.”²⁷ The manuscript was in very poor condition, and Gaster doubted that it could have survived much longer, but he produced a hand-written transcription of the whole manuscript. This copy, an impressive piece of work many hundreds of pages long, is now to be found in the collection of the British Library, and the Tobit story within it is annotated with verse divisions and instructions to the printer (although there are, curiously, many minor differences between the manuscript and Gaster’s printed edition of the text).

The version of Tobit in this second text has much in common with Neubauer’s Aramaic version, and is similarly presented in connection to the topic of tithing. Indeed, it is interesting to compare its introduction with that of the Aramaic version (cf. above):

עשר תעשר את כל תבואת זרעך היוצא השדה שנה שנה ואכלת לפני
 יי' אלהיך במקום אשר יבחר לשכן שמו שם מעשר דגנך ותירושך
 ויצהרך ובכורות בקרך וצאנך למען תלמד ליראה את יי' אלהיך
 כל הימים אמרו חז"ל עשר תעשר עשר בשביל שתתעשר תעשר
 שלא תתחסר רמז למפרשי ים להוציא אחד מעשרה לעמלי תורה
 אם תעשר דגנך ואם לאו דגני שנא' לכן אשוב ולקחתי דגני בעתו
 זכותם תירושך ואם לאו תירושך ר' לוי אם' נבהל להון איש רע עין
 ולא ידע כי חסר יבואנו זה הפסוק אם' כזה שאינו מוציא מעשרותיו
 כראוי דאם' ר' לוי מעשה באחד שהיה מוציא מעשרותיו כראוי לפי
 משה מזדויר לישראל עשר תעשר

In light of the many similarities, both of theme and content, it is hard to deny Gaster’s contention that this version is a close relative of the Neubauer one, although it is hard to establish which is the earlier. This text includes various details found only elsewhere in the Aramaic, such as the rearrangement of material in chap. 6 (cf. above). In another way, however, the two texts are very different. As we have already

²⁷ Apart from the little information provided by Gaster in his publications (ibid. 12-14), the information we provide here is based on what we have been able to read from his hand-written notes and transcription of the manuscript preserved in the British Library.

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seen, the Aramaic text is somewhat concise throughout, and changes the ending of the story to suit its own purposes. This Hebrew counterpart takes those tendencies to an extreme. After the expulsion of Asmodeus, the writer seems almost to lose patience: the marriage, recovery of the money and healing of Tobit are compressed into a very short summary, and all subsequent elements of the story are completely omitted, to be replaced with a brief statement that the tale illustrates the value of tithing.

Finally, in the introduction to his edition of these two texts, Gaster mentions that he is aware of yet another Hebrew Tobit.²⁸ This further version is not a manuscript, but is rather to be found in a collection of apocryphal books in Hebrew, published in Lemberg (Lvov). The book, entitled *Otsar Haqqodesh*, is presented as a reprint of an earlier, Amsterdam edition, but we have been unable to discover any trace of such an earlier edition, or any other information about the book's origins. The Hebrew date on the title page equates to 1850 or 1851, but it is not clear whether this refers to the Lemberg printing, as Gaster assumes, or to the Amsterdam edition. The book is extremely rare: Gaster noted that he had been unable to find any copy outside his own library. Likewise, the only copy of which we are aware is in the British Library collection.

Otsar Haqqodesh presents its constituent books as follows on the title page: "Hidden treasures of the king's treasury, no seeing eye has viewed them. Are they not the book of Tobiah, the book of the miracle of Hanukkah at the hand of Judith, and further precious words which rejoice the heart and give light to the eyes?"²⁹ In accordance with this claim that the contents are ancient, their language and phraseology is strongly biblical, which makes it almost impossible to assign a date of composition. The desire to appear ancient may also have exerted a strong influence on aspects of the content. In this version, for example, the non-biblical Asmodeus is replaced by a less obviously late "evil

²⁸ Gaster, *Two Unknown Hebrew Versions*, 14-15. Gaster's reference to and questions concerning this copy of Tobit have not as yet been followed up.

²⁹ Since so little is known about this book, we offer a list of its contents and folio numbers: Tobit (1b-6a), Judith (6b-12a); Susannah (12b-13b); The Ba'al [= Bel] in Babel (13b-14a); The Dragon in Babel (14a-b); Letter of Jeremiah (14b-16a); Baruch (16a-18a); The Dream of Mordecai and the Books of Ahasereus [=Ahasuerus] (18a-20a); and Prayer of Manasseh King of Judah (20b).

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spirit,” and the old Hebrew name חֲדָקַל — also found in the Tobit Qumran Aramaic 4Q197 4 i 6 (cf. 1QapGen xvii 7-8) at 6:2 — is used for the Tigris (cf. Gen. 2:14; Dan. 10:4). In other words, there is an apparent inclination to archaize, which further confuses the issue of dating, but which tends to suggest a relatively late date.

In the light of all that, and given the absence of any earlier witnesses, this version of Tobit might seem to be, in all probability, a new, comparatively late rendition into Hebrew. There are some signs, though, that matters may not be so straightforward. *Otsar Haqqodesh* associates Tobit’s captivity with the account in 2 Kgs 15:29, where Tiglath-pileser invades Naphtali and deports its people during the reign of Pekah. Other versions of Tobit, however, associate it with the invasions by Shalmaneser described in 2 Kings 17–18. This difference apparently gives rise to two corrections in the text:

בימים ההם עלה תגלת פלאסר (שלמנאסר) בתגלת פלאסר ((ר) מלך אשור
על ארץ נפתלי (1:10)

“In those days, Tiglath Pileser (Shalmaneser son of? Tiglath Pileser), king of Assyria, went up against the territory of Naphtali.”

וימת תגלת פלאסר וימלוך סנחריב בנו (צ”ל בן) תחתיו (1:15)

“But Tiglath Pileser died, and Sennacherib his son (i.e., son of his son) reigned in his place.”

Unless they are a very subtle form of archaizing, these corrections would seem to point to the existence of an editor who is willing to qualify, without altering, an already existing text. That, in turn, suggests that the printed edition is making use of a literary *Vorlage*.

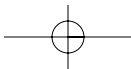
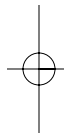
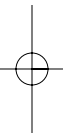
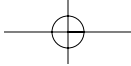
Excluding the finds from the Dead Sea materials, we have, then, six different Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Tobit, of which only two (Neubauer’s Aramaic and Gaster’s Hebrew) exhibit a close relationship with each other, although they in turn seem to depend upon a third (“Münster”). None of the six can be dated with precision, although at least four of them go back to the early medieval period (“Münster,” “Fagius,” North French Miscellany, Neubauer’s Ara-

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maic), and possibly beyond. Two of the versions are represented by several textual witnesses (“Münster” and “Fagius”), and these indicate the existence of dynamic, evolving traditions behind the texts. It is unlikely that any of the traditions are derived directly from the texts found at Qumran, but it is also clear that none are simply direct translations of the texts known to us in Latin and Greek. Thus for the purpose of uncovering some original form of Tobit, they probably have little to offer, but that does not excuse the recent scholarly neglect of these later texts. The ways in which they each adapt and recount the story offer important insights into Jewish ideas and practices in many different areas, from the liturgical through to the historical and magical. The apparent transfer of texts between Jewish and Christian contexts, moreover, is a matter of interest in itself, and the apparent popularity of the story relates to broader questions about Jewish attitudes to, and uses of the apocryphal materials.

Part Two

Ben Sira and Earlier Biblical Books



Ben Sira, Reader of Genesis I–II

MAURICE GILBERT, S.J.

“If recipe wisdom is to be defined as the knowledge of how one is to live fully and well in one’s vertical relationships with God and horizontal relationships with one’s fellows, together with the knowledge of how to master the world, then I think Walther Zimmerli is right in emphasizing that such wisdom is to be located within the framework of the OT theology of creation.” This statement of our colleague Alexander A. Di Lella appears in the introduction to his commentary on *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*.¹ He explains his opinion quoting Sir 15:11–20 and 17:1–14. I will come back to these texts. I only add here that when I met Alexander for the first time, in Boston in December 1987, a few months after his commentary was published, he insistently praised the book of Gian Luigi Prato on the problem of theodicy in Ben Sira, the subtitle of which justifies the present mention: “Compounding of the opposites and recall of the origins.”² Having also studied in Rome at

¹ P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 38; cf. W. Zimmerli, “The Place and Limit of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology,” *SJT* 17 (1964) 146–58. In this paper I use Skehan’s Anchor Bible translation of Ben Sira.

² G. L. Prato, *Il problema della teodicea in Ben Sira. Composizione dei contrari e richiamo alle origini* (AnBib 65; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1975).

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the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Alexander reads Italian and in his commentary he regularly refers to Prato's book.

In order to see the impact of Genesis 1–11 on Ben Sira, we must in fact assume the positions of Zimmerli and Prato. Such a study has not yet been done systematically. Only John R. Levison offers a panoramic view of the figure of Adam in the Book of Ben Sira.³ The present inquiry will go beyond Genesis 1–3, so as to cover other figures such as Noah.

Before getting to the heart of the matter, let us acknowledge that Ben Sira never quoted exactly a text from Genesis 1–11. Pancratius C. Beentjes indeed proved this.⁴ However, at times Ben Sira made incidental use of an expression from Genesis 1–11 without necessarily and clearly referring to its original context. For example, the spouse of a man is called “a help like his partner”⁵ in Sir 36:29b, and this nice expression comes from Gen 2:18 concerning Eve. Similarly, an unmarried man is a “restless wanderer” (Sir 36:30b), a strong phrase which is used in Gen 4:12, 14 for Cain.⁶

The first text of Ben Sira that alludes to Genesis 1–11 comes in Sir 7:15. This verse is not in the Peshitta and, in Hebrew MS A, we find it between 7:8 and 7:10, there being no 7:9. This text says:

Hate not laborious work;
work was assigned by God.

This advice recalls Gen 2:15 and, for the painful aspect of agricultural work, it recalls Gen 3:17–19, but without using any specific word from these references, except the term “work.” However, the textual situation of Sir 7:15 in Hebrew, as in Greek, is so difficult to understand that the authenticity of this verse can be called into question, as Beentjes

³ J. R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism From Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSup 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988) 33–48.

⁴ P. C. Beentjes, *Jesus Sirach en Tenach. Een onderzoek naar en een classificatie van parallellen, met bijzondere aandacht voor hun functie in Sirach 45:6–26* (Nieuwegein: privately published, 1981).

⁵ Skehan (*The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 427) translates “a help like himself” with the Greek version; see Gen 2:18 LXX. However, Peshitta reads: “a help like yourself”; Hebrew MSS B margin, C, D have: “a fortified city”; see Jer 1:18.

⁶ The Greek version of Sir 36:30b partly follows Gen 4:12 LXX.

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has already done.⁷ In fact, Ben Sira does not greatly appreciate farm work (see 38:25–26). Why should he recommend it in 7:15, the way the rabbis did?

Finally, before looking at the great pericopes that recall Genesis 1–11, let us take another look at a verse that is often discussed, Sir 25:24:

In a woman was sin's beginning:
on her account we all die.

Hebrew, Greek and Syriac have the same text. Despite Levison, an allusion to Gen 3:6 seems certain, as Di Lella acknowledges, even if by this allusion to the origins, Ben Sira makes the wickedness of a woman responsible for the ruin of the couple.⁸

Setting these texts aside, let us now turn to the main passages where Ben Sira gives his teaching recalling texts of Genesis 1–11.

1. God's Plan for Humankind (Sir 15:11–18:14)

The unity of this large text, shown by Josef Haspecker, analyzed by Prato, and synthesized by Levison, was not considered as such by Di Lella, who prefers to divide it: 15:11–16:23; 16:24–18:14.⁹ The main point for Ben Sira is to explain that “unseemly is praise on a sinner's lips [. . .]. But praise is offered by the tongue of the wise, and its rightful master teaches it” (Sir 15:9–10). Ben Sira's teaching is structured in two parts. The first begins with somebody accusing God of pushing him to sin. In order to refute such a stand which denies personal responsibility in moral matters, Ben Sira reminds us of the Creator's action from the very beginning: “It was he, from the first, when he created humankind, who made them subject to their own free choice” (Sir 15:14). Every human being, since the origin of human history, is God's

⁷ P. C. Beentjes, “Jesus Sirach 7:1–17, Kanttekeningen bij de structuur en de tekst van een verwaarloosde passage,” *Bijdragen* 41 (1980) 251–59, here 252.

⁸ J. R. Levison, “Is Eve to Blame? A Contextual Analysis of Sirach 25:24,” *CBQ* 47 (1985) 617–23; Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 349.

⁹ J. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach. Ihre religiöse Struktur und ihre literarische und doktrinaire Bedeutung* (AnBib 30; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1967) 142–55; Prato, *Il problema*, 209–99; Levison, *Portraits*, 34–41; Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 267–86.

creature, to whom the Creator gives freedom to choose between good and bad. Ben Sira in this verse alludes to Gen 1:1 (“from the first”) and Gen 1:27 (“God created humankind”); then he puts in this context the Hebrew word *yēšer* (“tendency, propensity”), used in Gen 6:5 and 8:21, where it has a negative connotation. Since Jean Hadot, it has been accepted that Ben Sira never used *yēšer* as “wrong inclination” as it was used by later rabbinism.¹⁰ For Ben Sira, *yēšer* means personal ability to make a free choice, as is proven in the subsequent verses (Sir 15:15-17).

Continuing with his reflections, Ben Sira goes on to recall some biblical events (16:5-10). As I read it, Sir 16:6 is an introduction asserting a general principle.¹¹ Now, 16:7 is problematic. The Greek version understands it as a reference to “the giants of old” mentioned in Gen 6:4. But the Hebrew text (MSS A and B) of Sir 16:7a speaks about “princes of old.” There are two ways to explain such a textual difference. Either Ben Sira is really referring to Gen 6:4, although he uses a different vocabulary, and this is the explanation given by Prato,¹² or else Ben Sira is alluding to another event. In this case, Di Lella suggests various texts referring to the king of Babylon and more precisely to Nebuchadnezzar,¹³ but then the chronological order of the events mentioned in 16:7-10 is broken. This is why I suggested seeing in 16:7 an allusion to the campaign of the four kings according to Genesis 14, even if that text does not say that these kings “were rebellious”;¹⁴ in any case, if my hypothesis keeps the chronological order of the events, with Genesis 14 we are no longer concerned with Genesis 1-11, which is the subject matter of this article.

To the reflections of Ben Sira, the one who objects reacts (Sir 16:17-22), questioning the divine providence: why should God take an interest in such a puny creature as me in the whole of creation? The answer of the master, a solemn one (16:24-25), unfolds in two points. First, Ben

¹⁰ J. Hadot, *Penchant mauvais et volonté libre dans la Sagesse de Ben Sira (L'Éclésiastique)* (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1970) 91-103.

¹¹ M. Gilbert, “God, Sin and Mercy: Sirach 15:11—18:14,” *Ben Sira's God. Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham - Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 118-35, here 122.

¹² Prato, *Il problema*, 254-56.

¹³ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 274.

¹⁴ Gilbert, “God, Sin and Mercy,” 122.

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Sira reminds us of the intention of God when he created, and then he invites the one who objects to come back to God. In recalling creation (16:26–17:10), Ben Sira refers to the first pages of Genesis, but he reorganizes their content in a way that seems more logical for his purpose. The cosmic creatures, mainly the heavenly bodies, are eternal, while plants, trees and animals, “with all manner of life” (Gen 1:21, 24 LXX) “must return into [the earth] again” (Sir 16:30). They must die like humankind, whose days were limited by the Lord (Sir 17:2; Gen 6:3). However, between cosmic creatures and human beings there is some similarity: each of them received from their Creator a specific function. The heavenly bodies perfectly fulfill their own role, and the Lord has provided help for human beings to do the same. “In God’s own image he made them” (Sir 17:3b), establishing them over animals that will fear them (Sir 17:4; Gen 1:28; 9:1–2), and he gave them everything necessary to fulfill their function, including sense organs and discernment. Therefore, avoiding every fault against their neighbors (Sir 17:14), they praise the Lord for “showing them the grandeur of his works” (Sir 17:8b–10).

Here Ben Sira offers a sapiential reflection based on the accounts of creation. He universalizes their meaning: Genesis 1–3 spoke of the first man and the first woman, but for Ben Sira, the same is true for every man and woman. Moreover, he emphasizes that human beings, like heavenly bodies, received from the Creator a function that implies respect for others.

2. Wisdom and the Wise Person (Sirach 24)

The praise of Wisdom and the complementary reflections of Ben Sira give him the opportunity to return to the first pages of Genesis. Four passages of Sirach 24 recall Genesis 1–3.

Since “from the mouth of the Most High [she] came forth” (Sir 24:3), Wisdom is like the creative Word of God (Genesis 1). Is she also like the spirit mentioned in Gen 1:2? Di Lella thinks so, but for me it is not obvious.¹⁵

Having received from the Lord a command to settle in Israel, Wisdom took root there and grew, producing buds, flowers, and glori-

¹⁵ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 332.

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ous fruit that she offers to anybody. In Sir 24:10-21, the tree of life (Gen 2:9; 3:22) is implied. For Ben Sira, it is again permissible to reach this tree of life (which is Wisdom) through the Torah (which is, as I see it, the divine revelation as a perfect expression of Wisdom).

In his commentary on the speech of Wisdom, Ben Sira compares the Torah with the four rivers of paradise (Gen 2:11-14), to which he adds the Jordan and the Nile (Sir 24:25-27). Like these rivers at the time of the new crops, the harvest, and the vintage, the Torah makes human wisdom plentiful. The divine revelation gives a profusion of wisdom and understanding (cf. Bar 4:1).

The following verse, Sir 24:28, is a merism, as Di Lella noted: neither the first human nor the last are able to understand Wisdom fully.¹⁶ Here the first points to Adam as a person, not only because he lived before the revelation of the Torah at Sinai, as Di Lella remarks,¹⁷ but also because Wisdom is vaster than the sea and the abyss (Sir 24:29). It must be the same for the last human, who seems to be Ben Sira himself (cf. 33:16a H [36:16a G]), and immediately afterward he bears witness to his own experience as a wise man full of Wisdom, though this does not mean that he has fully understood Wisdom.

3. Disparity between Creatures (Sir 33:7-15 H [36:7-15 G])

It is difficult to restore the Hebrew text of this passage; compare the proposals of Skehan and those of Prato.¹⁸ The latter keeps to a maximum the text given by the Hebrew of MS E. The intention of Ben Sira is to reconcile the opposites observed in God's work, particularly among human beings. In order to do so, he reminds us of the origins, referring to various passages in Genesis 1-11. The opening question and its answer (33:7-9) recall the disparity of days, even though every day receives light from the sun. Here Ben Sira does not adopt a literal following of Genesis 1, where light and sun appear on different days. The point of the discussion is the distinction established by God between days: the Sabbath (cf. 33:8b MS E) holds a peculiar place, for the Sabbath is the special day blessed and sanctified by the Lord (Gen 2:3).

¹⁶ Ibid., 337.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 394, 396-397; Prato, *Il problema*, 15-21.

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According to Sir 33:10, there is something similar among human beings.

So, too, all people are of clay,
for from earth humankind was formed.

Here Ben Sira paraphrases Gen 2:7, extending to the whole human race what is said there of the first man. However, in his wisdom, the Lord distinguished human beings: “[he] makes people unlike: in different paths he has them walk” (33:11), for he blesses some of them and curses others (33:12). Here Ben Sira reminds us of Gen 9:25-27, when, after the flood, Canaan was cursed and Shem (Israel’s ancestor) was blessed. In so doing, the Lord, like a potter deciding on his works, assigned (קלל) to everybody a place in his presence (33:13).¹⁹

In this way Ben Sira explains the contrast of opposites which is observed among human beings (33:14bc MS E) as in creation, where “light contrasts with darkness” (33:14d MS E), an idea which again recalls Gen 1:2-3, as is noted by Di Lella.²⁰ God’s works then “come in pairs, the one the opposite of the other” (33:15); Qoh 7:13-14 had already said this. With this explanation Ben Sira establishes a general principle of differentiation resolved by the Creator’s wisdom. There is no predestination here, since Ben Sira has already affirmed human freedom in 15:14-16. But recalling Gen 9:25-27, he acknowledges the function assigned to everyone in human history.

4. “The Works of God Are All of Them Good” (Sir 39:16)

The first two verses of this hymn (39:16-17) recall Genesis 1. The opening verse (39:16), reproduced almost identically in 39:33 by way of inclusion, starts with the leitmotiv of Genesis 1: “and God saw that it was good.” Then the second line of the verse acknowledges a theme already proposed by Qoh 3:11: everything “in its own time.”

Sirach 39:17 repeats, like Genesis 1, that God created through his word, but here Ben Sira only mentions the accumulation of waters which, in Gen 1:9-10, forms the seas. Recalling Ps 33:7, Ben Sira under-

¹⁹ For the meaning of the verb קלל, see Prato, *Il problema*, 42-43.

²⁰ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 401.

stands these waters as a reservoir that God could use at any moment to effect his saving work (39:18b: an allusion to Noah?).

Later, in 39:25, Ben Sira writes:

Good things for the good he [God] provided from the beginning,
but for the wicked, good things and bad.

Prato relates this verse to Genesis 1–3, but Di Lella is more precise: Sir 39:25b would be “an allusion perhaps to the leather garments (‘good things’) God made for the man and woman after they sinned and to their subsequent expulsion (‘bad [things]’) from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:21–24).”²¹ He also refers to Gen 4:13–15, where the fate of Cain is described. Such explanations seem to me too elaborate, for Sir 39:25 appears as a general principle that will be explained in the following verses.

5. “All That Is of Earth Returns to Earth” (Sir 40:11)

The interpretation of this verse is difficult. The second line, according to MS B, says: “and what is from above returns above,” but the Greek version reads: “and what is from the waters [returns] to the sea” (cf. Qoh 1:7). The Hebrew text is confirmed by the Peshitta.

Is it necessary to see an allusion to Gen 3:19 in the first line of Sir 40:11: “All that is of earth returns to earth”? Like many commentators, Di Lella thinks so.²² In Sir 40:11b MS B he too sees the same idea we also read in Qoh 12:7b: “the breath of life or human spirit” returns “to God who breathed it into humans (Gen 2:7).”²³ Such an interpretation is disputed. The main question is to know if Sir 40:11 has to be connected with the preceding or with the following verses. The first hypothesis is held by Prato,²⁴ among others, and in this case the words “all that” (Sir 40:11ab) mean “all flesh, both human and beast” (cf. 40:8a). If one takes the second hypothesis, as do Skehan and Di Lella,²⁵ the problem will be to clarify the relation between Sir 40:11 and 40:12–17. Now, the latter text contrasts injustice, which will be annihilated, with loyalty and goodness, which endure forever. In this case, an apt comment on

²¹ Prato, *Il problema*, 104; Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 460.

²² Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 471.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Prato, *Il problema*, 312–13.

²⁵ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 462, 469–70.

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Sir 40:11 was made by Israel Lévi:²⁶ “all that is rude, base, earthly, necessarily produces something base and earthly; conversely, all that is elevated and noble cannot but reach something elevated,” and this is true if it is understood that everything which is elevated endures forever, escaping the annihilation of what is earthly.

Earlier, Ben Sira spoke about the anxiety of Adam’s descendants from their birth till their return to “the mother of all the living” (Sir 40:1). This last phrase designates the earth (cf. MS B margin), but in Gen 3:20 the same expression is used for Eve. Di Lella does not mention this parallel text; he only refers to the dust from which man was created (Gen 2:7) and to which he must return (Gen 3:19).²⁷ Anyway, my point is that Sir 40:1, referring to the final fate of humans, only mentions their destruction, whereas 40:11–17 gives to the teaching a complement, asserting that the justice and goodness accomplished by human beings endure forever.

On the same point, Ben Sira is more explicit in 41:1–13. We have not to fear death, since it is God who prescribes it (41:3–4). Ben Sira refers here to the condemnation of Gen 3:19. But, in 41:10, alluding to the wicked, he adds that “all that is of naught returns to naught, [. . .] from void [*tōhû*] to void [*tōhû*]” (cf. Gen 1:2, the primeval chaos). By way of contrast, “a virtuous name will never be annihilated” (Sir 41:11b) and “a good name [will last] for days without number” (41:13b).

6. Praise of God for His Action in Creation and History (Sir 42:15–49:16)

The first part (Sir 42:15–43:33) of this long passage describes the works of God in creating the world. Only a few things refer to Genesis 1–11. The most important is the repeated mention of God’s word, especially in 42:15c, then in 43:5b, 10a, 26b. These last references insist on the perpetual force of the divine word. The other important allusion to Genesis 1–11 is the mention of the rainbow in 43:11–12. Before Ben Sira, it is mentioned only in Gen 9:12–17 and Ezek 1:28; Ben Sira will again allude to it in 44:18, in connection with Noah.

²⁶ I. Lévi, *L’Ecclésiastique ou la Sagesse de Jésus, fils de Sira*, 1 (Bibliothèque de l’Ecole des Hautes Etudes. Sciences Religieuses 10/1; Paris: Leroux, 1898) 20 (translation mine).

²⁷ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 469. On Sir 40:1 see also G. Vall, “The Enigma of Job 1,21a,” *Bib* 76 (1995) 325–42, esp. 335–39.

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In the Praise of the Fathers, only the beginning (44:16-18) and the end (49:14-16) must claim our attention. Sirach 44:16 is dedicated to Enoch, but this verse is problematic. The critical note of Skehan gives the data clearly concerning this verse, which he considers as an “expansion,” explained by the “popularity [of Enoch] in the last centuries B.C.”²⁸ The first line of the verse depends on Gen 5:24. For Di Lella, if this verse was originally written by Ben Sira, it forms an inclusion with 49:14.²⁹ However that may be, this mention of Enoch remains problematic, since the first section of this Praise of the Fathers enumerates the successive covenants concluded with the forefathers, from Noah to Phinehas (44:17-45:26), whereas there was no covenant with Enoch.³⁰

Noah is called a “just man found without reproach” (44:17a), as in Gen 6:9. The covenant with Noah is mentioned (44:17d: *bērîtô*), in accordance with Gen 9:10-11, 15-16, as well as the rainbow, “a lasting sign” (Sir 44:18) that there will never again be a flood: Gen 9:12 is implied here.

The conclusion of this Praise of the Fathers (49:14-16) is astonishing. Why this short reminder of the origins? Why has Ben Sira still added the praise of Simon? There are no clear answers to these questions. In any case, like Elijah, Enoch “was taken up” (49:14; cf. Gen 5:24), whereas the dead body of Joseph was honored (49:15). But why is there a reference here to Joseph? Perhaps to make a contrast between Enoch and Joseph, giving the advantage to Enoch.

The last verse, 49:16 differs in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Syriac. In Hebrew, the first line, after correction, says: “Glorious, too, were Shem and Seth and Enosh.”³¹ The order of these names remains without explanation, for Shem is the first son of Noah (Gen 9:18), Seth is a son of Adam (Gen 4:25) and Enosh is the first son of Seth (Gen 4:26). The textual transmission of the second half of Sir 49:16 is complex, as is its interpretation. The *status quaestionis* presented by Levison is excellent.³² For the first time in the Book of Ben Sira, in 49:16b Adam is seen explicitly in his own individuality (cf. Sir 24:28a). Indeed, in the

²⁸ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 499.

²⁹ Ibid., 499, 504.

³⁰ J. Marböck, “Die ‘Geschichte Israels’ als ‘Bundesgeschichte’ nach dem Sirachbuch,” in his *Gottes Weisheit unter uns: zur Theologie des Buches Sirach* (ed. I. Fischer; Herders biblische Studien 6; Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1995) 103-23, esp. 110 n. 29.

³¹ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 541-42.

³² Levison, *Portraits*, 44-45.

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Hebrew text Adam prevails in glory over “any living being.” Why? Perhaps because he “was created directly by God (Gen 2:7) and made in God’s image and likeness (Gen 1:26–27),” writes Di Lella.³³ In fact, this verse concludes the Praise of the Fathers, who are seen mainly as individual heroes of the sacred history of Israel.

Conclusion

If we put aside a few secondary allusions or quotations brought together in the introduction to this paper I offer to Alexander A. Di Lella, master and friend, there are three kinds of references to Genesis 1–11 made by Ben Sira.

The first and largest group of texts recalls Genesis 1–11, and more frequently Genesis 1–3, as an argument used to solve a problem in discussion. A theoretical problem is resolved by recalling the origins. For Ben Sira, what was at the beginning keeps its perpetual value, even for today. Therefore we understand why here he does not treat Adam as a historical figure, but sees him as representative of human beings. In so doing, Ben Sira is traditional among the sages: for them, a theology of creation reaches universality. On the other hand, Ben Sira does not give a proper commentary on the texts of Genesis. He rather reflects on them and reads in them not so much the reality of the cosmos and of every human being as their function in creation.³⁴

When he praises Wisdom (Sirach 24), Ben Sira is in keeping with the tradition, but more than Proverbs 8, his theology of creation implicitly recalls Genesis 1–3. With his optimistic view, he affirms that approaching Wisdom, identified with God’s creative word and with the tree of life, remains possible through the Torah, its best expression.

Lastly, the Praise of the Fathers offers a series of portraits: these personal figures are taken from sacred history. Here these figures are seen as they were, in their individuality. Each of them had his own part in human history, including Israel’s history, till Ben Sira’s time (Sirach 50), and indeed till Ben Sira himself (Sirach 51). From Adam to Ben Sira, there is a continuity of witnesses.

³³ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 545.

³⁴ See Prato, *Il problema*, 385–87.

The Influence of the Book of Exodus on Ben Sira

FRIEDRICH V. REITERER

In the introduction to his important commentary, under the heading “Wisdom Traditions in the Old Testament,” our colleague Alexander Di Lella, who celebrates his birthday, fittingly places the Book of Exodus in an important position in the context of wisdom.¹ He indicates that the theme of wisdom, which lies at the heart of Ben Sira, also has a significant function in several Pentateuchal passages (especially Exod 28:3; 35:25, 30-33; 36:1-2, 4, 8). Precisely because the relationship between Exodus and Ben Sira has not previously been systematically examined and because Alexander Di Lella has seen that there are interesting and worthwhile cross connections, it is appropriate to pursue this question.²

¹ P.W. Skehan and A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 31.

² At a recent conference devoted to “Studies in the Book of Exodus. Redaction – Reception – Interpretation,” unfortunately there was no discussion of the relationship between the Book of Exodus and Ben Sira; see M. Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (BETL 126; Leuven: Peeters, 1995). The volume treats Exodus in relation to various other biblical and pseudepigraphical books: C. Begg, “The Golden Calf Episode According to Pseudo-Philo,” 577-94; J. Cook, “Exodus 38 and Proverbs 31: A Case of Different Order of Verses and Chapters in the Septuagint,” 537-49; T. Hieke, “Der Exodus in Psalm 80: Geschichtstopik in den Psalmen,” 551-58; J. Lust, “Exodus

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1. Methodological Principles

It is not possible to treat this subject comprehensively. Moreover, particular research shows that, when we consider the allusions and the frequency of borrowed phrases, the Book of Exodus is not the most important biblical writing for Ben Sira.³ In this article I mention some examples in which I can show that Ben Sira handles the Book of Exodus in exactly the same way as other biblical texts. The examination offers interesting observations on how Ben Sira is influenced by his Bible. Indeed, there are indications that give us a key to understanding Ben Sira's work, as it lies before us in all its complexity. In fact, there are hints that Ben Sira has revised his own teaching at least once. In the process he allows himself more or less to be led by the Bible in his argumentation.

It should be emphasized that thematic similarities between Exodus and Ben Sira are frequently not exclusive to these books. Rather, there are many instances where the same themes occur in other biblical writings. In particular, one notices that many of the themes mentioned by Ben Sira appear in Deuteronomy as well as in Exodus. In fact, the Book of Deuteronomy plays a far more significant role for Ben Sira than the Book of Exodus.⁴ Due to reasons of space, this investigation will treat only the following few selected texts: Sir 3:16, 26, 27; 4:6a; 38:5, 9; 44:23.⁵

6,2-8 and Ezekiel," 209-24; A. van der Wal, "Themes from Exodus in Jeremiah 30-31," 559-66; J. T. A. G. M. van Ruiten, "The Relationship between Exod 31,12-17 and Jubilees 2,1.17-33," 567-75. Sadly, there is no reference to a deuterocanonical book in the index of biblical references.

³ See F. V. Reiterer, "Das Verhältnis Ijobs und Ben Siras," in *The Book of Job* (ed. W.A.M. Beuken; BETL 114; Leuven: Peeters, 1994) 405-29. Compare also R. Egger-Wenzel's article in the present volume.

⁴ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 75, 79, 84.

⁵ See the extensive listings of parallels between Exodus and Ben Sira in J. K. Gasser, *Die Bedeutung der Sprüche Jesu ben Sira für die Datierung des althebräischen Spruchbuches* (BFCT 8/2-3; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1904); A. Eberharder, *Der Kanon des Alten Testaments zur Zeit des Ben Sira* (ATAbh 3/3; Münster: Aschendorff, 1911); T. Middelndorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973). The biblical quotations in this article are based on the NRSV (sometimes altered).

2. An Example of the Same Theme But Different Terminology (Sir 3:16)

At the end of the poetic unit dealing with the relationship of children to aged parents (Sir 3:1-16),⁶ we read: "Whoever forsakes a father is like a blasphemer, and whoever angers a mother is cursed by the Lord" (Sir 3:16 G). Bad behavior toward elderly parents must have been a recurring problem, the prevention of which becomes an important concern, and biblical authors address themselves repeatedly against it. "Whoever curses father or mother shall be put to death" (Exod 21:17). "Cursed be anyone who dishonors father or mother. All the people shall say, 'Amen!'" (Deut 27:16). "All who curse father or mother shall be put to death; having cursed father or mother, their blood is upon them" (Lev 20:9). "If you curse father or mother, your lamp will go out in utter darkness" (Prov 20:20).⁷

In contrast to Ben Sira, there is no Pentateuchal passage dealing with this theme in which God is explicitly mentioned as one of the agents (or the sole agent) of punishment: both behaving badly toward parents and the resulting punishment occurs among humankind. It is a natural and inevitable occurrence that those who behave badly against parents will be punished. It is significant that it is not stated who the

⁶ On Sir 3:1-16 see J. Gamberoni, "Das Elterngesetz im Alten Testament," *BZ* 8 (1964) 161-90; J. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach. Ihre religiöse Struktur und ihre literarische und doktrinaire Bedeutung* (AnBib 30; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967) 125-27; R. Albertz, "Hintergrund und Bedeutung des Elterngesetzes im Dekalog," *ZAW* 90 (1978) 348-74, esp. 367-69; W. C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women. A Literary Analysis* (BJS 38; Chico: Scholars Press, 1982) 40-47; G. L. Prato, "Giovani e anziani: il quarto comandamento e la tradizione sapienziale," in *I giovani nella Bibbia* (ed. M. Gioia; Studio Biblico Teologico Aquilano 8; Rome: Dehoniane, 1988) 127-53; R. Bohlen, *Die Ehrung der Eltern bei Ben Sira. Studien zur Motivation und Interpretation eines familienethischen Grundwertes in frühhellenistischer Zeit* (Trierer theologische Studien 51; Trier: Paulinus, 1991); R. Martin-Achard, "Biblische Ansichten über das Alter," *Concilium* 27 (1991) 198-203; D. J. Harrington, "Wisdom at Qumran," in *The Community of the Renewed Covenant. The Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (ed. E. Ulrich and J.C. VanderKam; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994) 137-52, esp. 147-49; A. Kondracki, "La *šdqh*, che espia i peccati. Studio esegetico di Sir 3,1-4,10" (Doctoral dissertation, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, 1996); I. Krammer, "Die Auswirkungen des Verhaltens zum Mitmenschen auf die Beziehung zu Gott im Buch Ben Sira" (Doctoral dissertation, University of Salzburg, 1997) 17-44.

⁷ The LXX differs widely from the Hebrew text, but fortunately not in some passages that are of great value for our research.

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“agent” is, and likewise who intervenes on behalf of the parents. The hint that it could be “Israel” is possible, but this must be backed up with evidence.

In Ben Sira it is different. The traditional theme—in earlier time only a question among human beings—is connected strongly to God, who gives the rules of behavior to humanity: God regards behavior to aged parents as a yardstick indicating the relationship between himself and human beings. In effect, those who curse their parents, curse themselves. It is self-destructive: one condemns oneself before God and cuts oneself off from the source of life. So the relationship between Exodus and Ben Sira is such that the teacher of wisdom takes the theme from Exodus, but the terminology used cannot be attributed to any one particular passage. Rather, he develops the question in the context of theological debates.

3. Examples of Similar Themes with Similar Terminology (Sir 3:26a, 27a)

Usually the term *wise* appears as a natural contrast to *foolish*. It is not so simple for Ben Sira: he contrasts the heart of a wise person (Sir 3:29a) with a hard heart (Sir 3:26a, 27a).⁸ Furthermore, in the context of a “hard heart” (*lb kbd*) he mentions sin (3:27b), pride (3:28a) and evil (3:28b G).⁹ Hence it appears that “hard” has a qualified negative meaning: it is associated with what is onerous or “heavy,” that expresses itself in the human weakness of haughtiness. This is not by chance; such a person is guilty and cannot be healed (3:28). An obstinately haughty person possesses a markedly negative personality structure, and his vile behavior affects the environment.¹⁰

⁸ Usually in this antithesis we do not expect *heart* as an anthropological term. Therefore, we may ask why Ben Sira uses this word. The “heart” is the seat of all human characteristics of a physical, instinctive, mental, and psychological nature. Nevertheless, “heart” remains very specific, so that the author thereby addresses the entire “person” as he or she specifically appears. On Sir 3:26-27 see N. Caldich-Benages, *En el crisol de la prueba* (Asociación Bíblica Española 32; Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1997) 149, 238 n. 34.

⁹ Sirach 3:28b G corresponds with +3:28c H^A. For this numbering see F. V. Reiterer et al., *Zählsynopse zum Buch Ben Sira* (Fontes et Subsidia 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003).

¹⁰ If we do not consider the term too religiously, the Latin *impius* (“impious”) contrasting with *pious* (“pious”) reflects the intended meaning very well.

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Ben Sira's terminology is close to Exod 7:14 and 9:7 (among other passages). The Pharaoh saw how "each one threw down his staff, and they became snakes; but Aaron's staff swallowed up theirs" (Exod 7:12). The Egyptian king did not become wise through seeing this, and did not recognise the divine authority of Yahweh. Furthermore the biblical author maintained that Pharaoh's heart is "hardened" (Exod 7:14) or perhaps better "self-important" in the sense of "stubbornly proud," so that on principle he refuses to change his position. The emphasis of the biblical authors is that this reaction is based on Pharaoh's actively defensive position (Exod 9:7).¹¹ The goal of the action in the Book of Exodus is in no way the annihilation of the Egyptians. Rather, they should realize that Yahweh is God: "The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD" (Exod 7:5; cf. 7:17; 8:18; 14:4, 18); and this applies also to the Israelites in Exod 10:2. If the Egyptians are dead, naturally they can no longer come to this basic recognition. Therefore the subject matter is religious and theological.

Ben Sira takes the vocabulary from the Book of Exodus. Whereas in the quoted passages from Exodus *kbd* ("be hard") is used as a verb (often as a causative, "harden"), Ben Sira selects the adjective, makes an adjectival phrase and generalizes it: whoever acts out of destructive pride, destroys everything—as is evident if we think of ancient times, when the exodus took place. We can see this with Pharaoh: he puts out all his cards against Yahweh and loses. We can generalize and summarize: "in respect of the *entire* army of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained" (Exod 14:28). Without naming Pharaoh explicitly as a prototype, Ben Sira uses his behavior as an illustration to show what happens if someone turns obstinately against God. Again he relates humanity's attitude and behavior toward God and shows that both "issues" come together from the viewpoint of ethical conduct. Ben Sira treats ethical issues theologically, though without making faith a simple moral issue.

¹¹ By contrast with the causative form ("and he hardened his heart," Exod 8:11; cf. Exod 8:28; 9:34), Exod 9:7 states that "the heart of Pharaoh was hard" (Exod 9:7). The translation "the heart of Pharaoh was hardened" (NRSV) does not give the meaning of the Hebrew text well. It does not reflect who allowed his heart to be hardened, as is implied in the Hebrew verb (it is not passive but stative!).

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4. The Same Terminology with a New Emphasis (Sir 4:6a)

Ben Sira places a very high value on looking after the weak and disadvantaged.¹² In his aim to protect the disadvantaged he is following ancient traditions. Before we discuss further important issues, we should note the central relevance of the word $\text{\textcircled{q}}h$ (“a cry”), which is common to both Exodus and Ben Sira. Derivatives from the verbal root $\text{\textcircled{q}}$ (“to cry”) denote a cry for help uttered by people who for different reasons are without hope (Gen 27:34), helpless (Gen 41:55; Exod 5:8; Josh 24:7; Jer 49:3), without rights (Job 19:7), or suffering threats to their personal integrity (Deut 22:24, 27) or their life (Gen 4:10; Ps 107:4-6). The word occurs in serious and dramatic situations.¹³ It is then also typical that God hears the screams for help: “We cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression” (Deut 26:7).

From the previous examples (taken mainly from the Pentateuch), the urgency of the need is clear, but there was no example where $\text{\textcircled{q}}h$ (“a cry”) described the cry for help from the socially underprivileged. This is the case only in Exod 22:21-23 [NRSV 22:22-24].¹⁴ The technical

¹² See L. G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation. The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994) 243-90, esp. 254-55; F. J. Stendebach, “Weisheitliche Mahnungen zu mitmenschlichem Verhalten. Eine Auslegung zu Sir 4,1-10,” in *Gott an den Rändern. Sozialgeschichtliche Perspektiven auf die Bibel* (FS W. Schottroff; ed. U. Bail and R. Jost; Gütersloh: Kaiser, 1996) 83-90; M. Ehrmann, *Klagephänomene in zwischen-testamentlicher Literatur* (BEATAJ 41; Bern: Lang, 1997) 175-240, here 221-29; M. Zappella, “‘E ti amerà più di tua madre.’ Povertà e sapienza nella versione greca di Sir 4,1-10,” in *Logos. Corso di studi biblici. IV: Sapienziali e altri scritti* (ed. F. Mosetto; Turin: LDC, 1997) 223-38; P. C. Beentjes, “‘Sei den Waisen wie ein Vater und den Witwen wie ein Gatte.’ Ein kleiner Kommentar zu Ben Sira 4,1-10,” in *Der Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Sira* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel and I. Krammer; BZAW 270; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 51-64.

¹³ Correctly it has been asserted that the meaning of the term we have considered differs “from terms that do nothing more than express pain. . . . Other terms that mean ‘speak’ or ‘utter sounds’ are distinguished from $\text{\textcircled{q}}/\text{\textcircled{z}}\text{\textcircled{q}}$ not only by the acuteness of the distress that gives rise to the crying but also by the intensity with which the cry is uttered” (G. F. Hasel, “ $\text{\textcircled{z}}\text{\textcircled{q}}$; $\text{\textcircled{z}}\text{\textcircled{q}}h$; $\text{\textcircled{q}}\text{\textcircled{z}}\text{\textcircled{q}}$; $\text{\textcircled{q}}\text{\textcircled{z}}\text{\textcircled{q}}h$ ” [TDOT 4.112-22, here 4.116]).

¹⁴ Di Lella notes that as in Sir 4:6, $\text{\textcircled{q}}h$ (“a cry”) occurs “also in a similar context in Exod 22:22” (Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 166-67).

term for a cry uttered in extreme difficulties (which a person is unable to overcome without assistance) is used in a social context and expresses the cry for help of widows and orphans: “You shall not abuse any widow or orphan. If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry (*šqtw*); my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children orphans” (Exod 22:21-23 [NRSV 22:22-24]).¹⁵ This dramatic type of speech rarely occurs in the protocanonical OT; the formulation is unusual. This might imply that the social initiatives of the defenders of the law (such as the prophets) resulted in an improvement in the lives of the extremely disadvantaged groups. Now Ben Sira chooses this very passage in order to draw attention to his concern for social involvement. It is worth mentioning that he differs from Exod 22:22 [NRSV 22:23] as he does not mention widows or orphans, but rather speaks generally of a person in extreme pain (personal or otherwise): “The person embittered in spirit cries out in the pain of his soul” (Sir 4:6a H^A).¹⁶

Ben Sira is very sensitive and very radical: everyone who suffers needs help. Whether people should be helped does not depend on the seriousness of their difficulties (whether they are in physical danger or suffer from extreme social disadvantage), nor on the cause of the situation; rather, they should simply be helped because they are suffering.¹⁷ Anyone taking Ben Sira’s word seriously cannot compromise on helping. Any evasion or excuse is excluded: “[Do not] turn your face away from the poor. Do not avert your eye from the needy” (Sir 4:4b, 5a NRSV). Every time one meets a suffering person, one must help in a fitting way.

From this example we can discover something about the way in which Ben Sira uses the Bible. The teacher of wisdom often chooses

¹⁵ In Exod 22:22 [NRSV 22:23] the intensity is massively reinforced through the twice-repeated use of the cognate infinitive.

¹⁶ Cf. W. T. van Peursen, “The Verbal System in the Hebrew Text of Ben Sira” (Doctoral dissertation, University of Leiden, 1999) 188.

¹⁷ It is significant that the Greek translator either did not understand this important aspect in the Hebrew text (“from someone downtrodden in soul,” Sir 4:4a H^A) but limited it to those without possessions, or else he has not translated correctly (“from a poor person”). Moreover, the NRSV translation of Sir 4:4b is unfortunately based on the Greek version, and does not consider that probably in this verse it means more than the term “poor” implies.

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phrases that appear unusual or even unusable, but precisely through this choice he gives emphasis: at first sight our attention is not drawn to the chosen word—as we have just seen. So it shows that Ben Sira, sure of his aims as a native Hebrew speaker, had much more of a feel for the elasticity of the language than some modern interpreters. From numerous possibilities he chooses a meaningful technical term.¹⁸ In this way he shows that single words are also marked focal points. This emphasis through the selection of vocabulary shows something more: the considered and chosen selection calls to mind the context to which Ben Sira refers (in the literal meaning of the word which he chooses and also in the sense of understanding the usual meaning of the word). In his long discourses Ben Sira does not narrow this scope. The brevity should result in an increasing fortissimo, like an isolated drum beat that goes right through the listener.

Hence, in this context the attentive listener will hear the warning sentences from Exod 22:23. Ben Sira expects his audience to know the context of the ancient Scripture by heart (see Deut 31:12, 19, 21). It is not the style of wisdom to talk in the same way as in the Books of the Law and the Prophets. The teachers of wisdom are “gentler” and use less force, but they are more persuasive. The listeners should ponder more, think through and be convinced from within about what is right and proper, so that this appears to be, at the same time, the sum of one’s own discovery, as if it is the most natural outflow of one’s own personality.¹⁹

The reader who considers these points together will understand that very serious implications lie behind the previously “gentle” warning that “their Creator will hear their cry” (Sir 4:6).²⁰ Here comes the crunch. It is no longer a question of propriety, of socially honest

¹⁸ A modern philologist, taking Ben Sira’s advice, would have found the analysis of significant terms of classical Hebrew easier; but nevertheless modern scholars have correctly worked out the wider meaning of individual aspects through their detailed research (see Hasel, “*zʿq; zʿqb; ʿq; ʿqb*,” *TDOT* 4.118).

¹⁹ Because this understanding is so important, we can understand the aggressive polemic in Sir 23:2-3 against any danger threatening this significant task; cf. F. V. Reiterer, “Gott, Vater und Herr meines Lebens. Eine poetisch-stilistische Analyse von Sir 22,27-23,6 als Verständnisgrundlage des Gebetes,” in *Prayer from Tobit to Qumran* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel and J. Corley; DCLY 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004) 137-70.

²⁰ The NRSV’s choice of the term “prayer” (Greek) instead of “cry” (Hebrew) in Sir 4:6b is inappropriate, because it weakens the dramatic situation.

behavior, but on the contrary, it is a matter of the fundamental organization of the whole of creation. Whoever behaves incorrectly on this level, threatens the order of creation and must acknowledge that now the Creator himself will be called upon to act. It is predictable that the Creator would not surrender his creation to its potential destroyers because of an attempt by antisocial people to destroy it. Ben Sira does not elaborate on the consequences for those who ignore this command. Again here, Ben Sira expects that sensible people would think for themselves what the consequences might be.

5. The Book of Exodus as a Source for Ben Sira's Proclamatory Phrases (Sir 44:23)

Ben Sira concerns himself with Isaac and Jacob in a relatively short section (Sir 44:22-23). Because the passage is full of textual problems,²¹ it will be dealt with only so far as is indispensable for the question:

"To Isaac also he gave the same assurance for the sake of his father Abraham. The blessing of all people and the covenant he made to rest on the head of Jacob; he acknowledged him with his blessings, and gave him his inheritance; he divided his portions, and distributed them among twelve tribes."

The above quotation of Sir 44:22a-23g, based on the Greek version, follows the NRSV. As a translation of the Syriac version²² Liesen offers:

"And also to Isaac He swore because of Abraham his father and the blessing of all predecessors is resting on the head of Israel whom He named: my son, my first-born, Israel, and He gave to him a heritage and He established him (as) father for the tribes and (when) he passed away he was divided into twelve tribes."

²¹ For details see F. V. Reiterer, "Urtext" und Übersetzungen. *Sprachstudie über Sir 44,16-45,26 als Beitrag zur Siraforschung* (ATSAT 12; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1980) 108-20; R. Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani. Ben Sirac rilegge il libro e la storia d'Israele* (Theologia 4; Palermo: Augustinus, 1993) 74-115.

²² The translation is based on *Wisdom of the Scribe/La Sabiduría del Escriba. Diplomatic Edition of the Syriac Version of the Book of Ben Sira according to Codex Ambrosianus, with Translations in Spanish and English* (ed. N. Caldach-Benages, J. Ferrer and J. Liesen; Biblioteca Midrásica 26; Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 2003) 244. For the numbering of Sir 44:22-23 see Reiterer, *Zählsynopse*, 220, 222.

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The decisive colon in the Greek version is Sir 44:23b: “he acknowledged him with his blessings,” where the Syriac equivalent reads: “whom He named: my son, my first-born, Israel.” The name in the Greek tradition is “Jacob” (44:23a), but in the Syriac “Israel.” Israel is mentioned in the Syriac in 44:23a and in 44:23b, and in 44:23a there is a corresponding Hebrew text in H^B: “the head of Israel.” Without wishing to draw far-reaching conclusions from these few observations, it becomes clear that the deviations in the Hebrew base text which preceded the ancient translations were fundamental and deeply rooted. The observation of the suspicious *Vorlagen* will be confirmed in the next important theme: while G deals with blessing (“with his blessings”), there is a comparable model in the main text of H^B: “with a blessing.” In 44:22c (G: “the blessing of all people”; S: “the blessing of all predecessors”; cf. “a blessing” in 44:23a H^B) we have already read about the blessing of the predecessors. This theme now appears again in 44:23b G. Here G (“with his blessings”) receives support from the main text of H^B. If the Hebrew and Greek text are very close to one another, this could indicate that we have a text very close to the original.

However, on the basis of the contents, there is a strong counter-argument. We have previously seen that Ben Sira used only a few lines for Isaac and Jacob. The brevity of the treatment of the well-known patriarch Jacob means that only a few themes can be mentioned. Is it not a surprise that in such an eclectic reduction the subject of blessing occurs twice? In fact, there is another Hebrew version of this passage, confirmed by the Syriac, a variation that mentions another theme. We read in H^{Bmg}: “he confirmed him as firstborn” (44:23b). Here the Syriac seems to indicate that we have a very old, perhaps more original version: “whom He named: my son, my first-born, Israel” (44:23b). The following arguments serve to support this idea. First, in the OT tradition the connection between blessing and Jacob occurs frequently as a dominant theme.²³ Also the right of the firstborn is an important aspect, but the narratives of how Jacob achieved the birthright of the firstborn do not do him any particular honor. If we wanted to add one

²³ For Jacob as the recipient of a blessing from a human being, see Gen 27:19, 30, 41; 28:1, 6. For Jacob as the recipient of a blessing from God, see Gen 32:30 [NRSV 32:29]; 35:9; 48:3.

of these two themes into Ben Sira's teaching in the process of the development of the text, then it would certainly not be the subject of the firstborn. This can only appear because it was actually already included before the blessing was mentioned.

The close connection between Yahweh and his people, underlying God's demand for the Egyptians to free his people, is explained in Exod 4:22 in the following way: "Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: Israel is my firstborn son.'" Here again we come across a unique expression that confirms Ben Sira's individuality.

If the reasons already given are convincing that the tradition in H^{Bmg} and S (rather than the parallel text in G and H^B) are the original text-forms, then we can make an interesting deduction. When Ben Sira wrote the first version of his sayings, he followed biblical arguments (H^{Bmg} and S). We realize that in the other version (G and H^B) Ben Sira does not follow the Bible closely. This implies that the versions in G and H^B are later. In this way he does not distance himself from the Bible; his intention could be explained better from another scriptural passage. If these observations are right, this means that Ben Sira himself changes his argument. Even if a few individual cases cannot yet explain a whole system, they still remain as a strong argument inasmuch as the investigation (dealing with such questions carefully) shows a process of development in the proclamation of Ben Sira. What is of extreme interest can then be included: the numerous different versions of surviving passages are not just the result of more or less well (or badly) transmitted texts, but on the contrary have their roots in different forms of Ben Sira's original text. The translators were provided with Ben Sira's different manuscripts. If different versions had not arisen from different *Vorlagen*, the similarity could not be explained, except through later revisions. Even if we do not consider that every deviation of itself is due to an individual ancient tradition, there are nevertheless good reasons to conclude that the different versions—which differ very markedly from one another—are based on copies of Ben Sira's original manuscripts.

6. Adoption of the Same Ideas as the Theological Basis of Interpretation (Sir 38:5, 9)

At a time when scientific investigation of remedies hardly existed, biblical authors were interested in remedies themselves and, more

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importantly, their origins. For instance, we may call to mind the river flowing out of the temple in Ezekiel 47 as a symbol of God's power. It carries the power in itself, grows ever stronger, and changes the contaminated water of the Dead Sea into life-giving water (Ezek 47:8-9). Since an attentive reader would be aware that there would now be too little salt available, the author added that the marshes containing a little bit of salt should remain (Ezek 47:11). Yet not only would the water itself become useful, but it would also transfer its effect to other things: "Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing" (Ezek 47:12). Without being clumsy and ponderous, the emphasis is very clear: God's power is acting here. The healing comes from God directly. God provides the remedies.

God's provision of remedies is stated explicitly in another passage: after the rescue at the crossing of the Red Sea and the resulting victory song, the Israelites moved further (Exod 15:22-26 NRSV):

"Then Moses ordered Israel to set out from the Sea of Reeds,²⁴ and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water. When they came to Marah, they could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter. That is why it was called Marah. And the people complained against Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?' He cried out²⁵ to the LORD; and the LORD showed him a piece of wood; he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the LORD made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he put them to the test. He said, 'If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you.'"

Why is this passage quoted so fully here? Ben Sira takes up this argument in the passage about the physician (Sir 38:1-15).²⁶ Obviously

²⁴ So the NRSV margin, whereas the main text has "Red Sea." In almost all English translations (apart from the *NJB*), "Red Sea" appears for *yam sūp* (Exod 10:19; 13:18; 15:4, 22; 23:31; Num 14:25; 21:4; 33:10, 11; Deut 1:40; 2:1; 11:4; Jos. 2:10; 4:23; 24:6; Judg 11:16; 1 Kgs 9:26; Neh 9:9; Ps 106:7, 9, 22; 136:13; Jer 49:21). This translation is an explanation and leads many readers of the Bible to a geographical misunderstanding. For the first time "Red Sea" (*thalassa erythra*) occurs in the latter parts of the Bible in Greek (Jdt 5:13; 1 Macc 4:9; Wis 10:18, 19:7; Acts 7:36; Heb 11:29).

²⁵ See on *š'q* ("to cry") in section 4 above.

²⁶ See A. Sović, "Enkomij liječnicima u Svetom Pismu (Sir 38,1-15)," *Bogoslovska Smotra* 26 (1938) 165-78; H. Duesberg, "Le médecin, un sage (Ecclésiastique 38,1-15),"

the author is concerned about the right understanding of the physician's position. Ben Sira rejects two opposing arguments: "He had probably . . . in mind those who on religious grounds refused or were reluctant to consult a physician in their illness."²⁷ In opposition to such thinking were the freethinkers who had been influenced by the Hellenistic spirit. They were of the opinion that the physician heals by himself through his healing knowledge. According to that view, only simple people need God in addition.

Ben Sira strives to prove that the creative power of God manifests itself in healing: "For their gift of healing comes from the Most High, and they are rewarded by the king" (Sir 38:2 G). Since only one king exists in one kingdom, the mention of a "king" is a convincing picture of a powerful position without competition. Like the king, this God has his creation firmly under control. Already at the beginning of creation it was so: a word of command and the earth brought forth greenery and all kinds of plants (Gen 1:11). This is repeated again and again

BVC 38 (1961) 43-48; M. A. Halévy, "Les 'Dictionnaires de la Bible.' L'histoire de la médecine hébraïque," *Revue d'histoire de la médecine hébraïque* 14/1 (1961) 44-48; A. Stöger, "Der Arzt nach Jesus Sirach (38,1-15)," *Arzt und Christ* 1 (1965) 3-11; B. van Iersel, "Wechsel von säkularisierenden und sakralisierenden Tendenzen in der Schrift," *Concilium* 9 (1973) 42-48; P. C. Beentjes, "Een gedurfde visie op de geneeskunst. Sirach 38,1-15," *Schrift* 65 (1979) 178-83; D. Lührmann, "Aber auch dem Arzt gib Raum (Sir 38,1-15)," *WD* 15 (1979) 55-78; S. Noorda, "Illness and Sin, Forgiving and Healing. The Connection of Medical Treatment and Religious Beliefs in Ben Sira 38,1-15," in *Studies in Hellenistic Religions* (ed. M. J. Vermaseren; EPROER 78; Leiden: Brill, 1979) 215-24; P. C. Beentjes, "Jesus Sirach 38:1-15. Problemen rondom een symbool," *Bijdragen* 41 (1980) 260-65; H. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter. Eine Untersuchung zum Berufsbild des vor-makkabäischen Söfēr unter Berücksichtigung seines Verhältnisses zu Priester-, Propheten- und Weisheitslehrertum* (WUNT 2/6; Tübingen: Mohr, 1980) 138-46; M. Adinolfi, "Il medico in Sir 38,1-15," *Anton* 62 (1987) 172-83; D. P. Sulmasy, "The Covenant within the Covenant. Doctors and Patients in Sirach 38:1-15," *Linacre Quarterly* 55 (1988) 14-24; H. W. Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testaments* (5th ed.; Munich: Kaiser, 1990) 211-20; S. L. Jaki, "The Purpose of Healing," *Linacre Quarterly* 60 (1993) 5-15; E. Testa, "Le malattia e il medico secondo la Bibbia," *RivB* 43 (1995) 253-67; L. Schrader, "Beruf, Arbeit und Muße als Sinnerfüllung bei Jesus Sirach," in *Der Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Sira* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel and I. Krammer; BZAW 270; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 117-49, esp. 134-44; J. Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira* (BBB 37; Bonn: Hanstein, 1971; repr., BZAW 272; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) 154-60.

²⁷ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 441.

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(cf. the Hebrew causative participle): “The Lord created medicines out of the earth, and the sensible will not despise them” (Sir 38:4). Ben Sira loves to make the hearer think through the use of pictures and comparisons, rather than through direct confrontation. He reminds the reader that already a long time ago (Exod 15:22-26) there was a healing process that humanity observed and God let happen.

What is implied in the reference to the scene in the exodus from Egypt? In first place, in contrast to what is assumed today, Ben Sira sees no miracle in this event. Rather, God restores order to something previously destroyed and thereby heals nature (as above in Ezekiel 47). In second place, in a quite despairing way Moses cried out for help. The contaminated water was not restored through human power, but rather because Moses pleaded with God. In third place, Moses indirectly became a prototype of the physician, although it is not explicitly stated that he was a physician. From him we can also learn the relationship of a proper physician toward God. It is God who calls him and puts him into office. Moreover, it is God who remains the authority of the physician, the authority to whom he refers when he cannot solve difficult problems. Now in the time after Moses (according to Sir 38:6-7), the physician takes over this regenerative task. His work becomes a visible act of rescue, as the whole people had once experienced already in Exodus. The physician’s healing is the prolonged exodus out of difficulties: “God’s works will never be finished;²⁸ and from him health²⁹ spreads over all the earth” (Sir 38:8b-c). The earth is therefore not only the place where human beings can observe God’s great deeds, but rather where humanity can also admire above all the rectification of mistakes and imperfections. Thereby, and not only through the exodus out of Egypt, the people can see God’s constant presence accompanying them.

²⁸ If the word is taken as a form of ending, Ben Sira’s intention is lost. It does not imply termination in the sense of an end, but rather (*until the end*, that means *forever*) a permanent form of a repeated fulfillment of salvation.

²⁹ If I understand Ben Sira’s chosen terms correctly, he chooses the Hebrew word *tûšiyā* (lit., “successful wisdom”) to allude to God as Savior (see the assonance with *tēšû‘ā*, “salvation,” and the various implications of the root *yšc*, “save”) as well as to Yahweh (see the abbreviation of God’s name as Yah). The manuscript that served as the basis for G probably read *šālôm* (“peace”), though the Hebrew term has to be taken in the classical sense of “well-being.”

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On this theological foundation, Ben Sira unfolds two further important thoughts: turn to God in illness, and think at the same time that each transgression brings creation into disorder (Sir 38:9). For the functioning of creation sin is poison, like the contaminated water encountered in the wandering in the desert (Exod 15:23). Now let us go back to the first thought: “My child, when you are ill, do not delay, but pray to the Lord, and he will heal you” (Sir 38:9). As we would expect, Ben Sira relies on the biblical tradition in his central themes, as Di Lella notes: “The idea of God as healer derives from Exod 15:26.”³⁰ He refers to the passage cited above: “I will not bring upon you any of the diseases that I brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you” (Exod 15:26b).

Two things can be asserted: first, God is the one who heals, and second, healing is a process in which all diseases can be removed or prevented. Therefore, healing is a process to do with looking both backward and into the future.³¹ If so, we may then ask, does Ben Sira really mean that a sick person’s disease is caused by himself? At least to some extent this is not excluded. Health begins with seemingly banal actions, such as eating and drinking: that does not mean it is banal. For in the little things of everyday life, the entire creation (in essence) is present at the same time. In Ben Sira, a few lines previously we read: “For overeating brings sickness, and gluttony leads to nausea. Many have died of gluttony, but the one who guards against it prolongs his life” (Sir 37:30-31). It is in any case remarkable that Ben Sira recognizes that early death can be caused by oneself. In contrast, the physician (or God who works through the physician) restores health “for the sake of preserving life” (Sir 38:14c).

With regard to this aspect, I likewise consider the reference to Exodus as equally important: there in an unexpected way all the diseases of Egypt are mentioned (Exod 15:26). We cannot assume that the author has “only” the so-called Egyptian plagues in mind. Is he afraid that, for example, frogs make life impossible? Hardly. Every catastrophe (“Egyptian plague”) occurs as a result of the incorrect behavior of

³⁰ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 442; cf. Schrader, “Beruf, Arbeit und Muße,” 139, 145.

³¹ The angel in the Book of Tobit is called Raphael: “God heals” (cf. Tob 3:17). Healing is central to the content of the whole book.

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the Egyptians, according to the biblical account. This is again due to their corrupt attitude. Ben Sira refers to the main causes of the Egyptians' downfall. First, they were arrogant and vastly overestimated themselves. They were no longer capable of realizing the order of creation. By putting themselves in the position of God, they laid the foundations for their self-destruction. Second, they strove for power and did not want to let it go. Third, they did not keep any agreements; they were not capable of reflection. Fourth, they never recognized who God is and what kind of God he is, as the biblical authors summarized with the following phrase in the mouth of God: "I am the LORD" (Exod 6:6-8, 29; 7:5, 17; 8:18 [NRSV 8:22]; 10:2; 12:12; 14:4, 18; 15:26).

Illness is actually of a spiritual and religious nature. God wants to heal his people from it. In addition, Ben Sira consistently considers that humanity has to cooperate with God in order to be healed as God planned it in his creation (Sir 15:14, 16-17). On the basis of this view, the following sentence—even if grammatically an imperative—is no command, but rather a plea: "Give up your faults and direct your hands rightly, and cleanse your heart from all sin" (Sir 38:10).³²

7. Ben Sira's Technique of Interpretation and Actualization

Through the selection of terms, Ben Sira points to obvious passages. We notice that certain types of passages are implied. They are always passages with significant contents that often offer classical expressions. Such phrases and formulations are found in many biblical books. Therefore, without specific criteria we cannot assume, due to the different possibilities, that Ben Sira has been influenced only by a passage from Exodus.

Very noticeable, though not too frequent, are those passages that offer no other biblical references on the same topic. Ben Sira considers the themes in such passages to be the type from which people can learn. Many interpreters of the Bible consider themselves to have reached their goal when they have found a (or *the*) biblical reference.

³² Again the selection of the term is significant: in no other words for sin does free will take part in the process of committing an offense as clearly as in the Hebrew term *peša'* ("transgression"), which includes the idea of personal guilt. This differentiation, which is clear in Hebrew, is impossible in both Greek and Syriac.

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The identification of such an external fact does not fulfill Ben Sira's intention at all. He wants the reader to think of the intention beyond it. Whoever only compares external facts misses Ben Sira's intention. Thus, pondering is the task of wise persons, not just sometimes; it lies at the heart of their role. Understanding Ben Sira's Bible means therefore also walking in the steps of the teacher of wisdom. Those who fail to ponder will never recognize the guiding hand of God, either in everyday life or in the great feats of God in history. Nor will they recognize that God wishes to see his creation healthy and happy, freed from illness and filled with the joy of life.

Now it is also possible to describe the methodological steps that give us the proper understanding of the passages cited from Ben Sira. I see the following multi-layered intention, which I describe as Ben Sira's method of using the Bible: the sage quotes a passage more or less word for word, mostly not very literally. It is clear that he expects his readers to know the passage. However, the allusion or the literal citation is there for a deliberate purpose; he does not deal with the passage superficially, so as to intend merely a formal dealing with that passage. If this is the case, it means that Ben Sira is using the quotation to give authority to his discourses. Ben Sira's intention is not the kind of confirmation that we find for instance in the NT phrase: "so that the word of scripture might be fulfilled."³³ Rather, he wants to see that the meaning of the quotation has been grasped, which presupposes that we should start understanding its aim as Ben Sira sees it. Now, he takes over that aim (more or less literally) in his new context. Therefore, he expects that the readers again should not just consider the quotation itself, but rather they should wonder why Ben Sira refers to such a biblical passage here and in this context. The Bible is the foundation for Ben Sira's understanding of his world and of himself (today he would

³³ This is not an OT but a NT phrase (Matt 26:54, 56; Mark 14:49; Luke 4:21; 21:22; 22:37; John 13:18; 17:12; 19:24, 28, 36; Acts 1:16; 1 Cor 15:54; Jas 2:8, 23). The following verbs are used: *plēroō* ("fill, fulfill," 10 times), *teleō* ("complete," twice), *pimplēmi* ("fill, fulfill," once); plus the following phrases: *tote genēsetai ho logos ho gegrammenos* ("then will happen the thing that has been written," once); *kata tēn graphēn* ("according to Scripture," once). On the citation of Ben Sira passages in early Judaic literature (with the introductory phrase "it is written"), see F. V. Reiterer, "Text und Buch Ben Sira in Tradition und Forschung. Eine Einführung," in *Bibliographie zu Ben Sira* (ed. F. V. Reiterer et al.; BZAW 266; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 1-57, esp. 10-16.

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use the modern term “creation” instead). Always divine revelation stands next to him, like an invisible source of light that brings forth practical instructions for a right understanding as well as for current theological questions (both banal and important).³⁴

³⁴ My thanks are due to Penelope Shemunkasho for translating this article from German and to Jeremy Corley for editorial assistance.

In Search of Parallels: Ben Sira and the Book of Kings

PANCRACTIUS C. BEENTJES

Following the discovery of several Hebrew Ben Sira manuscripts at the end of the nineteenth century, quite extensive lists were published in which almost every Hebrew word, word-pair or phrase from the Book of Ben Sira was traced back to the Hebrew Bible.¹ It is striking, however, to ascertain that these lists to a high degree are completely different from each other, since the compilers did not give due consideration to methodological points of reference.²

As far as a connection between the Book of Ben Sira and 1-2 Kings is concerned, Solomon Schechter and Charles Taylor listed thirteen occurrences of “phrases, idioms, typical expressions, and even whole verses about which there can be no reasonable doubt that they were

¹ S. Schechter and C. Taylor, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book of Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899) 13-25; J. K. Gasser, *Die Bedeutung der Sprüche Jesu ben Sira für die Datierung des althebräischen Spruchbuches* (BFCT 8/2-3; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1904) 203-53; A. Eberharder, *Der Kanon des Alten Testaments zur Zeit des Ben Sira* (ATABh 3/3; Münster: Aschendorff, 1911) 6-52.

² As an example, this was the subject of my investigation of Sir 36:1-17 [36:1-22]; see P. C. Beentjes, *Jesus Sirach en Tenach: Een onderzoek naar en een classificatie van parallellen, met bijzondere aandacht voor hun functie in Sirach 45:6-26* (Nieuwegein: privately published, 1981) 5-19.

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either suggested to him by or directly copied from the Scriptures.”³ Johann Gasser’s enumeration of correspondences between Ben Sira and 1-2 Kings, however, has twenty-eight items, of which ten coincide with the list by Schechter and Taylor.⁴ And Andreas Eberharter’s outline has no less than fifty-seven Ben Sira passages that have a bearing on the Book of Kings.⁵ Putting the three conspectuses together, however, there appear only six pairs of texts in Ben Sira and 1-2 Kings that are mentioned by all scholars (the list quotes the relevant Ben Sira phrase):

1. Sir 13:12 / 2 Kgs 12:21: “he plots a plot.”⁶

קושר קשר

2. Sir 13:26 / 1 Kgs 18:27: “and withdrawn and perplexed.”

ושיג ושיח

3. Sir 16:18 / 1 Kgs 8:27: “behold, the heavens, and the heaven of heavens.”

הן השמים ושמי השמים

4. Sir 30:13 / 1 Kgs 12:10: “make heavy his yoke.”

הכבד עולו

5. Sir 47:25 / 1 Kgs 21:20, 25; 2 Kgs 17:17: “and they lent themselves to every evil.”

ולכל רעה התמכר

6. Sir 50:13 / 1 Kgs 8:22: “in front of the whole assembly of Israel.”

נגד כל קהל ישראל

At least two remarks are in order here. First, some parallels between the Book of Ben Sira and 1-2 Kings, which one would expect to find in each of the three synopses, are not given at all. We will revert to this particular point later on. Second, the compilers of these surveys realized that they had to do more than just offer a list of identical words,

³ Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 13.

⁴ Gasser, *Bedeutung*, 216-17.

⁵ Eberharter, *Kanon*, 15-17.

⁶ Note that the Hebrew text of Sir 13:12 and 13:26 differs from the Greek and the Syriac. Because of text-critical problems, these two instances will not receive further treatment in this article.

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idioms, typical expressions, or phrases. Both Gasser and Eberharther chose a couple of headings to typify the correspondences between the Book of Ben Sira and 1-2 Kings in a more detailed way.

In relation to the similarities between the Book of Ben Sira and 1 Kings, Gasser distinguishes between (a) strict imitations (“Eigentliche Anlehnungen”), (b) real allusions (“Sachliche Anspielungen”), and (c) linguistic reminiscences (“Sprachliche Erinnerungen”).⁷ In respect of the resemblances between Ben Sira and 2 Kings, however, he has chosen quite another system, since according to his view there appear only some reminiscences in the Book of Ben Sira, which are related to either (a) content or (b) form.⁸

With regard to the interrelationship of Ben Sira and 1 Kings, Eberharther’s survey also offers three categories: (a) allusions (“Anspielungen”), (b) imitations (“Anlehnungen”), and (c) references to several biblical passages (“Rückbeziehungen, bei denen mehrere Stellen zugleich in Betracht kommen”).⁹ As a consequence, these two compilers have sometimes listed the same Ben Sira phrase, word-pair or expression under quite different headings.

Schechter, as author of the introduction to the 1899 Cambridge text edition, does not offer in his list of parallels a subdivision into different categories, but has added the following explanation at the end of his conspectus:

A few words of comment however as to the nature of these quotations are necessary. The greatest number of these are what we may perhaps term adaptive. By this I understand such Scriptural passages, phrases, and groups of words as could not have been embodied by B. S. [= Ben Sira] in his ‘Wisdom’ without subjecting them first to the process of adaptation. This he managed mostly by slightly altering the Biblical text, by transposing words or giving them a different pointing, or by omitting or adding some words, or by combining various phrases, sometimes also by giving to the Biblical expression a meaning foreign to its original purport.¹⁰

⁷ In the list mentioned above, nos. 2-3 and 5-6 have been characterized by Gasser as being “strict imitations” (category a), whereas no. 4 has been listed as being a “linguistic reminiscence” (category c).

⁸ No. 1 from the list is found under the heading “reminiscence of form”.

⁹ Nos. 2-4, 6 from the list are typified as “allusions” (category a), and nos. 1 and 5 as “references to several biblical passages” (category c).

¹⁰ Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 26.

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New Developments Since 1960

The discovery of the Hebrew Ben Sira manuscripts at the end of the nineteenth century brought about only a temporary revival of Ben Sira research, which nearly always had a *philological* basis. From the mid-sixties of the twentieth century onward, however, a real upturn in Ben Sira studies was set in motion. The discovery of fragments of a Hebrew Ben Sira scroll at Masada in 1964 by Yigael Yadin, and the publication of these fragments (Sir 39:27-32; 40:10-19; 40:26-44:15,17), as well as the publication of the great Psalms Scroll from Qumran Cave II, containing parts of the Hebrew text of Sir 51:13-30, were crucial landmarks in the study of the Book of Ben Sira.¹¹ The Ben Sira texts from Masada and Qumran were conclusive evidence that the Hebrew text of the medieval Ben Sira manuscripts which had been discovered in the Cairo Genizah in 1896 was to a high degree authentic.¹² Since 1965, Ben Sira scholars therefore have been able to shift their attention from textual criticism to other topics, such as Ben Sira's setting in life and the theological themes of his book. Josef Haspecker and Johannes Marböck are undoubtedly the founding fathers of an approach to modern Ben Sira research in which the *theological* scope of investigation opened up new horizons.¹³

A re-evaluation of the extensive lists of parallels between the Book of Ben Sira and the Hebrew Bible was part of that new movement. The "parallelomania"¹⁴ which so strongly dominated the first wave of Ben Sira research was in fact disputed for the first time by John Snaith, who brought to the fore that

¹¹ Yigael Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada with Introduction, Emendations and Commentary* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, 1965), reprinted in *Masada VI: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965, Final Reports* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999) 152-225; J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave II (11QPs^a)* (DJD 4; Oxford: Clarendon, 1965) 79-85.

¹² This finding matched the assessment of Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (Studies in Classical Literature 1; The Hague: Mouton, 1966) 23-105.

¹³ Josef Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach: Ihre religiöse Struktur und ihre literarische und doktrinaire Bedeutung* (AnBib 30; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967); Johannes Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira* (BBB 37; Bonn: Hanstein, 1971; reprint, BZAW 272; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999).

¹⁴ This notion was introduced by S. Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962) 1-13.

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[t]he amount of Ben Sira's conscious literary quotation from the Hebrew Bible has been over-estimated through lack of detailed investigation into each alleged instance. Careful investigation into the contexts of *both* passages is necessary before conscious quotation can be acknowledged with any certainty. . . . What matters is what Ben Sira did with his quotations.¹⁵

[F]or it is not only through such study of contextual information in both occurrences that we can hope to discover what significances (if any) we may see in his quotations. Our aim is to discover something of what Ben Sira meant by his quotations and references rather than to assess how many there are or to show how wide their range.¹⁶

Compare Samuel Sandmel's observation:

Detailed study is the criterion, and the detailed study ought to respect the context and not be limited to juxtaposing mere excerpts. Two passages may sound the same in splendid isolation, but when seen in context reflect difference rather than similarity.¹⁷

Scholars nowadays are convinced that in all those cases where he quotes Scripture, Ben Sira not only adopted the biblical wording as such, but also added a *contextual clue* that supports his use of Scripture. This is a major methodological observation that is important for people who wish to discuss intertextuality in the Book of Ben Sira. If such an additional contextual clue is not fixed in advance, one gets mixed up in a very unwanted situation, as was the case in Ben Sira research at the beginning of the twentieth century.

In search of a consistent methodology, it was Devorah Dimant who in my view made tremendous progress. In a stimulating essay she offers an impressive analysis of how Mikra (the Hebrew Bible) is used and interpreted in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.¹⁸ In post-bibli-

¹⁵ J. G. Snaith, "Biblical Quotations in the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus," *JTS* 19 (1967) 1-12, here 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷ Sandmel, "Parallelomania," 2.

¹⁸ Devorah Dimant, "Use and Interpretation of Mikra in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Martin Jan Mulder; CRINT, section 2: The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud 1; Assen: Van Gorcum; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988) 379-419.

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cal literature Dimant differentiates between *compositional* and *expositional* use of biblical elements:

In compositional use biblical elements are interwoven into the work without external formal markers; in expositional use they are presented explicitly as such, with a clear external marker. These two distinctive functions have different aims. In the exposition the divine word is introduced in order to interpret it as such, while the composition is employed when the biblical element is subservient to the independent aim and structure of its new context.¹⁹

As post-biblical literature, however, rarely includes pure exposition, this category is not discussed by her. Her essay therefore is mainly devoted to the use of biblical elements in compositional use, in respect of which she distinguishes between explicit and implicit use of the Hebrew Bible.

Explicit Use of 1-2 Kings by Ben Sira

Dimant differentiates between explicit quotations and explicit mention of persons and circumstances. Explicit quotations are defined as “biblical phrases of at least three words, more or less accurately reproduced, and introduced by special terms and explicit references to the source.”²⁰ Though Ben Sira on several occasions in his book employs this use of the Hebrew Bible, it never has a bearing on the Book of Kings.²¹ The explicit use of the Hebrew Bible by means of explicit mention of persons and circumstances, on the contrary, is to be found several times in the Book of Ben Sira. This is especially true in the Praise of the Famous (Ben Sira 44-50). The section that runs parallel to 1-2 Kings is found in Sir 47:13-49:3. The following persons are explicitly mentioned by Ben Sira: Solomon (Sir 47:13-23a); Rehoboam and Jeroboam (Sir 47:23b-25); Elijah (Sir 48:1-11); Elisha (Sir 48:12-15d); Hezekiah and Isaiah (Sir 48:15e-25), and Josiah (Sir 49:1-3).

¹⁹ Ibid., 382.

²⁰ Ibid., 385.

²¹ For a general overview of Ben Sira citing Scripture, see P. C. Beentjes, “Canon and Scripture in the Book of Ben Sira (Jesus Sirach / Ecclesiasticus),” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (ed. Magne Saebø; vol. I: From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages [Until 1300], Part 2: The Middle Ages; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 591-605.

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a. *Solomon* (Sir 47:13-23a). Right from the start one comes across an intriguing problem. One phrase in Sir 47:13b is undoubtedly an explicit use of 1 Kgs 5:18:

Sir 47:13b: And God gave him rest on every side.

ואל הניח לו מסביב

1 Kgs 5:18 [NRSV 5:4]: Yhwh my God has given me rest on every side.

הניח יהוה אלהי לי מסביב

This reference is indeed found in Gasser's list.²² In the catalogue of Schechter and Taylor, however, the same phrase of Sir 47:13b is related to a passage dealing with King Jehoshaphat!²³

2 Chr 20:30: And his God gave him rest on every side.

וינח לו אלהיו מסביב

From a methodological point of view, this is quite an illustrative example. Whereas Gasser has pointed out 1 Kgs 5:18, since on the level of *content* this passage in respect of Solomon must have been Ben Sira's source, it is obvious that Schechter and Taylor, on the other hand, had quite another criterion in mind, viz., a *linguistic* correspondence. For 1 Kgs 5:18 is said by Solomon himself in the first person singular, whereas 2 Chr 20:30 is a phrase in the third person singular, just like Sir 47:13b. Yet for reasons of context Gasser's reference to 1 Kgs 5:18 is to be preferred, though it has been slightly reworked by Ben Sira from his primary source, just as this Jerusalem sage has adopted other phrases and expressions from the Hebrew Bible and remodeled them in order to create his own portrayal of Solomon, which in some respects differs considerably from the biblical presentation.²⁴

²² Gasser, *Bedeutung*, 216.

²³ Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 23. They also refer to Josh 21:42, which, however, has been put between brackets. Eberharder has no reference whatsoever relating to Sir 47:13b.

²⁴ For a detailed analysis of Ben Sira's view of Solomon, see P. C. Beentjes, "The Countries Marvelled at You': King Solomon in Ben Sira 47:12-22," *Bijdragen* 45 (1984) 6-14.

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b. Rehoboam and Jeroboam (Sir 47:23b-25). In the passage dealing with Jeroboam,²⁵ Sir 47:23ef in MS B reads: “Till there appeared—let him not be remembered—Jeroboam son of Nebat who sinned and led Israel into sin.” The phrase in 47:23f is obviously an explicit mention of persons and circumstances from the Hebrew Bible:²⁶

Sir 47:23f: Jeroboam son of Nebat who sinned and led Israel into sin.

ירבעם בן נבט אשר ח[מא ורחמי] א[ת ישראל]

However, it is disputed from which biblical passage it originates. This is a good example of how subjectively scholars estimate the evidence. Eberharther relates this Hebrew phrase to 1 Kgs 12:20, 28; 14:16. Gasser, who also limits the resemblance to the second half of the sentence (. . . אשר), says it refers to 1 Kgs 14:16 “and other passages,” whereas Schechter and Taylor offer only a reference to 2 Kgs 3:3.²⁷ Eberharther’s reference to 1 Kgs 12:20, 28 for several reasons is not to the point. On the literary level there is hardly any resemblance to Sir 47:23f. The only point of contact with 1 Kgs 12:20 is just the mention of “Jeroboam,” and even this small feature is absent in 1 Kgs 12:28. The reference to 2 Kgs 3:3 by Schechter and Taylor is equally unconvincing. For this instance is about King *Joram* who persisted in the sins of Jeroboam. The most appropriate parallel to Sir 47:23f is undoubtedly 1 Kgs 14:16 (“the sins of Jeroboam, who sinned and who led Israel to sin”), not only because it is the first time that the phrase under discussion is found in the Hebrew Bible, but also since this instance provides the most direct and natural context to which all subsequent biblical passages hark back.

²⁵ I differ from A. A. Di Lella, who contends that the name of Rehoboam (רחבעם) in the Hebrew of Sir 47:23d disturbs the pun of this bicolon, which opens with רחב (“broad,” 47:23c) and concludes with עם (“people,” 47:23d); see P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 530. In my view, we absolutely need this name here, as has been shown by T. Penar, *Northwest Semitic Philology and the Hebrew Fragments of Ben Sira* (BibOr 28; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1975) 82.

²⁶ Hebrew texts from the Book of Ben Sira are adopted from P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of all Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and A Synopsis of all Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (VTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997).

²⁷ Eberharther, *Kanon*, 16; Gasser, *Bedeutung*, 216; Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 23.

c. *Elijah* (Sir 48:1-11). Ben Sira's description of Elijah is full of biblical references.²⁸ Two quotations from the Book of Malachi, one at the opening and one at the end, create a firm *inclusio* for this pericope, and it is precisely these two quotations that identify Elijah as the subject of the Ben Sira passage.²⁹ The collocation כְּתֹנֹר בֹּעֵר ("as a flaming furnace") in Sir 48:1b is an inverted quotation from Mal 3:19, and the phrase "to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children" in Sir 48:10 is a literal quotation from Mal 3:23-24 [NRSV 4:5-6].³⁰ The special character of the Elijah-passage also comes to light by its literary genre, viz., the *apostrophe* (48:4-10), which Ben Sira elsewhere in his book has employed only in respect of Solomon (47:14-20).

From a *historical* point of view Ben Sira's presentation of Elijah is impossible. For the prophet is brought on the scene *after* the deportation of the Northern Kingdom (721 B.C.E.), whereas Elijah made his appearance one century and a half earlier! We have to do therefore with a *theological* maneuver that makes Elijah the link between the history of Ephraim and that of Judah.³¹

Sirach 48:8 is surely to be reckoned among Dimant's category of explicit mention of persons and circumstances, since it is a clear reference to 1 Kgs 19:16b:³²

Sir 48:8: Anointing a bearer of punishments, and a prophet as successor in your place.

הַמֹּשֶׁחַ מִלֵּא תְשֻׁלוּמוֹת וְנִבִּיאַ תְּחַלִּיף תַּחְתֶּיךָ

²⁸ P. C. Beentjes, "De stammen van Israël herstellen: Het portret van Elia bij Jesus Sirach," *Amsterdamse cahiers voor exegese en bijbelse theologie* 5 (1984) 147-55; R. Hildesheim, *Bis daß ein Prophet aufstand wie Feuer. Untersuchungen zum Prophetenverständnis des Ben Sira* (Trierer theologische Studien 58; Trier: Paulinus, 1996) 64-124; J. Lévêque, "Le portrait d'Élie dans l'Éloge des Pères (Si 48,1-11)," in *Ce Dieu qui vient: Mélanges offerts à Bernard Renaud* (ed. R. Kuntzmann; LD 159; Paris: Cerf, 1995) 215-29.

²⁹ The Greek in Sir 48:1a has added the name "Elijah."

³⁰ See P. C. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern," *Bib* 63 (1982) 506-23; idem, "Canon," 597-98.

³¹ That Elijah in Ben Sira's presentation has this function indeed is confirmed by the *inclusio* between Sir 47:23fg-24 and 48:15.

³² It is quite surprising, that in the "classical" surveys of Gasser, and of Schechter and Taylor, there is no mention of this striking resemblance! Only Eberharther, *Kanon*, 16 has listed this parallel.

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1 Kgs 19:16b: You shall anoint [Elisha . . .] as prophet in your place.

תמשח לנביא תחתך

As is often the case in his work, Ben Sira has rearranged the words that were originally part of one single biblical phrase into two separate phrases of his own.

d. Elisha (Sir 48:12-15d). In the passage on Elisha, in 48:12c one comes across the expression *פי שנים* (“a double share”). There can hardly be any doubt that these words refer to 2 Kgs 2:9, where it is said that Elisha makes a request just before Elijah will be taken away.

2 Kgs 2:9: [Let me inherit] a double share of your spirit.

פי שנים ברוחך

That Ben Sira beyond doubt had this biblical passage in mind is also confirmed by *בסערה* (“in a whirlwind”) that appears in both contexts (Sir 48:9, 12; 2 Kgs 2:1, 11). Ben Sira, therefore, on the one hand has adopted the words *פי שנים* (“a double share”) and *רוח* (“spirit”) from his parent text, but at the same time has arranged quite another context, as he placed both constituent elements into two different cola: “Elisha was filled with *his spirit*” (48:12b); “*twice as many* signs he wrought” (48:12c).³³

e. Hezekiah and Isaiah (Sir 48:15e-25). With the help of the verb *חזק* (“to strengthen”), Ben Sira’s portrait of Hezekiah (Sir 48:15e-25) has a twofold pun on the king’s name. The first one (48:17a) has a bearing on Hezekiah’s activities with respect to the water supply for the city (“Hezekiah fortified his city, bringing water within it”), whereas the second one (48:22b) manifests an important theological sense (“He held fast to the paths of David”).³⁴ For his presentation of King

³³ In my view, the verb *מלא* (“to fill”) in Sir 48:12b is a strong indication that the Genizah Hebrew text of Sir 48:8 (*המושח מלא תשלומות*) is correct and that there is no need to change *מלא* into *מלכי* (“kings”) to match the Greek.

³⁴ In 48:20d there is also a pun on the prophet Isaiah’s name. For a detailed analysis of this pericope, see P. C. Beentjes, “Hezekiah and Isaiah: A Study on Ben Sira xlviii 15-25” in *New Avenues in the Study of the Old Testament* (ed. A.S. van der Woude; OTS 25; Leiden: Brill, 1989) 77-88.

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Hezekiah in 48:17, Ben Sira virtually composed his own text. When introducing the Assyrians in 48:18ab, however, he adopted the precise wording of the biblical passages reporting this Assyrian raid.³⁵ But as soon as the adjutant's first activity is reported (48:18c), Ben Sira frames a colon of his own ("He shook his fist at Zion").

The next colon—"He blasphemed God in his pride" (Sir 48:18d)—offers an interesting case. The expression *לֹא יִדְבָּר* ("to blaspheme God") occurs seven times in biblical Hebrew, mainly in the Assyrian passage under discussion.³⁶ It could be argued that Ben Sira borrowed this wording from the biblical report of the Assyrian raid. There is, however, at least one major difference. Both in 2 Kgs 19:6 and in 19:22 the verb *יִדְבָּר* ("blaspheme") forms part of an oracle to Hezekiah by the prophet Isaiah which is preceded both times by a reference to prayer. In Ben Sira's text, all these data have been conflated anew. Although in 2 Kgs 19:14-19 it is explicitly stated that it was King Hezekiah who prayed to God, in Sir 48:20 it is the *community* to whom the author attributes the role of intercession before the Most High.

Doubtless Sir 48:21a ("He struck the camp of the Assyrians") refers to 2 Kgs 19:35 or is even a quotation of it. But, even if Ben Sira here quotes literally, at the same time he is creating a whole new context. For in Ben Sira's presentation, the one who struck the Assyrian camp is certainly not the Angel of the Lord as is the case in the biblical and deuterocanonical accounts (1 Macc 7:41; 2 Macc 15:22-24).³⁷ It is *God himself* who should be considered the subject of Sir 48:21ab.³⁸

f. Josiah (Sir 49:1-3). The explicit mention of Josiah's name at the opening of Sir 49:1a (*יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן יוֹסִיָּהוּ*) offers the one and only clue that Sir 49:1-3 is indeed devoted to this Judean king.³⁹ Ben Sira's presentation of King Josiah without any doubt is attached to the preceding paragraph dealing with Hezekiah. Both pericopes must be considered an illustra-

³⁵ Sir 48:18a corresponds with 2 Kgs 18:13 (// Isa 36:1); Sir 48:18b refers to 2 Kgs 18:17 (// Isa 36:2).

³⁶ Num 15:30; 2 Kgs 19:6, 22 = Isa 37:6, 23; Ezek 20:27; Ps 44:17.

³⁷ In the Greek translation by Ben Sira's grandson, this problem has been "solved" by adding *ὁ ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ* ("his angel") in 48:21b.

³⁸ See Beentjes, "Hezekiah," 84 for more detailed argumentation.

³⁹ P. C. Beentjes, "Sweet is his Memory, Like Honey to the Palate: King Josiah in Ben Sira 49,1-4," *BZ* 34 (1990) 262-66.

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tion or an application of the general statement in Sir 48:16a (“Some of them did what was right”). Ben Sira’s portrait of Josiah in no way refers to a couple of events that are very much in the spotlight in the Book of Kings. Both the finding of the Book of the Torah (2 Kgs 22:1–23:20) and the celebration of the Passover in the eighteenth year of his reign (2 Kgs 23:21–27) are completely missing. However, maybe a tiny correspondence with the biblical material has been incorporated into Sir 49:2.

Sir 49:2: For he was grieved over our perfidies, and put away the abominable gods.⁴⁰

כי נחל על משובתינו וישבת תועבות הבל

The vocabulary of this verse might have been derived from 2 Kgs 23:5, ח *hiph.* = “put away”) and 2 Kgs 23:13 (תועבה = “abomination”).

Implicit Use of 1-2 Kings by Ben Sira

Devorah Dimant offers a helpful definition of an implicit quotation:

The implicit quotation is one of the most characteristic features of the narrative works in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. It may be defined as a phrase of at least three words, which stems from a specific recognizable biblical context. When used in compositions these quotations are not introduced formally, but are interwoven into the new text.⁴¹

If we rigorously apply Dimant’s definition to Ben Sira’s use of 1-2 Kings, only two implicit quotations can be considered for such a qualification, since they contain a phrase of at least *three* words. The first one is found in Sir 16:18:

Sir 16:18: Behold, the heavens, and the heaven of heavens.

הן השמים ושמי השמים

1 Kgs 8:27: Behold, the heavens, and the heaven of heavens.

הנה השמים ושמי השמים

⁴⁰ For an account of this translation, see Beentjes, “Sweet is his Memory,” 264.

⁴¹ Dimant, “Use,” 401.

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The lists of Gasser, Eberharther, and Schechter and Taylor all refer to 1 Kgs 8:27 as the parent text, which is part of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. There is, however, just one more biblical passage that could have been the source of Sir 16:18. It is quite remarkable that the "classical inventories" do not even mention this occurrence, viz., Deut 10:14, since its context has more similarities with the Ben Sira passage than 1 Kgs 8:27.⁴² First, Deut 10:14, like Sir 16:18, has been embedded in a kind of historical retrospect. Second, more than is the case with 1 Kgs 8:27, the phrase in Deut 10:14 has the same argumentative impact as Sir 16:18.⁴³

A phrase in Sir 50:13 is traced back to 1 Kgs 8:22, not only by Gasser, Eberharther, and Schechter/Taylor, but by all Ben Sira commentators:⁴⁴

Sir 50:13: in front of the whole assembly of Israel.

נגד כל קהל ישראל

1 Kgs 8:22: in front of the whole assembly of Israel.

נגד כל קהל ישראל

No one even mentions, let alone gives serious consideration to the fact that this collocation also appears in Josh 8:35. This example brings me to the point that Ben Sira scholars should give all the information available before making a decision which biblical passage is to be preferred as the parent text! To be sure, the context of 1 Kgs 8:22 is more suited to that of Sir 50:13 than is Josh 8:35. But it is a matter of principle to have all the data at one's disposal.

There are some Ben Sira passages that, though strictly speaking they do not fulfill Dimant's definition that it must be a phrase of at least three words, nevertheless should be considered an implicit quotation. An example occurs in the final colon of chap. 47.⁴⁵

Sir 47:25: And they lent themselves to every evil.

ולכל רעה התמ[כר]

⁴² Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 16; Gasser, *Bedeutung*, 216; Eberharther, *Kanon*, 15.

⁴³ Compare the observation of Dimant, "Use," 408: "implicit quotation is placed in a crucial point of the argument."

⁴⁴ Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 24; Gasser, *Bedeutung*, 216; Eberharther, *Kanon*, 15.

⁴⁵ This colon is numbered Sir 47:24b by Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira*, 85, whereas it is called Sir 47:25a by F. V. Reiterer, *Zählsynopse zum Buch Ben Sira* (Fontes et Subsidia 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003) 232.

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It is the infrequency of the verb *מכר* *hithp.* (“sell oneself, lend oneself”) in the Hebrew Bible that makes it very probable to assume a direct link to the Books of Kings. Out of four occurrences in the Hebrew Bible, the verb *מכר* *hithp.*, in the first place, is found three times in the Book of Kings (1 Kgs 21:20, 25; 2 Kgs 17:17). Secondly, an important additional argument would be that it has a similar context (“sin”).⁴⁶

Another possible example is in Sir 30:13:

Sir 30:13: Discipline your son, make heavy his yoke.

יסר בנך והכבד עולו

In the Hebrew Bible, the combination of *כבד* *hiph.* (“make heavy”) and *עול* (“yoke”) is quite rare. It occurs only in 1 Kgs 12:10, 14 (// 2 Chr 10:10, 14), and in Isa 47:6. Because of a similar context, 1 Kgs 12:10, 14 should be preferred here as the source of Sir 30:13. A complementary argument might be that Sir 30:13 is placed at a crucial point, viz., at the very end of a section (Sir 29:21–30:13). And it is a characteristic feature by Ben Sira more than once to conclude a section with a quotation from the Hebrew Bible.⁴⁷

Conclusion

Correspondences and parallels between the Book of Ben Sira and the Book of Kings cannot be fully explained by simply cataloguing OT quotations that the Jerusalem sage probably used in his text. Several times it appeared to be important to investigate which *new* context Ben Sira has created with the help of *traditional* material. Then it comes to light that this author did much more than just re-use OT texts.

With this contribution I wish to congratulate Alexander Di Lella, a scholar who has brought about a real upturn in the study of Ben Sira and whom I have met several times in pleasant circumstances.

⁴⁶ The fourth occurrence of the verb *מכר* *hithp.* is in Deut 28:68, where it has a different meaning: “offer oneself for sale, as a slave.” The parallel of Sir 47:24b/25a and 1-2 Kings is the *only parallel* between these books that is mentioned by Snaith, “Biblical Quotations,” 7-8.

⁴⁷ This stylistic feature also appears, for instance, in Sir 5:8 (Prov 11:4), Sir 43:30 (Isa 40:31), and Sir 45:22 (Num 18:20).

Ben Sira and the Prophets

LEO G. PERDUE

The paraphrases and echoes of prophetic texts in Ben Sira have long been recognized and investigated in considerable detail.¹ This use of prophetic material is a new phenomenon in existing wisdom texts; even Prov 1:20-33 is a sapiential diatribe by Woman Wisdom as teacher, and not a prophetic one in which Wisdom is personified as a prophet.

¹ This essay is dedicated to Professor Alexander A. Di Lella, whose scholarship on the Book of Ben Sira has been heralded as among the most important on Israelite wisdom literature. He indeed is the personification of the ideal sage described by Ben Sira in 38:34-39:11. For a substantial bibliography on Ben Sira, see Friedrich V. Reiterer, "Review of Recent Research on the Book of Ben Sira (1980-1996)," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference* (ed. Pancratius C. Beentjes; BZAW 255; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 23-60. On Ben Sira's relationship to the prophets, see the detailed study of Helge Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter* (WUNT 2/6; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1980) 177-270; Rudolf Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, hebräisch und deutsch* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906); Walter Baumgartner, "Die literarischen Gattungen in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach," ZAW 34 (1914) 161-98, esp. 186-87; Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (2 vols.; London: SCM, 1974) 1.134-38; Otto Rickenbacher, *Weisheitsperikopen bei Ben Sira* (OBO 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973) 169-71; Theophil Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 62-71. In his brief summary of prophetic elements in Ben Sira, Hengel (*Judaism and Hellenism*, 1.135) makes the important connection between the prophetic self-consciousness of this wise man and the gift of the spirit to the *sōpēr* (Sir 39:6).

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This development of the inspired scribe, in the tradition of the prophets, may be understood on two bases, one that is external to the Jewish tradition as well as one that is internal to it. Externally, there is the existence of, and even competition with, Hellenistic religions and their inspired oracles and diviners. Not only were the older cult of the Olympian gods and the royal cults of ruler worship rivals of Judaism in both Israel and the Diaspora; so too were the mystery religions of Isis, Serapis, Dionysus, and Cybele.² On the basis of dreams and the divine indwelling of the gods in their human vehicles, Hellenistic prophets claimed to provide revelation for both nations and individuals, so as to give direction and comfort to the living. Internally, Jewish prophecy and priestly revelation by means of Urim and Thummim (cf. Ezra 2:63; Neh 7:65) had both ended in Second Temple Judah by the time of Ben Sira. How, then, could Jewish teachers assert the veracity of what they taught, in contrast to the mantic traditions of the Hellenists?

The course of action taken by Ben Sira was to assert that the spirit of prophecy had been assumed by certain divinely selected sages whose interpretation of Torah, the supreme instrument of divine revelation for life, was inspired and therefore authoritative. Indeed, “the Torah is as dependable as a divine oracle” (Sir 33:3 [36:3 G]).

Other opponents of Ben Sira, internal to Judaism, were the Jewish mantic prophets, more commonly called the apocalyptic seers. In First and Second Temple Judaism, there was a mantic sapiential tradition in which the sage came to the knowledge of God by means of dream revelations (see Joseph in the Joseph Narrative of Genesis 37–50; the wise king Solomon in 1 Kgs 3:3–15; and Eliphaz in Job 4:12–21). This mantic

² For a discussion of mystery religions and Hellenistic miracle workers, with an extensive bibliography, see Hans-Josef Klauck, *Die religiöse Umwelt des Urchristentums 1. Stadt- und Hausreligion, Mysterienkulte, Volksglaube* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1995) 77–128. Hellenistic religions strongly impacted Judaism in Eretz Israel during the Hellenistic period in cities like Dor, Caesarea Maritima, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Banias, and Beth-Shean. For a summary of the data of the material culture, see Aryeh Asher, *Jews and Hellenistic Cities in Eretz-Israel: Relations of the Jews in Eretz-Israel with the Hellenistic Cities during the Second Temple Period (332 BCE – 70 CE)* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1990). More recent excavations, including the one at Apollonia-Arsuf, serve to expand the evidence; see *Apollonia-Arsuf. Final Report of the Excavations 1. The Persian and Hellenistic Periods* (ed. Israel Roll and Oren Tal; Tel Aviv University Monograph Series 16; Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology, 1999).

tradition stood in opposition to the more rational and empirical traditions of the scribes who composed Proverbs, Job, and Qoheleth. In the postexilic period, as witnessed by Ezra and the scribes mentioned in Ezra and Nehemiah, scribal figures came to assume the role of interpreters of law.³ These scribes, and even the critical wisdom tradition of Job and Qoheleth, disputed the authenticity of the mantic or apocalyptic seers.⁴ Apocalypticism and its claim of esoteric knowledge during the Hellenistic period may be seen in the texts of Daniel and *1 Enoch*.⁵ Like Qoheleth and Job before him, Ben Sira opposed these seers. By claiming divine inspiration, Ben Sira could legitimate as authoritative his interpretation of Scripture and the authority of his own writings. And he made it possible for other sages, who followed in his path, to assert the same position.

This essay will outline various lines of argument as to why this sage claimed divine inspiration.⁶ There is no need to summarize the refer-

³ These interpreters of the law included the *ḥākāmīm-sōpērīm* in Deuteronomy, Ezra, the sapiential composers of the three Torah psalms (1, 19B, and 119), and, of course, Ben Sira; cf. Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972).

⁴ For a discussion of Qoheleth's opposition to the mantic and the early apocalyptic sages, see my essay, "Wisdom and Apocalyptic: The Case of Qoheleth," in *Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Biblical Tradition* (ed. F. García Martínez; BETL 168; Leuven: Peeters, 2003) 231-58. See the detailed bibliography on apocalyptic cited there and in the larger collection of essays.

⁵ This means, then, that Gerhard von Rad was partly right in arguing that apocalyptic emerged from wisdom circles; see his *Old Testament Theology* (2 vols.; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1962-1965) 2.306. However, the wisdom circle from which apocalyptic came was that of the mantic sages and not those of the other two traditions of traditional and critical wisdom. See Hans-Peter Müller, "Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," in *Congress Volume Uppsala 1971* (VTSup 22; Leiden: Brill, 1972) 268-93. Müller, who suggests that this type of wisdom included Daniel, is correct in arguing that mantic wisdom is one source for the development of apocalyptic. James VanderKam ("The Prophetic-Sapiential Origins of Apocalyptic," in *A Word in Season. Essays in Honour of William McKane* [ed. J. D. Martin and P. R. Davies; JSOTSup 42; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986] 163-76) goes a step further. He argues that mantic knowledge, or divination, is found, not only in archaic wisdom, but also in certain strains of prophecy. Yet this is not classical prophecy so much as it is a type of prophecy that was strongly akin to divination. According to VanderKam, this may have been the major stimulus for the development of apocalyptic.

⁶ In another study I will point to those places where it appears that Ben Sira is contrasting the inspiration of the biblical prophets and his own inspiration with the claims of both the Hellenistic religions' oracles and Jewish apocalyptic seers.

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ences to the prophets and prophecy in Ben Sira,⁷ since this has been done before by Hengel in brief and Stadelmann in detail. However, it is important to note both places where Ben Sira either explicitly or implicitly speaks as a prophetically inspired sage (24:30-33; 39:6; cf. the grandson's prologue). This is the first line of argument, the establishment of the fact that Ben Sira claimed divine inspiration. Second, important observations will be presented about the themes mentioned by Ben Sira regarding the prophets in his encomium and the amount of space devoted to each. These observations should allow us to draw together the lines of argument into a comprehensive summary.

I. The Sage's Claim to Inspiration

a. The Prologue. The grandson of Ben Sira notes that he devoted his life to "reading the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors, and had become rather proficient in them, [and] was led to write something pertaining to *paideia* (παιδεία) and *sophia* (σοφία), so that those who became familiar with these things might make even more progress in living according to the Law." The aorist passive, "was led" (πρόήχθη) is interesting, for it likely refers to divine inspiration.⁸ The second verb the grandson uses at the start of the prologue is a perfect participle, δεδομένων ("having been given"), that refers to the teachings of the "Law and the Prophets and the others that followed them"; this participle also does not identify the one who gives these texts, thus indirectly suggesting it is God. Subsequently, even the grandson regarded both the giving of Scripture and his grandfather's composition ("was led to write") to be, in the first instance, a divine gift, and in the second, a result of divine inspiration. As we shall see, this will become all the more clear later on. Equally important is the grandson's assertion that his grandfather devoted himself to reading "the Law and the Prophets and the other books of our ancestors," indicating he had pursued the study of Scripture, including the prophetic corpus, throughout his life.

⁷ It is clear that Ben Sira "quotes" or, perhaps better said, alludes to numerous biblical texts. See, for example, John G. Snaith, "Biblical Quotations in the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus," *JTS* 18 (1967) 1-12.

⁸ Note that 2 Macc 10:1 uses the same verb in describing Yahweh's leading of Judas Maccabeus and his followers in the restoration of the temple.

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b. Sir 24:30-33. Near the end of the first collection of Ben Sira is the elegant panegyric of self-praise by Woman Wisdom who takes up residence in Israel and in the temple in Zion, is present in the ritual and offerings of its cult, and is identified with the “covenant of God Most High” (24:23). Thereafter, Ben Sira makes the transition to the second collection with references to the creation (the four rivers of paradise, interestingly with the Jordan replacing Gihon), the comparison of Wisdom’s instruction to a fifth (the Nile), mention of the Sea (likely *yām*, although no Hebrew text for this chapter now exists) and the Abyss, and a reference to the first man, followed by his own self-praise in which he describes his wisdom like the waters of creation with which Wisdom’s instruction is compared:⁹

- 24:30. Now I, like a rivulet from her stream,
 channeling the waters forth into a garden,
 31. Said to myself, “I will water my plants,
 my flower bed I will drench”;
 And suddenly, this rivulet of mine became a river,
 and this stream of mine a sea.
 32. Again will I send my teachings forth shining like the dawn,
 to spread their brightness afar off;
 33. Again will I pour out instruction *like prophecy*,
 and bequeath it to generations yet to come.

What immediately provokes attention is the couplet in 24:33, in which the sage promises to again pour out teaching *like prophecy*, and leave it to all future generations. It is clear that in this transitional text at the end of the first section of his book, Ben Sira compares (ὡς “like”) his instruction (διδασκαλία) to prophetic speech (προφητεία). This is all the more striking when one remembers the frequent antipathy between sages and prophets during the preexilic period.¹⁰ But the

⁹ The translation is primarily that of Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987). The Septuagint text is that edited by Joseph Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* (2nd revised edition; Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum. Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, 12/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980). The Hebrew text is largely that of MS B, reconstructed by Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

¹⁰ William McKane, *Prophets and Wise Men* (SBT 45; Naperville, Ill.: Allenson, 1965).

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prophets who are dead and have no true successors save for the inspired sages chosen by God no longer pose any threat. It is also the case that, due to the failure of the “false” prophets to announce the “word of Yahweh” in a truthful manner and to their being among the causes of the fall of Judah to the Babylonians, prophecy had fallen on hard times and was largely discredited (see Zech 13:3-6 in the collection of Deutero-Zechariah, chaps. 9–14, dating likely from the fifth century B.C.E.). Ben Sira sought to restore prophecy to a legitimate place in religious history (although not his contemporary present), not only by claiming that its inspiration had passed to the sage, but also by asserting that some of their unfulfilled statements awaited divine enactment, known only by the inspired sages.

In fact, this larger section on inspired wisdom (24:23-34),¹¹ compared by Ben Sira to prophecy, consists of two strophes, vv. 23-29, and vv. 30-34. Verse 22 of this chapter concludes the aretology of Woman Wisdom, expressed in the first person. This section relates also to the conception of inspired wisdom teaching. The Torah of Moses is at the center of this sapiential hymn, especially in vv. 23-29. Wisdom, the subject of the panegyric, is now identified with the Torah (v. 23). In the Hellenistic world, the Jewish Torah was understood as wisdom or philosophy. The activity of interpreting Scripture, in particular the Torah, belonged to the learned scribe (*Schriftgelehrter*). His hermeneutical activity was a combination of allusion, interpretation, haggadah, and spiritualization.

Elsewhere in his book, Ben Sira alludes to or interprets the Torah in setting forth divine instruction: the commandment concerning parents (3:1-16), the love of neighbor (27:30–28:7), and the covenant with Phinehas and David (45:23-25). Genesis 1 is followed in Sir 17:1-10, where he uses a kind of haggadic tradition in his interpretation. Ben Sira at times, in similar fashion to Philo, tends to spiritualize the texts of the Torah; in 45:3, for instance, the word of Moses replaces his stretching out the hand (Exod 7:14; 11:10).¹²

In 24:23-34, the transition, then, is from the Book of the Covenant of

¹¹ Cf. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 246-52, 255-70.

¹² There are very few actual citations of Scripture in Ben Sira, but rather numerous allusions; cf. Andreas Eberharder, *Der Kanon des Alten Testaments zur Zeit des Ben Sira auf Grund der Beziehungen des Sirachbuches zu den Schriften des A. T. dargestellt* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1911). Stadelmann sees in Sir 35:6-7 [32:6-7 G] a citation of Deut 16:16; in 45:23, a citation of Num 25:13, and in 24:23 a citation of Deut 33:4.

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the Most High God to inspired prophetic-like teaching for all who seek wisdom and for all future generations. Yet, how is there a direct word from Yahweh? Ben Sira identifies himself neither as priest nor as prophet. Rather, he sees himself in his inspired state to be “like” a prophet. Thus for Ben Sira, there was Moses and the Torah, then the priests, then the prophets, and finally the chosen sages who continued to be the vehicle of inspiration for the theocracy of the new Jerusalem.

c. *Sir 38:34c–39:8*. The second section¹³ that portrays the inspiration of Ben Sira (39:6) occurs in a strophe within the second half of the artistic panegyric to the *Schriftgelehrten* (scribes learned in writing texts and interpreting them, in particular, the Torah) in 38:34c–39:11, a text that introduces a collection of learned poems, or *Lehrgedichte*, (38:24–41:15). Stadelmann follows Rickenbacher in the ensuing analysis of the structure of this poem that consists of four strophes, each comprised of two distichs.¹⁴ The first strophe (38:34c–39:3) describes the sage’s study of past tradition, which is itself inspired and authoritative. The second (39:4–5) sets forth the activities of the ideal sage. The third (39:6–8) speaks of his own inspiration and his subsequent writing of inspired wisdom and psalms. And the fourth speaks of the fame that accrues to him due to his exceptional understanding and wisdom (39:9–11).

The third strophe in 39:6–8 is especially important, for it articulates Ben Sira’s view of the inspiration of the chosen *Schriftgelehrter*. In this third strophe, the scribal interpreter receives the divine gift of the spirit of inspiration. Inspiration does not occur as a regular feature of this scribal activity, but rather is a free gift of God based on divine choice of only certain scribes. There are, of course, conditions for the gift that include the sage’s study of wisdom, Torah, and prophecies, service to great persons including rulers, and rising early to pray. Even so, this gift of the “spirit of understanding” (πνεῦμα συνέσεως) is still given only to those to whom God has chosen to impart it (note the conditional: “if the great Lord is willing”). Wisdom, in the sense of the ability to think, is given by God to all people (16:24–18:14), but the spirit of understanding only to a selected few. This concept of the divine gift of

¹³ On *Sir 38:34c–39:8* see Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 217–46.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 221–22; cf. Rickenbacher, *Weisheitsperikopen bei Ben Sira*, 177–79.

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wisdom is frequently found in the Hebrew Bible, often associated with Joseph, Joshua, Solomon, and Daniel.¹⁵ Even Eliphaz believes he is the recipient of a supernatural revelation that has given him insight into the corruption of human nature, although his description of his dream suggests mantic revelation (Job 4:12-17). Elihu likewise teaches the concept of a divine spirit that comes in a vision of the night to a sage and provides him with a revelation (Job 32:6-20). It is especially important to note that the comparison of instruction to prophecy in Sir 24:30-33 is similar to 39:6, where it occurs in this poem on the sage in 38:34c-39:11.

39:6 If the Lord Almighty is willing,
 he [the sage] will be filled with the Spirit of understanding,
 He will pour forth his words of wisdom,
 and in prayer give praise to the Lord.

This spirit of understanding or wisdom (39:6) is thus the gift of Yahweh to the sage in a similar way that the spirit or revelatory word or insight was the divine gift to the prophets in the prophetic corpus. The gift depends on the divine will in dispensing it to those he chooses.

These two texts suggest that a polemic or *Streitgespräch* is occurring between the sage Ben Sira and the seers and prophets of both apocalypticism and the Hellenistic religions. The apocalyptic seers based their claims to esoteric knowledge on revelations from heavenly messengers and journeys into the heavens, while the prophets in Hellenistic religions also claimed divine inspiration and saw themselves at times as the vehicle for the indwelling deity who would speak through them or at least make himself known through dreams and visions.¹⁶ It is clear from these two texts that Ben Sira sees himself "like" the OT prophets.¹⁷ By implication, the others (apocalyptic seers and Hellenistic prophets) are charlatans.

According to Ben Sira, the mode of inspiration of the false diviners and prophets is that of dreams and visions, occurring in Babylonian

¹⁵ Compare Joseph (Gen 41:16, 38-39), Joshua (Deut 34:9), Solomon (1 Kgs 3:12, 28; 4:19; 5:9, 26; 10:24; 2 Chr 1:11-12); and Daniel (Dan 2:19-24, 30). See also Ps 51:8, Prov 2:6, and Job 28:20-23 (only God knows where wisdom is).

¹⁶ See David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

¹⁷ See Rickenbacher, *Weisheitsperikopen bei Ben Sira*, 170-71.

wisdom, ecstatic prophecy, and of course apocalyptic.¹⁸ In 34:1-8 (31:1-8 G) Ben Sira explicitly rejects various means for receiving inspiration, including divination (קסם), omenology (נחש), and the interpretation of dreams (חלומות). Ben Sira did not consider divination, omenology, or mantic prophecy to be authentic forms of revelation;¹⁹ in other words, their practitioners were not given divine knowledge about future events. Rather for Ben Sira, the correct mode is the indwelling of the divine spirit that leads to proper interpretation of Scripture. While Ben Sira stands squarely within the wisdom tradition of ancient Israel and early Judaism, what is new is his avowal of the gift of divine inspiration to a chosen number of sages.

But what about the heroes of Israel, including Elijah and Elisha, two prophets who belonged to the ecstatic tradition, and the apocalyptic seers who depended especially on two means of obtaining esoteric knowledge: heavenly journeys and heavenly messengers? The answer may be found in Ben Sira's description of this gift of inspiration that comes from the indwelling spirit. The wisdom of the sage is both the means of human understanding given by God to each human creature and the knowledge achieved by study of Torah and wisdom. However, authoritative wisdom and teaching come only from divinely chosen and inspired sages.

Inspired wisdom is insight into divine knowledge provided by the spirit of God (Sir 39:6-8). One may break this affirmation down into several parts. First, inspired wisdom is limited to a few, and refers to the divine knowledge given by God to a select group of sages in whom

¹⁸ On Babylonian wisdom see the texts and discussion in Müller, "Mantische Weisheit und Apokalyptik," 268-93; and Peter von der Osten-Sacken, *Die Apokalyptik in ihrem Verhältnis zu Prophetie und Weisheit* (ThEH 157; Munich: Kaiser, 1969). On ecstatic prophecy see 1 Kgs 22:17-23; Jer 1:11-14; Ezek 1:1-3:11 (and elsewhere); Amos 7:1-9; and Zechariah 1-6.

¹⁹ It is doubtful that sapiential prophecy in Egypt had this type of mantic prophecy. See Siegfried Herrmann, "Prophetie in Israel und Ägypten. Recht und Grenze eines Vergleichs," *Congress Volume Bonn 1962* (VTSup 9; Leiden: Brill, 1963) 47-65; and Hellmut Brunner, "'Die Weisen,' 'ihre Lehren' und 'Prophezeiungen' in altägyptischer Sicht," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde* 93 (1966) 29-35. They question whether there is a truly mantic aspect to Egyptian sapiential prophecy, for the writers stress rather the rational, empirical character of their knowledge. However, it is clear that special priestly revelation did belong to this religion. There is not a clear separation between Egyptian wisdom and priestly tradition.

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the divine spirit dwells and whose interpretation of the Torah is true and therefore authoritative. It is the “spirit of understanding” (πνεῦμα συνέσεως). This has to do with the divine knowledge or insight given to the sage by Yahweh. It is not ecstatic or mantic inspiration. Second, the inspired scribe will “pour forth words of wisdom of his own” (39:6), meaning that his interpretations of the Torah and his own teachings, both oral and written, are true and authentic. The metaphor “to pour forth” in Ben Sira means to speak or write wisdom (18:29; 39:6; 50:27; cf. 24:30-31), and reflects the imagery of creation and paradise mentioned in chap. 24 and perhaps even alludes metaphorically to the sacred streams of Hellenistic oracles.²⁰ Third, the Lord “directs his counsel and knowledge” (βουλήν καὶ ἐπιστήμην), typical terms in the translation of the Septuagint for sapiential wisdom. Yet the teachings of the inspired scribe command obedience. Thus, Ben Sira does not simply gain insight from the sages of the past or even from his own experience, but also is the recipient of divine “inspiration” by means of divine election. Fourth, the sage “meditates on his [i.e., the Lord’s] mysteries (ἀποκρύφους, not incidentally the term for revelation or apocalyptic knowledge),” that are revealed by God only to a chosen few. In this meditation, legitimate insight is obtained that may then be transmitted through teaching. Fifth, the sage will “show what he has learned” (παιδείαν διδασκαλίας αὐτοῦ), i.e., will demonstrate his inspired wisdom by expressions of wisdom especially in his pedagogy. It is not secret knowledge revealed only to a few (the seer and his disciples). And sixth, the sage will “glory in the Torah of the covenant of the Lord” (39:8), demonstrating a direct relationship between sapiential knowledge that is inspired and the Torah with its correct interpretation.

Thus, the two sources of knowledge are Torah and Wisdom, but the ability to interpret them authoritatively results from God-given inspiration. What Ben Sira teaches and the praise that he utters are themselves inspired words worthy of being regarded as authoritative teaching and, in the hymns he writes, authentic adoration of God.²¹ The teaching consists of instructions, sayings, poems, and the *encomium* he crafts, while the praise likely refers to either wisdom

²⁰ Other metaphors for inspiration are found in 1 Kgs 9:16, Jer 20:9, and Job 32:18-20.

²¹ This may refer to Torah psalms and to wisdom psalms that appeared late, in the Second Temple period of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.

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psalms or hymns for public worship. In the latter case, one should note that the sage's writings include some of his own prayers (22:27–23:4; 36:1–22; 51:1–12) and hymns (1:1–10; 4:11–19; 16:24–17:14; 24:1–34; 39:12–35; 42:15–43:33). Furthermore, in his teachings he makes reference to prayers (7:14; 21:2; 28:1–2) and hymns (15:9–10; 47:8–10; 50:18–19). For Ben Sira, it is the sage who offers praise that the Lord will cause to prosper (15:10). By contrast, praise is not appropriate for a sinner, since it has not been occasioned by God (15:9).

2. The Prophets in the Praise of the Hasidim

a. Introduction to the encomium (44:1–7). The most important text in this third major section (or encomium) pertaining to prophecy is found in the introduction to the “praise of the pious,” “our ancestors” in 44:1–7 (NRSV):

- 44:1. Let us now sing the praises of famous men,
our ancestors in their generations.
2. The Lord apportioned to them great glory,
his majesty from the beginning.
3. There were those who ruled in their kingdoms,
and made a name for themselves by their valor;
those who gave counsel because they were intelligent;
those who spoke in *prophetic oracles*;
4. those who led the people by their counsels
and by their knowledge of the people's lore;
they were wise in their words of instruction;
5. those who composed musical tunes,
or put verses in writing;
6. rich men endowed with resources
living peacefully in their homes—
7. all these were honored in their generations,
and were the pride of their times.

It should not be overlooked that Ben Sira himself could be described with many of the same accolades, a fact that was probably intentional in his writing. He too provided counsel, issued words of instruction, wrote hymns, spoke prophetic oracles (or at least knew these oracles

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from the tradition and claimed a similar inspiration to the prophets), and was likely rather wealthy. In 44:3d, the prophets mentioned (along with kings, counselors, teachers and sages, and psalmists) are undoubtedly the OT prophets. Interestingly enough, the priests, who are described later in the specific portraits of Phinehas and Simon, are not mentioned in this introduction.

Following this general introduction, several of the ancestors are described as “prophets.”²² In the first section of this encomium, Ben Sira speaks of those great men of the Torah (44:16–45:26), while in the second he turns his attention to the prophets (46:1–49:12), including both the Former (46:1–48:16) and the Latter (48:17–49:12) Prophets.²³ It is no coincidence that the Torah and the Prophets are the two fixed sections of the canon in Ben Sira’s day.²⁴

b. Joshua (46:1–8). It is interesting to note that in Ben Sira’s brief description of Moses in 44:23f–45:5, he is described, not as a prophet, but as a miracle worker, a giver of commandments, a teacher, and the one chosen from all of humankind to see and hear God “face to face” (45:5 G). This privilege of revelation placed him above the apocalyptic seers and Hellenistic prophets who claimed a direct encounter with the divine. For Ben Sira, only Moses received this direct revelation, seeing and hearing God while standing in his presence. However, at the beginning of the portrait of Joshua, he is depicted as the “successor” (Greek) or “servant” (Hebrew) of Moses in the prophetic office (משרת משה בנבואה, 46:1b). Moses, of course, is portrayed in Deuteronomy as a prophet “whom the Lord knew face to face” (cf. Deut. 34:10). While the Torah describes Joshua as the servant²⁵ of Moses who succeeded him following his death, it does not describe him as a successor in the prophetic office (as does Sir 46:1 G), even though he is the one who was filled with “the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him” (Deut 34:9). This suggests that Ben Sira saw the

²² These are discussed in detail by Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 188–216.

²³ Compare the grandson’s prologue that describes Ben Sira as one who studied the Law, the Prophets, and the other writings.

²⁴ Cf. A. Goshen-Gottstein, “Ben Sira’s Praise of the Fathers: A Canon-Conscious Reading,” in *Ben Sira’s God* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 235–67.

²⁵ Cf. Exod 33:11; Josh 1:1. Elsewhere prophets, among other titles, are called “servants” of Yahweh (e.g., 2 Kgs 9:7).

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prophets as standing in a line of succession going back to the one he considered to be the first prophet, Moses, who also was a teacher, the giver of the law who stood in the divine presence, the one who saw and heard God's revelation, and the worker of miracles.

c. Samuel (46:13-20). Standing between Joshua and Samuel in the list of pious ancestors are the judges (46:11-12), although there is no reference to their possessing any prophetic role or activity or even as being the recipients of the divine spirit, an odd omission due to the emphasis placed on the role of the spirit in the traditions of the judges. However, the section on Samuel is a comparatively lengthy text that deals with this example of a "former prophet" who shares many of the attributes of Moses.

- 46:13 Honored among people, dear to his Maker (G),
pledged in a vow from his mother's womb (הַמְשׁוּאֵל מִבֶּטֶן אִמּוֹ),²⁶
as one consecrated (נָזִיר)²⁷ to the Lord in the prophetic office
(בְּנִבְיָאָה),²⁸
was Samuel, the judge who offered sacrifice.
At God's word he established the kingdom,
and he anointed princes to rule the people.
14. By the law of the Lord he judged the assembled folk (G),
and he made the rounds of the settlements of Jacob.
15. As a trustworthy seer (חֹזֶה) he was sought out
and his message proved him a true prophet (רִיָּאָה) (G).²⁹
16. He too called upon God
when he was hard pressed, with enemies on every side,
and offered up a suckling lamb.

²⁶ On the basis of a contrived etymology, Samuel's name, שְׁמוּאֵל, is here given the explanation of one who was "called from his mother's womb" (cf. 1 Sam 1:20). This compares to Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), whom Yahweh consecrated to be a prophet even before he had formed him in the womb.

²⁷ This term means "consecrated" for sacred office, especially as a Nazirite (Num. 6:2-21). Samuel was consecrated as a Nazirite (1 Sam 1:11, 22).

²⁸ The word נְבִיָּאָה is a late Hebrew term that refers to "prophecy" (Neh 6:12; 2 Chr 9:29; 15:8).

²⁹ In 46:15 Ben Sira uses the two common terms for "seer" (חֹזֶה, רִיָּאָה), though for the second word Hebrew MS B erroneously has רִיעָה ("shepherd").

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Then the Lord thundered from heaven,
 and the tremendous blast of his voice resounded;
 He brought low the rulers of the enemy
 and destroyed all the lords of the Philistines.
 When Samuel approached the end of his life,
 he testified before the Lord and his anointed prince,
 “No bribe or secret gift have I taken from anyone!”
 and no one could gainsay him.
 20. Even after his death his guidance was sought;
 he made known to the king his fate
 and from the grave he raised his voice
 as a prophet, to put an end to wickedness.

This vignette concerning Samuel is largely drawn from the Samuel story in 1 Samuel that, in its final form, presents him as a prophet, a Nazirite, a priest, a judge who is both a military leader and an arbiter, and an intercessor. However, the major emphasis of Ben Sira's portrayal of Samuel is his role as a prophet. This reference to his prophetic role (נְבוֹאָה) places him in the line of Moses. Thus, he continues the tradition that is so important for Ben Sira's understanding of the prophets. There is an authentic procession of successors of true prophets, until the end of prophecy in the postexilic period. Thereafter, the sages chosen by Yahweh take on this prophetic role.

Among the prophetic activities of Samuel mentioned by Ben Sira are the following. First, according to 46:13 he assumes the prophetic role of anointing rulers (וַיִּמְשַׁח נְגִידִים) over the people.³⁰ The plural indicates that Samuel anointed the first two kings of Israel, Saul and David. Second, Ben Sira uses the two terms for “seer” in speaking of Samuel (46:15). He borrows these from the Deuteronomistic tradition, but does

³⁰ Prophets who consecrated kings included Samuel, who anointed both Saul (1 Sam 9:16) and David (1 Sam 16:13). This action, after the establishment of the Davidic dynasty, was institutionalized as a part of the ritual of enthronement of successors, although it does appear to have had the potential of serving as a politically motivated act in choosing the successor. The northern prophets continued the practice of anointing rulers and participating in selecting kings not of a familial dynasty, leading to political turmoil (see 1 Kgs 19:15-16). Indeed, the ritual of anointing, that indicated divine choice, gave some of the prophets enormous political power. See Judg 9:15; 1 Sam 9:16; 15:1; 2 Sam 2:4, 7; 5:3, 17; 1 Kgs 1:45; 5:15; 19:6, 15; and 1 Chr 11:3.

not seem to differentiate them from the prophets. In his introduction to the pious ancestors, he had already mentioned that there were among them “seers,” or “those who saw all things in prophecy” (44:3d, וְחֹזֵי כָּל בְּנֵי־אֲדָמָה). Ben Sira connects this older form of prophecy with those who were prophets of the word, although this had already been achieved in the inherited tradition. Ben Sira also made no distinction between the two. Third, the uncorrupted Hebrew half-line in 46:15b uses the term “trustworthy” (נֶאֱמָן; cf. 1 Sam 3:20) to describe his prophetic “word” (דְּבַר), evoking the idea that he spoke truthfully, in an implied contrast to false prophets past and present. Fourth, the interesting comment follows that Samuel will take no payment for his prophecies (46:19), a probable disapproval of Hellenistic oracular prophets who made a handsome income for their temples and, if unattached, survived by selling their predictions. Finally, Ben Sira refers to the prophecy of Samuel foretelling from the grave the coming death of Saul (Sir 46:20; 1 Sam 28:19). This ability to foretell the future, even when conjured up after death, is important, for it is especially the ability claimed by the Greek prophets to know and declare the fate of people and events, even by oracles delivered from the grave. Furthermore, the Greeks had their chthonic heroes and deities who were a source of inspiration for oracles. Thus, Ben Sira argues it is the Hebrew prophets who possessed this divine talent (cf. the mentioning of the Minor Prophets in 49:10), and those prophecies of the distant past yet to be fulfilled were known and interpreted by inspired scribes. Ben Sira claims that even in death Samuel uttered his voice in prophecy to “blot out the wickedness of the people.” This role of the prophet as intercessor was important in the description of this sacred office throughout the biblical texts.

d. Nathan (47:1). The brief reference to Nathan who prophesied in the time of David serves as an introduction to this king: “After him came Nathan who served in the presence of David.” Why this reference to a prophet who was involved in the establishment and continuity of the dynasty is so truncated is not easy to surmise, except that the obvious subterfuge involving Bathsheba and him to obtain the crown for Solomon (1 Kgs 1:11-14) may have been too embarrassing to mention.

It is notable that, except for the brief reference to Nathan who provides a transition from Samuel to David, there is no other reference to

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prophets or prophecy during the reigns of David and Solomon. This contrasts with the Deuteronomistic History's and Succession Narrative's lengthy description of Nathan, the brief mention of Gad the seer, and the story of the revolutionary prophet, Ahijah of Shiloh. Thus, the judgment against David for having Uriah murdered in battle and taking his widow Bathsheba as his wife (2 Sam 12:1-14) is missing, as are the references to Nathan's participation in the establishment of the dynasty (2 Sam 7:1-17) and the court intrigue involving Solomon's appropriation of the throne that included his prophetic anointing (1 Kgs 1:32-39). Also missing are the references to the prophet Ahijah who, in rejecting Solomon's folly with foreign wives, appointed Jeroboam I to rule over the Northern Kingdom (1 Kgs 11:29-31), an action that resulted in the separation of the northern tribes from the kingdom of David. The sin of David and the loss of the northern tribes are not mentioned by Ben Sira, who does, however, blame Jeroboam for beginning the iniquity that would result in the captivity of the northern exiles (Sir 47:23-25).

Ben Sira's glossing over the shortcomings of David and Solomon and his extolling of Hezekiah and Josiah, while condemning the other rulers for abandoning the Torah (Sir 49:4), are reflective of a sage deeply devoted to the Davidic monarchy and to the importance of the Torah and comparable to the Chronicler. However, it is true that the Davidic dynasty played no part in Ben Sira's vision of the restored community in residence at Zion. The office of the high priest had replaced that of the monarchy in prominence and leadership (Sir 45:25).

e. Elijah (48:1-11). The next important prophet for Ben Sira is Elijah.

- 48:1 Till like a fire there appeared the prophet,
whose words were as a flaming furnace.
2. Their staff of bread he shattered,
in his zeal he reduced them to straits;
3. By God's word he shut up the heavens,
and three times brought down fire.
4. How awesome are you, Elijah!
Whose glory is equal to yours?
5. You brought a dead child back to life
from the netherworld, by the will of the Lord.
6. You sent kings down to destruction,
and nobles, from their beds of sickness.

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7. You heard threats at Sinai;
at Horeb avenging judgments.
8. You anointed the bearer of these punishments,
the prophet to succeed to your place.
9. You were taken aloft in a whirlwind,
by fiery captors heavenward.
10. You are destined, it is written, in time to come
to put an end to wrath before the day of the Lord,
to turn back the hearts of parents toward their children,
and to reestablish the tribes of Israel.
11. Blessed is he who shall have seen you before he dies!
[for we too shall certainly live (G¹).]

Fire plays an important metaphorical role in this description. In the beginning (48:1), the words (דבריו) of the prophet (נביא) are like a “burning oven,” suggestive of judgment (Deut 9:3; Ps 21:10; Mal 3:19).³¹ This imagery of fire also describes Elijah as a “prophet like fire” (נביא כשש). This metaphor continues in the prophetic “word” (דבר) calling down fire some three times from heaven, echoing the burning of the wood of the sacrifice, the sacrifice itself, and the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (48:3).³² The final reference to fire is the description of the heavenward journey of Elijah who was taken up by a “whirlwind” and by “captors of fi[re?]” (48:9; cf. 2 Kgs 2:1, 11). The heavenly journey of this prophet, taken from the tradition, becomes an apocalyptic image in the writings of later seers who speak of Elijah’s ascent and return with esoteric knowledge. In this encomium, it is Elijah, a prophetic predecessor of the inspired scribe Ben Sira, who takes the heavenly journey, but does not return with a special revelation for his followers.

Finally, Elijah anoints prophets to succeed him, a point of significance in Ben Sira, who once again stresses the continuity of the prophetic office that would eventually merge into the office of the scribal interpreter of Scripture (cf. 48:8). His selection of Elisha as his

³¹ Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter*, 197. On Ben Sira’s portrayal of Elijah and Elisha (48:1-15d) see Ralph Hildesheim, *Bis daß ein Prophet aufstand wie Feuer* (Trierer theologische Studien 58; Trier: Paulinus, 1996) 64-124.

³² See 1 Kgs 18:38; cf. 2 Kgs 1:10, 12.

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successor is mentioned in the following description of one who is filled with his predecessor's spirit.

f. Elisha (48:12-14). The mention of Elisha occurs in 48:12-14.

48:12 When Elijah was enveloped in the whirlwind,
 Elisha was filled with his spirit.
 Twice as many signs he wrought,
 and marvels with every utterance of his mouth.
 His life long he feared no one,
 nor was any able to intimidate his will.
 13. Nothing was beyond his power;
 from where he lay buried, his dead body prophesied.
 14. In life he performed wonders,
 and after death marvelous deeds.

This description of Elisha largely concentrates on the sins of the people of the northern kingdom (cf. 48:15). At the beginning of the section, what is emphasized is the miraculous power of the prophet who, filled with Elijah's spirit (cf. 2 Kgs 2:9-10, 15), performed twice as many miracles as did Elijah, and spoke marvels with his mouth (cf. the numerous miracles in 2 Kings 2-13). This twofold portion of Elijah's spirit (2 Kgs 2:9) is taken by Ben Sira to underscore the miraculous power of the prophets. Ben Sira (48:13) even takes the language of the unlimited power of Yahweh in Gen 18:14 (cf. Sir 48:4) and applies it to Elisha. His wonder-working powers were present in life, and even in death (2 Kgs 13:20-21).³³ Ben Sira lays particular emphasis on this miraculous element in the portraits of Moses, Elijah, and especially Elisha, in order to demonstrate that Israel also has its wonder-working prophets in similar fashion to the Hellenistic wonder-workers active in his own period. But more importantly, Israel's miracle workers, in contrast to the Hellenistic ones, are prophets who are authentic.

g. Isaiah (48:20d-25). In the course of the description of Hezekiah, Ben Sira mentions Isaiah.

³³ Gerhard von Rad is correct in his assessment that Ben Sira sees the prophets especially as "wonder-workers"; see his *Wisdom in Israel* (London: SCM, 1972) 258, n. 25.

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- 48:20d And he saved them through Isaiah.
 21. God struck the camp of the Assyrians,
 and routed them with a plague.
 22. For Hezekiah did what was right,
 and held fast to the paths of David,
 As ordered by the illustrious prophet (G)
 Isaiah, who saw the truth in visions. (G)
 23. In his lifetime he turned back the sun (G)
 and prolonged the life of the king. (G)
 24. By his dauntless spirit he looked into the future
 and consoled the mourners of Zion;
 25. He foretold what should be till the end of time,
 hidden things that were yet to be fulfilled.

The deliverance of Jerusalem from the Assyrians under Sennacherib is attributed to “the hand of Isaiah” (as 48:20d says literally), who thus performs a great miraculous feat. He appears to be connected loosely with the Lord’s destruction of the Assyrians by his angel (2 Kgs 19:15-35; cf. Isa 37:21-38). It is noteworthy that of the words and deeds of Isaiah, Ben Sira not only tells of the deliverance of Hezekiah and Jerusalem from the Assyrians through the “hand of Isaiah,” but also of the backward movement of the sun in order to lengthen King Hezekiah’s life (2 Kgs 20:6-11; cf. Isa 38:5-8) and the foretelling of the future that was yet hidden (i.e., what is in Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah). Once more the miraculous and the ability to foretell the future, even things that are hidden, demonstrate that Israel’s great prophets of old had the same kind of foreknowledge attributed to Hellenistic prophets, the powers of the Hellenistic miracle workers, and the knowledge even of hidden things as ascribed to Jewish apocalyptic seers. But Israel’s ancient prophets were the ones filled with God’s spirit, in contrast to those who were religious frauds.

h. Jeremiah (49:7). Ben Sira’s *encomium* includes a surprisingly brief description of this major prophet.

- 49:7 As Jeremiah had foretold; for they had mistreated him
 who even in the womb had been made a prophet,
 to root out, pull down, and destroy,
 and then to build and to plant.

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The one prophetic gift of Jeremiah, underscored by Ben Sira, is the ability to foretell the future, in this case the destruction of the city of Jerusalem (49:6). Jeremiah's ability to foresee coming events demonstrates that as one of Israel's prophets he had the sort of foreknowledge claimed by Hellenistic prophets.

i. Ezekiel (49:8). Immediately after Jeremiah comes Ben Sira's reference to Ezekiel.

49:8 Ezekiel beheld the vision,
and described the different creatures of the chariot throne.

The one activity of Ezekiel mentioned here was his ability to see the vision shown him by God and then to describe the chariot throne and its different creatures. This echoes the references to Enoch (44:16; 49:14), who was taken up from the earth, and to Elijah (48:9), who was taken up into the heavens in a chariot of fire. Ezekiel, however, only beheld a vision of God's chariot throne. The first two references (Enoch and Elijah) are Ben Sira's responses to the journeys of the apocalyptic seers who ascended into the heavens to learn the divine mysteries, while the third (the mention of Ezekiel) pertains to his vision, as mysterious as it is. Two of Israel's ancestors ascended into heaven, but they did not return. Ezekiel has a mysterious vision of the "chariot throne," but does not use it to journey into the heavens to witness divine secrets. Ben Sira claims no such heavenly journey and has no visions, but instead asserts he is filled by the divine spirit that gives him the ability to prophesy, interpret the Torah, and write sacred texts (24:32-33; 39:6-8).

j. The Twelve (49:10). Following a brief reference to Job comes the mention of the Twelve Prophets.

49:10 Then too, the Twelve Prophets—
may their bones flourish with new life where they lie!—
Gave renewed strength to Jacob
and saved him with steadfast hope.

The miraculous power of the Twelve is intimated in Ben Sira's calling upon them to issue forth new life from their bones, for in life they

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comforted the people and delivered them with hope. Even after death, Ben Sira suggests they continue to have the power to send forth life anew and to bring about their redemption (cf. his description of Samuel in 46:20).

k. Summary. Four of the former prophets (Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha), and the fifteen later prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve) are mentioned in this encomium. What is interesting in Ben Sira is the comparatively limited space given to the Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) and especially to the twelve Minor Prophets, in contrast to the rather ample space given to three of the former ones. Isaiah is portrayed in a little over five verses, with the first two and the fourth devoted mainly to King Hezekiah, Jeremiah in one verse, and Ezekiel in one. The entire group of twelve Minor Prophets collectively receives only one verse. And then it is especially their miraculous powers and the ability to tell the future that are underscored, and not their words that announce judgment against nation, kings, priests, officials, and people.

The question that begs an answer is why Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha receive significantly more space in their portrayals. One cannot help but surmise that this was intentional. It was the goal of Ben Sira to contrast Israel's prophets (from whom he claimed descent) with the apocalyptic seers and the Hellenistic prophets and miracle workers. The ability to foretell the future and the miraculous deeds of the prophets of Israel and Judah are especially important. The three earlier Israelite prophets were more involved in prediction and the miraculous, speaking even from the dead and performing miracles. They presented Ben Sira with Israelite prophets who also possessed similar powers and performed miraculous actions comparable to the claims of the Hellenistic prophets and wonder-workers. And these former prophets are especially able, like the Hellenistic prophets and the apocalyptic seers, to foretell the future.

Conclusions

By way of summary, we should pull together our observations about inspiration, revelation, and miracle-working that have been made. First, it is clear that Ben Sira claimed inspiration "like the prophets" of

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old, only his came from the selection of God and the indwelling of the spirit (24:33; 39:6). This means that he understood himself, and the other chosen prominent sages, to stand in succession to the long line of prophets when the prophets for at least two centuries had been discredited and when the priests no longer had the ability to obtain divine revelation through the casting of lots. Second, the prophets he praised he characterized by two major features: the ability to tell the future and the power of miracles, including the raising of the dead. Third, Elijah and Enoch ascended into heaven, but did not return with a revelation from their heavenly journeys. Even Enoch was transformed into an example of moral rectitude and not a recipient of esoteric knowledge (44:16). Fourth, Ben Sira stood in opposition to the teaching of apocalyptic and the revelation of esoteric knowledge given through angels and heavenly journeys (contrast Enoch and Daniel). True inspiration and revelation came from God's election, the indwelling of the divine spirit, and meditation on the teachings of Scripture, in particular the Torah. Revelation did not derive from heavenly journeys, esoteric knowledge, and indwelling deities. Fifth, Ben Sira claimed that, as an inspired sage, his interpretation of the Torah was authoritative and his composing of teachings and psalms was the creation of inspired literature. Sixth, Ben Sira opposed divination and the oracles of the competing Greek sanctuaries and mystery cults. What he, an inspired sage, taught and produced were the true revelations of God, because God chose him and endowed him with the divine spirit. Seventh, while Ben Sira did not claim to know the future, one of the trademarks of the Hebrew prophets was the talent of foretelling. However, Ben Sira could determine the meaning of these prophecies about the future, including those that had not yet come to pass, due to his divine inspiration. And eighth, the miracle-working power of the prophets of the past was narrated in order to compete with those wandering wonderworkers who claimed the power to heal, protect from demons, and raise the dead. Israel's prophets had such miraculous powers. However, Ben Sira does not claim to possess these powers himself. Instead, true life was to be found in studying and actualizing the Torah and the wisdom of the sages with which it is identified. This is the major difference between the prophets of old and the inspired sages of the present.

Placing Ben Sira in his Hellenistic world provides a proper back-

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ground in which to understand his teachings. In a world of many competing religions and different kinds of sacred personages, all claiming to enable the believer and doer to gain a better life and to know the will of the deities, Ben Sira sought to fashion a doctrine of inspiration and revelation centered on wisdom and the Torah. Faithful Jews were to look to their own traditions for well-being and life, and not to the false claims of apocalyptic seers, Greek oracles, and Hellenistic wonder-workers.

An Intertextual Study of Proverbs and Ben Sira

JEREMY CORLEY

At first glance the relationship of Proverbs and the Wisdom of Ben Sira appears simple: Ben Sira drew on Proverbs and adapted its insights for his own time. Thus, Alexander A. Di Lella writes: “Ben Sira’s dependence on Proverbs can be detected in almost every portion of his book,” and indeed various scholars have produced lists of parallels between Proverbs and Ben Sira.¹ Yet this observation needs to be developed and elaborated to do justice to the complexity and subtlety of the relationship. This article will consider how Ben Sira used the Book of Proverbs and modified what he selected from it. The article will also touch on other influences (Hebrew, Greek, and Egyptian) that caused Ben Sira to develop the teaching that he found in Proverbs. To facilitate the discussion, I will consider the similarities in three areas: theology, social ethics, and formal structure.

¹ The quotation is from P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 43. For lists of parallels between Proverbs and Ben Sira, see J. K. Gasser, *Die Bedeutung der Sprüche Jesu Ben Sira für die Datierung des althebräischen Spruchbuches* (BFCT 8/2-3; Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1904) 241-54; E. G. Bauckmann, “Die Proverbien und die Sprüche des Jesus Sirach,” *ZAW* 72 (1960) 33-63; T. Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 78-85; J. T. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom* (SBLMS 28; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 3-22.

Here I accept the usual dating of Ben Sira's book to the first quarter of the second century B.C.E., and I assume that he had access to the Hebrew text of Proverbs, hardly different from the form of it known today. There is other evidence for the use of Proverbs in late Second Temple Judaism, including its presence among the Qumran biblical MSS and references to it in the NT and the Book of Wisdom.²

Since the Book of Proverbs is attributed to Solomon (Prov 1:1), it is worth observing how Ben Sira portrays that king in a sixteen-line section of the Praise of the Ancestors (Sir 47:12-22). Ben Sira introduces Solomon as a "*prudent son*" (Sir 47:12 H^B), a phrase borrowed from Prov 10:5 and reminiscent of 2 Chr 2:11.³ Thereafter, Ben Sira loosely echoes 1 Kgs 5:12 [NRSV 4:32] in his celebration of Solomon's wise speech: "With *song, proverb, riddle, and epigram*, you astonished peoples" (Sir 47:17 H^B).⁴ The word "*song*" probably alludes to the "*Song of songs* that is Solomon's" (Cant 1:1), while the three terms "*proverb, riddle, and epigram*" all occur in the introduction to the Book of Proverbs: "To understand *a proverb and an epigram*, the words of the wise and their *riddles*" (Prov 1:6). Later, the description of Solomon's sin makes another reference to Proverbs. Sirach 47:19 H^B reproaches the king: "But you *gave your loins to women*," echoing the warning of Lemuel: "Do not *give your strength/wealth to women*" (Prov 31:3).

² The Qumran discoveries have yielded two Hebrew fragments of Proverbs (4Q102 and 4Q103) from ca. 50 B.C.E. to ca. 50 C.E.; cf. M. V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* (AB 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 361. In addition, 4Q271 5.i.14-15 (= CD 11:20-21) echoes Prov 15:8, though the wording is different from the MT. Proverbs is also used in the NT; for instance, Prov 3:34 is cited in Jas 4:6 and 1 Pet 5:5, while Prov 10:12 is quoted in Jas 5:20 and 1 Pet 4:8. On the substantial use of Proverbs by the Book of Wisdom, see P. W. Skehan, "The Literary Relationship of the Book of Wisdom to Earlier Wisdom Writings," in his *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* (CBQMS 1; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1971) 172-236, esp. 173-91; R. J. Clifford, "Proverbs as a Source for the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Treasures of Wisdom* (ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen; BETL 143; Leuven: Peeters, 1999) 255-63.

³ In this article I use the abbreviations H^B for the Genizah Hebrew MS B, H^Q for the Qumran Hebrew texts, H^M for the Masada Hebrew MS, G for the Greek text, and S for the Syriac. Note that all scriptural translations are mine. In biblical quotations I have italicized words shared between Proverbs and Ben Sira. Normally I have tried to avoid text-critical problems by quoting what seems to be the best witness to Ben Sira's original text, though the judgments are often uncertain.

⁴ It is unclear whether Sir 47:17 makes an allusion to Qoheleth, which purports to come from Solomon (Qoh 1:1).

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Outside Sir 47:12-22, a further indirect allusion to Solomon may be present in Sir 1:1-2: "All *wisdom* is from the Lord. . . . *Sand* of the seas . . . who can enumerate?" The opening words of Ben Sira's book seem to hint at the God-given gift of wisdom granted to Solomon (1 Kgs 5:9 [NRSV 4:29]): "And God gave Solomon very great *wisdom* and discernment, and breadth of understanding like the *sand* on the seashore."⁵

In their final form, both the Book of Proverbs and the Wisdom of Ben Sira may be classed as scribal wisdom.⁶ This categorization is clear for Ben Sira, who praises the scribal profession (Sir 39:1-11) in comparison with other occupations (Sir 38:24-34). While the Book of Proverbs was ultimately compiled by scribes (cf. Prov 25:1), parts of it seem to retain links with older tribal wisdom. Moreover, both Proverbs and Ben Sira frequently preserve the format of father-to-son instruction, by means of the address "my son" or "my child," which occurs more than twenty times in both books (e.g., Prov 1:8, 10, 15; Sir 2:1; 3:12, 17).

What is of interest is not merely the fact of Ben Sira's allusions to Proverbs, but also his method of using that book.⁷ Actually, he tends not to use extensive verbatim quotations of the earlier Scriptures, but rather to select words from key passages and play with them, often reversing them.⁸ Indeed, his allusion to a scriptural passage often

⁵ In addition, the introduction to the Praise of the Ancestors celebrates "declaimers of proverbs" (Sir 44:5 H^{BM}); the phrase (using an idiom from Job 27:1; 29:1) may be intended to include Solomon. On Ben Sira's portrayal of the wise monarch see P. C. Beentjes, "'The Countries Marvelled at You': King Solomon in Ben Sira 47:12-22," *Bijdragen* 45 (1984) 6-14; V. Peterca, "Das Porträt Salomos bei Ben Sirach (47,12-22): Ein Beitrag zu der Midraschexegese," in *Wünschet Jerusalem Frieden* (ed. M. Augustin and K. D. Schunck; BEATAJ 13; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1988) 457-63.

⁶ See M. V. Fox, "The Social Location of the Book of Proverbs," in *Texts, Temples, and Traditions* (ed. M. V. Fox et al.; FS M. Haran; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1996) 227-39, and B. G. Wright, "'Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest': Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (ed. P. C. Beentjes; BZAW 255; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 189-222.

⁷ On Ben Sira's method of using the Hebrew Bible, see P. C. Beentjes, *Jesus Sirach en Tenach* (Nieuwegein: privately published, 1981); idem, "Canon and Scripture in the Book of Ben Sira (Jesus Sirach/Ecclesiasticus)," in *Hebrew Bible, Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation, Vol. 1, Part 2* (ed. M. Saebø et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000) 591-605.

⁸ Cf. P. C. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern," *Bib* 63 (1982) 506-23. Note that later scribes often corrected Ben Sira's text to cor-

involves reworking its vocabulary and applying it to a different context. In some cases it is arguable whether Ben Sira is actually referring to a biblical text or merely employing the same wording. In the examples given below with verbal correspondences italicized, it is assumed that Ben Sira's use of the phraseology of Proverbs is intentional.⁹

Because Ben Sira's reminiscences of the Book of Proverbs are so pervasive, it will not be possible here to comment on every connection, most of which have been observed by previous scholars. Overall, Ben Sira's links with Proverbs may be divided into three categories: direct usage, with the same concepts and words; indirect resemblance, with conceptual similarity but without verbal overlap; and accidental resemblance, with verbal overlap but without conceptual similarity.¹⁰ This article will focus mainly on direct usage, involving both conceptual and verbal links.

I. Theological Similarities

Ben Sira expands the thought of Proverbs on many theological subjects. The following paragraphs will investigate these connections in four areas (wisdom; fear of God; retribution; life and death).

a. Wisdom: Since both Proverbs and Ben Sira are sapiential books, it is hardly surprising that there are strong connections in their teaching on wisdom.¹¹ Ben Sira's opening verse (Sir 1:1) restates the Israelite belief that Yhwh is the source of all wisdom (cf. Prov 2:6b and Sir

respond more exactly to the earlier Scriptures. Thus, the Genizah text of Sir 42:15b H^B is identical to Job 15:17b, whereas here the Masada text is more subtle, combining an echo of Job 15:17b with a rare verb from Deut 6:7.

⁹ Ben Sira may well have been one of the "scribes of the temple" mentioned in the decree of Antiochus III reported by Josephus (*A.J.* 12.3.3 §142); so J. Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel* (BBB 37; Bonn: Hanstein, 1971; repr. BZAW 272; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) 96. The scribal work of copying biblical manuscripts by hand would easily explain Ben Sira's detailed familiarity with scriptural phraseology, including the vocabulary of the more obscure parts of the biblical writings.

¹⁰ Middendorp (*Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras*, 82) notes an accidental resemblance in the echo of Prov 24:10 ("if you faint *on the day of adversity*") in Sir 51:10 H^B ("do not let go of me *on the day of adversity*"), where both phrases employ the same verb פָּרַח but in a different sense.

¹¹ On Ben Sira's approach to wisdom see Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel*; K. Weber, "Wisdom True and False (Sir 19,20-30)," *Bib* 77 (1996) 330-48; A. A. Di Lella, "God and

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24:3a). More particularly, the great sapiential poem in Prov 8:1-36 exerted an important influence on Ben Sira. Thus, Sir 4:12 combines echoes of Prov 8:17 and 8:35:

I love *those who love me*,
 and those who seek me early will find me (Prov 8:17 qere).
 For the one who finds me has found *life*,
 and has *obtained favor from Yhwh* (Prov 8:35 qere).
Those who love her love life,
 and those who seek her will *obtain favor from Yhwh* (Sir 4:12 H^A).

The clearest allusions to Proverbs 8 occur in Sirach 24.¹² Thus, Lady Wisdom's first-person speech in Sir 24:3-22 echoes her first-person declaration in Prov 8:4-36, with her presence at the origin of creation being affirmed in Prov 8:22-31 and Sir 24:3-6.

Yhwh *created me* at the *beginning* of his way (Prov 8:22).
 Before eternity, from the *beginning* he *created me* (Sir 24:9 G).
 When he established the *heavens* I was there,
 when he marked a circle on the surface of the *abyss* (Prov
 8:27).
 The vault of *heaven* I circled alone,
 and in the depth of the *abysses* I walked (Sir 24:5 G).

Moreover, the instruction to taste wisdom's fruit appears in both Prov 8:19 and Sir 24:19 G, while the portrayal of wisdom as a tree (Sir 24:13-17) echoes the image of wisdom as a "tree of life" in Prov 3:18. Furthermore, Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24 both warn against missing the

Wisdom in the Theology of Ben Sira: An Overview," in *Ben Sira's God* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 3-17. On the sapiential theology of Proverbs see L. G. Perdue, "Wisdom Theology and Social History in Proverbs 1-9," in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister* (ed. M. L. Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997) 78-101.

¹² Cf. P. W. Skehan, "Structures in Poems on Wisdom: Proverbs 8 and Sirach 24," *CBQ* 41 (1979) 365-79; M. Gilbert, "L'Éloge de la Sagesse (Siracide 24)," *RTL* 5 (1974) 326-48. According to the classification of Di Lella (which omits Sir 24:34 G as a gloss), "Ben Sira's poem has thirty-five lines, exactly the number in Proverbs 8"; so Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 331.

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opportunity to gain wisdom, in each case at the end of her first-person speech.

And one who *misses* me injures himself (Prov 8:36).

And those working with me will not *miss* the mark (Sir 24:22 G).

To be sure, the influences on Sirach 24 go beyond Proverbs 8 to encompass other books of the Hebrew Bible (and doubtless non-biblical material), but verbal echoes make clear the formative significance of Proverbs 8 for Sirach 24.¹³

In addition, the start of Sir 14:20–15:10 alludes to Prov 8:34.

Happy the human being listening to me [= wisdom],

to keep watch over my doors day by day,

to observe the doorposts of my *entrances* (Prov 8:34).

Happy the mortal who meditates on wisdom (Sir 14:20 H^A).

And at her *entrances* he listens (Sir 14:23 H^A).

Another allusion to Proverbs 8 occurs in the sapiential poem in Sir 6:18–37.

All of them [= wisdom's words] are *straight* for one who understands (Prov 8:9).

And not to many is she [= wisdom] *straightforward* (Sir 6:22 H^A).

Proverbs 8 is not the only chapter of the book alluded to by Ben Sira, since Sir 6:18–37 often echoes Proverbs 4. For instance, the call to attention in Sir 6:23 is reminiscent of Prov 4:10.

Listen, my son, and *receive* my words (Prov 4:10).

Listen, child, and *receive* my opinion (Sir 6:23 G).

¹³ A major difference of Sirach 24 from Proverbs 8 is Ben Sira's identification of wisdom with the Law of Moses (Sir 24:23); so Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel*, 56. Marböck also observes that wisdom's speech in Sir 24:3–22 echoes attributes of the Egyptian-Greek goddess Isis (pp. 49–54).

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The invitation not to let go of wisdom is also comparable.

Take hold of discipline; *do not let go* (Prov 4:13).
And when you have *taken hold* of her, then *do not let go* of her
(Sir 6:27 H^A).

Furthermore, both passages promise a “crown of glory” to the seeker of wisdom (Prov 4:9; Sir 6:31 H^{AQ}).

In calling his students to attend to his wisdom, Ben Sira sometimes employs other phrases that echo the Book of Proverbs. For instance, the motif of attentiveness in Sir 3:29 combines vocabulary from two passages in Proverbs.

My son, if your *heart* is *wise*,
my own heart will also *rejoice* (Prov 23:15).
... to make *your ear listen to wisdom* (Prov 2:2).
A *wise heart* will understand the proverbs of the wise,
and *an ear listening to wisdom* will *rejoice* (Sir 3:29 H^A).

Moreover, Sir 16:25 takes up wisdom’s promise to pour out a spirit of knowledge on the hearers (Prov 1:23), but adds a subtle echo of Job 28:25.

Behold, *I will pour out* to you *my spirit* (Prov 1:23).
To make a *measure* for the *wind/spirit* (Job 28:25).
I will pour out by measure my spirit (Sir 16:25 H^A).

Besides employing various images to describe what wisdom is, both Proverbs and Ben Sira describe how to become wise. In agreement with the view of Egyptian sapiential texts (cf. Ankhsheshonq 13.6; P. Insinger 13.19), Hebrew didactic writings teach that the easiest way to become wise is by associating with wise persons (cf. Tob 4:18; *m. Abot* 1:4).

One who walks with *wise persons* becomes wise (Prov 13:20 qere).
With *wise persons* take counsel (Sir 9:14 H^A).
You are to *lodge* in the midst of wise persons (Prov 15:31).
And *lodge* in my house of instruction (Sir 51:23 H^B).

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The closing twenty-three-line alphabetic poem, which describes the sage's dealings with Lady Wisdom (Sir 51:13-30), also alludes to the twenty-three-line poem in Prov 5:1-23, warning against the attractions of the loose woman.

Lest you *give* to others your *glory* (Prov 5:9).
 And to my teachers I did not *incline my ear* (Prov 5:13).
I inclined my ear a little, . . .
 and to my teacher I *give* his *glory* (Sir 51:16-17 H^Q).

These various examples on the theme of wisdom have shown Ben Sira employing many phrases from Proverbs, and often combining two different passages.

b. Fear of God: Closely related to wisdom in Ben Sira's view is the fear of God, on which subject the sage often develops thoughts found in Proverbs.¹⁴ Ben Sira's first poem on the fear of God appears in Sir 1:11-30, including a programmatic declaration that echoes two statements in Proverbs (Prov 1:7; 9:10; cf. Ps 111:10).

The *beginning of wisdom* is the *fear of Yhwh* (Prov 9:10).
 The *beginning of wisdom* is to *fear the Lord* (Sir 1:14 G).

The connection of wisdom with the fear of God appears elsewhere in both works (e.g., Prov 2:5-6; Sir 19:20). Indeed, Sir 1:27 combines echoes of Prov 15:33 and 12:22.

The *fear of Yhwh* is *instruction in wisdom*,
 and *humility* comes before glory (Prov 15:33).
 Those who practice *faithfulness* are *his desire* (Prov 12:22).
 For the *fear of the Lord* is *wisdom and instruction*,
 and *his desire* is *faithfulness and humility* (Sir 1:27 G).

Both books point out the benefits of fearing God.

¹⁴ On Ben Sira's view of the fear of God, see A. A. Di Lella, "Fear of the Lord as Wisdom: Ben Sira 1,11-30," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research*, 113-33; idem, "Fear of the Lord and Belief and Hope in the Lord amid Trials: Sirach 2:1-18," *Wisdom, You Are My Sister*, 188-204.

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The reward of humility is *fear of Yhwh*,
 wealth and *glory* and life (Prov 22:4).
 The *fear of the Lord* is *glory* and exultation,
 . . . and it gives rejoicing and joy and longevity (Sir 1:11-12 G).¹⁵
 Both works also associate old age with God-fearing virtue.
 A *crown of glory* is gray hair,
 and it is found in the way of righteousness (Prov 16:31).
 The *crown* of the aged is experience,
 and their *glory* is the fear of the Lord (Sir 25:6 G).

Furthermore, both books assert that the God-fearing person will gain a true understanding.

Evil persons will not *understand what is just*,
 but those who seek *Yhwh* will understand everything
 (Prov 28:5).
 One who fears *Yhwh* will *understand what is just* (Sir 32:16 H^B).

Hence it is advisable to choose as a friend “*one who is always reverent*” (Prov 28:14; Sir 37:12 H^{BD}).

c. Retribution: Both Proverbs and Ben Sira start from the viewpoint that much of the harm suffered by humanity is of one’s own making.

One who digs a pit will fall into it,
 and one who rolls a *stone*—on him will it return (Prov 26:27).
 One who throws a *stone* upward—on his head will it fall
 (Sir 27:25 G).
One who digs a pit will fill it with his body (Sir 27:26 S).¹⁶

¹⁵ Note that the benefits promised by wisdom in Prov 3:2, 16 [glory, length of days, and peace] are provided by the fear of God in Sir 1:11-12, 18-20.

¹⁶ Sirach 27:26 G seems to have been brought into line with Prov 26:27 by the Greek translator. On the various forms of this aphorism in the biblical tradition see I. Krammer, “‘Wer anderen eine Grube gräbt, fällt selbst hinein’: Ben Sira als Tradent eines bekannten Sprichwortes,” in *Der Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Sira* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel and I. Krammer; BZAW 270; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 239-60. On Ben Sira’s view of retribution see A. A. Di Lella, “Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom,” *CBQ* 28 (1966) 139-54, esp. 143-46; R. A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach* (SBLEJL 8; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995) 211-47.

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From these examples, Sir 27:27 G draws a general conclusion: “One who does wicked deeds—upon him will they recoil.”

For Proverbs and Ben Sira it is axiomatic that God rewards the virtuous, in line with the Deuteronomic theology of retribution.

One who sows *righteousness*—his *reward* is reliable (Prov 11:18).
Everyone who practices *righteousness*—for him there is a *reward*
(Sir 16:14 H^A).

Moreover, the righteous will find that their deepest desires are fulfilled.

He grants *the desire of righteous persons* (Prov 10:24).
He does not put an end to *the desire of a righteous person* forever
(Sir 16:13 H^A).

Thus, obedience to God brings its own reward.

One who observes the commandment *preserves himself* (Prov 19:16).
One who keeps the law *preserves himself* (Sir 32:24 H^B).¹⁷

Likewise, kindness to others benefits oneself, whereas meanness harms its practitioners.

A man of *kindness rewards* himself,
but someone *cruel* troubles his own flesh (Prov 11:17).
[Do not take counsel] with an evil man about *rewarding kindness*,
or someone *cruel* about physical well-being (Sir 37:11 H^{BD}).

Indeed, the righteous become a blessing for others.

The *memory* of a righteous person is *as a blessing* (Prov 10:7).
Let their *memory* be *as a blessing* (Sir 46:11 H^B).

However, God punishes the wicked.

And *he will render* to a *human being* according to *his deed*
(Prov 24:12).

¹⁷ See Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, 8-9. Note the textual variants in the Hebrew MSS here.

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Until *he renders* to a mortal *his deed*,
and the recompense of a *human being* according to his
devising (Sir 35:24 H^B).

Moreover, the future can produce unexpected results.

Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day *may bring forth* (Prov 27:1).
Before a stranger *do not* do anything secret,
for you do not know what its end *may bring forth*
(Sir 8:18 H^A).

Finally, the relentless quest for riches can also lead to retribution.

Wealth *will not avail on a day of wrath* (Prov 11:4).
Do not trust in deceitfully gained possessions,
for they will not avail on a day of wrath (Sir 5:8 H^A).

Hence riches are not to be sought for their own sake.

And someone hasty to become rich *will not go unpunished*
(Prov 28:20).
And someone hasty to gain increase *will not go unpunished*
(Sir 11:10 H^{AB}).

d. Life and Death: The expression “death and life” occurs in Prov 18:21, while the reverse phrase “life and death” appears three times in the Hebrew texts of Ben Sira (Sir 11:14 H^A; 15:17 H^{AB}; 37:18 H^B).

Death and life are in the power of *the tongue* (Prov 18:21).
The mind is the root of counsels;
four branches it shoots forth:
good and evil, *life and death*,
and ruling over them as a crown is *the tongue* (Sir 37:17-18
H^{D/B}).¹⁸

¹⁸ While Sir 37:18 H^D copies Prov 18:21 in the phrase “death and life,” this seems like a scribal correction of Ben Sira’s original form “life and death” (Sir 37:18 H^B G S). For the Aramaizing meaning “crown” for כִּלְיָל in Sir 37:18, compare Sir 45:8 H^B. In texts like

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In celebrating a decalogue of good things in life, Sir 40:18-27 also makes some allusions to Proverbs.¹⁹ Indeed, the format of the ten sayings in Sir 40:18-26 echoes Prov 27:3, for in each case the first colon lists two items, while the second colon mentions a third item that exceeds “*both of them*.” Some of the phraseology is also comparable to Proverbs.

For all *time* a companion is friendly,
and a *brother* is born for *adversity* (Prov 17:17).
A *brother* and a helper are for a *time* of *adversity* (Sir 40:24 G/H^B).

Because wisdom means life (Prov 8:35; Sir 4:12), Ben Sira can say that “worse than death is the life of a fool” (Sir 22:11 G).²⁰ However, when Ben Sira asserts: “Better death than a bitter life” (Sir 30:17), he may be echoing the sentiments of Job and Elijah (Job 7:15; 1 Kgs 19:4), though we may also compare other texts (e.g., Tob 3:6; Sophocles, *Ant.* 461-64).

In Sir 41:1-2 the sage observes the ambiguity of death, unwelcome to the healthy but desired by those of failing strength. It seems that Sir 41:2 combines echoes of Prov 11:7 and Isa 40:29 (though the possible double meanings of some Hebrew words makes complete understanding difficult).

At the death of a wicked human being, *hope will be lost*,
and the expectation from *strength* has been *lost* (Prov 11:7).
He gives power to the weary,
and *to one without strength* he increases *might* (Isa 40:29).
Aha to death! How good is your decree,
to one without strength and lacking *might*,
a man stumbling and bumping into everything,
with zero sight and *hope lost*! (Sir 41:2 H^{B/M}).

Sir 15:17, the mention of “life and death” alludes to the choice facing the Israelites in Deut 30:19.

¹⁹ On this passage see E. D. Reymond, “Sirach 40,18-27 as ‘*Tôb-spruch*,’” *Bib* 82 (2001) 84-92.

²⁰ Cf. A. A. Di Lella, “Sirach 22,9-15: ‘The Life of the Fool Is Worse than Death,’” in *Treasures of Wisdom*, 159-68.

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Passages like these, expressing a sage theological outlook, illustrate Ben Sira's use of phraseology and ideas from the Book of Proverbs.

II. Similarities in the Area of Social Ethics

Ben Sira also develops and sometimes modifies the thought of Proverbs in various areas of social ethics.

a. Honor and Shame: While avoidance of shame is a motive for action in Proverbs (as in ancient Egyptian wisdom instructions), this theme is more prominent in Ben Sira, perhaps under the influence of Greek culture (as seen in Theognis) and Hellenistic Egyptian teaching (as preserved in Papyrus Insinger).²¹ Whereas the references to honor and shame are generally scattered in the Book of Proverbs, Ben Sira collects his thoughts into several poems (e.g., Sir 4:20-22; 10:19-11:6; 20:21-26; 41:16-42:8; 42:9-14).

The poem on true glory in Sir 10:19-11:6 develops the thought of Prov 17:2.²²

A *prudent slave* will rule over a son who causes shame,
and in the midst of *brothers* he will divide an inheritance
(Prov 17:2).

A *prudent slave*—nobles will serve him (Sir 10:25 H^B).
Among *brothers* their head is honored,
but one who fears God is more honored than he (Sir 10:20 H^B).

In light of Prov 17:2 and Sir 10:25, the one who fears God in Sir 10:20 will include the devout and prudent slave. Furthermore, Prov 12:9 finds an echo in Sir 10:27.

²¹ On shame in Greek culture, see H. Moxnes, "Honor and Shame," in *The Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation* (ed. R. Rohrbaugh; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996) 19-40. On caution in P. Insinger and Ben Sira, see J. T. Sanders, "Ben Sira's Ethics of Caution," *HUCA* 50 (1979) 73-106. On Ben Sira's view of shame, see D. A. deSilva, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Honor, Shame, and the Maintenance of the Values of a Minority Culture," *CBQ* 58 (1996) 433-55; C. V. Camp, "Honor, Shame, and the Hermeneutics of Ben Sira's MS C," in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister*, 157-71.

²² On the poem see A. A. Di Lella, "Sirach 10:19-11:6: Textual Criticism, Poetic Analysis, and Exegesis," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* (ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1982) 157-64.

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Better a despised person who has a slave
than a boaster who lacks bread (Prov 12:9).
Better a worker who abounds in wealth
than a boaster who lacks food (Sir 10:27 H^A).²³

So important is the avoidance of shame that Ben Sira asserts: “Better someone dying than someone begging impudently” (Sir 40:28 H^M). Such a sentiment is less reminiscent of Proverbs and more akin to the statement of Ankhsheshonq 21.22: “Better death than want,” and Theognis 181-82: “It is better, dear Cyrnus, for a poor man to be dead than to live oppressed by grievous poverty.”²⁴

Using different wording, both Proverbs and Ben Sira teach that a good reputation is more valuable than material riches (Prov 22:1; Sir 41:12). Moreover, both books convey the idea that an honorable name comes to those who acquire wisdom (cf. Prov 3:16; Sir 4:13 H^A).

Wise persons will inherit glory (Prov 3:35).
A wise person of the people will inherit glory (Sir 37:26 H^D).

Indeed, one who is devoted to the study of wisdom will gain social advancement.

Have you seen a man skilled in his work?
 Before kings he will stand (Prov 22:29).
 He [= the scribe] will serve in the midst of magnates,
 and before rulers he will appear (Sir 39:4 G).

Similar phrases are also applied to the keen student (Sir 8:8 H^A) and to the physician (Sir 38:3 H^B).

b. Respect for Parents: Both Proverbs and Ben Sira restate a fundamental Israelite principle that parents should be respected.²⁵ Sirach 3:1-

²³ Whereas the final word of Sir 10:27 H^A is בָּרֶחַק (“a gift”), I correct this to מִזֶּן (“food”), following the Greek ἄρτων (“bread”); cf. Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 231.

²⁴ M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 3 (Berkeley: University of California, 1980) 176; D. E. Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry* (LCL 258; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) 201.

²⁵ See Exod 20:12; Lev 19:2; Deut 5:16; Tob 4:3-4; Mark 7:10-13; 4Q416 2.iii.15-19; Josephus, *Ap.* 2.206. Cf. R. Bohlen, *Die Ehrung der Eltern bei Ben Sira* (Trierer theologische Studien 51; Trier: Paulinus, 1991).

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16 makes allusions to Proverbs in order to develop the basic Jewish teaching from the Decalogue: “Honor your father and your mother” (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16).

The glory of sons is their *fathers* (Prov 17:6).
A man’s honor is the honor of his *father* (Sir 3:11 H^A).

While the language differs (the mention of honor comes from Exod 20:12), there is the same basic concept that no one can gain honor without showing respect to his father.

One who curses his father and his mother—
his lamp will go out in utter darkness (Prov 20:20).
And *one who curses his mother* provokes his Creator (Sir 3:16 H^A).²⁶

While Proverbs emphasizes a young man’s respect for a parent (or for a teacher *in loco parentis*), Ben Sira also refers to the son’s care of his ageing parents (Sir 3:12–15). Both Proverbs and Ben Sira elsewhere mention the blessing for obedience.

A good person leaves an *inheritance* for *children’s children*
(Prov 13:22).
With their offspring their *goodness* is sure,
and their *inheritance* is for their *children’s children*
(Sir 44:11 H^{B/S}).

c. View of Women: Since both Proverbs and Ben Sira arose in an ancient oriental society that was overwhelmingly patriarchal, the picture of women presented in the two works is clearly from a male viewpoint (cf. Prov 31:11–12; Sir 26:1–4). Whereas Proverbs presents three main types of woman (the temptress, the quarrelsome wife, and the ideal wife), Ben Sira classes women in five categories: the good wife; the mother or widow; the bad wife; the adulteress or prostitute; and the daughter.²⁷ Here we will consider Ben Sira’s five categories of women in relation to the Book of Proverbs.

²⁶ The text of Sir 3:16 varies between the Hebrew MSS and the versions; cf. Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 154.

²⁷ The classification for Proverbs comes from R. Gordis, “The Social Background of Wisdom Literature,” *HUCA* 18 (1944) 77–118, here 111. The categorization for Ben Sira

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Our discussion will begin with the good wife. The classic portrayal of the “capable wife” or “woman of worth” (אִשָּׁה חַיִּיל) in Proverbs occurs in the final acrostic poem (Prov 31:10-31).²⁸ Using the same phrase elsewhere, both Proverbs and Ben Sira consider the value of this woman from the male viewpoint.

A capable wife is the crown of her husband (Prov 12:4).

A capable wife will fatten her husband (Sir 26:2 H^C).

Another approving term is the phrase “prudent wife” (אִשָּׁה מְשַׁכֶּלֶת), which appears once in Proverbs and thrice in the surviving Hebrew MSS of Ben Sira (Prov 19:14; Sir 7:19 H^A; 25:8 H^C; 40:23 H^B).

A house and wealth are an ancestral inheritance,
but *a prudent wife* is from Yhwh (Prov 19:14).²⁹

A friend and a comrade will guide for a time,
but better than both of them is *a prudent wife* (Sir 40:23 G/H^B).

A further favorable term from the male standpoint is “good wife” (אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה).

One who has found a *wife* has found a *good thing* (Prov 18:22).

A good wife—happy is her husband (Sir 26:1 H^C).³⁰

comes from W. C. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women* (BJS 38; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982) 5. On Ben Sira's approach to women see also C. V. Camp, “Understanding a Patriarchy: Women in Second Century Jerusalem Through the Eyes of Ben Sira,” in *Women Like This: New Perspectives on Jewish Women in the Greco-Roman World* (ed. A.-J. Levine; SBLJL 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991) 1-39.

²⁸ Ben Sira's book also concludes with an acrostic poem (Sir 51:13-30), where the female figure deserving admiration is Lady Wisdom. The Greek translation of a “capable wife” is a “manly wife” (Prov 31:10; Sir 26:2).

²⁹ More similar to the thought of Prov 19:14b is Sir 26:14a S: “A gift of the Lord is a good wife.” Note that in both cases the Greek translation makes interpretative changes that tend to restrict the woman's freedom: Prov 19:14b G says: “But from God is a wife suitable to her husband,” while Sir 26:14a G reads: “A gift of the Lord is a silent wife.” Perhaps we can see here a Greek tendency to silence women in public (1 Cor 14:34-35), by contrast with the older Hebrew tradition where the public utterances of wise women often averted disaster (1 Sam 25:32-34; 2 Sam 20:16-22).

³⁰ Compare Sir 26:3; Theognis 1225. Other favorable texts speak of the wife's beauty (Prov 11:22; Sir 26:16) and her gracefulness (Prov 11:16; Sir 26:15).

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We will next consider briefly the category of mother or widow. Sirach 3:1-16 inculcates respect for both mother and father (cf. Sir 23:14), under influence from the Decalogue (Exod 20:12), Israel's sapiential traditions (Prov 1:8; 6:20), and perhaps demotic Egyptian wisdom teachings (P. Insinger 1.19-22).³¹ Both Proverbs and Ben Sira speak of God's support for the widow (Prov 15:25; Sir 35:17), but use different language.

Ancient wisdom teachers tended to give particular attention to the bad wife. While the Book of Proverbs has several aphoristic warnings about the contentious or quarrelsome wife (Prov 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15), Ben Sira has a long section notorious for its treatment of the supposed evils of bad women (25:13-26; 26:5-12; 26:19-27).

Better to *dwell* on the corner of a rooftop
than with a quarrelsome *wife* in a shared house (Prov 25:24).
I shall be pleased to *dwell* together with a lion and a snake
rather than to *dwell* with an evil *wife* (Sir 25:16 G).

Significant among admonitions in Proverbs and Ben Sira are the repeated cautions about the adulteress or prostitute. Indeed, both books convey many warnings against the allure of the loose or foreign woman, while the adulteress is also regarded as a snare.³²

And [another] *man's wife ensnares* one's precious life (Prov 6:26).
And [another] *man's wife* is considered as a deadly *snare* for those
clinging to her (Sir 26:22 S).³³

Elsewhere, a warning against prostitutes includes the reminder that they can eat up a young man's inheritance (Prov 29:3; Sir 9:6).

Do not give your strength/wealth to women (Prov 31:3).
... lest *strangers* take their fill of your power (Prov 5:10).
And *do not give your strength/wealth* to *strangers* (Sir 26:19 G).

³¹ Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, 81-82.

³² See Prov 2:16-19; 5:1-23; 6:23-7:27; 9:13-18; Sir 9:1-9; 23:22-26; 26:19-22.

³³ For the understanding "deadly snare" instead of "tower of death" here, see P. W. Skehan, "Tower of Death or Deadly Snare? (Sir 26:22)," in his *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, 127. For the view that Sir 26:19-27 derives from Ben Sira, see Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 351.

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Moreover, wisdom writers warn that female beauty can captivate the male student.

Do not desire her [= a foreign woman's] *beauty* in your heart
(Prov 6:25).
Do not fall through a woman's *beauty*,
and *do not desire* what is hers (Sir 25:21 H^C).

According to the male sages, such desire can lead a man into ruin.

For *on account of a woman* prostitute, [one may reach poverty] as
far as a piece of bread (Prov 6:26).³⁴
On account of a woman, many have been ruined (Sir 9:8 H^A).

The description of the adulteress in Sir 23:22-24 alludes to Prov 2:17 (cf. Prov 5:14).

. . . who *abandons* the mate of her youth,
and forgets the covenant of her God (Prov 2:17).
So also is a wife *abandoning* her husband . . .
For first she has disobeyed the law of the Most High (Sir 23:22-23 G).

These allusions show the concern of the authors of Proverbs and Ben Sira to warn their male students against the moral dangers involved in prostitution and adultery.

The last category of women for consideration here is daughters. While daughters do not play a major role in Proverbs (only Prov 30:15 and 31:29), they are important in Ben Sira (e.g., Sir 7:24-25 and 42:9-14).

One who *begets* a fool does so to his sorrow,
and the *father* of an idiot will not rejoice (Prov 17:21).
A *father's* shame is in *begetting* an undisciplined person,
but a daughter is born to his loss (Sir 22:3).³⁵

³⁴ The exact interpretation of Prov 6:26a is unclear. Note also that whereas Prov 6:25-26 cautions against dealings with the foreign woman or prostitute, Sir 9:8 and 25:21 offer more general warnings of the effects of female beauty on men.

³⁵ On Sir 22:3 see Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women*, 134-38. For the reversal of Sir 22:3 in Judith, see A. A. Di Lella, "Women in the Wisdom of Ben Sira and the Book of

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To the observation of Proverbs about the foolish son, Ben Sira adds a comment on the loss incurred in the birth of a daughter, whether financial loss or the parental worry about disgrace (Sir 42:9-14).

d. Friendship: Among biblical books, the most substantial teaching on friendship occurs in Proverbs and Ben Sira. Whereas the aphorisms on the topic are scattered in Proverbs, Ben Sira collects his sayings into several poems on friendship (Sir 6:5-17; 9:10-16; 13:15-23; 19:13-17; 22:19-26; 27:16-21; 37:1-6).³⁶

Sirach 6:5-17 makes a threefold contrast between a disloyal companion (6:8-10) and a faithful friend (6:14-16). Whereas “there is a friend” (6:8-10) who will abandon you, there is also a “faithful friend” (6:14-16). Here Ben Sira’s phrases are borrowed from two aphorisms in the Book of Proverbs, but interestingly he reverses the sense of each. Whereas Prov 18:24 employs the phrase “there is a friend” in a positive sense (some friends may become closer than brothers), Sir 6:8-10 uses the same phrase in a negative sense (some friends disappear in tough times).

There is a friend sticking closer than a brother (Prov 18:24).

There is a friend, a table partner,

but he will not be found on a day of adversity (Sir 6:10 H^A).

Moreover, while Prov 20:6 employs the phrase “a man of faithfulness” in a rather negative context, to warn of the infrequency of encountering such a person, Sir 6:14-16 uses the same phrase positively, to celebrate the valued presence of a faithful friend.

A man of *faithfulness* who can *find*? (Prov 20:6).

A *faithful* friend is a strong shelter,

and the one who *finds* him *has found* wealth (Sir 6:14 H^A).³⁷

Judith: A Study in Contrasts and Reversals,” in *Congress Volume: Paris, 1992* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 61; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 39-52.

³⁶ Cf. F. V. Reiterer (ed.), *Freundschaft bei Ben Sira* (BZAW 244; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996); J. Corley, *Ben Sira’s Teaching on Friendship* (BJS 316; Providence, RI: Brown University, 2002).

³⁷ In Sir 6:14 I follow G in reading “shelter” (σκέπη, representing the Hebrew אוהל “tent”), where H^A repeats the word אֹרֶחַ (“friend”); cf. Skehan and Di Lella, *The*

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Thus, we see that besides inverting the phraseology of his allusions to earlier biblical texts, Ben Sira likes sometimes to reverse the meaning by setting a phrase in the opposite context.

One of the main obstacles to friendship is the unauthorized disclosure of a friend's secrets. Accordingly, both Proverbs and Ben Sira offer warnings against disloyal individuals (Prov 11:13; 20:19; 25:9; Sir 6:9; 22:22; 27:16-17), in contrast to faithful persons.³⁸

One who reveals a secret goes about as a talebearer,
but someone *faithful* in spirit conceals a matter (Prov 11:13).
The one who reveals secrets has destroyed *faithfulness*,
and will not find a friend for himself (Sir 27:16 G).

In more general terms, both Proverbs and Ben Sira express a similar caution about befriending the wicked.

Do not be envious of the *wicked*;
for there will *not* be a future for the evil person (Prov 24:19-20).
Do not be envious of a *wicked* man,
for you do *not* know when his day [= for dying] will be (Sir 9:11 H^A).

However, Ben Sira parts company with Proverbs in his admonition: "Give to someone good and refuse someone evil" (Sir 12:4 H^A; contrast Prov 25:21), which is more akin to Theognis 108: "You cannot get anything good in return by doing good to the base."³⁹

Both Hebrew books also warn that unlike the poor, the rich tend to gain an abundance of friends.

But the friends of a *rich person* are *many* (Prov 14:20).
A *rich person* speaks and his helpers are *many* (Sir 13:22 H^A).⁴⁰

Wisdom of Ben Sira, 187. In Sir 6:5-17, the passages from Prov 18:24 and 20:6 provide a kind of framework that Ben Sira fills out by means of observations found in Egyptian and Greek texts; cf. Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship*, 50-51, 58; Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, 30-31, 70-71.

³⁸ Note that Sir 27:19-20 applies to the context of friendship the images of the bird and the gazelle from the different setting of financial guarantees in Prov 6:5.

³⁹ Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry*, 189.

⁴⁰ The next verse (Sir 13:23) combines the thought of Prov 19:7 with insights from Theognis 621-22 and 929-30, while Sir 12:9 draws broadly on the observation of Prov 19:4 as well as Theognis 697-98.

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We may further observe that good neighborliness is inculcated in both books.

Do not devise evil against your *neighbor* (Prov 3:29).

Do not devise lawlessness against a brother,
or likewise against any *neighbor* or comrade (Sir 7:12 H^A).

These examples illustrate that on the subject of friendship Ben Sira echoes many aphorisms in Proverbs, though he often develops them with ideas from the Greek poet Theognis or the Egyptian teaching preserved in texts like Papyrus Insinger.

e. Careful Etiquette at Banquets: Ben Sira's teaching on moderation at banquets (Sir 31:12–32:13) echoes aphorisms in Proverbs, which themselves fit into an early sapiential tradition reaching back to ancient Egypt (as in Ptahhotep #7 [119–44] and Kagemni 1.3–12). Ben Sira receives additional influence from the advice of Theognis (Theognis 475; 491–98; 509–10).

When you *sit* to eat with a ruler, carefully discern what is in front
of you,
and put a knife to your gullet if you are the possessor of an
appetite (Prov 23:1–2).

My son, if you *sit* at the table of a great man,
do not open your throat there (Sir 31:12 H^B).

Indeed, such indiscipline can even be fatal, though Sir 37:31 applies to gluttony the warning in Prov 5:23 against sexual indiscipline.

He will die for lack of *discipline* (Prov 5:23).

For want of *discipline* many have perished (Sir 37:31 H^D).

Furthermore, the warning against drunken delinquency in Prov 23:20–21 finds an echo in Sir 18:32–33.

Do not be among boozers of wine, among gobblers of meat,
for a *boozier* and *gobbler* will become *impoverished* (Prov
23:20–21).

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Do not rejoice in an abundance of pleasure,⁴¹
 whose *poverty* is twice as great.
 Do not be a *gobbler* and *boozer*,
 when there is nothing in your purse (Sir 18:32-33 H^C).

Such overindulgence will lead to poverty.

One who loves wine and oil *will not grow rich* (Prov 21:17).
 A boozing worker *will not grow rich* (Sir 19:1 G).

However, Sir 31:27 playfully reverses the allusion to drunkenness in the question “for whom?” (Prov 23:29).

For whom is “Woe!”? *For whom* is “Alas!”? . . .
 For those who stay late over *the wine* (Prov 23:29-30).
For whom is *the wine* life? For a human being,
 if he drinks it in its measure (Sir 31:27 H^B).

In this way, Ben Sira makes a statement more akin to Theognis 509-10: “Wine drunk in large quantities is a bane, but if one drinks it wisely, it is not a bane but a blessing.”⁴²

In its advocacy of generosity at table, Sir 31:23 combines allusions to Prov 22:9 and Ps 19:8.

Someone with a *generous* eye will be *blessed* (Prov 22:9).
 The *testimony* of Yhwh is *sure* (Ps 19:8).
 Someone *generous* over food, the lip will *bless*;
 the *testimony* of his *generosity* is *sure* (Sir 31:23 H^B).

Likewise, in condemning stinginess Sir 31:24 combines allusions to Prov 23:6 and Ps 19:8.

Do not eat the *food* of someone with a *stingy* eye (Prov 23:6).
 The *testimony* of Yhwh is *sure* (Ps 19:8).

⁴¹ Compare Sir 18:32 G and S: “in much luxury,” where H^C reads “in a little pleasure.” Note that Sir 18:33 reverses the phrase “boozer and gobbler” found in Prov 23:21.

⁴² Gerber, *Greek Elegiac Poetry*, 247.

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Someone *stingy* over *food* will be slandered at the gate;⁴³
the *testimony* of his *stinginess* is *sure* (Sir 31:24 H^{B/Bmg}).

The second allusion to Ps 19:8 is highly ironic, since the miser's stinginess is hardly a testimony to the revelation of God.

f. Speech: Like much ancient wisdom literature, Proverbs and Ben Sira share a concern for control of the tongue, which can cause great evils if unchecked. Sirach 5:9–6:1 develops thoughts from the Book of Proverbs.⁴⁴

There is *one who speaks* like thrusts of a sword,
but *the tongue* of wise persons means healing (Prov 12:18).
Death and life are *in the power of the tongue* (Prov 18:21; cf.
Sir 37:18).
Honor and dishonor are *in the power of one who speaks* (Sir 5:13a
H^C);
and *the tongue* of a human being is his downfall (Sir 5:13b
H^A).⁴⁵

In addition, Sir 5:12 echoes Prov 30:32.

And *if* you have devised evil, [put] *hand* to *mouth* (Prov 30:32).
If you have something [to say], answer your neighbor,
but *if* nothing, [put] your *hand* over your *mouth* (Sir 5:12 H^A).

The evils of the untamed tongue are also covered in Sir 28:8–26 (cf. 20:18), with further echoes of Proverbs.

And someone perverse in his *tongue will fall* into evil (Prov 17:20).

⁴³ Where H^B has the verbal root נָנַח (in its phrase “will be enraged at the gate”), G presumes the verbal root נָנַח (in its phrase “the city will murmur against”).

⁴⁴ On this passage see A. A. Di Lella, “Use and Abuse of the Tongue: Ben Sira 5,9—6,1,” in “*Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit . . .*: Studien zur israelitischen und altorientalischen Weisheit” (ed. E. Otto et al.; BZAW 241; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996) 33–48; J. I. Okoye, *Speech in Ben Sira with Special Reference to 5,9—6,1* (European University Studies 23/535; Frankfurt a.M.: Lang, 1995). Although the thought of Sir 5:11 echoes Prov 18:13 (cf. Anksheshonq 7.23–24), the only verbal link is the word *answer*.

⁴⁵ Instead of “death and life” (Prov 18:21), Sir 5:13 substitutes their sociological equivalents, “honor and dishonor” (in reversed order).

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Many *have fallen* by the mouth of the sword,
but not as many as those *having fallen* on account of the
tongue (Sir 28:18 G).

A slip due to the pavement rather than due to the *tongue* (Sir 20:18 G).⁴⁶

Moreover, Sir 28:17 echoes Prov 25:15 on the power of the tongue, but in a different sense; whereas Proverbs employs the image for the positive effect of patient persuasion, Ben Sira uses the image for the negative results of mischievous speech.⁴⁷

And a soft *tongue will break a bone* (Prov 25:15).
And a wound by the *tongue will break bones* (Sir 28:17 G).

Both books further observe that a serious misuse of the tongue can occur in legal cases.

A false witness brings forth lies,
and produces quarrels *between brothers* (Prov 6:19).
For an unjust human being who loves a lawsuit
casts hostility *between brothers* (Sir 28:9 S).⁴⁸

Further thoughts on wise speech occur in Sir 20:1-31, where the influence of Proverbs can be detected. For instance, Proverbs and Ben Sira agree that when one is in doubt, the best policy is to listen and remain silent.

Even a fool *when silent will be thought wise* (Prov 17:28).
There is one who, *when silent, is thought wise* (Sir 20:5 S).

Listening before speaking is commended in both books.

⁴⁶ Whereas Sir 28:18 speaks of the tongue causing another person to fall, Sir 20:18 agrees with Prov 17:20 in referring to one's own fall through a mistake of the tongue. Thus, Sir 20:18 takes the image of falling as a result of the tongue (Prov 17:20) and combines it with the insight of Ankhsheshonq 10.7: "You may trip over your foot in the house of a great man; you should not trip over your tongue" (Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 3, 167).

⁴⁷ Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, 20-21.

⁴⁸ Sirach 28:9 G has a different understanding. Note that Sir 28:10 is reminiscent of Prov 26:20-21, while Sir 20:6-7 echoes the thought of Prov 15:23.

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If a person *answers a matter before he hears*,
it is folly for him and ignominy (Prov 18:13).
My son, do not *answer a matter before you hear* (Sir 11:8 H^A).

g. *Care of the Poor*: Both Proverbs and Ben Sira advocate giving charitably to the poor and needy. In one case Ben Sira plays on Proverbs using a development of meaning in the Hebrew word צדקה, which originally meant “righteousness” but came to have the sense “almsgiving.”⁴⁹

But *righteousness/almsgiving will deliver* from death (Prov 10:2; 11:4).
And more than both of them, *righteousness/almsgiving delivers* (Sir 40:24 H^{B/Bmg}).

The poem on almsgiving in Sir 3:30–4:10 also shares the concern of Proverbs for compassionate treatment of the needy.

One who *mocks* at someone impoverished insults his Maker (Prov 17:5).
My son, do not *mock* at the life of someone poor (Sir 4:1 H^A).

Moreover, Ben Sira sees an atoning value in almsgiving, developing the thought of Prov 16:6 along the lines of Tob 12:9 and LXX Dan 4:27.

By lovingkindness and fidelity iniquity is *atoned for* (Prov 16:6).
So almsgiving *atones for* sin (Sir 3:30 H^A).

Unfortunately, however, Ben Sira’s concern for the needy does not seem to refer to slaves in general. Instead, his injunction to harsh treatment (Sir 33:25) applies Prov 26:3 to the treatment of recalcitrant servants, though the Hebrew and Greek texts differ.

⁴⁹ The Hebrew word is represented in the LXX by δικαιοσύνη (“righteousness”) in Prov 10:2 and 11:4, but by ἐλεημοσύνη (“almsgiving”) in Sir 3:30 and 40:24; cf. L. J. Prockter, “Alms and the Man,” *JNSL* 17 (1991) 69–80. With Sir 40:24 compare Tob 4:10 and 12:9. On Ben Sira’s view of wealth and poverty see V. Morla Asensio, “Poverty and Wealth: Ben Sira’s View of Possessions,” in *Der Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Sira*, 151–78.

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A *whip* for the horse, a bridle for the *donkey*,
 and a *rod* for the back of fools (Prov 26:3).
 Fodder and a *whip* and a burden for the *donkey*,
 and the discipline of work for a slave (Sir 33:25 H^E).
 Fodder and a *rod* and burdens for a *donkey*;
 bread and discipline and work for a household slave (Sir 33:25
 G).

Ben Sira then develops his teaching in line with Papyrus Insinger 14.6-11, which teaches: "The pay due the inferior man, let it be food and the stick" (P. Insinger 14.8).⁵⁰

III. Similarities of Structure and Form

Some clear similarities between Proverbs and Ben Sira occur in features of structure and form. Certain resemblances are rather distinctive, particularly the concluding of both books with an alphabetic acrostic (Prov 31:10-31; Sir 51:13-30), while other similarities are more general, such as a fondness for numerical proverbs.

The clearest structural resemblance is the use of an alphabetic acrostic to conclude both books (Prov 31:10-31; Sir 51:13-30).⁵¹ Di Lella observes: "The Hebrew alphabet has twenty-two letters, . . . and other acrostics have twenty-two parts (like Prov 31:10-31, the concluding poem of that Wisdom book)."⁵² Admittedly, Sir 51:13-30 imitates the form of Psalm 25 in adding an extra *pē* line, to create a twenty-three-

⁵⁰ Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. 3, 196; cf. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom*, 95. However, the advocacy of gentler treatment for a single household slave (perhaps an Israelite) in Sir 33:31 echoes the Torah (Lev 25:46; Deut 23:16-17); cf. J. Corley, "Social Responsibility in Proverbs and Ben Sira," *ScrB* 30/1 (2000) 2-14, esp. 12-13.

⁵¹ "As an epilogue to Sirach's book, it [= Sir 51:13-30] gives the book a conclusion similar to that of Proverbs, which also ends with an acrostic poem about a woman (who may be seen to bear some relation to Dame Wisdom)"; so W. Soll, *Psalms 119: Matrix, Form, and Setting* (CBQMS 23; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1991) 17.

⁵² Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 576. Di Lella also remarks that Ben Sira elsewhere employs poems of twenty-two or twenty-three lines, following a pattern already found in Proverbs (p. 74).

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line poem. Nevertheless, there is a structural similarity between the endings of the two books, enhanced by significant verbal links.⁵³

She opens her mouth with wisdom (Prov 31:26).

I opened my mouth and spoke of her:

“Acquire for yourselves *wisdom* without price” (Sir 51:25 H^B).

Most important perhaps is the reversed use of two keywords (נתן, “give,” and בעשים, “deeds”) in the last line of each poem.

Give her some of the fruit of her hands,

and let her *deeds* praise her at the gates (Prov 31:31).

Do your *deeds* with righteousness,

and he will *give* you your reward in its time (Sir 51:30 H^B).

Thus, in a skillful allusion to Proverbs 31, Ben Sira ends his book by presenting Lady Wisdom as the truly “capable wife” whom his students should seek.⁵⁴

There is also a general resemblance in the opening theological poems for the two books. We have already noted that the statement of Prov 1:7 (“The fear of Yhwh is the beginning of knowledge”) has been adapted to become the topic sentence of Sir 1:11-30: “The beginning of wisdom is to fear the Lord” (Sir 1:14 G; cf. Prov 9:10). For his poem on the fear of the Lord in Sir 1:11-30, Ben Sira has copied the twenty-two-line pattern of Prov 2:1-22, which also concerns the fear of God (Prov 2:5).

Another shared stylistic feature is the frequent use of numerical sayings, which occur eight times in Proverbs and seven times in Ben Sira.⁵⁵ A common form is the progression “three, four” (Prov 30:15b-16, 18-19,

⁵³ The vocabulary shared between the two acrostic poems includes four words at the start of poetic lines: חָמַל (“consider”: Prov 31:16; Sir 51:18 H^Q); יָד (“hand”: Prov 31:19; Sir 51:19 H^{BQ}); כַּף (“palm”: Prov 31:20; Sir 51:20 H^Q); פִּי (“mouth”: Prov 31:26; Sir 51:25 H^B). In addition, shared verbs include שָׁדַר (“seek”: Prov 31:13; Sir 51:14 H^Q); מָצָא (“find”: Prov 31:10; Sir 51:20, 26, 27 H^B).

⁵⁴ It is likely that Ben Sira knows the final form of the Book of Proverbs, because of his allusion to Prov 31:10-31 in Sir 51:13-30 and his echoing of Prov 1:6 in Sir 47:17.

⁵⁵ The numerical sayings occur in Prov 6:16-19; 30:7-9, 15a, 15b-16, 18-19, 21-23, 24-28, 29-31; Sir 23:16-18; 25:1, 2, 7-11; 26:5-6, 28; 50:25-26. See W. M. W. Roth, *Numerical Sayings in the Old Testament* (VTSup 13; Leiden: Brill, 1965); G. Sauer, *Die Sprüche Agurs in the Old Testament* (BWANT 4/4; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963) 49-70; C. Westermann, “Die Beobachtungsgedichte im Alten Testament,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister*, 234-47, esp. 234-41.

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21-23, 29-31; Sir 26:5-6). Interestingly, the numerical saying often expresses personal reactions of love or hate, with the first-person subject ["I"] or possessive adjective ["my"] (Prov 30:7-9, 18-19; Sir 25:1 [Syriac], 2, 7-11; 26:5-6, 28; 50:25-26). Whereas Proverbs often employs numerical aphorisms to structure observations from the natural world (Prov 30:21-23, 24-28, 29-31), Ben Sira sometimes uses numerical sayings to record his personal dislikes (Sir 25:2; 50:25-26).⁵⁶

IV. Conclusion

It is interesting to observe how Ben Sira treats his allusions to Proverbs. Sometimes he simply reverses words (Prov 23:21; Sir 18:33) or phrases. At other times he uses a phrase in an opposite sense (Prov 18:24; Sir 6:8-10). Elsewhere the material from Proverbs is combined with other allusions: to the Torah (Sir 3:1-16); to Theognis (Sir 31:12-31); to the prototype of Papyrus Insinger (Sir 3:1-16).

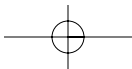
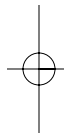
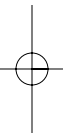
Although Ben Sira sometimes restates what he learned in Proverbs (Sir 1:14), more often he develops and adapts the thought, not only to place it within a longer poem on the topic, but also to set it in a wider context of intertextual and intercultural allusion (including Greek and Egyptian literature). In fact, Ben Sira differs from Proverbs in exhibiting a good deal of non-sapiential influence from the earlier biblical books (Pentateuchal law; biblical history writing; prophecy; Psalms). In addition, the Jerusalem sage has experienced some influence from Greek thought and from demotic Egyptian wisdom teaching. Ben Sira's procedure of adapting pre-existing material illustrates not only his wide learning but also his creative skill, whereby he took the wisdom traditions of Israel and surrounding nations and fashioned from them a new synthesis of Israelite faith and morality for his age. That is surely the measure of his greatness.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Other poetic devices occur in both Proverbs and Ben Sira. For instance, both make use of paradoxical contrast (Prov 17:27-28; 26:4-5; Sir 31:23-24; 41:3-4). Both sometimes place rhyme at the beginning and end of poems (Prov 31:10, 31; Sir 7:1-2, 17), or else employ *inclusio* (Prov 31:10, 29-30; Sir 10:19; 11:6). Both occasionally employ repetition of keywords in a poetic line, such as *רועבב* ("abomination": Prov 29:27; Sir 13:20) and *לפני* ("before": Prov 16:18; 18:12; Sir 22:24; 32:10). See the survey of Ben Sira's poetic devices in Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 63-74.

⁵⁷ I offer this article to Professor Di Lella, director of my doctoral dissertation, to express my gratitude for the wisdom he has taught me through his writings, his classroom teaching, and his friendship.

Part Three

Particular Themes in Ben Sira and Other Texts



Multum in Parvo: Ben Sira's Portrayal of the Patriarch Joseph

C. T. ROBERT HAYWARD

The single verse that Jesus Ben Sira devoted to the patriarch Joseph (Sir 49:15) presents the student with a number of curious challenges. First, it appears in what Professors Skehan and Di Lella have tellingly dubbed the “minipoem” of Sir 49:14-16, which some scholars believe to be a later addition to the Praise of the Fathers, which, in its present position, it concludes.¹ It is not free of textual difficulties.² Its brevity is surprising, given that Ben Sira's book is devoted to that same wisdom

¹ On this “minipoem” see P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 545. For the view that Sir 49:14-16 constitutes an addition to the original poem, see T. Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 135; J. G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus* (CBC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974) 248; B. L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic. Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers* (CSHJ; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985) 201-3. Its originality is not questioned, however, by M. Z. Segal, *Sēper ben-Sirā haššālēm* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1958) 337, 340 [in Hebrew]; H. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter* (WUNT 2/6; Tübingen: Mohr, 1980) 213; and is strongly supported by T. R. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50* (SBLDS 75; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986) 230-34; cf. J. Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira* (2d ed.; BZAW 272; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) 131.

² See Y. Yadin, *The Ben Sira Scroll from Masada* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1965) 38; B. G. Wright, *No Small Difference. Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* (SBLSCS 26; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989) 289-90.

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in which Joseph excelled (Gen 41:38-40); encourages travel in foreign lands (Sir 34:10; 39:4) which Joseph exemplified (Gen 39:1-2); and expresses confidence that the wise man will rise to positions of eminence alongside rulers (Sir 11:1; 39:4), like Joseph, whom Pharaoh appointed as his deputy (Gen 41:41; 42:6). The verse appears to say very little about Joseph's personality and achievements; and his presence in the "minipoem," sandwiched between references to Enoch on the one hand and Shem, Seth and Enosh on the other, has puzzled many commentators.³ This essay will make some observations which may help to elucidate some of the difficulties which have been perceived in this brief reference to Joseph. To that end, the Hebrew and Greek texts of 49:15 will be separately analyzed, with help from the Syriac and Latin versions being invoked at the appropriate points.

1. Ben Sira 49:15 in the Hebrew Text
of Cairo Genizah MS B

The sole Hebrew witness to Sir 49:15 and its surrounding "minipoem" is represented by Genizah MS B, cited here in Beentjes's edition with my own translation.⁴

49:14	וגם הוא נלקח פנים	מעט נוצר על הארץ כהניך
49:15	וגם גויתו נפקדה	כיוסף אם נולד גבר
49:16	ועל כל חי תפארת אדם	ושם ושת ואנוש נפקדו

49:14 Few were formed upon the earth like Enoch: and he also was taken within.

49:15 Was there born a man like Joseph? and also his body was visited.

49:16 And Shem and Seth and Enosh were visited: but above every living thing is the beauty of Adam.

³ See, for example, Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic*, 201, on the oddity of Joseph's inclusion in a list of antediluvian figures and his close proximity to Adam.

⁴ Hebrew Ben Sira will be cited from the edition of P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew. A Text Edition of all Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of all Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (VTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997). My translation of 49:14 emends the Hebrew כהניך ("your priests") to כהנוך ("like Enoch"); cf. Segal, *Sēper ben-Sîrā' haššālēm*, 340.

Leaving aside for a moment the difficulties articulated by modern scholars, and viewing this short text as it stands, the student is struck at once by the preponderance of verbs in the *niphal* form: Enoch was formed and was taken; Joseph was born and was visited; Shem, Seth and Enosh, were visited. This “divine passive” makes a re-appearance in MS B 50:1, which informs us that in the days of the high priest Simeon ben Johanan the Temple “was visited”; this *mot crochet* (Hebrew נִפְקַד), along with the repetition of “beauty” (Hebrew תִּפְאֶרֶת) in the same verse, serves to bind the “minipoem” closely to the following encomium of the high priest and his service.⁵ The mention of Enoch in 49:14 is now commonly accepted by scholars as marking a literary *inclusio* signalled by the earlier reference to this patriarch in 44:16; as it stands, therefore, 49:14-16 with its second reference to Enoch is intended not only to form the end of the *inclusio*, but also by catchwords to unite the poem about Simeon in chap. 50 to the rest of the composition.⁶

Joseph’s part in this is pivotal. In reference to the biblical characters listed in the “minipoem,” the Hebrew version selects for comment the formation of Enoch and the end of his life, and also the beginning of Joseph’s life and its end, which is described in terms of “visitation”: this notion is applied also to Shem, Seth, and Enosh, whose presence in the poem leads back inexorably to Adam. Both Enoch and Joseph are presented as individuals specially favored with remarkable modes of life, and significant departures from it.

None formed on the earth had such converse with the angels and familiarity with the heavenly world as Enoch: Ben Sira must have known of this, since it is boldly set out in the *Book of the Watchers* which comprises 1 *Enoch* 1-36, and dates probably from the latter part of the third century B.C.E.⁷ Enoch’s departure from this world was equally dramatic: the biblical record in Gen 5:21-24 led to the wide-

⁵ For the use of catchwords by Ben Sira at this point, see Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 550.

⁶ Ibid., 499; cf. A. Goshen-Gottstein, “Ben Sira’s Praise of the Fathers: A Canon-Conscious Reading,” in *Ben Sira’s God. Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham - Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 235-67, esp. 240.

⁷ On the relationship of 1 *Enoch* materials to Ben Sira’s work, see R. A. Argall, 1 *Enoch and Sirach: A Comparative Literary and Conceptual Analysis of the Themes of Revelation, Creation and Judgment* (SBLEJL 8; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995).

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spread belief that he had been translated to heaven while still living, a point of view attested already by LXX Gen 5:24 and *Jub.* 10:17, along with other sources.⁸ If one word can be held to characterize Enoch, it is wisdom; indeed, MS B of Sir 44:16 spoke of him as a “sign of knowledge” (אֵימָה דַּעַת), and his standing as a cultural hero is attested by Jewish-Greek writers such as Artapanus.⁹ Much of this wisdom he acquired through direct contact with angels and the heavenly world; and someone on the earth formed like him must surely have experienced a departure from this world different from that accorded to the common lot of humanity.

But Joseph, too, was an exemplar of wisdom. The Bible said so plainly (Gen 37:38-41). Why, then, did Ben Sira not allude directly to this, but speak initially of his birth, and then of his bones? The answer to this question cannot be divorced from Ben Sira’s treatment of Enoch just noted, in which he was clearly indebted to interpretations of biblical material current in his day. With regard to Joseph’s birth, we may note that, even though the Bible apparently reports nothing extraordinary about it (Gen 30:22-24), certain scriptural verses invite speculation. For instance, the literal translation of Gen 37:2 declares: “These are the *generations* (תַּלְדוֹת) of Jacob,” adding immediately, and apparently inconsequentially: “Joseph, seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock.” The very oddity of these two juxtaposed statements might be taken by ancient interpreters to be especially meaningful, for every “oddity” in a scriptural text demands explanation. This verse, in fact, could suggest that Joseph was *the* special progeny of Jacob, his birth being equivalent to “generations” and somehow encapsulating all that was best in Jacob himself. Indeed, the rabbis would later interpret the verse in just such a way (*Gen. Rab.* 84:6), declaring that Jacob and Joseph had both been born circumcised, observing that both were sons

⁸ On LXX Gen 5:24, see M. Harl, *La Bible d’Alexandrie 1: La Genèse* (Paris: Cerf, 1994) 123; on the *Jubilees* reference, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1. A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 70, 74; and see further *Targums Neofiti* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* of Gen 5:24, representing Jewish tradition recorded also in (e.g.) *b. Sanh.* 38b; *b. Abod. Zar.* 3b; *b. Hag.* 15a.

⁹ For the Greek text of Artapanus on Joseph preserved in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 9.23.1-4, with an English translation, see C. R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic and Jewish Authors, vol. 1: Historians* (SBLTT 20, Pseudepigrapha 10; Chico: Scholars Press, 1983) 204-9, who gives the dates of Artapanus (pp. 190, 196) as probably mid-third to mid-second century B.C.E.

of childless mothers who both had difficult births, and listing other elements common to the lives of both men.¹⁰

Furthermore, the following scriptural verse (Gen 37:3) described Joseph as son of Jacob's old age; but since this designation was more appropriate for Benjamin who was born later than Joseph, the verse suggested that some special association between Joseph and "old age" was in order. The association was wisdom, a characteristic of "old age" (Sir 25:5); and in the writings of Artapanus, who may have been more or less a contemporary of Ben Sira, we learn that Joseph excelled all Jacob's other sons in wisdom and understanding.¹¹ Such an idea, derived from Gen 37:3, was also characteristic of Jewish tradition in the land of Israel: it is found in *Targum Onqelos* of this verse, and represents a view widely echoed in other rabbinic writings.¹²

This is important information: Ben Sira seems to wish to put Joseph on some sort of par with Enoch, and he uses interpretations of Scripture and non-biblical traditions current in his lifetime to do so. Both are supreme examples of wise persons, their lives testifying to this: few were ever formed who were like Enoch, while Joseph's birth testified to his wisdom.¹³ Just as Enoch departed this life as and when God chose, the hand of the Almighty was also evident in Joseph's last days. Ben Sira wished his readers to perceive this with particular reference to the

¹⁰ In particular, the Aramaic *Tg. Ps.-J.* Gen 30:21 describes Joseph's birth as the result of a peculiar miracle, whereby Joseph's embryo was transferred from the womb of Leah to Rachel's womb, so that she should have two sons, and not be perceived as less distinguished than the maids Bilhah and Zilpah, who had borne two sons. The earliest reference to this miracle, however, appears in *y. Ber.* 9.14ab; see also *b. Ber.* 60a; and *Gen. Rab.* 72:6. Targum Neofiti stressed the direct divine participation of the Lord in Joseph's birth by inserting in its version of Gen 30:22 the midrash of the four keys, on which see M. McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis* (The Aramaic Bible 1A; Edinburgh: Clark, 1992) 148-49; B. B. Levy, *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study, vol. 1* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986) 198-201.

¹¹ See Holladay, *Fragments*, 204-7.

¹² For discussion of this Targum text and rabbinic parallels, see B. Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis Translated, with a Critical Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes* (The Aramaic Bible 6; Edinburgh: Clark, 1988) 126-27.

¹³ Note the remarks of Segal on this point with reference to Gen 41:38 (*Sēper ben-Sirā' haššālēm*, 340), to the effect that Joseph is not here described as greater than Enoch, the words expressing simply fulsome praise of his wisdom. The Syriac's statement that "no mother bore" one like Joseph is somewhat ambiguous; it is closer to the Greek than to the Hebrew, and may hint at some mysterious origin for Joseph.

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verb פָּקַד (“visit”), whose precise meaning we shall soon consider. For the moment, it should be observed that the Bible’s account of the end of Joseph’s life uses forms of this verb four times in two verses. Thus at Gen 50:24 Joseph announces to his brothers in Egypt that he is dying, and that:

God will surely visit you (פָּקַד יִפְקַד אֶתְכֶם) and bring you up from this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

At once (Gen 50:25) Joseph makes Israel’s sons swear an oath:

God will surely visit you (פָּקַד יִפְקַד אֱלֹהִים אֶתְכֶם) and you shall bring up my bones from here.

Joseph’s body, says MS B of Sir 49:15, was visited (וּפָקְדָה), a reference to the care for his bones which his brothers brought safely back to the land of Israel, but expressed in a passive form which allows the reader to draw the conclusion that God was involved in the process (Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32).

It is difficult not to believe that Ben Sira’s selection of this particular incident in Joseph’s story was calculated and deliberate; for in the Genesis account, Joseph’s bones and his death are directly related to the drama of Israel’s redemption from Egypt through use of this verbal stem פָּקַד (“visit”). Genesis says nothing about Joseph’s bones or body being visited; rather, *God* will visit the Israelites, to bring them out of slavery and give them the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Now Ben Sira had treated of these patriarchs at some length (MS B 44:19-23), but very specifically in terms of the covenant that God had granted them, a covenant involving blessing, progeny, and inheritance. By speaking of Joseph in the way that he does, Ben Sira contrives to prove that the covenant oath sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was in very truth preserved intact and honored by the Almighty, in that Joseph’s corpse, conveyed out of Egypt into the land of Israel, “was visited”—in other words, visited by God. What in the Bible appears as the purely human action of Joseph’s family, carrying his mortal remains out of Egypt into the Promised Land, becomes in Ben Sira’s Hebrew poem a divinely activated proof that God had been true to his

promises. Joseph's body was visited; and with that visitation at the time of the redemption from Egypt, divinely granted covenant promises became realized.

This last point becomes clearer when we recall that the Hebrew stem **נָפַק**, translated up to now as "visit," can also signify "remember."¹⁴ In respect of the covenant and its promises, the Bible insists again and again that God *remembers* these things, and his merciful visitation of people in the course of Israel's history is part of a larger scheme of his sustaining and maintaining the covenant which he himself had called into being.¹⁵ When MS B of Sir 49:16 states that Shem, Seth, and Enosh were "visited," therefore, what we have before us may not be a textual error,¹⁶ but a deliberate reference to God's remembering these antediluvian patriarchs in respect of his covenant, a covenant confirmed with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

In this regard, a passage from the *Book of Jubilees* proves illuminating: this book, whose final form saw the light of day less than a generation after Ben Sira's death, was a profoundly traditional work composed out of materials already known in Israel during the sage's lifetime. It describes how Abraham ordered Rebecca to guard Jacob, because he would be in the place of Abraham upon the earth as a blessing among humankind, and "a glory to all the seed of Shem" (*Jub.* 19:17). Then Abraham revealed the great destiny stored up for Jacob as follows (*Jub.* 19:24-25):¹⁷

¹⁴ The rabbis emphasized this (*b. Rosh ha-Sh.* 32b); cf. *Mekhilta de R. Shim'on bar Yohai*, ed. J. N. Epstein and E. Melamed (Jerusalem: Hillel Press, 1955) 138. This is a common meaning of the verb in post-biblical Hebrew, though even in biblical Hebrew the word can have the sense of "take an interest in" a person, used with the Lord as subject (G. André, "נָפַק *pāqad*," *TDOT*, 12.50-63, esp. 54-55).

¹⁵ See Gen 9:15; Exod 2:24; Lev 26:42; Ps 111:5; cf. M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 77, 330.

¹⁶ As we shall see below, the Greek version of Sir 49:16 states that these patriarchs "were glorified" (ἐδοξάσθησαν), which may indicate that the translator read a Hebrew text containing נִכְבְּדוּ ("were glorified") rather than נָפַקוּ ("were visited"): see Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 542. The Syriac has "were created," which is in keeping with that version's apparent interest in miraculous births; see n. 13 above.

¹⁷ The translation is that of O. S. Wintermute, "Jubilees," *OTP* 2.35-142, here 2.93. For the date of the final composition of *Jubilees* as lying at some point between 170 and 140 B.C.E., see J. C. VanderKam, "Jubilees, Book of," *ABD* 3.1030-32, esp. 3.1030. The outlook of this book is profoundly traditional, and many elements that went into its composition are likely to be quite old.

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And in his seed my name will be blessed, and the names of my fathers Shem and Noah, and Enoch, and Mahalel, and Enosh, and Seth, and Adam. And they will serve to establish heaven and to strengthen the earth and to renew all of the lights which are above the firmament.

According to this prediction, Shem, Seth, and Enosh, along with Enoch, Noah, Adam and other names not noted by Ben Sira as “fathers of Abraham,” will find their apogee in Jacob, such that the created order is established in the way that God envisaged from of old. We should note that Ben Sira’s praise of Simeon the high priest (50:1-24), following directly upon the “minipoem” we are discussing and linked to it by significant catchwords, is designed to show how this priest’s punctilious performance of the divinely ordered Temple service ensures the continuing stability of the created order. Indeed, Simeon himself as he carries out his liturgical functions is described in terms of the luminaries of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, and as comparable to the rainbow, the sign of God’s covenant to maintain the created order in peace.¹⁸

In fine, it is possible to read the words of MS B here examined as a smooth, unified, and meaningful poetic composition. The mention of Enoch in 49:14 marks the end-point of the literary *inclusio* beginning at 44:16, and that with clear reference to Enoch’s extraordinary life and translation, testifying to his status as an exemplary wise man. Joseph is similarly extolled, being put almost on a par with Enoch, but in language that recalls God’s covenant promises. The biblical content of these promises was expressed in respect of ancestors (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) to whom the land of Israel was promised as an inheritance. Joseph is pivotal here, his birth witnessing to his extraordinary wisdom, and his departure from this life being seen as a divine visitation which brings with it Israel’s entry into the inheritance promised by covenant. And that covenant has a universal dimension. Making use of non-biblical traditions about both Enoch and Joseph, the text is able to move smoothly, via antediluvian worthies specially favored by God, to Adam. Moreover, Adam’s “beauty” (תפארת) is reflected in the “beauty” of the high priest as he carries out the Temple service, being

¹⁸ See C. T. R. Hayward, *The Jewish Temple. A Non-biblical Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996) 44-63; O. Mulder, *Simon de hogepriester in Sirach 50* (Almelo: privately published, 2001) 154, 377-85.

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compared with the luminaries whose duty is to serve as signs, set times, days and years (50:5-7; cf. Gen 1:15). In 17:1-17, Ben Sira had begun with Adam and imperceptibly moved to a discussion of Israel. Here, MS B moves in the other direction, from discussion of Israel's greatest representatives hymned in the Praise of the Fathers back to Adam, father of the human race, but also patriarch of Israel.¹⁹ The passages from the *Book of Jubilees* quoted here enable us to see how this might be so.

None of this, of course, proves that MS B contains what Ben Sira originally wrote. It is perfectly possible that some tradent of his work, a scribe or other interested party, finding a confused and broken Hebrew text that needed improvement, performed some ambulance work on it. The point that should be made, however, is that the text of MS B can be read as making sense, both in terms of Ben Sira's own writing and within the wider world of Jewish thinking in the Second Temple period about the antediluvian biblical figures. If all this seems to assume a fair amount of knowledge on the part of the reader, then one can only remark that either Ben Sira himself, or the scribe responsible for MS B, had taken to heart the words of Sir 39:1 (preserved in Greek), that the one who meditates on the Torah will seek out the wisdom of the ancients.²⁰

2. Greek Sirach 49:15 within the Greek Version of 49:14-16

The Greek version of the "minipoem" differs in several respects from the Hebrew of MS B, not least in its inclusion of an extra line in the praise of Joseph:²¹

¹⁹ For discussion of Ben Sira's representation of Adam, see J. R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism from Sirach to 2 Baruch* (JSPSup 1; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988) 33-48.

²⁰ No Hebrew survives for Sir 39:1, but for "the ancients" the Greek uses the word ἀρχαῖος, which LXX often employed (e.g., Judg 5:21; Pss 76 [77]:5; 142 [143]:5; Lam 1:7; 2:17) to translate the Hebrew root אָרַךְ, often with specific reference to primeval times. Was Ben Sira thinking of antediluvian writers like Enoch when he penned 39:1?

²¹ The Greek follows J. Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* (Septuaginta 12/2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965) 356-57, with one exception. In 49:15 we read ἐγεννήθη ("was born") with the Origenic witnesses (matching the Hebrew), where Ziegler's text (following Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) has ἐγενήθη ("came to be").

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- 49:14 οὐδεὶς ἐκτίσθη ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τοιοῦτος οἶος Ἐνωχ
καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἀνελήμφθη ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς
49:15 οὐδὲ ὡς Ἰωσηφ ἐγεννήθη ἀνὴρ
ἡγουμένος ἀδελφῶν στήριγμα λαοῦ
καὶ τὰ ὀστέα αὐτοῦ ἐπεσκέπησαν
49:16 Σημ καὶ Σηθ ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἐδοξάσθησαν
καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντων ζῶον ἐν τῇ κτίσει Ἀδὰμ

A literal translation of these verses would read as follows:

- 49:14 Nobody was created on the earth such as Enoch:
For he was indeed taken up from the earth.
49:15 Nor was ever a man born like Joseph,
A leader of brothers, a support of the people:
And his bones they visited.
49:16 Shem and Seth among humanity were glorified:
And above everything living in the creation is Adam.

It is at once apparent that there are several points where this Greek version of 49:14-16 parts company with the Hebrew of Genizah MS B. Certainly the description of Enoch is not so far removed in general terms from what we read in the Hebrew; although the distinctive statement that “he was taken within,” an allusion in Hebrew to his entry into the divine presence, is not nearly so apparent in the Greek version’s “he was taken up from the earth.”²² The portrayal of Joseph in the Greek, however, exhibits important divergences from the Hebrew. First, the rhetorical question of Genizah MS B, “Was there born a man like Joseph?” is represented in the Greek as a statement that there was never a man born like Joseph, which rather flattens the impact of the opening description of the patriarch: deliberately so, since it now functions as a formula leading up to and introducing the next part of the Greek’s description of Joseph, which is not found in the Hebrew. This delineates Joseph as “a leader of brothers” and as “a support of the people”; and it is precisely this aspect of Joseph’s life which the Greek text intends to emphasize. Very soon we shall see how and why this is so; for the moment, we observe this difference, and the accompanying

²² His being taken “within” (Hebrew בְּיָדָיו) most probably refers to his introduction into the Lord’s presence: see Segal, *Sēper ben-Sīrāʾ haššālēm*, 340.

variation between Greek and Hebrew versions of the last line of 49:15. Where the Hebrew spoke of Joseph's body, the Greek referred to his bones: this is generally in keeping with the Hebrew, and in fact specifies the reference to Gen 50:24-25 quite neatly.²³ But whereas Genizah MS B spoke of Joseph's body being visited, the Greek version states that "they visited" his bones. It is not quite clear what this might mean. Possibly the Greek translator signified that "they" (that is, Joseph's descendants) took care of his bones, which is a meaning that ἐπεσκέπησαν may bear;²⁴ or the version envisages people visiting Joseph's bones, perhaps going on pilgrimage to his tomb.²⁵ In any event, it is clear that the Greek can have no mention of Joseph's bones "being visited" by God, in the sense of God's being mindful of Joseph's remains.

Given all this, it is perhaps not surprising to find that the Greek version of 49:16 has no obvious verbal connection with what has gone before. Here Shem and Seth are named indeed, but it is said that they were "glorified," not visited; and Enosh has been understood by the translator not as a proper name, but as one of the common Hebrew words for "humanity": hence the rendering "among humanity," which most likely represents a Hebrew באנוש either read, or understood, by the translator. In the same verse, the Greek has no reference to Adam's "beauty," a word that, in the Hebrew, forms a link with 50:1, where "beauty" is predicated of the high priest Simeon. In short, many of those verbal connections which make for smoothness and continuity of sense in the Hebrew text of 49:14-50:1 are absent in the Greek version, whose concern with Joseph is indicated by its provision of the description of him as "a leader of brothers, a support of the people," to which the words about his birth now form an introduction.

These words might at first sight seem to be related to some Hebrew material found in Genizah MS B of 50:1, where Simeon the high priest is called "greatest of his brothers and the beauty of his people" (גדול אחיו ותפארת עמו), a phrase which has no equivalent in the Greek text of that verse: its absence there should be carefully noted.²⁶ The

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ See Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus*, 248; cf. Segal, *Sēper ben-Sîrā' haššālēm*, 340.

²⁵ See Harl, *La Bible d'Alexandrie 1: La Genèse*, 318.

²⁶ See Segal, *Sēper ben-Sîrā' haššālēm*, 340. The Latin version of Sir 49:15 represented in the Vulgate, *Biblia Sacra Latina* (ed. R. Weber; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft,

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Greek of the second line of 49:15, however, is not simply a rehash of the Hebrew words still extant in Genizah MS B 50:1, since the descriptions of Joseph as “leader of brothers” and “support of the people” point in a very particular direction. The first of these (Greek ἡγούμενος ἀδελφῶν) recalls the words of Jacob’s blessing of his son Joseph in Gen 49:26 as it was understood by the LXX translators.²⁷ According to the MT of Gen 49:26, Jacob had addressed Joseph in blessing with these words:

The blessings of your father have prevailed over the blessings of my progenitors as far as the desire of the eternal hills: they shall be upon Joseph’s head, and on the crown of the head of the Nazirite among his brothers (נִיר אֶחָדִים).

The final description of Joseph in this verse, translated above as “the Nazirite among his brothers,” is not easy to understand, and gave rise to several different interpretations among the ancient commentators, of whom the LXX translators of Genesis probably represent the oldest. They took the phrase to mean that the blessings should rest on Joseph’s head, “and on the crown of the head of the brothers over whom he was leader” (καὶ ἐπὶ κορυφῆς ὧν ἡγήσατο ἀδελφῶν.) The LXX’s interpretation of Hebrew נִיר as “leader/ ruler” is shared with *Targum Neofiti*, *Fragment Targums*, and *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* of Gen 49:26, and evidently constitutes an old and commonly accepted way of reading the text.²⁸

Furthermore, the word for “leader” used in the Greek of Sir 49:15 (ἡγούμενος) is an especially significant word within LXX of Genesis, where it appears on only a single occasion: again in Jacob’s blessing of his sons, we encounter it at Gen 49:10, designating the “ruler” destined to come forth from Judah, and thereby translating the Hebrew מַלְכִּי,

1994), expands the text even further: here (49:17 Latin), Joseph is described as *princeps fratrum firmamentum gentis rector fratrum stabilimentum populi*, which offers a double translation of the Greek and whatever Hebrew may have lain behind it.

²⁷ Harl, *La Bible d’Alexandrie 1: La Genèse*, 314, has already made note of this.

²⁸ For detailed examination of these verses, see R. Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums. A Study of the Targumic Interpretations of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33* (Åbo: Åbo Akademi, 1986) 60-65. The interpretation is effected by understanding the Hebrew word נִיר in Gen 49:26 in light of נֵר (“crown”): this allows the Targumim, in particular, to ascribe royal qualities to Joseph and to his rulership.

an uncommon word which attracted a good deal of exegetical attention in Second Temple times.²⁹ For some Jews, indeed, Gen 49:10 in general, and that word in particular, had strong messianic associations. When the Greek version of Sir 49:15 selected this word ἡγούμενος to define Joseph's role, therefore, it took up a term heavy with royal associations, hinting at Joseph's affinity with the promised "leader" destined to arise from the tribe of Judah. And it should never be forgotten that Joseph himself had ruled, not only over his brothers, but also over the whole land of Egypt and its Gentile population.³⁰ When Ben Sira's grandson translated his grandfather's book, the Jews in the land of Israel were enjoying peace and military success, ruled by the priest-prince John Hyrcanus I: there is some evidence that this time of Jewish political good fortune is reflected in the LXX translation of the Psalter, and Greek Sirach's presentation of Joseph may not be unrelated to this wider celebration of what amounted to a Jewish renaissance.³¹ Finally, it should be noted that in the text of Greek Sirach, ἡγούμενος is a word bound up with wisdom (Sir 9:17; 10:1-2; 44:4) and with honor (10:20, specifically with regard to one who rules over brothers), and that to such "rulers" the sage was often addressing his wise sayings (33:19).

The Greek of Sir 49:15, therefore, seems to be intent on portraying Joseph as the very ideal of the ruler envisaged elsewhere in the text: there was never "a man born like Joseph," who was not only a "leader/ruler of brothers," but also "a support of the people." The

²⁹ See G. Vermes, "Lion - Damascus - Mehokek - Man," in his *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (2d ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1973) 49-55, and the extended discussion of this term in light of Balaam's oracles and Second Temple exegetical traditions in J. J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: the Messiah of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Ancient Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1995) esp. 61-67.

³⁰ For the importance of LXX Gen 49:10 pointing to a ruler over Gentiles, and its likely associations with contemporary Greek ideas of kingship, see W. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM, 1998) 48-50, 127-32.

³¹ See J. Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT 2/776; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995), esp. 42-45, 141-42, 149-52. Schaper cites J. A. Goldstein ("The Hasmonean Revolt and the Hasmonean Dynasty," *CHJ* 2.235), who notes the capture of the Moabite city Jazer by Judah the Maccabee as having fulfilled biblical prophecies (Isa 16:8-9; Jer 48:32), and John Hyrcanus I's capture of the old Moabite fort of Medeba as beginning the fulfillment of Isa 15:2 and Jer 48:1. In the background of this conquest of Moab lie the oracles of Balaam, especially Num 24:17, with its promise that Moab would be the first enemy nation to be conquered when God brings victory for Israel.

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latter phrase, too, serves further to heighten the standing of the patriarch: στήριγμα (“support”) is found only three times elsewhere in Greek Sirach, and on two of these occasions (34:15, 16) it is used with reference to the Lord himself as a support of the righteous. If one may so speak, Joseph is moving in exalted company! If the Greek translator truly removed from 50:1 Hebrew phrases qualifying the high priest Simeon, then the translator has (quite literally) transferred to Joseph some of the praise and glory and royal terminology originally ascribed to the now dethroned Zadokite dynasty and its representative. And if what we have before us in the Greek of Sir 49:15 is from the pen of Ben Sira’s grandson, settled in Egypt and translating his grandfather’s work, then this aggrandizement of Joseph makes sense. For this patriarch is the most honorable representative of Egyptian Jews, endowed with wisdom, second only to Pharaoh in power and authority, and responsible for the salvation from famine and death not only of his father and his brothers, but also of the whole people of Egypt. That a Jew resident in Egypt should wish to celebrate the greatness of this particular patriarch is entirely comprehensible. The ambiguity of the Greek in the final line of 49:15 now seems justified: the translator may indeed wish to record that Joseph’s bones were not only cared for by his descendants, but that their resting place has become a site of pilgrimage, perhaps for the very Egyptian Jews whose finest qualities and abilities were expressed in the person of that great father of Israel.

3. Conclusions

This brief exploration of Joseph’s appearance in the “minipoem” of Hebrew and Greek Ben Sira 49:14-16 has shown reasonable grounds, we would submit, for concluding that Genizah MS B is a unified, continuous composition which dovetails with the end of the Praise of the Fathers, and leads naturally into the poem of Sir 50:1-24 extolling Simeon the high priest. It may also be reasonable to conclude that, despite the objections raised to its integrity by some modern scholars, it is what Ben Sira himself wrote. The Greek version of the “minipoem” might then be understood as a very particular rewriting or interpretation of Ben Sira’s work by his grandson, resident in Egypt, acutely conscious of the high regard in which Egyptian Jews held Joseph, and eager to present Joseph to his readers quite specifically as

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the exemplar of a truly wise ruler and support of his people. In both its Hebrew and its Greek forms, Sir 49:15 uses language which strongly suggests that Joseph was guided throughout his life by the providence of the Almighty, and that his life and death played a vital role in God's overall plan for this covenant people, Israel.

Such an analysis, however, may not do justice to the "minipoem," and may indeed misrepresent it. For detailed analysis of it, in both its Hebrew and its Greek versions, shows how deeply indebted it is to traditional Jewish exegesis of Scripture current in Second Temple times. That is to say, another way of viewing the differences between the Hebrew and Greek versions of the "minipoem," particularly in respect of what it has to say about Joseph, is to envisage the composers of each version as having been influenced by different elements or currents of biblical interpretation which seemed to them important, and therefore worthy of selection for inclusion in their texts. In other words, neither Hebrew nor Greek may represent exactly what Ben Sira wrote, but those scholars and scribes who handed on his work saw in what he had written opportunities to include or express ideas known to them from their traditional understanding of Scripture. One could say that the Hebrew version of 49:15 might well have been congenial to Jews living in the land of Israel, and the Greek version to Jews resident in Egypt; but even this is not certain, since Joseph's status as a wise ruler operating under divine providence would have had a universal appeal to Jews of Second Temple times. The relationship of the Hebrew text to the Greek, in this particular instance, seems to me to admit of no simple explanation, both versions having possibly been amplified or subject to minor alterations of wording to express what seemed right and proper to the tradent from whose hands we receive the finished product. Given that Joseph, on any showing, represented a political figure, exercising control over the lives of Jews and Gentiles alike, it is hardly surprising that the portrayal of him might vary in the versions of Ben Sira's work which have come down to us.

The matter of exegetical tradition, however, does emerge as a key element in this attempt to "explain" the Hebrew and Greek witnesses of Ben Sira. We have had recourse to the Septuagint of several Penta-teuchal verses; the Greek version of the Psalter; the *Book of Jubilees*; the writings of Artapanus; and the Aramaic Targumim in our attempt to elucidate what the Hebrew and Greek versions of Sir 49:15 have said

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about Joseph. These documents, all of which seek to expound biblical texts and to underscore the continuing significance of the Hebrew Scriptures for the life of the Jewish people at home and abroad, perhaps help us to see a little more clearly what Ben Sira meant when he wrote at the end of Lady Wisdom's great soliloquy (24:34; cf. 33:18) that he had not labored for himself alone. In Ben Sira's short notice about Joseph in either its Hebrew or its Greek form, the learned Jew could find allusions to worlds of discourse (not apparent from a surface reading), which, once entered, could only enrich, inform, and ennoble the reader wherever she or he might be. The remarkable ability of Ben Sira's work to speak to all sorts and conditions of people, in all sorts of circumstances, has been made admirably clear in the many books and essays of Professor Di Lella, whose sensitive appreciation of Ben Sira's poetry and scholarship has stimulated and informed a whole generation of scholars. To him this little essay is dedicated, in gratitude.

Ezra, Scribe and Priest, and the Concerns of Ben Sira

MICHAEL W. DUGGAN

Within the biblical compendium, Ben Sira and Ezra share the title “scribe” and a concern for temple, priesthood, and Torah. Nevertheless, Ben Sira does not mention Ezra in the Praise of the Ancestors (Sir 44:1–49:16; esp. 49:11–13).¹ In attempting to account for Ben Sira’s omission of Ezra, scholars have offered a variety of proposals, both textual and ideological. The textual explanation for Ben Sira’s inclusion of Nehemiah but not Ezra (Sir 49:13) is that Ben Sira had access only to material that acclaimed the work of Nehemiah (the Nehemiah Memoir [NM]: Neh 1:1–7:5a; 12:27–43; 13:4–31; cf. 2 Macc 1:18–26).² The ideological proposals span a variety of issues: (1) Ben Sira would have been offended at the association of the Levites with Ezra in the Ezra–Nehemiah narrative (Ezra 8:15–10:44; Neh 8:1–18; 9:1–5);³ (2) Ezra’s lineage as a Zadokite priest disqualified him from the favor of Ben Sira, who also omits Zadok from his Praise of the Ancestors (cf. Sir 45:6–

¹ “Praise of the Ancestors of Old” is the heading of this section in Sir 44:1 (Hebrew MS B). See Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 498–99.

² Lester L. Grabbe, “What was Ezra’s Mission?” in *Second Temple Studies 2. Temple Community in the Persian Period* (ed. Tamara C. Eskenazi and Kent H. Richards; JSOTSup 175; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994) 286–99, esp. 289–90.

³ Peter Höffken, “Warum schwieg Jesus Sirach über Esra?” *ZAW* 87 (1975) 184–202.

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26);⁴ (3) Ben Sira's concern for the reconstruction of the temple and of Jerusalem prompts him to mention Nehemiah, but not Ezra, after his references to Zerubbabel and Jeshua (Sir 49:10-13);⁵ (4) Ben Sira's Praise of the Ancestors clashes with Ezra's negative view of Judah's forebears that fueled his demand for repentance (Ezra 8:7, 10-15);⁶ and (5) Ben Sira's respect for foreigners and his apparent lack of offence at intercultural marriages (cf. Sir 47:19-21) contrasts with Ezra's advocacy of Judahite exclusivism and his expulsion of foreign wives (Ezra 10:44).⁷

I wish to contribute to the discussion by examining the profile of Ezra as scribe and priest in Ezra-Nehemiah, and comparing this profile with the relationship between scribes and priests in the Wisdom of Ben Sira. I shall analyze the Ezra material from a synchronic, or literary, perspective but I shall discuss the content of Ben Sira from both a literary and historical, or diachronic, perspective. I do so because Ben Sira's extensive first-hand writings allow us to hear the actual voice of the sage. However, both the brevity and the ideological preoccupations of the Ezra material make it very difficult to find the historical Ezra. Nevertheless, we certainly encounter the Ezra of the biblical narrative.⁸ The portrait of the scribe and priest in Ezra-Nehemiah more

⁴ Saul M. Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship to the Priesthood," *HTR* 80 (1987) 261-86, here 275. Olyan argues that the praise of the Zadokite priest Simeon (Sir 50:1-21) is a late addition.

⁵ Christopher Begg, "Ben Sirach's Non-mention of Ezra," *BN* 42 (1988) 14-18. According to Jacques Vermeylen, Nehemiah's wall building is symbolically parallel to Ben Sira's desire to protect his pupils from the dangers of foreign ideology ("Pourquoi fallait-il édifier des remparts? Le Siracide et Néhémie," in *Treasures of Wisdom* [ed. Núria Calduch-Benages and Jacques Vermeylen; BETL 143; Leuven: Peeters, 1999] 195-213). In Vermeylen's view, "those who live in Seir, and the Philistines, and the foolish people that live in Shechem" (Sir 50:26) represent the same kind of enemies of Israel as Geshem the Arab, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Sanballat the Horonite (Neh 6:1), namely, the Nabateans, the Hellenizing Tobiads, and the Samaritans (pp. 212-13).

⁶ Burton L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers* (CSHJ; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985) 119-20.

⁷ John G. Gammie, "The Sage in Sirach," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 355-72, here 362-64. Gammie emphasizes that Ben Sira does not speak of Solomon as marrying "foreign" women (p. 363).

⁸ Grabbe ("Ezra's Mission?" 286-99) casts doubt on the historicity of the Ezra material from a variety of perspectives. For a summary of discussion on this question, see Michael W. Duggan, *The Covenant Renewal in Ezra-Nehemiah (Neh 7:72b-10:40): An Exegetical, Literary, and Theological Study* (SBLDS 164; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001) 16-19.

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likely reflects the vision of the author in the middle to late fourth century B.C.E. than the identity of Ezra in 458 B.C.E. (Ezra 7:1-7).

I discuss this topic here as an expression of my esteem for Professor Alexander Di Lella, a priest in the tradition of Francis of Assisi and a scribe in the tradition of Ben Sira. Examining Ben Sira in Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, and Latin in his doctoral seminar taught me careful reading of the biblical text. The experience of his tutelage forged long-term bonds between the students and made us feel part of a distinctive Ben Sira heritage. As first reader of my dissertation on Ezra-Nehemiah, Dr. Di Lella's solicitude enhanced the work and established a gracious friendship, for which I am ever grateful.

I. Ezra, Priest and Scribe

I treat the Ezra material according to its present arrangement in Ezra 7:1-10:44; Neh 7:72b-8:18; Neh 12:26; and Neh 12:27-43. The cohesiveness of this material is evident from the fact that a rearrangement of the major sections can provide a self-contained narrative (Ezra 7:1-8:36; Neh 7:72b-8:12; Ezra 9:1-10:44).⁹ The canonical form consists of six parts: (1) an introduction of Ezra as priest and scribe of the Torah (Ezra 7:1-10); (2) the decrees of Artaxerxes authorizing Ezra to transport funds and vessels to the temple in Jerusalem, to appoint magistrates and judges, and to teach the laws of his God (Ezra 7:11-26); (3) Ezra's journey from Babylon to Jerusalem (Ezra 8:1-36); (4) Ezra's marriage reform (Ezra 9:1-10:44); (5) the covenant renewal and Festival of Booths (Neh 7:72b-8:18); and (6) the dedication of the city walls (Neh 12:26, 27-43).

Ezra is a leader in the three great assemblies of the second part of Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 7:1-Neh 13:31): as priest, he presides over the marriage reform in front of the temple (Ezra 10:10, 16, in 10:1-44); as priest and scribe, he initiates the covenant renewal by reading the Torah at the square in front of the Water Gate (Neh 8:2; cf. 8:1, 4, 5, 13 in Neh 8:1-18); as scribe, he leads a procession on the city walls in the ceremony of dedication (12:36 in 12:27-43; cf. 12:26).

⁹ This rearrangement synthesizes Ezra's mission in one year (458 B.C.E.), beginning with the departure from Babylon on the first day of the first month (Ezra 7:9) and ending with the dissolving of the mixed marriages on the first day of the first month of the following year (Ezra 10:17; cf. Ezra 7:8; Neh 7:72b; Ezra 10:9, 16). For a more detailed presentation of this sequence and a discussion of an original Ezra Memoir (EM) or Ezra Narrative (EN), see Duggan, *The Covenant Renewal*, 5-19.

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The narrator introduces Ezra with a genealogy that traces his line back to Aaron, through Phinehas and Zadok, the ancestor of the post-exilic high priests (Ezra 7:1-5). However, Ezra is not a high priest: his name is absent from the list of the high priests (Neh 12:11-12). Nevertheless, Ezra's Aaronite pedigree is foundational to his certification as teacher of the Mosaic laws (Ezra 7:10, 25; cf. Lev 10:10-11). As priest, Ezra teaches and enforces the divine statutes (Ezra 10:10, 16; Neh 8:2). Ezra carries forward the office of priesthood from the preexilic and exilic eras when priests were the guardians of the law (2 Kgs 17:27-28; Jer 18:18; cf. Hos 4:6; Mic 3:11; Zeph 3:4; Ezek 7:26). In him, the functions of priest and scribe are intertwined in handling the Torah just as, in the preexilic era, both priests and scribes were responsible for the law (Jer 8:8; cf. 18:18).

Among the priests in his era, Ezra is unique in bearing the title "scribe" (Ezra 7:11).¹⁰ Moreover, Ezra exhibits a unique relationship to other priests: he is not subservient to the high priest and he dictates reform to the priests (Ezra 10:1-44). His authority comes from the foreign king Artaxerxes, who manifests greater reverence for the Torah than do many of the priests prior to Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem (Ezra 7:12, 14, 21, 23, 25-26; cf. 9:1-2, 10-11; 10:5, 18-22).¹¹ So great is the Persian king's confidence in Ezra that he puts into his hands vessels for the temple, almost four tons of silver, and abundant supplies for sacrifices (7:19-20, 22). Ultimately, Ezra brings to the temple over twenty tons of silver, just under four tons of gold and other valuables (8:26-27). Furthermore, the king grants Ezra authority to teach, not just in the province of Yehud, but also throughout the whole satrapy Beyond the River (7:25). He grants Ezra freedom from tribute and the promise of sanctions against trespassers of the law, and transmits through him orders for the satrap and governors of the region (7:26; 8:36). More importantly, he gives Ezra authorization to appoint judges and magistrates throughout the whole satrapy (7:25). In sum, Artaxerxes bestows stupendous authority on Ezra.

Ezra puts the vessels and the funds for the temple in the care of fellow priests along with the Levites (Ezra 8:24-36). However, the

¹⁰ It is worth noting that in Neh 13:13 a scribe named Zadok works in cooperation with a priest and a Levite.

¹¹ For a description of Judahite embellishments of the Persian rescript, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988) 146-52.

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Levites, rather than the priests, become his co-workers in teaching the Torah (Neh 8:7-9). Their activity is reminiscent of the Deuteronomic tradition that identifies the Levitical priests as teachers of the law in Israel (Deut 33:10; cf. 17:18). Moses had authorized them to read the law to the people every seventh year on the Festival of Booths (Deut. 31:10-13; cf. Neh 8:13). The association of the Levites with the Torah may cast light on Ezra's authority to appoint judges (Ezra 7:25); however, the narrative does not describe Ezra as actually fulfilling this mandate. Deuteronomic material closely associates the Levitical priests with judges who are responsible for rendering legal decisions (Deut 17:8-13). Indeed, according to Deuteronomy, Levitical priests serve as judges (e.g., Deut 21:5; 24:8).

The Levites come to the fore after Ezra leaves the scene (Neh 8:18) when they take over the leadership in the covenant renewal by voicing the confessional psalm (Neh 9:5, 6-37).¹² Their active participation has some resonance with the Deuteronomic program for the covenant renewal at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, which appoints the Levites to declare the curses to Israel (Deut 27:14-26).

Insofar as the narrator introduces Ezra as a scribe skilled in the Torah (Ezra 7:6), the protagonist's career culminates in his reading the scroll from dawn until noon on the first day of the seventh month (Neh 7:72b-8:12), studying it with the leaders on the second day (8:13), and reading it again every day throughout the Festival of Booths (8:18). The narrator describes Ezra's reading "the book of the Torah of God" throughout the festival as reminiscent of Joshua who renewed the covenant upon entering the land (Neh 8:18; cf. Josh 8:34-35; 24:26). His reading throughout the Festival of Booths corresponds in large part with Deuteronomic legislation (cf. Deut 31:9-13). Like a new Joshua, Ezra gathers the formerly exiled "children of Israel" (Neh 7:72b) and initiates the covenant renewal by reading the Torah to them.

Apparently, the scroll from which Ezra reads is much more than a compendium of laws. This text is the focus of a liturgy: Ezra introduces it with a procession (Neh 8:2), mounts a platform that supports fourteen men (two groups of seven persons: 8:4), opens the scroll (and the people stand: 8:5), blesses Yhwh (and the people worship: 8:6), and

¹² Whereas the Greek inserts "and Ezra said" before the prayer of confession, the Hebrew text implies that the Levites mentioned in Neh 9:5 are the speakers of the prayer in Neh 9:6-37.

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provides interpretation along with the Levites (8:7-13). We do not hear a word of its contents, but the narration reveals the sacred quality of the text. Indeed, the scroll must be comprehensive since it takes at least eight days to read (cf. 8:18). There is no doubt that the narrator here has in mind the complete Torah, as he knew it.

II. Scribe and Priest in Ben Sira

In comparing the portrait of Ezra in Ezra-Nehemiah, with Ben Sira's outlook on scribes and priests, I first outline the points of contact between the Ezra narrative and Ben Sira's concerns, and subsequently I note the dissonance between them.

A. Points of Contact between Ben Sira and the Narrative Portrait of Ezra

An overview of the associates (Sir 38:32c-33) and the activities (38:34cd-39:11) of the scribe according to Ben Sira has persuaded at least one scholar that Ezra was an inspiration for these descriptions.¹³ Ezra is foremost "in the public assembly" (Sir 38:33a; cf. Ezra 10:1-14; Neh 7:72b-8:18), understands judicial decisions (Sir 38:33bc; cf. Ezra 7:25), experiences the company of "rulers" (Sir 38:33e; 39:4; cf. Ezra 7:12-14), devotes himself to the Torah (Sir 38:34cd; cf. Ezra 7:6, 10, 11), "asks pardon for his sins" (Sir 39:5de; cf. Ezra 9:6-15), and "gives thanks to Yhwh in prayer" (Sir 39:6d; cf. Ezra 7:27-28).

The scribe's devotion to "the study of the law of the Most High" (Sir 38:34cd) merits particular consideration for its resonance with the narrator's introductions of Ezra and the king's rescript (Ezra 7:6, 10, 11).¹⁴ Ezra "studies" the "Torah" of Yhwh (7:10). Such activity of the scribe

¹³ See Martha Himmelfarb, "The Wisdom of the Scribe, the Wisdom of the Priest, and the Wisdom of the King according to Ben Sira," in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism, and Early Christianity* (ed. Randal A. Argall, Beverly A. Bow, and Rodney A. Werline; Harrisburg: Trinity, 2000) 89-99, esp. 89-92. One must note, however, that Ben Sira's praise of tradespeople (38:24-34ab) and his poem on the scribe (38:34cd-39:11), for the most part, are extant only in Greek, with Hebrew for 38:24-27.

¹⁴ See Johannes Marböck, "Sir 38,24-39,11: Der schriftgelehrte Weise," in his collected essays, *Gottes Weisheit unter Uns: zur Theologie des Buches Sirach* (Herders biblische Studien 6; Freiburg i.B.: Herder, 1995) 25-51, esp. 34-36.

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relates to Aaron's priestly authority to "teach" the "precepts" and the "norms" to Israel (Sir 45:17). This text echoes Ezra 7:10 even as it similarly harks back to the teaching office of the Levitical priests (Lev 10:10-11; Deut 33:10).¹⁵ Such a chain of references that link the scribe to the priest in Ben Sira has opened up speculation about the possibility that Ben Sira may have been a priest-scribe after the fashion of Ezra.¹⁶

An additional link between Ben Sira and Ezra is the identification of the "book" of the law as the Torah (Sir 24:23 [Greek]; cf. Neh 8:1, 8, 18). For Ben Sira, personified Wisdom, which was present at creation, now inhabits the Jerusalem temple (Sir 24:10-11) and is manifest in the Book of the Torah (Sir 24:23). Wisdom in the law is a motif that seems to originate in Deuteronomic theology (Deut 4:5-6) and resonates with the description of Ezra's Torah as "the wisdom of your God" (Ezra 7:25).¹⁷ Both Ezra and Ben Sira venerate the Torah (Sir 24:23-29; Neh 7:72b-8:18).

*B. Dissonance Between Ben Sira
and the Narrative Portrait of Ezra*

However, while Ezra's zeal for the Torah may have inspired Ben Sira, his relationships to the temple and the priests would have made a negative impression. Ben Sira esteems both the temple and the priests, whereas Ezra maintains some distance from the first and reforms the second. Ezra's provision of transportation to the temple for the king's abundant sacrificial offerings may indicate that he shared Ben Sira's concern for appropriate sacrifices (Ezra 8:24-36; cf. Sir 34:21-35:13). However, Ezra shies away from the temple precincts. He sends a delegation of priests and Levites to transfer the king's gifts into the temple

¹⁵ Ezra 7:10b: חק ומשפט בִּישְׂרָאֵל חַק וּמִשְׁפָּט

"And to teach the precepts and the norms in Israel."

Sir 45:17cd: חַק וּמִשְׁפָּט אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

"And he taught his people precepts, and norms to the children of Israel."

¹⁶ See Helge Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter: Eine Untersuchung zum Berufsbild des vormakkabäischen Söfēr unter Berücksichtigung seines Verhältnisses zu Priester-, Propheten- und Weisheitslehrertum* (WUNT 2/6; Tübingen: Mohr, 1980) 20-22.

¹⁷ See Daniel J. Harrington, "The Wisdom of the Scribe according to Ben Sira," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism: Profiles and Paradigms* (ed. John J. Collins and George W. E. Nickelsburg; Chico: Scholars Press, 1980) 181-89, here 181-82. See also Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 151.

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(Ezra 8:30, 33-34). While he first meets the people at the square in front of the temple (Ezra 10:9), later he gathers them at the square in front of the Water Gate (Neh 8:1), and finally he encounters them on the city walls (Neh 12:31-37). True, he once stays overnight in one of the rooms at the temple (Ezra 10:6); but the temple priests are notably absent among those who arrange the assembly for marriage reform (Ezra 9:1, 4; 10:2). Indeed some of them are his strenuous opponents and their marriages to foreigners are his primary concern (Ezra 10:5, 15, 18-22, 23-24).

Ezra's behavior represents a contrast with Ben Sira's admonition, "Fear God and honor the priest" (Sir 7:29-31 [Hebrew]).¹⁸ Ben Sira is an advocate on behalf of the priesthood, at least in the lines of Aaron and Phinehas (45:6-22, 23-26), if not Zadok.¹⁹ Ezra's criticism of the priests may have disqualified him as an example that Ben Sira would want to hold up to his students.

The social status of Ezra is different from that of Ben Sira and his scribal students. As a delegate of the ruler of an empire, Ezra carries imperial rescripts that testify to his authority (Ezra 7:12-26). He is not answerable to the temple priests, to the high priest, to the governor of Yehud, or even to the satrap of Beyond the River (7:21-24; 8:36). His authority comes from no one in Yehud, and his social position and professional status are secure by imperial mandate. By contrast, Ben Sira and his students rely on the patronage of the powerful in Judah. Ben Sira's scribes apparently belong to a "retainer" class whose livelihood depends on the favor of the Jerusalem aristocracy, notably the priests and civic leaders associated with the temple authorities.²⁰ While Ezra has the authority to appoint judges, Ben Sira's students can only

¹⁸ See Benjamin G. Wright III, "'Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest': Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (ed. Pancratius C. Beentjes; BZAW 255; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 189-222, esp. 189-96. See also Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship," 263-67.

¹⁹ The hymn of praise for the Zadokite Simeon (50:1-24) is an addition to the Praise of the Ancestors (44:1-49:16). I do not consider Ezra's descent through the line of Zadok sufficient to have disqualified him from mention by Ben Sira (cf. Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship," 275).

²⁰ On the "retainer" class, see Benjamin G. Wright III and Claudia V. Camp, "'Who has been Tested by God and Found Perfect?' Ben Sira's Discourse of Riches and Poverty," *Henoch* 23 (2001) 153-74, here 162-68.

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aspire to that office (Ezra 7:25; cf. Sir 7:6; 38:33b; 39:4). Furthermore, Ezra's marriage reform involves his contradicting Ben Sira's admonition not to contend with the powerful (Ezra 10:1-44; cf. Sir 8:1-2; 4:7).

Ben Sira and his students are scribes of a different type than Ezra. Ezra is a priest and scribe, and as such, he reflects a revival of the pre-exilic tradition of the priest as teacher of the law, a function Ben Sira includes among the works of Aaron (Sir 45:17). However, while Ben Sira admires the priesthood, he does not ascribe to himself the role of a priest. The scribe in Ben Sira is a layperson.²¹ The Chronicler may provide a bridge from Ezra to Ben Sira when he describes lay officials joining Levites and priests to teach from the book of the law (2 Chr 17:7-9). However, one need not look beyond Ezra-Nehemiah to find the transition of the Torah from the hands of Ezra the priest to the community at large. This democratization of Torah reading is central to the drama of the covenant renewal (Neh 8:3; cf. 9:1-3).²² I suggest that Ben Sira's scribes are unwittingly indebted to Ezra insofar as they arise from the heritage of the whole people who voice commitment to the Torah stipulations in Neh 10:28-40.

III. Conclusion

The points of contact between Ben Sira's presentation of priest and scribe and the narrative portrait of Ezra, priest and scribe, are not sufficient to indicate that the sage had a particular admiration for Ezra. Only two scant verses provide meager literal connections with the Ezra narrative (Sir 38:34cd [Greek]; 45:17; cf. Ezra 7:6, 10, 11). There are no specific connections between Ezra and Ben Sira's poems on the trades and on the scribe (Sir 38:24-34ab; 38:34cd-39:11).

In terms of professional status and relationship to authorities in Judah, Ezra has little in common with Ben Sira's scribes. Ben Sira upholds the status quo and advocates deference to the priest. By contrast, Ezra is a reformer who directs his challenge at the priests first of all. Ben Sira's concern to maintain the favor of the powerful may

²¹ Lester L. Grabbe (*Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* [London and New York: Routledge, 2000] 57-58) views Ben Sira as inaugurating the tradition of "scribalism."

²² Duggan, *The Covenant Renewal*, 296.

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explain why he does not present Ezra as a model either as priest or as scribe.²³

Nevertheless, Ben Sira and Ezra share a love for the Torah. Ezra's reform culminates with the people reading the Torah on their own and swearing an oath of allegiance to its stipulations (Neh 9:1-3; 10:28-40). In generating such a reform, Ezra opens the way for the eventual emergence of a distinct scribal class in Judah. One may detect irony in Ben Sira's omission of Ezra. Although Ezra provided for the possibility of a scribal school like Ben Sira's, he remains outside the sage's religious landscape, perhaps due to the very fact that Ezra was a reformer.

²³ Cf. Núria Calduch-Benages, "Fear for the Powerful or Respect for Authority?" in *Der Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bei Ben Sira* (ed. Renate Egger-Wenzel and Ingrid Krammer; BZAW 270; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1998) 87-102.

“Faith in God” Rather Than “Fear of God” in Ben Sira and Job: A Necessary Adjustment in Terminology and Understanding

RENATE EGGER-WENZEL

If we look at publications on the Book of Ben Sira, it becomes evident that one theme is repeatedly treated, namely, “fear of God.”¹ Sirach 1:11-12 (NRSV) reads: “The fear of the Lord is glory and exulta-

¹ Josef Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach: Ihre religiöse Struktur und ihre literarische und doktrinaire Bedeutung* (AnBib 30; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967); Alexander A. Di Lella, “Fear of the Lord as Wisdom: Ben Sira 1,11-30,” in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference, 28-31 July 1996, Soesterberg, Netherlands* (ed. P. C. Beentjes; BZAW 255; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 113-33; idem, “Fear of the Lord and Belief and Hope in the Lord amid Trials: Sirach 2:1-18,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. M. L. Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997) 188-204; Martin Löhr, “Bildung aus dem Glauben. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Lehrreden des Buches Jesus Sirach” (Ph.D. diss., University of Bonn, 1975) 25-48; Víctor Morla Asensio, “Sabiduría, culto y piedad en Ben Sira,” *Scriptorium Victoricense* 40 (1993) 125-42, esp. 131-32; Núria Calduch-Benages, *En el crisol de la prueba. Estudio exegético de Sir 2,1-18* (Asociación Bíblica Española 32; Estella: Verbo Divino, 1997). The earlier work of Siegfried Plath, *Furcht Gottes. Der Begriff jr' im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1963) has no discussion of deuterocanonical literature.

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tion, and gladness and a crown of rejoicing. The fear of the Lord delights the heart, and gives gladness and joy and long life.” When you take the first reference in Ben Sira in its context, it gives you pause and you ask yourself how “fear in the presence of God” (according to Becker a “moral concept expressed in a legal formula”)² can be brought into harmony with a long and joyful life. Does not fear automatically exclude the emotion of joy? A person who is frightened, afraid of somebody or something, is normally unable to experience joy at the same time. Naturally you can say that “fear of God” is a formulaic term, which all believers understand as reverence for God (or something similar). But if on the inside I am standing to attention in front of any authority, how do I attain this joy and delight that the text of Ben Sira describes? In our secular and multicultural world, can you really expect that people handle the Bible (our holy text) with so much preparation and sensitivity that the language (which often seems antiquated) can be understood in a meaningful way?

If you use the dictionaries you will discover the following under *fear*: “An unpleasant often strong emotion caused by anticipation or awareness of danger” (Webster) or “The painful emotion caused by the sense of impending danger or evil. . . . A state of alarm or dread” (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*).³ If you apply this meaning to the “fear of God,” then from today’s viewpoint it is even harder to understand the choice of this word in the context of Sir 1:11-13, and we are virtually forced to seek a change in the terminology. In this article we will first look at the references from the older wisdom book (Job), and then make a closer scrutiny of Ben Sira, before summing up the findings.

1. The Book of Job and the “Fear of God”

In the earlier wisdom book (edited after the exile, but originating long before Ben Sira), there are in total nine references where we can

² Joachim Becker, “Überblick über den Begriff der Gottesfurcht im Buche Sirach,” in his monograph *Gottesfurcht im Alten Testament* (AnBib 25; Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965) 276-80, here 276.

³ *Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam, 1963) 305; *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (5th ed.; 2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 1.933.

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find the “fear of God” (Job 1:1: *wîrēʾ ʾēlōhîm*, *theosebēs*; 1:8/2:3: *yērēʾ ʾēlōhîm*, *theosebēs*; 1:9: *yārēʾ . . . ʾēlōhîm*, *sebetai . . . ton theon*; 4:6: *yirʾātēkā*, *ho phobos sou*; 6:14: *wēyirʾāt šadday*, Greek different; 15:4: *yirʾā*, *phobon*; 22:4: *hāmīyyirʾātēkā*, Greek different; 28:28: *yirʾāt ʾādōnāy*, *hē theosebeia*). It is noticeable that the noun *yirʾā* (“fear”) can stand on its own,⁴ directed toward God as its object of reference in the immediate context. The translation into Greek occurs either with *phobos* (“fear”) on its own, or else with *theosebeia* (“reverence for God,” as in Sir 1:25b) or *theosebēs* (“God-fearing”) or *sebetai . . . ton theon* (“he reveres . . . God”). In the following section, these instances will be considered within their contexts.

*a. “Is not your fear of God your confidence,
and the integrity of your ways your hope?” (Job 4:6 NRSV)*

In his first speech, Eliphaz of Teman tries to restrain Job’s verbosity by pointing out that now he is overtaken by the same fate as so many people troubled by sorrows, whom Job wanted to cheer up in former times (Job 4:3-5). Now that Job himself is affected, he loses his courage and is distraught. Eliphaz questions Job about his “fear” (*yirʾā*; *phobos*; NRSV: “your fear of God”), meaning rather his “faith.” By means of this question Eliphaz tries to show him that God is the guarantor of the connection between a deed and its consequence (*Tun- und Ergehenzusammenhang*).⁵ The basis for Job’s hope should be the righteousness of his ways (4:6). Above all, where has an innocent and

⁴ “Fear of God” is also expressed by the verb *yʾr* (“to fear”) in Job 9:35; 11:15; 37:22, 24. In addition, Job 37 deals with an awe-inspiring theophany, which in the conviction of Elihu ought to convert the supposed sinner Job.

⁵ The connection between a deed and its consequence (*Tun- und Ergehenzusammenhang*) is here used in the way that Franz Sedlmeier understands it: “The view that human activity has a good or bad effect on the outcome is a widespread notion in the world of the ancient orient.... The nexus between deed and consequence is, however, to be understood neither as retribution in the sense of a punishment imposed purely externally (e.g., by the deity), nor in the sense of a self-operating automatic system (‘a sphere of activity producing its own fate’ [K. Koch]).... Rather the connection between a deed and its consequence is based on the conviction of a preexisting ‘communicatively constituted world’ [J. Assmann], in which the idea of ‘mutuality or reciprocity’ (B. Janowski) and the principle of solidarity are shown to be decisive for human activity” (editors’ translation from Sedlmeier’s article “Tun-Ergehen-Zusammenhang” [3rd ed.], *LTK* 10.304-5, here 10.304).

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upright human being ever been ruined (4:7)? Eliphaz uses an agricultural example to illustrate his point, when he says that those who plow or sow iniquity will harvest trouble (4:8). God's breath will destroy them; the blast of his wrath will put an end to them (4:9). In this context *yir'â*, standing on its own in Job 4:6, has nothing to do with "being afraid of somebody," since Job can trust God because of his righteous way of life. Only evildoers must fear this God, because they have to expect annihilation for their deeds. Hence, in Job 4:6 it is better to see *yir'â* as referring to "faith" in God rather than to "fear" of God.

*b. "Those who withhold kindness from a friend
forsake the fear of the Almighty" (Job 6:14 NRSV).*

Soon after the beginning of his answer to Eliphaz in chap. 6, Job confirms briefly that he has not denied the words of the Holy One (6:10). Instead, he has practiced obedience to God's instructions, which is, according to Eliphaz's speech in 4:6, the reason that Job can have "faith" in God (*yir'â*).⁶ Commencing in 6:14, Job turns to highlighting the reaction of his friends to his suffering, using various pictures from nature, and he ends by deploring them (6:25-27). At the opening of the passage he describes what behavior he thinks his friends should display. If somebody wants to help his desperate friend, who in his need is even losing his "faith in Shaddai" (*yir'ât šadday*; NRSV: "the fear of the Almighty"), then he must show solidarity (6:14).⁷ Quite consistently Job has taken up the theme of Eliphaz in 4:6 and added a particular name of God (Shaddai) in connection with *yir'â*. Job expects therefore that a true friend will act in solidarity and support, even if one has gotten into such a hopeless predicament that one's trusting relationship with God (the confidence that he wants the good of humankind) has begun to falter.

⁶ See the definition offered by John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991) 138: "The phrase 'the fear of God' means both reverence toward God and living by a high ethical standard."

⁷ The construction of Job 6:14 as a nominal sentence strengthens Job's request further. The chiasmic structure of both colas is interesting, as it offers the core message in the central words (according to the Hebrew word order): desperate Job: friends: *solidarity* :: *trust*: Shaddai: Job's resignation.

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*c. “But you are doing away with the fear of God,
and hindering meditation before God” (Job 15:4 NRSV).*

Through the progress of the speeches and counter-speeches, the esteem of Eliphaz for Job has (in the second cycle) been turned into the opposite, as 15:2-6 proves. Denying that Job is a wise man, Eliphaz discounts everything uttered by his desperate friend as “windy” (NRSV) or “dubious.” When he suggests in 15:2 that Job’s inside is filled with the east wind, we even get the impression that Eliphaz wants to imply that Job’s verbal defense is obnoxious stinking flatulence. Eliphaz feels downright annoyed by Job’s words: they are of no use to him and do not give him any further help (15:3). Indeed, Eliphaz feels his own relationship with God is being put into question by Job’s words. That is why Eliphaz says that Job is allowing his “trust in God” (*yirʾâ*; *phobon*; NRSV: “the fear of God”)⁸ to be undermined, to such an extent that he is belittling (and even destroying) pious devotion before God (15:4). The corroborating accusation follows immediately. Job’s “iniquity” is becoming obvious through his own mouth, because he has chosen the language of the “crafty” (15:5). Eliphaz uses synonymous parallelism to strengthen his arguments; his accusation against Job is that he is condemned by his own mouth, not by his friend, and that his own lips give testimony against him (15:6).

Because in 15:4 there is synonymous parallelism between “doing away with fear (*yirʾâ*)” and “hindering meditation before God,” we can assume that *yirʾâ* refers to God too (so NRSV). However, if you translate *yirʾâ* (as has been customary) with “fear,” it would run counter to devout contemplation before God and indeed would make it impossible.⁹ Nevertheless, it can naturally also really mean the “fear of God,” because from Eliphaz’s point of view Job is now a sinner and as such will therefore feel God’s wrath (cf. Job 4:8-9), according to the ancient oriental understanding of the connection between a deed and its consequence.

⁸ The rendering “fear of God” (Job 15:4 NRSV) is a clarification of the Hebrew, which has simply *yirʾâ* (“fear”).

⁹ According to Georg Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (KAT 16; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963) 267, Job 15:4 refers to the destruction of piety or religion (the foundation of all wisdom); cf. Hartley (*Job*, 106). In the view of Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM, 1985) 148, “‘Fear’ (*yirʾâ*) approximates the idea of religion or traditional faith.”

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*d. "Is it for your piety that he reproves you,
and enters into judgment with you?" (Job 22:4 NRSV)*

In his last speech Eliphaz again mentions the "fear of God" (*yir'â*; NRSV "piety").¹⁰ In 22:2-5 he begins to treat the subject with questions. Is humanity of use for God? No. The wise are of use only to themselves (22:2). In ongoing parallel phrases Eliphaz asks whether it is of interest for Shaddai if Job is just, or whether it is a gain for God if Job makes his ways righteous (22:3). Does he call Job to account because of his piety (*yir'â*; NRSV: "Is it for your piety that he reproves you?"), and does he go to court with Job to get a verdict (22:4)? Is the wickedness of Job not great, and are not his iniquities endless (22:5)? Eliphaz accuses his friend of no longer putting his trust in God. Since Job has lost all respect for Shaddai, he only acts for his own benefit (22:6) by trying to enrich himself. In this way he disregards the social rules for protecting marginal groups in society, such as the poor, the widows, and the orphans (22:6-9). Job disputes this long register of sins in chap. 31 by making a protestation of his innocence.

e. Prologue and Chapter 28 (Job 1:1, 8, 9; 2:3; 28:28)

Finally, we will consider together five further references to fearing God in the Book of Job. The NRSV renders these verses as follows:

There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil (1:1).

The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil" (1:8).

Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (1:9).

The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil. He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason" (2:3).

¹⁰ Habel shows that a sarcastic interpretation of the phrase as "God's fear of Job" is also possible (*Job*, 338).

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And he said to humankind, “Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding” (28:28).

Job 28 first considers the question about the origin of wisdom with a description of mining (28:1-6), although it notes that neither humanity nor animals nor any other beings in creation really know anything about wisdom (28:7-14). Moreover, wisdom can not be exchanged for gold or jewels (28:15-19). Only Elohim understands the way to it and knows its abode (28:23). He has seen it, told of it, has made it and explored it (28:27). He tells humanity that “fear of the Lord” (*yirʾat ʾādōnāy, theosebeia*) is “wisdom” and—in synonymous parallelism—the avoidance of evil is insight. What is meant by that “wisdom” and “fear of the Lord” is not specified there; the only hint appears in the command to avoid evil. With this language we are referred back to the description of Job in the prologue.

The opening of the Book of Job offers a “traditional characterization of a wise person as one who ‘fears God.’”¹¹ Job 1:1 describes the principal character: “That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.” Similarly, Job 1:8 and 2:3 portray him as “a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.” In the LXX three of these five quotations (1:1, 8, 9; 2:3; 28:28) formally have in common the same adjective *theosebēs* (1:1, 8; 2:3), while 28:28 employs the cognate noun *theosebeia*, and 1:9 has a related phrase: *sebetai . . . ton theon*.¹² Moreover, they share the understanding that a God-fearing person avoids evil. This understanding is explained more thoroughly in the prologue: such a person is righteous and upright and “fears” Elohim.¹³ That is exactly what Satan doubts in 1:9, when he insinuates that Job is not “God-fearing” without a reason. Job 28:28 offers not the adjective *yārēʾ* (“fearing”) and the divine name Elohim (“God”), but the noun *yirʾā* (“fear”) and

¹¹ Ibid., 90.

¹² It is likely that the same Greek translator has been at work in the respective citations from the prologue and from chap. 28.

¹³ Fohrer (*Hiob*, 73) offers this definition: “‘Fear of God’ is the paraphrase for religious faith, used especially in the realm of wise living. It refers not to terror before God (or particularly before Yahweh) but to religious reverence.” Hartley (*Job*, 67) gives this explanation of “fear of God” in Deuteronomy: “It stands for a solid trust in God. One who fears God loves him devoutly. . . . In daily life he expresses his fear by striving to please God in faithful obedience inspired by love.”

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the divine name Adonai (“the Lord”). Thus the description of Job as “blameless and upright” (1:8; 2:3) goes further than 28:28.

How does a person in the state of “fear of somebody or something” attain wisdom or achieve a right point of view? Naturally one can cease doing evil for fear of consequences, but does one thereby reach an attitude that is guided by wisdom? On the contrary. No one can attain understanding or insight (or indeed wisdom) by chance or with force or even the threat of punishment. Rather, it has to be based on free will and therefore has to be a conscious decision *for* something. The text itself indicates the first step; the avoidance of evil (or at least a steady endeavor to do so) is something a person can do on his or her own. Maybe that happens out of the experience that otherwise I harm my fellow human being or myself. The motivation can also be based on a respect for a higher entity, namely, God. This behavior seeks insight and in the long run takes a person closer to a way of life guided by wisdom.

f. Summary: the Fear of God in Job

As the principal character of the book, Job is identified right at the outset in the prologue as someone that “fears” God (Elohim). A more detailed explanation appears in the following description: he is blameless and upright and furthermore keeps away from evil (1:1). Reference to the so-called “fear of God” is also linked to the ancient idea of a connection between a deed and its consequence. Humanity must first know God’s will (outlined in his words) and then keep to it. In the case of Job, that means following this way with integrity. Job stresses this especially in chap. 31 by using a protestation of innocence, asserting that he follows God’s commands (e.g., Deut 4:19; 22:22-24; Exod 21:2-3; Lev 25:39-40) and keeps covenant with him. In particular, he takes care of the marginalized social groups (the poor, widows, and orphans).

Because of his trusting relationship with God, Job feels especially obligated to help sufferers. It is not a matter of an isolated relationship between a single individual and his God,¹⁴ but also about sympathetic active behavior towards his fellow men and women. Thereby Job can be sure that he does not fall foul of the link between a deed and its con-

¹⁴ This is the sense in which Haspecker understands the striving for the fear of God (*Gottesfurcht*, 218 and *passim*).

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sequence. Instead, he can trust firmly that God will treat him in accordance with his positive behavior. But the righteous person is not protected from harm. So he can doubt the trustful relationship with God in particular emergency situations, or even break that bond and through his own doubts jeopardize the relationship of others with God. In such cases the doubter has to rely on the help of a friend.

After all these practically orientated statements about “fear of God” (better understood as “trust in God”), Job 28:28 offers one definitive explanation: *yirʾat ʾādōnāy* (“fear of the Lord”) is wisdom. This is equated with having enough insight to avoid evil. Included here are intellectual understanding, thinking, and feeling, as well as their application in daily life. Therefore a person is obliged to make lifelong efforts to get near to wisdom (whose provenance and abode only God knows) by practicing “trust in God.” One gets the suspicion that “wisdom” is the theory that has to be tested in the practice of *yirʾâ* (“fear”),¹⁵ or even better that “wisdom” and *yirʾâ* are two expressions with the same contents. People can get near to wisdom (and therefore to God) in the course of their life by means of actions formed by faith.

2. Ben Sira and the “Fear of God”

Haspecker calls Ben Sira’s first two chapters a “self-contained treatise on the fear of God.”¹⁶ In fact, they are central to any treatment of the expression “fear of God” because of the number of occurrences there (19 out of 52 [51]).¹⁷ That is why this analysis concentrates mainly

¹⁵ Hence Di Lella speaks of “practical wisdom” and “theoretical wisdom” (“Fear of the Lord as Wisdom,” 114 and passim).

¹⁶ Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht*, 93. He understands Sir 1:1–2:18 as providing a basic orientation for the whole book (p. 101).

¹⁷ See Haspecker’s table of references (ibid., 48–50). The Greek text has 21 instances of *phobos kyriou*: Sir 1:11, 12a, 12c+, 18, 21, 27, 28, 30; 9:16; 10:22 (*yirʾāt* γγγ, H^B); 16:2 (*yirʾāt* γγγ, H^{AB}); 19:20; 21:11; 23:27; 25:6, 11; 27:3; 40:26b; 40:26c (*bēyirʾāt* γγγ, H^B); 40:27 (*yirʾāt ʾēlōhīm*, H^B); 45:23 (different Hebrew text); plus 2 [3] occurrences of the noun *phobos* standing on its own in a relevant context: Sir 2:10; [4:17]; 36:2. There are also 12 (11) instances of *phoboumai ton kyrion*: Sir 1:13, 14, 16, 20; 2:7, 8, 9; 7:31 ([*ka*]bbēd ʾēl, H^A; the first Hebrew letter is not really identifiable); 10:19, 24 (*mīl*ṛēʾ ʾēlōhīm, H^A); 25:10; 34:17 (with *ton*, Rahlfs); plus 15 (14) references of *phoboumai kyrion*: Sir 2:15, 16, 17; 6:16 (*yērēʾ ʾēl*, H^A); 6:17; 10:20 (*wīrēʾ ʾēlōhīm*, H^{AB}); 15:1 (*yērēʾ* γγγ, H^{AB}); 21:6; 26:3 (*yērēʾ* γγγ, H^C); 32:14 (different Hebrew text); 32:16 (*yērēʾ* γγγ, H^B); 33:1 (*yērēʾ* γγγ, H^{BF}); 34:14, 16;

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on chaps. 1 and 2 (where the Hebrew text is lost). Nevertheless, the remaining occurrences in the book also offer their own insights.

After Sir 1:1-10 has revealed the source of wisdom, readers can see the so-called “fear of God” running through as a theme up to the end of chap. 2, with the author employing different types of style that are relevant for an understanding of the text. Alongside the repeated use of parallelism, we can mention only the cases of threefold repetition (characteristic of Ben Sira).¹⁸ Examples occur in the repetition of the noun phrase *phobos kyriou* (“fear of the Lord”) in 1:11a, 12a, 12c+ and in 1:27a, 28a, 30e. Similarly, there is also threefold repetition of the verbal phrase *phouboumai ton kyrion* (“to fear the Lord”) in 1:13a, 14a, 16a, in 2:7a, 8a, 9a, and in 2:15a, 16a, 17a. In addition, there is a combination of both expressions in 1:18a (noun), 20a (verb), 21a (noun).

However interesting a more detailed survey of the poetic structure would be,¹⁹ we must dispense with it here, because it goes beyond the limits of this article. For the present purpose, we will attempt to systematize the relevant references. To do that, we will select three categories of statements about “fear of God” and “God-fearing persons.” In the first instance we will look at statements of definition (“fear of God” is . . .), then we will consider the positive and negative effects of *phobos kyriou* (also including references to behavioral commands and prohibitions), and lastly we will discuss sayings about the behavior of the *phoboumenoi (ton) kyrion* (“those who fear the Lord”). These categories are treated below.

a. Defining the “Fear of the Lord” (phobos kyriou)

Right at the beginning of Sir 1:11-30, “fear of the Lord” (*phobos kyriou*) is defined as glory and honor (1:11a; cf. 9:16; 10:22; 25:6). In the

34:17 (without *ton*, Ziegler); and 2 instances of the verb *phouboumai* standing on its own in a relevant context: 15:13 (*lîrê’āyw*, H^A; *lîrê’āyw*, H^B); 15:19 (*yirê’û*, H^A [!]). The verse numeration for the Book of Ben Sira follows Friedrich V. Reiterer et al., *Zählsynopse zum Buch Ben Sira* (Fontes et Subsidia 1; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2003). The plus sign following a reference (e.g., 1:12c+) indicates that the verse or line is absent from G¹.

¹⁸ A list of threefold repetitions appears in Calduch-Benages, *En el crisol*, 281-82.

¹⁹ Cf. Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 138-52; Di Lella, “Fear of the Lord as Wisdom,” 114-32, on Sir 1:11-30; idem, “Fear of the Lord and Belief,” 189-204, on Sir 2:1-18.

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parallelism it is defined as gladness, and even a crown of joy (1:11b). An addition in G^{II} calls it a gift from the Lord (1:12c+). Sirach 1:14a develops these statements by saying that “to fear the Lord” (*phobeisthai ton kyrion*) is the beginning, in 1:16a the fullness, and in 1:20a the root of wisdom (a reference back to 1:6), while 1:14b asserts that it was created to aid the faithful.²⁰ In 1:18a “fear of the Lord” is even called the crown of wisdom, bringing peace and health. And in 1:27 *phobos kyriou* is equated with wisdom and education, which lead to faith and virtue (qualities in which God takes delight).

This must mean that wisdom and education are very closely connected with notions like “fear of the Lord” (*phobos kyriou*) and “to fear the Lord” (*phobeisthai ton kyrion*). How can we define these notions? They are the source and contents and furthermore the essence of wisdom; indeed, they are the greatest good attainable through wisdom. Moreover, they give to the relevant person a position of honor amongst the people as a gift from God, and at the same time provide the highest joy. From this we can deduce that “fear of the Lord” is God-given knowledge of life, or a talent to master life positively. This helps a person reach a highly regarded position in society, as well as personal joy.

b. The Consequences of phobos kyriou

The “fear of God” leads to certain effects in a person, particularly in his behavior. These can be described in a positive or even a negative way. Positively speaking, “fear of the Lord” gladdens the human heart according to 1:12a, and according to 1:12b it gives joy, happiness, and a long life. Offering a negative definition, G^{II} speaks in 1:21a+ of the fact that “fear of the Lord” keeps away sins and (in the parallel in 1:21b+) drives away all anger. By contrast, reverence for God (*theosebeia*) is an abomination to the sinner (1:25b). If a person lives without fearing God (1:30e) but with a heart full of deceit (1:30f), then his social decline is a logical consequence (cf. 1:30a-d). To avoid this, Ben Sira gives instructions in direct speech using prohibitions: One should not be disobedient to the “fear of the Lord” (1:28a), nor approach him with a divided

²⁰ Di Lella (“Fear of the Lord as Wisdom,” 123) expresses this circumstance as follows: “Ben Sira seems to say that like life itself wisdom is an infused gift granted to the faithful in the womb.”

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heart (1:28b; cf. 2:12b). One should not cheat one's fellows (1:29) or exalt oneself above them (1:30a). The "fear of the Lord" (*phobos kyriou*) requires from a person a holistic outlook, or perhaps better an unambiguous basic attitude, according to the motto: "Let your yes be a yes and your no be a no" (Matt 5:37). One should live free from sin because of an inner conviction, and not treat one's fellows in an overbearing or even treacherous manner. On the other hand, "fear of the Lord" is the reason for a positive attitude toward life, full of cheerfulness that leads to a long and fulfilled life.

c. *The Behavior of the "God-fearing"*
(*phoboumenoi [ton] kyrion*)

In the first two chapters of Ben Sira, under discussion here, the participle of *phoboumai* ("to fear") in combination with the object [*ton*] *kyrion* ("the Lord") occurs a total of seven times (Sir 1:13; 2:7, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17).²¹ It is noticeable that most of the references appear in a passage encouraging a person to put his trust in God and to keep faith in spite of all misfortunes or trials (Sir 2:1-18).²² So in 2:7a there is the direction to "those who fear the Lord" (*phoboumenoi [ton] kyrion*) to wait for God's mercy without deviating (cf. 27:3; 40:26-27), so as to avoid falling (2:7b).²³ This suggests a reference to 2:16b, since the "God-fearing person" should orientate his life in accordance with God's rules, because ultimately they contribute toward a successful life (cf. 19:20).²⁴ Again in 2:8a "those who fear the Lord" (*phoboumenoi [ton] kyrion*) are encouraged to trust the Lord, because he will not deprive them of their reward.²⁵ In this sense the declaration of 1:13a holds out the

²¹ The number seven here has a symbolic character.

²² Cf. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht*, 215; William H. Irwin, "Fear of God, the Analogy of Friendship and Ben Sira's Theodicy," *Bib* 76 (1995) 551-59, esp. 551; Núria Calduch-Benages, "Trial Motive in the Book of Ben Sira with Special Reference to Sir 2,1-6," in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research: Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference 28-31 July 1996, Soesterberg, Netherlands* (ed. P.C. Beentjes; BZAW 255; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 135-51.

²³ The high priest Phinehas serves as a great model according to Sir 45:23 G.

²⁴ Sirach 19:20 states that all wisdom for human beings lies in the doing of the law (cf. Sir 10:19; 15:11; 21:11; 23:27).

²⁵ For Haspecker (*Gottesfurcht*, 259), reward is not to be understood in the sense of a theology of achievements and rewards.

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prospect that all will go well for the God-fearing at the end of their life, and they will be praised (1:13b). And in 2:9 the God-fearing are told for the third time in direct speech to hope for the good, for everlasting joy and mercy (cf. 34:14, 16-17). The addition in the secondary Greek text-form (G^{II}) offers an explanatory comment: “For his reward is an everlasting gift with joy” (2:9c+ NRSV).

The last threefold repetition in chap. 2 is found in vv. 15-17, which contains a description of behavior. Sirach 2:15a says that “those who fear the Lord” (*phoboumenoi kyrion*) are not disobedient to God’s words (cf. 21:6; 32:14). In parallel, 2:15b asserts that those who love him observe his ways. Moreover, 2:16a describes “those who fear the Lord” as lovers of God; they want to achieve his benevolence by keeping his rules (2:16b).²⁶ According to 2:17a the God-fearing prepare their hearts, and thus they humble themselves before the Lord (2:17b).

Here we can sum up the description of “those who fear the Lord” (*phoboumenoi [ton] kyrion*) given by the wisdom teacher Ben Sira. The God-fearing are a group of people that put their trust in God, listen to his word and his rules, and act accordingly. These people base their behavior on their love of God. And love rooted in trust results in the attempt to please the loved one, by trying to fulfil his wishes (2:16b: “his law”). Then the recompense (in other words, the reward) will not fail to come: a good outcome, joy, and a blessed end to life, with the support of one’s fellows.

d. Summary: the Fear of God in Ben Sira

If we look at the first two chapters of the Book of Ben Sira, we can say that fear of the Lord is defined as wisdom (even more precisely as the source, essence, and even crown of wisdom), which is a very desirable gift from God. To attain this possession, one has to fulfill certain

²⁶ Di Lella (“Fear of the Lord and Belief,” 196) points out the close connection with the notion of “the Deuteronomic equation” and cites “Deut 4:5-6; 6:1-5; 6:24; 8:6; 10:12, 20; 13:5; 17:19; 31:12-13.” According to Sir 7:31 G (where the Hebrew differs), “fear of the Lord” includes honoring the cultic realm and giving adequate offerings; cf. Friedrich V. Reiterer, “Gott und Opfer,” in *Ben Sira’s God. Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference, Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 136-79, esp. 159-64, and his appendix “Opferterminologie in Ben Sira,” 371-74.

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conditions: one has to know and accept God's words, hear and obey God's rules, in other words, walk in God's ways. This means that people are not simply "God-fearing" because they cultivate an exclusive relationship with God, but out of conviction they have to live without sin and behave in a certain way toward their fellows. The God-fearing are respectful toward others and meet them in an honest and decent manner. Their word must be reliable and unambiguous, not lies and deceit.

In addition the "God-fearing" are loving people. Because they love God, "fear of the Lord" (*phobos kyriou*) can be interpreted as "love toward God."²⁷ A lover tries to guess the wishes of his beloved and act accordingly. He trusts the other person implicitly, is unquestionably faithful to his beloved, and hopes for forgiveness and mercy when he makes a mistake.

According to Ben Sira, the effects of this basic attitude (in other words, the rewards of this way of life) are personal happiness, joy, serenity, a well-regarded social position, a long contented life, esteem from one's fellows, and finally a good death. Thus, as in the Book of Job, the later sapiential Book of Ben Sira situates "fear of the Lord" within the ancient idea of the connection between a deed and its consequence. Indeed, "fear of the Lord" is a relationship of divinely given rules and their committed translation into action on all levels of one's personal life, as well as with one's fellow men and women.

3. Conclusion

When we compare the treatment of "fear of the Lord" and "fear of God" (together with their derivatives) in the Books of Job and Ben Sira, we find much common ground on the level of contents. In both books this term is identified with wisdom (and even subordinated to it in Sir 25:10). We can only get near to this desirable gift from God by first knowing God's will and his rules, and then acting accordingly.²⁸ Human behavior does not involve only the vertical dimension, which

²⁷ Sir 2:15-16; cf. Deut 10:12. See Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht*, 283-90; Ida Zatelli, "Note. Yir'at JHWH nella Bibbia, in Ben Sira e nei rotoli di Qumran: Considerazioni sintattico-semantiche," *RivB* 36 (1988) 229-37, esp. 229; Caldusch-Benages, *En el crisol*, 192-208.

²⁸ Cf. Roland E. Murphy, "Religious Dimensions of Israelite Wisdom," in *Ancient Israelite Religion* (ed. P. D. Miller Jr., P. D. Hanson, and S. D. McBride; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 449-58; on p. 452 he describes this as "observance of the Torah," thereby bringing a further issue into the discussion.

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means a bond with God marked by trust, but also the horizontal dimension, namely, an upright and unambiguous relationship with one's fellows in accordance with God's rules.²⁹ If a person lives according to these self-chosen standards, then in the normal course of life he has a good chance of personal happiness, a high social status (cf. Sir 10:24), and a long life with a good death. Here the concept of trust in God³⁰ (involving a respect or esteem for God's will) finds a link with the common sapiential idea of the connection between a deed and its consequence.

The differences between Job and Ben Sira in connection with “fear of the Lord” and “fear of God” (plus their derivatives) concern both form and contents. Besides the noun *yir'â* (“fear”), the Book of Job employs the adjective *yārē'* (“fearing”) and the verb *yārē'* (“to fear”). Although the noun and the verb can be used without a name of God, the context indicates the meaning. Hence the LXX translates the references in the prologue and in chap. 28 exclusively with the noun *theosebeia*, the adjective *theosebēs*, and the phrase *sebetai . . . ton theon* (which leads to a deduction about an identical translator for the whole of LXX Job).³¹ In contrast, the Greek text of Ben Sira employs the noun *theosebeia* only in Sir 1:25b. Insofar as the Hebrew text of Ben Sira has survived, in all the manuscripts we find as the Hebrew source for *phobos kyriou* (and related wording) only the root *yārē'*, though the names of God (Yahweh, Elohim, El) also differ from those in Job (Elohim, Shaddai, Adonai).³² From this we can deduce that at the time of the final editing and the translation of the Book of Job into Greek the phrase “fear of the Lord” or “fear of God” could still be interpreted differently. On the level of contents one gains the impression that in the Book of Job the theory of a successful way of life, determined by God, is described with the term “wisdom,” and its practical application needs to show itself through “trust in God.”

²⁹ Within the wider historical and political context this means: “You simply cannot walk the wrong path of Hellenism and at the same time walk the right path of Judaism” (Di Lella, “Fear of the Lord and Belief,” 201).

³⁰ Cf. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht*, 261-62.

³¹ However, we still need to explain the change of the Hebrew divine name from Elohim to Adonai in Job 28:28.

³² Plath (*Furcht Gottes*, 55) rightly points out that with *wēyir'at šadday* in 6:14 and with *yir'at 'ādōnāy* in 28:28, Job attests a vocabulary for the fear of God that appears nowhere else.

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Through the equation of “those who fear the Lord” with “those who love him” in Sir 2:15-16, the identification of “those who trust God and honor his will” can be extended to “those who love God” (cf. Deut 10:12; 11:1; Mic 6:8), thereby adding a major aspect. Perhaps modern translators can dare—at least for the Book of Ben Sira—to make the step from “fear of God” (which does not cover the contents any more) to “faith in God” or “respect for God,” or even “love of God.” After all, there is a big qualitative difference whether a person acts out of fear or out of love. A positive effect of this change would be to counteract the lingering prejudice of a “fear-inspiring” God of the OT.³³

³³ My thanks are due to Ursula Kücher-Hogg for translating this article from German and to Jeremy Corley for final proofreading.

“Come, Let Us Be Wise”: Qoheleth and Ben Sira on True Wisdom, with an Ear to Pharaoh’s Folly

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Recent literary methods have opened new horizons in understanding the meaning and message of biblical texts.¹ One such horizon is intertextuality that allows the reader to hear new theological messages that speak not from one book, or passage therein, but with an ear raised to hear multiple voices “conversing” in the canon. In this essay I offer an exploratory intertextual investigation of self-realized wisdom as evidenced in Qoheleth and Ben Sira and raise an intertextual question: “Do Qoheleth and Ben Sira perhaps have the Pharaoh of Exodus in mind when they warn against self-realized wisdom?”²

¹ I am honored to present this essay on the occasion of Father Alexander Di Lella’s 75th birthday. As a professor and then a reader of my dissertation, he showed himself the sage: practical, speculative, and diligent in the search of wisdom and discipline. *Cento di questi giorni!*

² This study does not address the question of Ben Sira’s knowledge of Qoheleth’s work. The focus is on how the two books view a similar theme, as well as its intertextuality. On historical connection and suggested parallels see, for example, J. Marböck, “Kohleleth und Sirach: Eine vielschichtige Beziehung,” in *Das Buch Kohleleth: Studien zur Struktur, Geschichte, Rezeption und Theologie* (ed. L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; BZAW 254; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1997) 275-301; F. J. Backhaus, “Qohelet und Sirach,” *BN* 69 (1993) 32-55; T. Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973) 85-90.

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The verb חָכַם (“be wise”) occurs seven times in the hithpael conjugation in the canonical OT: Exod 1:10; Qoh 7:16; and Sir 6:32; 10:26; 32:4; 38:24, 25 (the identified leaves in Hebrew). The hithpael is essentially reflexive and relates somehow to the self-realization of wisdom.³ This syntactical usage of the verb stands out in that all references therein come from wisdom literature *except* for the one occurrence in the Book of Exodus. I suggest that this small verbal cluster offers an opportunity to explore the intertextual evidence and its implications for our understanding of one aspect of authentic biblical wisdom, i.e., wisdom as self-realized. Further, the data offer an opportunity to interface with the great Exodus saga in which Pharaoh presumes to be wise and act wisely, only to prove himself unwise and an agent of what I would call anti-wisdom. Over and against this great OT memory of the Pharaohs of oppression, Qoh 7:16 warns against presumption in the advance of wisdom: “Be not just to excess, and be not overwise, lest you be ruined.”⁴ Sirach 10:26 also cautions against presumption in the advance of one’s wisdom: “Flaunt not your wisdom in managing your affairs, and boast not in your time of need.” These and the other maxims cited above speak both positively and negatively of self-realized wisdom. I suggest that the memory of the Pharaohs of Hebrew oppression in the Book of Exodus was on the mind of the later sages, and this recollection informs our intertextual understanding of true wisdom when expressed as “self-realized.”

Wisdom as Self-Realized

The first Pharaoh of the oppression characterizes himself as being wise in his exhortation to the Egyptians to stop the Hebrews’ increase, lest they join with an enemy and leave the country. Exodus 1:10 reads:

Come, let us be wise about them (הָבֵה נַחְכְּמָה לָּו).⁵

³ See H.-P. Müller (with M. Krause), “חָכַם, *ḥākām*,” *TDOT*, 4:364-85, here 4:371.

⁴ Translations are from the NAB unless noted otherwise.

⁵ This is my translation. W. H. C. Propp (*Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [AB 2; New York: Doubleday, 1999] 131) notes that many render the verb as active (“Let us deal shrewdly”; see NAB, NRSV, NJPSV), without conveying the reflexive nature of the hithpael. He suggests that Exod 1:10 means “take counsel together,” expressing the complicity of the Egyptian people.

At first glance Pharaoh's statement makes some sense. Why not turn their dilemma into an asset and arouse xenophobia to unite the citizenry?⁶ Although the Book of Exodus is not wisdom literature outright, the various affinities to wisdom tales in Exodus 1–2 have been noted.⁷ Indeed, the thoughtful reader can deduce as the narrative unfolds that Pharaoh is not so wise after all. He is never named while the humble midwives are. He seems to assume the willing complicity of midwives Shiphrah (beauty) and Puah (lass or splendor) in his pogrom.⁸ He fails to catch the veiled insult in the midwives' response to his displeasure: unlike Egyptian women, the Hebrew women are robust! The king is not only being deceived, he is being mocked.⁹ The king soon suffers the complicity of his own daughter in saving Moses, and then the next Pharaoh (Exod 2:23) sees his plans gradually unravel to the point that his own people lose heart: “The magicians said to Pharaoh, ‘This is the finger of God’” (Exod 8:15; see also 9:20; 10:7). By the time the narrative reaches the Sea of Reeds, Pharaoh proves to be an inept military commander. What wise, cautious general would run headlong into an altered body of water that looks more like a trap than a means of passage? In sum, blind self-will and the presumption of power characterize the Pharaohs of Exodus, beginning with the self-realized wisdom of the first Pharaoh of the oppression (Exod 1:10, expressed in the hithpael).

The occurrences of חָכָם in the hithpael in Qoheleth and Ben Sira offer an intertextual foil to Pharaoh's folly. Read together, these wisdom books offer sage statements on the range and limits (positive and negative) of self-realized wisdom. To begin, Qoh 7:16 pairs justice and wisdom in a negative statement and reads:

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See B. S. Childs, *Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1974) 13. He notes that the story of Exodus is not wisdom literature in the strict sense of the term. However, certain features surrounding the birth story of Moses do exhibit some affinities to wisdom tales. Childs further observes that Pharaoh seems to represent a typical figure, i.e., one who intends to act shrewdly but is duped by the more clever midwives.

⁸ On the names of the midwives see C. Houtman, *Exodus: Historical Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Kampen: Kok, 1993) 91.

⁹ J. S. Ackerman, “The Literary Context of the Moses Birth Story (Exodus 1–2),” in *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (ed. K. R. R. Gros Louis, J. S. Ackerman, T. S. Warshaw; Nashville: Abingdon, 1974) 74–119, esp. 86.

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Be not overly just or overly wise (ואל תתחכם יותר), lest you be ruined.

The pairing of justice and wisdom is an equation, since justice and wisdom go hand in hand.¹⁰ The adverbial qualifiers used for “overly” (הרבה of justice and יותר of wisdom) have evoked two main interpretations. Some commentators see in the warning an element of hypocrisy and pretense, i.e., claiming something one has not.¹¹ Others, more rightly I think, see therein the dangers of boasting and presumption.¹² The sage is not saying, “Show no pretense to wisdom when you have none,” but rather, “Be careful not to think too much of yourself in becoming wise.” In biblical tradition one cannot be too wise in the sense of transgressing by excess. Wisdom in its fullness is unattainable. This admonition finds its context in the overall viewpoint of Qoheleth that the mysteries and gifts of life are unattainable in their fullness. He writes as much in Qoh 7:23-24 regarding wisdom: “I said, ‘I will acquire wisdom’; but it is beyond me” (see also 1:17). Hence, an irony emerges. Presumption (or pretension for that matter) leads to ruin, so embrace moderation (7:16). That is fine and good. But moderation will never lead to the fullness of wisdom anyway, and Qoheleth does not advocate any “middle way” between two extremes.¹³ In sum, Qoheleth muses that self-realized wisdom is elusive and any grasping for such wisdom, much like his key motif of “vanity” or “vapor”

¹⁰ R. E. Murphy, *Ecclesiastes* (WBC 23A; Dallas: Word Books, 1992) 70.

¹¹ So R. N. Whybray, “Qoheleth the Immoralist? (Qoh 7:16-17),” in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* (ed. J. G. Gammie et al.; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1978) 191-204. W. P. Brown (*Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996]) thinks that, although Whybray’s linguistic arguments are overly subtle, the context partially confirms his thesis (p.141).

¹² So Murphy, *Ecclesiastes*, 70; C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 18C; New York: Doubleday, 1997) 253. However, whether one reads the *hithpaal* as pretentiousness or presumption, Whybray makes a point that offers common ground: “What we have here is rather a gentle warning which takes account of human weakness” (“Qoheleth the Immoralist?” 196).

¹³ As Murphy writes (*Ecclesiastes*, 72), “This kind of reason is simply not applicable to 7:16-17, which presents two points of view, not two extremes in moral activity.” J. L. Crenshaw (*Ecclesiastes* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987] 140-41) suggests that Qoheleth’s advice about excessive wisdom may be ironic. Wisdom, like justice (see 7:20), is an unattainable ideal.

(הבל), is a grasping for what is essentially a mystery.¹⁴ Qoheleth’s progressive wisdom challenges the more conservative Deuteronomic theology with its general equation of righteousness with prosperity.¹⁵ Hence, when cautioning against either outright hypocrisy or overweening pride, true wisdom knows its limits just as the sea knows its boundaries (Job 38:8-11), while yet all rivers flow to the sea (Qoh 1:7).

The beginning of Sir 6:32 offers a positive saying in regard to self-realized wisdom:

If you wish, my son, you can become wise.

(אם תחפוץ בני תתחכם MS A)

This saying is juxtaposed with another conditional clause: “If you set your heart to it, you can be shrewd.”¹⁶ Desire leads to action. To apply oneself is expressed in the Hebrew as setting one’s heart to the endeavor. This wording implies the application of the intellect and will, not simply an emotional desire. The following verse spells out *how* to act: “If you are willing to listen, you will learn; if you give ear, you will be instructed” (Sir 6:33, my translation). Such aural learning of wisdom is personified and extolled in Proverbs 8, e.g., “So now, O children, listen to me; instruction and wisdom do not reject . . .” (Prov 8:32-33). Authentic self-realization of wisdom is a noble task that moves from desire to action. One is not inherently pretentious or presumptuous in the search of wisdom for oneself, an observation that offers a positive qualifier to what is stated in Qoh 7:16. In Ben Sira true wisdom, somehow “self-realized,” can be a noble endeavor when the desire for wisdom overflows into action and, I might add, with fear of the Lord (Sir 1:12).

¹⁴ The term הבל is an *inclusio* in the book (Qoh 1:1; 12:8), indicating its importance as a primary motif. For a discussion of the semantic range of the term see M. V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999) 27-49.

¹⁵ On the Deuteronomic theology of retribution see A. A. Di Lella, “Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom,” *CBQ* 28 (1966) 139-54. Qoheleth and Job also represent a more progressive wisdom.

¹⁶ This is my translation. For the Hebrew MSS see P. C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (VTSup 68; Leiden: Brill, 1997); Z. Ben-Hayyim, *The Book of Ben Sira: Text, Concordance, and an Analysis of the Vocabulary* (Jerusalem: Academy of the Hebrew Language, 1973); M. Z. Segal, ספר בן־סירא השלם (3rd ed.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1972); cf. R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, erklärt* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906).

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Sirach 10:26 offers a negative warning about self-realized wisdom:

Make not a display of wisdom in doing your work.¹⁷

(MS B: אל תתחכם לעשות חפצך).

The saying appears in the context of Sir 10:19-11:6, a poem focused on true honor in wisdom. The sage suggests that it is better to do one's work quietly and humbly rather than call attention to oneself. To fear the Lord is essential and a mark of honor (10:20). In sum, self-realized wisdom must not degenerate into egotism. Self-realized wisdom bespeaks humility in the classical and best sense of the virtue, i.e., the right estimation of oneself.

Sirach 32:4 offers yet another negative warning:

And flaunt not your wisdom at the wrong time.

(MS B: ובל עת מה תתחכם).

There is a time and place for everything, as the saying goes, and social gaffs typically occur at table with wine and spirits flowing. This advice, couched in the context of banquet etiquette (Sir 31:12-32:13), reminds the hearer that erudition, experience, and simply practical wisdom are commendable, but the sage person demonstrates basic table manners and knows when to hold the tongue. I suggest that the sage's use of table manners to comment on wisdom offers a colorful image that calls to mind the genre of burlesque, i.e., comedy characterized by exaggeration and the clash between the dignified and the nonsensical or uncouth.¹⁸ The poem juxtaposes images of banquets, rich food, wine, distinguished company, and favored guests with what is totally crass. The wise person contrasts with the ill-mannered, i.e., those who ask how much food there is, grab for food at the same time as another, gorge when others have stopped eating, induce vomiting to make room for more food, and overindulge in wine.¹⁹ The poem offers

¹⁷ Translation (with MS B) as in A. A. Di Lella, "Sirach 10:19-11:6: Textual Criticism, Poetic Analysis, and Exegesis," in *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. C. L. Meyers and M. O'Connor; Winona Lake, IN: ASOR-Eisenbrauns, 1982) 157-64, here 159. MS A reads לעבוד instead of לעשות, without changing the meaning.

¹⁸ C. H. Holman, *A Handbook to Literature* (3rd edition; Indianapolis/New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1972) 76. He notes that the discrepancy between subject matter and style is the essential quality of burlesque.

¹⁹ One thinks perhaps of old Three Stooges skits in which the stooges crash an ele-

a lesson on practical wisdom using the example of table manners and includes therein a comment about not flaunting wisdom, a self-serving activity as uncouth as any impolite *faux pas* in an elegant setting. Be brief, but say much in those few words; be like the wise person, taciturn (Sir 32:8). Perhaps the sage hints that a little knowledge is indeed a dangerous thing! Youths who are fledglings to the “self-realization” of wisdom may be the very ones, with overweening pride, to flaunt it prematurely and with poor timing.

Sir 38:24 notes that one free from arduous labor can give priority to gaining wisdom:

Whoever is free from toil can become wise.²⁰

(MS B: וְחֹסֶר עֲסָק הוּא יִתְחַכֵּם).

Such is the prerogative of the scribe. Sir 38:25 then asks:

How can one become wise who guides the plow?

(MS B: מִה יִתְחַכֵּם תּוֹמֵךְ מִלְמֵד).

The leisured scribe contrasts with the farmer and all types of craftsmen and artisans who engage in manual labors (vv. 25-34), although those who work with the mind and those who labor with the hands can *both* attain wisdom, a point that I address in more detail below.²¹ The juxtaposition of two occurrences of the hithpael of חָכַם (Sir 38:24-25) contrasts the scribe and craftsman.

Since leisure is the basis of culture,²² the scribe represents those who enjoy intellectual pursuits but also take on the responsibility of teaching wisdom to others via writing and instruction. By the time of Ben Sira, the scribe had become the learned interpreter of Torah, the seeker and preserver of ancient wisdom, and an eminent attendant at public

gant mansion dinner party and soon bring the powerful, educated, and sophisticated guests down to slapstick. Such burlesque highlights the thin veneer sometimes evidenced between the upper crust and the common people.

²⁰ The translations of Sir 38:24-25 are from P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 445.

²¹ Ben Sira was also familiar with the Egyptian “Satire of the Trades” (*ANET*, 432-34); cf. Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 449-51.

²² See J. Pieper, *Leisure, the Basis of Culture* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 1998). He notes that whether one is an intellectual or a manual worker, “nobody is granted a ‘free zone’ of intellectual activity, ‘free’ meaning *not* being subordinated to a duty to fulfill some function” (p. 21).

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assemblies (see Sir 39:1-11).²³ Freedom from toil facilitates the pursuit of wisdom. Further, by the time of Ben Sira there were houses of study in law and wisdom for the education of wealthy Jewish youth: "Come aside to me, you untutored, and take up lodging in the house of instruction" (Sir 51:23). The wisdom of the scribe and the education of youth in wisdom both depended on some leisure. Addressing this point more broadly, Ben Witherington III writes,

Ben Sira say [*sic*] that 'the wisdom of the *soper* depends on the opportunity of leisure; only the one that has little business can become wise' (Sir. 38:24). Furthermore, his extensive warnings about the dangers of greed and wealth, about being concerned for one's good name which outlives its owner, coupled with advice on how to behave if one is made master of the feast at large banquets or in the presence of rulers, and the need to keep one's wife from parading her beauty in public or from becoming jealous of a rival, or the danger of seeking high offices, surely all indicate that his audience included well-to-do youth who might have occasion to face such challenges. . . .²⁴

Although Ben Sira comments that only the one that has little business can become wise (Sir 38:24), he recognizes that the practical wisdom of farmers, smiths, potters, and other craftsmen has its value and must not be trivialized (38:31-32). The scribe may hold a higher rank in society as preserver and interpreter of Torah, wisdom, and prophecy (39:1-3), but the craftsman enjoys a different status: "They set forth no decisions or judgments, nor are they found among the rulers; yet they maintain God's ancient handiwork, and their concern is for the exercise of their skill" (38:33-34). They maintain God's handiwork as they exercise human skills that bespeak practical wisdom (Sir 38:34; cf. Exod 28:2-3; 35:25-26; Isa 28:23-29). Many and diverse vocations are paths to self-realized wisdom.

In sum, both Qoheleth and Ben Sira offer different but related statements on the nature of self-realized wisdom, couched generally in terms of being realized by and for oneself. Self-realized wisdom is a value but subject to cautions. Qoheleth warns against presumption in becoming wise. That too is a form of vanity. Ben Sira praises wisdom

²³ See K. Paffenroth, "Scribes," in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000) 1173; Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 450.

²⁴ B. Witherington III, *Jesus the Sage: The Pilgrimage of Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994) 85.

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when expressed in positive action and extols those who engage in intellectual or manual labors (the scribe or the craftsman). Like Qoheleth, Ben Sira warns against flaunting wisdom before others in a manner that demeans its integrity and proves a disservice.

Qoheleth and Ben Sira, with an Ear
to Pharaoh’s Folly

The advice in Qoheleth and Ben Sira, stated in terms of positive and negative self-realized wisdom, resonates with the Israelite memory of the Pharaohs of oppression in the Book of Exodus. Qoheleth 7:16 warns against being presumptuous, a characteristic of Pharaoh in Exod 1:10. Pharaoh *has* wisdom but, as I noted above, goes on to act unwisely at every step.²⁵ Sirach 6:32 insists on the concrete application of wisdom with attention to listening, giving ear to sound advice, and growing in knowledge. In contrast, Pharaoh never really listens to Moses and Aaron regarding the messages of Yahweh or the cry of the Hebrews. At the first encounter between Pharaoh and Yahweh’s emissaries, the Egyptian king is dismissive of them and their God: “Who is the Lord, that I should heed his plea to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord; even if I did, I would not let Israel go” (Exod 5:2). Neither does Pharaoh listen to his own people when they express misgivings. Pharaoh’s presumptive wisdom never flows into wise actions on any level. Pharaoh is folly!

Sirach 10:26 advises doing one’s work humbly and without display. Egotism and self-promotion are unproductive. In contrast, the very first statement of Pharaoh in the Book of Exodus is a reaction against the increase of the Hebrews and a presumption to acting wisely. The smugness in “Come, let us be wise about them” (Exod 1:10) is apparent; no humility is evidenced.²⁶ Pharaoh’s plan is all about himself and for himself, though it is couched as “Us” (unless the first person plural suggests the complicity of the Egyptians).²⁷

²⁵ Fox (*A Time to Tear Down*, 261) notes that Pharaoh has genuine wisdom for he is speaking of his own plan.

²⁶ Pharaoh’s “Come, let us be wise about them” (Exod 1:10) recalls as well the plan of the citizens of Babel: “Come, let us mold bricks” and “Come, let us build ourselves a city” (Gen 11:3-4). Both plans reflect institutional sin.

²⁷ Propp (*Exodus 1-18*, 131) suggests that the complicity of the Egyptian people is implied in the verb in Exod 1:10 (understood as “take counsel together”).

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Sirach 32:4 uses the banquet setting to warn against bad timing in one's display of wisdom. One can only surmise from Exod 1:10 the social setting in which Pharaoh would have announced his proposal regarding the increase of the Hebrews and the potential danger ahead. However, the reader can envision it at a banquet among his courtiers, servants, and guests. To imagine so adds color to the moment and calls to mind the warning about table manners in Sirach.²⁸

Finally, Sir 38:24-25 praises both the scribe and the craftsman. The wisdom value of both vocations invites a recollection of the early part of Exodus. Pharaoh with his power and with his entourage of wise men, sorcerers, and magicians stands in sharp contrast to the Hebrew slaves whose worn hands build his supply cities. These workers are akin to the seal carvers, ironsmiths, and molders of clay of whom Ben Sira states: "Without them no city could be lived in" (38:32).²⁹ The isolation and oppression of Pharaoh in his anti-wisdom contrasts with the wisdom of Ben Sira that embraces the practical wisdom that can be found both in the life of the mind and in the work of one's hands.

Other intertextual points are evidenced between the sages and the Pharaohs of Exodus. In the context of warnings about self-realized wisdom in Qoh 7:16 and Sir 10:26, the concept of fear of the Lord appears as well (Qoh 7:18; Sir 10:23), thus echoing the reverential fear of the midwives in Exodus 1: "The midwives, however, feared God; they did not do as the King of Egypt had ordered them" (Exod 1:17), and: "Because the midwives feared God, he built up families for them" (Exod 1:21). Further, the classes of people cited in Sir 10:24 include the "ruler" and "judge" (MS B: שר and שופט; cf. Prov 8:16, plural),³⁰ terms that the Hebrew slave sarcastically applies to Moses in Exodus 2: "Who has appointed you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" (Exod 2:14). Ben Sira likewise states that nobles serve the "wise slave" (עבד משיכיל, 10:25). Moses designates himself as a servant of Yahweh (Exod 4:10, same term used in 5:15-16 of the Israelites) and is later given that title by the narrator of Exodus (14:31). These additional parallels with Qoheleth and Ben Sira, together

²⁸ Recall also the death of John the Baptist and Herod's distress for having granted an open favor before his banquet guests (Mark 6:17-29).

²⁹ Compare the "wisdom" of the craftsmen Bezalel and Oholiab for constructing and furnishing the tabernacle later in Exodus (Exod 31:3,6).

³⁰ Read with MS B. Cf. Di Lella, "Sirach 10:19-11:6," 160-61.

with the diverse advice about self-realized wisdom, may well represent allusions to the “wise” Pharaoh of the Exodus tradition. Pharaoh’s oppression and anti-wisdom in Exodus serves as a paradigm for the failure of self-realized wisdom when it is not in conformity with true wisdom, including fear of the Lord. True wisdom comes from God (Sir 1:1) who exalts the lowly and the oppressed; fear of God is greater than human power. Since the matrix of wisdom is creation,³¹ Pharaoh’s oppression is also anti-creational and contrary to genuine wisdom.

Intertextuality: Some Theological Reflections

In terms of any self-realized wisdom, Qoheleth offers a progressive qualifier to Ben Sira’s more traditional views. Ben Sira advises the aspirant to desire wisdom and pursue it, but to be careful not to flaunt it. Likewise, one should realize that scribes and craftsmen both enjoy practical wisdom in their own right. The texture of the advice in Ben Sira resonates with the Deuteronomic theology of retribution: the good prosper, the wicked suffer, and the suffering of the just is probationary. In Ben Sira a person in search of self-realized wisdom must guard against pretense and maintain a balance. Qoheleth’s advice on self-realized wisdom is stated just once and is negative in tone, emphasizing that human wisdom is limited and ultimately beyond the person.³² In the pursuit of wisdom, self-realized or however expressed, Qoheleth demands attention to the irrationalities of life and the dangers of illusion. (What is the exception to the rule, what is disjointed and not applicable to oneself or understandable of self?) These realities deserve a hearing as well. One can say that Qoheleth may irritate more than a few hearers, but he does hold his ground on adult questions that speak to an adult faith.³³

³¹ Di Lella notes that “[practical] wisdom is to be located within the framework of the OT theology of creation”: so Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 38. On wisdom and creation see R. E. Murphy, “Assumptions and Problems in Old Testament Wisdom Research,” *CBQ* 29 (1967) 101-12; idem, “Wisdom and Creation,” *JBL* 104 (1985) 3-11; L. G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994).

³² On contradictions in Qoheleth see Fox, *A Time to Tear Down*, 1-26.

³³ Ibid. Fox observes that the early rabbis were concerned that Qoheleth was unsafe for general reading and could even cause heresy. It was dangerous territory for the many (pp. 1-2).

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Self-realized wisdom turns out to be a mixed blessing open to caution and critique. At its best, such knowledge moves the aspirant from desire, to practice, to genuine embodiment. However, such knowledge can also lead to mistakes that bring dishonor because of hubris or poor timing. At its most horrendous, self-realized wisdom can fall into xenophobia, oppression, death, and yet another cry for liberation. Such horror is reflected in Israel's memory of the Pharaohs of the Exodus saga.

Elsewhere in Qoheleth the reader learns about everything being in its time (chap. 3: a time to be born, a time to die). Self-realized wisdom takes time, i.e., learning through trial and error, making well intended but regrettable mistakes, and eventually coming to the realization that full human wisdom is unattainable. Both Qoheleth and Ben Sira speak to these realities and share some common ground, whether couched in terms of conservative or progressive wisdom. Oppression hurts as we know from Exodus; wisdom hurts as we learn from the sages. Regarding Qoheleth, Fox offers this observation: "Ironically, in so far as wisdom succeeds in gaining knowledge, it causes pain. The rational intellect uncovers galling truths."³⁴ In sum, the sages advise the reader that the realization of wisdom will hurt as one grows into it as a sister and a tree of life (Prov 7:4; 3:18).

This discussion of self-realized wisdom in the sages has included raising an ear to the memory of Pharaoh's folly in the Book of Exodus. Israel's collective memory of Egypt in the OT is so often limited to oppression, suffering, the powerful over the powerless, and joy at the defeat of the enemy: "I will sing to the Lord, for he is gloriously triumphant; horse and chariot he has cast into the sea" (Exod 15:1). By and large, Egypt is that place of slavery and oppression in Deuteronomy (see Deut 5:6; 6:12; 7:18; 8:14), and Deut 11:10-12 depicts the Promised Land as a place unlike Egypt:

For the land which you are to enter and occupy is not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you would sow your seed and then water it by hand, as in a vegetable garden. No, the land into which you are crossing for conquest is a land of hills and valleys that drinks in rain from the heavens, a land which the Lord, your God, looks after; his eyes are upon it continually from the beginning of the year to the end.

³⁴ Ibid. 90. Fox notes, regarding Qoh 7:16, that you should not become extremely perceptive, lest you see things that will shock you.

To embrace a little more “self-realized” wisdom would be to engage in a little armchair philosophy (much like one might picture old Qoheleth) and make a few disinterested observations that mitigate against the “conservative,” the majority opinion, and perhaps the dominant and negative memory of Egypt. Qoheleth might note the “vanity” regarding Egypt evidenced in Deuteronomy. Amid the many exhortations that the Israelites keep their laws out of having been released from slavery in Egypt, Deuteronomy also commands the Israelites not to abhor Egypt: “You are not to abhor any of the Egyptians, because you were an alien residing in their land” (Deut 23:7). Qoheleth might also note that the memory of Egypt includes its being a place of refuge, and sometimes fortune, for such figures as Abraham, Joseph, Jacob/Israel, and Jeremiah.

Qoheleth’s wisdom (“Yes, but . . .”) might even mitigate any smug and self-assured reading of Pharaoh’s folly. Is old Pharaoh really any different from all others who, good or bad, end up in Sheol? Consider the end of life. The sage would take the wind out of typically triumphal readings of the memory of Egypt and the exodus. Such recollections are also vanity and chasing after wind. When Qoheleth warns, “Be not overly wise, lest you be ruined” (7:16), he speaks not of one group more righteous than another or of some golden mean toward the moderation of wisdom. He reminds us that human wisdom faces disconfirmation and God’s ways are ultimately transcendent and mysterious. Qoheleth stands with Job as an intertextual voice that presses the “comfort zone” of self-realized wisdom.

Conclusion

Both Qoheleth and Ben Sira reflect on self-realized wisdom (evidenced in the hithpael of the verb חָכַם), and such shades of wisdom find an antecedent in the memory of the Pharaohs of oppression and exodus. Intertextuality offers an opportunity to read and reflect among the books of the canon and glean insights to inform our understanding of biblical theology. Ben Sira teaches us that self-realized wisdom has its value when embraced with humility, perseverance, listening to good instruction, and learning from mistakes. Qoheleth warns sagely that one’s zeal for wisdom must take into account its mystery and its being beyond human reach in its fullness. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Sir 1:12); one’s pursuit of wisdom

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is a noble discipline but ultimately a mystery without end. One thinks of Qoheleth's enigmatic words: "Cast your bread upon the waters" (Qoh 11:1). Precautions do not resolve uncertainties, and the embrace of uncertainties is an aspect of true wisdom, self-realized or however expressed.

Ben Sira and the *Book of the Watchers* on the Legitimate Priesthood

BENJAMIN G. WRIGHT III

Although not one of my “official” teachers, Alexander Di Lella has been a constant conversation partner of mine since I began work on the Book of Ben Sira. From his initial readings of my doctoral dissertation to his many scholarly writings, from questions on conference papers to numerous personal conversations, I have learned as much about the Wisdom of Ben Sira from Alex as I have from any scholar. I am honored to offer this short study as a thank you for our years of mutual engagement with this important Jewish wisdom text.

In 1996 at the First International Ben Sira Conference, I delivered a paper in which I argued that *1 Enoch* and *Aramaic Levi* represented “groups of priests and scribes who feel marginalized and even disenfranchised vis-à-vis the ruling priests in Jerusalem.”¹ Ben Sira, for his part, was aware of criticisms aimed at the Jerusalem priests and several passages in his book contain his responses to them. While not all will agree that those responsible for *1 Enoch* (primarily chaps. 1–36, the *Book of the Watchers*) and *Aramaic Levi* were priests, most will agree that aspects of these works take a dim view of the ruling priestly aris-

¹ “‘Fear the Lord and Honor the Priest’: Ben Sira as Defender of the Jerusalem Priesthood,” in *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (ed. Pancratius C. Beentjes; BZAW 255; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1997) 189–222, here 218.

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tocracy in Jerusalem, particularly of their marriage practices.² Whether they were priests or not, the authors/redactors of the *Book of the Watchers* and *Aramaic Levi* (and those who later used these works) were deeply concerned with priestly affairs. The conduct of the Jerusalem cult mattered across the board in ancient Israel, and ancient sources present several different ideologies of the proper constitution of the legitimate priesthood. That is, who can/should serve legitimately as priests at God's altar? In this short study I want to ask a relatively narrow question, "Do we see in *1 Enoch* (primarily the *Book of the Watchers*) and Ben Sira differing ideologies of the priesthood that might be the source of some of the disagreements that scholars have noticed between them?" As I tried to show in my earlier article, these works offer contrasting positions on the calendar and on the legitimate mechanisms for acquiring wisdom. Might their differences also stem from alternative assessments of who should be priests in the first place?

Ben Sira and the Legitimate Priesthood

Ben Sira's attitude toward the Jerusalem cult has been something of a matter of dispute in recent years. Some argue that Ben Sira really cares little about the cult, and that he thinks proper ethical behavior more central to living a life pleasing to God.³ Such a distinction creates more problems than it solves, however, and does not really do Ben Sira justice. The cult matters deeply to Ben Sira, and the Jew who fulfills the Law must perform the necessary sacrifices in the Temple (Sir 7:29-31; 35:1-12; 38:9-11).⁴

Just as Ben Sira thinks proper cultic practice important, he also cares about the proper composition of the priesthood. Two scholars have offered different assessments of who Ben Sira thinks ought to serve as priests, and especially as high priest. Saul Olyan has tried to situate Ben Sira's view among the priestly ideologies found in the bibli-

² For one critical view, see Martha Himmelfarb, "The Book of the Watchers and the Priests of Jerusalem," in *The Origins of Enochic Judaism: Proceedings of the First Enoch Seminar, University of Michigan, Sesto Fiorentino, Italy, June 19-23, 2001* (ed. Gabriele Boccaccini; Turin: Silvio Zamorani, 2002) 131-35, esp. 134-35.

³ For discussion and bibliography, see Wright, "Fear the Lord," 192-93; Saul Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship to the Priesthood," *HTR* 80 (1987) 261-86, esp. 261-62.

⁴ Wright, "Fear the Lord," 193-94.

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cal traditions—the P narrative, the Chronicler, the additions to Ezekiel 40–48, Deuteronomy/Jeremiah—and several Second Temple Jewish texts more contemporary with him.

Olyan argues that the priority Ben Sira places on the priesthood exceeds even that of the P narrative, and thus probably indicates that Ben Sira himself was a priest.⁵ Concerning the composition of the legitimate priesthood, Olyan contends that Ben Sira's position essentially reflects that of the P narrative, that the priesthood is reserved for the sons of Aaron. He remarks, "In Ben Sira, as in P, the ideology of the priesthood can be characterized (1) by the claim of an exclusive covenant with Aaron and his descendents through Pinhas [= Phinehas], and (2) by an eternal covenant with the same."⁶ This covenant, Olyan concludes, includes the high priesthood, which is not exclusively the right of the sons of Zadok to possess, but is open to any Aaronid. Ben Sira's scheme makes one curious omission, however, that most likely reveals some conflict about that makeup of the priesthood. Unlike P, he does not treat the Levites at all, but rather he ignores them altogether. Even though in his ideology of the priesthood Ben Sira comes closest to that articulated in P, P explicitly assigns the Levites the task of serving the Aaronid priests. In Num 16:8–11, for example, the Levites approach God to "perform the duties of the Lord's tabernacle and to stand before the congregation and serve them," but, according to P, they have aspired to more than that, they have desired the priesthood itself.

Ben Sira's essential agreement with P stands in contrast to other biblical literature that also treats the relationship between the Levites and the Aaronids. Deuteronomy and Jeremiah, for example, articulate an ideology of a pan-Levitic priesthood. These works support the Levites as the priests who may rightfully officiate at God's altar (see Deut 18:1–14; Jer 33:18, 21). Ben Sira's complete silence about the Levites suggests that he does not share these claims.

The Chronicler, like P, places the Levites in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the Aaronid priests, but his narrative is much less polemical

⁵ Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship," 263–65. On Ben Sira as a priest, see also H. Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter: Eine Untersuchung zum Berufsbild des vor-makkabäischen Sōfēr unter Berücksichtigung seines Verhältnisses zu Priester-, Propheten- und Weisheitslehrertum* (WUNT 2/6; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1980).

⁶ Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship," 272.

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against them than is P. Whereas P claims that the Levites tried to grab for more than they should have, the Chronicler portrays the duties of the Levites as important, and he spends a fair amount of time on them.⁷ Ben Sira's silence, then, would appear to align him more closely with P, who is critical of the Levites, than with the Chronicler, for whom the Levites seem less troublesome.

Perhaps the most anti-Levite writer of all is the author of several additions to Ezekiel 40–48.⁸ The Levites have, according to this author, committed idolatry, and as a result, “They shall not come near to me, to serve me as priest, nor come near to any of my sacred offerings, the things that are most sacred, but they shall bear their shame, and the consequences of the abominations that they have committed. Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the temple, to do all the chores, all that is to be done in it” (Ezek 44:13–14). The only legitimate priests are the sons of Zadok, whom Solomon made high priest after deposing Abiathar (1 Kings 1–2). Apparently, where the Aaronids fit in this picture poses a problem for Ezekiel. These passages about the proper priesthood do not mention the Aaronids, and Olyan thinks that the author most likely lumps them together with the Levites who are excluded from the priesthood and who perform the temple chores.

Ben Sira's neglect of the Levites and even further his failure to mention Moses' priestly status must be regarded as a conscious choice, according to Olyan. Moreover, in clear contrast to Ezekiel's ideology, Ben Sira does not refer to the sons of Zadok even a single time, nor does he mention Zadok or the Zadokite Ezra in the Praise of the Ancestors. Olyan argues that Ben Sira ignores the Levites because he simply does not regard them as priests, and rather than polemicize against them, he simply renders them invisible.⁹ On the other hand, he does not mention the Zadokites because he views the wider group of Aaronids as having legitimate claim to the priesthood.

⁷ Ibid., 274.

⁸ On Ezekiel 40–48, see especially Jon Douglas Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40–48* (HSM 10; Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976) 129–58. Walter Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) 463, suggests that the additions are “postexilic,” whereas Levenson (p. 63) implies that an earlier date is preferable. The question, of course, is whether 1 *Enoch*, which uses Ezekiel 40–48, could have had a version of Ezekiel that did not include this “Zadokite stratum.” It seems likely at least that the circles that produced 1 *Enoch* would have known Ezekiel in something like its present form.

⁹ Olyan, “Ben Sira's Relationship,” 275.

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Yet, one of Ben Sira's heroes, Simon II, was himself a Zadokite. Why would Ben Sira ignore the Levites and Zadokites, but single out for praise a Zadokite high priest to whom he devotes considerable space in chap. 50? Olyan writes, "Though Ben Sira praises Simon greatly, presenting him as a priestly ideal, his Zadokite heritage is ignored and the occasion is used to make pan-Aaronid claims."¹⁰ If Ben Sira had been a Zadokite himself, Olyan reasons, he could scarcely have avoided mentioning that fact about him, but Ben Sira presses his "pan-Aaronid" claims even while praising a Zadokite high priest. He does not even refer to, let alone highlight, Simon's Zadokite lineage, and he designates the priests who surround Simon "sons of Aaron" and "all the sons of Aaron" (Sir 50:13, 16). Ben Sira could probably not make Simon disappear as he had the Levites, even if he had wanted to. Simon was his contemporary and, as Ben Sira records, he had performed important benefactions for the Jews and Jerusalem (cf. Sir 50:1-4). Olyan bolsters his argument by contending that Sir 45:24, part of Ben Sira's notice of Phinehas, presses claims that the high priesthood for all time belongs to the Aaronids through Aaron's grandson.¹¹

Gabriele Boccaccini takes issue with Olyan's conclusions about a pan-Aaronid priesthood and high priest.¹² He argues that Ben Sira, by emphasizing the covenant with Phinehas, has a Zadokite high priest in mind. In Boccaccini's reconstruction, if Ben Sira had wanted to emphasize a pan-Aaronid priesthood, he would not have fixed on Phinehas from whom Zadok was descended (1 Chr 5:30-34 [NRSV 6:4-8]), but on Eleazar and Ithamar, whom he advisedly ignores due to their troubled histories. He points to the Hebrew ending of the praise of Simon as evidence for Ben Sira's Zadokite leanings: "May his [God's] love abide upon Simon, and may he keep him in the covenant of Phinehas; may one never be cut off from him; and as for his offspring, (may it be) as the days of heaven" (Sir 50:24).¹³

Two issues militate against Boccaccini's position, it seems to me. First, even though the Priestly writer links Zadok to Phinehas genealogically, Ben Sira does not show any interest in appealing to that relationship. Thus, by skipping any reference to Zadok, Ben Sira may

¹⁰ Ibid., 276.

¹¹ Ibid., 270, 276.

¹² Gabriele Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism: An Intellectual History, From Ezekiel to Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) 135.

¹³ Ibid.

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well be looking beyond him to the broader number of Phinehas's descendants, both Zadokite and non-Zadokite. Second, the reference to the covenant of Phinehas in Sir 50:24 almost certainly harks back to Sir 45:24 where Ben Sira goes a small but significant step beyond Num 25:12-13 to which he is alluding: "Therefore God conferred on him the right, in a covenant of friendship, to provide for the sanctuary, so that he and his descendants should possess the high priesthood (*kěhûnâ gědôlâ*) forever." The Numbers passage mentions only the priesthood, not the high priestly office. Thus for a second time, Ben Sira essentially skips backwards over Zadok to grant the high priesthood to Phinehas and his progeny. This claim, combined with no mention of Zadok or his sons, inclines me to accept Olyan's position. Of course, a Zadokite high priest would not ultimately be problematic for Ben Sira, since a Zadokite would necessarily be a son of Aaron. He does not, however, *contra* Boccaccini, push for an exclusive Zadokite hold on the position of high priest.

The Book of the Watchers and the Priesthood

Olyan outlines the priestly ideologies of several Second Temple Jewish works roughly contemporary with Ben Sira—the Qumran corpus, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *Aramaic Levi*, *Jubilees*, and briefly the *Epistle of Enoch* (1 *Enoch* 92–105).¹⁴ He argues that some of these works clearly oppose the "Zadokite-controlled temple in Jerusalem," concluding,

Were they [the authors of these works] disenfranchised Levites? This seems likely, since the opposition begins with the founding of the second temple. Presumably, their opponents are the Zadokite and Aaronid ideologues who would exclude the rest of Levi from the priesthood. Thus we may have evidence here of a contemporary Levitic ideology opposed to Ben Sira's pan-Aaronid exclusivism.¹⁵

One work he does not treat, however, in which priests also appear, albeit in disguise, is the *Book of the Watchers*. 1 *Enoch* 12–16 encodes

¹⁴ Olyan, "Ben Sira's Relationship," 276–81. Olyan is cognizant of the problems connected with the *Testaments*, but he does think that they contain relevant evidence for Second Temple views of the priesthood.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

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within the myth of the fallen Watchers a criticism of at least some priests who serve in the Jerusalem temple.¹⁶ In chap. 14, Enoch ascends to God's throne room to deliver the petition he has written for the Watchers and to intercede for them. The description of Enoch's ascent and appearance before God envisions heaven as a temple in which the angels serve as priests. The fallen Watchers who descend to earth and have carnal relations with human women become the symbolic stand-ins for priests who have conducted marriages with women who are denied them by law, at least according to a particularly rigorous exegesis of Leviticus 21.¹⁷ Just as the Watchers violated the clear boundaries between the heavenly and the earthly and thereby incurred God's punishment, so have certain priests violated boundaries between the sacred and profane resulting in their condemnation.

One of the issues that remains unclear in the *Book of the Watchers*, however, is whether the author(s)/redactor(s) intended this condemnation as a general rejection of the Jerusalemite priesthood. This is how I understood the polemic in *1 Enoch* in my 1997 article. Martha Himmelfarb makes the point that even if the Watchers have indeed fallen and become polluted, some of the angels persevere in their purity and continue in proper priestly service. In her estimation, this portrayal indicates that in the eyes of the author/redactor of the *Book of the Watchers* some priests have remained faithful to the law while others have fallen. Thus the work is not sectarian in a sociological sense, and it actually represents a fairly mild criticism of the Jerusalem priesthood when compared to some other Jewish works.¹⁸

But who are these priests who persevere in proper practice? One of the difficulties in sorting all this out is that in adapting what appears to be a contemporary situation to fit into the myth of the fallen Watchers, the author/redactor seems to be comparing apples and oranges.

¹⁶ G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Enoch, Levi, and Peter: Recipients of Revelation in Upper Galilee," *JBL* 100 (1981) 575-600; David Suter, "Fallen Angel, Fallen Priest: The Problem of Family Purity in *1 Enoch* 6-16," *HUCA* 50 (1979) 115-35; Wright, "Fear the Lord," 196-201; Martha Himmelfarb, "Levi, Phinehas, and the Problem of Intermarriage at the Time of the Maccabean Revolt," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 6 (1999) 1-24.

¹⁷ On the *Book of the Watchers* as representing a rigorist reading of the biblical law about priestly marriages, see Himmelfarb, "Levi, Phinehas," 6-12, 23; idem, "The Book of the Watchers," 133-34.

¹⁸ Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 22; idem, "The Book of the Watchers," 133.

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Whereas all earthly priests may marry, even though they are restricted in their choice of marriage partners, the Watchers should be prohibited from marrying at all, since their heavenly natures do not require procreation. As Himmelfarb notes, "This lack of fit is the result of the inherited material the author of 12–16 has decided to put to new use, and it doesn't make it any easier to understand his point."¹⁹ One possible way to read the myth as we have it is that only some of the Jerusalem priests have become polluted by such practices and others have not. Perhaps, however, those who level the criticisms view themselves (if they are priests) or the priestly constituency they support (if they are not) as those who fulfill the marriage laws properly, and thus, 1 *Enoch* 12–16 represents their attempt to use the myth as a basis for substituting themselves for those in Jerusalem who have fallen like the Watchers. In any event, reading the myth in either of these ways does not provide any evidence for an Enochic position on the Zadokite, Levitic, or Aaronid composition of the true priesthood.

The veiled nature of the *Book of the Watchers*' mythic representation of priests as fallen Watchers and heavenly angels probably means that a clear ideology of the priesthood may not be forthcoming. Yet, the author has drawn on sources whose attitudes toward the legitimate priesthood are well known and that at least have the potential to provide clues to the views of the circles that produced the *Book of the Watchers*. One of its most important sources is undoubtedly the prophet Ezekiel. Much of Enoch's ascent and appearance before the divine throne in chap. 14 is modeled on Ezekiel's call in chaps. 1–2 and on the description of the new temple in chaps. 40–44.²⁰ Yet, as much as the *Book of the Watchers* relies on parts of Ezekiel, one looks in vain to find reflected anywhere Ezekiel's quite restricted view that the legitimate priesthood that serves at the altar belongs only to the sons of Zadok while all others are relegated to servile status.

Not only are the Watchers portrayed as priests and heaven as a temple, Enoch himself combines the roles of scribe and priest.²¹ In 12:4

¹⁹ Himmelfarb, "The Book of the Watchers," 133.

²⁰ For the details of these descriptions, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 9–28; George W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch* 1 (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001) 257–66.

²¹ On the relationship between scribes and priests in the Second Temple period, see Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 24–25; Steven Fraade, "'They Shall Teach Your Statutes to Jacob': Priest, Scribe, and Sage in Second Temple Times" (unpublished paper). I thank Prof. Fraade for making a copy of his paper available to me.

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God calls Enoch “scribe of righteousness,” and it is to Enoch that the Watchers go to request a written petition of their case. But Enoch also carries the petition to the heavenly temple where he is able to gain entrance to the sanctuary, a priestly prerogative, and where he does more than simply deliver the Watchers’ petition. He actually intercedes for them, thus performing a priestly function.²² In filling these roles, Enoch resembles perhaps the most famous scribe/priest, Ezra (a Zadokite), and certain elements of chap. 13 reflect elements of Ezra’s prayer of confession (cf. Ezra 9:6).²³ But what is true of the *Book of the Watchers*’ portrayal of the Watchers also applies to its picture of Enoch. There appear to be no distinctive or clear indications that in its descriptions of Enoch the *Book of the Watchers* is attempting to promulgate any particular view of a legitimate priesthood other than one in which its members adhere to a strict reading of Leviticus 21 when choosing women for marriage.

Himmelfarb detects yet another interesting priestly clue in the description of God in 1 *Enoch* 14:20. She suggests that the white raiment worn by God may be a reflection of the P narrative’s plain linen garment worn by the high priest in his once-a-year entrance into the holy of holies (Lev 16:4). Himmelfarb writes, “[T]his emphasis on the garment alone may indicate that the plain linen garment that the high priest wore when he entered the holy of holies, the earthly counterpart of the spot where God sits enthroned in the heavenly temple, contributed to the whiteness of the garment in 1 *Enoch* 14.”²⁴ If Himmelfarb’s view of heaven as a temple in 1 *Enoch* 14 indicates that we ought to understand the white clothing of God in 14:20 as that of the high priest, then 1 *Enoch* again projects the earthly priesthood into heaven. In at least this one place in the *Book of the Watchers* we perhaps can detect dependence on P, but it does not employ any of P’s arguments about who comprises the legitimate priesthood. Thus, we should not understand 1 *Enoch*’s God dressed as P’s high priest as Enochic agreement with P’s priestly ideology. Here again we are greeted with silence on the issue of who constitutes the legitimate priestly line.

What does the silence of the *Book of the Watchers* on the issue of a particular genealogy for the legitimate priesthood mean for its under-

²² Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 23-25; Wright, “‘Fear the Lord,’” 199.

²³ Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch* 1, 238.

²⁴ Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven*, 18.

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standing of who the legitimate priests are? Gabriele Boccaccini presents the most extensive case that *1 Enoch* does have a particular viewpoint on the priesthood. He thinks that even though *1 Enoch*, representing what he calls Enochic Judaism, takes issue with various aspects of the Judaism practiced by the ruling elite in Jerusalem (Zadokite Judaism), it derives from the same priestly circles as the Zadokites. He argues that *1 Enoch*'s narrative depends on the same chronology as the Zadokite Torah and thus "both traditions share the same priestly background."²⁵ As additional evidence he cites the use of Ezekiel by the *Book of the Watchers*, and he concludes that the parallels between the two are so numerous that "both Enochic and Zadokite Judaism can legitimately claim a father-child relationship with the exiled prophet-priest." Thus, Enochic criticism "was not the reaction of outsiders against the Zadokite order, but rather was the cry of insiders who (after a brief period of order) had seen denied (lost) (what they claimed were) their rights within the divine order."

Although he does not explicitly say so, it seems that Boccaccini reads *1 Enoch*'s silence on the issue of *who* the legitimate priests are as evidence that there is no essential disagreement between his Enochic and Zadokite Judaisms. That is, *1 Enoch* accepts that Ezekiel's Zadokite priests should be the ones running the show, and these two forms of Judaism represent two groups of Zadokites arguing over matters other than the correct priestly lineage. Boccaccini's subsequent argument that after the Maccabean revolt Enochic Judaism would spawn Essenism, with its emphasis on the legitimate sons of Zadok who oppose the illegitimate Hasmonean usurpers, also indicates that he reads *1 Enoch*'s silence in this way.²⁶ But ultimately the *Book of the Watchers* itself offers only silence on this issue. Certainly priests represent a main focus of discontent, and priestly issues matter a great deal to this author/redactor. In this sense, Boccaccini is probably correct that we have here not an anti-priestly diatribe, but rather an internal (that is, intra-priestly) family squabble. But in the absence of any clearly articulated or identifiable ideology in *1 Enoch*, the uncertainty

²⁵ All three quotations in this paragraph are from Boccaccini, *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 99.

²⁶ On Essenism as an offshoot of Enochic Judaism, see *Roots of Rabbinic Judaism*, 103, and this book's predecessor, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

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still remains concerning which family or families are doing the squabbling.

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When we look at the *Book of the Watchers* and Ben Sira together, however, their respective views of the legitimate priesthood would not appear to constitute a sufficient basis for concluding that the makeup of this institution was the primary issue that separated them. Although it amounts to an argument from silence, if the tradents who produced *1 Enoch* 12–16 had desired to advocate a Zadokite priesthood, they certainly could have emphasized (and indeed we might have expected them to feature prominently) those passages in Ezekiel that singled out the Zadokites as the only legitimate priesthood. They do not; the passages from the final chapters of Ezekiel that claim the priesthood for the Zadokites simply do not appear as part of *1 Enoch*'s argument. Ultimately, the criticisms of *1 Enoch* 12–16 do not revolve explicitly or clearly around the pedigree of priests, but they focus on specific aspects of priestly behavior—marriage practices.

While Ben Sira does articulate a view of the priesthood as belonging to all the “sons of Aaron,” his book also contains silences that require some attempt at explanation. Olyan understands Ben Sira's silence on the Levites and Zadokites as his rejection of the claims of those groups that they should exercise the priestly duties.²⁷ He calls Ben Sira's silence in chap. 50 about Simon's Zadokite lineage “subtle polemic” and the invisibility of the Levites he deems a “conscious choice.”²⁸ One might even ask if silence or tacit neglect is a more general and deliberate tool of Ben Sira, since he treats other matters in the same way. If Ben Sira was aware of the criticism of priests over their marriage practices, he betrays no obvious interest in them as a source of conflict. He simply ignores the issue, even though he singles out for emphasis the covenant with Phinehas, where he easily could have addressed priestly marriage if he had so desired.²⁹ Even when he does confront potentially contentious issues, we could characterize his

²⁷ Olyan, “Ben Sira's Relationship,” 275.

²⁸ Ibid., 275, 276.

²⁹ Himmelfarb, “Levi, Phinehas,” 22–23.

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response as “subtle polemic,” to use Olyan’s phrase. On topics like the calendar (43:2-8) or receiving revelatory knowledge (3:21-24), Ben Sira’s remarks are more suggestive than anything else, and perhaps what we might interpret as his reticence to discuss them openly reflects a desire to keep from drawing the attention of his students to such dangerous or contentious issues.³⁰ We have to admit, however, that in the face of Ben Sira’s silence all scholars can offer are possible explanations for it.

Ben Sira makes one more move vis-à-vis the priesthood that distinguishes him from the author/redactor of the *Book of the Watchers*. Ben Sira lived at a time when Israel had not been ruled by a king for several centuries. Himmelfarb argues that in the Praise of the Ancestors Ben Sira articulates an ideology that recognizes the high priest as the leader of the people and that rejects the notion that Israel requires a king. As part of his articulation of this view, Ben Sira attributes kingly qualities to the priestly figures he praises and at the same time deemphasizes the Davidic covenant. He attributes both royal and priestly features to Aaron (45:6-22), to Phinehas (45:23-24) and to Simon II (50:1-24).³¹ In doing so, Ben Sira not only legitimizes the contemporary situation—that is, the high priest is the leader of the Jewish people—he maintains that this configuration does not represent a break with the past. Rather, Himmelfarb argues, Ben Sira is working out the implications of Deuteronomy’s redefinition of the priesthood as teachers and adjudicators of an authoritative text.³² Ben Sira thinks that the secular monarchy was flawed from its inception and that leadership in the royal high priesthood, the situation current in Ben Sira’s day, was actu-

³⁰ I suggested this motivation as a possibility in “Putting the Puzzle Together: Some Suggestions Concerning the Social Location of the Wisdom of Ben Sira,” in *SBL Seminar Papers, Annual Meeting 1996* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 133-49, here 148.

³¹ For the high priest as a royal figure, see Himmelfarb, “The Book of the Watchers,” 134; idem, “The Wisdom of the Scribe, the Wisdom of the Priest, and the Wisdom of the King According to Ben Sira,” in *For a Later Generation: The Transformation of Tradition in Israel, Early Judaism and Early Christianity* (ed. Randal A. Argall, Beverly A. Bow, and Rodney A. Werline; Harrisburg, PA: Trinity International, 2000) 89-99, esp. 94-96; cf. Benjamin Wright, “Ben Sira and Kingship,” paper delivered at the conference on “Representations of Monarchy in Hellenistic Culture,” Somerville College, Oxford University, March 24-26, 2003.

³² This is one of the central arguments of her article “The Wisdom of the Scribe.” One interesting note here is that Ben Sira can apparently utilize aspects of Deuteronomy’s ideology of the priesthood while at the same time articulating a view that conflicts with Deuteronomy’s.

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ally the way that God had intended things to be. Himmelfarb further notes that any ideology of priest as king is totally absent from the *Book of the Watchers*. She suggests that Ben Sira, in this instance, presents an ideal picture.

He values the work of the scribe, the learned wise man, and he clearly views the ideal priest as filling that role, as an interpreter of Torah and practitioner of wisdom. This understanding has roots in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic reform, but it was apparently not universally embraced in the Second Temple period. . . . The Book of the Watchers shares Ben Sira's ideal of the wise priest despite a different set of images for conflating priest and scribe. But the Book of the Watchers' silence on royal priesthood may suggest disapproval—and here the Book of the Watchers, not Ben Sira, is conservative.³³

The question of who constituted the acceptable and legitimate priesthood in the Jerusalem temple was contested in the exilic and immediate postexilic periods, and it apparently continued to be a matter of concern for some Second Temple Jewish authors. Ben Sira's pan-Aaronid priesthood represents one construction among a number of possible options on the question. No clear answer emerges from the *Book of the Watchers*, and this Enochic work may not have been so concerned about this aspect of priesthood. Priestly lineage was only one of several possible matters (such as determining the proper calendar, delineating proper marriage partners, or defining the roles of the high priest) that could have separated groups of priests or their supporters from one another. For *1 Enoch* 12–16 the ideal priest was a scribe, as he is for Ben Sira, but one whose legitimate marriage partners were restricted to a much smaller pool of candidates than apparently at least some Jerusalem priests thought. While Ben Sira articulates a view that the priesthood belongs to all the sons of Aaron, if he is polemicizing against rival claimants to priestly privilege, his polemic is indeed subtle (as Olyan notes). But beyond priestly lineage, Himmelfarb has made a good case that another significant item on Ben Sira's agenda in the Praise of the Ancestors is to portray the legitimate leadership of the Jewish people as residing in the royal high priest, and

³³ Himmelfarb, "The Book of the Watchers," 134.

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here his approach differs from that of *1 Enoch*. Indeed, his advocacy of a royal high priest constitutes “a distinctive feature of Ben Sira’s view of Jewish history and the Jewish polity, and it surely was not unwelcome to many Jerusalem priests.”³⁴

Several concerns about priestly prerogative and station divide Ben Sira and the *Book of the Watchers*, and priestly lineage might be added to that list—at least as far as Ben Sira is concerned. But given the evidence we have seen in these two works, I cannot speculate whether lineage would have been important enough in and of itself to divide the author/redactor of the *Book of the Watchers* and Ben Sira. Had they actually been interlocutors, however, this issue would only have been one among a number about which they might argue.

³⁴ Ibid.

Amid Trials: Ben Sira 2:1 and James 1:2

NÚRIA CALDUCH-BENAGES

The Book of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus) enjoyed great popularity during the first centuries of Christianity, as is well demonstrated in its notable impact on the NT writings and the works of the Church Fathers.¹ Although there is not a single explicit quotation from Ben Sira to be found in the NT—neither the author nor the book is mentioned—certain terminological and thematic analogies cannot be denied.² This article proposes a comparison between Sir 2:1 and Jas 1:2, which are two texts that belong to different eras but are similar in form and content and in the answer they want to elicit from the hearers/readers.

¹ See F. Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico, testo ebraico con apparato critico e versione greca, latina e siriana* (Pubblicazioni del Seminario di Semitistica, Testi 1; Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1968) xxxii-lx; M. Gilbert, *Introduction au livre de Ben Sira ou Siracide ou Ecclésiastique* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1985) 41-47; N. Calduch-Benages, "Ben Sira 2,1-18 y los Padres de la Iglesia," *EstBíb* 61 (2003) 199-215.

² Cf. the index of allusions to extracanonical literature in the NT compiled by A. C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (HTS 20; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964) 54-55, and the list of literary connections between Ben Sira and the NT in H. Duesberg and I. Franssen, *La Sacra Bibbia Volgata latina e traduzione italiana dai testi originali illustrata con note critiche e commentate a cura di Mons. Salvatore Garofalo, 19: Ecclesiastico* (Turin: Marietti, 1966) 18.

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Previous Research on the Book of Ben Sira
and the New Testament

At the end of the eighteenth century Eichhorn remarked that the NT authors employed some expressions that were also found in the work of Ben Sira.³ Some years later Bretschneider included in his commentary on Ben Sira (1806) an excursus on the use of this book for interpreting the NT (*De usu huius libri in interpretando NT*), in which he compiled a list of many parallels between Ben Sira and the NT.⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century Edersheim maintains that there are passages in various parts of the NT where the meaning or the expression recalls Ben Sira.⁵ Nevertheless he does not share the opinion of his predecessors regarding the list of parallel texts. He finds the catalogue compiled by Eichhorn incomplete and the one by Bretschneider "altogether fanciful." Starting from the popularity of Ben Sira in Jewish and Hellenistic circles, especially in Alexandria, Edersheim prefers to concentrate his analysis on two works that reflect a certain familiarity with Ben Sira even without containing any explicit reference to it. He deals with the Letter to the Hebrews (representing Hellenism) and the Letter of James (representing Judaism).

From the early twentieth century till the present day, the relationship between Ben Sira and the NT has not roused much interest among exegetes. Notable exceptions are Box and Oesterley, as well as Spicq. Box and Oesterley widen the influence of Ben Sira to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke,⁶ while Spicq includes also the Pauline corpus and

³ Cf. J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in die apokryphischen Schriften des Alten Testaments*, vol. 4 (Leipzig: Weidmann, 1795) 75-76. For this section, cf. N. Calduch-Benages, "Ben Sira 2 y el Nuevo Testamento," *EstBib* 53 (1995) 305-16, esp. 306-7.

⁴ Cf. C. G. Bretschneider, *Liber Jesu Siracidae graece ad fidem codicum et versionum emendatus et perpetua annotatione illustratus* (Ratisbon: Apud Montagium et Weisium, 1806) 709-22. In his selection of parallels the author includes many texts from the Pauline letters. Cf. however, E. Earle Ellis, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament* (3d ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991) 76.

⁵ A. Edersheim, "Ecclesiasticus," in *Apocrypha*, vol. 2 (ed. H. Wace; London: John Murray, 1888) 1-239, here 22-23.

⁶ Cf. G. H. Box and W. O. E. Oesterley, "The Book of Sirach," in *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (ed. R. H. Charles; Oxford: Clarendon, 1913) 268-517, here 294-95. Regarding the relation of Ben Sira and Matthew, see A. Feuillet, "Jésus et la Sagesse divine d'après les Évangiles synoptiques," *RB* 62 (1955) 161-96, esp. 173-76; L. Cerfaux, "Les sources scripturaires de Mt XI, 25-30," *ETL* 31 (1955) 331-42, esp. 336-42; G. Lambert, "'Mon joug est aisé et mon fardeau léger.' Note d'exégèse,"

the Gospel of John, especially its prologue.⁷ Fortunately, in the last fifteen years some studies have appeared that revive the question and offer new insights. We refer to the dissertation by van Broekhoven and the articles by Petraglio, Kurz, Calduch-Benages, Wischmeyer and Dumoulin⁸ without taking into account the more specific studies on the relationship between Ben Sira and James, to which we will come back later.

Ben Sira 2:1-18 and James 1:2-12: Two Exhortations in Times of Crisis

The Letter of James is undoubtedly the NT writing that comes closest to the Book of Ben Sira.⁹ Although it would be an exaggeration to

NRT 77 (1955) 963-69; R. Rinaldi, "Onus meum leve." Osservazioni su Ecclesiastico 51 (v. 26, Volg. 34) e Matteo 11,25-30," *BeO* 9 (1967) 13-23. Regarding Ben Sira and Luke, see P. Winter, "Some Observations on the Language of the Birth and Infancy Stories of the Third Gospel," *NTS* 1 (1954) 111-21, esp. 114-15 [Sir 48:10 / Luke 1:17].

⁷ Cf. C. Spicq, "L'Ecclesiastique," in *La Sainte Bible*, vol. 6 (ed. L. Pirot and A. Clamer; Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1951) 529-841, here 547; idem, *Les épîtres pastorales* (4th ed.; ÉBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1969) 220-23; idem, "Le Siracide et la structure littéraire du Prologue de saint Jean," in *Mémorial Lagrange* (ed. L.-H. Vincent; Paris: Gabalda, 1940) 183-95.

⁸ H. van Broekhoven, "Wisdom and World. The Functions of Wisdom Imagery in Sirach, Pseudo-Solomon and Colossians" (Ph.D. dissertation, Boston University, 1988); R. Petraglio, "Figli e Padri. Lettori, copisti e traduttori cristiani di Ben Sirac," in *Lettere cristiane dei Libri Sapientziali* (ed. F. Bolgiani; Studia Ephemeridis Augustinianum 37; Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 1992) 489-504; W. S. Kurz, "Intertextual Use of Sirach 48.1-16 in Plotting Luke-Acts," in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel* (ed. C. A. Evans and W. R. Stegner; JSNTSup 104; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) 308-24; Calduch-Benages, "Ben Sira 2 y el Nuevo Testamento"; O. Wischmeyer, "Gut und Böse. Antithetisches Denken im Neuen Testament und bei Jesus Sirach," in *Treasures of Wisdom. Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom* (FS M. Gilbert; ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen; BETL 143; Leuven: Peeters, 1999) 120-36; P. Dumoulin, "La parabole de la veuve, de Ben Sira 35,11-24 à Luc 18,1-8," *Treasures of Wisdom*, 169-79.

⁹ Cf. A. Boon, *Dissertatio exegetico-theologica, de Epistolae Jacobi cum libris Siracidae, sapientia dicto, Convenientia* (Groningen: University of Groningen, 1860), and the lists of parallels in J. B. Mayor, *The Epistle of Saint James* (London: Macmillan, 1892) lxxiii-lxxv and J. Chaine, *L'épître de saint Jacques* (ÉBib; Paris: Gabalda, 1927) li-lvii. See also P. H. Davids, "Tradition and Citation in the Epistle of James," in *Scripture, Tradition and Interpretation* (FS E. F. Harrison; ed. W. Ward Gasque and W. Sanford LaSor; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978) 113-26; idem, "The Pseudepigrapha in the Catholic Epistles," in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* (ed. J. H. Charlesworth and C. A. Evans; JSPSup 14; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press,

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speak of literary dependence, there are numerous points of contact that merit closer study. Prominent among these is the literary, thematic and contextual affinity between Sir 2:1-18 and Jas 1:2-12. Both are exhortations belonging to the same biblical tradition, as Frankemölle has demonstrated.¹⁰ In both texts, various trials (sent by the Lord) may serve, even for a faithful and law-abiding person, as a means of interior purification, further growth in faith, and a cause for deep joy (cf. Gen 22:1; Exod 15:25; Deut 8:2; Job 1-2; Tob 12:14; Wis 3:5; Matt 6:13; Luke 11:4).¹¹ We do not intend to make a full comparison between both texts but will limit ourselves to examining them from a single point of view, viz., as witnesses of a society in turmoil.

In Sir 2:1-18 Ben Sira addresses the disciples who are searching for wisdom in a situation of crisis¹² and dedicates a vivid exhortation to patience (2:4, “be patient,” μακροθύμησον; 2:14, “endurance,” τὴν ὑπομονήν; 2:1 [title in codex 248], “on endurance,” περὶ ὑπομονῆς). Sirach 2:1-11 points to a disturbing and alarming reality with such expressions as “in time of adversity” (ἐν καιρῷ ἐπαγωγῆς), “all that befalls you” (πάν, ὃ ἐὰν ἐπαχθῇ σοι), “in humiliation” (literally, “in the changes of your humiliation,” ἐν ἀλλάγμασιν ταπεινώσεως σου), “in the furnace of humiliation” (ἐν καμίνῳ ταπεινώσεως), “in time of tribulation” (ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως), together with the terminology of “trial” (πειρασμός) and “purifying” (δοκιμάζω). The same can be said of other, metaphorical expressions such as “cowardly hearts” (καρδίαις δειλαῖς), “slack hands” (χερσὶν παρειμέναις), “a sinner walking

1993) 228-45; A. Hanson, “The Use of the Old Testament in the Epistle of James [Seminar Report],” *NTS* 25 (1979) 526-27; R. Bauckham, “James, 1 and 2 Peter, Jude,” in *It Is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* (FS B. Lindars; ed. D. A. Carson and H. G. M. Williamson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 303-17, esp. 306-9.

¹⁰ H. Frankemölle, “Zum Thema des Jakobusbriefes im Kontext der Rezeption von Sir 2,1-18 und 15,11-20,” *BN* 48 (1989) 21-47. In contrast with the author, we consider Jas 1:13-18 as a transition/bridge (dealing with the origin of temptation, not of trials) between 1:2-12 and 1:19-27.

¹¹ Cf. A. A. Di Lella, “Fear of the Lord and Belief and Hope in the Lord amid Trials: Sirach 2:1-18,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister* (FS R. E. Murphy; ed. Michael L. Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997) 188-204, esp. 196.

¹² See Di Lella, “Fear of the Lord and Belief”; N. Caldich-Benages, *En el crisol de la prueba. Estudio exegético de Sir 2,1-18* (Asociación Bíblica Española 32; Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1997); idem, *Un gioiello di sapienza. Leggendo Siracide 2* (Cammini nello Spirito, Sezione Biblica 45; Milan: Paoline, 2001).

on two roads” (ἀμαρτωλῶ ἐπιβαίνοντι ἐπὶ δύο τρίβους), “a feeble heart” (καρδίᾳ παρειμένῃ), all of which evoke the figure of a Jew who was once a law-abiding person, but who now lets his faith wither through imbibing new currents and religious practices (2:12-14). Finally, with the exhortation not “to fall into the hands of human beings” (2:18; cf. 2:7), Ben Sira seems to allude to Hellenistic circles and Hellenized Jews who began to proliferate in the country. Although it is true that the text nowhere specifies the nature of the trial and that all the above mentioned expressions could be understood as referring to personal experiences of the disciple, be they psychological, moral or religious, it is also true that nothing prevents us thinking of a trial caused by the relentless influence of Hellenistic civilization.

In Jas 1:2-12, too, a situation of crisis is envisioned which is hard to identify in all its details. In his letter, which seems to be more of a homily, James addresses Christians of Jewish origin living in the Diaspora (literally, “to the twelve tribes of the dispersion,” Jas 1:1), i.e., those dispersed in the Greco-Roman world, especially perhaps in the border regions of Syria and Palestine. He exhorts his readers insistently to have joy (cf. 1:2, “perfect joy,” πᾶσαν χαρὰν; 1:9, “let him boast,” καυχάσθω; 1:12, “blessed/happy,” μακάριος) and patience (1:3, 4, “endurance,” ὑπομονή; 1:12, “endures,” ὑπομένει) in times of trial. This exhortation implies a situation of weakness and insufficiency that seems to boil down to a lack of wisdom (1:5-6a), a lack of faith (1:6b-8), and a lack of solidarity between the poor and rich (1:9-11).¹³

One important aspect can be added. After having confirmed that the gift of wisdom has to be asked from the Lord with faith and without wavering, James concludes his teaching with a rapid and incisive description of the person of fickle faith (Jas 1:8). To this end he employs two rare words: δίψυχος (“double-minded”),¹⁴ a biblical hapax, and ἀκατάστατος (“inconstant, restless”),¹⁵ a NT hapax. In our opinion,

¹³ Cf. Frankemölle, “Zum Thema des Jakobusbriefes,” 26.

¹⁴ In Jas 4:8, the author again uses the word δίψυχοι, now in synonymic parallelism with ἀμαρτωλοί: “Cleanse your hands, you sinners (ἀμαρτωλοί), and purify your hearts, you double-minded (δίψυχοι).” On this word, see P. H. Davids, *The Epistle of James* (NIGTC; Exeter: Paternoster, 1982) 74-75 (with bibliography).

¹⁵ In Jas 3:8 the adjective ἀκατάστατος (cf. LXX Isa 54:11) refers to the tongue which appears as the personification of evil (a “restless” evil). It is noteworthy that Codices C and L read ἀκατάσχετον (“uncontainable”), probably a *lectio faciliior* that offers an easier understanding of the text.

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this “double-minded man” (ἀνὴρ δίψυχος), who is “inconstant” (ἀκατάστατος) in all his ways/actions,” alludes in a metaphorical way to the conflict situation which the Christian communities of the Diaspora experienced (cf. the analogous image in Sir 2:12) because of their continuous internal and external tensions.

A breath of hope concludes both exhortations and it comes in the form of implicit praise in the one and of a blessing in the other. With his invitation to let oneself fall into the hands of the Lord, and not into those of human beings, Ben Sira exalts the greatness and mercy of the Lord (2:18), who is compassionate and merciful, forgives sins and saves in times of affliction—as is taught by the ancestral tradition (2:10-11). James, for his part, takes up the theme of trial again by way of a makarism with a certain eschatological flavor¹⁶ that seems to be associated with the man described in 1:12: “happy the man who endures trial” (μακάριος ἀνὴρ ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν). Once the trial is overcome (literally, “having been proven”), he will receive the crown of life which is a symbol of the recompense of the just and a cause for joy. This is the reward that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

Ben Sira 2:1 and James 1:2:
Two Promising Openings

The two first verses of the exhortations in question have the following features in common: the use of the vocative, the use of the imperative, and the presence of the noun πειρασμός (“trial” or “testing”).

Ben Sira 2:1-18 opens with the vocative τέκνον (“child” or “son”), equivalent to the Hebrew word בֶּן (“my son”).¹⁷ This form of address is a very frequent formula in Ben Sira (24x) and in the Book of Proverbs (22x) as well as in the wisdom literature of Egypt, Babylon, and Assyria. Ben Sira employs it to address his young disciples, thereby establishing a family relationship with them (father/son). The vocative τέκνον expresses the authority and at times the affection with which the father/teacher instructs his son/disciple. In twenty-one instances (including our text), this address is found at the beginning of the sen-

¹⁶ Cf. in the Syriac version of Ben Sira lines 1-6 of the gloss substituting Sir 1:22-27 of the Greek text.

¹⁷ From Sir 2:7 until 2:14 the sage addresses his speech to οἱ φοβούμενοι [τόν] κύριον (“you who fear the Lord”).

tence and indicates the beginning of a theme or a new unit. In Jas 1:2 the vocative ἀδελφοί μου (“my brothers”),¹⁸ immediately after the verb in the second person, mitigates the authoritarian tone of the discourse. This form of address occurs often in the letter (ἀδελφοί, “brothers,” in 4:11; 5:7,9,10; ἀδελφοί μου, “my brothers,” in 1:2; 2:1,14; 3:1,10,12; 5:12,19; ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοί, “my beloved brothers,” in 1:16,19; 2:5), and its frequent repetition confers on the letter a certain tone of intimacy, which compensates for the harshness of some texts. This trustful relationship between sender and recipients continues to puzzle many authors, for whom the formula stands out more on account of its stylistic value than on account of its profound theology concerning Christian fraternity.¹⁹

The conditional clause “son, if you approach to serve the Lord” (Sir 2:1a) constitutes the initial premise upon which Sir 2:1-6 depends. It continues with a series of imperatives that express in a kind of “crescendo” the counsels to be put into practice in times of trial and adversity. The first four imperatives concern the interior life of the disciple (“prepare your soul/self,” “direct well [straighten] your heart,” “remain firm,” “do not be anxious,” 2:1b-2b), and the last two concern his personal relationship with God (“cling to him,” “do not get separated [from him],” 2:3a). To be added are the imperatives in 2:4 (“accept,” “be patient”) and in 2:6 (“believe in him,” “make straight your paths,” and “trust in him”). The author of the Letter of James (like the writer of 1 Peter) also begins his instruction with the imperative as the predominant verbal form.²⁰ The verb ἡγήσασθε (aorist imperative of ἡγέομαι), denoting some sort of mental judgment, could here be translated as “hold, believe, consider.” The addressees are called to experience, in the present and in the future (aorist imperative), a complete joy occasioned by trials or tribulations: “consider [it to be] a perfect joy (πᾶσαν χαρὰν ἡγήσασθε), my brothers, when you are engulfed by all kinds of trials” (Jas 1:2).

Both Ben Sira and James mention the reality of “trial” or “testing” in a vague and imprecise way. The former employs the expression

¹⁸ As L. T. Johnson has noted in *The Letter of James* (AB 37A; New York: Doubleday, 1995) 176, the letter resists a completely inclusive translation, specially when the author uses ἀνὴρ (“man,” 1:8, 12); cf. however the mention of ἀδελφή (“sister”) in 2:15.

¹⁹ G. Marconi, *La lettera di Giacomo* (Commenti biblici; Rome: Borla, 1990) 52.

²⁰ From a total of 1735 words, 43 are imperatives (2.5%), while 5 are participles that function as imperatives.

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“prepare yourself for trial” (Sir 2:1) with no other specification, while the latter qualifies the noun “trials” (Jas 1:2) with an adjective underlining its general character: πειρασμοῖς . . . ποικίλοις can be translated with “various trials” or “trials of every kind” (ποικίλος originally meant “of various colors”).²¹ In both texts, however, the context points towards a putting to the test of the religious stance of the disciple who wants to serve/follow the Lord. In Sir 2:1 the instruction “prepare your soul/self” (ἐτοίμασον τὴν ψυχὴν σου) is congruent with the statement in Sir 2:17: “Those who fear the Lord . . . humble themselves before him” (οἱ φοβούμενοι κύριον . . . ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ταπεινώσουσιν τὰς ψυχὰς αὐτῶν). A similar message appears in Sir 18:23, where the service of the Lord takes the form of fulfilling a vow: “Before making a vow, prepare yourself” (πρὶν εὔξασθαι ἐτοίμασον σεαυτὸν). We are dealing here with the integral preparation of a person in view of accepting and overcoming a trial, i.e., the various trials that inevitably come with the choice for the Lord, and that produce a progressive human and religious maturity in the young person. In Jas 1:2-3 the various trials or tribulations of the followers of Jesus are not only cause for joy, but also ways of purifying their faith. Indeed, Jas 1:3 mentions “the testing of your faith” (τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως). As fire tests gold by purifying it from its impurities, the Lord verifies the faith of his faithful with trials and adversities (cf. 1 Pet 1:7: “so that the genuineness of your faith,” using the same Greek phrase, ἵνα τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως).²²

Conclusion

In accordance with the sapiential tradition of the OT (cf. Prov 3:11-12; Deut 8:5; Wis 3:5; 11:9), Ben Sira sees a God-given trial as a means of education. In Sir 2:1-18 the sage announces from the very beginning the hard reality of trials. A “trial” (πειρασμός) is a category of its own which comprises both Fear-of-the-Lord and its possible alternative. If those who face a situation of crisis react with Fear-of-the-Lord and all that is entailed by this attitude, then they will enjoy divine mercy (2:7-

²¹ For Johnson (*The Letter of James*, 177), the conjunction ὅταν (“whenever”) also contributes to this sense of vagueness and generalization.

²² Cf. Sir 2:5: “For gold is tested (δοκιμάζεται) in the fire, and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation.”

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11). If, however, they prefer to adopt an attitude opposed to Fear-of-the-Lord, then the only destiny awaiting them is their downfall (2:12-14). Wisdom's disciples have to know that the option for Wisdom (which is in fact the option for the Lord) entails a series of difficulties that can only be overcome with the help of divine mercy.

As an inheritor of this sapiential tradition,²³ the author of the Letter of James constructs a new formulation on the theme of trial for the catechesis of the primitive Church. Being familiar with this tradition, he utilizes (partially) the same terminology and the same style as the sages, in order to give a message of hope to some Christian communities in crisis. In Jas 1:2-12 we see not only the author's familiarity with the tradition he has inherited, but also his specific contribution to it: trials become an occasion for joy, while patience is the true motive for rejoicing.²⁴

Both Sir 2:1 and Jas 1:2 contain the authentic wisdom of a teacher who is always ready to help the disciple in times of difficulty. On the one hand, the teacher displays a sense of reality, for following the Lord inevitably brings trials, but on the other hand, hope and optimism, for in the long run patience always triumphs over difficulty and gives the disciple reasons for joy.

²³ On the multiple connections of James with the biblical wisdom tradition, see Johnson, *The Letter of James*, 33 n. 119.

²⁴ Marconi, *La lettera di Giacomo*, 54.

Sanctus Matthaeus, Magister Sapientiae, Summa cum Laude

JAMES K. AITKEN

Any study of Ben Sira cannot nowadays omit the name of Alexander Di Lella from the bibliography. His work encompasses three main facets of Ben Sira: textual issues, the theology or exegesis of the text, and the poetic nature of the Hebrew.¹ He shows himself to be a true *magister sapientiae*. It is therefore appropriate to consider an ancient *magister sapientiae*, and one who may also have devoted time to the study of Ben Sira, namely the author of Matthew's Gospel. There is one aspect of note that I wish to draw attention to here. In a telling passage in his Anchor Bible commentary Di Lella has this to say:

[W]e must keep in mind that Ben Sira utilized certain Gentile expressions and aphorisms only because he considered these to be true and hence, in his mind, conformable to Jewish tradition and doctrine. In effect, what Ben Sira does with the non-Jewish material is to make it as Jewish as possible, and this procedure is far more important and

¹ A. A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (Studies in Classical Literature 1; The Hague: Mouton, 1966); idem, "Conservative and Progressive Theology: Sirach and Wisdom," *CBQ* 28 (1966) 139–54; idem, "The Poetry of Ben Sira," in *H. M. Orlinsky Volume* (ed. B. A. Levine and A. Malamat; Erlsr 16; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1982) 26*–33*.

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significant for our understanding of his book than the fact that he has borrowed or adapted it in the first place.²

Di Lella is probably correct to emphasize what Jack T. Sanders has described as the “Judaizing” of Hellenic thought.³ To delineate what is Jewish and what is Greek is very difficult in the case of Ben Sira, and all the more so for Matthew.⁴ It is not merely a matter of the synthesis of Jewish and Greek cultures, but a realization that the two are not equal categories of thought. Judaism was an identifiable religious and “ethnic” group, whilst Hellenism was a political and cultural force, allowing one to be both Jewish and Hellenistic; Judaism did not always exist apart from Hellenism.⁵ If we use such terms as “Hellenistic” and “Jewish” we immediately establish their separate identities instead of the fusion that we are arguing for. Nevertheless, it is a convenient shorthand to identify the very blending of the “Hellenistic” and “Jewish” material, and this blending raises important questions for an intertextual reading of Ben Sira and the Gospel of Matthew.⁶

Matthew’s Gospel has variously been interpreted between these two poles of Judaism and Hellenism, and particular passages have in turn been seen to derive from either Jewish or Gentile and “Gnostic” sources. In terms of genre, the Gospel has for some time been compared occasionally to Greco-Roman biographies,⁷ but until recently the author has

² P. W. Skehan and A. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes, Introduction and Commentary* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987) 49–50.

³ J. T. Sanders (*Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom* [SBLMS 28; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983] 58) stresses that “what [Ben Sira] opposes is the dismantling of Judaism.”

⁴ Cf. Martin Hengel in collaboration with Christoph Marksches, *The “Hellenization” of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Trinity Press, 1989). Hengel notes the effect of three hundred years of Hellenistic influence: “the term ‘Hellenistic’ as currently used no longer serves to make any meaningful differentiation in terms of the history of religions within the history of earliest Christianity” (p. 53).

⁵ This is explored further in my retrospective review, “M. Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus*,” *JBL* 123 (2004) 331–41.

⁶ Di Lella’s own study of the Matthean Beatitudes, “The Structure and Composition of the Matthean Beatitudes,” in *To Touch the Text: Biblical and Related Studies in Honor of Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.* (ed. M. P. Horgan and P. J. Kobelski; New York: Crossroad, 1989) 237–42, does not in fact discuss Ben Sira, as it is concerned with the internal structure of the pericope.

⁷ Prominent in this regard have been C. W. Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Greco-Roman World* (FBBS 27; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1970); C. Talbert, *What is a Gospel?* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

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largely been seen as a “Jewish Christian.”⁸ The apparent knowledge of Judaism and Jewish legal prescriptions has led one scholar to go as far as to suggest that the author was a rabbinic follower of Yochanan ben Zakkai who had been converted to Christianity.⁹ Others are more content to emphasize the “midrashic” technique used by the author or his Jewish background revealed in his knowledge of sources.¹⁰ The precise shade of his Judaism has been variously presented, from conservative through to strongly Hellenistic. More recently there has been a movement to see the author as a Gentile, especially given his polemic against Judaism (e.g., Matthew 23) and his misunderstanding of the biblical text (e.g., his use of Zech 9:9 in Matt 21:2, 7). The nature of his Judaic background, therefore, can have consequences for our view of Jewish–Christian relations in antiquity, and in all this the role of Jewish sources in Matthew’s work is highly significant.

The similarities in the work of Ben Sira and Matthew have frequently been noted. On a general level, proverbial wisdom as a teaching tool is exemplified in Ben Sira and Matthew, and is most apparent in the Sermon on the Mount.¹¹ The very form of the makarism, while often employed in a legal context in the Bible (Deut 27:12; 28:1–14; 31:9–13; cf. 1QS 2:1–4; 1QM 13:2–3), appears as a didactic tool in the Psalms (e.g., Ps 1:1) and in Ben Sira (e.g., Sir 14:1–2, 20–27; cf. 4Q525 2 ii 1–11) before the time of Matthew.¹² The similarities are often to be

⁸ On the problem of this term see R. E. Brown and J. P. Meier, *Antioch and Rome: New Testament Cradles of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983) 1–8; J. N. Carleton Paget, “Jewish Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 3: The Early Roman Period* (ed. W. Horbury, W. D. Davies, and J. Sturdy; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 731–75, esp. 733–42.

⁹ E. von Dobschütz, “Matthäus als Rabbi und Katechet,” *ZNW* 27 (1928) 338–48.

¹⁰ M. D. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew. The Speaker’s Lectures in Biblical Studies 1969–71* (London: SPCK, 1974). D. J. Harrington’s work, *The Gospel of Matthew* (SacPag 1; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), focuses on the Jewish background, although his use of Ben Sira is surprisingly sparse, perhaps owing to the brevity of the commentary.

¹¹ The commentary by H. D. Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3–7:27 and Luke 6:20–49)* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), for example, draws many comparisons with Ben Sira.

¹² On these passages, see in particular É. Puech, “4Q525 et les péripécopes des béatitudes en Ben Sira et Matthieu,” *RB* 98 (1991) 80–106. Note that there may be a significant semantic difference between *bārûk* (“blessed,” Latin *benedictus*), so often used in the Bible, and *ʾašrê* (“happy,” Latin *beatus*).

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explained in part by the use of the same biblical passages. Both Matt 16:27 (as elsewhere in the NT) and Sir 35:24 refer to the theme of repaying each person according to his deeds (alluding to Isa 59:18), and both authors refer to the expectation of the return of Elijah (Matt 11:14; 17:11; Sir 48:10, alluding to Mal 3:23-24 [NRSV 4:5-6]). In this latter case it reflects more than mere allusion, but an awareness of a particular tradition of interpretation.

Often Ben Sira and Matthew draw upon similar ideas that are no doubt more widely current in Second Temple Jewish thought. An etymological example occurs in the interpretation of the name Joshua as savior by Ben Sira (Sir 46:1) and by Matthew (Matt 1:21, explaining the Greek equivalent, "Jesus"). Many of the ideas present in the two writers are attested in other literature as well, such as the need for economy of words in prayer (Sir 7:14; Matt 6:7-8; cf. Qoh 5:1; Isa 1:15),¹³ the essential character of salt (Sir 39:26; Matt 5:13; cf. Job 6:6), the importance of paying the temple tax (Sir 7:29-31; Matt 17:24-27; cf. Mal 3:8-10), the need to care for the sick (Sir 7:35; Matt 25:39; cf. Job 2:11-13), the impropriety of criticizing one's neighbor (Sir 11:7-9; Matt 7:1-6),¹⁴ and the theme of self-examination before forgiveness (Sir 18:20; Matt 7:1-2; cf. *m. Abot* 1.6; 2.5; *m. Sot.* 1.7).¹⁵ The concept of hidden mysteries in Matt 13:11 is now well-attested in *Ethiopic Enoch* and Qumran literature, and is referred to in Ben Sira (cf. Sir 3:22; 4:18; 48:25). The theme of hidden treasure (Matt 13:44) has its origins in wisdom literature (Prov 2:4; Sir 20:30; 41:14). Likewise, similar metaphors appear in both writings, including the comparison of the righteous to the sun (Sir 50:7; Matt 13:43) and the quality of the fruit being dependent on the nature of the tree (Sir 27:6; Matt 12:33; cf. Isa 5:2).¹⁶ At times, the use of similar material helps to clarify the meaning of a passage. Thus, the

¹³ D. A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13* (WBC 33A; Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1993) 147.

¹⁴ Cf. Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, 265.

¹⁵ Note also a comparable criticism of wealth (Sir 31:7; Matt 19:23-26), and a similar insistence on the respect due to parents (Sir 3:8-16; Matt 15:4-6; cf. Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16).

¹⁶ Other metaphors include sheep and wolves (Sir 13:17; Matt 7:15-16; cf. Isa 11:6; 65:25), treasures in heaven (a theme common in Judaism: Sir 29:10-13; Matt 6:20; cf. Tob 4:9; 4 Ezra 6:5; *Pss. Sol.* 9:5), and eyes for lusting (Sir 9:8; Matt 5:28; cf. 2 Pet 2:14; 1 John 2:16); cf. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, 120. Another comparable usage is the concept of the evil eye (Sir 14:8-10; Matt 6:22-23; 20:15; cf. Tob 4:7). The expression "to [the point of] death" might also be included in this category (Sir 37:2; Matt 26:38; cf. LXX Jonah 4:9).

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reference to testing at Matt 6:13 might be understood in light of Sir 2:1 and 33:1, as well as the great test of Abraham (Gen 22:1).¹⁷

Some ideas, adopted by both writers, were clearly current not only in Judaism but also in Greco-Roman culture. The Golden Rule, used by many ancient writers, is found at Matt 7:12 and in a reversed form at Sir 31:15 (cf. Tob 4:15; *Let. Arist.* 207–8). The discussion of the two ways at Matt 7:13–14 (contrast the maxim that the way of the wicked is easy at Sir 21:10) has resonances in Sir 33[36]:7–15. Similar ideas already appear in Greek literature (e.g., Hesiod, *Works and Days* 287–92; Xenophon, *Mem.* 2.1.20) but have parallels also in biblical material (e.g., Ps 1:1–6; Prov 4:18–19), and continue into subsequent Jewish writings (e.g., 1QS 3:18–4:26; *m. Abot* 2.9) and early Christian literature (e.g., *Did.* 1:1; *Let. Barn.* 18:1).¹⁸

In most of these examples it is difficult to prove any direct dependence of Matthew upon the work of Ben Sira, but he may sometimes at least have had some familiarity with expressions found in Ben Sira.¹⁹ Notwithstanding these many parallels, Matthew (or his source) is an independent writer, and we sometimes find Matthew's Jesus subverting the teaching of Ben Sira and his tradition. Di Lella has noted, for example, that the teaching of Jesus at Matt 5:43–48 overturns Sir 12:1–6.²⁰ The latter urges readers not to help sinners, since the Lord despises them and will punish them. Matthew, by contrast, teaches

¹⁷ Cf. M. H. Sykes, "And do not bring us to the test," *ExpTim* 73 (1962) 189–90. On the Ben Sira passage see N. Calduch-Benages (*En el crisol de la prueba: Estudio exegetico de Sir 2,1–18* [Estella, Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1997] 49 and 92), who makes the connection with Genesis 22.

¹⁸ An exhaustive list of references in ancient Judaism and Christianity, including a note on its existence in Islam and Buddhism, is provided by K. Niederwimmer, *The Didache* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998) 59–63. On Sir 33[36]:7–15, see P. Winter, "Ben Sira and the Teaching of the 'Two Ways,'" *VT* 5 (1955) 315–18.

¹⁹ Cf. D. A. deSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002) 193. In fact, deSilva is cautious about direct dependence and suggests that synagogue preachers wove Ben Sira's sayings into homilies, from which writers could draw. It is questionable as to why this is a more likely reconstruction than writers actually reading the text themselves. Knowledge of the text is clear from citations in rabbinic literature, and especially from its influence on the Mishnaic tractate *Abot*.

²⁰ A. A. Di Lella, "God and Wisdom in the Theology of Ben Sira: An Overview," in *Ben Sira's God. Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel; BZAW 321; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002) 3–17, here 3–4 n. 2.

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that one should love one's enemies and pray for one's persecutors. This instance is one of a number of examples of Matthew's independence as a creative writer and theologian, but such creativity has led some to call into question his use of sources such as Ben Sira. This issue has been particularly scrutinized in light of the strongest parallel between Ben Sira and Matthew, Jesus' call to his disciples (Matt 11:25–30).

Wisdom's Yoke (Matt 11:25–30)

The passage that has often been seen as the one likely citation or adaptation by Matthew of the words of Ben Sira is Matt 11:25–30.²¹ It is here, notably in 11:28–30, that Jesus declares his role as a revealer of God's will through the embodiment within his own person of wisdom and law. Just as Israel has been mistaken in presuming its secure relation with God (11:20–24), so the “wise” and powerful have failed to recognize children or the meek (11:25–30). The passage begins with a declaration by Jesus of praise and thanksgiving (11:25):

I give thanks to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
that you have hidden this from the wise and learned,
and revealed it to simpletons.²²

Jesus continues with a call to study (11:28–29):

Come to me, all who are toiling and burdened,
and I will refresh you.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,
for I am simple and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

²¹ For a helpful summary of the main points regarding this passage, see D. C. Allison, “Two Notes on a Key Text: Matt. XI.25–30,” *JTS* 39 (1988) 477–85, esp. 477–78. See also W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2: *Matthew VIII–XVIII* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991) 296–97, with bibliography 298–302.

²² The Greek word *hoti*, translated here by “that,” could also mean “because,” but the semantic force of the two alternatives in the context is similar. I render the plural pronouns in the singular (“this” and “it”) for natural English usage.

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It is generally recognized that David F. Strauss was the first to relate this passage to similar words in the Greek text of Sir 51:1, 23, 26, once more following a call to praise:²³

I give thanks to you, Lord, King,
and I praise you as God my savior.
I give thanks to your name.
Come near to me, you uneducated,
and dwell in the house of education.
Submit your neck to the yoke,
and let your soul partake of education.

Strauss postulated that there lay behind the Matthean text a lost wisdom source similar to Ben Sira's text, but significantly different enough to account for discrepancies. He was cautious not to place the origins of the Matthean text in the wisdom tradition, but saw it as possible that this was one strand in the development of Christology. Rudolf Bultmann likewise saw Matt 11:28–30 as a "more original" form of Wisdom's call than that of Sir 51:23–27, but he also questioned the unity of the Matthean pericope.²⁴ Ever since, there has been much discussion over the different parts of the passage and the elements of it that might be attributable to Q. We shall not dwell on these here, as they have been well covered in the literature. In light of recent finds and renewed discussion, the reasons for arguing for disunity in the Matthean pericope are not as strong as they might once have seemed. Although vv. 28–30 are absent from Luke, and v. 27 promises revelation whilst vv. 28–30 change the topic to a promise of rewards for obedience, such disjointed organization of *gnomai* are typical features of proverbial literature. This has long been a recognized aspect of Ben Sira's ordering of material, and can now be found too in the Qumran sapiential material.²⁵ In a similar vein, the blending of the apocalyptic

²³ The article by D. F. Strauss ("Jesu Weheruf über Jerusalem und die *Sophia tou theou*, Matth. 23, 34–39, Luk 11, 49–51. 13, 34f. Ein Beitrag zur johanneischen Frage," *ZWT* 6 [1863] 84–93) prints the two passages in parallel columns to let the reader judge the similarities.

²⁴ R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition* (rev. ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1972) 159–60.

²⁵ See D. J. Harrington, "Two Early Jewish Approaches to Wisdom: Sirach and Qumran Sapiential Work A," *JSP* 16 (1997) 25–38, esp. 25–28; J. K. Aitken, "Apocalyptic, Revelation and Early Jewish Wisdom Literature," in *New Heaven and New Earth*.

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or mystical thought in v. 27 with wisdom sayings is known both from Ben Sira (contrary to some views) and from the Qumran wisdom literature.²⁶ This indicates that the Matthean passage need not derive from Gnostic influence. The Qumran wisdom material does remind us not to draw too simple a conclusion over the contents of Q, and elements previously considered incompatible can now be seen as joined in the same documents.²⁷

Eduard Norden was the first to argue for the unity of Matt 11:25–30 as forming part of Q, and saw the passage as a Christian protest against the wisdom of the Hellenes.²⁸ Michael Goulder is in favor of viewing 11:25–30 as in part derived from Ben Sira, noting the possibility that Matthew was familiar with 1 Cor 1:17–25, and sees the passage as primarily a development from Isa 29:14 and Sirach 51.²⁹ He regards the dependence on Sirach 51 as “indisputable,”³⁰ and it is a dependence on the Greek rather than the Hebrew version (see especially Sir 51:23, 26–27). In addition, he regards the wording “for your souls” as an adaptation from Jer 6:16. Nonetheless, it is for him a midrash on Ben Sira, and a Matthean midrash at that, given the preponderance of characteristic phrases. Chapter 11 of Matthew is then the midrashic work of the evangelist, expanding Mark 6:14–29 freely on the basis of biblical texts. Goulder concludes his study with the words: “What need have we to posit other sources?” He notes that where these texts (Isaiah and Sirach 51) lack particular features, the images are familiar from the evangelist and most probably to be seen, therefore, as additions by Matthew.

The comparisons with Ben Sira have led some to an extreme position of imputing a Wisdom Christology in which Jesus speaks as Wisdom. Whereas Bultmann saw Jesus as a wisdom envoy in the

Prophecy and the Millennium: Essays in Honour of Anthony Gelston (ed. C. T. R. Hayward and P. J. Harland; VTSup 77; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 181–93, esp. 182.

²⁶ See Aitken, “Apocalyptic, Revelation and Early Jewish,” where it is argued that the distinctions drawn between Ben Sira and the Qumran material are not as great as normally presented. Cf. M. J. Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew’s Gospel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970) 71–108.

²⁷ See, e.g., D. J. Harrington, *Wisdom Texts from Qumran* (London: Routledge, 1996).

²⁸ E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1913) 277–308.

²⁹ Goulder, *Midrash and Lection in Matthew*, 361.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 362.

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manner of Ben Sira speaking as a prophet after Wisdom's proclamation (Sir 24:32–34), Jack Suggs and Celia Deutsch suggest that the Q tradition of Jesus as envoy becomes in Matthew Wisdom incarnate, although Deutsch emphasizes the significance of discipleship obedient to revelation.³¹ At the same time as Suggs, Felix Christ argued also for such a Wisdom Christology, but saw it in Q and Luke as well as Matthew.³² Marshall D. Johnson in particular has shown the problems in such an approach,³³ but there has been a resultant counter tendency to deny all reference to Ben Sira and to emphasize a far more independent Matthew as creator and author of the passage.

Graham Stanton has been one of the greatest advocates for Matthew's "non-use" of Ben Sira.³⁴ He does not dispute the use of Wisdom themes by Matthew, but suggests that they are not the key to 11:25–30 as it stands. In this he is similar to Goulder, but whereas Goulder recognises the Matthean contribution and yet still holds to the importance of the midrashic nature of the passage, Stanton wishes to focus on the creative author rather than give attention to the underlying sources. He begins by noting the erotic flavour of chap. 51 in the Hebrew of Ben Sira (11QPs^a 21.11–22.1), something not apparent in Matthew and therefore indicative of the gulf between the two sources. It has subsequently been questioned, however, whether the language in Ben Sira is to be seen as erotic.³⁵ If Matthew were dependent on the text in Greek, as Goulder asserts, then the meaning of the Hebrew is not at issue anyway, and the erotic connotations are certainly not present in Greek. More importantly, Stanton draws attention to how slender the verbal links are between Matt 11:28–30 and Sirach 51.³⁶ It is a matter of a mere two words ("toil" and "yoke") and of one phrase

³¹ Suggs, *Wisdom, Christology, and Law in Matthew's Gospel*; C. Deutsch, *Hidden Wisdom and the Easy Yoke: Wisdom, Torah and Discipleship in Matthew 11.25–30* (JSNTSup 18; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987).

³² F. Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern* (ATANT 57; Zürich: Zwingli, 1970).

³³ M. D. Johnson, "Reflections on a Wisdom Approach to Matthew's Christology," *CBQ* 36 (1974) 44–64.

³⁴ G. N. Stanton, "Salvation Proclaimed: X. Matthew 11.28–30: Comfortable Words?" *ExpTim* 94 (1982) 3–9; idem, *A Gospel for a New People: Studies in Matthew* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993) 366–71.

³⁵ T. Muraoka, "Sir. 51,13–30: An Erotic Hymn to Wisdom?" *JSJ* 10 (1979) 166–78.

³⁶ Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 369.

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(“find rest”). Where we do find the word “toil” in Ben Sira, it is twice used of the search for Wisdom (Sir 6:18; 51:27), but in a very different sense. In Matthew attention is not on the toil to find wisdom, but on the ease of the task.³⁷ Also, of decisive significance for Stanton is the lack of anything in Ben Sira comparable to the most important section of Matthew, namely the expression “all who toil and are heavy laden” and the portrayal of Jesus as “meek and lowly in heart.” Stanton concludes that Matthew put these verses together and that the connection with Sirach 51 is misguided.³⁸

Other points made in favor of Stanton’s position, but probably of less moment, are some incongruities in the portrayal by Matthew.³⁹ The figure of Wisdom in the biblical precedents is often a proud or audacious figure rather than the humble person of Matthew. At Sir 24:1 Wisdom is said to speak boastfully (*kauchaomai*) and in Proverbs 1 and 8 she cries aloud on the corners and at the gates, although this latter action might be less a case of arrogance and more a sign of a school open to the public. The concepts of meek and lowly are used by the evangelist elsewhere, and suggest that this is where the point of departure from the wisdom tradition lies.

Stanton also proposes that since in 11:27 Jesus is the son, and in 11:28 we are required to jump to him as wisdom, we are faced with a problem of gender.⁴⁰ Wisdom is feminine in both Hebrew and Greek, and she is always portrayed in strongly female terms, whilst men, by contrast, always seek her, with sexual imagery lying just beneath the surface. Stanton alludes to the words of Johnson that it would have been incongruous “to ancient Jewish sensibilities” that Lady Wisdom was incarnated as the “Son.”⁴¹ This latter point does, however, presuppose

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 368.

³⁹ Cf. R. H. Gundry, *Matthew: A Commentary on his Literary and Theological Art* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) 220. C. S. Keener, however, in his *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids/ Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999) 349 n. 37, suggests that Gundry’s own evidence points to Matthew’s adaptation of Ben Sira’s text rather than his non-use of it.

⁴⁰ Stanton, *A Gospel for a New People*, 370.

⁴¹ See Johnson, “Reflections on a Wisdom Approach,” 61–62. While Johnson raises a rhetorical question whether it would have been as incongruous to ancient Jewish sensibilities as to ours, Stanton has reversed the wording of the question to make it a statement.

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a certain understanding of the meaning and language of imagery, and how far Wisdom as incarnate need necessarily be female. The fact that in Ben Sira the one person who exhibits most the features of Wisdom is indeed the high priest Simeon, a male priest embodying the aspects of Lady Wisdom,⁴² does suggest that it is not as incongruous as might be thought.

If Ben Sira is not the source for Matthew in 11:25–30, can it be seen as an entirely new creation by the evangelist or should there be other texts under its influence? W. D. Davies and Dale Allison find the origins of this passage, not in Sirach 51 but in the Moses typology of Exod 33:12–14, providing for them further evidence of Jesus as a counterpart to Moses. The concept in Matt 11:27 of reciprocal knowledge is found in Exod 33:12–13 (cf. Deut 34:10) and attested in other OT and NT texts.⁴³ This passage is then followed by the proclamation: “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (Exod 33:14), a close parallel in wording to Matt 11:28.⁴⁴ Further support for the possible allusion to Moses is provided by the use in John 15:14–15 (parallel to Matt 11:27) of Exod 33:11, with the word order matching that of Exodus 33, and the additional reference to “meek” (*praus*) reflecting traditions of Moses (Num 12:3; Philo *Mos.* 2.279).

It would seem, then, from these arguments of Stanton and of Davies and Allison that Ben Sira is an unlikely source for Matthew’s wording. But we should not be so ready to dispense with the ancient sage, if we bear in mind that he can throw light in many different ways. Biblical interpretation might not have been a matter of quotation from or allusion to one particular passage or figure. The gathering of vocabulary and ideas from many different texts is characteristic of some approaches, and this much is implied in Goulder’s recognition of multiple texts influencing Matthew 11, and Davies and Allison’s compilation of allusions to Moses. What we do find in Ben Sira is a lively

⁴² See C. T. R. Hayward, “Sacrifice and World Order: Some Observations on Ben Sira’s Attitude to the Temple Service,” in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology* (ed. S. W. Sykes; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 22–34. The pupils of Wisdom (presumably all male) also display wisdom characteristics (Sir 39:12–14).

⁴³ Allison, “Two Notes on a Key Text,” 478–81; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2, 283–85.

⁴⁴ Allison, “Two Notes on a Key Text,” 481; Davies and Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, vol. 2, 285–86.

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interpretative tradition that can illuminate our reading of Matthew 11, and an explanation for the apparently contradictory conclusions by scholars. It may not provide a precise explanation for every word or phrase in Matthew, since indeed the evangelist was an author capable of originality, but this may not be sufficient to dispense with all inter-textual allusions to Ben Sira.

Chapter 51 of Ben Sira has been the starting point for most scholars, but it has also been the cause for dissent. We should probably best follow Daniel Harrington, who admits that it is unclear whether there was a direct literary relation, but that Sir 51:26–27 establishes that Matt 11:28–30 uses the language of teachers in a wisdom school.⁴⁵ It is perhaps not insignificant that the opening of the address is couched in the words of a prayer to God. The themes of yoke, rest, soul, and prayer are found in both sources, and although their reference is different in each, this (as we have already seen) is typical of the variations in the tradition exhibited by Matthew. Just as Ben Sira sometimes adapted the tradition that he inherited from Proverbs, so Matthew does from Ben Sira.

The image of a yoke in wisdom literature is a common reference that appears elsewhere in Ben Sira. Part of its importance lies in the recognition that its full sense is only clear in Hebrew rather than in the Greek of Matthew, suggesting it is derived from a Hebrew spoken or written tradition. In Sir 6:24–25, we read:

Put your feet into her fetters, and your neck into her collar.
Offer your shoulder to her burden; do not be impatient of her bonds.

In Sir 6:25 (cf. 6:30) the “bonds” (*môšerôt*) of wisdom’s yoke can also be read as her “instructions,” and thus Ben Sira gives us evidence of a lively reading tradition behind the image of the yoke.⁴⁶

Davies and Allison are probably correct to infer allusions to Moses from Exodus and elsewhere in the Matthean passage, but it should also be recognized that Ben Sira has himself taken such allusions and

⁴⁵ Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 170.

⁴⁶ For the reading “bonds” in Sir 6:25b, see Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 192. On 6:24–25, see J. K. Aitken, “Hebrew Study in Ben Sira’s *Beth Midrash*,” in *Hebrew Study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda* (ed. W. Horbury; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999) 27–37, esp. 28–30.

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already incorporated them into a sapiential context. In the hymn of Wisdom in Sirach 24, the figure of Wisdom is located within the traditions of the Israelite exodus, initially by the statement that Wisdom's throne is in "the pillar of the cloud" (Sir 24:4). This combination of the motifs of "throne" and "pillar of cloud" is unique. The throne is normally used of kings or God, and suggests that Wisdom's position has in some way been elevated. The Wisdom of Solomon also relates that Wisdom "sits by you [God] upon your throne" (Wis 9:4).⁴⁷ The throne does not occur in the Pentateuch as such, which renders all the more curious its association with the Pentateuchal pillar of cloud, but *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 2:6 (a verse already alluded to at Sir 24:3) interprets the mist to be a cloud of glory descending from beneath the throne of glory. The "pillar of cloud" was the symbol of divine guidance and presence in the wilderness traditions of the Book of Exodus and elsewhere (Exod 13:21–22; 14:19; 33:9–10; 40:38; cf. Neh 9:12, 19; Ps 78:14).⁴⁸ Philo too came to identify Wisdom with the pillar of the cloud (*Her.* 42), and it occurs nearer to Ben Sira's time in the Wisdom of Solomon, whose author writes that it was Wisdom who conducted the Israelites through the wilderness, becoming for them "a shelter by day and a starry flame by night" (Wis 10:17; cf. 10:18).

The wilderness motif would explain the choice of verb in Sir 24:4a, where Wisdom declares: "I encamped (*kateskēnōsa*) in the heights." The verb implies the pitching of a tent (cf. Syriac),⁴⁹ and Gerald Sheppard's detailed analysis of the vocabulary leads to the conclusion that the verb is alluding to the camping in the wilderness during the exodus.⁵⁰ The repeated emphasis upon encampment throughout chap. 24 cannot but call to mind the Israelites in the wilderness. Wisdom "sought a resting place" (Sir 24:7a) and wondered where she should "dwell" (24:7b), in response to which the Lord commanded her to "set

⁴⁷ G. T. Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct: A Study in the Sapientializing of the Old Testament* (BZAW 151; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) 31.

⁴⁸ See, inter alia, J. Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel: Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sira* (BBB 37; Bonn: Hanstein, 1971) 37; Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct*, 31–33; Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 332.

⁴⁹ R. Smend believes the Syriac to be a "more exact" rendering here (*Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach, erklärt* [Berlin: Reimer, 1906] 216). However, M. Z. Segal (*Sēper ben-Sirā' haššālēm* [2d ed.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1958] 148) is more cautious than Smend.

⁵⁰ Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct*, 27–30.

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her tent” (24:8b) and “encamp” (24:8c) in Jacob. Thereupon, she “was established” (24:10b), “rested” (24:11a) and “took root” (24:12a) in Jerusalem, upon Mount Zion. The density of the occurrences of these words shows that the concept of settlement is uppermost in the author’s mind, and, given the variety in the choice of Greek words, the whole spectrum of Hebrew words for “to inhabit” is no doubt covered.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the intended allusions may be inferred not from the particular choice of words but from their combination with expressions for receiving one’s inheritance, since closely tied to the images of settlement is that of inheritance. Wisdom, when wondering where she should seek her resting place, also asks in whose inheritance she should lodge (24:7). Therefore, the Lord tells her to take up her inheritance in Israel (24:8), and accordingly she declares her inheritance to be in the portion of the Lord (24:12). The combination of rest and inheritance is not common in the Bible other than in those texts concerned with Israel’s preparations for the conquest of the land in Deuteronomy (Deut 3:18–20; 12:1–11; 25:19; cf. Josh 11:13–15).⁵² The command from God issued to Wisdom (Sir 24:8) is equivalent to that issued to Israel to find a resting place (Deut 3:18; Josh 1:13; cf. Deut 12:11, 14). In addition, the concept of *seeking* a resting place or inheritance is used solely of Israel searching for their promised land (Num 10:33; Deut 1:33; Judg 18:1).⁵³

In summary, Wisdom is portrayed as being present with the Israelites in the wilderness whilst she searches for her earthly home and inheritance. This she eventually finds on Zion in the city of Jerusalem (Sir 24:10–12), where she may perform the liturgy and where, once arrived, she flourishes like many exotic plants (24:13–17). In Ben Sira she is finally identified with the Torah itself, given to Moses on Mount Sinai (24:23). In Jewish tradition it appears that the final goal of the exodus was Mount Zion and the sanctuary (*Targum Neofiti* to Exod 15:17), and this in part explains the emphasis earlier in the chap-

⁵¹ In the LXX *katapauō* (“cease, settle, rest”) renders an array of Hebrew words, and in Ben Sira also it is not consistent.

⁵² Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel*, 62; Sheppard, *Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct*, 40–42.

⁵³ Sheppard (*Wisdom as a Hermeneutical Construct*, 41–42) observes that in the passages from Deuteronomy and Numbers the pillar of cloud is associated with this search.

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ter upon Wisdom's search for a dwelling. *Targum Neofiti* to Exod 15:13, for example, reads:

In your mercy you have led this people that you have redeemed; you will lead them in your might to the dwelling place of the house of the Shekhina of your holiness.⁵⁴

Ben Sira has combined the motifs of Israel searching for a home and Wisdom finding a resting place, and (as in later Jewish tradition) that rest is found in the temple. We are reminded of Psalm 132 (one of the "Psalms of Ascent"), in which the psalmist says that he will not give sleep to his eyes or rest to his eyelids (Ps 132:4) until he finds a place for the tabernacle. He then beseeches God to enter his resting place (Ps 132:8), transforming the rest for his eyes into the rest for God.

Ben Sira demonstrates the complexity of the motif of rest, which certainly alludes to the role of Moses and the exodus, but also expresses a goal to be sought. The psalmist cannot find rest until God is settled in his place, and Wisdom finds rest only when established in Jerusalem. The offer of rest in Matt 11:28–29 is an offer for complete fulfillment. First, it is for one's fulfillment as a disciple of wisdom, not so much to be freed from the toil of wisdom, but to have achieved complete understanding. Second, it is for fulfillment in one's spiritual life, the ultimate goal of finding a resting place with God. This does not answer the question whether Jesus is to be seen as a Wisdom figure or a Mosaic figure, since he can be both at once. Perhaps what Matthew is doing is not so much trying to portray Jesus as an incarnation of either of these, but suggesting that the disciples, if they follow him, will achieve their ultimate destination. And, as Ben Sira demonstrates, that destination is the goal of Israel's history. They will become heirs of the promises made to the ancestors.

Conclusion

There is no easy alignment of correspondences between Matthew and Ben Sira. Both are complex texts, composed by creative authors. But without denying the contribution of Matthew as author, we may

⁵⁴ *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to this verse expands it further, emphasizing the role of the temple (cf. *Mek. Shirata* 9.49–52).

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draw the conclusion that Matthew was familiar with Ben Sira and alludes to him, or to the wisdom traditions of which Ben Sira is our prime example. The allusions convey a complexity of traditions that indicate both authors have reflected on the biblical texts.

Given such knowledge of the texts on the part of Matthew and his adaptation of traditions familiar from Jewish sources, we might wish to conclude with the observation that we once more have a thoroughly Jewish Matthew, an Akiba in the making. Whilst this may be true, it also is not to deny the Hellenistic context of what he has to say. Matthew 11:28–30 contrasts the yoke of God's kingdom with earthly rule, a theme familiar from other Jewish sources (e.g., Jer 5:5; *m. Abot* 3:5; *Pss. Sol.* 7:9; *2 Apoc. Bar.* 41:3).⁵⁵ But the emphasis on education and instruction is also a Greek preoccupation, and wise instruction for a king to show the infallibility of his rule was popular from Aristotle onwards. Soon after Matthew's Gospel, in the second century C.E., this once more became a popular mode of discourse.⁵⁶ Ben Sira and Matthew were children of their time, and the categories that we use may not always be helpful. Matthew, the *mathētēs* ("disciple"), was a learned man, wise in the traditions of Israel, but like his sapiential predecessor, an educated man influenced by contemporary ideas, as long as (in Di Lella's words) "he considered these to be . . . conformable to Jewish tradition and doctrine."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ So Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, 348 n. 36.

⁵⁶ See T. Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

⁵⁷ Skehan and Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 49.

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