Solomon and His Retelling of the Ancient Israelite History: An Examination of the Literary Structure of Ch.7-9 and Ch.10-19 in the Wisdom of Solomon

Jiani Sun
Oriel College, University of Oxford

November 2023

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford.

Table of Contents

Short Abstract

Although the Wisdom of Solomon occurs with high frequency in scholarly discussions on the conceptual development of wisdom at different stages in early Jewish history, alongside an exploration of Hellenistic influence on the Jewish religion, monographs dedicated to the book are not many. It has been nearly a decade since the last publication of a monograph dedicated to Wisdom. In this regard, this present study aims to bridge the research gap regarding the Wisdom of Solomon and offers new insights into how scriptural interpretation shapes the intellectual and religious life of the sage in the Hellenistic world, and also the community to which he belongs.

This study explores the literary arrangement of the last two sections of Wisdom—the Book of Wisdom (Ch.7-9) and the Book of History (Ch. 10-19), and attempts to showcase how an interconnected reading between the two sections can yield a fruitful understanding of the role of a Jewish sage amidst his community in the Hellenistic world. By linking the two major sections in Wisdom, I present how Ch.7-9 critically shape the voice of the sage in the guise of Solomon, whose voice lends itself to the historical retelling in Ch.10-19. I argue that reading the last two sections in Wisdom interconnectedly enables us to see how the Hellenistic Jewish sage performs Israelite history through a mode of conversation. The conversation is directed both at the community to which he belongs, and God, to whom praises and thanksgiving for deliverances throughout history are ascribed (19:22). The central argument is that innovative and creative scriptural interpretation

enables the sage to present himself and the nation of Israel as exemplary, by which the sage invites people to respond to their changing contexts in light of the acts of God in history.

Long Abstract

The dissertation aims to examine the literary structure of the Wisdom of Solomon, with a focus on the last two sections of the book. The research question I ask is, namely, when chapters 7-9, the so-called Book of Wisdom, and chapters 10-19, the Book of History are put together in this particular sequence, what kind of hermeneutics and theology can be generated? I argue that by constructing a narrative of the self that is mediated through the life story of Solomon (Ch. 7-9), the sage writes his own life story into the national story of the Israelites (Ch. 10-19). Hence the link between a personal history and a collective history is formed. The sage not only recounts and reinterprets biblical history, he also becomes one of the biblical characters who participates in the stories of the past. The combination of the autobiography of the sage and the historical retelling by the sage sets the stage for the performance of history, which brings out a liturgical dimension of the text. The performance ultimately leads to the praise of God, as clearly indicated in the doxology by the end of the book: “For in everything, O Lord, you have exalted and glorified your people, and you have not neglected to help them at all times and in all places” (Wisdom 19:22).

The dissertation consists of two main parts. The first part of the thesis is titled “The Sage’s Making of an Autobiography” in which I argue that the sage creates his intellectual and religious autobiography through an active reading and interpretation of the Solomonic

motifs in scripture and traditions. The four major Solomonic motifs that I engage with include 1) praying for wisdom, 2) list of knowledge and crafts, 3) wise ruling and governance, and 4) building the temple. Building upon my literary analysis of the Solomonic motifs in Wisdom, I then move on to articulate the inter-relationship between the sage and the figure Solomon. In particular, how the creation of the self of the sage is mediated through the life story of the other, namely Solomon. On the one hand, the sage remains anonymous in the guise of Solomon. Yet in the meantime, the personal traces of the sage can be found in the particular portrayal of Solomon, whose persona well fits into the cosmopolitan Hellenistic context. I think that the sage manages to make his own autobiography in composing the text and making Solomon pertinent to his day and age. In other words, the sage who authors the Wisdom of Solomon actualizes his humanness by thinking *with* and *through* Solomon, the exemplar whose steps he follows.

In the second part of the thesis titled “Sage’s Performance of History,” I argue that the biblical history in the Book of Wisdom, both in the form of a historical recital and a full-fledged Exodus retelling, is interpreted history through the lens of wisdom and justice. In this interpretation of the early Israelite history, I focus on how the talent of a Hellenistic Jew meets his tradition through a careful literary analysis of the historical retelling. Furthermore, I examine the structure of historical retelling and present the two excursions as the sage’s theological contemplation of divine attributes and proper worship in response to the God who is active in history. In this regard, history enables a theology of hope. By the end, I highlight the dialogical features of the historical retelling and how the sage turns history into a liturgical performance that instructs the people and gives due praise to God, as shown in the doxology by the end of the book.

In my dissertation, I engage with a variety of texts from mainly the Hebrew and Greek linguistic registers. To understand the Solomonic traditions that the author of the Wisdom of Solomon inherits, partakes, and reshapes, I pay attention to the Solomonic narratives in the Hebrew Bible, both 1 Kings 1-11 and 2 Chronicles 1-9, alongside the corresponding Greek translations of some of the relevant accounts in the Septuagint. Through a series of comparisons and contrasts, I hope to demonstrate how the author of the Book of Wisdom highlights and downplays certain traditions associated with Solomon, and the possible rationales behind these interpretive moves. In the meantime, Ben Sira and the Philonic corpus serve as another important textual reference, through which I point out some of the shared Hellenistic strands of thoughts, exegetical practices, and common theological concerns and issues.

On the theme of historical retelling, I probe into many poetic texts in the Psalter (mainly historical psalms, such as Psalms 78, 105-106, 135-136) and beyond to see how the early Israelite history has been interpreted and reinterpreted. To understand how the excursions on divine mercy and anti-idolatrous discourse fit into the historical retelling section as an organic whole, I also examine passages on illicit worship in some prophetic texts and second temple literature (e.g. Jeremiah 10:1-6, Isaiah 42:21-29, 44:0-20, 57:1-13; Baruch 6, Jubilees 48:5-8, etc.) to articulate the context in which the parodies of illicit worship emerge. To put these texts in their larger contexts, I hope to glean some insights into the placement of the excursions in the section of historical retelling in the Book of Wisdom. I would argue that the intersection of history and the contemplation of divine attributes and proper worship contributes to the performative feature of history.

Chapter One

Introduction

Introducing the Thesis

Although the Wisdom of Solomon (hereafter Wisdom) occurs with high frequency in scholarly discussions on the conceptual development of wisdom at different stages in early Jewish history, alongside an exploration of Hellenistic influence on the Jewish religion, monographs dedicated to the book are not many.[1] It has been nearly a decade since the last publication of a monograph dedicated to Wisdom. In this regard, this present study aims to bridge the research gap of the Wisdom of Solomon and offers new insights into how scriptural interpretation shapes the intellectual and religious life of the sage in the Hellenistic world, and also the community to which he[2] belongs.

This study explores the literary arrangement of the last two sections of Wisdom—the Book of Wisdom (Ch.7-9) and the Book of History (Ch. 10-19), and attempts to showcase how an interconnected reading between the two sections can yield a fruitful understanding of the role of a Jewish sage amidst his community in the Hellenistic world. By linking the two major sections in Wisdom, I present how Ch.7-9 critically shape the voice of the sage in the guise of Solomon, whose voice lends itself to the historical retelling in Ch.10-19. I argue that reading the last two sections in Wisdom interconnectedly enables us to see how the Hellenistic Jewish sage performs Israelite history through a mode of conversation. The conversation is directed both at the community to which he belongs, and

[1] More details will follow in the literature review section.

[2] I decided to use "he," the third-person masculine pronoun to describe the sage who composed the Wisdom of Solomon. The dissertation is consistent in this gender reference to the sage.

God, to whom praises and thanksgiving for deliverances throughout history are ascribed (19:22). The central argument is that innovative and creative scriptural interpretation enables the sage to present himself and the nation of Israel as exemplary, by which the sage invites people to interpret and respond to their changing contexts in light of the acts of God in history.

Literature Review: Current Trends in the Studies of the Wisdom of Solomon

The Wisdom of Solomon has fascinated scholars for its intriguing combination of biblical traditions and Hellenistic ideas.[3] The book offers a unique window into the cross-cultural influence on the development of the concept of wisdom and interpretation of biblical history in early Judaism. Its mixture of biblical traditions and Hellenistic learning

[3] For general surveys that examine the cross-cultural phenomenon of the Wisdom of Solomon, see John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997), 178-95; Leo G. Perdue, "Wisdom During the Roman Empire: The Wisdom of Solomon," in *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 292-355; David A. DeSilva, "Wisdom of Solomon: 'The Righteous Live Forever," in *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018), 131-60; Richard J. Clifford, "The Wisdom of Solomon," in *The Wisdom Literature*, Interpreting Biblical Texts Series (Nashville: Abingdon, 1998), 133-56; Daniel J. Harrington, "The Wisdom of Solomon: Immortality, Wisdom, and History," in *Invitation to the Apocrypha* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 55-77; William Horbury, "The Wisdom of Solomon," in *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Apocrypha*, ed. Martin Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 45-68; Roland E. Murphy, "The Wisdom of Solomon: A View from the Diaspora," in *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 83-96; Katherine Dell, *"Get Wisdom, Get Insight": An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Literature* (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 128-139; Chesnutt D. Randall, "Wisdom of Solomon," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Wisdom Literature*, ed. Samuel L. Adams and Matthew Goff (Hoboken, New Jersey : Wiley Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2020), 104-121; Maurice Gilbert, "Sagesse de Salomon (ou Livre de la Sagesse)," *DBSup* XI (1991), cols. 8-119; Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr, "Einführung in die Schrift," in *Sapientia Salomonis* (Weisheit Salomos), ed. K. W. Niebuhr, SAPERE 27 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 3-37.

strongly suggests that it originated in Alexandria.[4] It was composed in Greek.[5] The book can be dated around the turn of the era, though the specific range of time is still debated among scholars.[6] Wisdom is normally divided into three parts: the Book of Eschatology (Ch.1-6), the Book of Wisdom (Ch.7-9), and the Book of History (Ch.10-19).[7] The division

[4] David Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 43 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday,1979), 25; Craig A. Evans, *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 13; John M. G. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan* (323 BCE-117 CE) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 452; DeSilva, *Introducing the Apocrypha*, 127; George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 211. Georgi proposes a Syriac provenance for Wisdom, for he finds the connections with Egypt in the book rather weak. See Dieter Georgi, *Weisheit Salomos*, JSHRZ (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1980), 395-96. However, the general negative attitude toward Egyptians and animal worship in Egypt in the book might suggest otherwise. Regarding the distinct features of Alexandria—a city with vibrant political, economic, cultural, and religious life—a recent publication that introduces the different aspects of the ancient city is worth mentioning: *Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World*, ed. Benjamin Schliesser, Jan Rüggemeier, Thomas J. Kraus, and Jörg Frey, with the assistance of Daniel Herrmann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021). The introductory essay by Jan Rüggemeier offers a panoramic view of the city and how the city is conducive to breeding multiculturalism. This introductory essay can provide some helpful perspectives to understand the cultural dynamic in which Wisdom emerged. Rüggemeier, "Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World," xiii-l.

[5] At one phase in scholarship, scholars have debated whether Wisdom is a translated work from any Semitic language, or some parts of it can be traced back to Semitic sources. The summary of the debate can be found in Carl E. Puriton, "Translation Greek in the Wisdom of Solomon," *JBL* 47, no.3 (1928), 279. Nowadays scholars have come to a consensus that Wisdom was originally composed in Greek, taking into account its literary style and textual unity. Pfeiffer has pointed out, "If any part of Wisdom was translated from the Hebrew, the rendering was so free and so rhetorically Greek that it amounts to an original work with only the vaguest resemblances to its supposed prototype." Robert H. Pfeiffer, "Wisdom of Solomon" in *History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1949), 325.

[6] Some scholars would suggest a time range, while others would contextualize the book based on more concrete historical events. For those who propose a time range, Larcher places the book between 30-10 BCE. C. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou, La Sagesse de Salomon*, vol.1 (Paris: Gabalda, 1983), 148-61. Barclay proposes a period between 100 BCE and 30 CE. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean World*, 451. Koester dates the book between 30 BCE to 40 CE. Craig R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: the Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature and the New Testament*, CBQMS 22 (Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989), 58. For the latter case, scholars such as Winston and Nickelsburg would date the book to the reign of Caligula (37-41 CE), especially in light of the Alexandrian riots in 38 CE. Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 20-25. Grabbe, on the other hand, suggests an earlier date during the reign of Augustus (31 BC-14 CE). Lester L. Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon*, Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 87-90. In his commentary on Wisdom, Winston has discussed many critical issues that point to a first-century date. He argues that many vocabularies that occur in Wisdom are not common in literature prior to the first century. In the meantime, some of the historical references in the book reflect the period of Roman rule.

[7] Most commentators divide the Book of Wisdom into three sections, although the exact versification might differ slightly in the proposals of the literary structure of the book as a whole. See Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 9-12. Luca Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, IECOT, trans. Michael Tait (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2019), 20. Lester, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 18. In my dissertation, I follow the chapter division in Mazzinghi's commentary.

demonstrates the major theme that each section entails. The main message of the book is to exhort people to pursue wisdom, which leads to a life of righteousness and immorality.

Apart from conventional commentary writing,[8] the trends in the studies of Wisdom of Solomon can be roughly divided into three major streams that focus on different aspects of the book: themes, structure and genre, and biblical interpretation. In the following, I will mention some of the representative studies in each aforementioned aspect.

I. Themes

Studies that are thematically oriented touch upon many concepts and ideas emerging from Wisdom. For instance, immortality has been an important theme in the initial chapters of the book. George W. E. Nickelsburg and Michael Kolarcik have engaged with the issues of death and immortality in their respective monographs.[9] Regarding the idea of kingship, Judith Newman and Jonathan More helpfully reflect the changing notion

---

The division of the book is made in view of the main literary content of each section. For a short period in the 18th and 19th centuries, the unity of the book had been challenged because of the various topics covered in the book and the seeming disconnect among the topics. See the discussion in C. L. W. Grimm, *Das Buch der Weisheit* (Leipzig, 1860), 9-15. The position was rejected by many, seeing the stylistic unity of the book and its sophisticated literary structure. With many careful studies of the literary structure of the book, scholars have now reached a consensus on the unity of the book. See Addison G. Wright, "The Structure of the Book of Wisdom," *Bib* 48 (1976): 165-184; James M. Reese, "Plan and Structure in the Book of Wisdom," *CBQ* 27 (1965): 391-399; James M. Reese, H*ellenistic Influence of the Book of Wisdom and Its Consequences*, AnBib 43 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); Paolo Bizzeti, *Il libro della Sapienza: Struttura e genere letterario* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1984) ; Maurice Gilbert, "The Literary Structure of the Book of Wisdom: A Study of Various Views," in *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research*, eds. Angelo Passar and Giuseppe Bellia (Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 18-32.

[8] David Winston's commentary on *The Wisdom of Solomon* (1979) remains a classic. Chrysostome Larcher published a three-volume massive work on the Book of Wisdom: *Le Livre de la Sagesse ou la Sagesse de Salomon* (1983-1985). Lester L. Grabbe's *Wisdom of Solomon* (1997) offers a simple and clear introduction, highlighting some of the major themes in the book. The most recent and up-to-date commentary is by Luca Mazzinghi's *Wisdom* in the IECOT series (2019). Detailed footnotes of these works can be found in footnotes 4 and 6.

[9] George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972); Michael Kolarcik, *The Ambiguity of Death in the Book of Wisdom 1-6: A Study of Literary Structure and Interpretation* (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991).

of kingship and its implication among the Jewish sages in the Hellenistic world.[10] On the topic of Solomonic attribution, Nathalie LaCoste and Devorah Dimant have written essays that explore the issue of Solomonic authorship and examine how Solomonic influence has shaped the composition of the text.[11] The theme of kingship and its relation to the Solomonic persona will be treated in the first part of the thesis. Another theme that receives much scholarly attention is apocalypticism. For instance, Shannon Burkes and John Collins have explored the apocalyptic elements in the Wisdom of Solomon.[12]

II. Structure and Genre

Studies that focus on the structure and genre of the book are interested in exploring the literary features of the book. Maurice Gilbert has masterfully examined the internal structure in Ch.13-15 in his monograph.[13] Moving beyond a discussion over the structure and genre of a section, James M. Reese and Paola Bizzeti have examined the literary genre of the book as a whole.[14]

III. Biblical Interpretation

[10] Judith Newman, "The Democratization of Kingship in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, ed. Hindy Najman and Judith Newman (Boston: Brill, 2004), 309-328; Jonathan More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Text-Critical and Hermeneutical Studies in the Septuagint*, ed. Johann Cook and Hermann-Josef Stipp (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 409-425.

[11] Nathalie LaCoste, "Solomon the Exemplary Sage: The Convergence of Hellenistic and Jewish Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon," *University of Toronto Journal of Jewish Thought* 1 (2010): 1-23; Devorah Dimant, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *From Enoch to Tobit: Collected Studies in Ancient Jewish Literature* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 313-324.

[12] Shannon Burkes, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Wisdom of Solomon," *HTR* 95, no.1 (2002): 21-44; John Collins, "The Interpretation of Apocalyptic Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule* (Leiden, Brill: 2005), 143-158.

[13] Maurice Gilbert, *La critique des dieus dans le liver de la Sagesse (Sg 13-15)* (Rome : Biblical Intitute Press, 1973).

[14] James M. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and Its Consequences* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970); Paolo Bizzeti, *Il Libro della Sapienza: Struttura e genere letterario* (Paideia, 1984).

Biblical interpretation in Wisdom can be regarded as the top interest among most scholars. Multiple monographs are dedicated to the examination and analysis of how biblical interpretation is done. Most monographs focus on scriptural interpretation in the Book of History (Ch.10-19).[15] These studies tend to be descriptive in nature, as their main goal is to examine the early interpretation of the biblical accounts, alongside the shared traditions in other Hellenistic Jewish writings (Philo and Josephus in particular) and early Rabbinical literature. The thesis will interact with most of the findings of the previous scholars. In the meantime, the study pays more attention to the representation of biblical themes in Wisdom's scriptural interpretation, and the function and purpose of such interpretation.

Purpose and Contributions of the Present Study

In light of the trends in scholarship in Wisdom, what are some contributions I hope to make in this current study of the Wisdom of Solomon? I think the purpose of the present study is threefold.

I. Reading Practice: From Parts to Whole

Because of the relatively clear divisions in Wisdom, scholars tend to focus on one section of the book and explore the critical issues in terms of history, literary style, and theological ideas within this particular section. As we have seen, monographs mentioned in

[15] Udo Schwenk-Bressler, *Sapientia Salomonis als ein Beispeil frühjüdischer Textauslegung: Die Auslegung des Buches Genesis, Exodus 1-15, und Teilen der Wüstentradition in Sap 10-19* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1993); Peter Enns, *Exodus Retold: Ancient Exegesis of the Departure from Egypt in Wis 10:15-21 and 19:1-9* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); Samuel Cheon, *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation, JSPSupp 23* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); and some recent publications include Andrew Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10: A Jewish Hellenistic Reinterpretation of Early Israelite History Through Sapiential Lens* (Boston: De Gruyter, 2011); and Jonathan Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Boston: Brill, 2013).

the literature review have yielded fruitful results in understanding either the first half of the book (Ch.1-6) or the latter half of the book (Ch. 10-19). For the middle section of Wisdom (Ch.7-9), numerous articles have explored the Solomonic influence or the nature of wisdom depicted in the text. In the scholarship of Wisdom so far, research has oriented itself to a close and detailed analysis of one specific part of the book and has not paid adequate attention to the interconnection between the different sections in Wisdom. One of the goals of my research is to move beyond close readings of the parts and to examine how the intersection between the different parts can contribute to our understanding of the message of the book as a whole.

Why is there a lack of engagement in understanding how different sections are related to each other? I think two reasons can explain this phenomenon. The first reason is associated with scholarly practice and convention. The scope of a monograph limits the topics and content one can cover at one time. One concrete topic and its elaboration might already be sufficient for a full-length book. As one can see, both the first half and the latter half of Wisdom contain many interesting topics that deserve a complete analysis. The second reason is more decisive to the purpose of the present study. It is related to the questions one proposes. For research that focuses on one section of the book, the questions one is concerned with have to be derived from this specific section. It reflects a reading practice that focuses on the part, which has both advantages and disadvantages. The weakness in such a reading practice lies in its inability to capture a holistic view of the text.

Considering this, I would like to raise another set of questions: How shall we understand the literary arrangement of Wisdom? To narrow down the scope of this current study, I will particularly focus on the last two sections as a case study to show the benefits

of a more holistic reading of the book: How does this particular literary layout—first the autobiography of the sage, then the historical retelling—generate the hermeneutics of Wisdom as a whole? Building upon scholars' insights into the manifold important topics arising from each section, I will explore the interconnection between these two sections in terms of biblical interpretation, theology of history, and the intellectual and religious practices of the sage in the Hellenistic world.

Both the Book of Wisdom (Ch. 7-9) and the Book of History (Ch.10-19) have been treated separately and quite extensively in scholarship. Yet the theological connection between the two sections has not been explored adequately: the interrelation between the major motifs that each section emphasizes, the function of the voice of the speaker that continuously runs through the two sections, the liturgical practices of the sage implied in the text—all of which can be further investigated and thus generate new thoughts regarding the book as a whole.

II. Rethinking the Role of Solomon and Pseudonymity

The Solomonic attribution of Wisdom is largely taken for granted in scholarship. Scholars generally acknowledge the pseudonymous attribution and agree that the Solomonic persona is best gleaned from the Book of Wisdom (Ch. 7-9) where a full disclosure of the speaker's identity becomes available. Under the influence of Hindy Najman's various works on pseudepigraphy,[16] scholars started to pay more attention to

[16] See Hindy Najman, "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?" in *Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honor of Florentino Garcia Martinez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 529-36. Also see her earlier classic monograph *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJSS 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003). In this book, she proposes the concept of "Mosaic discourse," a conceptual framework indebted to Michel Foucault. She innovatively groups texts across genres based on their Mosaic authorship and argues that these different pseudonymous texts participate in a discourse that is tied to the founder Moses, whose name bears authority that critically enables the text to be regarded as authoritative.

authorial claims made in such texts, as well as open up new ways of understanding the relationship between the real author and the alleged author of the text, especially in light of the topic of exemplarity.[17] This particular trend in investigating how the Solomonic attribution serves as "a metaphorical device, operating at the level of the text as a whole"[18] has also touched upon research in Wisdom. The articles by Dimant, Newman, and LaCoste mentioned above in the literature review have demonstrated a careful look into the practice of Solomonic attribution to the text.[19] My research is much indebted to their thoughtful analyses. At the same time, I would like to advance their examination of the Solomonic persona shaped by both biblical and Hellenistic ideas and ask the question: What can the construction of the Solomonic persona tell us about the intellectual and religious life of the Hellenistic sage who authored the book? I am particularly interested in the autobiographical dimension of the Book of Wisdom (Ch.7-9) and examining how Solomonic motifs are reshaped and recast into the making of the sage's autobiography.

My approach to the examination of the Solomonic persona differs from Dimant and Newman's.[20] Whereas they tend to identify certain intertexts to demonstrate allusions and echoes of biblical texts that are related to Solomon, I tend to focus more on the Solomonic motifs and present how these signature features of Solomon are presented in the text. Although I would also explain and analyze textual references, my textual corpus is broader, more fluid, and more thematically oriented. I agree with Dimant's proposal that the name

---

[17] For instance, Benjamin G. Wright, "Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar," in *Praise for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas, and the Septuagint*, ed. Benjamin G. Wright (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 165-82. Also, Annette Y. Reed, "The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham," *JSJ* 40 (2009): 185-212.

[18] Najman, "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?", 535.

[19] See footnotes 10 and 11.

[20] See footnotes 10 and 11.

of Solomon is "organic to the original framework and thus constitutes an integral part of the work,"[21] yet I find her literary approach too restrictive to understand the role of the actual author of Wisdom in shaping the Solomonic persona. Also, her distinction of two types of pseudonymity seems to limit the scope of the function of pseudonymous attribution in Second Temple texts.[22] My discussion on pseudonymity aims to broaden the scope of discussion and articulate how the sage and the figure of Solomon mutually influence each other through the practice of pseudonymous attribution.

As I have highlighted my interests in the Solomonic motifs, my analysis is built upon Newman's examination of the Solomonic prayer in Wis. 10 and LaCoste's investigation into the list of knowledge in Wis. 7, both of which I find helpful and well-articulated.[23] In my reading of the text, I borrow their insights into the convergence of Hellenistic and Jewish traditions in shaping the idea of kingship and the exemplary sage through these Solomonic themes. Apart from prayer and the list of knowledge, I add two other Solomonic motifs in my examination, namely, wise governance and temple building, which I consider as important elements in forming the Solomonic persona.

Following the steps of Newman and LaCoste,[24] I would carefully examine how these Solomonic motifs shape the presentation of a Solomon-like sage, in particular how these motifs are modified or transformed into the Hellenistic cultural context. Nevertheless, my elucidation of the presentation of the Solomonic persona differs from theirs. While they

---

[21] Dimant, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon," 315.

[22] Dimant, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon," 315. On p314 of the article, Dimant distinguishes two types of pseudonymity as follows: "The first, found mostly in biblical books, employs titles as a means of pseudonymic attribution without affecting the actual structure or content of the work…The second type of pseudonymity, used by most of the Jewish Pseudepigrapha, is organic to the original framework and thus constitutes an integral part of the work."

[23] See footnotes 10 and 11.

[24] See footnotes 10 and 11.

tend to focus on how the author presents a Hellenistic Solomon to participate in the new cultural strand of thought, I would like to explore how the life of the Hellenistic sage is mediated through the life of Solomon. To put it in another way, I am interested in the sage behind Solomon. By focusing on the sage and his autobiography, I attempt to show how a Hellenistic Jewish sage conceives intellectual life and religious piety by imagining himself as Solomon.

III. What Can the Practice of Biblical Interpretation Tell Us?

Biblical interpretation has been the central focus of most monograph publications on Wisdom. The reason for that is articulated well by Andrew Glicksman:

> Since the Wisdom of Solomon is a late composition, study of chapter 10 will illuminate one facet of the Jewish Hellenistic reinterpretation of Scripture and will also help elucidate similar modes of exegesis in the early rabbinical and early Christian eras.[25]

Although Glickman's book focuses on Wisdom 10, the reason for such a careful study of scriptural interpretation in Wisdom is applicable to the later sections on the Exodus retelling as well. Such is the case for Cheon and Enns's interest in the interpretation of the Exodus story.[26] In my analysis of the historical retelling (Ch.10-19) in Wisdom, I have benefited tremendously from these predecessors' careful textual comparisons, discussion of textual influences, and identification of various literary traditions. I agree with these scholars' emphasis on the continuity of tradition and its variations in the Hellenistic cultural contexts. However, I think the attention given to how biblical interpretation is done in Wisdom leaves the placement and internal structure of the interpretation of history unnoticed. In this present study, I want to explore how the discrete units within the

[25] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 3.
[26] See footnote 15.

historical retelling—such as the historical recital, theological reflection on divine mercy, critique of illicit worship, and the Exodus retelling—fit together. Furthermore, I examine the placement of the historical retelling right after the autobiographical section, and how it can generate insights into the need and function of the interpretation of biblical history that centers on the Exodus narrative in the Book of History.

To address these questions, I think an investigation into the mode of presentation of the historical retelling is critical, and I suggest that it has a link to the previous Book of Wisdom. The mode of conversation shapes the historical retelling. Monographs that explore biblical interpretation in the Book of History have not yet taken an interest in the speech framework in which historical narratives are retold. I shall examine the distinct conversational features in the historical retelling and their connections to the previous section.

Because of the nature of a speech, the historical interpretation is interactive and conversational, which can be observed through the changing pronouns for the addresses in the Book of History. A speech needs a speaker, and this speaker is the sage who constructs his autobiography through the life of Solomon in the previous section. Hence, a natural link between the two sections is formed through sharing the same voice. The voice of the sage keeps running through the historical retelling, which is a critical element in linking the two last sections together. It is through his voice that the performance of history takes place. By highlighting the sage's agency in performing history, I argue that the sage reenacts and participates in ancestral history through active interpretation of scripture. In the meantime, through the performance of history, the sage instructs and teaches his community about

God's power, righteousness, and faithfulness—the nature of God demands rightful worship. Thus, history and theology become deeply intertwined.

Chapter Outline

In order to understand the link between the last two sections in Wisdom, a detailed analysis of each section is necessary. Following the introduction, there are two major parts in this study. In the first part titled "Sage's Making of an Autobiography," I shall offer a close reading of the Book of Wisdom (Ch.7-9). I start with a survey of the Solomonic traditions in *Chapter Two "Creating the Solomonic Persona"* to demonstrate the growing development of literary traditions associated with the figure of Solomon. The Wisdom of Solomon surely participates in the rich traditions and also contributes to the shaping of traditions. After a survey of a variety of texts related to Solomon, I transition to a focused study of the Solomonic persona in Wisdom. In *Chapter Three "Establishing the Solomonic Voice in the Wisdom,"* through a careful analysis of how the Solomonic voice is established, I showcase how the Hellenistic Jewish sage molds and shapes major Solomonic motifs to craft his own autobiography. The interrelation between the sage and the Solomon he created is the main concern in *Chapter Four "The Making of an Autobiography."* The discussion on the practice of pseudonymous attribution and the literary trope of first-person discourse in wisdom literature contribute to the exploration of the mutual influence between the sage and Solomon. Also, different autobiographical elements—such as the kingly voice, stages of life, and emotions and feeling—are explored to understand the construction of an autobiography.

Following a discussion on Ch.7-9 in the first part of the thesis, I shall move to an examination of Ch.10-19 in the second major part of the study. Titled "The Sage's Performance of History," this part aims to present how the sage renews the past and brings hope to his community through active and innovative scriptural interpretation. In this second part of the thesis, I first offer a literary analysis of how the sage interprets history, with a comparison to the historical recitals of the Hebrew Bible in *Chapter Five "Biblical History, Narrative, and Interpretation."* In my analysis, I highlight and explain the continuity in the traditions of historical retelling, alongside the distinct features in Wisdom's interpretation of history. After the literary analysis, I move on to examine how the sage integrates history and theology through interpretation in *Chapter Six "The Sage's Performance of History."* I start with a closer look at the internal structure of the Book of History and showcase how the Exodus retelling generates theological reflection. Then I turn to address the conversational mode of presentation for the historical retelling, which leads to a reflection on the interconnection between Ch.7-9 and Ch.10-19. The voice of the sage and the speech framework are critical in establishing the connection. The sage first constructs his autobiography, a personal history, then he moves on to narrate the history of a nation. The two levels of history—the individual and the collective—are made prominent through the prism of the life of the sage, in particular how he speaks and prays to God, and how he instructs the community. Interpretation becomes a way to connect to God and to invoke the presence of God for the other.

At the final chapter "*Conclusion,*" I offer some reflection on the relationship between Solomon and the Exodus and how this connection is foundational to the presentation of the two last sections in the Wisdom of Solomon. By portraying himself in

the guise of Solomon and the nation of Israel as exemplary, the sage refashions the way to access wisdom and approach God in the Hellenistic context: with scriptural interpretation coming to the fore.

Part I: Sage's Making of an Autobiography

Every painter paints himself.

--Renaissance maxim

General Introduction

Considering its central position in the book, Chapters 7-9 in Wisdom of Solomon (hereafter Wisdom) can be regarded as an important section to bridge the previous chapters and the chapters to come. In these chapters, a full disclosure of the speaker becomes available: Solomon the unnamed yet "discernible pseudepigraphic author"[27] comes to the fore. Clearly, Solomon plays a critical role in unlocking the hermeneutical key to the work as a whole. What is the significance of Solomon in the composition of the text? Why does the sage choose Solomon to be the mouthpiece to deliver the message of wisdom, and later to retell early Israelite history? In this chapter, I will focus on the construction of the Solomonic persona in Wis.7-9, showing how a variety of biblical motifs of King Solomon are combined, reshaped, and transformed to create the imagery of a sage-king. I argue that the compositional practices in establishing the Solomonic voice in Wisdom demonstrate that the sage not only actively reads and interprets the Solomonic episodes in Scripture, but brings innovative interpretation that sheds light on the practice and function of a sage in the Hellenistic context. In other words, the intellectual and religious life of a Hellenistic Jewish sage is mediated through an interpretation of the life of Solomon.

The interrelation between the sage and *his* Solomon serves as the core for the discussion in this chapter. The name Solomon only occurs in the title, yet the whole work

[27] Newman, "The Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon," 310.

bears the impact of the name. Specifically, the sage takes upon himself a distinct Solomonic personality that reflects a deep immersion in tradition and an openness to the immediate cultural context. To create the Solomonic persona, the sage employs the first-person voice to recount how he searches for, obtains, and later cherishes and dwells with Sophia/wisdom. The changing relationship with wisdom is the key to the life development of Solomon in scriptural narrative. Likewise, Wisdom portrays the sage's growth of wisdom and understanding through his constant interactions with wisdom at different stages of life. Using the first-person singular pronoun "I," the sage constructs an intellectual and spiritual autobiography through the stories of Solomon.

In this regard, the life of the sage is deeply influenced by the life of Solomon. Wisdom functions as the key element that ties their respective lives together. At the same time, in composing the text, the sage also makes Solomon pertinent to his day and age. The sage actualizes his humanness by thinking *with* and *through* Solomon, the exemplar whose steps he follows. Imitation undergirds the composition. As Theodor Adorno states, "The human is indissolubly linked with imitation: a human being only becomes a human at all by imitating other human beings."[28] By becoming Solomon, the sage demonstrates his authority to promulgate wisdom that brings erudite knowledge, spiritual insights, political prosperity, and everlasting life.

To achieve the goal in Part I, namely, to understand the interrelation between the sage and Solomon, it is important to offer a close reading of the Solomonic figure presented in the text. The Solomonic figure does not emerge in a vacuum, but builds upon many years of interpretive traditions, which calls for an overview of the major portrayals of

[28] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: Verso, 1951), 154.

Solomon in the Hebrew Bible and non-biblical Second Temple literature.[29] This survey of manifold texts consists of Chapter 2. The overview here is not meant to be exhaustive, but instead attempts to show the traditions and textual materials that the sage of Wisdom might be familiar with or inherited from his predecessors.[30]

The overview helpfully consolidates certain motifs that are frequently associated with Solomon. When it comes to the evaluation of the character of Solomon, different texts also choose to emphasize certain aspects while downplaying others. In this survey, the different evaluations of Solomon and their corresponding rationale will be offered. The Solomon portrayed in Wisdom reflects certain consistency in the interpretive tradition, and brings out new angles of the character. In Chapter Three, building upon the interpretive traditions of Solomon, I move on to highlight four major motifs that are prominent in the text and examine how the sage establishes the Solomonic voice by engaging with both

[29] The classification is heuristic here. I am aware of the ongoing debates around the issue of biblical canon, and whether the binary category of "biblical" and "non-biblical" is helpful to reflect textual reality in history. Here I chose to use the term "non-biblical," simply for the sake of argument, as I want to distinguish the literary corpora that I attempt to engage with here. For scholarship on canon debate, see Hindy Najman, "The Vitality of Scripture Within and Beyond the Canon," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43 (2012): 497-518. L. M. McDonald and J. A. Sanders, eds., *The Canon Debate: The Origins and Formation of the Bible* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002). J. C. VanderKam, "Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11, no.2 (2001): 269-292. For some of the recent discussion, see F. García Martínez, "Rethinking the Bible: Sixty Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Research and Beyond," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. M. Popović, JSJSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 19-36; G. J. Brooke, "Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical Process," in *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran: Proceedings of a Joint Symposium*, STDJ 58, eds., E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant, and R. A. Clements (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 85-104; E. Ulrich, "The Bible in the Making: The Scriptures at Qumran," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 17-33; J. J. Collins, "Before the Canon: Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism," in *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present and Future: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, eds., J. L. Mays, D. L. Petersen, and K. H. Richards (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 225-41; and T. H. Lim, "Authoritative Scriptures and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds., J. J. Collins and T. H. Lim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 303-22; Konrad Schmid, "The Canon and the Cult: The Emergence of Book Religion in Ancient Israel and the Gradual Sublimation of the Temple Cult," *JBL* (2012): 291-307; Timothy H. Lim, "How Was the Canon Formed?" *The Expository Times* 133, no. 9 (June 2022): 357–69.

[30] For scholarly works that focus on the reception history of Solomon, see Sheila Leiter, *Perils of Wisdom: The Scriptural Solomon in Jewish Tradition*, Judaism in Context 28 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021); Sara Koenig, "Solomon in Reception History," in *The Handbook of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 511-525; Joseph Verheyden, ed., *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Jewish traditions and Hellenistic ideas. These four motifs include 1) praying for wisdom; 2) the list of knowledge and crafts; 3) wise ruling and governance; and 4) building the temple. In my engagement with each of the four motifs, I explain how the sage reimagines the Solomonic themes in his intellectual and cultural milieu and makes them relevant to the vision and duty of an ideal sage in the Hellenistic world.

Following a close reading of the text and the rich interpretive history associated with Solomon, I focus on the first-person speech in Wis.7-9 in Chapter Four, examining how this particular mode of expression reflects the intricate relationship between the sage and Solomon. As a recurrent literary trope in wisdom literature, the first-person narrative boosts the veracity of the teaching. Also, first-person teaching based on one's firsthand experience can be regarded as a rhetorical strategy to persuade the audience and make the message more convincing. The first-person speech in Wisdom reflects these purposes, both in terms of its veracity and conviction. Nevertheless, the unique facet of the autobiographical speech lies in its allusions to the exterior narratives of Solomon. In other words, the construction of the sage's autobiography is mediated through the life stories of Solomon. The sage's speech builds upon and invokes the Solomonic stories, stories of the other. I would describe the language of "I" in Wisdom as "narrativized I"—an account of self that receives and absorbs the narratives of others. As the sage receives and internalizes the Solomonic narratives, he also enriches the interpretive legacy of Solomon's life by writing his heyday cultural values into the life of the paradigmatic wise king in Israelite history. In the meantime, this active scriptural interpretation based on the figure of Solomon becomes an integral part of the sage's formation of piety, and functions as a way for the sage to approach God.

The chapter ends with an examination of the autobiographical elements presented in the text, such as 1) crafting a royal voice, 2) stages of life, and 3) feelings and emotions. These different elements shape the personality of an individual. Through the timeline, one can experience the growing maturity of the individual under portrayal. In the sage's making of autobiography, the *self* of the sage and the *other* of Solomon become so intertwined that they ultimately shape and mold the life stories of each other. The sage becomes Solomon, and Solomon simultaneously becomes a Hellenistic sage.

Chapter Two

Creating the Solomonic Persona: An Overview of the Solomonic Traditions

Introduction

Because of the ever-growing tradition associated with Solomon, the renowned king of wisdom in Israel's history enjoys everlasting fame long after his death. King, sage, temple builder, and subsequently magician and exorcist—the figure Solomon creates a complex and fascinating network in which many unanticipated parts of scripture come together, the ruminations of the sages across generations dwell, and the folkloric tales and anecdotes blossom. The name of Solomon becomes a fountainhead through which florid and variegated traditions evolve and develop.

Among many of his achievements, wisdom can be regarded as Solomon's most distinct feature worthy of perpetual remembrance. Traditions further reinforce the important role of wisdom in Solomon's judicial, political, ritual, and literary success. Thus, Solomon's relationship with wisdom becomes a central place for later interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, to elaborate, comment on, and imagine. The different aspects of Solomon's association with wisdom consist of Solomon's request and acquisition of wisdom, the divine gift of wisdom to Solomon, and how wisdom or lack thereof manifests in Solomon's life and political career.

The character of Solomon and the development of a Solomonic persona are intertwined. Although there are staple themes that occur frequently in the portrayal of Solomon, the emphases vary depending on the contexts in which new literature emerges. In this sense, the imagery of Solomon is never fixed, but fluid, complex, and at times ambiguous.

In the following, I will offer an overview of the depiction of Solomon in biblical and non-biblical literature leading up to the era close to the compositional time of Wisdom and see how certain prominent features of the iconic king in the Israelite history are established throughout the history of reception. Alongside the different portrayals of Solomon in a variety of texts, the last section is devoted to the literary works that become associated with Solomon. Solomon's amazing literary output recorded in 1 Kings buttresses the pseudonymous attribution to the king. In turn, as more literary works become associated with Solomon, the more literarily famous the king becomes in reception history.

I. Solomon in the Hebrew Bible

In the Hebrew Scripture, the most extensive biographical account of Solomon can be found in 1 Kings 1-11 and 2 Chronicles 1-9. Despite being parallel accounts, the attitude to the king and the emphasis on the role of the king to Israel suggest significant differences. In fact, before the foundational account of Solomon in 1 Kings arrives, the name of Solomon occurs briefly in 2 Sam.12:24-25. This occurrence is associated with the origin of Solomon's name. The intimate relationship between God and Solomon is readily implicated in the first mention of his name at birth. After the doomed death of their first child, Solomon was born to David and Bathsheba. The first description of the newborn king is "The Lord loved Him" יהוה אהבו (2 Sam. 12:24). Divine affection for the little babe is further reinforced by Nathan the prophet's renaming of Solomon as "Jedidiah," "loved by God" (2 Sam. 12:25).[31] In Nehemiah 13:26, Solomon is again described as someone

[31] Nick Wyatt considers the name Jedediah to be a throne name that legitimates the succession of Solomon after David. The root in the name דוד also hints at the personal name of David and reflects the father-son relationship between David and Solomon. See Nick Wyatt, "Jedediah and Cognate Forms as a Title of Royal Legitimation," *Biblica* 66, no.1 (1985): 112-25.

who was "beloved by his God אהוב לאלהיו."[32] The language of love may play an important role in shaping the idealization of Solomon's character, as implied in the expression "The Lord loved him."[33]

The peaceful and hopeful ambiance surrounding the birth of Solomon has been long gone when the king arrives on stage again. 1 Kings opens with a violent and bloody succession narrative (1 Kings 1-2). The purge of potential political enemies and solidification of political power paved the way for Solomon's ascent to the throne.

Shortly after Solomon establishes his kingdom, he pleads to God for wisdom. This central episode in Solomon's life follows immediately after his marriage alliance with Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kgs. 3:1).[34] Solomon goes to Gibeon and offers sacrifice to God. From there Solomon receives a vision from God by night in which God promises to grant Solomon whatever he asks for (1 Kgs. 3:5). In this vision, Solomon asks for wisdom to govern the people and for the ability to judge between good and evil (1 Kgs. 3:9). Solomon's answer pleases God tremendously. In response to Solomon's request, God grants him unparalleled wisdom, alongside enormous wealth on the condition that he would keep his statutes and law (1 Kgs. 3:10-14).

In the following chapters, the biblical historians show the manifold dimensions of how Solomon carries out his divinely-given wisdom in judicial matters, building international relations, and fostering international trades, alongside his enormous body of knowledge and prolific literary output (1 Kgs. 3:16-4:34 [Heb. 5:14]). In addition, the

---

[32] In the context of Nehemiah 13, Solomon was regarded as a negative example. Nehemiah mentions Solomon to illustrate the traps of foreign women, as they led a wise king astray. Using Solomon as an example, Nehemiah aims to justify the need for divorce between Jews and foreign women.

[33] Katherine Dell, *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 64.

[34] The Gibeon episode serves as the main source for the composition of the prayer in the Wisdom of Solomon 9, which will be further explored in the next chapter.

historian details the building projects that Solomon undertook during his reign, namely, the Temple and his palace (1 Kgs. 5-8:11). A detailed description of the Temple occupies much space in the biographical account. Ranging from extravagant building materials to the inches and cubits in measure—the significance of the Temple lies in its meticulous details.[35] As the builder of such a magnificent Temple, Solomon naturally gains his enduring fame.

Once the construction of the Temple is complete, Solomon dedicates the sacred place to God through a long prayer. God reappears to Solomon to reassure him about his royal throne (1 Kgs. 9:2-5). In the meantime, God repeats the precondition for establishing Solomon's kingdom: Solomon and his descendants must keep His commandments and statutes. If they turn away from the Lord and worship other idols, the kingdom of Israel will be in jeopardy and the house will be in ruins (1 Kgs. 9:6-9). Following the Temple episode, the Deuteronomistic historian turns to the interaction between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who is attracted by Solomon's grand Temple, his wisdom, and his wealth. The Queen of Sheba comes to visit Solomon and his kingdom, and also tests him with

---

[35] Scholars have proposed different approaches to understanding why such meticulous details of the temple are incorporated into the depiction. Some suggest that the details help the readers to visualize the building. In that sense, it implies a historical reality. For example, Hurowitz states, "[It is] striking in the exact details given, and especially the fact that dimensions are provided…The information provided by the biblical inscriptions seems to be intent on enabling the reader actually to visualize the building or object described." V. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*, JSOTSup 115, American Schools of Oriental Research Monograph Series (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992), 5. Others have questioned the historical reality of the temple building and pointed out its ideological importance. Such is the case in John Van Seters, "Solomon's Temple: Fact and Ideology in Biblical and Near Eastern Historiography," *CBQ* 59, no.1 (1997): 45-57. Along a similar line of thought, scholars have explored the symbolic and theological meanings of the many architectural details in the temple. Jon Levenson and Mark Smith have argued that the temple represents the heavenly abode and corresponds to the paradisiacal garden of Eden. See Mark S. Smith, "The Psalms as a Book of Pilgrimage," *Interpretation* 46 (1992), 160-161; Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 90-99. For the integration of archeology and text, see Elizabeth Bloch-Smith, ""Who is the King of Glory?" Solomon's Temple and Its Symbolism," in *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, eds., Michael D. Coogan, Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager (Westminster: John Know Press, 1994), 18-31.

riddles (1 Kgs. 10:1-13). Solomon's answers to the Queen further confirm his great wisdom and demonstrate the blessings he has received from God.

Despite the innumerable accolades of the king, the ending of Solomon's biography in 1 Kings poses a critical note. The Deuteronomistic historian indicts Solomon for his horde of foreign wives and pagan alliances (1 Kgs. 11:1-13). How shall one understand the minor critique by the end of the biography? To what extent will the ending affect one's reading of the full story? When taking the literary proportion into account, the harsh critiques against Solomon's backsliding constitute a small portion of the king's biography.[36] Here the grand eulogy and minor criticism of Solomon reflect a tension "in the Deuteronomistic History between pro- and anti-monarchical statements," which has long been noted among scholars.[37]

The ambiguous attitude toward Solomon implied in 1 Kings can be hardly detected in the parallel accounts in Chronicles. Solomon's succession to power seems so "seamless, [as] David designates Solomon his heir, and he ascends to the throne without controversy or conflict"[38] (cf. 1 Chron. 28:9-21; 29:22-25). When the Chroniclers transition the focus

---

[36] Dell, *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence,* 80. Walter Brueggemann also comments on the literary disproportion in Deuteronomists' depiction of Solomon's achievements and the critiques of his lapsed life. "In light of the social revolution of 1 Kings 11-12 in which the Solomonic achievement abruptly collapses, it is clear that the ideological thrust of sapiential rationality was uncritical, oppressive, and therefore unacceptable to much of the populace." Even though the Deuteronomistic historian might intend to show that the Solomonic wisdom would not work in the end, the state's commitment to such wisdom could be hardly denied. In this regard, the historian offers a social critique that "the regime was indeed committed to such an ideological self-deception that brought its own ruin." See Walter Brueggemann, "The Social Significance of Solomon as a Patron of Wisdom," in *A Social Reading of the Old Testament: Prophetic Approaches to Israel's Communal Life*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 257-258.

[37] Dell, *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence,* 80. Dell notes the observation of Deuteronomistic scheme can be traced back to scholars in Wellhausen's era. Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des alten Testaments,* 3rd ed. (Berlin: B. Reimer, 1989). For the debate on whether the Deuteronomistic historian paints Solomon in a positive or pessimistic light, see Gary Knoppers, "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program," *CBQ* 57 (1993): 229-254. Also see Marvin Sweeney, *I and II Kings: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007).

[38] Steven Weitzman, *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 33.

from David to Solomon, the first major event of Solomon under description is the Gibeon episode (2 Chron. 1:1-13). In the hands of the Chroniclers, the pivotal moment when Solomon requests wisdom in 1 Kings becomes an occasion where the king exhibits his piety and faithfulness to God. Solomon is accompanied by the assembly when he goes to Gibeon where he encounters God and requests wisdom from God. Gibeon, this time, becomes a place of worship: "Solomon…went to the high place that was at Gibeon, for the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness, was there" (2 Chron. 1:3). The emphasis on the cultic significance of the place and Solomon's sacrificial activities aligns with the Chroniclers' overall concerns for the temple and cultic worship.[39] Shortly after the Gibeon episode, the Chroniclers leave the judicial case between two prostitutes in 1 Kings 3, and directly offer an overview of Solomon's given wealth (2 Chron. 1:14-17).

For the rest of the Solomonic accounts in Chronicles, a large portion of writing is dedicated to the temple construction and Solomon's prayer of temple dedication (2 Chron. 2-7). Chroniclers' concern about the temple decisively shapes the presentation of monarchical history. David and Solomon are portrayed as "a single, unified event"[40]—their relationship reflects the promise and fulfillment of the temple construction. In the words of Schweitzer, "Chronicles becomes a cultic history rather than a royal one."[41]

The centrality of the temple in Chronicles is inseparable from the target audience, namely, the post-exilic community and their immediate contexts.[42] In the Persian period,

---

[39] Roddy L. Braun, "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles," *JBL* 92 (1973), 509-510.

[40] H. G. M. Williamson, "The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles," *VT* 26 (1976), 356.

[41] Steven J. Schweitzer, "The Temple in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles," in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, eds., Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 125.

[42] As for the dating of Chronicles, most scholars position it somewhere in the late Persian or early Hellenistic period. In scholarship, dating has been a wide range from the sixth century B.C.E. to the Maccabean period.

the temple is not only an institution of worship, but also a crucial factor in maintaining social stability.[43] As a result, the Chroniclers highlight the pre-exilic significance of the temple by recounting the great effort that David and Solomon had put into building the temple, which closely links to their faithfulness to God. To further bolster the piety of the two kings, the Chroniclers omit their flaws, especially the sexual misconduct of the two kings. David's dalliance with Bathsheba is untraceable in the Chroniclers' retelling. In the case of Solomon, Chronicles eliminated the critical endnote in 1 Kings where Solomon's foreign wives seduced him to idolatry and led the king astray. The omission, as Ben Wright rightly notices, changes one's interpretation of the subsequent division of the kingdom.[44] Instead of attributing the division to Solomon, as in the case of 1 Kings, Chronicles transfers the responsibility for such evil consequence to Rehoboam and Jeroboam (2 Chron. 10).

For the Maccabean dating, the redactional layers function as the deciding factor. See footnote 8 in Steven J. Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles*, Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 442 (New York: T & T Clark International, 2007), 4. Advocates for a late date include Peter R. Ackroyd, "Criteria for Maccabean Dating of Old Testament Literature," *VT* 3 (1953): 113-32; Ernst M. Dorrfuss, *Mose in den Chronikbuchern: Gerant theokratischer Zukunftserwartung*, BZAW 219 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 282-83; Georg Steins, *Die Chronik als kanonisches Abschlussphanomen: Studien zur Entstehung und Theologie von 1/2 Chronik*, BBB 93 (Weinheim: Beltz Athenaum Verlag, 1995), 491-39, 491-99; Georg Steins, "Zur Datierung der Chronik: Ein neuer methodischer Ansatz, " *ZAW* 109 (1997): 84-92. As Schweitzer mentions all the references to a late date and their criteria, he also notes that the stance fails to gain currency in scholarship, "as nothing in the text requires the specific context of the Maccabean period for an explanation." A detailed analysis of dating can be found in Sara Japhet's commentary. See Sara Japhet, *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993), 23-28. Japhet dates the book "at the end of Persian or, more probably, the beginning of the Hellenistic period, at the end of the fourth century BCE." Also see Gary N. Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1-9*, AB 12 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 72-117; Jonathan E. Dyck, "Dating Chronicles and the Purpose of Chronicles," *Did* 8, no.2 (1997): 16-29; Isaac Kalimi, "The Date of the Book of Chronicles," in *God's Word for Our World*, vol.1, *Biblical Studies in Honor of Simon John DeVries*, eds., J. H. Ellens, D. L. Ellens, R. P. Knierim, and I. Kalimi (London: T & T Clark International, 2004), 347-71. The references can be found in footnote 8 in Schweiter's *Reading Utopia in Chronicles*.

[43] Steven J. Schweitzer, *Reading Utopia in Chronicles*, 11-13.

[44] Benjamin G. Wright, "Solomon in Chronicles and Ben Sira: A Study in Contrast," in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, eds., Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011), 146.

With many modifications, the Chroniclers whitewash the flawed character of Solomon, making him a faithful temple builder.[45] The biographical account of Solomon in 2 Chronicles ends with the visit of Queen Sheba who is amazed at his ability to solve thorny questions, as well as his material wealth. Prior to a brief note on his death (2 Chron. 9:29-31), Solomon's great wealth is mentioned again by an enumeration of a wide range of expensive objects he possessed during his lifetime (2 Chron. 9:13-28).[46] Overall, the imagery of Solomon in the Chronicles is not so much a king of wisdom, but first and foremost, the main patron of the cult.

II. Solomon in Non-Biblical Second Temple Literature

A variety of Second Temple literature mentions the name of Solomon and some of his accomplishments: temple building and exorcism become dominant themes in the portrayal of Solomon. References to him as a temple builder can be traced to scriptural accounts. Apart from the temple, Solomon is also remembered for many other building projects during his lifetime (cf. 1 Kgs. 9:15-25, 2 Chron. 8:1-18). Regarding exorcism, one can hardly find any explicit mention in Scripture, yet the references to Solomon's extensive knowledge of plants and animals (1 Kgs. 4:33) might pave the way for later traditions to portray him as someone who is well-versed in all sorts of living forces, including the various spiritual forces. Solomon as an exorcist is a result of the evolusion of tradition.

---

[45] There is a clear tendency to downplay Solomon's defects and religious confusions in the development of traditions linked to the figure. The critical attitude towards Solomon seems to disappear in the process of making a connection between a literary corpus and the king. The more positive attitude to Solomon is examined in the chapter as well, particularly in the survey of Second Temple literature that engages with the figure of Solomon.

[46] Solomon's great wealth and wisdom serve as bookends for the retelling in Chronicles (2 Chron 1:1-14, 9:13-24). The thematic link exhibits that both people under his rule and beyond the borders recognize Solomon's wealth and wisdom. Raymond Dillard characterizes the narrative structure as chiastic. See Raymond B. Dillard, "The Literary Structure of the Chronicler's Solomon Narrative," *JSOT* 30 (1984), 88.

Among the many literary references to Solomon in the Second Temple period, Josephus the Jewish historian offers the most extensive and lengthy account of Solomon in his *Antiquities of the Jews*. In the introductory session on how Solomon comes to power, Josephus follows the historical accounts in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles, with a few embellishments on Solomon's enormous accomplishments. Louis Feldman notes that Josephus emphasizes Solomon's achievements by intentionally downplaying the role of David in the preparation for the temple and the focus on David in Solomon's prayer at Gibeon.[47]

After an enumeration of Solomon's wisdom and its applications, Josephus singles out Solomon's ability to charm demons and elaborates on his exorcist power unfound in the biblical accounts.[48] To make the account convincing, Josephus also incorporates his own witness of a certain Eleazer, contemporary to him, who has successfully expelled an evil spirit by invoking the name of Solomon:

> And God granted him knowledge of the art used against demons for the benefit and healing of men. He also composed incantations by which illnesses are relieved, and left behind forms of exorcisms with which those possessed by demons drive them out, never to return. And this kind of cure is of very great power among us to this day, for I have seen a certain Eleazar, a countryman of mine, in the presence of Vespasian, his sons, tribunes and a number of other soldiers, free men possessed by demons, and this was the manner of the cure: he put to the nose of the possessed man a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon, and then, as the man smelled it, drew out the demon through his nostrils, and when the man at once fell down, adjured the demon never to come back into him, speaking Solomon's name and reciting the incantations which he had composed. Then, wishing to convince the bystanders and prove to them that he had this power,

---

[47] Louis H. Feldman, "Josephus Portrait of Solomon," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 66 (1995), 103-105.

[48] Although it is hard to find explicit biblical descriptions of Solomon's spiritual powers over demons, Dennis Duling has proposed that the exorcism tradition in the passage can be traced back to MT 1 Kgs 5:9-14. See Dennis Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," *HTR* 68, no.3/4 (1975), 235-252. See also, Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magnus, Development of a Tradition*, JSJSup 73 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 26-105.

> Eleazar placed a cup of foot-basin full of water a little way off and commanded the demon, as it went out of the man, to overturn it and make known to the spectators that he had left the man. And when this was done, the understanding and wisdom of Solomon were clearly revealed, on account of which we have been induced to speak of these things, in order that all men may know the greatness of his nature and how God favored him, and that no one under the sun may be ignorant of the king's surpassing virtue of every kind (*A.J.* 8. 45-48).[49]

According to Josephus, Solomon is not only able to exorcise demons on his own, but he also bequeaths his spells for the subsequent generations—whenever the name of Solomon is invoked, demons and evil spirits will be expelled. In fact, Solomon's spiritual powers started to gain currency in the early Herodian period. Angela Harkins points out that Solomon's active role in exorcism can be readily found in 11QApocryphalPsalms (11Q11), one of the exorcism texts in Qumran.[50]

Solomon's esoteric arts continue to grow alongside exegetical development. The magical ring and seal also occur in the *Testament of Solomon*,[51] a late antique work. In the *Testament*, Solomon is presented as an authoritative tamer of all sorts of demons and evil spirits who disrupted the construction of the Temple. As Solomon prayed fervently to God,

---

[49] All translations of Josephus's *Antiquitates judaicae* follow the translation in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, trans. Henry St. J. Thackeray, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930).

[50] Harkins comments that even though the majority of the text is concerned with David, Solomon's occurrence is clearly situated within an exorcistic context. She also points out that there is a likelihood that Solomon's reputation of exorcism might be even older than the late Second Temple period. See Angela K. Harkins, "The Odes of Solomon as Solomonic Pseudepigrapha," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 25, no.4 (2016), 253. For scholarship on the exorcism texts in Qumran, see notes 14-16 on page 253 of Harkin's article.

[51] The compositional history of the Testament of Solomon is complex. It is challenging to pinpoint the date of the text, as the likelihood of different layers of texts being composed or redacted at different times is quite high. For a discussion on the dating and provenance of the book, see D.C. Duling, "Testament of Solomon: A New Translation and Introduction" in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol.1, ed. James H. Charlesworth, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 940-944. Duling considers it challenging to establish the provenance of the book because of the international nature of magical literature. Some suggestions are favored among scholars: Babylonia, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Syria-Palestine. In light of the thought forms of the text, alongside a citation of TSol in a Christian text from about 400 AD, Duling argues that TSol might be dated from late third-century. In another article, Duling dates the work prior to 400 CE (between the second and fourth century CE), see Dennis Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," 242.

God sent him the archangel Michael to grant him a ring with a seal that would allow Solomon to have authority over the demons.

> [The archangel Micahel] said to me (Solomon): 'Solomon, Son of David, take the gift which the Lord God, the highest Saboath, has sent to you; (with it) you shall imprison all the demons, both female and male, and with their help you shall build Jerusalem when you bear this seal of God. (T. Sol. 1.5-7)

Solomon ruled over all the demons with the power granted by God. In the end, all the rebellious demons and evil spirits became obedient to Solomon the charmer. Under Solomon's command, these demons and spirits even made contribution to building the temple. The portrayal of Solomon as an excellent exorcist, coupled with his frequent gesture of prayer, allows Angela Harkins to draw a connection between the king's prayer and the protective outcomes from these prayers.[52] Harkins points out that in Solomon's prayer for dedication, he specifically asks for deliverance and protection from pestilence and evils of many sorts (1 Kgs. 8:31-53). The prayer ends with a theophany and a divine declaration of promise (1 Kgs. 9:2-3). Harkins's proposal of the link between Solomon's well-reputed exorcism and his dedicatory prayer further strengthens the efficaciousness of prayers uttered by the wise king.

Comparing the Solomonic accounts in Kings and Chronicles, one can already observe the divergent opinions on the life of the king. The critical issue in the overall evaluation focuses on Solomon's end of life. In particular, how do later interpreters comment on Solomon's flaws, especially his liaisons with foreign women who drew him away from faithful worship to YHWH? In most Second Temple literature, Solomon's fatal flaw as noted by the Deuteronomistic historian is much toned down or even omitted. To a certain degree, Josephus shows an awareness of the issue. His critique of Solomon's

[52] Harkins, "The Odes of Solomon as Solomonic Pseudepigrapha," 255.

innumerable wives is rooted in the Mosaic law against intermarriage, a point also brought up by Nehemiah in his condemnation of mixed marriages (Neh. 13:23-31). In the *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus writes,

> [He] did not preserve in this way until his death, but abandoned the observance of his father's customs and came to an end not at all like what we have already said about him, for he became madly enamored of women and indulged in excesses of passion; not satisfied with the women of his own country alone, he married many from foreign nations as well, Sidonians, Tyrians, Ammanites and Idumaeans, thereby transgressing the laws of Moses who forbade marriage with persons of other races, and he began to worship their gods to gratify his wives and his passion for them…But Solomon, carried away by thoughtless pleasure, disregarded these warnings and took as wives seven hundred women, the daughters of princes and nobles, and three hundred concubines, and beside these the daughter of the king of Egypt; and he was very soon prevailed upon by them to the extent of imitating their ways, and was forced to give a sign of his favor and affection for them by living in accordance with their ancestral customs. (*A.J.* 8.190-193).
> ……
>
> Thus Solomon died at a good old age, having reigned for eighty years and lived ninety- four, and was buried in Jerusalem. He surpassed all other kings in good fortune, wealth, and wisdom, except that as he approached old age he was beguiled by his wives into committing unlawful acts (*A.J.* 8.211).

Despite Josephus touching upon the erroneous decisions and behaviors that Solomon committed by the end of his life, he still paints the king in a very positive light as a whole. Josephus attributes Solomon's failure to his old age, which leads to the decline of reason and loss of memory of the Hebrew practices (cf. *A.J.* 8.194). Seemingly, Josephus attempts to excuse Solomon from his late weakness due to his physical deterioration. The portrayal aligns with Josephus' overarching agenda—he wants to present that Solomon as someone chosen by God to be a man of virtue (ἀρετή) who builds His temple.[53]

The Book of Ben Sira, however, remains an exception in the overall tendency to downplay Solomon's final flaws in Second Temple literature. Solomon clearly claims a

[53] Feldman, "Josephus Portrait of Solomon."

special place in the heart of Ben Sira, as the sage creates an apostrophe in the Praise of the Fathers to make the sage-king stand out. Unlike the previous heroes who are described in the third person pronoun, Ben Sira switches to the second person pronoun "you" in his retelling of Solomon's life. This pronoun change allows the author to "speak directly to someone and to do this over the heads of his audience."[54] He praises Solomon for his excellent understanding, "songs, proverbs, and parables," also his extraordinary wealth (Sir. 47:14-18). Ben Sira shows great admiration for Solomon's early life. But in the second half, he clearly critiques Solomon's sexual indulgence in his later years, which leads to the instability and final division of the kingdom. Although Ben Sira's evaluation of Solomon ends with a critical note, he does not follow the account in 1 Kings exactly. For instance, Solomon's practice of idolatry is not mentioned.[55]

The combination of Solomon's unbridled sexual desires and how foreign women lead him astray can be found at the end of the Testament of Solomon. Solomon became obsessed with a Shunammite woman. In order to win her, he made sacrifice to Raphan and Moloch (T. Sol. 26.5), the foreign gods. Solomon's idolatrous act made the divine spirit leave him immediately and he then became "a laughingstock to the idols and demons" (T. Sol. 26.7). From these instances, one can see Solomon and his erotic life can be problematic in the eyes of some interpreters.

III. Solomonic Attribution and the Issue of Pseudonymity

[54] P. C. Beentjes, "The Countries Marveled at You: King Solomon in Ben Sira 47:12-22," *Bijdragen, Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 45 (1984): 6.
[55] Claudia Camp, "Killing the Father: Gender, and the Figure of Solomon in Ben Sira's Hymn to the Fathers," in *On Prophets, Warriors, and Kings: Former Prophets through the Eyes of their Interpreters*, eds., George J. Brooke and Ariel Feldman (Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 72.

Solomon's prolific literary output is one of the defining features of the wise king in future remembrance of Solomon. "He also uttered three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five" (1 Kgs. 4:32)—the claim generates a rich literary tradition that is associated with Solomon. In the Hebrew Bible, two psalms are attributed to Solomon.[56] More well-known Solomonic attribution in the Hebrew Bible call to mind Proverbs, Qoheleth, and Song of Songs, all of which can be traced back to the claim of Solomon's outstanding literary composition. The Solomonic authorship of these works has left a lasting impact on the reception of Solomon in later Jewish and Christian communities. As the fame of Solomon continues to grow through the history of reception, more literary works become associated with him and these literary works move beyond the linguistic register of the Hebrew language and were composed in Greek and possibly Syriac, such as the Wisdom of Solomon,[57] Psalms of Solomon, Odes of Solomon, and Testament of Solomon.

Seeing the various texts that are attributed to Solomon, we observe that a wide range of pseudepigraphic literature is associated with him. How shall we understand the purported authorship of Solomon across different genres of literature? What kind of role does Solomon play in the composition of such literature?

To set the stage for our discussion, it can be helpful to briefly discuss the notion of authorship and its relation to the ancient practice of pseudepigraphy. First, it is important to note that the ancient understanding of "author function" works quite differently from the

[56] Psalms 72 and 127.

[57] In the *Muratorian Canon*, attributed to Hippolytus, another suggestion of authorship is proposed. Hippolytus claims that Wisdom was written by Solomon's friends to honor him: 'et sapientia ab amicis saloonis in honorem ipsius scripta.' The Greek version that points to the tradition suggests that Wisdom was written by Philo (καὶ ἡ σοφία Σαλομώντος ὑπὸ φίλωνοσ εὶς τιμὴν συγγραφεῖσα). In Eusebius *Hist. Eccl.* 6.13.6., Clement of Alexandria gets associated with the Book of Wisdom. Cf. William Horbury, "The Christian Use and the Jewish Origins of Wisdom of Solomon," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honor or J. A. Emerton,* eds., Day, Gordon, and Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 188.

modern notion of authorship. The modern Western concept of authorship is well delineated in Foucault's classic essay, "What is an Author?."[58] Foucault points out that the primary task for an interpreter is to discover the authorial intent of the text.[59] If one unfortunately deals with an anonymous text, then the first step is to "rediscover the author."[60] In this regard, authorship is highly respected and valued in the modern literary world. This modern sense of authorship has impacted the early generation of scholars' treatment of the massive pseudepigraphic literature exterior to the canonical biblical literature. The biblical pseudepigraphy once was regarded as "fraud" or "forgery," inferior to the canonical biblical literature.[61] Annette Reed associates the dismissive attitude to pseudepigraphy with the influence of the modern notion of authorship, alongside a religious intent to guard the canonical status of the Bible as "divinely-inspired textual revelation."[62] The rationale goes as follows, since the text is penned after the name of a biblical figure, the creativity of an individual author is compromised; furthermore, the authenticity and authority of the content remain dubious.

Yet the evaluation of texts based on their canonical status is problematic. In fact, as Reed points out, the practice of pseudepigraphy is readily observable in a variety of canonical texts, ranging from Old Testament texts such as Deuteronomy to a large number of pastoral epistles in the New Testament.[63] The three Solomonic texts, alongside countless

---

[58] Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", in *Aesthetics, Methods, and Epistemology*, trans. Robert Hurley, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998), 213.
[59] Foucault, "*What is an Author?,"* 213.
[60] Foucault, "*What is an Author?,"* 213.
[61] Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of "The Bible" in Late Antiquity," in *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montreal Colloquium in Honor of Charles Kannengiesser*, eds., Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 475.
[62] Reed, "Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of "The Bible" in Late Antiquity," 475.
[63] Reed, "Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of "The Bible" in Late Antiquity," 475.

Davidic psalms in the Psalter further demonstrate the prevalence of pseudepigrapha in the now canonical literature. Furthermore, the canonical boundary also at times hampers us from understanding how the ancient communities would receive pseudepigrapha in the first place. Hindy Najman suggests that many texts that employ "pseudepigraphic strategies" might have had "scriptural or even canonical status" in some of the "ancient Jewish and Christian communities."[64] Such is the case in Najman's interpretation of the Book of Jubilees. With her proposal of a Mosaic discourse, Najman convincingly demonstrates how Jubilees, a second-century BCE text, participates in a similar interpretive strand as Deuteronomy.[65] Against most scholars' reading of Jubilees as a challenge to the Mosaic traditions that are canonized, she argues that Jubilees continues and further expands the early Mosaic traditions. As opposed to the replacement model, Najman enables us to see an alternative to the textual relationships. By softening the boundary between canonical and non-canonical, or biblical and post-biblical, the continuity in different modes of literary production becomes more noticeable.

Now as we have cautioned against applying the modern sense of authorship to ancient pseudepigrapha, and pointed out the shared biblical traditions in which pseudepigrapha participate, let us focus on the Solomonic authorship and explore how the series of Solomonic pseudepigrapha contributes to the interpretation and formation of the Solomonic traditions. When we try to articulate the relationship between Solomon and Solomonic literature, it can be helpful to compare this with Hindy Najman's proposal of

---

[64] Hindy Najman, *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future: An Analysis of 4 Ezra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 35. Regarding the status of certain books, this is not only a phenomenon of ancient communities of faith, but also modern ones. For the Ethiopian church today, books such as *Jubilees* and *1 Enoch*—regarded as non-authoritative in most church denominations—are considered biblical and canonical. See R. W. Cowley, "The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today," *OKS* 23 (1974): 318-323.

[65] Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 1-69.

the Mosaic discourse. Unlike Moses and Mosaic discourse where new textual production, in one way or another, depends on earlier Mosaic traditions to establish textual authority, the majority of texts attributed to Solomon, such as the collection of proverbs, psalms, and odes, do not contribute much to further readings of Solomon in the historical narratives (1 Kings//2 Chronicles). In the case of Solomonic literature, to rephrase Hindy Najman's concept of a "discourse tied to a founder,"[66] it functions more as "A founder tied to a discourse." For these Solomonic works, it is clear that the king functions less a historical figure, but more of a "metaphorical and symbolic figure."[67] Solomon's life symbolizes a life of wisdom—his literary genius and massive literary production are the result of his wisdom. His prolific literary life evidenced in 1 Kings 4 attracts a wide scope of literature attributed to him and is further reinforced by the massive amount of literature produced under his name.

Despite the extent to which the Solomonic narratives in the Hebrew Bible exert influence on the composition of these works varies,[68] the reputation of Solomon as the paragon of wisdom, songwriter, and poet continues to grow with more textual composition and production. Solomon gradually evolves into the concept of a wise and prolific writer—the creation of this particular Solomonic personality becomes the central point of our discussion. The link between "textual formation and the gradual formation of the concept of an author"[69] is the key to understanding Solomonic authorship in the vast number of

[66] Najman, *Seconding Sinai*, 13.
[67] Leiter, *Perils of Wisdom*, 105.
[68] Harkins, "The Odes of Solomon as Solomonic Pseudepigrapha," 247-273.
[69] Najman, *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future*, 41.

texts. In the following, I highlight three major trends in the literary development associated with Solomonic authorship:[70]

1) textual unity in light of the Solomonic biography and personality
2) increasing number of texts associated with Solomon, but less concern with his biography and personality
3) a name attachment, but no indication of biographical influence, and a lack of interest in Solomonic personality

For the first trend, Rabbinic interpretation of the Solomonic texts demonstrates how the biography of Solomon can shed light on textual production. In particular, Rabbis deal with the three Solomonic texts, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes in the Hebrew Bible. Early Jewish interpreters' construction of Solomon's biography is to aid their interpretation of these different texts.[71] By reading these texts in view of Solomon's biography, Rabbis suggest a textual unity among the three disparate texts that convey drastically different ideologies. Since their interpretive motivation differs, the Rabbis situate the compositional date of the works in the life of Solomon differently. Rabbi Hiyya,

[70] The three trends are modeled after Hindy Najman's reading of the three stages of Homeric authorship in Nietzsche's inaugural speech at Basel "Homer and Classical Philology." See Najman, *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future*, 39-43. Here instead of using stages that denote a historical development, I choose to use "trends" in that the degree to which Solomonic biography impacts the composition of the manifold works varies. Different interpretations might yield different outcomes. For example, against most scholars' opinion on the minimal influence that Solomon has on the composition of Odes of Solomon, Angela Harkins argues that the biblical king plays a critical role in shaping the content of these odes. See Harkins, "The Odes of Solomon as Solomonic Pseudepigrapha." In the meantime, the dating of these works is not fixed, which opens more possibilities to argue the direction of influence, say between Kings and Proverbs, Song of Songs, or Ecclesiastes. The dating issue is noticed by Leiter in her engagement with the three Solomonic works in the Hebrew Bible. See Leiter, *Perils of Wisdom*, 105-117.

[71] For a detailed review of the issue of Solomonic biography and his literary works, see Thomas M. Berlin, *Ecclesiastes and the Riddle of Authorship* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 20-34.

following the order of literary forms indicated in the list of 1 Kings 4:32—first proverbs (משל), then songs (שיר)—presents the compositional sequence as Proverbs, Song of Songs, and lastly Ecclesiastes. Ecclesiastes Rabbah positions the composition of the works early in his reign prior to Solomon's reception of the holy spirit at Gibeon. Rabbi Jonathan, on the other hand, proposes another order for the Solomonic literary works: first Songs, then Proverbs, and at last Ecclesiastes. In Shir Hashirim Rabbah, Rabbi Jonathan states, "When a man is young he composes songs; when he grows older he makes sententious remarks; and when he becomes an old man he speaks of the vanity of things."[72] The different positions provide one a window into ancients' conceptualization of the growth or development of literature.[73] These literary works also form a distinct personality of the individual. In this regard, the life of an individual and the literary works that one produces become deeply intertwined and illuminate each other.[74] I would situate the Wisdom of Solomon in this particular trend, as the composition of the book shows literary and ideological influence from the Solomonic biography. I will offer a detailed analysis of this connection in the following chapter.

The second trend is made more manifest in the Second Temple period. In the Greek translation of Proverbs, we observe the elevation of Solomonic authorship. Unlike the Masoretic Text of Proverbs, Septuagint does not show a specification of multiple attributions.[75] Rather, the translators of Proverbs regard Solomon has authored the

---

[72] *Canticles Rabbah*, eds., H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, vol.9 (London: Soncino Press, 1961), 17.
[73] Jacqueline Vayntrub, *Beyond Orality: Biblical Poetry on its Own Terms* (London: Routledge, 2019), 27.
[74] Vayntrub comments on this literary phenomenon: "These ideas are conceptualized, not for an entire culture's literary traditions, but rather on the scale of an individual life: the order in which Solomon's own literary skill developed through the course of his lifetime." *Beyond Orality*, 27.
[75] In the Masoretic Text, we can find attributions to Agur, King Lemuel, or some sages in the generic term "the wise".

collection single-handedly.[76] Apart from the attribution of the Greek Proverbs, the number of his reputed literary works also grew exponentially in the Greek context. In the Septuagint, Solomon composed five thousand (πεντακισχίλιαι) songs, instead of a thousand and five (חמשה ואלף) according to the Hebrew version (LXX 1 Kgs. 4:32). In *Jewish Antiquities*, Josephus also makes a slight change in the way of counting Solomon's literary compositions. "He also composed a thousand and five books of odes and songs, and three thousand books of parables and similitudes" (*A.J.* 8.44). The insertion of the word "books" (βιβλία) offers another model of viewing the sheer quantity of works that Solomon has produced. From the number of *songs* to the number of *books of songs*, Solomon's works become increasingly voluminous. For such statements concerning Solomon's literary career, we can still find resonances with the "Solomon" who utters Proverbs and writes songs under the biblical depiction. Nevertheless, the biography of Solomon is not much of a concern for attributing an increasing number of proverbs and songs to the king.

The last trend shows how Solomon serves as a name attached to a variety of literary works. In this sense, the Solomonic biography does not yield much influence on certain textual production.[77] This use of pseudonymous attribution is quite prevalent in biblical literature. For example, the superscription of David (ל דוד) in many Psalms, and of Solomon (ל שלמה) in a large portion of the Proverbs.[78] Much likely, later editors or compilers add these attributions. Such is also the case for some collections of psalms and

---

[76] Johann Cook, "The Septuagint of Proverbs," in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*, eds., Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 94.

[77] Dimant, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon," 314.

[78] The preposition ל can be understood in a variety of ways. It can be rendered as "to David/Solomon," meaning dedicated to the kings. It can also mean "by David/Solomon," that is, the works are supposed to be composed by the figures. Another option would be "concerning David/Solomon," or "belonging to David Solomon."

songs attributed to Solomon. Amidst the manifold Solomonic texts, there is an observable genre tendency. Some of the works can be categorized under the wisdom corpus. Solomon's wisdom—one of the distinct characteristics of the figure—is reinforced through his connection to the wisdom literary corpus.[79] According to Katharine Dell, Solomon is the "figurehead who holds the family of 'wisdom' texts together."[80] The concept of the author of Solomon, someone having unparalleled wisdom, critically contributes to the Solomonic attribution to literary texts that instruct wisdom and impart insights in different spheres of life. Outside the traditionally acknowledged wisdom books attributed to Solomon such as Proverbs, Qoheleth, and the Wisdom of Solomon, other literary works sometimes lack the aforementioned generic unity. Texts such as Song of Solomon, Psalms of Solomon, and Odes of Solomon might be at odds in fitting into the wisdom corpus.[81] Nevertheless, all these texts show the growing fame of Solomon so much so that more literary texts—no longer limited to generic boundaries—become attributed to the wise king.

---

[79] For the books that are traditionally associated with Solomon, namely, the triad Proverbs, Qoheleth, and Song of Songs, the nature of these books has long been under scholarly scrutiny. The first two works are generally regarded as wisdom literature regarding their content and form. Scholars have debated whether Song of Songs can be regarded as a wisdom book. Murphy argues against such a categorization and states in *The Tree of Life*, "Needless to say, the Canticle is not a wisdom book; it is a collection of love poems." Roland E. Murphy, *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*, 1st ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1990), 106. Katherine Dell, on the other hand, proposes that Song of Songs has strong connections to wisdom. She points out many wisdom motifs in the Canticle. See Dell, *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence*, 44-61. Also see her earlier article, "Does the Song of Songs Have Any Connections to Wisdom?", in *Perspectives on the Song of Songs/Perspektiven der Hoheliedauslegung*, ed., Anselm C. Hagedorn (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 8-26.

[80] For the term "wisdom family," Katherine Dell incorporates Cheung's three categories of "family resemblance" here. These categories include "a ruling wisdom thrust, an intellectual tone, and a didactic intention." Dell, *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence*, 29. Simon C. C. Cheung, *Wisdom Intoned: A Reappraisal of the Genre "Wisdom Psalms,"* The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 613 (London: T & T Clark, 2015), 17.

[81] Genre identification should not exclude the possibility of arguments that support an influence of the wisdom genre on these works. For instance, some scholars are keen to explore Song of Song's connection to the wisdom genre. Recent publications include Jennifer Andruska, *Wise and Foolish Love in the Song of Songs*, Old Testament Studies 75 (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Dell, "Does the Song of Songs Have Any Connections to Wisdom?," 8-26; also Dell, *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence*, 44-61.

Conclusion

In the overview of the Solomonic traditions, we see that the formation of the Solomonic persona(s) takes a long span of time. Solomonic wisdom and its different manifestations serve as springboards for ancient interpreters to recount the stories of Solomon. Temple building, literary output, knowledge in divination—each aspect of wisdom gains new significance in the retelling of Solomon's life at different times and contexts. The large amount of pseudepigraphic literature penned after the name of Solomon also shows his lasting influence.

In my engagement with the Wisdom of Solomon in the following chapter, many Solomonic motifs in the reception history will recur. As I have already hinted in the discussion about Solomonic attribution, Solomonic authorship of Wisdom participates in the first trend in pseudonymous attribution and shows the formal and ideological influence of the Solomonic biography in the composition and interpretation of the text. For Wisdom's Solomonic attribution, the name of this famed person is not meant to be considered a "pure and simple reference," but takes up some "other indicative functions."[82] As Foucault puts, "[The name] is more than a gesture, a finger pointed at someone; it is, to a certain extent, the equivalent of a description."[83] What does this description of Solomon look like in Wisdom? How does Wisdom participate in and reshape the Solomonic traditions for its audience? To answer these questions, we shall turn to the next chapter and examine how the Solomonic voice is established in Wisdom.

[82] Foucault, "What is an Author?", 209.
[83] Foucault, "What is an Author?", 209.

Chapter Three

Establishing the Solomonic Voice in the Wisdom of Solomon

Introduction

In the Wisdom of Solomon, Solomon functions as a figure who invokes rich literary history and enacts both the form and content of the composition of Wisdom. These textual allusions are not only limited to the Solomonic traditions, but also across scripture. Devorah Dimant highlights the importance of understanding how biblical interpretation

works in Wisdom, which is deeply connected to the function of pseudonymity in the work. She states,

> Wisdom does not have a narrative framework that lays out the context and identifies the chief protagonist. So, without details regarding the identity of the speaker, the author resorts to a complex system of biblical allusions that portray the pseudonymic speaker. A detection of these allusions and an exploration of their functions would then unveil the literary mechanism that makes pseudonymity work. Since Wisdom is presented as the discourse of a biblical figure, it is through the biblical allusions that this literary make-up functions. [84]

Although Wisdom lacks a well-developed narrative context in comparison to the biography of Solomon in the Hebrew Bible, the complex of allusions to existing narratives shapes a coherent narrative surrounding the speaker in Wisdom in its own right.[85] In line with Dimant's observation, how does Wisdom of Solomon retrieve and recast sources and traditions, both within and outside the historical books, to establish a Solomonic voice? In the fluid and ever-changing traditions, as we readily observe from the previous survey, what are some motifs that persist and perpetuate?

In this chapter, I propose that four major motifs critically shape the imagery of Solomon presented in Wisdom. These four motifs, in one way or another, have occurred in many aforementioned texts. Here I will analyze each of the themes in turn 1) praying for wisdom; 2) the list of knowledge and crafts; 3) wise ruling and governance, and 4) building the temple. In my examination of each Solomonic motif, I aim to present how the sage's active interpretation of the Solomonic motifs derived from the Hebrew Bible reflects the intellectual and religious practices of a sage in the Jewish Hellenistic context. Furthermore,

---

[84] Dimant, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon," 315.

[85] Here my opinion differs slightly as regards to Dimant's point of the non-existence of a narrative framework in Wisdom of Solomon. The difference might lie in the divergent understandings of the notion of "narrative." Dimant might have a stricter understanding of narrative and its essential elements. For me, "narrative" is broader, as it is not limited to the genre of a text, but rather how the interpretation of a text enables readers to construct meaning in a sustained and coherent way. As to the narrativity of these chapters, I will explore further in the following chapter "The Making of an Autobiography."

by elaborating and expounding on these dominant features of Solomon, I argue that Wisdom establishes a firm and pious voice of a Hellenistic sage-king, building upon Solomon's already established reputation, who faithfully follows the ancestral tradition in a cosmopolitan context.

I. Praying for Wisdom

In light of the central location and its length, prayer (7:7-22, 8:21-9:18) plays an important role in the autobiographical section. The speaker prays to seek and acquire wisdom. The close link between prayer and wisdom is exhibited throughout the section. How shall we understand the significance of prayer as a medium through which wisdom is sought, obtained, and praised? By focusing on the content and function of the prayer, I argue that the prayer uttered in the voice of Solomon provides a window into the liturgical practice among the Jewish sages.[86] Just as Solomon prays for wisdom, the Hellenistic Jewish sage also seeks wisdom and communes with God through prayers.

To demonstrate the piety of the sage, it is of primary importance to understand how the prayer is framed in the first place. In terms of the content of the prayer, it is readily noticeable that the prayers in Ch.7-9 reflect important themes of wisdom such as divine origin and its surpassing values in Solomon's request and reception of wisdom. These wisdom themes are derived from Solomon's encounter with God in the dream at Mountain Gibeon in scripture, an episode that looms large in the central chapters of Wisdom (1 Kings

[86] Ben Sira is another classic instance to show the importance of prayer in the daily life of a sage. See Judith H. Newman, "Liturgical Imagination in the Composition of Ben Sira," in *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays in Honor of Eileen Schuller on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*, ed. Jeremy Penner, Ken Penner, and Cecilia Wassen (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 323-338. Judith Newman, *Before the Bible: the Liturgical Body and the Formation of Scriptures in Early Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 24-47.

3). Seeing the clear biblical allusions, we shall first examine how these different Solomonic episodes are recast and modified in Wisdom to shape the imagery of a praying sage.

Let us start with a focus on the portrayal of Solomon's religious piety in the Hebrew Bible. In the biblical accounts, prayers have served as important markers for Solomon's piety. Solomon prayed to acquire wisdom, and later he also prayed to commemorate the completion of temple construction (1 Kgs. 3:6-9; 8:23-53; 1 Chron. 1:7-10; 6:14-42). As mentioned before, the famous episode of Solomon asking for wisdom in a dream at Gibeon is foundational in crafting the prayers in Wisdom 7-9. I argue that the Gibeon episode is crucial in establishing the connection between the liturgical and the sapiential in the Solomonic narratives in scripture, where the practice of prayer is pivotal to gaining insights and wisdom. To illustrate this point, we shall turn to a detailed analysis of the two crucial features of Solomon's wisdom—divine origin and its values over worldly achievements—established by the well-known account in 1 Kings 3:3-14. Both features of wisdom can be clearly observed in Wisdom.

In the initial encounter between Solomon and God in 1 Kings, Solomon exhibits his sincere desire to have wisdom for rulership so he can govern the people of the Lord:

> At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this your great people?" (1 Kgs. 3:5-9)

From this passage, we observe the first prominent feature of Solomon's wisdom—its divine origin. It is not inherent in him, rather his wisdom is a divine gift granted by God in response to his request. In Wisdom, the sage is also acutely aware of the source of wisdom, and this is reflected in his own prayer.

In its formulation, the sage repetitively highlights the divine origin of wisdom. When the sage initiates a prayer, it is apparent that wisdom and understanding are something external and regarded as a gift from God.

> Διὰ τοῦτο ηὐξάμην, καὶ φρόνησις ἐδόθη μοι,
> ἐπεκαλεσάμην, καὶ ἦλθέ μοι πνεῦμα σοφίας.
> Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given to me;
> I called upon God, and a spirit of wisdom came to me (Wisdom 7:7).

The divine origin of wisdom occurs in many other parts of the prayer. Each time when the sage pleads for wisdom, God as the sole source of wisdom is emphasized. "But knowing that I would not otherwise gain possession of her unless God gave her to me…so I made supplication to the Lord (ἐνέτυχον τῷ Κυρίῳ) and besought him (ἐδεήθην αὐτοῦ)" (8:21). The request shortly turns up again. "…give me wisdom that sits by you on your throne (δός μοι τὴν τῶν σῶν θρόνων πάρεδρον σοφίαν)" (9:4). Following the indication of the location of wisdom, another supplication is made after several lines concerning the divine commands. "Send her out from the holy heavens (Ἐξαπόστειλον αὐτὴν ἐξ ἁγίων οὐρανῶν), and from your glorious throne send her (πέμψον αὐτὴν), that she may be with me and toil, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you" (9:10). From first-person aorist active verbs that denote the sense of actively seeking God to second person imperatives, the intensity in the level of the request continues to grow.

The repetitive request for wisdom, in a rhetorical sense, shows the sage's strong desire to obtain and possess wisdom. In his prayer, the sage identifies the source of wisdom as God and affirms that understanding is a gift from God. Additionally, this gift can be asked for. Once one attains the divine gift of wisdom, one's relationship with God is further strengthened. The intersection between the request for wisdom and the practice of prayer shows Wisdom's reading of the Solomonic accounts, as the supernatural dimension of wisdom and the portrayal of the pious seeker of wisdom are modeled after King Solomon. It is worthwhile to note that in the sage's adaptation of the Solomonic background in composing the prayer, he makes two interpretive changes to reframe the narrative.[87] First, the sage becomes the person who initiates God's sending of wisdom. In the biblical account, the oneiric dialogue between God and Solomon is first initiated by God. In addition, the encounter between God and Solomon appears more like a conversation. God told Solomon to ask (שאל/αἰτέω) Him for whatever he wants, and Solomon appealed to God for "an understanding mind" (לב שמע/καρδίαν ἀκούειν) to govern the people (1 Kgs. 3:9). While the episode in 1 Kings lacks the exact vocabularies that describe the action of Solomon as "praying," the sage in Wisdom employs a series of verbs, such as εὔχομαι (7:7), ἐπικαλέω (7:7), and ἐντυγχάνω (8:21), that clearly denote the practice of praying. Here the sage modifies the account of divine appearance to a praying Solomon who earnestly seeks wisdom, stressing the need for the specific act of prayer.

Another interpretive change from the original biblical account is the sage's specific plea for wisdom (σοφία). In 1 Kings 3, the word wisdom (חכמה) does not occur in Solomon's request. What Solomon specifically asked for is "a hearing heart" (לב

[87] I thank Cian Power and Alison Salvesen for encouraging me to further explore and articulate the interpretive changes in Wisdom's Solomonic prayer at our meeting in June, 2023.

שמע/καρδίαν ἀκούειν), an expression that carries judicial significance.[88] Throughout the Gibeon episode as a whole, the mention of wisdom only occurs briefly in God's response to Solomon's plea: "I give you a wise and discerning mind (לב חכם ונבון/καρδίαν φρονίμην καὶ σοφήν)" (1 Kgs. 3:12). In Chroniclers' rendition of the event, however, Solomon's request for wisdom is clearly spelled out (2 Chron.1:10). In the statements of both Solomon and God, the expression of "wisdom and knowledge" (חכמה ומדע) (2 Chron.1:10-12) demonstrates the core element in the narrative as wisdom. Although the account in 1 Kings 3 is quite blurred about the specific request for wisdom, the phrases of "a hearing heart" and "a discerning heart' point to the direction of wisdom overall. Clearly, later readings of the account tend to generalize these distinct expressions in the Gibeon episode and treat them under the broader concept of wisdom.

These two interpretive changes to the Gibeon episode further emphasize the importance of prayer and wisdom respectively in the sage's liturgical practice, revealing the divine origin of wisdom. Otherwise, the sage faithfully sticks to the nature of wisdom depicted in the biblical account.

As we have already discussed the divine origin of Solomon's wisdom, we shall continue to examine the second important feature of Solomon's wisdom, namely, the unparalleled value of wisdom. In 1 Kings 3, after listening to Solomon's answer, God takes great delight in Solomon's request for wisdom over longevity, material wealth, and military victories:

---

[88] For a study of the expression 'the hearing heart," see E. E. Kozlova, "King Solomon and the 'Anatomy' of Wisdom," *JSOT* 46, no. 2 (2021): 249-268, esp. 252-258. In her analysis, Kozlova engages with comparative materials from the ANE to show how the expression of the "hearing heart" has roots in royal ideology. It signifies how the king is willing to attune to the information conveyed by people and the gods. Citing Wray Beal, Kozlova also notes that the judicial emphasis on the "hearing heart" eventually becomes more encompassing, including wisdom in a variety of fields such as the judicial, military, political, and cultic realms. See 257.

> It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches (ימים רבים/ἡμέρας πολλὰς, עשר/πλοῦτον), or for the life of your enemies (נפש איביך/ψυχὰς ἐχθρῶν σου), but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you. I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; no other king shall compare with you. If you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your life" (1 Kgs. 3:10-14).

In a reasonable yet seemingly serendipitous fashion, all these worldly achievements naturally follow if one chooses wisdom first. The same rationale occurs in Josephus' retelling of the Gibeon account in the *Jewish Antiquities*. The Jewish historian spells out the other things that Solomon did not mention in his prayer, yet God granted to him after the request for ruling wisdom and justice. These appended blessings include "wealth, honor and victory over his enemies and above all, intelligence and wisdom such as no other man whether king or commoner had ever had" (*A.J.* 8.24). Possessions play a crucial role in creating, maintaining, and preserving a person's identity.[89] What to acquire, what to own, and what to give up speaks to an individual's way of shaping values and further being shaped by the things one possesses. In Solomon's case, his heart is set first and foremost on "a wise and discerning mind לב חכם ונבון" (1 Kgs. 3:12). The expression of לב חכם denotes the desire to become wise, or to acquire wisdom, or in the general sense of a "wise person."[90] It also occurs in the context of the making of the tabernacle, and is used to describe people's artistic skills in relation to Bezalel and other artists (Exod. 28:3; 31:6;

[89] The statement is modeled after the title of a journal article in consumer research. Cf. Jim Centry, Stacey Menzel Baker, and Fredric B. Kraft, "The Role of Possessions in Creating, Maintaining, and Preserving One's Identity: Variation Over the Life Course," *NA-Advances in Consumer Research* 22 (1995): 413-418.

[90] Arjen F. Bakker, *The Secret of Time: Reconfiguring Wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 143 (Leiden: Brill, 2023), 51. The expression also occurs in a variety of other texts. In note 98, see Job 9:4, 37:24; Prov. 10:8 11:29; 16:21; 23:15; Sir 45:26. (Ms B.) reads חכמת לכם יתן ביניכם בשלום ויהי לבב .But the reading of LXX (δῴη ἡμῖν εὐφροσύνην καρδίας καὶ γενέσθαι εἰρήνην ἐν ἡμέραις ἡμῶν) seems preferable (i.e., לבב שמחת.)

35:10, 25; 36:1, 2, 8). The priority of wisdom in Solomon's request exhibits an order of desire that appeals to the divine. As a result, God promised Solomon unparalleled wisdom and insurmountable wealth and glory on the condition that Solomon follows divine statutes and commandments faithfully (1 Kgs. 3:12-14).

In Wisdom, the sage also acknowledges the surpassing value of wisdom over material prosperity in the prayer. The sage declares his love for wisdom over all worldly things.

> Προέκρινα αὐτὴν σκήπτρων καὶ θρόνων,
> καὶ πλοῦτον οὐδὲν ἡγησάμην ἐν συγκρίσει αὐτῆς.
> Οὐδὲ ὁμοίωσα αὐτῇ λίθον ἀτίμητον,
> ὅτι ὁ πᾶς χρυσὸς ἐν ὄψει αὐτῆς ψάμμος ὀλίγη,
> καὶ ὡς πηλὸς λογισθήσεται ἄργυρος ἐναντίον αὐτῆς.
> Ὑπὲρ ὑγίειαν καὶ εὐμορφίαν ἠγάπησα αὐτὴν,
> καὶ προειλόμην αὐτὴν ἀντὶ φωτὸς ἔχειν,
> ὅτι ἀκοίμητον τὸ ἐκ ταύτης φέγγος.
> Ἦλθε δέ μοι τὰ ἀγαθὰ ὁμοῦ πάντα μετ' αὐτῆς,
> καὶ ἀναρίθμητος πλοῦτος ἐν χερσὶν αὐτῆς.
> Εὐφράνθην δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων,
> ὅτι αὐτῶν ἡγεῖται σοφία…
> I preferred her to scepters and thrones,
> and wealth I considered nothing in comparison with her.
> Neither did I compare any priceless gem to her,
> because all gold in her sight is a little sand,
> and silver will be counted as clay before her.
> I loved her more than health and beauty,
> and chose to have her rather than light,
> because the radiance from her never rests.
> But all good things came to me together with her,
> and in her hands uncounted wealth.
> I rejoiced in them all, because wisdom leads them…(Wisdom 7:8-12a)

This comparison between wealth and wisdom in the sage's word is a common motif in wisdom literature. For instance, "How much better to get wisdom than gold! To get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver" (Prov. 16:16). When wealth is brought up in conjunction with wisdom, a value comparison is implicated (Prov. 8:10-11; Job 28:13-

19). Wisdom outweighs wealth, health, and beauty. Worldly possessions, such as material well-being, success, and fame can be obtained if one prioritizes wisdom. Material well-being, success, and fame can follow wisdom as byproducts. In Wisdom, even though the value of wealth is much inferior to wisdom, wealth is still regarded as a blessing (7:12). The sage in Wisdom expands the meaning of πλοῦτός. On the one hand, wealth refers to material prosperity that comes along with wisdom (7:12). On the other hand, wealth transcends the ethereal realm and refers to spiritual blessings through the union with God (7:13-14). In this sense, the relationship between wisdom and wealth is multidimensional, more than wealth from wisdom, but the *wealth of* wisdom. The link suggests that the blessings of wisdom apply both to the worldly and heavenly realms, reiterating wisdom's unmatched value. And prayer is the first step to gaining wisdom and its blessings.

As such, we can see how the prominent features of Solomon's wisdom—divine origin and unparalleled values—are articulated in the sage's prayer. Interacting with the Solomonic features of wisdom, the sage in Wisdom further articulates the merge of the sapiential and the liturgical embedded in the Gibeon account by linking the practice of prayer to the human condition. Here the linkage propels us to think about the function of the prayer in Wisdom. Building upon Judith Newman's insights into the intricate relationship between textual formation and liturgical practices, I consider that the prayer uttered in the voice of Solomon shows the "lived religion" that belongs to "a matrix of cultural practices"[91] in the Second Temple period. In other words, I argue that the Hellenistic Jewish sage[92] behind the figure of Solomon in Wisdom showcases the important

[91] Newman, *Before the Bible*, 27.

[92] As to the self-presentation of the sage, it will be further explored in the following chapter.

religious practice of prayer—in seeking divine wisdom and communing with God—prevalent in his day and age.

On the one hand, prayer is pivotal for the sage in gaining insights and understanding. Furthermore, praying for wisdom allows the sage to become more aware of his creaturehood and thus to depend on God even more. In this sense, prayer plays a crucial role in fostering an intimate relationship with the divine. This is done through prayers, where one becomes more aware of one's creaturehood and learns to depend on God. The sage in Wisdom demonstrates this power of prayer and offers a model of the function of prayer amidst the sages in his time.

To better grasp Wisdom's reinforcement of human dependence on God for wisdom through prayers, it can be helpful to examine and compare what motivates one to pray in the case of Solomon in 1 Kings and the sage in Wisdom. In 1 Kings, how to govern and rule God's people well is the driving force that propels Solomon to pray for wisdom. When Solomon found himself overburdened with the prospect of ruling God's chosen people, he prayed to God that he might be able to have "an understanding heart to rule God's people and to discern between good and evil לב שמע לשפט את עמך להבין בין טוב לרע" (1 Kgs. 3:9). In the LXX rendition of the verse, the translator further emphasizes that Solomon prays to carry out his judgements in righteousness (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ).

As for Wisdom, prayer can be regarded as a response to one's existential condition and a desire to lead a meaningful life in respect of one's creaturehood.[93] Before the prayer commences, the first-person speech begins with the sage's reminiscences of his birth and childhood. The sage states his early stages of life in the following words:

[93] Newman, "Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon," 311.

> Εἰμι μὲν κᾀγὼ θνητὸς ἄνθρωπος, ἴσος ἅπασι, καὶ γηγενοῦς ἀπόγονος πρωτοπλάστου.
> Καὶ ἐν κοιλίᾳ μητρὸς ἐγλύφην σὰρξ δεκαμηνιαίῳ χρόνῳ, παγεὶς ἐν αἵματι ἐκ σπέρματος ἀνδρὸς καὶ ἡδονῆς ὕπνῳ συνελθούσης.
> Καὶ ἐγὼ δὲ γενόμενος ἔσπασα τὸν κοινὸν ἀέρα, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν ὁμοιοπαθῆ κατέπεσον γῆν, πρώτην φωνὴν τὴν ὁμοίαν πᾶσιν ἴσα κλαίων.
> Ἐν σπαργάνοις ἀνετράφην, καὶ ἐν φροντίσιν.
> Οὐδεὶς γὰρ βασιλεὺς ἑτέραν ἔσχε γενέσεως ἀρχήν.
> Μία δὲ πάντων εἴσοδος εἰς τὸν βίον, ἔξοδός τε ἴση.
> I myself also am mortal, like everyone,
> and a descendant of the first-formed individual born on earth;
> and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh,
> within the period of ten months,
> being compacted with blood,
> from the seed of a man and the pleasure that accompanies intercourse.
> And I myself, when I was born, drew in the common air,
> and fell upon the kindred earth,
> with the same first sound crying like everyone.
> In swaddling clothes, I was nursed, and with care.
> For no king has had a different beginning of existence;
> there is for all one entrance into life, and the same way out (Wisdom 7:1-6).

The encompassing language and frequent comparisons with the commoners (ἴσος ἅπασι, ὁμοίαν πᾶσιν ἴσα, πάντων) suggest that all humans share the same beginning and end in life. No one can be exempt from death, regardless of one's social status and worldly power. In light of this, how to lead a good life in one's temporary earthly life becomes an important question. To respond to one's mortality and make a meaningful life from it, the speaker initiates a prayer and looks up to God for wisdom (7:7).

A recognition of human inadequacy and incapability that again requires dependence on God also occurs in the Solomonic account in 1 Kings. It goes in tandem with the request and reception of discernment and judgments. Prior to presenting his prayer requests, Solomon humbly states his naivety of youth and weakness to govern innumerable people. "I am a but a little child. I do not know how to go out and come in ἐγώ εἰμι παιδάριον μικρὸν, καὶ οὐκ οἶδα τὴν ἔξοδόν μου καὶ τὴν εἴσοδόν μου/ ואנכי נער קטן לא אדע צאת ובא (1

Kgs 3:7). The latter half of the verse means “having experience to lead”.[94] The idiomatic expression reflects one’s ability to “discharge public duties, especially in war.”[95] The Greek translation of Solomon’s statement here follows the word order in the Hebrew quite closely. Nevertheless, the Greek translators change the two infinite constructs צאת and בא that follow ידע in Hebrew to two simple nouns εἴσοδος and ἔξοδος. These two nouns in the accusative form serve as objects of the verb οἶδα. Interestingly, these two nouns occur in Wisdom 7:6 and refer to natality and mortality respectively. For the same usage of the two expressions, the military connotations and the expectations for political responsibility shown in 1 Kings 3:7 become transformed in Wisdom. In Wisdom, “going out” and “coming in” pick up an existential dimension and denote one’s birth and death.

Wisdom shows a particular interest in the human condition and proposes ways to acknowledge and even transform certain conditions. In the prayer, the recognition of human frailty and lack of understanding compels the sage to seek divine wisdom and aid earnestly. The sage presents his humanness without any reservation, highlighting the weight of divine commands to judge and rule the people of God. Already indicated in the autobiography (7:1-6), the sage again voices his inadequacy and stresses that divine wisdom is indispensable to him:

> Ὅτι ἐγὼ δοῦλος σὸς καὶ υἱὸς τῆς παιδίσκης σου,
> ἄνθρωπος ἀσθενὴς καὶ ὀλιγοχρόνιος

[94] Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 10 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 186.

[95] Cogan, *1 Kings*, 186. Similar biblical references include Num. 27:17, 21; Deut. 31:2; Josh. 14:11. Some have also considered the phrase to mean an admission of sexual experience, for the subsequent verse contains the idiomatic expression “good and evil,” a phrase that occurs in the episode of the garden Eden and potentially refers to sexual experience and ability in the context of dressing and nakedness. A similar usage of “going out and coming in” can be found in Deut. 1:39, a potential “reference to children under the age of twenty who had not yet had sexual experience.” See Weitzman, *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom*, 27.

καὶ ἐλάσσων ἐν συνέσει κρίσεως καὶ νόμων.
Κᾄν γάρ τις ᾖ τέλειος ἐν υἱοῖς ἀνθρώπων,
τῆς ἀπὸ σοῦ σοφίας ἀπούσης, εἰς οὐδὲν λογισθήσεται.
Because I am your servant and the son of your handmaid,
a weak and short-lived man,
with limited understanding of judgment and laws;
for even if someone is perfect amongst human beings,
if the wisdom that comes from you is absent, they will be considered to be nothing.
(Wisdom 9:5-6)

The prayer continues with an enumeration of kingly obligations, including judging the people (9:7) and building the temple (9:8).[96] Shortly after mentioning the designated responsibilities, the speaker praises God and pleads for wisdom again (9:9-10). As indicated in the future tense of the verbs (ἔσται, διακρινῶ, ἔσομαι), the foreseeable accomplishments with the accompaniment of wisdom do not dissolve the tension of human finitude and weakness immediately (9:13-15). Instead, it makes human mortality and the limits of humanity more noticeable.

Λογισμοὶ γὰρ θνητῶν δειλοί, καὶ ἐπισφαλεῖς αἱ ἐπίνοιαι ἡμῶν.
Φθαρτὸν γὰρ σῶμα βαρύνει ψυχὴν, καὶ βρίθει τὸ γεῶδες σκῆνος νοῦν πολυφροντίδα.
Καὶ μόλις εἰκάζομεν τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς, καὶ τὰ ἐν χερσὶν εὑρίσκομεν μετὰ πόνου,
For the thoughts of mortals are worthless, and our inventions liable to fail.
For a corruptible body burdens the soul, and the earthly tent weighs down a mind full of cares
With difficulty we make inferences about what is on the earth, and what is at hand we find with labor.
(Wisdom 9:14-16a)

According to Wisdom, human reasonings are fickle and precarious. Human bodies are thus destined to corrupt.[97] Additionally, human works are fleeting and laborious. The

[96] The themes of ruling and temple building will be further examined in the following sections of this chapter.

[97] The expression shows clear Platonic influence. Winston lists some occurrences of this Platonic idea in the Platonic corpus and Roman Stoics. Cf. David Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 207. In Phaedo, Plato claims that the body impedes one's soul to desire and seek the truth (66B). Similar notions can be attested in Republic 611C. The adverse effect of the body on the soul is a widespread Platonic motif. In Phaedo 81C, it states,

frailty of humanity forms a contrast with the constancy of divine will and action. The contrast makes it more apparent that the divine gift of wisdom is crucial to lead a life that is meaningful and pleasing to God (9:17-18). In the Psalms and wisdom literature, the contrast between human weakness and divine power is a prevalent theme. In the Psalter, human transience is frequently coupled with human sinfulness (Pss 39:5, 12, 9; Pss 40, 90, 102, 103). Some metaphorical depictions of humanity also suggest human frailty. For instance, humanity is compared to עשב (Pss 92:8; 102:5, 12), or עפר (Ps.103:14). These comparisons emphasize the transience of human life vis-à-vis the steadfastness of God (Pss 92:1-2, 102:12-13, 103:17-18). In Proverbs, humanity is reminded of the limits of their knowledge (Prov. 27:1; 30:2-4; cf. 21:1) and the inability to decide the consequences of one's decisions and actions (Prov. 3:5; 20:24; 21:31). The recognition of human weakness propels one to rely on God for divine wisdom and refuge.[98] Such is the theme we find in the prayer in Wisdom as well.

In the prayer (Ch.9) in Wisdom, the long-held contrast between human temporality and divine constancy is not merely an echo of a theological motif, but also vividly demonstrates that a life in pursuit of wisdom is not exempt from struggles conditioned by human nature. In Wisdom, the sage continues to go back and forth between the praise of divine wisdom and the recognition of human finitude, which differs greatly from Solomon in 1 Kings. In the biblical accounts, after the reception of wisdom, Solomon made a successful judgment between the two prostitutes (1 Kgs. 3:16-28). The judgment won great

"And such a soul is weighed down by this and is dragged back into the sensible world."

[98] In fact, the nature of humanity in the Psalms and the wisdom literature presents certain dialectical dimensions. On the one hand, humans are weak and frail, and thus they need to depend on God and seek His deliverance. On the other hand, humans are also God's creation and are endowed with dignity. The recognition of human dignity leads to the worship of God. See Psalm 8, 139:14. For a more detailed discussion on the dialectic nature of the human condition, see Douglas Lawrie, "The Dialectic of Human Dignity and Human Finitude in the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature," *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa* 105, no.1 (Jan 2010): 608-620.

favor among the people: “they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God (חכמת אלהים/φρόνησις Θεοῦ) was in him, to execute justice” (1 Kgs. 3:28). The status of Solomon perceived by the masses is significantly elevated after his demonstration of divine wisdom. The kingly authority is thus established, and people feared him for his wisdom and determination. Perhaps as a way to stress the weakness of humanity, there seems to be an inversion of the figure of Solomon in Wisdom.[99] The power and authority of the king is much toned down.[100] Instead, the Solomonic figure looks rather humane. He is constantly reminded of his weakness and frailty and needs to depend on God. Through the practice of prayer, the sage continues to foster and strengthen the intimacy and dynamic of the divine-human relationship.

As we have analyzed the content and function of the sage’s prayer in Wisdom, we can see how the nature of wisdom depicted in the prayer—its divine origin and surpassing value—is shaped by the Solomonic accounts in the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, the main incentive for praying for wisdom has some nuanced differences between the sage in Wisdom and Solomon in 1 Kings. In Wisdom, prayer is primary in seeking wisdom and provides space for one to contemplate one’s human frailty in relation to the power of God. These thoughts and reflections enable one to carry out the practice of prayer to grow dependence on God and His grant of wisdom. From the close link between prayer and wisdom established in Wisdom, we can get a glimpse of how a Hellenistic sage actively pursues wisdom and knowledge through prayers.

---

[99] Thanks to Philip Lasater, for making this acute observation and comparison at the Writers’ Workshop, HT 2023. The portrayal of the king aligns with the conception of kingship in the Hellenistic period, which I will explain further in the following session.

[100] For a more detailed discussion on kingship in the Hellenistic context, see the section on “Crafting the Voice of a King” in the following chapter.

II. The List of Knowledge and Crafts

In the autobiography, the list of knowledge and crafts shows the breadth of the sage's wisdom (7:15-22). As the list closely follows the prayer (7:7-14), it can be read as a divine response to the prayer and further shows the efficaciousness of prayers to attain wisdom. In this section, through an examination of the content and the form of the list, I argue that the sage establishes his intellectual authority through an illustration of his encyclopedic knowledge, which is regarded as a gift from God.

I start with an analysis of the varied elements in the list. What does the list entail? What is the cultural significance of the items included in the list? The list can be considered as a Hellenistic variation of the enumeration of Solomon's great corpus of knowledge in 1 Kings 4:29-34 (MT 5:9-14). To illustrate this point, I first examine the nature of Solomon's wisdom in 1 Kings, namely, his enormous literary output and quasi-scientific knowledge. In light of the two characteristics of Solomon's wisdom, I compare the two lists and point out some similarities and differences between them. By a closer examination of the items in the list in Wisdom, I present how the list demonstrates a convergence of Jewish and Hellenistic traditions.

Furthermore, how shall we understand the form and the function of a list in establishing the wisdom of a sage? I argue that the form of a list is crucial to establishing the authority of the sage's wisdom, as it creates a totalizing tendency to suggest the all-encompassing knowledge of the sage. The totalizing effect situates the sage between God and the rest of the people. As a transmitter of cultural knowledge, the sage has the responsibility for promulgating cultural values in light of what God has imparted to him. I contend that the in-between position of the sage and the obligation that the sage bears

propel one to ponder the place of humanity in the world, as well as the triangular relationship between God, humanity, and the cosmos. The sage's relationship with God, others, and the cosmos makes him an exemplar through whom one learns to give praise and honor to God and to live a life in pursuit of wisdom.

To begin with, the summative paragraph in 1 Kings 4:29-34 (MT 5:9-14) demonstrates the breadth and width of Solomon's wisdom. Borrowing Dennis C. Duling's expression, the list of items presented in 1 Kings becomes the "fountainhead" of the manifold literary traditions associated with Solomon.[101]

> And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and largeness of mind like the sand of the seashore so that Solomon's wisdom surpassed the wisdom of all the people of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all other men, wiser than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the nations round about. He also uttered three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. He spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of the wall: he spoke also of beasts, and of birds, and of reptiles, and of fish. And men came from all peoples to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and from all the kings of the earth, who had heard of his wisdom.

---

[101] Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," 237. Jesse Rainbow wittingly contextualizes the passage for a post-Enlightenment reader who may regard Solomon "as a natural historian devoted to science for its own sake—the kind of gentleman who might go around giving Latin names to things." See Jessie Rainbow, "The Song of Songs and the *Testament* of Solomon: Solomon's Love Poetry and Christian Magic," *HTR* 100, no.3 (2007), 252. Rainbow further notes that modern commentators commonly employ "post-Enlightenment terms" to talk about Solomon's erudition. He gives many examples in his note. For example, "Torijano uses words such as 'encyclopedic' and 'scientific' to describe Solomon's knowledge (*Solomon*, 13, 29-33). Simon J. DeVries characterizes Solomon's wisdom here as 'essentially intellectual,' and 'cleverness'; what Gerhard von road termed a 'Solomonic humanism' (*1 Kings* [2nd ed.; Word Biblical Commentary 12; Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2003] 74-76). Walter Brueggemann presents an alternate (post) modern view by postulating a dual tradition of 'clan' and 'urbane' wisdom. *Solomon: Israel's Ironic Icon of Human Achievement*, 107-10." See footnote 8 in Rainbow's article. James Crenshaw offers a critique of the use of "enlightenment" to describe Solomon's achievements. He highlights the unprecedented tyranny in the era of Solomon's rule. Forced labor, oppression of subjects, exorbitant taxes—all these harsh political activities make the description of enlightenment unfitting to the Solomonic context. See James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*, 3rd edition (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010), 49.

From the passage, Solomon's erudition and insights can be roughly divided into two parts. One is concerned with Solomon's massive literary production. The other is Solomon's quasi-scientific knowledge. Wisdom reflects both characteristics, either implicitly or explicitly.

As to Solomon's literary output, the Solomonic attribution of Proverbs and Song of Songs in the Hebrew Bible can find its traces in the passage (1 Kgs. 4:32, MT 5:12). Later interpreters also show deep admiration for Solomon's literary achievements. Ben Sira famously lauds Solomon for his literary contribution in a series of praises dedicated to the fathers. "Your songs, proverbs and parables, and the answers you gave astounded the nations" (Sir. 47:17). In the list of Wisdom, even though no particular literary compositions are mentioned, the composition of the book as a whole can be regarded as the continuation of the Solomonic literary career.

Wisdom as a book attributed to Solomon not only expands the literary corpus of the king, but also enriches the biographical portrayals of the king. Eva Mroczek insightfully observes the interconnection between attribution and biography. Attribution is "an aesthetic and poetic act," allowing the body of literature to become authorized by linking it to a famous figure.[102] In the meantime, through the wide circulation of the attributed literature, the life stories of the very character are further developed and celebrated.[103]

The pseudonymous attribution of Solomon to the Book of Wisdom aligns with the aesthetic value of the attribution practice. The name of Solomon breathes life into the biographical details in the first-person speech, as the portrayal of the speaker is so rooted in the Solomonic narratives that the passage creates a constant flashback to the king.

---

[102] Eva Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 54.
[103] Mroczek, *The Literary Imagination*, 54.

Meanwhile, the speech also generates new and fresh visions of Solomon as a literary character—Solomon is portrayed as a king from humble origins.[104]

In Wisdom, the humble origin and the human side of a supposedly powerful king are stressed in the opening lines of the first-person speech. J. M. Reese contextualizes the literary practice in the Hellenistic kingship tracts where kings are advised to be mindful of their humanity so that they might avoid arrogance and pride.[105] A similar emphasis on humanity and humility can also be found in the discussion on the nature of kingship in the *Letter of Aristeas*. In a series of questions and answers between the king of Egypt and the Jewish wise men, they came upon a discussion on the moral character and formation of a good king. One important reminder for the king is to "[maintain] impartiality, and [remind] himself in the case of each individual that he is a ruler of men and still a man himself."[106] The portrayal of the king in Wisdom is also impartial, as Solomon shares the common experience for all humanity: birth, life, and death. By highlighting the shared humanity and reducing the social-political differences between the king and his subjects, Solomon in Wisdom becomes democratized—he is an exemplary figure that everyone can aspire to become.[107]

---

[104] The portrayal looks rather different from the biblical accounts where Solomon's royal authority is established through political schemes (1 Kings 1:28-2:9). His authority is further reinforced by the favor of God, as he is elected by God to rule and govern the people (1 Kings 3//2 Chronicles 1). The unique status of Solomon as a person and a king is clearly indicated in the biblical accounts.

[105] Reese, *Hellenistic Influence on the Book of Wisdom*, 80. Reese traces the origin of the practice to the time of Alexander the Great. The presentation "must be understood against the background of the widespread anthropological speculation of religious inspiration devoted to elaborating the kingly ideal in the Hellenistic world from the time of Alexander the Great. Formulated in the new literary genre of tracts 'On Kingship,' this speculation played an important educative and propaganda role in the various kingdoms that sprang up in the Greek-speaking world after the death of Alexander" (72).

[106] *Letter of Aristeas*, 263.

[107] This idea aligns with Judith Newman's understanding of kingship presented in the prayer in Wisdom. See Newman, "Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon," 309-328.

Apart from literary production, the foundational text in 1 Kings also exhibits Solomon's extensive knowledge of the natural world. Why is there such an emphasis on the natural world? In 1 Kings 4, the "scientific" knowledge—in particular the specificities and its orientation to the natural world in the list—reflects the nature of wisdom upheld by the ancients. Alt points out that the emphasis on nature-wisdom in Solomon's case is indebted to the long-standing scribal training and wisdom tradition in the Near East.[108] The naturalistic interests bear resemblances with many classified lists of natural phenomena in Mesopotamia and Egypt.[109] Knowledge of the living things in nature also occurs in Proverbs, though not merely for the sake of knowing the names of animals and plants. Instead, observations of natural phenomena have instructive values and teach people how to orient their lives in light of what they observe in the natural world (cf. Prov 6:6-7, 30:24-28). The theme is also noticeable in Wisdom and is further developed in accordance with the Hellenistic context, to which we shall turn.

How does the list in Wisdom participate in the Solomonic tradition reflected in 1 Kings 4, alongside the Hellenistic culture and values? How shall we understand some of the stable and changing elements in the list from 1 Kings to Wisdom? What is the cultural significance of the added items in the list of Wisdom? To address these questions, we shall transition to a close examination of the items included in the list of Wisdom, many of which reflect learning and knowledge highly regarded by the Hellenistic world. I propose that the varied items in the list demonstrate a convergence of Jewish and Hellenistic values.

---

[108] Albrecht Alt, "Die Wiesheit Salomos," *TLZ LXXVI,* cols. 213-20 (1951), 90-99, cited in John Gray, *1 & 2 Kings: A Commentary*, 3rd edition (SCM Press, Ltd, 1977), 145.
[109] Gray, *1 & 2 Kings*, 146.

In Wisdom, the list constitutes a great corpus of knowledge, ranging from botanical and biological knowledge (7:20), to skills or crafts (7:16), cosmology (7:17), time (7:18), astronomy (7:19), and even esoteric knowledge (7:21).[110]

> Ἐμοὶ δὲ δῴη ὁ Θεὸς εἰπεῖν κατὰ γνώμην,
> καὶ ἐνθυμηθῆναι ἀξίως τῶν δεδομένων,
> ὅτι αὐτὸς καὶ τῆς σοφίας ὁδηγός ἐστι,
> καὶ τῶν σοφῶν διορθωτής.
> Ἐν γὰρ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ οἱ λόγοι ἡμῶν,
> πᾶσά τε φρόνησις καὶ ἐργατειῶν ἐπιστήμη.
> Αὐτὸς γάρ μοι ἔδωκε τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν ἀψευδῆ,
> εἰδέναι σύστασιν κόσμου καὶ ἐνέργειαν στοιχείων,
> ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητα χρόνων,
> τροπῶν ἀλλαγὰς καὶ μεταβολὰς καιρῶν,
> ἐνιαυτῶν κύκλους καὶ ἀστέρων θέσεις,
> φύσεις ζώων καὶ θυμοὺς θηρίων,
> πνευμάτων βίας καὶ διαλογισμοὺς ἀνθρώπων,
> διαφορὰς φυτῶν καὶ δυνάμεις ῥιζῶν,
> ὅσα τέ ἐστι κρυπτὰ καὶ ἐμφανῆ ἔγνων.
> Ἡ γὰρ πάντων τεχνίτις ἐδίδαξέ με σοφία·
> May God grant to me to speak with judgment
> and to think thoughts worthy of what has been given to me,
> because he himself is the guide even of wisdom
> and the corrector of the wise.
> For both we and our words are in his hand,
> both all understanding and skills in crafts.
> For he himself gave me an unerring
> knowledge of the things that exists,
> to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements;
> the beginning and end and middle of times,
> the alterations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons,
> the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars,
> the natures of animals and the tempers of wild beasts,
> the violent forces of spirits and the thoughts of human beings,
> the varieties of plants and the powers of roots;
> and all things, both what is secret and what is manifest, I learned

[110] There are different scholarly categories for the items in the list. David Winston describes the range of the list includes ontology, cosmology, physics, astronomy, biology, botany, and esoteric knowledge. Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 172. Michael Kolarcik characterizes the times as chronology, zoology, demonology, the human psyche, and pharmacology. Kolarcik, "The Book of Wisdom: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol.5, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 502.

> for she that is the fashioner of all things, taught me, namely wisdom (Wisdom 7:15-22).

In Wisdom's list of knowledge and crafts, not changing the formal nature of a noun list, more items are incorporated to make the paradigmatic Israelite king fit neatly into the Hellenistic context. Some of the items associated with science and nature pick up more of a Greek flavor. In one way or another, the list can be read as a Hellenistic variation of Solomon's list of wisdom in 1 Kings. Before looking at the items in turn, it is worthwhile to point out that both lists emphasize the divine source of all knowledge and wisdom. By placing God at the beginning of the list, the divine character of learning is made clear. "May God grant me (Ἐμοὶ δὲ δῴη ὁ Θεὸς)…"—the optative mood of δίδωμι expresses the speaker's clear knowledge of the origin of wisdom and his genuine wish to obtain wisdom from God.[111]

In addition to the emphasis on the divine origin of human knowledge, both lists indicate a shared interest in natural phenomena. The presentation of natural knowledge in Wisdom becomes more general and less specific. Instead of specifying the names of plants and animals, such as "Lebanon cedar, wall hyssop, beasts, birds, reptiles, and fish" in 1 Kings, Wisdom simply states "the nature of animals and the tempers of wild beasts…the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots" (7:20).[112]

---

[111] In a similar vein, Philo also attributes all knowledge, and even the ability to learn to God. In Cherubim 71, Philo writes, "All are God's possessions and not yours, your reflections, your knowledge of every kind, your arts, your conclusions, your reasonings on particular questions, your sense-perceptions, in fact, the activities of your soul, whether carried on through the senses or without them."

[112] δυνάμεις ῥιζῶν can be also translated as "the power of roots." Roots with medicinal effects are associated with magic and healing in the ancient world. As the Solomonic traditions develop, the king is believed to have magical knowledge and can exorcise demons. Josephus notes that one Eleazer exorcised a demon by putting "to the nose of the possessed man a ring which had under its seal one of the roots prescribed by Solomon, and then, as the man smelled it, drew out the demon through his nostrils" (*A.J.* 8.2.5). The tradition of Solomon's healing power with his effective roots is already prevalent in Josephus's time.

The list of items in Wisdom not only echoes some of the references in 1 Kings, but also expands the items by incorporating knowledge and skills derived from the surrounding Greek culture and learning. Winston has readily noted the Greek philosophical vocabularies and Aristotelian technical terms in the list.[113] For instance, Aristotle used the word ἐνέργειαν to denote action, operation, and energy. Here Wisdom uses ἐνέργειαν to describe the operation of elements. What do the elements refer to? The term στοιχεία/στοιχεῖον has a wide range of meanings and can be divided into two main categories: "basic components of something" and "elemental spirits."[114] When στοιχεῖον is used as "elements" or "components", it conveys certain specificities. It can refer to the specific elements of classical cosmology: earth, air, fire and water, or "heavenly bodies," or "fundamental principles."[115] In the list of Wisdom, στοιχεῖον is more likely to refer to the cosmological forces. The clue is detected from the parallel phrase σύστασις κόσμου in the same verse (7:17). Cosmos (κόσμος) and cosmological elements (στοιχεῖον) are frequently grouped together in the later sections of Wisdom. When the cosmos starts to defend the righteous and wards the righteous off the attacks from the unjust ones, fire and water as representative elements are explicitly mentioned to exert their natural power to aid the righteous (16:17-19, 22-23; 19:6-7).

Further Hellenistic influence in the list can be observed from the temporal expression "the beginning and end and middle of times" ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος καὶ μεσότητα χρόνων (7:18). Winston comments on the phrase as "a common collocution in Classical and Hellenistic literature."[116] Ranging from the Orphic theogony to the Pythagorean

[113] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 173.
[114] William F. Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 946.
[115] Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 946.
[116] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 173.

numerical division of the world, the tripartite division of time and world is well attested in Greek literature and beyond.[117] The Hellenistic Jewish play Ezekiel the Tragedian also embodies the significance of threes. When Moses' father-in-law interprets Moses' dream about the three dimensions of the world, he concludes that Moses would know the present, the past, and the future.[118]

Moreover, the observation of seasonal changes and the knowledge of the stars (7:18b-19) in the list give a glimpse of the endorsement of astronomical knowledge in the Hellenistic Jewish community. The integration of astronomical knowledge into the corpus of wisdom can be seen in a variety of Hellenistic Jewish texts.[119] In Jubilees 4:16-20, Enoch is described as the first person to receive astronomical knowledge:

> Enoch…was the first of mankind who were born on the earth who learned (the art of) writing, instruction, and wisdom and who wrote down in a book the signs of the sky in accord with the fixed pattern of their months so that mankind would know the seasons of the years according to the fixed patterns of each of their month.[120]

In addition to Enoch, Jubilees also associates Abraham's "conversion" with his observation of the stars (Jub. 12:16-18). Unlike the pagan practice of astral knowledge so widespread in the Chaldean land, the cultural hero Abraham is not entangled with the idolatrous inclination of such practice. Instead, astral wisdom serves as a means for Abraham, through

---

[117] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 174.

[118] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 174.

[119] For recent publications on the topic of astronomy in Hellenistic Judaism, see *Ancient Jewish Sciences and the History of Knowledge in Second Temple Literature*, ed. Seth L. Sanders and Jonathan Ben-Dov (New York: New York University Press, 2014); Annette Yoshiko Reed, "Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews: Josephus, Ant. 1.154-168, and the Greco-Roman Discourse about Astronomy/Astrology," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 35, no.2 (2004): 119-158. As to different perceptions on astrological divination in Judaism, see James H. Charlesworth, "Jewish Astrology in the Talmud, Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Early Palestinian Synagogues," *HTR* 70 (1977): 183-200.

[120] Similarly, Pseudo-Eupolemus also credits Enoch as the first discoverer of astrology.

which he becomes edified and realizes the One God who is the true source of all celestial phenomena and controls the patterns of nature. In Philo's depiction of Abraham's discovery of monotheism, a similar motif also occurs. Even though Abraham has long been acquainted with the astral practice among the Chaldeans, he is not influenced by their pluralistic understanding of the divine forces operating in the world. Rather he is able to embrace the one true God who "guides and steers" the whole world.[121]

Influenced yet not compromised by his cultural surroundings, Abraham participates in astral practice and even imparts astronomical knowledge to the Egyptians. Both Artapanus and Pseudo-Eupolemus praise Abraham for his astral knowledge and credit Abraham as the cultural transmitter of astral practice from Chaldea to Egypt.[122] Astronomy is regarded as a hallmark of civilization. In this regard, Hellenistic Jewish authors imbibe current cultural values and attribute astronomical knowledge to their cultural heroes. The strand of thought aligns with the apologetical discourse in Hellenistic historiography, attempting to justify the values and validity of each community's respective culture.[123] Many non-Greeks "would eagerly adopt their claims to have discovered

---

[121] In *On Abraham* 69-71, Philo writes, "The Chaldeans exercised themselves most especially with astronomy and attributed all things to the movements of the stars, believing that whatever is in the world is governed by forces encompassed in numbers and numerical proportions…He [Abraham] grew up with this idea and was a true Chaldean for some time, until—opening the soul's eye from the depth of sleep—he came to behold the pure ray in the place of deep darkness, and he followed that light and perceived what he had not seen before: One who guides and steers the world, presiding over it, and managing its affairs." For a similar expression, see Philo, *Questions and Answers in Genesis* 3.1.

[122] Artapanus writes, "[Abraham] came to Egypt with all his household to the Egyptian king Pharethothes, and taught him astrology…". In the fragments of Pseudo-Eupolemus, one reads: "Abraham excelled all in nobility and wisdom; he sought and obtained the knowledge of astrology and the Chaldean craft, and pleased god because he eagerly sought to be reverent…Abraham lived in Heliopolis with the Egyptian priests and taught them much: He explained astrology and the other sciences to them, saying that the Babylonians and he himself had obtained this knowledge". Both fragments of Artapanus and Pseudo-Eupolemus are preserved in Eusebius' *Praeparatio evangelica* 9.17.2-9 and 9.18.1. The translation of Artapnaus is by John Collins, and Pseudo-Eupolemus, Robert Doran. For discussions on the dating and provenance of the texts, see *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol.2, ed. James H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983), 855-858, 889-896.

[123] Reed, "Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews," 136-142.

astronomy/astrology" in the belief that the discovery and practice of astronomy affirms the antiquity and longevity of their cultures, for the efficacy of astral knowledge "depends on accurate, long-term observations of patterns of cause-and-effect."[124]

In this regard, the sage in Wisdom has been equipped with astral knowledge that demands many years of learning and is deeply rooted in time and history. In the case of Wisdom, the reception of the highly-esteemed astral knowledge does not include any arduous learning, but rather a gift from God in response to the sage's prayer. Nevertheless, the incorporation of astronomy in the list of Solomon's wisdom shows the affinity and appreciation of the broader Hellenistic cultural values. By presenting the acquaintance of astral knowledge of the Solomon-like sage, Wisdom suggests how the sage possesses first-rank knowledge in the cosmopolitan context. The sage is highly cultured and able to engage with and participate in manifold discussions in his time.

The list ends with the teachings of "what is secret" and "what is manifest" (7:21). Knowledge of esoteric matters is viewed as a divine reward to the righteous sages who follow and keep the divine commandments.[125] To whom secrets are concealed, and to whom secrets are revealed—the set of questions has unsettled generations of sages. In response to the questions, the sages throughout the ages have shown a particular concern with the role of kings in dissolving secrets. In Prov. 25:2-3, kings are responsible for seeking after the unknown.

> It is the glory of God to conceal things (הסתר דבר),
> but the glory of kings to search things out (חקר דבר)
> As the heavens for height, and the earth for depth,

[124] Reed, "Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews," 137.

[125] LaCoste, "Solomon the Exemplary Sage: The Convergence of Hellenistic and Jewish Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon," 15. Examples include Dan. 12:4, 9; 1 En. 93:2-3; and 4 Ezra 14:46-47.

so the heart of the kings is unsearchable (אן חקר) (Prov. 25:2-3).

The verse occurs in the collection of miscellaneous sayings attributed to Solomon (Prov. 25:1). As an introduction to the teachings on kingship and the courts, the association with King Solomon in this section seems fitting. With the repetition of words such as glory כבד, things דבר , and search חקור , the two verses form a nice parallel between God and king and their shared inscrutability. Even though the proverbs seem to suggest that both God and Kings obtain their glory by their inscrutability, the subordination of the kings to God remains clear. The subject matter ofדבר is ambiguous, as the same word may denote different things. However, a potential overlapping in the meaning of the word should not be exempted. For God, the things that He conceals but also demonstrate His glory can refer to the acts of creation. As for the kings, "things" can mean the activities in statecraft, also the active search for the knowledge of God's creation. Divine procession of the mystery (cf. Deut. 29:28a) and His preservation of such mystery bring humility to people[126] and make people realize their finitude in a world filled with astounding wonders. Nevertheless, human beings are still invited to search for the order of creation and understand God's created world. Among the inhabitants of the world, kings are singled out in particular. Kings are obligated to proclaim the works of the divine while guarding their secrets carefully. In the context of the Proverbs, the unfathomable knowledge of the kings may not constitute esoteric knowledge, unlike the phrase in Wisdom. Instead, the kings' secrets might constitute their plans, knowledge, and thoughts concerning ruling the state and these matters remain unsearchable to their subjects. In sum, the hierarchy of authority and

[126] Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, AB 18B (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 778.

wisdom is neatly constructed: "God, king, subjects."[127] At times, the hierarchy might demand new ways of reinforcement and clarification. In the words of the angel Raphael, one observes the "competing wills to conceal and to search out the hidden" in the contrastive relationship between kings and God.[128]

> It is good to conceal (κρύψαι) the secret of a king (μυστήριον βασιλέως), but to acknowledge and reveal (ἀνακαλύπτειν) the works of God, and with fitting honor to acknowledge him (Tob.12:7, 11).

Although the statement in Tobit varies slightly from Prov. 25:2, the secrets may have different connotations. James Crenshaw explains the contrast by proposing that kings' secrets in this verse involve matters that may cause turmoil if not guarded with caution.[129] On the other hand, God demands the kings to uncover the secrets of divine truth and proclaim His marvelous works to the world.[130] Crenshaw comments on the tension in the different realities that a king needs to face.

> In one, the king clutches precious data to his chest while God allows free proclamation of divine works; in the other, kings eagerly search for what God presses to the bosom. Both perceptions capture distinct features of reality with which the sages wrestled. Some truths freely surrendered to royal search, while others refused to budge an inch.[131]

In the Wisdom of Solomon, the list of knowledge and crafts also articulates many of the themes in the discussion above, ranging from the hierarchy of God, the king, and the

---

[127] Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs 15-31* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 310.
[128] Crenshaw, *The Old Testament Wisdom*, 53.
[129] Crenshaw, *The Old Testament Wisdom*, 53.
[130] Crenshaw, *The Old Testament Wisdom*, 53.
[131] Crenshaw, *The Old Testament Wisdom*, 53.

people, to the secret of God and His creation. Wisdom portrays Solomon as a paradigmatic wise king, as it highlights the source of the king's wisdom and how God enables the king to spread knowledge of human culture and His creation to the rest of the people. God gifts Solomon the knowledge of what is hidden in response to his prayer. In the meantime, Solomon never stops pursuing wisdom and insights so that he can continue to proclaim the wondrous works of God.

Seeing the affinity with Greek learning in the list of Wisdom, now let us take a brief moment to consider how the sage's endorsement of knowledge differs from the philosophers in the broader Greek culture. I think the major difference lies in one's attitude to human access to knowledge—whether it is a divine gift or the outcome of human strivings. I suggest that Wisdom's constant emphasis on divine origin of human knowledge might function as a subtle critique against an elite pursuit of knowledge promoted by important philosophers or thinkers such as Aristotle.[132] We may take Aristotle as our example, whose influence is also detectable in some of the items in the list of Wisdom. As an exemplary philosopher in the Greek world, Aristotle's writing is well known for its breadth, depth, and width. In his introduction to the life of Aristotle, Christopher Shields makes a long list to display the wide range of fields that Aristotle once engaged within his lifetime, "including aesthetic theory, argumentation theory, astronomy, botany, biology, category theory, cosmology, epistemology, ethics, government, history of thought, literary theory, logic, mathematics, metaphysics, music, medicine, meteorology, pedagogy, philosophy of science, political theory, psychology, physics, rhetoric, semantic theory, political history, theology, and zoology."[133] This astonishing number of fields demonstrates

[132] I thank Alison Salvesen and Cian Power for suggesting this comparison at our meeting in June, 2023.
[133] Christopher Shields, "Aristotle's Philosophical Life and Writings," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, ed. Christopher Shields (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 8.

the utmost knowledge one can acquire in one's lifetime. The deep appreciation for learning and knowledge is also reflected in Wisdom. Nevertheless, unlike the elite Greek thinkers who regard "knowledge [as] the highly prized and naturally desirable goal,"[134] the sage of Wisdom does not treat knowledge as an end in itself. Instead, knowledge is a gift from God, and it equips one to further understand divine creation and the wisdom derived from that.

To gain knowledge of God and His creation, the sage, in the guise of Solomon, needs to foster an intimate relationship with wisdom.[135] Lady Wisdom is regarded as the fashioner of all things (7:22). She possesses a wide range of experiences—from the secrets of time, rhetoric, signs and wonders, to seasonal order—all of which constitutes a significant portion of wisdom (8:8). In Wisdom, we observe a clear affirmation of human sciences and cultures. Yet at the same time, the text makes clear that the source of all knowledge flows from divine wisdom which is revealed by Sophia. Ultimately, finding Sophia and possessing her leads one to the divine. By pursuing and searching for Sophia/wisdom, the sage is able to probe the meaning of divine works and the divine will (9:9).

Not only the content of the list, I contend that the form of a list is also critical in shaping how one perceives the nature of wisdom and the sage who possesses such knowledge. The act of listing is crucial to exhibit the holistic feature of knowledge and establishes the intellectual authority of the sage. James Kugel articulates how lists in

---

[134] Joseph Owens, "Aristotle's Notion of Wisdom,"*Apeiron* 20, no.1 (1987): 1-16.

[135] The cultivation of an intimate relationship with Wisdom will be further explored in the following chapter. The different life stages depicted in Wisdom and their relationship with Wisdom are important to understand the character/sage's growth of wisdom and understanding.

sapiential texts contribute to the perception of wisdom and point to the divine plan by which the order of the world is established.

> For, in the ancient world, knowledge was conceived to be an altogether static thing: whatever a person might come to know belonged to a defined corpus of things; it was this finite body that "wisdom" designated. This defined corpus of insights was deemed to play a special role in the world: it underlay all of reality, constituting the great set of master plans by which the world—the natural world, of course, but also human society—was governed.[136]

As Kugel suggests, wisdom is embodied through a finite list of factual knowledge. The items in the list can be fluid and expansive, as we have already observed in the Hellenistic variation of Solomon's list of knowledge and crafts in Wisdom. By nature, the items in the list are partially selected and far from exhaustive. Yet the act of listing creates a totalizing tendency[137] and enacts "a rhetoric that revolves around comprehensiveness and order."[138] In other words, wisdom is complete and orderly through the act of listing. The features of totality, perfection, and completeness arising from the list not only demonstrate an all-encompassing intellectual engagement of the speaker, but also the relationships between humanity and the divine, as well as the inhabited world.

The list of knowledge and crafts in Wisdom and its very form generate thoughts on the issues of authority and power in the human realms.[139] Based on the rhetorical features of a list, the Solomonic sage in Wisdom is claimed to possess complete wisdom.

---

[136] James Kugel, "Wisdom and the Anthological Temper," *Prooftexts* 17, no.1 (1997): 10.)

[137] Jacqueline Vayntrub describes totalizing descriptions in the following way: "Totalizing descriptions can be identified not only by their systematic listing of an entity's constituent parts but also by concluding statements of totality. In these concluding statements, the description, and therefore the object being described, is claimed to be perfect and complete." Jacqueline Vayntrub, "Tyre's Glory and Demise: Totalizing Description in Ezekiel 27," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 82, no.2 (2020), 215.

[138] Pieter Hartog, "Jubilees and Hellenistic Encyclopaedism," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 50 (2019), 4.

[139] Joshua Billings, *The Philosophical Stage: Drama and Dialectic in Classical Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 26.

Nevertheless, the list situates the sage in the cosmic realm: "subjected to God on one hand, but ascendant over (nonhuman) animals on the other."[140] The sage is readily aware of the divine origin of wisdom, understanding, and skill in crafts (7:15-16). At the same time, once gifted with such knowledge, the sage has intellectual authority over the natural world and other human beings (7:20). Certain hierarchies are constructed around the relationship between the divine and humans.[141] Knowledge and crafts then become the mediation between the mortals and the divine, by which divine favor is expressed and shown.

In light of an implied hierarchy in the list of knowledge and crafts, I argue that the list in Wisdom (7:15-22) illustrates the complex relationship between God, humanity, and the cosmos through the concept of wisdom. Wisdom is first and foremost from God. The divine origin of wisdom indicates that human knowledge and cultural development are impossible without God's inspiration and direction. The plead for divine correction and guidance (7:15) shows that human culture depends on God and His favor. The dependence does not limit human agency in acquiring and demonstrating a variety of knowledge of the world. However, accumulative knowledge is not oriented to build up one's esteem and fame. Instead, to know and to learn the manifold aspects of the world is to know more about God and His plan for creation. The reciprocal knowledge of God and His creation drives the sages to inquire about nature, human affairs, and the relationship between humanity and the divine relentlessly. Ultimately, the sage uses wisdom granted by God to investigate His marvelous works and honor Him and His ineffable wisdom.

---

[140] Billings, *The Philosophical Stage*, 26.
[141] Billings, *The Philosophical Stage*, 26.

In the list, the triad God/humanity/creation-cosmos relationship lays an emphasis on humanity. Humankind plays a crucial role in "promulgat[ing] wisdom's secret."[142] Furthermore, the person who preaches wisdom is "not just anyone but a very specific and outstanding man, King Solomon, who has been associated with wisdom in a peculiar way."[143] The list of culture in the first-person speech has a performative function, as it establishes "a relation between a speaker or text and an audience or reader."[144] By becoming like Solomon, the sage invites the readers or audience to join him to partake the journey of ascent to wisdom and perfection. Not only the sage takes the path to truth, but readers are also compelled to follow along the path. "The ideal sage then is one who embodies Wisdom, and the student also can embody Wisdom only inasmuch as he regards the sage as the exemplar to be emulated."[145] For the emulators, what they aim to acquire is not so much every single item in the list, rather a wholehearted submission to God as the true source of all wisdom. Totality implicated in the list form is closely associated with perfection and order. The order of the world and cultures propels one to give due praise to God and to aspire to lead an intellectually and morally virtuous life.

III. Wise Ruling and Governance

In Wisdom, governing capability is closely linked to the speaker's acquisition and demonstration of wisdom. Wise ruling is considered one of the most important factors in evaluating the life of a king. There are many occasions in the autobiographical section, as

---

[142] Peter Schafer, *Mirror and His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 33.
[143] Schafer, *Mirror and His Beauty*, 33.
[144] Billings, *The Philosophical Stage*, 28. Billings notes that lists in narratives rarely advance the plot, but rather act more interruptedly.
[145] Wright, "Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar," 181.

well as the book as a whole where just and wise rulings are praised. Through an analysis of how the sage portrays himself as a wise ruler modelled after King Solomon, I argue that the sage offers his political ideal that a successful ruler is someone who rules in justice and wisdom.

To begin with, I examine how the biblical accounts depict Solomon's wise ruling, which provides a framework to create the Solomonic persona in Wisdom. One important way of portraying Solomon's successful rule is through people's acknowledgement of the king's wisdom. To put it simply, recognition plays an important role in claiming someone is wise. Aleida Assmann insightfully points out that "all wisdom is ascribed."[146] Assmann continues to expound on the ascriptive feature of wisdom:

> For wisdom to appear it takes at least two persons: the wise person and another one who identifies him or her as wise. "I am wise" is not a well-formulated sentence in the cultural grammar of wisdom. Wisdom does not "belong" to the wise person. Which is to say, the evaluation of wisdom is part of the wisdom itself……wisdom is generated in the eye of the beholder and not in that of the observer. Of course, this does not mean that here is no place for the observer, or that wisdom is of its very nature mysterious and defies empirical research. It only reminds the observer not to forget the beholder or ask him or herself, whether he or she is really the observer or rather the beholder, namely the person who is constituting wisdom by identifying it.[147]

In the Solomonic narratives, the ascription of wisdom to the king is inseparable from his wise ruling and governing recognized by both locals and people from abroad. In the following, I will center on how the Solomonic accounts in the Hebrew Bible use domestic and international fame to testify to the righteous ruling of the king.

---

[146] Aleida Assmann, "Wholesome Knowledge: Concepts of Wisdom in a Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspective," in *Life-Span Development and Behavior*, vol.12, ed. David L. Featherman, Richard M. Lerner, and Marion Perlmutter (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1994), 222.
[147] Assmann, "Wholesome Knowledge," 222.

The recognition of Solomon's wisdom first takes place in Israel, and then extends to the lands beyond. Starting with the judicial judgement over the case of the two prostitutes, Solomon exhibits his wisdom in a legal puzzle.[148] Solomon's judgement was considered wise and discerning in all of Israel. In response to the judgment, "[the Israelites] stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God φρόνησις Θεοῦ / חכמת אלהים was in him, to render justice" (1 Kgs. 3:28). In this brief conclusive statement, people simultaneously acknowledge Solomon's wisdom, its divine origin, and the effects of king's divinely gifted wisdom.

Furthermore, Solomon's prosperous reign is indicated by the peace and happiness of the people. "Judah and Israel were as many as the sand by the sea; they ate and drank and were happy אכלים ושתים ושמחים" (1 Kgs. 4:20). Merriment overflows in the consecutive verbs here. The scale of Solomon's kingdom follows the depiction of national prosperity. "Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates into the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt: they brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life" (MT 1 Kgs. 5:1). The expansive political regime fosters international interactions and allows Solomon's wisdom to spread more widely and internationally.

In this case, Solomon's wisdom is acknowledged by two particular foreign rulers in the accounts of 1 Kings. The first foreign ruler was Hiram King of Tyre, with whom Solomon acquired cedars to build the temple (MT 1 Kgs. 5:15-32). During the trading transaction, Solomon explained his plan to build a Temple and specified the materials and skills that he needed from Hiram. When Hiram received Solomon's request, the King of

[148] In Chronicles, the episode of the two harlots is omitted. Solomon's request for wisdom is followed by the temple construction (2 Chron. 1-9). The different arrangements of Solomonic materials suggest distinct theological agendas between the Dtr historians and the chroniclers. Instead of focusing on ordinary events in everyday life, chroniclers pay more attention to cultic matters. See Zipora Talshir, "The Reign of Solomon in the Making: Pseudo-Connections between 3 Kingdoms and Chronicles," *VT* 50, no.2 (2000), 242.

Tyre who was an admirer of David took great delight in Solomon's words. He praised Solomon and his God, "Blessed be the Lord this day, who has given to David a wise son to be over this great people ὃς ἔδωκε τῷ Δαυὶδ υἱὸν φρόνιμον ἐπὶ τὸν λαὸν τὸν πολὺν τοῦτον/ בן חכם על־העם הרב הזה" (MT 1 Kgs. 5:21/LXX 1 Kgs. 5:7). Hiram's words echo Solomon's prayer request to God, as Solomon's ruling of the great people is effective, at least in the eyes of the foreign king from Tyre. The interactions between the two kings ended with a peace treaty. Also, the accomplishment is regarded as a confirmation of Solomon's divinely given wisdom (MT 1 Kgs. 5:26/LXX 1 Kgs. 5:12).

Another foreign ruler who recognizes Solomon's wisdom is the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs.10:1-13). The famous episode begins with an explanation of the incentive for the queen's visit: "Now when the queen of Sheba heard שמע of the fame שמע of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with riddles" (1 Kgs. 10:1). Now with the dissemination of Solomon's wisdom, praises and reports concerning his righteous ruling circulate widely across different regions. Solomon's growing fame attracts visits from foreign rulers. However, hearsay and reports are not convincing enough, foreign rulers would like to come in person to testify to the wisdom of Solomon. By eyewitness and in-person interactions with Solomon, the visit reaches its climax when the Queen of Sheba delivers her speech of admiration to King Solomon.

> The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and behold, the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report that I heard. Happy are your men! Happy are your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel forever, he had made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness (1 Kgs. 10:6-9).

The Queen of Sheba showers King Solomon with profuse praise. She first refers to the report that she had heard שמעתי before the visit. Then she stresses the transformative experience by seeing and witnessing תראינה עיניthe great wisdom of Solomon. The grouping of verbs "listen" שמע and "see"ראה emphasizes a personal, immediate eyewitness encounter with Solomon's wisdom. The two verbs also appear in the Israelites' response to Solomon's judgement of the disputes between the two harlots. "All Israel heard of שמעו the judgment which the king had rendered, and they were in awe of the king, because they saw ראו the wisdom of God was in him to render justice" (1 Kgs. 3:28). The sequence of these two verbs seems to suggest that seeing confirms what one has heard.

From hearing reports to on-site investigation, the Queen of Sheba affirms the great wisdom of Solomon. In her encomium, the Queen of Sheba further expounds on the different aspects of Solomon's wisdom. First, the queen praises the prosperity of the people and the king's household.[149] Second, the queen blesses the God of Solomon and makes a theological claim that all the prosperity, wisdom, and wealth of Solomon comes from his God. The praise of the king, alongside the God that the king serves is similarly expressed earlier by Hiram. However, the double praise of the king and his God appears more frequently in the episode of Sheba's visit. Whenever the queen of Sheba comments on the great fame of Solomon (10:1), his reign over Israel (10:9), and his just and righteous ruling (10:9), the name of God turns up concurrently, reminding one that God is the source and sustainer of Solomon's grand achievements. In the conclusion of her speech, the Queen of Sheba not only blesses Solomon's God, but also claims that Solomon's kingship is

[149] There is a textual variant for the word "your people" (1 Kgs. 10:8). The LXX and Syr, read the phrase as "your wives."

motivated by divine love for His people (10:9). The connection between kingship, God, and people created by the foreign visitor implies fulfillment of Solomon's request to God at Gibeon. The king rules God's great people with much success. The episode of Queen of Sheba's visit ends with her giving Solomon abundant gifts in exchange for hearing Solomon's great wisdom (10:10).

Solomon's interactions with foreign monarchs are well attested in the biblical account. These international exchanges serve as testimonies to the great wisdom of the Israelite king. Praises and admiration expressed by other powerful rulers buttress the fame of Solomon, adding credibility to the assessment of his successful ruling. The happy storyline of Solomon's political life ends with the note: "King Solomon excelled all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. The whole earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put into his mind. Every one of them brought a present, objects of silver and gold, garments, weapons, spices, horses, and mules, so much year by year" (1 Kgs. 10:23-25). The note centers on Solomon's unparalleled wisdom and its byproducts of wealth and fame, each of which enhances the power of wisdom.

From both domestic and international dimensions, we can see the biblical accounts employ perspectives and comments from the people under Solomon's sovereignty and other foreign rulers to showcase the outcomes of his successful statecraft. Likewise, Wisdom also picks up a similar angle in portraying the success of governance—it focuses on the global fame and acknowledgement of the king's ruling from a variety of groups. Moreover, Wisdom incorporates reflection on the contribution of wisdom to the growing impact of the king.

The opening section of Wisdom showcases the global fame of the king, as he summons foreign rulers to listen to the ways of righteous ruling. In addition, the close connection between great leadership and faithfulness to the divine is clearly indicated in the first line:

> Love righteousness, you rulers of the earth (οἱ κρίνοντες τὴν γῆν),
> think of the Lord with uprightness and seek him with sincerity of heart (1:1).

Following the opening line, Wisdom transitions to a long instruction that covers a variety of wisdom topics, including the meaning of righteousness (δικαισύνη), the actions and fates of the wicked and the righteous, and teachings on kingship. Seeing the gnomic form and the similar motifs, scholars have argued that Proverbs 1-9 serves as a model for the first section of Wisdom (1-6:21).[150] However, the context of teachings looks drastically different in both texts. Unlike Proverbs' "Father-Son" instructional setting where certain subordination of the learners is presumed, Wisdom's addressees supposedly share the same social status as the speaker. After the teachings on justice, Wisdom returns to an address to rulers of the world. This call functions as bookends for the first section of Wisdom. The repetitive mention of leaders and similar phraseology recurs in the beginning, also at the end of Chapter 6:

> Listen therefore, O kings (βασιλεῖς), and understand;
> learn, O judges of the ends of the earth (δικασταὶ περάτων γῆς).
> Give ear, you that rule over the multitudes (οἱ κρατοῦντες πλήθους),

[150] Patrick W. Skehan, "The Literary Relationship of the Book of Wisdom to Earlier Wisdom Writings," in *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* (Catholic Biblical Association, 1971), 172-91; Richard J. Clifford, "Proverbs as a Source for Wisdom of Solomon," in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom: Festschrift Maurice Gilbert*, BETL 143, eds. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 255-63; For an analysis of the thematic correspondences between Prov. 1-9 and Wis. 1-6:21, see Devorah Dimant, "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon," 317.

and boast of many nations (6:1-2).
……
Therefore, if you delight in thrones and scepters (θρόνοις καὶ σκήπτροις),
O monarchs over the peoples (τύραννοι λαῶν), honor wisdom,
that you may reign forever…
Therefore be instructed by my words, and you will profit (6:21, 25).

Apart from the global impact of a wise king, the sage in Wisdom also reflects upon the divine election of kingship and the responsibility that comes alongside it. Bringing judgements to the people is an important duty of the king (9:7), which echoes the request in the Gibeon episode in the Solomonic narrative. In fact, to attain governing wisdom is one of the major factors that motivates Solomon to request wisdom from God (1 Kgs. 3:8-9).[151] The ongoing prayer in Ch.9 indicates one of the political ends for having wisdom is to "judge [God's] people justly, and be worthy of the throne of my father" (9:12).

Furthermore, Wisdom records a series of diplomatic ruling skills in the context where the speaker sought wisdom to be his bride (8:2). Under the constant guidance of wisdom, the speaker is equipped with governing knowledge and insights:

Ἔξω δι' αὐτὴν δόξαν ἐν ὄχλοις,
καὶ τιμὴν παρὰ πρεσβυτέροις ὁ νέος.
Ὀξὺς εὑρεθήσομαι ἐν κρίσει, καὶ ἐν ὄψει δυναστῶν θαυμασθήσομαι.
Σιγῶντά με περιμενοῦσι, καὶ φθεγγομένῳ προσέξουσι,
καὶ λαλοῦντος ἐπιπλεῖον, χεῖρα ἐπιθήσουσιν ἐπὶ στόμα αὐτῶν.
Ἔξω δι' αὐτὴν ἀθανασίαν, καὶ μνήμην αἰώνιον τοῖς μετ ἐμὲ ἀπολείψω.
Διοικήσω λαοὺς, καὶ ἔθνη ὑποταγήσεταί μοι.
Φοβηθήσονταί με ἀκούσαντες τύραννοι φρικτοὶ,
ἐν πλήθει φανοῦμαι ἀγαθὸς, καὶ ἐν πολέμῳ ἀνδρεῖος.
Because of her (wisdom) I shall have glory among the multitudes
and honor in the presence of the elders though I am young.
I shall be found keen in judgment
and in the sight of rulers I shall be admired
When I am silent they will wait for me,
and when I speak they will give heed;

[151] For a discussion on Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings, see the section "Praying for Wisdom".

and when I speak at great length
they will put their hands on their mouths.
Because of her I shall have immortality,
and leave an eternal memory to those who come after me.
I shall govern peoples,
and nations will be subject to me;
dread monarchs will be afraid of me when they hear of me;
among the people I shall show myself capable, and courageous in war (8:10-15).

Many governing themes present in the passage find resonance in Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings. The great number of ruling subjects echoes Solomon's description of the people of God: "a great people that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude עם רב אשר לא ימנה ולא יספר מרב/λαὸν πολὺν, ὃς οὐκ ἀριθμηθήσεται" (1 Kgs. 3:8). The depiction is modelled on God's promise to Abraham (cf. Gen. 15:18; 22:17; 32:12), and can be read as a fulfillment of the divine promise to the patriarch. The portrayal of a young king (ὁ νέος) who aims to establish authority in the court and accrues military strength echoes Solomon's self-acknowledgement as "a little child" (παιδάριον μικρός) who desires to boost his leadership in war (1 Kgs. 3:7).[152]

In Wisdom, the governing abilities and the effects of the governing wisdom demonstrate the local and global influence of a king. The mention of other "rulers," "dread monarchs," "peoples and nations" are consistent with the cosmopolitan ambiance constructed around King Solomon in Wisdom. His marvelous speech makes the listeners "put their hands on their mouths," a sign that suggests respect and awe (8:12).[153] In addition, the great deeds performed by the king will imprint on the memories of generations of people, making the king immortal.[154]

---

[152] The expression "I do not know how to go out or come in" (1 Kgs. 3:7) refers to one's ability to "discharge public duties, especially in war." See Cogan, *1 Kings*, 186. Similar biblical references include Num. 27:17, 21; Deut. 31:2; Josh. 14:11. See my discussion in footnote 95 in this chapter.

[153] Cf. Job 21:5; 29:7-11; 40:4; Sir. 5:12; Prov. 30:32. The gesture can mean respect or confusion.

[154] Immortality (ἀθανασία) is an important concept in Wisdom. It has a close association with wisdom and righteousness (1:15, 8:17, 15:3). In this verse, however, immortality is achieved by eternal memories, a statement that aligns more with the traditional Jewish idea of "being remembered for one's good deeds."

The depiction of Solomon's governing skills in Wisdom reflects a reading of Solomon's political engagements in 1 Kings. Information is selected and rearranged, yet deeply indebted to the pertinent passages. In Wisdom, the assertive voice of the king grows out of Solomon's successful political career recorded in 1 Kings, particularly his transnational fame, the attraction and admiration from rulers all over the world, the prosperity of the ruling subjects, and military capabilities. Although biblical accounts are not fleshed out in detail in Wisdom, these narrative elements decisively shape the presentation of Solomon in Wisdom. Recognition of the successful ruling from a multitude of voices reinforces the wisdom of the king.

Despite the correspondences in motifs, Wisdom presents the respect and honor paid to the wise ruler differently compared with the biblical accounts. There is a perspectival change in the presentation of the king's global influence. Instead of describing the king's wise governance from an omniscient narrator, the speaker in his *own* voice narrates the powerful impact of ruling (8:10-15). When the sage states that wisdom will enable him to judge, preach, and govern, he shows deep confidence in the fruits the wisdom can bear. This confidence is also rooted in divine faithfulness, for the grant of such governing wisdom is first and foremost, a gift from God. By this perspectival change, the sage further stresses wisdom and righteousness are the core values that sustain rulership. The emphasis on justice and wisdom shows the sage's advocacy for a successful political rulership that is not rooted in the power or strength of the king, but rather in following and keeping the divine will. The wise and faithful king serves as an exemplar for people to emulate.

IV. Building the Temple

Ernst G. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 59.

One of Solomon's greatest achievements is the construction of the temple. As we have seen in the overview of the Solomonic tradition, ancient interpreters early on have considered temple building as a significant feature of the king. This building achievement is regarded as the nexus of the king's piety, fulfillment of divine promise, and the proper place of worship for the people. Surprisingly, the temple as a well-known marker associated with Solomon occurs scarcely at all in Wisdom. Despite the scanty reference to the temple, one clear reference to Solomon's temple in Wis. 9:8 still invites us to think about the significance of the temple and its changing forms in the Hellenistic context. In Wisdom's treatment of the temple motif, I contend that the sage, by drawing upon Hellenistic conceptualizations of the temple, decentralizes the particular locale of the temple. By doing so, the sage revisions an understanding of the divine presence. I argue that the sage refashions the presence of God through wisdom: where wisdom is, where divine presence can be felt.

To better grasp the temple imagery and its association with Solomon presented in Wisdom, it is helpful to take a look at some relevant episodes in the Hebrew Bible for some points of reference. Both 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles dedicate a significant portion to describing Solomon's efforts in building the temple and his prayer of dedication following the completion of the building. In Chroniclers' retelling of Solomon's life events, accounts not pertinent to Solomon as a temple architect are downplayed. The selection of events further highlights Solomon's contribution to building the temple. For instance, in the Deuteronomistic account, Solomon offers sacrifices after his reception of divine wisdom (1 Kgs. 3:15). Then Solomon demonstrates his ruling wisdom by adjudicating the case of two prostitutes fighting for the one living baby (1 Kgs. 3:16-28). In the Chronicle's account,

what follows immediately after Solomon's reception of wisdom is a brief account of his wealth and trading activities (2 Chron. 1:14-17) and then Solomon's temple-building. The replacement of Solomon's activities in Chronicles creates a direct link between Solomon's wisdom and his temple building. The connection between wisdom and temple is further reinforced in the praise of Hiram the King of Tyre in the chronicler's version: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, who has given King David a wise son, who has discretion and understanding, who will build a temple for the Lord, and a royal palace for himself" (2 Chron. 2:12). The praise becomes longer than the blessing of the same foreign king in 1 Kings 5:7, which reads "Blessed be the Lord this day, who has given to David a wise son to be over his great people." In the Chronicler's version, the building projects are added to the pronouncement, and the manifestation of Solomon's wisdom changes from an emphasis on governing the people to building the temple. Temple construction and its dedication are the core of the Solomonic narratives in Chronicles, as proper cultic worship shapes the theological motifs for the book. The centrality of the Temple reflects the need of the post-exilic community to establish continuity with their past.[155] In the meantime, the enlarged significance of the Temple and the cultic zeal of Solomon in Chronicles somehow mitigate the critiques against Solomon as an apostate in 1 Kings.[156]

---

[155] H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, New Century Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982), 28. For discussion on the temple theology and Chronicle's distinct perspectives, see Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*, BEATAJ 9 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989).

[156] Braun Roddy, "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles," *JBL* 92, no.4 (Dec., 1973): 503-516, esp. 508-512. To present Solomon as the pious Temple builder, the chronicler also omits and reshapes many materials in 1 Kings. For instance, the controversy surrounding Solomon's succession is replaced with the language of divine selection (2 Chron. 1:1). Solomon received a unanimous acceptance from Israel and the other sons of David (1 Chron. 29:23-24). The chronicler also omits any mention of Solomon's harem and how the multitude of foreign wives led him astray in his late life.

Regardless of the important legacy of Solomon as a temple builder, the reference to the temple is surprisingly scanty in Wisdom. The explicit mention of the temple (ναός) occurs twice. The first occurrence is in 3:14 where the righteous eunuch is blessed with great delight in the temple of the Lord, which is an allusion to Isaiah 56:3. Both verses are situated in a context where the figures who do not fit in the social-religious norms have received blessings from the Lord because of their faithfulness and piety. The other occurrence of the temple is more explicitly related to Solomon. It occurs in the long prayer in Wis. 9:

> Εἶπας οἰκοδομῆσαι ναὸν ἐν ὄρει ἁγίῳ σου,
> καὶ ἐν πόλει κατασκηνώσεώς σου θυσιαστήριον,
> μίμημα σκηνῆς ἁγίας ἣν προητοίμασας ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς.
> You said I should build a shrine on your holy mountain,
> and an altar in the city of your encamping,
> a copy of the holy tent that you prepared beforehand from the beginning (9:8).

Seeing the verse is positioned in the context of the prayer, temple building is regarded as one of the obligations that Solomon needs to fulfill as a chosen king by God (9:8). The language of divine selection and Solomon’s duty of building the temple echoes David’s instruction to his son (1 Chr. 28:9-10). In the proximity to the temple verse, the prayer highlights Solomon’s governing responsibilities for the people of God: to be a good judge and ruler (9:7, 12). In this sense, temple builder is one of the many duties that Solomon as an elected king needs to fulfill.

Although the verse is short and concise, the literal construction is thoughtful, and it stresses the importance of the temple construction. An infinitive clause following the main

verb "to say" (εἶπας) contains a nice chiasm[157] with an interchange of a place of worship and its exact geographical location: "shrine"—"on your holy mountain"—"in the city of your encamping"—"altar." The third verset begins with another nominative phrase "a copy of the holy tent," acting as an apposition for the two previous nouns "shrine" and "altar." Another relative clause "that you have prepared from the beginning" further elaborates on the pre-conceived design for the holy tent. This idea of the pre-preparation (προετοιμάζω) of the temple further signifies the divine election (προείλω) of Solomon (9:8), for he is the divinely elected one to fulfill the building of the temple that God has predetermined for Himself.[158] The repetition of the second person possessive pronoun σου (your), alongside the elaborative design and the location of the temple, as shown in the literary construction, also underlies the importance of the temple and its significance in the relationship between God and Solomon the temple builder.[159]

Despite the unspecific geographical locations, which aligns with the anonymous tendency in Wisdom, the elevated spot can possibly refer to Mountain Zion where the temple of the Lord stood (cf. LXX Ps. 14:1, 47:2). The city, with its cultic significance, may point to Jerusalem. Although the language used to describe the location of the temple is vague, the consecration of the space in the verse highlights the sacredness of the temple. Yet what kind of temple does the sage envision here? Is it heavenly or earthly? What does the inauguration of such a temple signify? To address these questions, I think it is important to unpack the expression "the copy of the Holy tent" (μίμημα σκηνῆς ἁγίας),

---

[157] Michelangelo Priotto, "Building a Temple to Wisdom (Wis 9:8)," in *Wisdom for Life*, ed. Nuria Calduch-Benages, John Barton, and Reinhard G. Kratz (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, Inc., 2014), 262.
[158] Priotto, "Building a Temple to Wisdom," 262.
[159] Priotto, "Building a Temple to Wisdom," 262.

which provides the interpretive key to understanding the essence and scope of the temple here. We will examine each word in turn.

Starting with the notion of "copy" (μίμημα), it is a hapax in the book and is the only attestation in the LXX. Winston points out that the employment of μίμημα shows traces of Platonic influence on the composition.[160] The word μίμημα is "meant to emphasize by contrast the greater reality of the archetype,"[161] which suggests an ideal temple prior to the human-built temple. The ideal temple, first and foremost, is willed and designed by God. In this aspect, the usage of μίμημα may echo the idea of תבנית in the Hebrew Bible. The divinely willed and designed form of the sacred shrine (either the tabernacle or the Temple), with regard to both exterior and interior details, is shown to the person whom God elected. For instance, on Mount Sinai, God showed Moses the form of the sanctuary that he was to build for Him: "According to all that I show you concerning the pattern (παράδειγμα, תבנית) of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it…And see that you make them after the pattern for them, which is being shown you on the mountain" (Exod. 25:9, 40). In a similar vein, David instructs his son Solomon to follow the plan for the temple building in accordance with the celestial model that God has imparted to him: "All this he made clear by the writing from the hand of the Lord concerning it, all the work to be done according to the plan (παράδειγμα, תבנית)" (1 Chr. 28:19).

Although the word תבנית occurs in both texts, the reception and transmission of the temple blueprint look quite different. In the case of Moses, the design of the tabernacle is passed to him through divine vision where God speaks to him and shows him how to

[160] On a survey of the word μίμημα and its usage, see David Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 203-205.
[161] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 203.

fashion every single detail of the sanctuary, and then he can instruct the people likewise. Moses also is obligated to participate in the making of the tabernacle. For David, his reception of the תבנית suggests certain prophetic experience. The expression "from the hand of the Lord" (מיד יהוה) has prophetic resonance, as it is used to introduce Ezekiel's vision and enables the prophets to perform miracles or prophesy.[162] Another intriguing facet of David's temple blueprint is its *writtenness*, as the Lord showed him the plan with writing (בכתב).[163] With the mention of prophetic experience and writing, Sara Japhet points out the strong link between the God's command to Ezekiel to write down the temple plan (Ezek. 43:11) and Chronicler's "written" plan of the temple.[164] According to Japhet, the *written* temple blueprint that David passed down to Solomon is an integral product of the תבנית in the Mosaic tabernacle context and Ezekiel's written plan.[165] Similar to the prophet Moses, David receives divine revelation of the temple.[166] However, unlike Moses, he is prohibited from building the temple, for he has "shed blood" as "a warrior" (1 Chr. 28:3).[167] The task is handed down to Solomon. The nature of the temple blueprint as revelatory and divinely directed is also passed down to the context of Solomon.

---

[162] Eva Mroczek, "How Not to Build a Temple: Jacob, David, and the Unbuilt Ideal in Ancient Judaism," *JSJ* 46 (2015), 526. For scriptural references, see Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 3:22, 8:1, 33:22, 37:1; 1 Kgs. 18:46 concerning Elijah, and 2 Kgs. 3:15 concerning Elisha.

[163] Mroczek also highlights this point in "How Not to Build a Temple," 526.

[164] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 494.

[165] Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 494.

[166] For scholarly discussion on the similarities between Moses and David, Mroczek has made a list of relevant scholarship, see note 32 in "How Not to Build a Temple." Cf. Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, 628; Alex A. Jassen, *Mediating the Divine: Prophecy and Revelation in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 111-13; David L. Peterson, *The Role of Israel's Prophets*, JSOTSup 17 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 43; S. J. DeVries, "Moses and David as Cult Founders in Chronicles," *JBL* 107 (1988): 619-39.

[167] Here the reason offered in Chronicles differs from 2 Sam.7. In response to David's desire to build a house for the Lord, God defers his plan by stating that He has never lived in a house or never asked people to build a house for Him (vv. 6-7). Later, the emphasis of the speech transitions to God's promise of building a house for David. Namely, God would establish the kingdom of David and his descendants. And in the future, David's son Solomon, unnamed in this context, will build a house for the name of God (vv. 12-13). In 2 Samuel, there is no mention of any quality of David that prohibits him from building the temple.

With respect to the pre-materialized design and divine conceptualization of the temple, תבנית and μίμημα share some commonalities. However, when it comes to the evaluation of the physical temple through the lens of a temple in its pre-conceived state, these two words and the contexts in which they are employed suggest divergent attitudes. The word μίμημα emphasizes the superiority of the non-physical state of the temple, for its archaic purity and transcendence. On the other hand, in the contexts of Mosaic tabernacle and David's preparation for temple building, תבנית offers an important guideline for the upcoming physical temple—all the details, arrangement, and organization of the physical temple are supposed to be in accordance with the blueprint. In this regard, the physical temple is equally important to the pre-conceived temple.

Since we have been discussing at length the different states of the temple, let us move on to an investigation into the second part of the expression "the copy of the holy tent," namely, the possessive phrase σκηνῆς ἁγίας. This expression can be helpful in understanding the imagery of the temple and the historical and cosmic relevance signified by the depiction. Considering the "identification of the holy tent" as a "*crux interpretum*" here,[168] Philip Church lays out five major scholarly suggestions for the interpretation of the phrase:[169]

(1) heaven as the true temple of God

(2) a heavenly prototype of the Jerusalem temple

---

[168] Philip Church, *Hebrews and the Temple: Attitudes to the Temple in Second Temple Judaism and in Hebrews*, Novum Testaentum Supplements 171 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 56.

[169] Philip Church, *Hebrews and the Temple*, 56-57. The first three options are proposed by Emile Osty, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, La Sainte Bible, 2nd ed revue (Paris: Cerf, 1957), 65. The fourth proposal is suggested by R. Cornely, *Commentarius in librum Sapientiae* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1910), 348-50. Gäbel suggests the last interpretive option. See George Gabel, *Die Kulttheologie des Hebräerbriefes: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Studie*, WUNT 2, 212 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 32-33.

(3) the tent built by Moses on the guidance of YHWH

(4) the created universe as a prototype of the temple

(5) the sanctuary God's hands established in Exod 15:17, which signifies the eschatological dwelling place of God with his people

Let us spend some time going through the different interpretations in turn. Seeing the references to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, the verse does not show an immediate interest in God's heavenly dwelling, thus option (1) does not fit in the context. The term σκηνή echoes the expression σκηνή τοῦ μαρτυρίου (Tent of Witness/Meeting)[170] that occurs frequently in the book of Exodus. Although option (3) has verbal correspondences with the recurrent phrase in Exodus, it implies that the Mosaic tent is the same as the Solomonic temple. It is theologically sound to say that the wilderness tabernacle is the precursor of the temple, yet there lacks literary evidence that indicates Solomon's temple is modelled after the plan of the Mosaic tent. Also, the wilderness tabernacle was built by Moses, not God—the agent of the building does not map onto the last verset here. In this regard, we need to reject option (3). Option (5) an eschatological temple is also unlikely because the temporal phrase "from the beginning" (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) in v.9 indicates an archaic past for the holy tent. Instead of an interest in the future, it is more oriented to the past, before the construction of the Solomonic temple.

Now as we rule out options (1), (3) and (5), the other remaining options or a combination of these options can most likely offer some insights here. As to the second option of the heavenly temple, Church rejects this reading, for he considers the plan for the temple is attributed to David under YHWH's direction (1 Chr. 11-19).[171] I think Church's

[170] Cf. Exod. 27:21; 28:43; 29:10-11, 30-32, 42-44; 30:16, 18, 20-21, 26, 36; 31:7; 33:7;35:21; 37:5, 19; 38:26-27; 39:9; 40:2, 5-6, 22-26, 34-35.

[171] Church, *Hebrews and the Temple*, 57.

reading is problematic, in light of the previous discussion on the *tabnit*. The heavenly prototype of the temple is implied in the relevant biblical passages. I consider option (2) a heavenly prototype as a possible reading for the verse. The heavenly temple has currency in several Second Temple books.[172] This wide acceptance of a heavenly temple is partially due to the dissatisfaction with the earthly temple in Jerusalem. In the Animal Vision of 1 Enoch, it uses allegorical language to depict Zerubbabel's postexilic temple:

> And they began again to build as before and they raised up the tower and it was called the high tower. And they began again to place a table before the tower, but all the bread on it was polluted and not pure. And besides all these things, the eyes of the sheep were blind and they did not see (1 Enoch 89:73-74).

In this passage, the Second Temple is critiqued for its unimpressive construction as a "high tower," the rejection of divine dwelling, and the contaminated bread. Nickelsburg responds to the passage by highlighting that "the sacrificial cult of the Second Temple is polluted from the time of its construction (and this continues right up to the beginning of the end-time, compare 90:6)."[173] Another classic Qumran text *Damascus Document* also harshly critiques the sacrificial impurity of the temple:

> And they also defiled the temple for they did not keep apart in accordance with the law, but instead lay with her who sees the blood of her menstrual flow (CD 5.6-7).

A similar concern over ritual uncleanness is also expressed in the Psalms of Solomon, a text that can be dated to the first century BCE:

---

[172] See 1 Enoch 90:28ff; Jubilees 1:27-29; 4QFlor; Tobit 14:5; Sibylline Oracles 5.403, 414-44; 1Q32; 2Q24; 5Q15.

[173] George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Temple According to Enoch," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no.1 (2014), 14.

> They plundered the sanctuary of God,
> as if they were no heir to redeem it.
> They trod upon the altar of the Lord (coming) from all uncleanness;
> and with menstrual blood they defiled the sacrifice as (if these were) polluted flesh (Ps. Sol. 8:11-12).

The ritual impurity indicated in these texts contributes to a group of people's disappointments at the physical temple. To counter the corruption of the local physical temple, these people put their hope in a perfect and incorruptible heavenly temple.[174]

Although there is a strand of thought promoting the vision of a heavenly temple, the attitude to the Second Temple is more complex. The concerns for the earthly temple and observance of temple rituals cannot be eliminated in the Second Temple period. For instance, the defilement of the Jerusalem temple by Antiochus Epiphanes IV caused unrest and people responded with great resistance to protect the earthly temple. The history of opposition is recorded in books such as Judith and 1 Maccabees.[175]

Against the backdrop of the complex attitudes to the physical temple in the Second Temple period, where should we place Wisdom in the spectrum? I think Wisdom has an affirmative attitude to both the heavenly temple and the physical temple in Jerusalem. Wisdom participates in the discourse of the heavenly temple prevalent in the Second Temple period (option 2). Since the reference to the temple in Wisdom is indebted to the creation of the Solomonic persona, the temple imagery is first associated with the historical temple under Solomon's reign. In this regard, the heavenly temple with its purity and perfection legitimates the glory and magnificence of the Solomonic temple. In addition,

---

[174] Nickelsburg, "The Temple According to Enoch," 24; David Suter, "Temples and the Temple in the Early Enoch Tradition: Memory, Vision, and Expectation," in *The Early Enoch Literature*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins, JSJSupp 121 (Boston: Brill, 2007), 195-218.

[175] Judith 4:2-4, 5:17-19; 1 Macc. 2:7-9, 4:46-50, 57, 7:34-38, 10:41-45, 15:1-9.

unlike the aforementioned texts, Wisdom indicates no critique of temple worship at its time. Yet the diasporic context for the composition of the book invites us to consider another possibility: by refashioning the temple location, which leads to changes in locating the dwelling presence of God, the sage needs to imagine and articulate new ways of worshipping God. I think the liturgical transformation is closely associated with the sage's new definition of the task of temple building, which I will discuss later. Before I go into how the sage redefines his liturgical duty, let us continue to focus on the remaining interpretive possibility for the "holy tent"—option (4).

Regarding option (4), the "holy tent" refers to the created universe. In my view, the scope of the created universe might seem too broad in Wis. 9:8, for the references to the temple as the place of worship are underlined in the previous parallels. Nevertheless, to refine the identification, it is theologically compelling to say that the "holy tent" has cosmic significance, considering that the Jerusalem temple is regarded as a "microcosm of the universe" that links heaven and earth.[176]

Since the temple has cosmic significance, the ministers who lead worship at the temple become participants in a cosmic event. The depiction of Aaron's priestly robe and the cosmic symbolism on it support such a reading (Wis. 18:24). The cosmic importance of the high priest is also noted in Ben Sira, in particular his eulogy of the High Priest Simon ben Onias who culminates the whole epic of the Israelite heroes (Sir. 50). Simon's relation to the temple is multifaceted: he not only repairs and fortifies the temple, and strengthens the walls, but also faithfully carries out his sacrificial duties.[177] The depiction of Simon

[176] Philip Church, *Hebrews and the Temple*, 58; Jon D. Levenson, "The Temple and the World," *The Journal of Religion* 64, no.3 (1984): 275-298.

[177] Ben Sira does not mention the assistance of Antiochus III of Syria in the restoration of the Temple. According to Josephus, Simon helped Antiochus besiege the garrison of the Egyptian general Scopas. In turn, the foreign king assisted in the Temple restoration. Josephus, *A.J.* 12.129-53.

officiating in the temple service also resembles the works of Adam in the garden of Eden.[178] Adam the archetype of humanity keeps and serves the garden while Simon ministers in the temple. The symbolic significance of the garden of Eden as the cosmic temple is further strengthened through the person who maintains it.[179]

In addition, Ben Sira compares Simon the priest with trees, flowers, and celestial bodies—all these metaphors find their expressions in the embodied wisdom in the book as well (Sir. 24). The personified wisdom in Ben Sira is the fundamental principle through which the cosmos is established and maintained its order. The analogical expressions suggest that both wisdom and the high priest are critical in maintaining the order of the world and uniting all creatures of the world to worship the creator.[180]

The theme of creation and the role of wisdom in creation also find resonances in Wisdom. Immediately after the temple verse, the sage states the coexistence of wisdom with God in the creation of the world, which echoes Proverbs 8:22:[181]

> With you is wisdom, which knows your works
> and was present when you made the world
> and understand what is pleasing in your eyes
> and what is right according to your commandments (9:9).

---

[178] Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira," in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture*, ed. Craig A. Evans (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 105-7.

[179] Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 90-99. See also Peter Thatcher Lanfer, *Remembering Eden: the Reception History of Genesis 3:22-24* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. 127-158. Dan Lioy, *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), esp. 1-15.

[180] Robert Hayward, *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 7.

[181] Prov. 8:22 reads "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago."

Here we see that both temple and wisdom demonstrate a cosmic impact (Wis. 9:9-12). Wisdom is in God's presence during creation. Similarly, the heavenly prototype of the temple also exists in the primordial time, as indicated in the expression "you have prepared from the beginning" (v.8). In Ben Sira, we see the high priest facilitating worship at the temple and demonstrating divine wisdom. Analogously, in the case of Wisdom, the sage becomes the core human figure who receives, exhibits, and imparts divine wisdom.

In Wisdom, the cosmic order is established not through priesthood, but by those who pursue righteousness and justice. It is the righteous and the just who give rightful worship to God.[182] That is to say, divine presence and the experience of such presence are no longer bound to one geographical location; rather divine presence is promised to the wise and just ones who pursue God earnestly and consistently. As a teacher of wisdom, the sage in the guise of Solomon redefines the mission of temple building: by promoting wisdom and justice, and dedicating oneself to the teaching of wisdom, he would like to build up more disciples who pursue righteousness to experience the indwelling presence of God through wisdom.

Conclusion

As Priotto rightly points out, "[b]ehind the picture of Solomon there is the figure of the author himself and also the figure of the ideal teacher of wisdom."[183] To recount an individual's quest for wisdom, the sage takes up a Solomonic persona who is famous for his intimate relationship with wisdom. In his making of the Solomonic voice, the sage

[182] The Book of Eschatology (Chs. 1-6) and the Exodus story (10:15-19:22) are told through a cosmic battle between the righteous ones (δικαίοι) and the impious ones (ἀσεβεῖς). In Part II of the dissertation, I will offer a close reading of the Exodus story and its performative values in the historical retelling.
[183] Michelangelo Priotto, "Building a Temple to Wisdom (Wis. 9:8)," 267.

demonstrates attentive and innovative reading of the Solomonic episodes in the Hebrew Bible. He selects four foundational motifs derived from the Solomonic narratives: Solomon asking for wisdom, the manifestation of his wisdom through encyclopedic knowledge and his political success, also Solomon's temple building.

These themes are interpreted and reshaped in light of the new context: the paradigmatic Israelite king has more of a cosmopolitan outlook in the Hellenistic environment. The creation of the Solomonic persona demonstrates the integration of Jewish Scripture and Hellenistic thought. In the meantime, certain narrative elements from the Solomonic stories also transform into something new. First, Solomon's request for wisdom in an oneiric dialogue is recast into a long and earnest prayer for wisdom to overcome the frailty of humanity. This long prayer offers a window into the sages' life of prayer during the Second Temple period. It is through prayer that the sages approach God and seek for divine wisdom. Second, Solomon's famous list of knowledge and skills becomes updated in a Hellenistic context. More subjects of value at the present day make their way into the list. The emphasis on the divine origin and gifting of human knowledge differs from the elite intellectual pursuit among the Greeks. The list of encyclopedic knowledge demonstrates the erudite learning of the sage and his intellectual authority over the people. Third, the prosperity of Solomon's regime in both domestic and global realms is also visible in Wisdom's poetic lines. By depicting the subjects' praise and acknowledgement of the successful ruling, the sage articulates his political ideal where a king rules with justice and wisdom. Fourth, Solomon's temple is described against the backdrop of the Hellenistic conceptualization of the temple. This heavenly prototype of the temple, in its pure and perfect form, has cosmic significance. Solomon's task of building the temple to

secure divine dwelling among His people is also transformed when it applies to the sage. The sage invokes divine dwelling through imparting wisdom to the ears that hear. Divine presence can be attained by those who seek wisdom and pursue righteousness and justice.

In sum, through this detailed analysis of the composition of the Solomonic voice, we came to examine the intellectual and spiritual practices behind the attribution to Solomon. This is a sage of strong religious piety and great intellectual capabilities, who embodies the ethos of a highly learned and faithful Hellenistic Jew, through whom Solomon is channeled by invoking the traits and achievements associated with him.

Chapter Four

The Making of an Autobiography: I am Solomon, Solomon is I

Introduction

In the previous literary analysis, we have already seen how the personal life of the sage is mediated through the life stories of Solomon. The relationship between the sage and the "Solomon" under his interpretation is intricately linked. One major reason that contributes to the close relationship is the literary style that the sage uses to craft his autobiography: the sage employs the prevalent first-person discourse in wisdom literature to impart knowledge and wisdom. Considering the recurring literary trope of the first-person discourse in wisdom literature, what is unique about the first-person speech in Wisdom? I think this particular mode of expression contributes to the shaping of the sage's self and demonstrates the growth of a person at different stages. I would describe the "I" language in the sage's speech as a "narrativized I," by which I intend to highlight that the formation of the self is through narratives one receives and absorbs.

In the case of the sage of Wisdom, the shaping of his *self* is through the narratives of Solomon. In other words, as the sage constructs his autobiography, the story of *my*self is shaped by the *other*. At the same time, I also want to point out that the sage leaves a distinctly Hellenistic imprint on the reception history of Solomon, the paradigmatic king of wisdom in Israel. In this chapter, I aim to show how Solomon and the Hellenistic sage mutually shape each other's lives in the process of making an autobiography.

I. First-Person Discourse in Wisdom Literature

1. An Overview of Wisdom Texts

Before we go into an examination of the "I" language in Wisdom, let us start with a brief overview of the first-person narrative in wisdom literature. As mentioned before, the first-person narrative is a prevalent literary trope in biblical wisdom literature. Sages imparting their own experience to the students stand at the core of wisdom literature. Expressions such as ראיתי (I saw), ואראֹ (I have seen), alongside the verb עבר (pass by) frequently occur in the section of first-person account.

In the Book of Proverbs, two instances show the instructive values of a first-person account. In Prov. 4:3-9, through the first-person pronoun "I," the sage recounts the parental advice on seeking wisdom and insight at a young age, the motif and form of which can find early resonances in Egyptian wisdom literature.[184] The importance of wisdom has been instilled in "me" from an early age. The second case is recorded in Prov. 24:30-34 where the sage gives a lesson on avoiding laziness and pursuing diligence. To make the point, the sage uses his own experience to describe the undesirable state when one is lazy and foolish.

> I passed by (עברתי) the field of one who was lazy,
> by the vineyard of a stupid person;
> and see, it was all overgrown with thorns;
> the ground was covered with nettles,
> and its stone wall was broken down.
> Then I saw (אחזה) and considered (אשית) it;
> I looked (ראיתי) and received instruction (לקחתי).
> A little sheep, a little slumber,
> a little folding of the hands to rest,
> and poverty will come upon you like a robber,

[184] James Crenshaw, "Wisdom," in *Old Testament Form Criticism*, ed. John H. Hayes (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974), 256.

and want, like an armed warrior.

In a similar vein, many wisdom psalms also portray actual or imagined first-person experiences to address the issue concerning the problem of evil. The psalmists make observations of their surroundings and comment on the actions and fates of people of many sorts. For example, Ps. 37:25, 35-36 bring out the psalmist's concern for justice, especially in light of the prosperity of the wicked.

> I have seen (ראיתי) the wicked oppressing,
> and towering like a cedar of Lebanon. (37:35)

The prosperity of the wicked is temporary, for their end is doomed. For the righteous, they will gain their reward and be upheld by God. Using language that invokes one's personal experience, the psalmist describes the respective end of the wicked and the righteous:

> Again I passed by, and they (the wicked) were no more;
> though I sought them (אבקשהו), they could not be found. (37:36)

> I have been young, and now am old,
> yet I have not seen (לא ראיתי) the righteous forsaken
> or their children begging bread.
> They are ever giving liberally and lending,
> and their children become a blessing. (37:25-26)

Confessional elements also can be found extensively in Job, particularly in chapters 29-31 where Job makes his defense against his friends' accusations. Speaking from a first-person perspective is common in the book as a whole. Job's friends, each speaking from their own experience and mind, try to convince Job that his sin and folly contribute to his

suffering.[185] The first-person perspectives allow multiple voices to engage with each other, to challenge the convention, and to relate one's experience to one's knowledge of God.

In Qoheleth, the investigation of wisdom also takes place in the first-person point of view, which is particularly manifest in the autobiographical section of the book (1:12-2:26).[186] Not unlike the sages in Proverbs, Qoheleth relies on many personal experiences to illustrate his quest of wisdom and the outcomes of gaining wisdom. The epistemological style is deeply personal, and also involves much seeing (ראיתי) and knowing (ידעתי). Qoheleth has applied his mind to all that is done under heaven, also he has seen everything in the world, yet his conclusion is far from positive—"All is transient, and a striving after wind" (1:14). In addition, Qoheleth's observation and experience of wisdom lead to much pain and vexation, which also differs from the conventional outlook of wisdom that affirms life and its meaning.[187]

Ben Sira also uses his firsthand experience to legitimize him to be a fitting teacher for those who "are great among the people, and leaders of the congregation" (33:18). The sage employs the analogy of a grape-gatherer to talk about his laborious work in seeking wisdom and instruction (33:16). The first-person depiction of the sage's career aims to invite people to study with him; in particular, to study and learn from the sage in "the house of instruction" (בית מדרש/οἴκος παιδείας).[188] The location is explicitly brought up in the

[185] Cf. Eliphaz's speech and his proposal for retribution theology. Job 4:8, 5:3.

[186] In this chapter, Qoheleth will be further examined and discussed. I offer a comparative reading of the autobiography in Qoheleth with that in Wisdom.

[187] For the different stages of the development of wisdom traditions in early Judaism, see Hindy Najman, "Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Period," in *Is There a Text in this Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke*, ed. Ariel Feldman, Charlotte Hempel, and Maria Cioata (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 459-472, esp. 470-472.

[188] The Hebrew manuscript from Qumran reads בית מוסר, while manuscript B has בית מדרש. For a discussion on the divergent textual traditions of the Book of Ben Sira, see *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation*, ed. Jean-Sebastien Rey and Jan Joosten, JSJSup 150 (Leiden: Brill, 2011). The location of the house of study may suggest the context in which the book first emerged. See Richard J. Coggins, *Sirach* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 70-73.

autobiographical narrative (51:13-22). The autobiography is embedded in a thanksgiving prayer in which Ben Sira recounts his fervent pursuit of wisdom from his youth (51:13-22) and ascribes his knowledge to God's answer to his prayers. The interconnection between prayer and first-person narrative also occurs in the Wisdom of Solomon. Both texts demonstrate the importance of prayer, which is a liturgical practice that reflects the spiritual life of the sage and contributes to the composition of a wisdom text.

With the enumeration of a variety of wisdom texts across centuries, in different languages, each with its own provenance, we can observe the prevalence of the first-person narrative as a literary trope in wisdom texts. From a practical point of view, the incorporation of first-person accounts in wisdom literature makes the teachings of the sages more vivid and convincing. Using language that highlights one's experience, the sage is able to enhance the value of the content taught. In Von Rad's words, the sage "[makes] himself personally responsible for the perception which is presented."[189] He further states that the style of autobiography "enlivens" the scenes of instructions and generates an intimate interaction between the teacher and students or those who want to receive wisdom.[190]

2. The First Person Singular and Its Relation to the Author in the Wisdom of Solomon

As we have pointed out the frequent use of the first person singular in wisdom texts effectively adds veracity to the message, now let us move on to think about how the language of "I" relates to the sage who composed the text. Is the use of the "I" language merely a literary strategy or technique? Is it possible to gain any information about the

[189] Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. J. D. Martin (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1972), 38.
[190] Von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 56.

author behind the "I," through his or her presentation of the first-person singular experience? I think the answers to these questions vary depending on the different texts under examination. As for the Wisdom of Solomon, I think the "I" voice is a crucial literary strategy, through which the intellectual and spiritual autobiography of the sage is constructed. Seeing the nature of ancient literary texts,[191] it is hard to trace the actual author of Wisdom. Instead of searching for the historical sage who authored Wisdom, I think it is possible to examine the function of the alleged Solomonic authorship in shaping the self of the sage, by which the relationship between the first person singular and authorship may find its answer. Building upon Najman's insights into "authorial impersonation"[192] in her analysis of 4 Ezra, I argue that the self of the sage in Wisdom is shaped by the exemplary figure Solomon. The "I" language represents an ideal sage-king—an expansion of the Solomonic personality—whom the sage aspires to become or is in the process of becoming.

At the outset, I want to situate the Wisdom of Solomon in the broader discussion of the operation of "I" voice in relation to the author in the aforementioned wisdom texts. Let us first consider Proverbs and some wisdom psalms discussed above. In these texts, the sages are anonymous, and thus it is hard to construct a personality. These sages use first-person pronouns to teach and instruct while leaving no traces for identification. The "I" voice is by no means identifiable, as the nature of a collection of sayings, proverbs, and poems once bounded together, lacks any definitive historical contexts. The process of anthologizing a variety of teachings inevitably leads to the loss of the original context of

[191] George Brooke explains the reason as follows: "While actual authors might be more readily discernible behind documentary texts, such as letters, the discovery of authors behind ancient texts remains very difficult. It is important to identify the principle cause of the difficulty. The principal cause seems to rest in the observation that whereas documentary texts are most often stand-alone, one-off products, literary compositions are much richer and more varied in several ways." See George J. Brooke, "Rewriting Authorship in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Sonja Ammann, Katharina Psychny, and Julia Rhyder (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 63.

[192] Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 50.

the individual text, yet possibly can create a new context of its own.[193] In this sense, the "I" voice in the sayings and poems is a literary style, a style that enhances the intimacy in teaching and enables the teaching to be more vivid and convincing.

Unlike the anonymous sages in Proverbs, Ben Sira, the "latter-day Book of Proverbs"[194] in the words of Scott, gives a clear self-identification of the sage who speaks in the first-person voice. Sir 50:27 states,

> Παιδείαν συνέσεως καὶ ἐπιστήμης ἐχάραξα[195] ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ,
> τούτῳ, Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Σειρὰχ Ἱεροσολυμίτης,
> ὃς ἀνώμβρησε σοφίαν ἀπὸ καρδίας αὐτοῦ.
> Instruction in understanding and knowledge I have written in this book,
> Jesus son of Eleazer son of Sirach of Jerusalem,
> whose mind poured forth wisdom.

Regarding this self-revealing passage of the sage Ben Sira, scholars have different proposals for understanding the "I" voice in relation to the historical author and his individual responsibility for the creation of the text. Some have regarded this claim of authorship as a crucial moment in Jewish literary history, particularly in light of the

---

[193] A fascinating discussion of the collection of the Psalter and its anthologizing nature, in relation to the scribal transmission and liturgical use can be found in David Willgren, *The Formation of the "Book" of Psalms: Reconsidering the Transmission and Canonization of Psalmody in Light of Material Culture and the Poetics of Anthologies*, FAT 88 (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016).

[194] R. B. Y. Scott, *The Way of Wisdom in the Old Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1971), 201-12.

[195] The Greek verb χαράσσω is only attested in a few instances in the Septuagint. It occurs in Sir 50:27, 4 Reigns (2 Kings) 17:11 where it may potentially mean "engraved." Also in 3 Macc 2:29, the word means "branded." In addition, there exists a textual critical problem of the verb in this verse, which further complicates the issue. The verb has both first-person and third-person forms. In some Greek minuscule manuscripts, the third person verb ἐχάραξε is attested, a version that Ziegler incorporated in his critical edition. However, most Greek manuscripts contain the first-person verb ἐχάραξα. On the other hand, the Syriac translation based on the original Hebrew does not include the name of the author. For the only Hebrew manuscript that preserves this verse found in Cairo Genizah, the verse does not contain a main verb; rather, the attribution of the proverbs and instruction to Ben Sira remains impersonal. For a discussion on the different manuscript traditions and the rendition of the book into different languages, see Benjamin G. Wright III and Eva Mroczek, "Ben Sira's Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy: Idealizations from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages," in *Sirach and Its Contexts: The Pursuit of Wisdom and Human Flourishing*, ed. Samuel L. Adams, Greg Schmidt Goering, and Matthew Golf (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 218.

prevalent literary trend in the Second Temple period where barely any sages put down their names in their compositions. Such is the case for Jubilees, 2 Baruch, the Wisdom of Solomon, just to name a few. The authors of these texts choose to speak in the guise of their chosen legendary heroes from Jewish literary history. In a world where anonymity and pseudonymity are the dominant literary practices, Ben Sira's "self-identification stands out as a watershed."[196]

To understand this major shift, some scholars have pointed out the Greek influence on this view of authorship. Burton Mack comments on the phenomenon,

> Finally, a suggestion about the possible significance of Ben Sira's awareness of what it meant to be an author should be given. This is certainly one of the more remarkable traits about him. In contrast to the authorship of Jewish works before his time and to the pseudonymity of much of the literature after his time, Ben Sira's consciousness and acknowledgement of being an author is a strange and wonderful anomaly. It was no doubt the result of his learning about texts, education, and authorship on the model of the Greeks. This conception of authorship expected that the author be responsible for his utterances, and it rewarded him for their sagacity.[197]

Mack's comments also align with Martin Hengel's proposal. The practice not only shows the influence of Greek culture, but also "[stresses the] personality of the individual teacher derived from Greek custom."[198]

Recently, however, scholars such as Benjamin Wright and Eva Mroczek have made attempts to question the corresponding relationship between the "I" voice and the historical sage Ben Sira. Wright points out that the "I" voice in Ben Sira may be a literary

---

[196] Wright and Mroczek, "Ben Sira's Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy", 213.
[197] Burton L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985), 186-87.
[198] Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*, trans. J. Bowden, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 79.

construction. He thinks that the self-presentation in Ben Sira does not reflect the experience of the real author behind the text, rather it shows what an exemplary sage might look like. At his examination of the "autobiographical I" in Ben Sira, Wright states,

> While it is tempting to see the "real" or autobiographical Ben Sira as the primary subject of these passages [i.e., the first-person passages of the book], and most scholars read the book this way, we cannot assume that this is the case. Besides whatever personal experience might be reflected here, these sections offer a deliberate self-presentation. That is, through his authorial "voice" we hear how Ben Sira wants his reader to perceive the "I" who speaks here, and…the "I" passages serve a specific function in the book. Consequently, we should exercise caution when claiming that we gain any significant insight into Ben Sira's personality, since upon reflection we find the "I" of Ben Sira to be just as constructed as the "I" of Moses in Jubilees or the "I" of Ezra in 4 Ezra.[199]

Against the scholarly opinion from the previous generation, Wright finds it problematic to stress identifying the historical Ben Sira through the literary expression of the first person singular. In the meantime, he also poses questions about the equivalence of authorship and personality, an issue that recurs in his other co-authored article with Mroczek. They together point to the equivalence being problematic.[200] By highlighting the continuity of traditions, they invite readers to reconsider the role of Ben Sira: to what extent is he generating new materials, or is a faithful compiler of sources from traditions?[201] Echoing Elias Bickerman's note "There are no self-revelations in Ben Sira," Mroczek highlights how Ben Sira channels the voice of tradition by employing similar literary styles and

---

[199] Wright, "Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar," 169.)

[200] See Wright and Mroczek's discussion on the issue of authorship and personality, and how scholars have constructed the link to the advent of Greek cultural values in early Jewish literary practices in "Ben Sira's Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy," esp. 215-218.

[201] Wright and Mroczek, "Ben Sira's Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy," 216. Ben Sira's relationship with scribal culture has attracted scholars' attention recently. See Lindsey L. Askin, *Scribal Culture in Ben Sira*, JSJSup 184 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

language, also common motifs of long standing in conventional wisdom literature.[202] Moreover, by placing Ben Sira in the pseudepigraphic discourse and looking for similarities in the mechanisms of other pseudepigraphic literature, Mroczek considers Ben Sira more of a "tradent and guarantor" of the "ongoing project of wisdom and instruction"[203] than "a creator and author."[204]

Wright and Mroczek's critiques can be helpful, as they divert us from an occupation with the search for a historical author, in whom all the questions of the text can find their answers. Instead, they shift the focus onto the presentation of the text and how the text continues a literary tradition.[205] However, I find their grouping of Ben Sira with a host of pseudepigraphic texts not convincing. Going back to Wright's comment, I do not think the parallel texts that he suggested, such as Jubilees and 4 Ezra, operate on the same level as Ben Sira when these texts construct the "I" passages. I consider the literary mechanism in these texts is different and a more nuanced view is needed.

---

[202] Mroczek, *Literary Imagination*, 96-100.

[203] Wright and Mroczek, "Ben Sira's Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy," 216.

[204] Annette Reed writes that the "pseudonymous writer is not so much creator or author as tradent and guarantor." See Reed, "Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of the Bible in Late Antiquity," 477.

[205] This change of concern in current scholarship can be viewed as a product of a wide array of rich literary discussions such as the intentional fallacy by Wimsatt and Beardsley, Barthes' announcement of "the death of the author," alongside the prevalence of ideology-infused approaches to literary texts. See W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," *The Sewanee Review* 54, no.3 (1946): 468-488. The article showcases the stance of the New Critics concerning the interpretation of a poem. Wimsatt and Beardsley believe that the intention of the author is neither available nor desirable when it comes to the evaluation of a text. Also, Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), 142-148. To some extent, Barthes can be regarded as the precursor for the literary theory of reader response. By the end of the highly cited essay, Barthes claims "We know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth; the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." Regarding the various ideology-inclined approaches, see Freudian, Marxian, Foucauldian, post-colonial studies, and gender studies. In the realm of biblical studies, the interest in the individual authors behind the myriad texts is decreasing nowadays. One major reason is that the evidence for the historical authors standing behind the text remains slim. Due to the lack of evidence, scholars choose to dedicate themselves to the "[reconstruction] of the purpose of a given composition" by focusing on how the text evolved by identifying and understanding the different "textual layers and historical processes" in textual transmission. See Melanie Kohlmoos, "Authorial Intention(s) in Old Testament Texts," in *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Sonya Ammann, Katharina Pyschnny, and Julia Rhyder (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), 76.

Unlike Moses in Jubilees and Ezra in 4 Ezra, Ben Sira is not a biblical character or a cultural hero from the past. In Ben Sira, scholars have shown that the first-person confession and the autobiography weave many biblical texts together.[206] Nevertheless, the problem of identification of the speaker does not exist, for the name of Ben Sira as a historically active scribe renders the issue irrelevant.

This may not be the case for pseudonymous texts such as Jubilees and 4 Ezra. For the biblical characters such as Moses and Ezra, each of whose persona gets picked up by later authors in their composition of new literary works, the identity of these figures is shaped and developed through a network of literary references and allusions pertinent to their manifold activities recorded in the Bible. Although we do not need to reduce the protagonists to the biblical characters we know[207] in the respective biblical books, a familiarity with the background stories of these characters still remains a desideratum in the appreciation of such texts. The familiarity with the narratives enables one to identify the "I" voice in these texts. In order to make the biblical character stand in these new texts, the depiction and portrayal of the "I" depend on stories of the past associated with the biblical heroes. In other words, narratives outside the text in view are referred to, invoked, and reimagined. These exterior narratives allow the readers to grasp the meaning of the new texts and witness, also participate in the transformation of a tradition. For Jubilees and 4 Ezra, alongside many other pseudepigraphic works, the "I" voice in the text is a readily narrativized "I" from the beginning of the presentation. By narrativized "I," I refer to the

---

[206] Wright, "Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar," 165-82; Wright and Mroczek, "Ben Sira's Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy," 213-239. Di Lella examines the influence of the Psalter and Proverbs in the text. Alexander A. Di Lella, "Sirach 51:1-12: Poetic Structure and Analysis of Ben Sira's Psalm," *The CBQ* 48, no.3 (1986): 395-407. Also Francoise Mies, " Le Psaume de Ben Sira 51, 12a-o Hebreu: L'Hymme aux Noms divins (Deuxieme partie) ," *Revue biblique* 116, no.4 (2009) : 481-504.

[207] Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 50.

creation of a self that is built upon the existent narratives of other people. I would situate the first-person singular expression in Wisdom in this context as well.

How shall we understand the narrativized "I" in the Wisdom of Solomon, in light of the relationship between Solomon and the sage? To avoid misunderstandings, I would like to briefly clarify the way I use the term "narrative" and its verbal form "narrativized." When I describe the "I" voice in Wisdom as narrativized, I do not intend to show how the first-person passage models after the narrative sequence and development of Solomonic episodes in the Bible. Clearly, the poetic rendition in Wisdom lacks a clear narrative thread. The portrayal of the "I" of the Solomonic sage strips away the historical context of the Solomonic narratives in the Hebrew Bible. Nevertheless, the shaping of the "I" voice largely depends on the sage's active reading of the Solomonic narratives. *It is a self that is formed by narratives of the other.* As we have shown in the previous session on literary analysis, the sage selects and reshapes some prominent Solomonic motifs to present an autobiographical account of the sage *himself*. What I am interested in is how the sage is impacted by the story of Solomon in shaping an account of the self, also how the sage expands the personality of Solomon through his presentation of the self.

To grasp the relationship between the sage's literary presentation of the "I" and Solomon as an authoritative figure of literary inspiration, I think Hindy Najamn's comments on the use of authoritative figures in 4 Ezra are applicable to our discussion here. She states,

> Authoritative figures are invoked in 4 Ezra in two different ways. The first involves naming or *identifying* a figure explicitly, while the second involves alluding to a figure or implicitly *comparing* the protagonist with that figure in some aspect.[208]

[208] Najman, *Losing the Temple*, 57. The italics appear in the original text.

These two ways of invocation—identification and comparison—also operate in the literary presentation of the sage's self. As we have already pointed out, identifying the Solomonic persona is a primary step to understanding the meaning of the text. Solomonic motifs provide the basis for the composition of the autobiography section in Wisdom. In this respect, we see the sage impersonate the Solomonic identity and imagine himself as a sage-king in the Hellenistic world. By becoming Solomon-like, the sage continues the glorious past embodied by Solomon's life of wisdom and articulates the significance of attaining wisdom like Solomon for and to his contemporary audience: "it was an ethical stance of antiquarian emulation."[209]

When the sage renews the past by emulating the exemplary figure, he also simultaneously expands and transforms the hero of the past. The portrayal of Solomon demonstrates the merging of Hellenistic and biblical traditions. This comparative aspect is made manifest through the sage's bringing Solomon the Israelite paradigmatic wise king into his present context. Solomon is transformed into a Hellenized sage-king, an imagery that neatly fits in the sage's own cultural and historical milieu. Each of the Solomonic motifs gains new significance when it is presented in relation to the sage's self-understanding of his sage-hood in the Hellenistic context. The sage appeals to Solomon, and also compares himself to his precursor to demonstrate how wisdom leads and guides the shaping of the intellectual and spiritual life of a Hellenistic sage.

---

[209] M. Popvoic, "Pseudepigraphy and a Scribal Sense of the Past in the Ancient Mediterranean: A Copy of the Book of the Words of the Vision of Amram," in *Is There a Text in This Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke*, ed. A. Feldman, M. Cioata, and C. Hempel, STDJ 119 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 308-18. Summarized by George Brooke, "Rewriting Authorship in the Dead Sea Scrolls," 68.

II. The Making of an Autobiography

Building upon our discussion on the first-person singular as an important literary strategy to construct the selfhood of a sage, now let us examine in detail how the self is constructed in Wisdom. I propose the following three elements are crucial in the making of sage's autobiography: 1) crafting the voice of a king, 2) stages of life, and 3) emotions and feelings. The first element is concerned with the royal voice, which partially echoes the kingly status of Solomon. It also shows influence from the ideal sage-king imagery in the Hellenistic period. The other two elements focus on the growth of the protagonist in an autobiography. In the following, I will examine the three elements in turn.

1. Crafting the Voice of a King

The royal voice of the speaker is apparent at the beginning of the book when a command to listen is announced to the rulers and judges of the earth (1:1; 6:21). To increase the authority of the royal voice, the association with King Solomon is made clear in the autobiography section of the book (Ch. 7-9). The formation of the king's voice through Solomon echoes the Book of Qoheleth in the Hebrew Bible. Both texts showcase the thoughts and reflections of a powerful and affluent king who ponders the meaning of wisdom, though the way they perceive the meaning of wisdom is drastically different.[210] Seeing that the Solomonic voice plays a crucial role in framing the narrativity of both texts, I think it can be fruitful to put these two texts in dialogue. In this section, I will offer a

[210] Although Qoheleth and the Wisdom of Solomon share similar features, their differences in language, provenance, and ideology are also apparent. The comparison between these two texts does not intend to suggest that there is a literary dependence. Following the line of thought indicated in Lester Grabbe's study of the intertextual links between these two texts, hardly any evidence can be found to present a case that the Wisdom of Solomon knows Qoheleth, or is citing it as scriptural. See Lester Grabbe, "Intertextual Connections Between the Wisdom of Solomon and Qoheleth," in *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, eds. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes (Bloomsbury: T & T Clark, 2014), 202.

comparative reading of the two texts, particularly focusing on the portrayal of kingship. Through an observation of similarities and differences in shaping the royal voice associated with Solomon in both texts, I think that Wisdom's distinct way of fashioning the king's voice can be better grasped. I argue that the kingly voice in Wisdom centers on the humanity of the king and lacks interest in the political power and superiority that the voice of a king might be able to carry. In other words, Wisdom intends to show a humble king who depends on the guidance of wisdom.

Let us first start with some similarities between the two texts. Obviously, the attributed authorship to Solomon links these two texts together across linguistic registers: not only the attribution, but also the way in which authorship is framed in the text is similar. Neither of the texts mentions the name of Solomon explicitly. Yet the identification of a Solomonic persona takes place through presenting prominent Solomonic motifs in the first-person speech in both texts. Intriguingly, both texts present a speaking Solomon whose biographical details are revealed in his speech. Qoheleth exhibits a clear framework of speech from the beginning. The name of Solomon does not occur in the text, and the speaker was described as "son of David, king of Israel in Jerusalem" (1:1; "Israel" in LXX not in MT). Nevertheless, the references to the speaker's unparalleled wisdom and insurmountable wealth in the autobiographical sections (2:1-23) point the readers to the famed king in the Israelite history. The long list of exotic gardens, lustrous plants, countless livestock, treasure from everywhere, and many entertainers, all of which, reminds one of the prosperity during Solomon's reign as recorded in 1 Kings 3-5 (2:5-8).[211] A

[211] In the reception history of Qoheleth, both Jewish and Christian interpreters argue for the validity of Solomonic authorship as follows: No one but Solomon "could have spoken with such vehement denunciation on the vanity of riches, wealth, and even human existence." Eric S. Christianson, *Ecclesiastes Through the Centuries*, Blackwell Bible Commentaries (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007), 91. Rabbi Eleazar states, "but for Solomon…I might have said that this man who had never owned two farthings in his life makes light of

similar case can be made for Wisdom of Solomon in which the name of the famous king is never mentioned, yet his identity can be conjectured through the autobiographical section (Ch. 7-9). The speaker in Wisdom demonstrates kingly authority as he commands kings and governors from other parts of the world to listen to his instructions. The long prayer and the request for wisdom from God have been read against the backdrop of Solomon's prayer for wisdom and his dedicatory prayer of the temple in 1 Kings 3 and 8.

Regarding structure, the first-person speech in both works constitutes a similar proportion in relation to the individual book as a whole. For Qoheleth, the autobiography session runs through Ch.1-2, while for Wisdom, Ch.7-9 form the first-person speech. The autobiographical section is condensed and focused in one section of the book, yet the voice of the speaker lends itself to the other parts of the book. Seeing the nature of both wisdom texts as composite texts—there is a collection of sayings and teachings, the single voice "acts as a filter for the whole range of utterances assembled in the text."[212] As to the use of the Solomonic voice in Qoheleth, Michael Fox comments, "The book's cohesiveness inheres above all in the constant presence of a single brooding consciousness mediating all the book's observations, counsels, and evaluations."[213] The line of thought is also applicable to the discussion of Wisdom, as the Solomonic voice also plays a critical role in

---

the wealth of the world and declares, 'Vanity of vanities'" (*Midrash Qoheleth* 3.11.1). A similar line of thought can be found in Bonaventure's Introduction to the Commentary on Qoheleth. He writes, "…a poor person with no possessions would not be believed about despising riches since that person has no experience and therefore knows nothing. So the author of this book had to be a person with experience of all these things, that is, a person who was powerful, rich, voluptuous, and curious or wise. We have not read or heard of anyone who so excelled in all these as Solomon." *Works of St. Bonaventure: Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, trans. Campion Murray and Robert J. Karris (New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005). The rationale behind the reasoning is that only those who possess much wealth can speak about the uselessness of wealth. In this regard, the content of the book, especially the elaboration of Qoheleth's wealth, enables the interpreters to make the connection between Solomon and the preacher.

[212] Jennie Grillo, "Ecclesiastes," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Wisdom Literature*, ed. Samuel L. Adams and Matthew Golf (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2020), 54.

[213] Michael V. Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999), 151.

framing the narrative of the book. This single voice invites rulers and judges to listen to the power of wisdom and recounts the bliss of owning wisdom. This voice also later becomes a narrator's voice by which the history of Israel is retold—this will be my focus in the second part of the dissertation.

Putting Qoheleth and Wisdom in dialogue, we can note that the first-person voice is crucial in constructing the Solomonic persona. The sections of the first-person speech in both texts critically shape the interpretation of each book as a whole. As shown in the discussion on first-person discourse as a common literary trope in wisdom texts, it is conventional for many sages to use the "I" voice to instruct wisdom and impart knowledge. The conventional "I" voice within wisdom literature carries intellectual authority, but not so much a kingly or political authority envisioned by the sages who authored Qoheleth and the Wisdom of Solomon. The convergence of a wise man and a king naturally increases the authority of the speaker,[214] a convention that can be traced back to Egyptian wisdom literature.[215]

In line with this particular tradition, how shall one understand the significance of the royal voice in the presentation of the two texts? What is the hermeneutical effect of presenting the voice of a king through a first-person speech? How does a royal first-person speech help the sages articulate the vision of kingship and the king's obligation? To address these questions, the different attitudes to kingship in these two texts can provide us with some insights. Qoheleth has a skeptical view of the authority and capability of a king,

---

[214] Seow notes the royal guise throughout Qoheleth and its implications: "The pretense of Solomonic kingship was prompted by the author's desire to be perceived as sage-king par excellence, who, having observed and experienced wisdom, pleasure, and toil firsthand, as it were, is able to offer advice with sufficient credibility." C. L. Seow, "Qoheleth's Autobiography," in *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, ed. A. Beck et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 275-87. A similar stance can be found in Fox, *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up*, 159-60.

[215] Cf. Instruction for Merikare (ANET, 414-418), and Instruction of Amenemhet (ANET, 418-419).

while Wisdom has a positive view of kingship and pursues being a pious and wise king in accordance with God's will.

Let us focus on Qoheleth first and make some observations of his self-declaration of kingship. Qoheleth announces his identity in 1:12: "I, Qoheleth, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem." The place of dwelling echoes the description in 1:1 where the Solomonic connection is articulated. Such an announcement is common in ancient Near Eastern literary practice known as "royal statement" that geared towards a king's self-exaltation.[216] Yet the following statements uttered by Qoheleth do not follow the common agenda. Soon it is made clear that despite the countless kingly accomplishments (2:1-11), these material possessions and well-established reputations lead to nothing but despair and puzzlement. The irony lies in the fact that Qoheleth adopts an ancient literary device and subverts it. In addition, Qoheleth does not respond well to the kingly obligation suggested in Proverbs. In Prov. 25:2, the glory of God is in contrast to the glory of kings: when God conceals things, kings have the responsibility of searching things out. Qoheleth, however, is disillusioned about the task of discovery designated to the kings. He regards the experience of searching things out as a heavy burden (ענין רע) (Eccl. 1:13). The task is too grievous and burdensome: all is vanity and a striving after wind.

---

[216] See C. L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, AB 18C (Doubleday, NY: 1997), 119; Fox, *Time to Tear Down*, 170-71; Tremper Longman, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Michigan, W. B. Eerdmans, 1998), 76. The language and style follow many West Semitic and Akkadian royal inscriptions. Loretz points out that the first-person singular pronoun, alongside the mention of name and kingship is a conventional literary formula to introduce an exalted king in Semitic royal inscriptions. See O. Loretz, *Qohelet und der Alte Orient. Untersuchungen zu Stil und theologischer thematik des Buches Qohelet* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 62. Koh, in her examination of the declaration, uses Mesha's Inscription to illustrate the Near Eastern influence on Qoheleth's formation of the statement. "In Mesha's Inscription, for example, we read, 'I am Mesha…king of Moab מלך מאב...אנך משע". Similarly, in Zakkur's Inscription, there is 'I am Zakkur, king of Hamath and Luath אנה זכר מלך חמת ולעש.'" Y. V. Koh, *Royal Autobiography in the Book of Qoheleth* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006), 28.

In light of the disrupted order of the world, Qoheleth further questions kingship and its expected power and function. Christianson points out that the pessimistic outlook of life in Qoheleth, especially in light of the injustice and absurdities in the world, "hints at the limits of the king's power."[217] The falling apart of a supposedly existent social order propels Qoheleth to "question the potency of the king's power."[218] By proposing a series of questions as a king who owns much wealth and power, Qoheleth challenges and deconstructs the "socially unquestioned power and authority of the king."[219] Christianson's reading implies that king has the responsibility of maintaining social order, and the failure to do so becomes a critique against kingship.

On the issue of kingship, Koh offers a different opinion from Christianson. She argues that Qoheleth's thoughts on injustice and his inability to resolve such problem do not function as a critique against kingship, but rather highlight that the king also shares the same human weakness and frailty.[220] Koh comments on the commonalities between the king and the commoners: "…the pessimistic musings of a royal personage who sees his position and authority as being subject to the same vicissitudes of life as his subjects, only on a grander scale. Hence there is added pessimism about the royal role on his part."[221]

Although Christianson and Koh approach kingship from different angles, they both highlight the issue of worldly order and the human role in maintaining this order. In both cases, the king is singled out to demonstrate the effect of human rulership. This is a shared concern in Wisdom. Nevertheless, the king in Wisdom is eager to learn how to rule the

---

[217] E. S. Christianson, *A Time to Tell: Narrative Strategies in Ecclesiastes*, JSOTSup 280 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998), 136.
[218] Christianson, *A Time to Tell*, 136.
[219] Christianson, *A Time to Tell*, 136.
[220] Koh, *Royal Autobiography in the Book of Qoheleth*, 49.
[221] Koh, *Royal Autobiography in the Book of Qoheleth*, 49.

people well, and to seek and acquire knowledge of many sorts to sustain his leadership. Echoing Koh's comments on the shared vulnerability as humans between the king and commoners, Wisdom also participates in this stream of thought. With this realization, at the start of the autobiographical section, the speaker prays to God to gain power and strength to overcome one's weakness. Even more so, the main request in the prayer is to become a wise ruler so the king can maximize the benefits of God's people under his regime (cf. Wis 7:1-6; 8:10-15; 9:7, 12). Unlike the preacher king in Qoheleth who loses hope in restoring the order of the world, the king in Wisdom seeks divine help and prays for wisdom to actively maintain the order.

In the ancient world, the king's obligation to maintain order in the world and among his subjects is considered an earthly manifestation of divine ruling. The analogous relationship between the earthly king and the heavenly king, namely, God, can be complex and rife with tensions at times. In the Hebrew Bible, there are occasions where human kingship is severely critiqued and questioned. In 1 Samuel 8, the episode depicts the Israelites requesting Samuel for a king so that they might be like the foreign nations. Samuel's hesitant and furious response to the request reflects the overt concerns over human rule and authority. The enumeration of harsh aspects of a king's rule such as forced conscription, misappropriation of people's properties, and deprivation of labor makes 1 Sam. 8 regarded as the "single most anti-monarchial expression" in the Hebrew Bible.[222] Human kings might be at odds with the divine king, as human rulers might replace or possibly surpass the divine king. Seeing the potential threats posed by human rulers, biblical authors further highlight the ultimate kingship of God.[223]

[222] Leiter, *Perils of Wisdom*, 34.

[223] For scholarly discussions on kingship in Israel, see Keith W. Whitelam, "Israelite Kingship: The Royal Ideology and Its Opponents," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political*

For Wisdom, the ultimate kingship of God is unquestioned. The biblical notion of kingship integrates well with the Stoic idea of kingship. In the Hellenistic world, God as a heavenly king is noted in Stoic writing as well. According to the Stoics, God has sovereignty over the cosmos. The notion of divine sovereignty is prevalent in Wisdom. In Wis 3:8, "[the righteous] will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign (βασιλεύσει) over them forever." Similarly, God is in control of all His creation: "You are righteous and rule all things righteously…for your strength is the source of righteousness, and your sovereignty (δεσπόζειν) over all causes you to spare all" (Wis 12:15, 17). More than ruling and sovereignty, divine kingship also manifests in God's unceasing providence and sustenance for the world and His people (cf. Wis 14:3, 17:2; 6:7). As the ultimate king who brings judgment, God punishes the wicked and saves the righteous from perils. Even at times, God disciplines the righteous, He does so to train and shape their characters and strengthen their faith in Him (Wis 3:5, 11:5, 13; 16:2, 11, 24).

The positive portrayal of kingship in Wisdom gives hope in a world where order is disrupted. Even though injustice might be rampant in the current situation, God as the ultimate king will rectify all the wrongdoings in the end time and reward the righteous for their constancy and patience in times of persecution (Wis 5:1-3, 15-23). Furthermore, the language on kingship employed in Wisdom echoes some Pythagorean fragments' descriptions of God and king. The shared language in the portrayals of God and the king shows that God is simultaneously an omnipotent heavenly king who has sovereignty over all His creation and an aspirational model with all good virtues for the ideal human king.[224]

Perspectives, ed. R. E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 119-140. Regarding the kingship of YHWH in the Israelite religion, Flynn offers a comparative analysis with other ANE texts that describe divine kingship. Shawn W. Flynn, *YWHW is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

[224] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 414.

The message that God as the ultimate king invites the earthly king to imitate God in all their capacity. Jonathan More enumerates many ancient Greek sources on the king's imitation of God. According to the Pythagorean traditions, the king's position in the polis is analogous to God's placement in the cosmos (Diotogenes 72.19-20; cf. Ecphantus 81.26-82.3).[225] The way that an earthly king rules the world needs to resemble how God rules the cosmos. In the words of Diotogenes, "royalty is an imitation of divinity" (Diotogenes 75.15-16).[226] The kings are encouraged to acquire virtues that the gods exhibit (Diotogenes 75.8-9), which include "majesty, graciousness, justice, mercy, and kindness."[227] For Ecphantus, the interrelationship between God and the earthly king even starts from the genesis of kingship. "Since God used himself as the archetype when creating the king, the earthly king is a copy (τύπος) of the heavenly king" (80.4-5).[228]

The idea of charismatic leaders imitating God can also be found in Philo's writing. Philo regards the king's sovereignty as "formed in the image of its archetype the kingship of God" (*Spec. Laws* 4.164). In the same treatise, Philo also mentions the contribution of the Mosaic law to character formation among those who hold superior authority—the king of a city comes up first in the list. The crucial principle that undergirds good conduct is to help others with good intentions and avoid causing injuries to people (*Spec. Laws* 4.186). The principle, in the mind of Philo, embodies an "act in imitation of God", for "God also has the power to do either good or evil, but His inclination causes him only to do good" (*Spec. Laws* 4.187). Right after the message concerning imitation of God, Philo discusses how the creation and arrangement of the world reflect God's goodness. The divine order of

[225] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 415.
[226] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 415.
[227] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 415.
[228] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 415.

the world and God's beneficent powers make it more fitting for good rulers of a nation to imitate God. The link between God, human rulers, and the cosmic order in Philo echoes the Pythagorean thoughts.

As in the Book of Wisdom, God, the human ruler, and cosmic forces also occur as a group of concepts that shed light on each other. Nevertheless, as More rightly notes, the language that depicts the king's imitation of God and divine sovereignty is lacking in Wisdom. In addition, the attributes of God and wisdom appear quite similar in the book, and the virtues that the king aspires to attain also correspond to these attributes (Wis 7:22b-8:1).[229] Not so much of an earthly king gaining sovereignty over his subjects through the imitation of God, but in Wisdom, a clear emphasis is given to the king's harmonious relationship with wisdom (Wis 6:21; 8:10-18), which in itself is a gift from God (Wis 7:7; 8:21; 9:10, 17).[230]

When More finds the lack of imitation language striking[231] in Wisdom, he attempts to explain the phenomenon, especially in comparison to Philo's description of Moses as "god and king." He discusses the different nature of kingship envisioned by the two Hellenistic Jewish authors. Philo describes Moses as "god and king" (Mosis 1.158). The statement, taken from a plain literal point of view, might sound striking. Yet in the context of *De Vita Mosis*, Philo does not intend to equate Moses with God. Instead, Philo might

---

[229] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 416.

[230] More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 416.

[231] On the one hand, More identifies the allusion to Gen 1 in Wis 9:1-3, a literary allusion that allows the author to elaborate on the themes of *imago dei* and *imitateo dei*. On the other hand, More agrees with McGlynn's observations regarding the numerous parallels between Plato's Republic and Wisdom. According to McGlynn, the Republic is formative for the composition of Wisdom. Since the topos of imitation is prevalent in Plato's Republic, the lack of such a theme in Wisdom becomes more conspicuous. See Jonathan More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 416, also footnote 37. M. McGlynn, "Solomon, Wisdom, and the Philosopher-Kings," in *Studies in the Book of Wisdom*, eds. G. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengeller, JSJSup 142 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 61-81, especially see pp 72-77 for the discussion on Plato and the Wisdom of Solomon.

have Exod. 7:1 in mind where God promised to present Moses as “a god to Pharaoh” (נתתיך אלהים לפרעה/ἰδοὺ δέδωκά σε θεὸν Φαραὼ). In light of this, More comments that “[t]he title ‘god’ is an expression of Moses’s human excellence as a sage and does not imply divinity in any absolute sense.”[232] In Wisdom, the sage-king is never described in any god-like terms. The sheer humanity is clearly indicated in the beginning of the autobiographical section. Furthermore, the conflation between humanity and god is clearly denounced—either it is out of grief that a father made an image of his child (τέκνου εἰκόνα ποιήσας) in memory of the sudden passing of the child, or people honor monarchs from afar by making a visible image of the king (ἐμφανῆ εἰκόνα τοῦ τιμωμένου βασιλέως ἐποίησαν) (Wis 14:15-21). Making images of human figures and then worshiping the images are regarded as a form of idolatry, and they are clearly condemned in the later section of the book.

As we can see, Solomon as God’s elected king in Wisdom does not make him superior to other human beings. The apparent lack of god-like qualities of the king makes him ordinary and humble. For Wisdom, I think the royal voice indebted to King Solomon does not aim to buttress the social-political distinction between the king and his subjects. Rather, by emphasizing the similarities in all humanity, the sage diminishes the hierarchical differences. The sage uses the first-person kingly voice to point out the need for wisdom’s guidance to pursue a journey of justice and righteousness, which can be applicable to all people. To recount the insights and virtues one gains along the journey, the sage sets up the stages of life as a way of narrating. In the meantime, he incorporates his personal feelings and emotions to showcase his growth in life. To better grasp the art of crafting the personal account of the sage-king, to these two topics we shall now turn.

[232] More, “On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon,” 419.

2. Stage of Life

One prominent feature of an autobiography, or a narrative that entails an autobiographical dimension, to be more accurate in the context of Wisdom, is a well-constructed timeline. In order to present one's life as "a somehow coherent identity,"[233] the stages of life—moving from the birth of the protagonist to the present moment of rumination and composition, even to the continuation of one's life into the future which is ultimately marked by one's death—function as an important way to organize different events in the life of a person. In the first-person narrative of Wisdom, I argue by setting up the different stages of life, the sage creates certain consistency and continuity in his life as he continues to deepen his relationship with Lady Wisdom.

Cradle to grave is outlined with the focal point on wisdom, a means by which the weakness of humanity—both in the physical and spiritual sense—can be overcome. With the introduction to Lady Wisdom and the acquisition of her, the idea of immortality is reinforced (8:13, 17, cf. 1:15, 4:1). Death is not included in the presentation of the different stages of life, for death is put to an end when one owns wisdom and befriends God (7:27, 8:17).

As how the stages of life stage develop, the first stage naturally begins with birth (7:1-6). What makes the birth account stand out lies in its simplicity and humility. Unlike the grand beginning presented in some royal inscriptions among the ancient Near Eastern kings or the legendary or miraculous birth tales of many kings or cultural heroes in the ancient world, the birth account of King Solomon depicted here is simply human and deeply relational. Relationality exhibits itself in two perspectives. One is from the familial

[233] Burton Pike, "Time in Autobiography," *Comparative Literature* 28, no.4 (1976), 327.

side. The conception is a result of the union of a man and a woman in marriage (7:2). Motherly love provides a safe environment for the baby to grow and be nurtured (7:1, 4). The familial relation can be applicable to many, which brings out the second relational perspective, namely, one's relationship with the others. In this case, it refers to the rest of the people, "all humankind" (πάντων) (7:6). The shared way of entering into the world and the fate of demise further connects the king with the rest of humanity (7:6).

As Jonathan More rightly points out, "The portrait of God's king in Wisdom is quite different. Solomon is not a super-human sage who holds position of his superiority over the rest of humanity. There is no hint of any god-like qualities being ascribed to Solomon."[234] The emphasis on sheer humanity, in one way or another, highlights the transformative power of wisdom in the king's life.

Moving from childhood to adulthood, the transitional period of youth is particularly important. This transition is marked both by biological maturity and the growth in social skills. From the personal aspects, biological growth witnesses a series of movements towards "sexual, emotional, and intellectual maturity."[235] As for the social aspects, there are "changing relationships with social institutions, in particular those concerned with family, education, work, and leisure."[236] This particular phase of life receives most of the attention in the autobiographical section of Wisdom. Both personal and social aspects are incorporated.

Furthermore, the transition from a dependent child to a maturing youth, or even an adult is by no means a solo journey. In Wisdom, the growth of the speaker is highly

---

[234] Jonathan More, "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon," 420.
[235] Jean Spence, "Concepts of Youth," in *Working with Young People*, ed. Roger Harrison and Christine Wise (London: Thousand Oaks, 2005), 48.
[236] Spence, "Concepts of Youth," 48.

interpersonal and relational. The journey towards maturity takes place with a long and enduring developing relationship with Lady Wisdom: seeking after her, requesting and praying for her, and in the end, obtaining her and cohabiting with her. The development of youth in particular is manifested through a recount of the ongoing relationship with wisdom. The praise of wisdom and the character's constant pursuit of her seem inseparable. Shortly after the birth account, nearly all the activities that the speaker carries out are, in one way or another, associated with wisdom (7:7-22). An encomium of wisdom follows closely after the manifold gifts that the king receives from wisdom (7:22-8:1). Here the intellectual growth seems rather like an intellectual reception.

Returning to the development of an individual, love and desires play important roles in one's biological growth. The astounding beauty and endless insights generated by Lady Wisdom lead to a confession of love from the speaker. Here the phase of life is also clearly indicated: "youth," (νεότης) the period of time is marked by passionate desires and love. "I loved her and sought her from my youth, and I desired to take her for my bride, and I became enamored by her beauty" (8:2). The proclamation of love is not unfamiliar in the Solomonic tradition. In the eyes of the Deuteronomistic historians, one of the major defects of Solomon is his notorious penchant for women,[237] which can be traced back to 1 Kings 11. Seeing the positive imagery of Solomon as a pious and wise sage-king painted in Wisdom, it is difficult to see if the author of the book had ever borne in mind Solomon's unbridled desire for women. Despite the different traditions of Solomon, the theme of erotic love[238] is still present in Wisdom, though with a much more holy and positive twist. Here the desire and passion for woman is reserved only for Lady Wisdom, portrayed as a

[237] Dell, "Does the Song of Songs Have Any Connections to Wisdom?," 10.

[238] Such may also be the case for Song of Songs—how the passionate love poetry gets associated and attributed to the king, apart from the verse that indicates his prolific literary output in 1 Kings 4:32.

long-awaited bride whom Solomon invites to live with him (8:9). This love is completely faithful, dedicated to only one person. Furthermore, the object of love fits well in the religious realm—by loving wisdom, one is constantly drawing close to God and learning to love the Lord.

Apart from love and passion, accomplishments in a career constitute another hallmark of the speaker's youth. Such accomplishments reflect the changing roles of the speaker in relation to the institution in which he takes part. The maturity of social and governing skills is also inseparable from wisdom. Although one fully recognizes one's youth (ὁ νέος) that naturally links to lack of experience and authority, wisdom enables the young king to make wise judgements that win the hearts of the multitudes (8:10-11). The king's dependence on wisdom makes it clear that any good things and achievements that he is able to accomplish can all be traced back to God's gift of wisdom. To give thanks to God, a flashback of childhood emerges: "As a child (παῖς), I was by nature well endowed, a good soul fell to my lot" (8:19). Structurally, this sudden recall of the past childhood echoes the beginning of the first-person narrative (7:1-6). The enclosure paves the way for the long prayer that comes shortly afterward. From a temporal perspective, this brief comment on the past is "actually a creation of the later, present moment, which remains the dominant perspective."[239] Clearly, the focal point of the present moment is wisdom, its impact and promise to the speaker. The next verse that follows the recollection of childhood points to God's gift of wisdom (8:21).

Although there is a certain fortune in the good lot, the speaker does not linger nor elaborate on the topic. Instead, the speaker soon transitions to comment on the inherent inadequacy of the human race in prayer, regardless of one's socio-economic background.

[239] Pike, "Time in Autobiography," 337.

"For even if one's perfect among the sons of men, yet without the wisdom that comes from you, he will be regarded as nothing" (9:6). A person might seemingly possess much, but without the true possession of wisdom, all things are just counted as nothing. From all these instances, we can say that what makes the youth of the king so distinctive is that his maturity and responsibility do not lie in an *independence*, but rather a constant *dependence* on God and wisdom.

Birth, youth, adulthood—the sequence of life naturally makes one wonder about death in the autobiographical narrative. The author touches upon death as a reality (7:6; 9:5) in the first- person speech. However, the discussion of death is indeed lacking in the section of autobiography. Instead of talking about death, the sage focuses on immortality, ἀθανασία. The word occurs twice (8:13, 17) in the section. Two semantic dimensions of the word are suggested in the usage here. One reflects a common Hebrew wisdom trope—remembrance by the subsequent generations that makes one live forever. Such is the case for 8:13. The other highlights the ultimate value of righteousness and wisdom. The idea echoes the discussion of righteousness and immortality in 1:14, where it reads "there is no kingdom of death upon earth, for righteousness is immortal." The attribution of immortality to the righteous is clear in some other instances in the book as well (1:15, 3:2, 6:18, 15:3).[240] Furthermore, a righteous person and a wise person seem to be equivalent in the context of Wisdom. A wise person unquestionably owns righteousness, and thus is immortal. The veneer of death is replaced with immortality, a qualitative value of righteousness. Those who consort with wisdom and follow the righteous path set up by God can transcend physical death.

---

[240] John J. Collins, "The Root of Immortality: Death in the Context of Jewish Wisdom," *HTR* 71, no. 3 (1978), 189.

Through this timeline, we see the sage grow wiser and more virtuous as he grows more mature. The impact of wisdom is observable in the present life of the sage, even after his demise, for the fame of his wisdom will be remembered for generations.

3. Emotions and Feelings

An autobiographical narrative is naturally infused with memories. These memories can be roughly divided into episodic memory and semantic memory.[241] For semantic memory, one can remember the general facts about oneself, such as one's date of birth and one's experience of schooling. Regarding episodic memory, it involves more unique events and important moments in life, such as remembering one's wedding day or the passing of a dear friend. For events as such, memories are so inextricably linked to emotions. Semantic information might not generate intense feelings, as knowledge of one's basic biographical information is generally stated in a plain way, without much interpretive effort. On the other hand, episodic information invites the first-person narrator to reexperience the past events, which invokes sensory information from the first time and these feelings and emotions have a high likelihood to become afresh in the process of recollection and simultaneously, a new rendition of the events. By highlighting the emotions and feelings indicated in Wisdom's presentation of memories, I intend to show that these psychological depictions exhibit the sage's maturing relationship with wisdom and his faithfulness to God.

---

[241] As the different divisions in memory systems, see Endel Tulving, "Episodic and Semantic Memory," in *Organization of Memory*, ed. Endel Tulving and Wayne Donaldson (New York: Academic Press, 1972), 382-402. Endel Tulving, "How Many Memory Systems are There?" *American Psychologist* 40 (1985): 385-98. For a discussion on Halbwachs' division of memories and the relevance to collective memory, see Nicholas Russell, "Collective Memory Before and After Halbwachs," *The French Review* 79, no.4 (2006): 792-804, esp. 797-799.

First, we need to identify the different memories involved in Wisdom. For semantic information, the depictions of the birth story (Wis 7:1-6) and the list of knowledge in a wide range of topics (Wis 7:15-22) both belong to this category. As stated before, semantic information does not contain much emotional elaboration. Memories of events that contain explicit emotions are those of episodic ones. In Wisdom, the episodic memory revolves around the quest for wisdom: the longing for Lady Wisdom, the courtship of her (Wis 8:2-21), and the long prayer (Wis 9:1-18) following the declaration of love to wisdom function both as a request and a response. Emotions can influence the way in which an event is retained and recalled. Undeniably, all retellings of past experiences generate feelings and emotions associated with the events. Emotions and feelings are essential elements in the construction of the autobiography in Wisdom. The passionate desires and pursuit of wisdom are powerful emotions. Apart from those expressions of intense feelings, many words with strong emotional connotations demonstrate the sage's *eusebeia*, his piety to God, which is particularly manifest in the many prayers that the speaker offers to God.

Right after the encomium of wisdom, the speaker's confession of love to wisdom starts with a series of verbs of affection. "Love (φιλέω),"[242] "seek (ἐκζητέω)," alongside

[242] Luca Mazzinghi calls attention to the verb φιλέω here, as opposed to the frequently occurring verb ἀγαπάω in the text. He points out that the parallel use of these two verbs occurs in Prov 8:17, where the personified wisdom promises an intimate relationship with those who love her. Although Mazzinghi does not aim to deny the nuptial aspect of the passage, he also wants to highlight the possibility of the love of friendship in this context. See Luca Mazzinghi, "I loved [Wisdom] and sought her from my youth; I desired to take her for my counsellor" (Wis 8:2a). Solomon and Wisdom: An Example of the Closest Intimacy," in *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2012/13 series, ed. Angelo Passora (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 233. In this article, Mazzinghi attempts to reduece the nuptial dimension of the passage, but rather focuses on the side of friendship with wisdom. See his discussion on the following vocabularies: συμβίωσις, προσαναπαύω, συγγένεια, ὁμιλία esp. 234-237. Even though he brings in new and fresh perspectives on certain words, based on a careful philological study, the renditions of these words concerning a marital relationship cannot be ruled out either. In addition, the analogy between pursuing a wife and wisdom, plus fidelity to one's wife in marital life and royalty to wisdom is commonplace in sapiential literature. Cf. Roland E. Murphy, "Wisdom and Eros in Proverbs 1-9," *CBQ* 50, no.4 (1988): 600-603. The terminology of love and marriage is by no means exceptional in the context of the Wisdom of Solomon.

"desire (ζητέω)"—these verbs demonstrate a clear association between wisdom and eros. Also, the close proximity of first-person aorist indicative verbs intensifies the expression of love. The speaker is enamored by the beauty of wisdom and becomes a lover (ἐραστὴς ἐγενόμην) of her. In wisdom literature, it is not uncommon to present Lady Wisdom in erotic language.[243]

The pursuit of wisdom is clearly erotic. To get wisdom—the action of acquisition employs the terminology of love and marriage. Seeing the inherent abundance and virtues of Lady Wisdom, the speaker proposes an invitation to dwell together. The word συμβίωσις, a shared life, denotes the determination to make Lady Wisdom a life partner. To better visualize the delightful vision of a life together with Wisdom, the tense of the main verbs switches to the future tense.

> "I *will have glory* (Ἕξω…δόξαν) among the multitudes…" (8:10)
> "I *will be found* (εὑρεθήσομαι) keen in judgment…I *will be admired* (θαυμασθήσομαι)…" (8:11)
> "When I am silent they will wait for me, when I speak they will give heed…they will put (ἐπιθήσουσιν) their hands on their mouths." (8:12)
> "I *will govern* peoples (διοικήσω), and nations *will be subject to* (ὑποταγήσεταί) me…dread monarchs *will be afraid of* (φοβηθήσονταί) me…I *will show* myself (φανοῦμαι) capable…" (8:15)

The fruits that the married life with Lady Wisdom might yield center on the skills of judgment and governance, two skills that are of tremendous value to a king (Wis 8:9-12, 14-15). In addition, the complete joy and happiness one receives from living with wisdom is another highlight in life after marriage. The speaker imagines his return from the public sphere and enjoys the company of Lady Wisdom. In the private space, wisdom brings rest, comfort, joy, and gladness to the king (Wis 8:16). The interactions between the king and

[243] Cf. Sir. 4:11-19; 6:18-31; 14:20-15:8; 51:13-30; also Wis. 6:12-16, 7:7-10.

wisdom in the public and private space form an interesting contrast. In front of the multitudes, Lady Wisdom empowers the king to pursue his political career with insight and courage. When it comes to the private life of the king, Lady Wisdom provides gentle care and refreshes the king's soul. Clearly, wisdom meets the needs of the king in both public and private spheres. The contrast between the two highlights the manifold dimensions of Lady Wisdom and further explains the reason for the king's deep fascination with her.

All these beautiful scenarios are depicted in the future tense, which shows the king's deepest longing for wisdom and also the promises that come alongside the acquisition of wisdom. With a shift to the aorist tense, the king's acts of pondering bring the hearers/readers back to the moment of speech. "When I considered (λογισάμενος) these things in myself and pondered (φροντίσας) in my heart," the vision of life with Lady Wisdom leads to another series of thoughtful considerations, all of which are listed in relational terms to wisdom (8:17). Different kinds of relationship and interaction with Lady Wisdom bring forth positive results. The list of relationships has a nice parallel structure. Each introduction to a new interaction starts with the preposition ἐν, such as "in kingship with wisdom" (ἐν συγγενείᾳ σοφίας), "in friendship with her"(ἐν φιλίᾳ αὐτῆς), "in the labors of her hands"(ἐν πόνοις χειρῶν αὐτῆς), "in training in companionship with her"(ἐν συγγυμνασίᾳ ὁμιλίας αὐτῆς), and "in sharing her words" (ἐν κοινωνίᾳ λόγων αὐτῆς) (8:18). A blessing follows each interaction with wisdom. Correspondingly, these blessings include immortality, pure delight, unfailing wealth, understanding, and great reputation (8:18).

Furthermore, the speaker does not lose himself in deep thoughts about wisdom, rather he takes action to look for wisdom—"I went about seeking (περιήειν ζητῶν) how I might take (λάβω) her to myself" (8:18). These active verbs offer a sense of motion. The

integration of thought and action is crucial to gaining wisdom. Yet the speaker is also fully aware of the nature of wisdom as a divine gift. The search for wisdom does not begin with any random roaming around, but a prayer to God for wisdom (8:21). With this realization, the speaker soon transitions to a long prayer where human emotions can be observed, and we shall take a closer look at the emotional state depicted in the prayer.

The introductory line to the prayer starts with a depiction of feelings. "And with my whole heart I said…" The expression ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας is commonly used in the Old Testament and conveys the sense of piety.[244] The phrase intends to capture the whole being of the person who prays. In the words of Markus Witte, "[i]t stands for the orientation of the whole person towards God and includes the human being with his or her rationality, morality and affectivity."[245] The posture of prayer inherits the ethos from the great prayer of *Shema' Yisrael* (Deut. 4:29; 6:5) taught by the heroic leader Moses.[246] In the long prayer of Solomon, there are much fewer terms that express one's emotions in comparison to the Psalter. Another instance, though subtle, can be inferred from the word ἐνθυμέομαι in the rhetorical question posed by the speaker (9:13b).[247] This word contains such emotional aspects, suggesting a desire to know and to learn (cf. 7:15).

Although on the human side, explicit emotional terms might be lacking, the nature of prayer as addressed to God—the ultimate Other—allows the characterization of the divine to reflect certain human emotions. In other words, the way humans communicate

---

[244] Cf. LXX Deut. 4:29; 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10; 2 Chron. 15:12; Joel 2:12; Zeph. 3:14; Jer. 3:10; 24:7; 4 Mac. 7:18; 13:13.

[245] Markus Witte, "Emotions in the Prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Jewish Prayers and Emotions: Emotions Associated with Jewish Prayer in and around the Second Temple Period*, ed. Stefan C. Reif and Renate Eggar-Wenzel (Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 169.)

[246] Witte, "Emotions in the Prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon," 169.

[247] Cf. Gen. 6:6; Deut. 21:11; Jos. 6:18, 7:21; Lam. 2:17; Wis. 3:14, 7:15, 9:13; Sir. 16:20, 17:31; Bar. 3:31; Esd. 8:11; 1 Mac. 6:8; 3 Macc 1:10, 1:25; 4 Mac. 5:13, 8:21, 8:27.

with God, even from the minute detail of an epithet, can show the emotional ties between the person who prays and the deity. The title for God is "God of the fathers and Lord of mercy" (Θεὲ πατέρων καὶ Κύριε τοῦ ἐλέους), a title that is deeply relational and invokes a series of memories from the past (9:1). The first address of God as father occurs in a few post-exilic texts, including 1 Chr. 12:17, 2 Chr. 20:6, and Ezr. 7:27, as well as Deut. 26:7. The precise phrasing of "God of the fathers" also occurs in Dan 2:23. The epithet here is a shorthand expression for the frequent address as "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel." The style of the title fits nicely with the rest of the book, as the sage of Wisdom tends to avoid using any proper names.[248] As for the second half of the epithet, "Lord of mercy" emphasizes divine faithfulness and kindness. The Greek word ἔλεος is a common rendition of the Hebrew word חסד. Newman points out that the author might have the verse of 1 Kgs. 3:6 in mind when he depicts the divine quality of mercy here.[249] In 1 Kings 3:6, Solomon gave thanks to God for the great mercy that the Lord had shown to his father David (cf. 2 Sam. 7). In this sense, the covenant loyalty is also invoked in the address. On the emotional side, the description of God as a merciful and covenant-keeping God is "an appeal to God to prove [and exhibit] his ἔλεος again and again."[250]

For the speaker, in the guise of Solomon, the intention to offer a prayer is to please (ἀρεστά) God (9:9, 18). The desire to please God crucially motivates the prayer and the constant search for wisdom: to seek wisdom is to learn what is well pleasing (εὐάρεστος) in the eyes of the Lord (9:10). In turn, the possession of wisdom enables one to conduct life in a way that is acceptable (προσδεκτός) to God (9:12). The positive language of making God pleased shows the piety of the sage.

[248] Newman, "Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon," 316.
[249] Newman, "Democratization of Kingship in Wisdom of Solomon," 316.
[250] Witte, "Emotions in the Prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon," 165.

Through an examination of the sage's strong feelings for Lady Wisdom and his pious emotions toward God, we can sense the sage's faithful commitment to God. In this light, the depictions of emotions and feelings through the sage's relationship with wisdom and God make him an exemplary pious figure for people to follow.

Conclusion: Self and the Other in the Making of an Autobiography

The Chinese literary master Qian Zhongshu once made a witty comment on how an author might present him/herself in the composition of an autobiography or a biography. He stated, "If you want to know an author's self, you have to read his biographies for others; if you want to know other people, you need to read the author's autobiography. Writing about oneself is actually writing about others."[251] In his literary context, Qian's definitions of autobiography and biography lean towards the modern literary genre, which might not be fully transferrable to the discussion of the autobiographical section in Wisdom. Nevertheless, Qian's insight into the complex relationship between the author's self and the figure he presents (either himself or others) is helpful for our understanding of the dynamic between the "I" vis-à-vis the author and the "Solomonic persona" in Wisdom 7-9.

When the sage of Wisdom presents an account of his quest for wisdom and his life with wisdom, he adopts the first-person singular perspective to establish the autobiographical dimension of the account. The literary analysis of the major Solomonic themes has shown that the life of the sage is mediated through the narratives of Solomon. In this sense, the story of the sage's self is shaped by the stories of the other. In the

[251] This is my translation. "Devil's Night Visit at Mr. Qian's," in *The Essay Collection of Qian Zhongshu* (Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2002), 9-10.

meantime, the sage recasts different Solomonic motifs into an autobiographical framework that constitutes the royal voice of the king, different stages of life, and feelings and emotions. These important autobiographical elements demonstrate the growth of the sage in his continued relationship with wisdom and God.

On the one hand, we see how Solomon as "the other" guides the formation of the selfhood of the sage. The actualization of the self is made possible through becoming Solomon who pursues wisdom, obtains knowledge, prays to God, and rules with wisdom. At the same time, by portraying and interpreting the life of the other through the language of "I," the Hellenistic author writes his own story shaped by his contemporary cultural values and ideas contemporary into the life stories of Solomon. The Solomon in Wisdom is inspired by the biblical Solomon, but looks distinctly Hellenistic in the presentation. The Hellenistic sage enriches the interpretive legacy of Solomon's life. His personal trace is reflected in the Hellenistic ideas that permeate throughout the text, alongside many depictions of his liturgical practices.

In the interpretive process, a curious phenomenon arises: the "self" of the author and the "otherness" of Solomon are intertwined. The other reflects the self, and the self leads to the other. One can say the making of the self is through the other, while the shaping of a Hellenistic sage-king Solomon is through the sage's construction of a self. "For writing an autobiography is essentially a process of writing the self as other, and to do this, one must other the self."[252] The sage, by othering himself and imagining himself as Solomon "the other," brings the precursor into his reality and allows Solomon to transcend the boundaries of time and space.

---

[252] Tara Hawes, "Janet Frame: The Self as Other/Othering the Self," *Deep South* 1, no.1 (Feb, 1995). https://www.otago.ac.nz/deepsouth/vol1no1/hawes1.html.

With the growth of textual traditions and the ongoing enterprise of interpretations, more literary compositions in the name of Solomon or depicting the life stories of Solomon form a body of texts that enacts a "retroactively constituted tradition,"[253] borrowing the term from Hindy Najman. This process enables interpreters throughout generations to write their stories into the tradition, either explicitly or implicitly. Each interpreter participates in the story of the past, as their interpretation and composition have to start with a deep immersion in the tradition and stories they have long received. The interpreter and the biblical characters—the constant interaction between the two keeps renewing the understanding of the self and the other. The biblical characters have informed the way of living among the interpreters. Simultaneously, the interpreters also write their life stories into the lives of these biblical characters. The mutual enrichment might start and end with the same orientation: to write and perform "what is pleasing to the Lord" (9:10), and to make one's work acceptable to God, as the sage of Wisdom indicates.

[253] Najman explains the concept of "retroactively constituted tradition" as the following: "…the idea is that a specific text or body of texts may employ and develop features of earlier texts in a way that allows these features to stand out for the first time, thus retroactively constituting these earlier texts as precursors—that is, as members of a tradition that would not exist if not for its late exemplar." Hindy Najman, "Traditionary Process and Textual Unity in 4 Ezra," in *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction after the Fall*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Matthias Henze (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 109.

Part II The Sage's Performance of History

We are not born into a world of children…as unspeaking children, we come in to a world already full of our predecessors' narrative.[254]

–Paul Ricoeur

General Introduction

Chapters 10-19 in Wisdom, the so-called Book of History, recounts the manifold human experience in the saving works of wisdom in early Israelite history with a particular focus on Israel's Exodus from Egypt and subsequent wilderness accounts. The central focus on the Israelite history and its reinterpretation through the sapiential lens in these chapters mark a new section of the book.[255] The literary transition from the autobiography of a sage (Ch.7-9) to the retelling of the national history is hinted at the final line in the prayer. In Wisdom 9:18, the sage highlights the instructional and salvific values of wisdom. The last phrase "they were saved by wisdom" (τῇ σοφίᾳ ἐσώθησαν)[256] ushers in the main theme of the Book of History: the salvation of God recorded in the major events of the Israelite history.

---

[254] Paul Ricœur, "Narrative Time," in *On Narrative*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 181-82.

[255] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 260. Also Peter Enns, "Wisdom of Solomon and Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period," in *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, ed. J. I. Parker and Sven K. Soderlund (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 212-225.

[256] The verb σῴζω has several occurrences in the Book of History. It is a keyword that critically shapes the proceeding of the many historical events in the section. It first occurs in 9:18 and then turns up again in 10:4; 14:4, 5; 16:7, 11; 18:5.

The structure of the Book of History is as follows. Wisdom 10 begins with a sweeping history of the patriarchs (10:1-14). The patriarchal history is retold through a series of antitheses between the actions and the corresponding consequences of the seven righteous individuals (ὁ δίκαιος) in comparison to their wicked counterparts.[257] Sophia is the main agent who delivers the righteous from perils and plights. The list culminates in the departure from Egypt and people's joyful response to wisdom's salvific deliverance (10:15-21), which pave the way for the further elaboration of the Exodus event in the coming chapters (11:1-14, 16-19). Following the antithetical style in the list in Ch.10, the Exodus retelling constitutes seven pairs of diptychs that depict the divine judgement and benevolence of the Egyptians and the Israelites respectively. These diptychs are based on creative reading and reworking of the plague cycle (Exod. 7-12), alongside numerous episodes in the wilderness wandering. Interspersed between the two major units of proper historical retelling are the two lengthy theological reflections on divine mercy and idolatry (11:15-12:27, 13-15).[258]

---

[257] Although none of the characters in the list are named, the literary allusions allow one to decode the nameless characters and associate them with readily known biblical figures. It is worth mentioning that anonymity persists throughout the Book of History. Such is also the case for the exodus retelling. No explicit mention of the Egyptians and the Israelites ever occurs in the book. Instead, Egyptians are portrayed as a wicked nation while the Israelites are a righteous nation. The particular feature of anonymity as an important interpretive strategy will be further examined in Chapter Five.

[258] Most commentators have noticed the disruption of the narrative sequence generated by the discussion on divine mercy and critique of idolatry. See Armin Schmitt, *Das Buch der Weisheit—Ein Kommentar* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1986), 101; Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 224. Scholars have different proposals regarding the impact of the two discourses on the book as a whole. Winston and Schmitt are content to treat these sections as excursions or digressions without much formal comment on the relationship between the two sections and the rest of the book. For Larcher, he suggests that 11:15-15:10 is integral to the section of historical retelling and questions the labels of "digressions" and "excursuses." See Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, 224. Jonathan Linebaugh offers similar reasoning and considers that these theological reflections fit neatly into the retelling of scriptural history as a whole. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 63. McGlynn regards the mercy dialogue as the "interpretive key" to the whole book. Cf. Moyna McGlynn, *Divine Judgement and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 25-53. I contend that these two reflections are organically linked to the historical retelling. In Chapter Six, I offer my reading of the literary and structural link by arguing that the knowledge of God, including the divine character, divine truthfulness, and faithfulness, is mediated through historical experience.

A brief overview of the historical retelling in Wisdom shows diverse interests in the meaning of biblical history. The significance of history is coupled with a renewed understanding of wisdom and its manifestation, alongside theological reflections on the nature of God. The wide range of thematic interests, when put together, generates a host of questions. For instance, regarding the internal structure of the Book of History, how do the different units, such as the list of heroes, a full-blown Exodus retelling, and the theological reflection on divine mercy and idolatry, all fit together? Moving from the internal structure to its broader connection to the preceding chapters, how does the Book of History as a whole relate to the sage's autobiography in the Book of Wisdom? These two questions serve as the leading questions for the second part of the thesis to address.

Before I consider the questions in turn, I will start with some general remarks and reflection on historical retelling and interpretation of history in *Chapter Five*, two of which, I believe, are inextricably linked. Historical retelling can be highly selected and motivated by certain agendas upheld by the person who practices interpretation of the given historical events in light of his cultural-political milieu. Each interpreter is also conditioned by his present context. As a Jewish sage in the Hellenistic world, the way he interprets history in Wisdom reflects the convergence between scriptural tradition and Hellenistic literary form, namely, "synkrisis" (σύγκρισις). The marriage between form and content enables the sage to generate new insights into the patriarchal history and the Exodus account. In this reflection on historical interpretation as a whole, I will emphasize two distinctive features of interpreted biblical history in Wisdom: 1) anonymity and 2) creative juxtapositions and their respective functions. These two prominent and consistent interpretive techniques set the stage for the following detailed analysis of the text.

A close reading of the historical retelling paves the way for both the understanding of the internal structure of the Book of History and its connection to the sage's autobiography. To begin, I first identify the events that the sage selected and incorporated into the historical retelling. After naming the events, I will engage with the following series of interpretive questions: What is the rationale behind the selection and grouping of events that defy the temporal and narrative sequence indicated in scripture? How do the selected events and interpretation show participation in or deviation from the existent rich interpretive tradition? Through Wisdom's interpretation, how do these familiar events pick up new significance, and for what purpose?

In my analysis of the list of heroes (10:1-21) and the Exodus account (11:1-14, 16-19), I present the variety of interpretive strategies employed in the historical retelling. In particular, I pay attention to how the sage participates in the common exegetical traditions, and in the meantime, establishes his ingenious voice. I argue that the sage's interpretive insights bring about the instructional values of history, with a focus on moral justice and cosmic justice established by God who orchestrates wisdom and cosmic elements to set up the order of the world. Furthermore, the sage's interpretation of biblical history is deeply oriented to the community at his time. The interpretation of the historical past brings assurance and comfort to the community and provides an orientation to a hopeful future.

Building upon an examination of Wisdom's interpretation of biblical history, I investigate the ways of how the sage performs history in *Chapter Six*. First, I highlight the sage's theological reflection through an engagement with the literary structure of the historical retelling, both to the Book of History as a whole (Ch. 10-19), and its relation to the sage's autobiography (Ch.7-9). The structure of the historical retelling is deeply

hermeneutical.[259] I argue that these seemingly discrete units in the Book of History—the list of heroes, the Exodus narrative, and the instruction and reflection on divine mercy and rightful worship—are organically linked. The arrangement of events contributes to the sage's performance of history. By alternating the focus on history and theology, the sage establishes the theological nature of biblical history. In other words, for the sage and his community, knowledge of God is deeply rooted in their historical experience and their renewing interpretation of that shared history in response to the ever-changing context.

Following the conclusion of the unity within the Book of History and its implications, I transition to address the second leading question for this part of the thesis, namely how the historical retelling connects to the sage's autobiography. I think the speech framework in which the historical retelling takes place is critical to answering this question about connection. The historical narrative is presented in the voice of the sage, the same sage who crafts his autobiography through the life of Solomon. The shared voice in the Book of Wisdom and Book of History fosters a continuity between the two sections despite their thematic differences. By highlighting the conversational mode of expression in the historical retelling, I will demonstrate how the sage performs history for his community and instructs the community about God's power, mercy, and faithfulness. Through scriptural interpretation, the sage shows the lasting impact of history on his present community and the divine power of liberation inscribed in the historical event, which gives the community orientation to a hopeful future. From the making of his autobiography to the performance of the ancestral history, the sage writes his life story into the collective story of the nation. In the meantime, the sage turns history into a liturgical performance that aims

[259] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness,* 61.

to instruct the people and give due praise to God, which culminates in the final doxology by the end of the book (19:22).

Chapter Five

Biblical History, Narrative, and Interpretation

Introduction

"Historical recital" has been regarded as a prevalent literary phenomenon in the early Israelite literature and Second Temple literature. In the Hebrew Bible, classical examples include Joshua's farewell speech (Josh. 24:1-13), Samuel's farewell address (1 Sam. 12:6-18), numerous historical psalms (Pss. 78, 105, 106, 135, 136), Ezekiel's pronouncement against Israel's continuing rebellion (Ezek. 20:1-32), and Nehemiah's confessional prayer (Neh. 9:6-38).[260] Some apocalyptic literature also contains historical retelling, such as the Apocalypse of Weeks (93:1-10, 91:11-17) and the Animal Apocalypse (85-90) in 1 Enoch. In Judith, the recitation of Israelite history is performed by a gentile, the Ammonite Achior (5:5-21). In the New Testament, Stephen's apologetical

[260] Technically, Deut. 6:20-24, 26:5-9 also can be considered as historical recitals. Due to its scanty historical references in contrast to the other samples listed here, I decided to leave this double pericope aside. It offers insights into the function of historical recital in the Israelite religion and its development. Nevertheless, the theological significance of the Deuteronomistic recital cannot be underrated. The liturgical aspects of the recital led Von Rad to make his genuinely innovative proposal about Old Testament theology: Israel's faith is historically dynamic and involves an ongoing process with the incorporation and articulation of new materials. He regards the process of historical retelling as deeply theological. According to Von Rad, the continuous expansion of the historical moments, as we observe in many longer historical recitals in the list of texts, indicates how each new generation "attempts to make the divine acts of salvation relevant for every new age and day—this ever-new reading-out to an avowal of God's acts which in the end made the old creedal statements grow into such enormous masses of tradition." Gerhard Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*, vol. 1 (San Francisco, California: Harper and Row, 1962, 1965), vi. The idea made its first occurrence in his 1938 essay "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2005), 1-78. In this essay, Von Rad employs Gunkel's form-critical approach and argues that Deut. 26:5-11 entails a "historical creed." Current scholarship tends to treat Deut. 26:5-11 as a late text that can be dated to the post-exilic period. See Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012), 122-123; and also Eckart Otto, *Deuternomium 12-34: Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament* (Freiburg: Herder, 2017), 1897-1898. In this case, Deut. 26:5-11 might not be considered one of the earliest paradigmatic credo texts of Israel's faith. Despite the dating disagreement concerning the Deuteronomist passage, Von Rad's insights into the nature and significance of the historical retelling in Israel's faith remain valid and find resonance in this chapter.

speech (Acts 7:1-53) also constitutes many critical historical moments in Israelite history.[261] Seeing the broad literary contexts in which the historical recitals occur (including texts ranging from the liturgical, the prophetic, the apocalyptic, and novella), the literary trope of historical retelling defies being categorized as a genre.[262] In these historical recitals, major events in Israelite history are joined together through a creative arrangement of the materials, innovative interpretation, and intriguing narration. In these manifold historical retellings, history is never perceived as cool and descriptive facts, but rather enriched and renewing reflection on the meaning of history, a history that is critically shaped by the interaction between YHWH and His people. In this sense, biblical history is fundamentally interpreted history. Different interpretive agendas underlie the various presentations of history. The main purpose of historical recitals in Israelite and early Jewish literature is to understand the meaning and significance of history pertinent to the changing contexts of the narrators and listeners.

To bring about the meaning of history, history is narrated through the fashion of narrative or story-telling. Narrative is increasingly recognized as a major operative element in the writing of history—it not only reflects the essence of historical writing, but also gives structure to historical events.[263] Narrative enables people to organize, explore, and

---

[261] Due to the limited space of the dissertation, these listed texts that involve historical retellings would not receive full treatment. However, as I elucidate the major historical motifs that most historical recitals employ, many of the texts will be referred to and engaged with.

[262] Carol Newsom, "Rhyme and Reason: The Historical Resume in Israelite and Early Jewish Thought," *Congress Volume* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 215.

[263] Philosophers of history have proposed that narrative and historiography are inextricably linked. See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), esp. Introduction, 1-42. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987). Allen Megill, "Grand Narrative and the Discipline of History," in *A New Philosophy of History*, ed. Frank Ankersmit and Hans Kellner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 151-173. Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, 3 volumes, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1988).

create the meaning of life.[264] Seeing that "narrative patterns"[265] are built into the human mind, what are some crucial factors in making a coherent and sensible narrative? Building upon the scholarship of many literary theorists and bible scholars, I think that the sequence, causation, and consequence of events are the three main indispensable factors in crafting a narrative.[266] In these historical recitals, we observe how different events in the Israelite history are selected, grouped, and arranged to convey certain logical progression. These selected historical moments do not stand alone, rather a logical connection between different episodes is created in the making of a historical recital. Literary logic will play an important role in my following literary analysis of the historical recital in Ch.10 and the Exodus retelling in the remaining chapters. To use the phrase of Shimon Bar-Efrat, the organization of the different historical events in the recitals creates "a meaningful chain of interconnected events."[267] The amalgamation of various historical moments is far from

---

[264] In recent years, the interest in narrative has blossomed in varied disciplines. The relationship between narrative and cognitive sciences has been extensively investigated and explored. See David Herman, "Narrative Theory and the Cognitive Sciences," *Narrative Inquiry* 11, no.1 (2001): 1-34. The article offers a helpful survey of recent publications of the topic and suggests new directions for research in the interrelation between narrative theory and cognitive science. In social science such as anthropology, storytelling is regarded as an important way of understanding human cultures. Rodolfo Maggio, "The Anthropology of Storytelling and the Storytelling of Anthropology," *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology* 5, no.2 (2014): 89-106. Drawing upon neuroscience and evolutionary biology, literary scholar Jonathan Gottschall also provides insights into how stories shape our human nature. *The Storytelling Animal: How Stories Make Us Human* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012). Also, Stephen D. Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 39, no. 3 (Sep., 1971), 291-311. The bestseller *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* also illustrates the power and imagination people exhibit in creating stories that bring people together. See Ch.2 The Tree of Knowledge in particular. Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Vintage, 2015).

[265] Carol Newsom, "Rhyme and Reason," 216. Cf. Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 13-14.

[266] Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin define a narrative as a "discourse stating facts linked together in a temporal sequence (chronological order) and with a causal link (order of configuration)." *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1999), 21. Rick Altman argues that narratives "require actions. Without action, we may have portraiture, catalogue, or *nature morte*, but not narrative." *Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 1-20. The early literary theorist of novels E. M. Forster also emphasizes on the sequence and consequence of events in a story. "Story is a narrative of events arranged in their time sequence and plot is a narrative of events with the emphasis falling on causality." *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harvest Books, 1954), 27, 86.

[267] Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1989), 91.

static, rather dynamic and vibrant. In the varied historical recitals across time and provenance, we observe how the ancient events are reinterpreted and new events are simultaneously incorporated.[268] This mode of retelling history never ceases.

Then what propels people to retell the story over and over again, also in so many different forms? To limit the scope and phrase the question more pertinent to the thesis as a whole, why do the Jewish people constantly retell the history of the nation with a particular focus on the Exodus story? I contend that the impulse to retell is driven by the purpose of creating and maintaining a communal identity. The tenacious retelling of the historical past —with expansion, reflection, and embellishment—allows the Jewish community to build and reify its identity in the vicissitudes of time. Furthermore, the formation of the communal identity is not merely a human matter, but rather points to God who holds the earthly community together. Each recounting of the historical events is an affirmation of the historical experience in which God acted and remembered His people. These continuous creative interpretations of the historical past serve as "an emulation of the divine act of creation," at the same time "the human act of recognizing the divine."[269] It is through history that the encounter between the divine and humanity takes place.

On the dimension of community building, there are certain particularities in a historical narration that are conducive to such a formation. Jörn Rüsen's proposal of the three major qualities of a historical narration helpfully illustrates how a community locates, orients, and shapes its identity:[270]

---

[268] The same historical event can be interpreted differently. According to Judith Gartner, this is rightly possible and probable. See *Die Geschichtspsalmen: Eine Studie zu den Psalmen 78, 105, 106, 135 und 136 als hermeneutische Schlüsseltexte im Psalter*, FZAT 84 (Tübingen: Mohr Seibeck, 2012), 1-35.

[269] Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg, *Sustaining Fictions: Intertextuality, Midrash, Translation and the Literary Afterlife of the Bible* (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2008), 35.

[270] Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005), 11. For a more detailed analysis of each quality, see Rüsen, "Die vier Typen des historischen Erzählens," in

1. A historical narrative is tied to the medium of memory. It mobilizes the experience of past time, which is engraved in the archives of memory, so that the experience of present time becomes understandable and the expectation of future time is possible.
2. A historical narrative organizes the internal unity of these three dimensions of time by a concept of continuity. This concept adjusts the real experience of time to human intentions and expectations. By doing so it makes the experience of the past become relevant for present life and influences the shaping of the future.
3. A historical narrative serves to establish the identity of its authors and listeners. Dependents upon this function are whether a concept of continuity is plausible or not. This concept of continuity must be capable of convincing the listeners of the permanence and the stability of themselves in the temporal change of their world and of themselves.

As we can see, each of the qualities builds upon the other and is thus interrelated. In the historical retellings, the collective memory of the Jewish community is implied. Yet each new rendition adds a new aspect to the memory that is shaped by the contexts and hermeneutical needs of the interpreter and his community. Despite the deviation from the "original" memory,[271] the very existence of the shared historical memory continues to generate a sense of continuity. Each generation has its own concerns and interests. Nevertheless, continuity enables one to participate in a tradition where one finds a sense of belonging and locates the meaning of life.

In addition, seeing its preservation of the past, concerns for the present, and orientation to the future, historical narrative demonstrates the great potency of becoming

---

Zeit und Sinn: Strategien historischen Denkens (Frankfurt am Main: Humanities Online, 2012), 153-230.

[271] "Original" memory is something unable to be traced and destined to get lost in the course of time. Memory is a compilation of manifold events and their interpretation. It is elastic and changing. In this light, one can hardly pinpoint the origin moment when a memory is formed. Every time when people recall a past event, the way people interpret the event retrieved from their memories can be different and have many nuances. For a survey on current research on the topic of memory and its influence on the construction of biblical history, see Daniel Pioske, "Retracing a Remembered Past: Methodological Remarks on Memory, History, and the Hebrew Bible," *Biblical Interpretation* 23 (2015): 291-315.

timeless, in a sense that the "traditional" narrative of origin[272] can become a medium through which significant lessons for life are conveyed and articulated. I believe that this is exactly the case in the Wisdom of Solomon. I consider that the historical retelling in Wisdom enables the transformation of a national story: it is not only concerned with the ancestral past, but also brings out important lessons on justice and righteousness, which point one to the divine and renewed understanding of God's characteristics.

Before a detailed literary analysis of Wisdom's interpretation of the historical recital and then the Exodus event, we can first take a look at two distinct interpretive techniques employed consistently in the Book of History. In the following, I will examine these two issues, namely, anonymity and juxtapositions in turn.

I. Two Distinct Interpretive Techniques in the Wisdom of Solomon

1. Anonymity and Its Function

Having long been recognized as one of the most intriguing literary characteristics of the book, anonymity persists in the Book of History (Ch.10-19). Proper biblical references such as names of the biblical characters, places, and events are omitted. Starting with a recount of the Israelite *Heilsgeschichte* (Ch.10), Wisdom employs generic terms to describe two groups of the people, "the righteous (δίκαιος)" and "the wicked (ἀσεβής)". In the portrayal of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses and the Israelites, each figure remains nameless and instead, is described in an allusive fashion. They become "the first-

[272] Jörn Rüsen proposes four typologies of historical narration, including traditional narrative, exemplary narrative, critical narrative, and generative narrative. Although these four types of historical narration have their respective features, they are often present simultaneously in historical texts. One may be dominant, the others secondary. These different operations are helpful in thinking about the transformation of biblical history. Exodus as the foundational episode in Jewish history exhibits these features in different interpretations across time. See *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation*, 12, 17.

fashioned father of the world (10:1)," "the righteous man saved by a paltry piece of wood (10:4)," "the righteous man amidst the evil of the world (10:5)," "a righteous man was sold (10:13)," "a servant of the Lord (10:16)," and "a holy people and blameless race (10:15)." In contrast to the righteous people, the representatives of the wicked group such as Cain, the Egyptians, the Sodomites and the Canaanites are depicted as "an unrighteous man (10:3)," "a nation of oppressors (10:15)," and "those who dwelt of old in the land (12:3)."

In the full-fledged Exodus retelling (16-19), the Israelites and the Egyptians remain anonymous and continue to be described as "the righteous ones" and "the wicked ones." Despite the allusive terms, readers who are familiar with the scriptural accounts can quickly identify the main characters involved in the storyline. More than biblical characters, Wisdom also avoids any mention of geographical locations that occur in the biblical narratives. Except for an explicit mention of the Red Sea (10:18; 19:7), the rest of the place names are described in generic terms. For instance, "an inhabited wilderness" (11:2) alludes to the wilderness of Sin, "untrodden wastes (11:2)" to Rephidim (or Kadesh), "the flinty rock" (11:4) to the rock at Horeb, and "an ever-flowing river" (11:6) to the Nile River.

Why such elusiveness about biblical characters and events? How shall we understand anonymity and its function in Wisdom? Before we address these questions, it is important to note that some basic (at times detailed) background knowledge in the stories of the biblical heroes, and the Exodus account—in particular the plague cycle—is presumed in order to understand the message in Wisdom, not to mention for further appreciation. In this regard, the general target readers of Wisdom can hardly be gentiles who are unfamiliar with the Jewish traditions, for the message would be too difficult to

decode. Most likely, the historical interpretation in Wisdom is targeted at a Jewish community to which the sage belongs.[273] Winston settles the readership in the diaspora community in Alexandria and suggests that Wisdom does not intend to create "any serious puzzlement but rather to provide the reader familiar with the Bible the enjoyment of virtually immediate recognition of the biblical figures described but unnamed."[274] The pleasure involved in reading and understanding is an intriguing thought. To achieve such enjoyment, the recognition of the biblical characters through the depiction of their distinct features. A name no longer matters, but the description derived from the biblical narratives suffices to decode the anonymous figures and events. In other words, even though the names of the ancestral heroes and the nation itself are withheld, the historical narratives of the past sustain their identity, and in the meantime, enable them to become moral examples that demonstrate the actions and fates of the righteous and the wicked.

Here I want to highlight the connection between these nameless characters and the biblical events. It is through the biblical events and narratives that the anonymous characters become recognized. This connection, however, is much toned down when scholars approach the issue of anonymity from a comparative angle with Greek literary genre and rhetoric. Reese argues that Wisdom participates in the protreptic discourse which

[273] The construction of readership has been a trend in early scholarship. Speculation and guesswork were involved at that time. It is undeniably challenging to construct what the original recipients of the book look like. Yet seeing the nature of its ample literary references and allusions to the Bible, the target audience is much likely to be of Jewish descent. Goodrick argues that the target audience of the message is Jewish apostates or backsliders in their ancestral faith. A. T. S. Goodrick, *The Book of Wisdom* (New York: Macmillan, 1913), 143. In contrast to Goodrick's opinion, Grimm considers that the addressees consist of princes in high positions who show no interest in knowing the particular names of the biblical characters. C. L. W. Grimm, *Das Buch der Weisheit* (Leipzig, 1860), cited in Goodrick, *The Book of Wisdom*, 143. Grimm's speculation of the recipients as princes and rulers may derive from his reading of the invocation lines in Wisdom. For instance, "Love righteousness, you rulers of the earth ἈΓΑΠΗΣΑΤΕ δικαιοσύνην οἱ κρίνοντες τὴν γῆν" (1:1) and "Listen therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth Ἀκούσατε οὖν βασιλεῖς καὶ σύνετε, μάθετε δικασταὶ περάτων γῆς" (6:1). In retrospect, many of these early speculations about readership are quite farfetched and unsubstantiated. For a summary of the scholarship on anonymity, see Samuel Cheon, "Anonymity in The Wisdom of Solomon," *JSP* 9, no. 18 (1998):112-114.

[274] Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon*, 139.

treats people in the literature as types. Reese indicates that Wisdom's anonymous heroes run parallel with those in Theophrastus' *Characters*.[275] In other words, those unnamed biblical heroes are "types of the saved."[276] In a similar vein, Collins also highlights the ideology of type in Wisdom's presentation of the salvation history. In the words of Collins, "Pseudo Solomon is not concerned with the recitation of 'salvation of history as the unique and exceptional history of Israel…Each of the biblical characters illustrates a type, the 'righteous'…The history of Israel provides a paradigmatic example of the experience of righteous individuals or a righteous people, but it is only an illustration of the workings of the universe. Wisdom and righteousness are not necessarily confined to Israel."[277] Vogels's view resembles the one of Reese and Collins, though without an explicit mention of the term "type." He emphasizes the universal outlook that Wisdom aims to achieve, as he points out that "salvation is no longer the salvation of Israel from Egypt as in the Book of Exodus, but something offered to the whole of humanity which God has created."[278]

In these scholars' formulation, anonymity in Wisdom's historical presentation reduces Jewish particularism and helps foster a universal outlook of history. In their presentation of the use of anonymity, there implies certain cultural tension between Greek universalism and Jewish particularism. This cultural demarcation has its roots in the scholarly construction of the differences between Judaism and Hellenism.[279] In the case of

[275] Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 119.
[276] Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 119.
[277] John Collins, "Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age," *History of Religions* 17, no. 2 (1977), 127.
[278] W. Vogels, "The God who Creates is the God who Saves," *Eglise et Theologie* 22 (1991), 333. (315-35)
[279] For a helpful discussion on the history of scholarship on the categories, see Jörg Frey, ""Judaism" and "Hellenism": Martin Hengel's Work in Perspective", in *Jewish Cultural Encounters in the Ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern World*, ed. Mladen Povpovic, Myles Schoonover, and Marijjn Vandenberghe (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 96-118. The categories can be traced back to the "history of religions" school among German scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century. Representative would be the well-known New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann. To counter the opposition between "Judaism" and "Hellenism" and their clash in values proposed by Bultmann and his schools, Martin Hengel authored his

Wisdom, to participate in the Hellenistic discourse, a certain reduction of a particular Jewishness is expected. The reduction can be motivated either by the surrounding Hellenistic literary culture or the social-political context of the Alexandria Jews.

For the latter proposal, Samuel Cheon regards the composition of Wisdom as a response to the persecution of the Jews in 38 CE.[280] Drawing upon the depictions of the Alexandrian riot in Philo's *In Flaccum*, Cheon paints the event in a gloomy light. The social status of the Jews was in peril, and many of them suffered from harmful attacks, insults, and inhumane treatment.[281] The Alexandrians looted the properties of the Jews, broke into their shops, and everything was sacked.[282] Cheon considers that the avoidance of

magnum opus *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2003). In this book, Hengel demonstrates that prior to the emergence of Christianity, Judaism and Hellenism had long been in contact.

[280] Scholars proposed different date ranges for the composition of the work. In a summary of scholarly suggestions for dating, Aitken presented and explained two main date ranges that scholars had proposed. Some proposed an early date and placed the text in the first century BCE, alongside a vibrant Jewish philosophical tradition in Hellenistic Alexandria. On the other hand, some dated the text to a later date and placed the work in the early Roman period, specifically under the reign of Caligula (37-41 CE). The rationale for the dating lies in the fact that some Jewish persecutions occurred during the period, which fits into the literary themes portrayed in Wisdom, such as the suffering of the righteous and their final vindication. See James K. Aitken, "Wisdom of Solomon" in *T & T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 402-404. As for dating suggestions in commentaries, see Grabbe, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 88-89; Larcher, *Le Livre de la sagesse*, 148-61; Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 20-25. For a historical reconstruction of the events in 38 CE, see Sandra Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 CE and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[281] Jews who were not integrated well as citizens were badly treated in Alexandria and were vulnerable to the aggression of 38 CE. Philo depicted the horrendous suffering that Jews underwent during the riot. "…being immediately seized by those who had excited the seditious multitude against them, they were treacherously put to death, and then were dragged along and trampled underfoot by the whole city, and completely destroyed, without the least portion of them being left which could possibly receive burial; and in this way their enemies, who in their savage madness shad become transformed into the nature of wild beasts, slew them and thousands of others with all kinds of agony and tortures, and newly invented cruelties, for wherever they met with or caught sight of a Jew, they stoned him, or beat him with sticks, not at once delivering their blows upon mortal parts…" (*Flacc*., 65-66). Regarding the rights of Jews as residents in Alexandria, see Gambetti, *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 C.E.*, 57-85. Gambetti also discusses the impacts of Flaccus' infamous edict on the Jews in Alexandria. See esp. 172-176.

[282] Philo, as a witness of the Alexandrian riot, recorded the event with vehement anger: "They [The Alexandrians] drove the Jews entirely out of four quarters, and crammed them all into a very small portion of one; and by reason of their numbers they were dispatched over the sea-shore, and desert places, and among the tombs, being deprived of all their property; while the populace, overrunning their desolate houses, turned to plunder, and divided the booty among themselves as if they had obtained it in was. And as no one hindered them, they broke open even the workshops of Jews, which were shut up because of their mourning for Drusilla, and carried off all that they found there, and bore it openly through the middle of the market-place as if they had only been making use of their own property" (*Flacc*., 56).

proper biblical names is an interpretive move to cope with the intense difficulties and challenges that Alexandrian Jews faced. Sensitive to the political climate of the day, Wisdom intentionally hides away the exact biblical references to "bring consolation and hope to the community, also to counteract the anti-Semitic prejudices."[283] Cheon's suggestion preserves the importance of the biblical history to the local Jewish community who most likely remain the target audience of the book. Nevertheless, the apologetic proposal greatly depends on a detailed historical reconstruction of the event that leads to the composition of Wisdom. The dependence might reinforce an apologetic reading of the text, which can be problematic.[284] Although it is true that no literature emerges in a vacuum, a narrowly focused historical contextualization of the text also limits the interpretive possibilities of the text.

Seeing the varied suggestions of understanding anonymity and its function in Wisdom, I consider it important to uphold both the biblical narratives and the exemplary features of the nameless characters. Instead of prioritizing one over the other, I argue that the biblical foundation is essential in shaping these characters. The distinct interests in

---

[283] Cheon, "Anonymity in The Wisdom of Solomon," 115.

[284] In his review of Cheon's work, Benjamin Wright points out the problematic connection between the composition of Wisdom and the riots in 38 CE Alexandria. On the one hand, Wright notes that Cheon's suggestion for such a connection lacks clarity in explaining the literary dependence or influence from Philo's *In Flacuum*. On the other hand, Wright reflects on the flaws of Cheon's methodology for dating a text. "Any attempt to place a piece of literature in precise historical circumstances is fraught with problems." Benjamin Wright, "The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 89, no.3/4 (1999): 470-472. Methods of dating biblical texts, or ancient texts more broadly, need to be constantly reviewed and refined. In his response to Juha Pakkala's dating of Deuteronomy, Nathan MacDonald lays out two insightful questions concerning the dating practices of a text. "First, can one simply proceed through a *via negativa*, using omissions as grounds for dating to one period and against dating to another period?... Second, how might we date and take sufficient account of Deuteronomy's intention to reconfigure Israelite life?" Although the second question is posed for the dating issues with Deuteronomy, it can be applied to the dating discussion of Wisdom as well. How do dating and construction of a historical context show, or perhaps not show the socio-political circumstances and the philosophical thoughts and ideas in the time when Wisdom was composed and received? See Nathan MacDonald, "Issues in the Dating of Deuteronomy: A Response to Juha Pakkala," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 122, No.3 (2010), 431-435.

Israelite salvation history cannot be compromised here.[285] In addition, Wisdom's interpretation of these events influenced by the contemporary Hellenistic literary culture further enacts the *universal quality* of the biblical figures and events. In the close reading of the Book of History, I will examine the rich interpretive traditions in which the sage participates in composing the text and present how an exemplary and generative narrative of biblical history can be actualized in the process of retelling.

2. Creative Juxtapositions: Moral Justice and Cosmic Justice

In the historical recital and the Exodus retelling, Wisdom adopts an antithetical form to present the actions and consequences of each character involved in the retelling. The series of juxtapositions between the righteous and their counterparts can be regarded as a consistent literary style throughout Wisdom.[286] In the Book of History (Ch.10-19), what are some of the biblical events included in making these juxtapositions? How shall we understand the function and purpose of these juxtapositions?

---

[285] Scholars have debated about the ways of reading the anonymized historical retellings in the Book of History: whether one should read the historical episodes as a particularistic history of the Israelites or a universalized account that the characters involved in the story are merely types of people. In their engagement with the Exodus retelling, scholars show a tendency to side with one side of the reading. Michael Legaspi supports the former reading, as he considers the presentation of wisdom in the Exodus recount essentially national. Michael Legaspi, *Wisdom in Classical and Biblical Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 201-202. David Winston argues that the form of wisdom in the Exodus recount is "individualistic, humanistic, and universalistic," and the rendition of the story suggests that the author aims to transform the "exclusive nationalist tradition of Israel to the universalistic philosophical tradition." Winston, *The Ancestral Philosophy: Hellenistic Philosophy in Second Temple Judaism* (Brown Judaic Studies, 2001), 89-90. John Collins has a similar view, and he thinks that the ethical evaluations indicated in the story are not so concerned with particular Jewish customs, but suggest certain "humanistic ideal." Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (WJK Press, 1997), 220-221. For further scholarly discussion, see Gregory Schmidt Goering, "Election and Knowledge in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Studies in the Book of Wisdom*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér, JSJSup *142* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 163-82. Michael Kolarcik, "Universalism and Justice in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom*; Festschrift M. Gilbert, ed. Núria Calduch-Benages and Jacques Vermeylen, BETL 143 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 289-301.

[286] In Ch.1-6, one can also find the comparisons between the wicked and the righteous. The speech of the wicked and the depiction of the righteous also take place alternatively.

To address these questions, I will start with two lists to enumerate the different events incorporated in the historical retelling. The first list is concerned with the historical recital. The second list engages with the full-blown Exodus retelling.

List 1

No.	Verse	Righteous	Wicked	Biblical References
1	10:1-3	Adam[287]	Cain	Gen. 2: 7; Gen.4
2	10:4	Noah	Cain? the flood generation	Gen.4; Gen. 6-9
3	10:5	Abraham	the wicked nations that were put into confusion	Gen. 12, 22; Gen. 11
4	10:6-8	Lot	Sodomites	Gen. 14; Gen. 19
5	10:9-12	Jacob	Esau	Gen. 28-33
6	10:13-14	Joseph	His opposers	Gen. 37-50
7	10:15-21	Israel, Moses	Egyptians, Pharaoh	Exodus 14-15

List 2

No.	Verse	Righteous Israel	Wicked Egyptian	Biblical References
1	11:1-14	Wisdom provided the righteous with abundant water.	The water became undrinkable for the wicked.	Blood plague: the first plague (Exod. 7:14-25); Water from the rock (Exod. 17:1-7)
2	16:1-4	For the righteous,	A multitude of	Animal plague

[287] Adam is the only figure in the list that is not described as "righteous," rather the depiction is "πρωτόπλαστον πατέρα κόσμου" the first-formed father of the world (10:1).

		God prepared quails to satisfy their hunger.	animals tormented the ungodly, making them lost appetite.	(Exod. 8:1-15); Quail as provision (Exod. 16, Num. 11)
3	16:5-14	For the righteous, God healed them from the venomous serpents.	The wicked were killed by the bites of locusts and flies and could not be healed.	The plague of locusts and flies (Exod 8:20-30, 10:1-20); bites from venomous serpents, healing from the divine word (Num 21:5-9)
4	16:15-29	For the righteous, God provided them with heavenly bread and made them satisfied.	In their refusal to acknowledge God, the wicked were pursued and they were consumed by hail, storms, and fire.	The plague of hail: the seventh plague (Exod. 9:13-35); heavenly bread (Exod.16)
5	17:1-18:4	For the holy ones, God provide a flaming pillar of fire to guide them into a glorious wandering.	Overwhelming fear of darkness gripped the ungodly.	The plague of darkness: the ninth plague (Exod. 10:21-29); Pillars of fire (Exod. 13:17-22)
6	18:5-25	Although the experience of death also touched upon the righteous ones, God used Aaron the priest to stop further destruction.	The firstborn of the ungodly were struck dead.	Death of the firstborn: the tenth plague (Exod. 11, 12:29-32); Aaron's incense ministry, death and healing (Num. 16:41-50)
7	19:1-17	God ministered through creation to protect the righteous.	The wicked were destroyed in the Red Sea.	Crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 14)

The antithetical arrangement of the historical materials is unique in style in comparison to the majority of historical retellings in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple

literature. To illustrate the use of the peculiar form, most scholars would turn to contemporary Greek literary practices. Situating the text into its Greek literary context, scholars propose that the sage adopts a classical Greek genre: σύγκρισις (synkrisis).[288] Drawing upon examples from classical literature and Philo's works,[289] Mazzinghi explains that synkrisis is "a prolonged and systematic comparison between two realities in order to emphasize which of them is preferable."[290] The preference is indicated in these juxtapositions, as the descriptions of "the righteous" versus "the evil" readily convey clear value judgements.

On the other hand, if we situate Wisdom in the proverbial tradition, the pair of opposites as a common compositional practice in the Proverbs is also noticeable in Wisdom's antitheses. In Whybray's summary of the five compositional types for Proverbs, including "1) verbal repetition or affinities of sound (paronomasia), 2) repetition of identical words, 3) identity of topic and theme, 4) similar imagery, and 5) common theme," many of which can find their traces in the antitheses in Wisdom.[291] A close reading of the Exodus retelling can testify to that: the canonically distant passages are not selected at random, rather certain common themes and imageries underlie the arrangement of the opposites.[292] Nevertheless, the major difference between the Proverbs and Wisdom lies in the employment of narrative or its lack thereof. For instance, Chs.10-15 in Proverbs show a

---

[288] Cf. Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 98; Mazzinghi notes that the idea originated from Focke, *Die Entstehung*, 12-15; "Synkrisis," *Hermes* 58 (1923), 330, then followed by Beauchamp's elaboration of the literary genre in *De libro Sapientiae Salomonis*. Also in Gilbert, *Sages*se, 85, 87.

[289] Aristotle, Rhetoric 1.9,38; Cicero, De Or. 2.84, 348-349. Philo, De virtutibus, 201-210, 211-225, also Prob. 62-136. Mazzinghi also notes that within the synkrisis, it is relatively common to find digressions, which testifies to the case in the Wisdom of Solomon. See Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 262.

[290] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 262.

[291] R. N. Whybray, *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*, JSOT 168 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 72.

[292] The observation will be further articulated in the close examination of the Exodus retelling in the following section.

concentrated collection of antithetical statements.[293] The topics of comparison center around ethics, order of life, and religious conduct. By setting up the antithetical statements, one can observe the consequences of good and bad behavior, and the different fruits of wisdom and folly. In fact, the didactic purpose of antitheses is also purported by Wisdom. Unlike the lack of a narrative thread that runs through the collection in Proverbs, biblical stories and events set the background for the composition. In other words, biblical stories are transformed into proverbial wisdom that instructs on the values of justice and righteousness.

How do these juxtapositions enact moral teachings and instruction? Zurawski notes the pedagogical interactions between God/Sophia and humanity, "In this text [the Book of History in Wisdom] we see a clear dichotomy between the righteous, who learn from God's pedagogy, and the impious, who do not, through a continuous series of divine tests that God (or Sophia) uses to instruct humankind and to give people a chance to repent for past, unwitting transgressions."[294] The didactic values of the antitheses, though having a universal outlook, are informed and shaped by the historical narrative of the Israelites, the Exodus story in particular. Building upon Zurawski's interest in paideia, I also want to highlight that the moral instructions reflected in the Book of History manifest a clear historical awareness and a detailed narrative dimension.[295] In this regard, I propose that the

[293] Prov. 10-22:16 is a collection attributed to Solomon. The form and structure of the section look quite different from the preceding chapters. Fox proposes that the structure from Chapter 10 to Chapter 15 is rather similar, as antithetical sayings dominate the section. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 509.

[294]Jason Zurawski, "Paideia: A Multifarious and Unifying Concept in the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman (Society of Biblical Literature, 2017), 205.

[295] On the connection between narratives and moral instructions, see Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), xvi. In opposition to foundationalist philosophy, Rorty calls for a turn toward narrative instead of occupation with theories. Rorty rejects any metaphysical approaches to establishing moral concerns for the other. He insists that detailed descriptions of human activities and qualities are crucial to understanding ethics and encouraging one to do likewise. These literary descriptions have little to do with theory, "but for genres such as ethnography, the journalist's report, the

moral teachings are derived from a creative reading of biblical accounts, which is further magnified through the innovative juxtapositions of events. People of different moral standards are either protected or judged by God. In the form of retribution, divine justice is claimed and order of the world is established.

II. Tradition and the Individual Talent

As I have already indicated the prevalence of historical retelling in Jewish literary history, historical events undergo a multitude of interpretations throughout time.[296] These interpretations then naturally become traditions in which new generations of interpreters participate. The dynamic between an individual poet and the tradition to which he belongs has been well illustrated in T. S. Eliot's seminal essay on literary criticism "Tradition and the Individual Talent."[297] In the essay, Eliot proposes that in the works of an individual poet, one can observe the legacy of the "dead poets".[298] The appreciation of an individual poet is inseparable from a deepened understanding of the poet's relation to his predecessors.[299] Building upon the intricate interpersonal relationship between poets of past and present, Eliot brings out the complex idea of "tradition," which contains a "historical sense" and in the meantime, the temporal dimension transcends the past. In the words of Eliot, "the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness and the past, but

---

comic book, the docudrama, and especially, the novel" (*Contingency*, xvi). The emphasis on literary language and its relation to moral teachings is fitting for our discussion on the biblical stories and the moral lessons derived from these accounts.

[296] We can have a glimpse of the phenomenon in the various texts listed at the beginning of the section "Biblical History, Narrative, and Interpretation."

[297] T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," *Perspecta* 19 (1982): 36-42.

[298] Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," 37.

[299] Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," 37.

of its presence."[300] The echo of the past exegetical traditions and their significance to the present are readily observable in Wisdom's interpretation of biblical history. When the sage retells biblical history, tradition is invoked and simultaneously altered in the composition of a new work. In the process of the retelling, we see "the past [is] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past."[301]

In the following, I would situate the author of Wisdom in the exegetical tradition of historical retelling in early Jewish literature and thought. For a close reading of Chapter 10,[302] I first point out some prominent motifs in the historical retelling and their linkages envisioned in the historical recital. Then I move on to show how Wisdom's presentation of historical materials aligns with or differs from biblical tradition. By points of comparisons and contrasts, I aim to show how the historical recital in Wisdom creates a new literary logic as to the sequence of events in the Israelite history. The new literary logic is in the service of praising Sophia and her claim of justice in the life of the patriarchs and the exodus event. I argue that the emphasis on Sophia's agency, influenced by the Isis aretalogy at the time, renews the significance of the Israelite history—history becomes a place where divine wisdom and justice are disclosed and known.

---

[300] Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," 37. This idea is analogous to the expression of "precursor" in textual development. The text itself participates in the interpretive traditions, and simultaneously, it becomes a precursor for subsequent interpretations. This idea has been explored and articulated in Hindy Najman's engagement with Philo's reading of authoritative figures such as Moses and Abraham. See Hindy Najman, "Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish Paideia," in *The Authoritativeness of Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Mladen Popovic, JSJSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 253-265.

[301] Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," 37.

[302] For an extended treatment of Chapter 10, see Andrew T. Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10: A Jewish Hellenistic Reinterpretation of Early Israelite History Through Sapiential Lenses* (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2011).

The examination of the Exodus retelling follows a similar pattern.[303] I first offer some exegetical background for the plague cycle in the Hebrew Bible and point out the growing interest in the elaboration of plagues in the Hellenistic Jewish literature. I show how the depiction of plagues in Wisdom participates in or deviates from the interpretive traditions, some of which are contemporaneous to Wisdom. In particular, I focus on the series of diptychs in the Exodus retelling. These diptychs of the wicked Egyptians and the righteous Israelites draw upon texts that are canonically distant and rearrange the chronology of events in the Exodus and wilderness episodes. The creative rearrangement of biblical events establishes a new literary logic. I argue that the new linkages between texts defamiliarize the biblical stories and make them fresh and new. The innovative retelling in Wisdom actualizes the polysemy of the biblical stories and traditions. Through Wisdom's rendition of the Exodus event, the foundational story of the birth of a nation becomes generative and exhibits pedagogic and didactic values that instruct one to remain faithful to God and turn away from moral injustice and illicit worship. In this regard, a theological connection is made with the reflection on divine mercy and anti-idolatrous discourse (13-15) between the first blood plague and the rest of the plagues in the Exodus retelling.

1. Historical Recital through the Sapiential Lens: Ch.10

[303] For extended treatments on the exegetical traditions and hermeneutical principles in Wisdom's Exodus retelling, see especially Samuel Cheon, *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation, Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 23* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Peter Enns, *Exodus Retold: Ancient Exegesis of the Departure from Egypt in Wis 10:15-21 and 19:1-9* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997); R. T. Siebeneck, "The Midrash of Wisdom 10-19," *CBQ* (1960): 176-182; Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, "The Hermeneutics of Exodus in the Book of Wisdom," in *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honor of Cornelis Houtman*, ed. Riemer Roukema, Bert Jan Lietaert Peerbolte, Klaas Spronk, Jan-Wim Wesselius (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 97-166; Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 380-411; Monya McGlynn, *Divine Judgment and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom (*Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 170-219; Jonathan Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to Romans: Texts in Conversation* (Boston: Brill, 2013), 61-80.

A. Motifs in a Historical Recital

Many scholars have made remarks concerning the unique literary genre of Wisdom 10, largely due to the lack of parallels in the Hebrew Bible.[304] In his detailed analysis of the chapter, Glicksman briefly touches upon the historical psalms, in particular those hymns of praise (Ps. 105, 135-136), and discusses their possible literary influence on the interpretation of history in Wisdom 10.[305] He concludes that the influence is subtle, and might be "part of his religious subconscious" in presenting history in a chain of events.[306] I would like to suggest otherwise. To better understand the selection of historical motifs and their literary arrangement, I think it can be fruitful to set up a careful comparative study with the tradition of historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible. The references to the patriarchs and the Exodus event, alongside the speedy progression of narration, much resemble the historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible.

In what follows, I will explore the similar motifs shared by the historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible and the list in Wisdom 10 and show how Wisdom articulates and expands these motifs. My focus does not lie in the identification of a genre, but rather in how the selection of historical materials contributes to the recognition or magnification of a motif. In addition, I also pay attention to the combination of these varied motifs in the historical recitals, and the literary logic generated by such an arrangement. The art of storytelling lies in the creation of a literary logic, which plays a crucial role in tying the discrete biblical events together and generates meaning in the history recital as a whole. In

---

[304] See Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 264; Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon* 10, 82-99. Both scholars agree that Wisdom 10 can be regarded as *Beispielreihen*, a list of heroes. Similar forms can be seen in the following texts: 1 Macc 2:50-61; 4 Macc 16:16-23; 18:9-19; Sir 44-50; Heb 11; CD 2.17-3.12; Philo, *Praem.* 13-78; Virt. 119-227, though not all scholars agree that these lists belong to the sub-genre of *Beispielreihen*.

[305] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 77-80.

[306] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 80.

other words, the purpose and function of history are reflected in the emplotment of the various historical motifs.[307] By focusing on the motifs in the texts, I argue that Wisdom 10 participates in the long and enduring tradition of reciting biblical history and makes modifications to adapt to the Hellenistic context.

Depending on the time and provenance of the composition or redaction of a historical recital, the number of events included in the list varies significantly. Considering this, historical recitals in nature are flexible to expansion. The traditions reflected in the different historical lists can be elastic and amenable to change. Despite the plasticity and fluidity of traditions manifested in varied texts of historical retellings, there remain certain relatively stable historical motifs that occur with high frequency in the recitation of the Israelite history. These historical motifs include 1) the patriarchal period, 2) the Exodus, 3) the wilderness, 4) conquest, 5) Sinai, 6) David, 7) exile and return. These motifs occur frequently, though not every single motif has to appear in one text to attest to the importance of the motif. The grouping of several motifs in one text is a common phenomenon.[308] Two particular historical motifs that are pertinent to the historical recital in Wisdom 10 include 1) the patriarchal period and 2) the Exodus. In the following, I will first offer a quick survey of how the majority of historical recitals (i.e. Josh. 24, 1 Sam. 12, Neh. 9, Ezek. 20, Pss. 78, 105, 106, 135, 136) in the Hebrew Bible elaborate on these two

---

[307] Shemaryahu Talmon highlights the importance of studying a motif in conjunction with other motifs. His main concern lies in the different literary motifs that occur in the Hebrew Bible and how these motifs enable us to gauge the way of thinking among the ancient Israelites. Building upon his method of studying literary patterns and motifs, I would like to further engage with the narrative thread that runs through the different historical motifs in the case of Wisdom. See Shemaryahu Talmon, *Literary Motifs and Patterns in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 8.

[308] In studies of historical psalms and their cultic contexts, scholars have pointed out the incorporation and interpretation of these motifs. See Erik Haglund, *Historical Motifs in the Psalms* (Uppsala, Sweden: Liber Tryck Stockholm, 1984); A. S. Kapelrud, "Tradition and Worship: The Role of the Cult in Tradition Formation and Transmission," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, ed. D. A. Knight (London: SPCK, 1977), 101-124.

motifs. By points of comparisons and contrasts, I will examine the shared elements in Wisdom 10, also the elements that are added in or left out, and the significance that the interpretations bring out.

a. The Patriarchal Period

Apart from the extensive narrative cycle of the patriarchs in Genesis (Ch.12-50), the references to the life of the patriarchs are scanty across the Hebrew Bible.[309] In the majority of the historical recitals, the three foundational patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose names become associated with the epithet of God "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"[310] generally occur in the beginning of the recitals. Among the three patriarchs, Isaac receives the least attention in historical recitals. Isaac is briefly mentioned in Josh. 24: 3-4 and Ps.105:9. In both contexts, the name of Isaac occurs in conjunction with Abraham and does not exhibit any significance in the progress of the narrative. On the other hand, both Abraham and Jacob are mentioned on a regular basis. These two figures facilitate the narrative flow and are linked to particular events with certain theological significance.

For Abraham, he establishes the genealogy of Israel, and the Abrahamic covenant is closely tied to the promises of descendants and the land (cf. Gen. 12, 15). The three historical recitals including the name of Abraham reflect this theological trend. In Josh. 24:2-3, God took Abraham from a family that worships pagan gods and brought him to the land of Canaan. In the meantime, the promise of descendants (וארב את זרעו) is actualized

[309] Many scholars have noted the phenomenon. Blenkinsopp comments on the lack of external references to Abraham outside Genesis. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Abraham: The Story of a Life* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2015), 1-26. In the Psalms, the explicit mention of the patriarchs is rather rare. C. J. S. Lombaard, "Some Remarks on the Patriarchs in the Psalms," *Old Testament Essays* 11, no.1 (Jan. 1998), 60-62; David Emanuel, *From Bards to Biblical Exegetes: A Close Reading and Intertextual Analysis of Selected Exodus Psalms* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012). In his analysis of the Psalms that are related to the Exodus event, he notes that the treatment of the patriarchs' lives is scanty.

[310] Cf. Exod. 3:6, 3:15, 16, 4:5; 1 Kgs. 18:36; 1 Chr. 29:18; 2 Chr. 30:6.

through the birth of Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. The pericope on Abraham in Nehemiah's confessional prayer also starts with Abraham's migration by divine election (בחר), followed by covenantal language (כרות עמו הברית) with the promises of offspring and land (Neh. 9:7-8). The mention of Abraham is more sporadic in Ps. 105, yet each reference is closely tied to the divine covenant and the promises. In particular, the promise of land is underscored (vv.9, 42). Scholars have noticed the interest in land in Nehemiah 9 and Psalm 105, as land serves as a focal point in the text.[311] In this regard, Abraham's association with land provides a foundation for the hope for the retrieval of land once promised to and belonging to the Israelites' ancestors in the post-exilic period.

Like Abraham, Jacob is also important in the patriarchal period. From a literary point of view in these historical recitals, Jacob bridges the patriarchs to the Exodus event by his relocation to Egypt (Gen.46). Josh. 24:4 states, "Jacob and his sons went down (ירדו) to Egypt." Similarly, 1 Sam. 12:8 mentions Jacob went into (בא) Egypt. The parallel verse in Ps.105:23 also notes Jacob's arrival (ויבא) and dwelling (גר) in Egypt. In the MT, Jacob's relocation to Egypt in Josh. 24 and 1 Sam. 12 are followed immediately by the Exodus event (Josh. 24:5, 1 Sam. 12:8b). In the Greek translation, however, the explanation for the cause of divine deliverance from Egypt is provided. To explain the cause, the LXX contains information that shows what happened in between Jacob's time and the Exodus event. In LXX Josh. 24:4-5, one reads:[312]

---

[311] Judith Newman, *Praying by the Book: The Scriptualization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 92-102; Lombaard, "Some Remarks on the Patriarchs in the Psalms," 64. Also see D. Mathias, *Die Geschichtstheologie der Geschichtssummarien in den Psalmen* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Long, 1993), 210, 212.

[312] Scholars have long observed the differences between the OG and the MT in Joshua 24. Nearly every verse in the chapter exhibits certain differences. OG Joshua 24:4-5 is missing from the MT, yet there exists an "almost word-for-word counterpart in Deut. 26:5-6." See Ville Makipelto, *Uncovering Ancient Editing: Documented Evidence of Changes in Joshua 24 and Related Texts* (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018), 75. Makipelto contends that this addition was likely available to the translator in the Hebrew *Vorlage* and explores the possibilities of incorporating Deut. 26:5-6, discussing how the verses accidentally became lost in

καὶ ἐγένοντο ἐκεῖ εἰς ἔθνος μέγα καὶ πολὺ καὶ κραταιόν·
καὶ ἐκάκωσαν αὐτοὺς οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι.
and became there a great and populous nation,
and the Egyptians treated them badly.

In the case of LXX 1 Sam.12:8,[313] the Greek translator describes Jacob in the following:

Ὡς εἰσῆλθεν Ἰακὼβ καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς Αἴγυπτον,
καὶ ἐταπείνωσεν αὐτοὺς Αἴγυπτος
And Jacob and his sons went into Egypt,
and Egypt humbled/mistreated them.

From a literary perspective, here the addition of "his sons" after the mention of Jacob makes more sense of the birth for the future generation that experiences the Exodus. In the meantime, the mistreatment by the Egyptians not indicated in the MT, is found in the Greek translation. In the Greek translation, the literary move from Jacob's moving to Egypt to the Exodus event is strengthened in comparison to the MT. The information presented in the Greek text indicates a stronger literary link between Jacob and his subsequent generation, and also God's commission of Moses and Aaron in delivering the people by building upon the growth of the Israelites (more explicit in Josh. 24:4) and the oppression of Egyptians. Both factors are mentioned in Ps. 105:24-25: "And the Lord made his people very fruitful (ηὔξησε/ויפר), and made them stronger (ἐκραταίωσεν/ויעצמהו) than their foes. He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal craftily (δολιοῦσθαι/התנכל) with his

the MT text on p 75-77. I thank Alison Salvesen for bringing my attention to the Hebrew *Vorlage* variants and recommending the article by Anneli Aejmelaeus. Aejmelaeus' article led me to further investigation into the divergent sources possibly presented in the translation. See Anneli Aejmelaues, "What Can We Know about the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 99, no.1 (1987): 58-89, esp. 66-71.

[313] Makipelto highlights the connection between Josh. 24:4-7 and 1 Sam. 12. All the variant readings in the MT Joshua correspond to the phrasings in MT 1 Sam 12. Makipelto, *Uncovering Ancient Editing*, 72-74.

servants." The literary evidence in LXX Josh. 24 and 1 Sam.12 follows the narrative flow in Ps. 105 which is based on a reading of the transitional passages from Genesis to Exodus (Gen. 50-Exod. 1-2). Although the connection between Jacob and the Exodus event seems loose in the MT Josh. 24 and 1 Sam. 12, the familiarity with these stories might not impede the readers from understanding the progression of events nor miss the purpose of such a historical recital. Yet the plus verses in the Greek translation remain valuable, as they show how literary logic matters in the conception of the flow of events and also testify to a possible divergent Hebrew *Vorlage*.

Besides Abraham and Jacob, other characters in the patriarchal period rarely get attention from the major historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible. Esau gets a passing note regarding his inheritance, alongside Jacob in Josh. 24:4. The name of Joseph appears briefly in Ps. 78:67 where he represents the North that the Lord rejects. Ps. 105:16-23 is the only instance where the story of Joseph receives a more extensive treatment. Snippets of Joseph's life story, such as being sold by his brothers, imprisonment, and his rise to power in the court, are rendered in a poetic fashion in Ps. 105.

Although not every patriarch in the Genesis account receives extensive treatment, two characteristics are quite consistent in depicting a patriarch in most historical recitals. First, there is an individual focus.[314] For instance, when the message is concerned with Abraham, particular events in Abraham's life will be selected and commented upon in light of the covenant and divine promises. Second, the portrayal of the individual patriarch tends to be brief and never exhaustive. The reason is twofold. On the one hand, the nature of a

[314] The focus on the individual can be regarded as inchoate in the historical recitals. The scale is limited and the samples are mainly constrained to Abraham and Jacob, one instance, Joseph. The full-blown interest in each individual amidst the heroes from Israel's past is more of a Hellenistic literary phenomenon. See my note on *Beispielreihen*.

historical recital is sweeping in tendency. On the other hand, the way of historical recitals drawing upon biblical narratives preserved in the Pentateuch presumes preexisting knowledge on the part of the readers. The brief and succinct textual references to the events from the biblical narratives or figures are not meant to block one's understanding, but function as "a major way to convey clues for gap-filling and interpretation of what is actually in the text."[315] Readers or hearers of the message are expected to actively engage with the given information.

In Wisdom 10, the patriarchal period covered in the list also embodies traits of the majority of historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible. Patriarchs are treated individually and their life events are incorporated selectively. Nevertheless, there are some distinctive developments in the historical retelling of Wisdom 10. First, more figures in the patriarchal period, those in the prediluvian period are added to the list. Adam the father of humanity begins the list. Many uncommon figures in traditional historical recitals such as Cain and Abel, Noah, Lot and his wife are part of the list. Jacob and Joseph also get more elaborate depictions in Wisdom 10. Second, the historical retelling exhibits a strong didactic sense, as the anonymous biblical figures serve as positive and negative examples to demonstrate the saving works of Sophia. By attributing moral quality to the biblical figures, the list creates some innovative links between different biblical events, including 1) Adam "the first-formed father of the world"; 2) Cain and the flood; 3) the Tower of Babel and Abraham; 4) Lot-Jacob-Joseph, from persecution to liberation. Now let us take a close look at these intriguing literary links in Wisdom's historical recital.

---

[315] Karl N. Jacobson, *Memories of Asaph: Mnemohistory and the Psalms of Asaph* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017), 195.

Making New Literary Links

a.1 Adam "the first-formed father of the world"

The list begins with Adam, an antediluvian figure who hardly appears in any historical recital. In fact, neither the Hebrew Bible nor the subsequent Jewish literature seems to have much invested interest in Adam as a figure.[316] The exception would be Jubilees, the writings of Philo, the Life of Adam and Eve, also the Wisdom of Solomon. Most of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical literature does not seem to consider *'dm* as a proper name.[317] That being said, the significance of Adam is readily noticeable in the historical recital in Wisdom. By placing Adam in the front of a historical list, Wisdom declares that human history starts with the creation of Adam.

In the historical retelling, Adam is the only character without an evaluative description. He is not described as "righteous."[318] Instead, he is described as "the first-formed father of the world" (πρωτόπλαστον πατέρα κόσμου) (10:1). The singularity of Adam is further stressed with the expression that immediately follows "when he alone was created" (μόνον κτισθέντα). The term πρωτόπλαστος is derived from a reading of Gen. 2:7 where God formed (ἔπλασεν) man of the dust of the earth.[319] LXX uses the verb πλάσσω to describe the divine action of creation. In the Septuagint, the word πρωτόπλαστος is only

---

[316] George J. Brooke, "From Adam to the Patriarchs: Some Biblical Figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and The Nag Hammadi Codices* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 180. In the Qumran and Nag Hammadi corpora, Adam remains a marginal figure of discussion. Brooke notes that Laato and Valve provide a maximalist view on the issue. Cf. *Adam and Eve Story in the Hebrew Bible and in Ancient Jewish Writings Including the New Testament*, SRHB 7, ed. Antti Laato and Lotta Valve (Turku: Abo Akademi University; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2016).

[317] See John R. Levison, *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: from Sirach to 2 Baruch* (London: Bloomsbury, 1988), 13-32.

[318] The reason for this is uncertain. However, Kolarcik suggests that "the reason why the author does not describe him as righteous is likely that it was precisely from his transgression that wisdom had delivered him." Kolarick, "The Book of Wisdom," 522.

[319] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 106. Cf. note 11: Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 64; Schwenk-Bressler, *Sapientia Salomonis*, 64; Scarpat, *Libro della Sapienza*, 2:177.

attested in the Wisdom of Solomon and it occurs twice in the book.[320] Another occurrence of the word is in the autobiographical section where the Solomonic sage describes himself: "I am…a descendant of the first-formed individual born on earth" (Εἰμι…γηγενοῦς ἀπόγονος πρωτοπλάστου) (7:1).

Let us take a moment to consider in what sense is the sage "the first-formed individual" in light of the similar expression conferred upon Adam, the progenitor of humanity? First, I think the shared vocabulary πρωτόπλαστος highlights human creaturehood and both are bounded by the earth. This realization is important for the sage who presents himself in the voice of King Solomon whose authority and power are well-acknowledged in traditions. In the autobiography section, the sage states that the fate of birth and death unites all people together despite one's social-political status. In this sense, the sage is also Adam-like and he is a descent of "the first-formed individual."

Furthermore, as the "first-formed" humans, God grants both Adam and the Solomon-like sage responsibilities to rule. The ruling ability depends on the guidance of wisdom. In the case of Adam, shortly after a depiction of Adam's creation status, [sophia] "delivered him from his own transgressions" (ἐξείλατο αὐτὸν ἐκ παραπτώματος ἰδίου) (10:1b). What does this deliverance refer to here? Does it imply that Adam has committed certain transgressions and then delivered from Lady Wisdom? Scholars propose different opinions regarding the interpretation of this puzzling verse. Some would argue that Adam had committed transgression and was later restored.[321] Levison offers another interpretation. He argues that wisdom "saved" Adam in the sense that Adam "was

[320] The term also occurs in Philo's *QE* 2.46.

[321] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 213; Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 92; Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 109; J. A. F. Gregg, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1909), 96.

preserved from sinning by means of wisdom."[322] In this reading, Adam is not tainted by sin. He connects the previous verb διαφυλάσσω performed by wisdom with other instances in Wisdom (10:12, 17:4) and argues that wisdom's role in the life of Adam can be regarded as *preservation* from rather than deliverance from transgression.[323] I think Levison's reading is promising in that the perfect state of Adam aligns with the rest of the righteous Israelite heroes in the list.[324] This reading echoes the many traditions that the primordial Adam is regarded as the example of the perfect human being.[325] At the same time, the life of Adam preserved from the blunder and errors resembles the life of the sage in his prayer for wisdom[326]—may wisdom "guide [him] prudently in [his] actions and guard [him] with her glory" (10:11).

With wisdom's protection and guidance, both Adam and the sage are expected to fulfill their ruling obligations. The last segment on Adam reads, "she gave him strength to rule over all things" (ἔδωκέ τε αὐτῷ ἰσχὺν κρατῆσαι ἁπάντων) (10:1). The word κρατέω "to rule" in the depiction of Adam forms a parallel with the vocation of humanity envisioned by the sage: "to rule over (δεσπόζῃ) the creatures that were made by you, and to manage (διέπῃ) the world in holiness and righteousness" (9:2-3). The divine mandate for humanity to rule over the creatures of the world (Gen.1:26-28) is inscribed in these verses. In this regard, the first human Adam actualizes the command of God with the gift of wisdom. The two verbs διέπω and δεσπόζω also occur in tandem in the description of the divine ruling: "…you manage (διέπεις) all things righteously…for your strength is the beginning of

---

[322] Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 60.
[323] Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 60.
[324] Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 60.
[325] Cf. C. Fletcher-Louise, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).
[326] Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 60.

righteousness, and your sovereignty (δεσπόζειν) over all causes you to spare all" (12:15-16). In addition to the verbs, the echoes of modifying nouns such as "strength ἰσχύς" and "righteousness δικαιοσύνης" reinforce the connection between divine rule and human rule.[327] The connection reflects a common view of kingship in the Hellenistic world: "human management of the world [is] a legitimate imitation of the divine rule of the world."[328] Thus, the exhortation of the rulers and judges of the nations (1:1; 6:1-2) to pursue wisdom and the divine is essential for wise ruling in line with God's own rulership.

In light of Wisdom's portrayal of humanity and their tasks, human beings are endowed with the power and responsibility of monarchs.[329] Amongst all, the Solomonic sage is singled out to exhibit the power of wisdom in pursuing wise ruling. The earnest desire for wisdom is inseparable from the sage's recognition of human nature. Just as the juxtaposition between Adam's creaturehood and his power to rule (10:1-2), the sage also indicates a similar tension in his prayer (7:1-6; 8:10-12; 9:11-18). Nevertheless, the antidote to the persistent tension is wisdom for both of them. It is wisdom that balances the tension between the human predicament of mortality and the divine mandate of ruling.

In sum, by positioning Adam at the start of the historical recital, Wisdom traces the history of Israel back to the progenitor of the human race. Adam as the archetype of humans embodies the nature and responsibility of all humanity. In the meantime, the connection between Adam and the sage as a descent of the first-formed man generates a network of meaning in terms of human mortality, dominion, and the gift of wisdom.

---

[327] Levison also points out that the depiction of human authority granted by God in 9:3 and 9:5 shares many vocabularies with the depiction of God's armor in 5:17-20. Levison, *Portraits of Adam*, 56.
[328] D. Georgi, *Weisheit Salomos*, Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit, 3.4 (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1980), 434.
[329] Newman, "Democratization of Kingship," 324.

a.2 Cain and the Flood

Following the first man, Wisdom quickly moves on to Cain whose life fails to abide in wisdom and perishes (10:3). The contrast between Adam and Cain is clear in the outcomes of their life. The intriguing literary connection here is the link between Cain and the flood. Through the initial causal phrase δι' ὃν, Cain and his murder are regarded as the cause of the flood. "Because of him, the earth was flooded" (δι' ὃν κατακλυζομένην γῆν) (10:3). In this case, Cain becomes accountable for something more severe and terrible than scripture assigned to him. According to Genesis 6:1-6, the flood is divine punishment of the increasing human wickedness which is signified by the rise of the Nephilim, also intercourse of the sons of God and the daughters of humankind. In the development of the flood tradition, many texts start to associate the reason for the flood with the unruly interactions between the divine beings and humanity.[330] The connection might be alluded to in Wisdom as well: "In the beginning, when the arrogant giants (ὑπερηφάνων γιγάντων)[331] were being destroyed…" (14:6).

Amidst the tradition of the flood, Cain's association with the flood in Wisdom is quite novel.[332] In the context of the list, Cain is juxtaposed to the first-created human, Adam. Adam symbolizes life while Cain is the destroyer of life. Considering Cain as the first murderer, David Winston explains that Cain "serves as a paradigm of human

---

[330] Explicit connections can be found in 3 Macc 2:4; 1 Enoch 6-10; Jub. 7:21-25; A. J. 1.3.1-2 §§73-75.

[331] In LXX, Nephilim is translated as γίγας giants.

[332] There are some textual variants noted in the critical apparatus. Instead of "δι ον," Codex Sinaiticus offers a reading of "διο," a conjunction often translated as "therefore" and expressing consequences. The textual variants can be approached in two ways. One possibility is that the scribe(s) might have confused the two terms due to the similar appearances in the letters. Another possibility is that the scribe(s) might have grappled with the implied meaning in the verse: how does Cain become responsible for the flood? In this context, the scribe(s) might have attempted to identify the cause of the food, which could be fratricidal rages or wrath indicated in the preceding verse. I thank Alison Salvesen for bringing this into my attention, and to Guillermo Velillia for his discussion on this particular textual variant with me.

wickedness, so that the cause of the flood can be ascribed to them."[333] The death of Cain is also new in Wisdom. According to Genesis, Cain does not perish as a result of his murder. Cain's death is also suggested in Philo's *Det*. 14.47-48, though the emphasis is on the spiritual and moral death of Cain. Philo explains that the expression "Cain killed him" (καὶ ἀπέκτεινεν αὐτόν) in the biblical text means Cain has finished himself by the departure from "virtue and the love of God." In Wisdom, the death of Cain can be read as both physical and spiritual. The clear retribution message in Wisdom—the salvation of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked—places Cain in the fate of the wicked (cf. Wis 1:16; 2:21-24). To conclude the primeval history, Noah, the righteous man, is saved from the flood by a fragile piece of wood (δι' εὐτελοῦς ξύλου). The inconspicuous means seems a degradation of Noah's gigantic ark, yet its seeming insignificance highlights the power of wisdom. Even with a small and tiny piece of wood, wisdom can pilot Noah to safety.

a.3 The Tower of Babel and Abraham

Another intriguing link is Wisdom's juxtaposition of Abraham and the Tower of Babel. The seemingly sharp transition from the primeval time to the patriarchal period in Genesis is much toned down, for Abraham becomes contemporary with the generation of the Tower of Babel. Wisdom 10:5 reads,

> Αὕτη καὶ ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ πονηρίας ἐθνῶν συγχυθέντων εὗρε τὸν δίκαιον,
> καὶ ἐτήρησεν αὐτὸν ἄμεμπτον Θεῷ…
> She also, when nations, collaborating together in wickedness, were put to confusion,
> recognized the righteous man and preserved him blameless with God…

[333] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 214.

The verb συγχέω, in the form of aorist passive participle (συγχυθέντων) here, is also used in the episode of the Tower of Babel in Genesis LXX (11:7, 9). Yet the focus on "confusion" in Wisdom is not so much of the languages, but rather caused by human wickedness (ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ πονηρίας).[334] In the midst of the evil nations who attempted to bring disorder to the world, Abraham was found and preserved by wisdom.

How does Abraham get placed among the rebellious nations? The origin of the tradition is hard to trace, yet its popularity can be attested in many different texts[335] which confirms it being a widespread exegetical tradition. In these traditions, Abraham is portrayed as someone who vociferously protests against the building project.[336] The status of Abraham as a righteous individual amongst the arrogant people is made clear in the particular exegetical tradition.

To further explain the link between Gen.11:1-9 and Gen. 12:1-3, Peter Enns proposes that the connection might be motivated by certain narrative gaps presented in the portrayal of Abraham in the Hebrew Bible.[337] For instance, in Joshua's farewell speech,

---

[334] Philo operates in the same exegetical stream. In the *De confusion linguarum*, Philo reads the story not as merely a confusion of languages, but rather divine punishment for the wrong-doing that wicked men performed. "…the confusion of tongues was effected as a remedy for sins, in order that men might not be able to cooperate in common for deeds of wickedness through understanding one another…For it was not the languages which were the causes of men's uniting for evil objects, but the emulation and rivalry of their souls in wrong-doing." 4.9-10.

[335] Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 6-7; Enns also notes some Rabbinic sources that participate in a similar tradition: Gen. Rab. 38:13; 33:13; b. Pesah. 118a; Deut. Rab. 2.29; Cant. Rab. 1.55; 8:9; Midr. The. 118:36-38. See Enns's discussion in "Wisdom of Solomon and Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period", 218. For scholarly engagement with the particular tradition, see Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 85-90; also G. W. E. Nickelsburg, "Good and Bad Leaders in Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Israel*, SBL SCS 12, eds. John J. Collins and G. W. E. Nickelsburg (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1980), 51-52; Diana Lipton, "The Reluctant Brick Maker: Babel and Abraham in Pseudo-Philo and Bereshit Rabah," in *Ve-Ed Ya'aleh (Gen 2:6), vol.2: Essays in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Edward L. Greenstein*, eds. Peter Machinist, Robert A. Harris, Joshua A. Berman, Nili Samet, Noga Ayali-Darshan (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2021), 1065-1078.

[336] See Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 6-7; Pseudo-Philo, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 6-7. See Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 18-19.

[337] Peter Enns, "Wisdom of Solomon and Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period," 219.

Abraham and his ancestors used to worship pagan gods before their migration (Josh. 24:2), which is attested nowhere in the Genesis accounts.[338] We can observe that the early interpreters created a pagan religious upbringing for Abraham because they have become aware of the abrupt transition from the generation of Babel to a focus on the individual Abraham. By doing so, these interpreters emphasize Abraham's faith to the true God and his resistance against idolatry as a result of his enlightenment.[339] In the case of Wisdom, the sage does not show a particular concern for idolatry in relation to Abraham. Nevertheless, by placing Abraham in the Babel generation, the distinction of Abraham as a righteous person amidst the wicked people remains clearly observable.[340] The last part of Wis. 10:5 alludes to the Aqedah story (Gen.22). In this time, Abraham was kept strong (ἰσχυρός) by Sophia to overcome the test by the near-sacrifice of his son.

a.4 Lot-Jacob-Joseph

The following three patriarchal figures Lot-Jacob-Joseph round up the patriarchal period, each receives relatively longer treatment than the previous figures. In traditional historical recitals, none of the figures tends to be included, not to mention an elaboration. The events selected in the portrayal of the three patriarchal figures largely follow the progression of the narrative in the Hebrew Bible.

---

[338] Enns, "Wisdom of Solomon and Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period," 218.

[339] Abraham's iconoclasm can be found in *Jubilees* 11-12, *The Apocalypse of Abraham* 1-8, *Gen. Rab.* 38:13; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan Genesis* 11.28; *Quran* Surah 21.

[340] For a recent scholarly reading of the connection between the Tower of Babel episode and the migration of Abraham and his family, see Mark A. Awabdy, "Babel, Suspense, and the Introduction to the Terah-Abram Narrative," *JSOT* 35, no.1 (Sep. 2010): 3-29. Awabdy employs narrative criticism to address the literary connection between the two vignettes. The themes of "reputation" שם and "migration" are key themes in fostering such a connection. Awabdy's reading suggests that the episodes of Babel and the migration of Abram in the Bible are generative to an interconnected reading.

Let us start with Lot. He is depicted as a righteous man who successfully fled from the destruction of the land (10:6). The wicked men in contrast to Lot are the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. The events reflected in the succinct depiction call to mind the narrative in Gen. 19:15-25. God punished Sodom and Gomorrah due to the severity of their sins. In the biblical account, the means by which God used to destroy the evil inhabitants are "sulphur and fire" (θεῖον καὶ πῦρ). In Wisdom's paraphrasing, it becomes "the descending fire" (καταβάσιον πῦρ).

After the mention of the way that the wicked are punished, Wisdom continues with a vivid depiction of the disastrous aftermath of the fiery punishment. Thus, according to Wisdom, the devastating state of the land serves as a testimony (μαρτύριον) of the evil conducted by the impious ones (10:7). The desolate region is described with three features: 1) ongoing fire and smoke, "a smoking waste still remains"; 2) unripened fruits, "plants bearing fruit that does not ripen"; 3) an additional pillar, "a stele of salt standing as a monument to an unbelieving soul."

Concerning the smoking waste (καπνιζομένη χέρσος), the first feature of the area aligns with ancient authors' depiction of the geographical situation of the Dead Sea.[341] For the unripened fruits, the tradition of the cursed fruits in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah might be traced back to Deut. 32:32 where the grapes produced there are bitter and poisonous. A similar motif is observed in Josephus' portrayal of the inedible fruits as a result of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah:

[341] Josephus *J.W.* 4. 483; Philo, *Abr.* 140-141.

> Still, too, may one see ashes reproduced in the fruits, which from their outward appearance would be thought edible, but on being plucked with the hand dissolve into smoke and ashes.[342]

The last feature, the additional stele to the land—the pillar of salt (στήλη ἁλός)—serves as the memorial "of an unbelieving soul" (ἀπιστούσης ψυχῆς). The segment is a reference to Lot's wife who disobeys the command of an angel by looking back to her home. As a result, she becomes a pillar of salt (Gen. 19:26). The association between the pillar of salt and Lot's wife is quite common in ancient writers' comments on the geography of the Dead Sea.[343] Regarding the state of faith of Lot's wife, the Genesis account does not offer any evaluative statement. In Wisdom, following the tendency to ascribe moral quality to biblical figures, Lot's wife is considered "unbelieving" (ἀπιστούσης). Her lack of faith becomes the main reason for her petrification. The word μνημεῖον also exhibits two possible meanings in the unit: it can mean both "memorial" and "tomb."[344] Taking into consideration the double meaning of the word, we can read that the stele of salt functions as "a reminder of her disbelief and her grave."[345]

In addition to describing the deserted land, Wisdom also offers reason for such a condition of Sodom and Gomorrah, alongside the fate of Lot's wife. The core reason is their neglect of wisdom (σοφίαν…παροδεύσαντες), which ultimately distances them from God the source of all good things (τὰ καλά) (10:8). As a result, they leave behind "a memorial of folly" (τῆς ἀφροσύνης … μνημόσυνον) for the humanity and their evil behavior will not escape notice (μηδὲ λαθεῖν δυνηθῶσιν). The term ἀφροσύνη in most wisdom literature suggests not only senseless behavior, but also "wicked and contrary to

[342] Josephus, *J.W.* 4.8.4.
[343] Josephus, *Ant.* 1.11.4; *BT Ber.* 54a; Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer*. 4.31.3; *1 Clement* 11.
[344] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 121.
[345] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 121.

the divine will."[346] In Stoic thinking, ἀφροσύνη is regarded as "ignorance of good and evil (SVF II, 50 frag. 174)" which is the ultimate evil (SVF III, 19 frag.79).[347] The evil and immoral behavior of the wicked have a lasting impact when the wicked men become negative examples for the subsequent generations.

The consequence of being remembered as a negative example is twofold. On the one hand, these people and their wickedness serve as warnings against immoral and foolish behavior. One should not act likewise. On the other hand, the end of the wicked reflects the justice of wisdom. The wrongdoings of the wicked will not be hidden away. The theme is consistent throughout the book. Wisdom embodies the spirit of justice that fills the word and it penetrates into the soul and mind of humanity (1:6-11). "Those who utter unrighteous things will not escape detection (οὐδεὶς μὴ λάθῃ), and justice, when it convicts, will not pass them by (οὐδὲ μὴ παροδεύσῃ)" (1:8). In addition, the evidence of sin can also manifest in the offspring of the wicked. As opposed to the "spiritual fertility"[348] received by the childless, the eunuch, and the youth who die young,[349] the wicked though with children pass down their sinfulness into their descendants (4:6). The consequence of sin cannot escape a close examination. The fruits of the wicked are doomed to be unstable and useless (4:3-4).

After a brief theological commentary on the aftermath of the wicked, the list transitions to another figure of the righteous, namely, Jacob (10:9-12). With the conjunction δε, a contrast to the previous depiction of the wicked is introduced. "But

---

[346] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 272.
[347] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 272.
[348] Jane S. Webster, "Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon," *JSOT* 23, no. 78 (1998), 77.
[349] For a study on the distinct selection of these characters, see Samuel Cheon, "Three Characters in the Wisdom of Solomon 3-4," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 12, no.1 (2001): 105-113.

Wisdom rescued from troubles those who served her" (10:9). The first line in the Jacob unit can be read as a transitional line that reinforces the salvific power of wisdom, the main theme that ties the varied biblical figures together in the list. In the meantime, the idea of "serving" (θεραπέυω) wisdom finds echoes in Sirach 4:14 "they who serve her (wisdom) serve the Holy One." By constructing the parallel between wisdom and God, the sage of Sirach proposes that wisdom functions as a crucial channel through which the master-servant relationship between God and humanity is established.[350] In Wisdom 10, although there is no exact wording that denotes the service to wisdom is equivalent to the service to God, the idea is implicit in the depiction of Moses, who is regarded as "a servant of the Lord" (θεράποντος κυρίου) (v.16a).

To illustrate Sophia's power to rescue people from their suffering (ἐκ πόνων), Jacob's current perilous state and wisdom's guidance serve as the opening of the narrative. He is described as a "fugitive" (φυγάδα) who "fled from his brother's anger" (10:10). The verse is a summary of the situation in Gen. 27:41-45, where Esau wants to kill Jacob for receiving the blessing from Isaac, a blessing that is intended for the firstborn while Jacob gains it through his trick. In Wisdom's account, the ethically problematic side of Jacob is left out.[351] Rather, he is depicted as a righteous man under persecution. In light of the hardship that Jacob experiences, the focus shifts to wisdom and a detailed depiction of her guidance and protection:

> She guided him on straight paths;
> she showed him a divine kingdom
> and gave him knowledge of holy things;

[350] Ralph Marcus, "On Biblical Hypostases of Wisdom," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no.1 (1950), 167.
[351] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 123. Cf. Hans Hübner, *Die Weisheit Salomons*, ATD Apokryphen 4 (Göttingen, 1999), 138.

she prospered him in his toils
and increased the fruits of his labor (v.10).

Wisdom is the main agent for the series of actions: "guide," "show," "give," "prosper," and "increase," each of which demonstrates how wisdom benefits her recipients and makes them thrive. The guidance of wisdom on the straight path (ὡδήγησεν ἐν τρίβοις εὐθείαις) calls to mind the similar image in 9:18 where the sage sets the stage to recount how via wisdom, "…the ways of those on earth were set right" (διωρθώθησαν αἱ τρίβοι τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς). The similar wording stresses the veracity of the introductory statement of the historical recital. The mention of the "divine kingdom" (βασιλείαν θεοῦ) and "knowledge of holy things" (γνῶσιν ἁγίων) might allude to Jacob's vision at Bethel (Gen. 28:10-22). The kingdom of God might refer to divine ruling, in light of the allusion to divine kingship in Wis. 3:8. As for the "holy things," scholars debate about the exact reference. First, ἁγίων can be read as "holy ones," which can be read as the angels descending and ascending on the ladder that Jacob saw in his vision (Gen. 28:3).[352] If such is the case, wisdom granted Jacob knowledge about the angels. The thought is not impossible, yet seems rather odd, since no tradition records the angelic knowledge of Jacob. Second, ἁγίων might refer to the heavenly sanctuary. There is a parallel tradition in the *Testament of Levi* 9:3 where Jacob sees a vision concerning Levi and states that Levi one day would be in the priesthood.[353] The lack of supporting evidence for a priesthood reading renders the option speculative. Another option would be God himself. This alternative reading of Wisdom draws from Prov. 30:3 where the expression γνῶσιν ἁγίων also occurs.[354] It reads,

[352] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 125. Cf. Larcher, *Livre de la Sagesse*, 2:629; Vilchez Lindez, *Sabiduria*, 304; Neher, *Wesen and Wirken*, 144; Schorch, *Jacob's Ladder*, 189-190.
[353] Eric Burrows, "Wisdom 10," *Biblica* 20, no.4 (1939): 406-407. (405-407) Mazzinghi sides with the proposal in his commentary. See Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 274.
[354] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 125.

> θεὸς δεδίδαχέν με σοφίαν, καὶ γνῶσιν ἁγίων ἔγνωκα.
> God has taught me wisdom, and I have knowledge of the holy things.

The parallel structure of the pithy saying suggests that wisdom and knowledge of God are inextricably linked.[355] Among the different readings of the term ἁγίων, the knowledge of God or the way of God fits neatly in the Jacob unit and also the broader context of the historical recital where the didactic value of history told is magnified through the works of Sophia.

The last two stitch use synonymous parallelism. The reference to Jacob's prosperity can be read as a highly condensed summary of Jacob's sojourn at Laban and his acquisition of wealth (Gen. 29-31). The use of πόνος is positive here, as the outcome of one's labor is not in vain, but rather fruitful. This meaning of πόνος forms a contrast with the previous verse where the same term is used to refer to "trouble" or "suffering." The employment of the same verb with different meanings in close proximity shows the transformative power of wisdom: it delivers the righteous from perils and prospers the works by his hand. V.11 closely follows the last two stitch in v. 10 and continues to elaborate on Jacob's accretion of wealth during his time with Laban. The depiction of wisdom standing by (παρέστη) Joseph reflects her constant aid and protection. The verb will return by the end of the book and is used to describe God's constant help for God's people (19:22). Again, the similarities between wisdom and God are embedded in the use of vocabularies and shared imagery.

The last verse (v.12) in the Jacob unit circles back to the imagery of how wicked people pursue after the righteous one. The brief mention of an "arduous contest" (ἀγῶνα

[355] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 125.

ἰσχυρὸν) alludes to Jacob's wrestle with the angel of God (Gen. 32:24ff). The concluding line of the unit brings out the didactic value of the contest: more than a physical contest, it imparts the value of piety (εὐσέβεια) which surpasses everything.[356]

As the episode of Jacob comes to an end, the list moves on to Joseph the last patriarch in the Genesis account. The beginning line (v.13) shows the plight of Joseph when he was sold by his brothers into Egypt (Gen. 38:26-28, 36). Again, Sophia saved Joseph from sin (ἐξ ἁμαρτίας). Most likely, the phrase refers to the sexual temptation from Potiphar's wife in Gen. 39:7-12.[357] In his resistance to Potiphar's wife, Joseph claims that he would not commit such a great evil and sin against God (חטאתי לאלהים/ἁμαρτήσομαι ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ) (Gen. 39:9). The shared terms suggest Wisdom's succinct summary of the event at Potiphar's house. A similar expression is used before to describe Adam. Although the connotation of sin[358] differs in the case of Adam (παραπτώματος) and of Joseph, the idea of deliverance from iniquity embodied by both individual figures forms a nice inclusio before the historical list moves to a collective group.

Following the episode at Potiphar's house, Wisdom also incorporates Joseph's captivity in the pit before he was sold (λάκκον) (Gen. 37). where Sophia accompanied him and never left him alone (συγκατέβη…οὐκ ἀφῆκεν αὐτόν). The divine presence and comfort are implied in Gen. 39:21 "The Lord remained with Joseph; He showed him kindness by making the chief jailor well-disposed toward him."[359] In the Genesis account, the favor of men is closely associated with divine kindness. Wisdom preserves the ethos,

---

[356] The idea of an agon of piety and godliness also occurs in Philo's writing. Cf. *Spec*. 2.183; *Mos*. 1.307; 2.136; *Virt.* 45; *Spec*. 1.57.

[357] Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 101; Reider, *Book of Wisdom*, 137; Larcher, *Sagesse*, 2:636; Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 131.

[358] See my discussion on Adam in a.1.

[359] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 132.

though the ascription to such kindness changes to Sophia who acts as the main agent in the list.[360]

After the temporary imprisonment of Joseph, Wisdom devotes the remaining lines to depicting the change of fate in Joseph's life and his rise to power.

> until she had brought him the scepter of a kingdom (σκῆπτρα βασιλείας),
> and authority over those who ruled over him (ἐξουσίαν τυραννούντων αὐτοῦ).
> Those who had found fault with him she showed to be false
> and gave him everlasting glory (δόξαν αἰώνιον). (v.14)

The series of nouns in the four cola demonstrate the power and authority of Joseph, whose narrative reference can be found in Gen. 41:37-56. In the Genesis account, Joseph gains his reputation through his wise interpretation of Pharaoh's dream and later his service to Pharaoh in coping with the famine in advance. Wisdom outlines Joseph's changing path in life, from persecution to glory with the aid of Sophia. Power, honor, and glory, all these wisdom-related elements[361] in the story of Joseph in Genesis also find their way into the rendition of the life of Joseph in Wisdom.

For the portrayal of Joseph here, the selection of events and its narrative sequence align with the account of Joseph in Ps. 105:17-22. As I mentioned earlier,[362] Psalm 105 is the only instance where Joseph is mentioned by name in a historical recital. Both Ps. 105:17-22 and Wisdom 10:13-14 provide a narrative arc for the life of Joseph, focusing on his enforced slavery, state of being in chains, his liberation, and his subsequent lordship. These varied episodes follow the development of the biblical Joseph cycle closely. Although it might be challenging to argue for a direct influence of Ps. 105 on Wisdom's

[360] I will discuss more about the role and function of Sophia in the historical recital in the following section.
[361] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 134. See Prov. 3:16; 4:8-9; 8:18; Sir 4:13; 6:31.
[362] See my discussion on the role of Joseph in the historical recital.

portrayal of Joseph,[363] the shared interest in showing Joseph as a figure in whom God demonstrates protection from enemies is pronounced.

In fact, this idea of deliverance and protection from evil is the common thread that ties the remaining patriarchal figures together. Each character starts with a peril from which they need liberation. Lot fled (φεύγω) from the cities under destruction (v.6b). Jacob (φῦγάς) fled from the revenge of Esau (v. 10a). Joseph was sold (πραθέντα) and bounded in chains (ἐν δεσμοῖς) (v. 13a, 14ab). Either fleeing or confinement, the righteous individuals experience persecution from the unrighteous. The theme paves the way for the upcoming retelling of the Exodus story, both in its brief form by the end of the historical list and the full-blown version in the rest of the book. In addition, the emphasis on the suffering righteous individual in the midst of persecution has been a major motif in the opening chapters of Wisdom. In Wis. 2:10-5:23, the echoes of the "suffering servant song" in Isa. 52:13-53:12 can be detected.[364]

As Glicksman points out, the consistent theme of the righteous sufferer(s) in the historical recital might reflect how Wisdom responds to his current situation through a reinterpretation of biblical figures.[365] As their ancestors who have been delivered by God from injustice and hardship in the past, the Jewish community in Alexandria will experience God's saving power as well.[366] The collective experience of the Jewish

---

[363] For a study on the parallels between the Wisdom of Solomon and Psalm 105, see Streeter S. Stuart, "The Exodus Tradition in Psalm 105 and the Wisdom of Solomon: Notable Similarities," *Evangelical Quarterly* 92, no.2 (2019): 132-141. On the discussion of Joseph, see 139.

[364] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 119-120. For a discussion on the use of Isaiah in the first section of Wisdom, see Jack M. Suggs, "Wisdom of Solomon 2:10-5: A Homily Based on the Fourth Servant Song," *JBL* (1957): 26-33.

[365] Andrew T. Glicksman, ""Set Your Desire on My Words": Authoritative Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon,"" in *Scriptural Authority and Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity*, ed. Geze G. Xeravits, Tobias Nicklas, and Isaac Kalimi (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 181. (167-184)

[366] Glicksman, "Set Your Desire on My Words," 182.

community in Wisdom's time is possibly most magnified in the retelling of the Exodus story, to which we shall turn.

b. The Exodus

It is not an overstatement to say that no other events in the Hebrew Bible can be as significant as the Exodus in shaping Israelite and Jewish identity. Frequently, the identification of God is associated with the event that the Lord brought Israel from Egypt, the land of slavery.[367] In the historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible, the Exodus is a stable motif that occurs frequently. As a common motif, varied historical recitals highlight different elements in the Exodus story. Breaking down the Exodus story into different elements, I consider the recurring elements include 1) the leadership of Moses and Aaron (Josh. 24:5; 1 Sam.12:6); 2) the plagues, including striking down the firstborn[368] (Josh. 24:5; Ps.78:44-51; 105:28-36; 135:8; 136:10); and 3) miracle at the Red Sea (Josh. 24:6-7; Ps. 78:52-53; 106:9-11; 136:13; Neh. 9:11). These elements are not expected to occur altogether in one historical recital, rather they can show up selectively and in different groupings. Also, the length of the treatment of each individual element varies across lists. The constitutive elements of the Exodus story, either in the individual form or in the collective group, show how God reveals His power by redeeming His people.

---

[367] The depiction becomes a standard formula that occurs throughout the Hebrew Bible, across different literary corpus. Exod. 13:9, 14, 16; 16:32; 18:1; 20:2; 29:46; 32:7, 11; Lev. 11:45; 19:36; 23:33, 43; 25:38, 42; 25:55; 26:13, 45; Num. 14:13; 15:41; 20:16; 23:22; 24:8; Deut. 4:20, 37; 5:6, 15; 6:12, 21; 7:8, 19; 8:14; 9:26; 13:5, 10; 16:1; 20:1; 26:8; 29:25; Josh. 24:5, 17; Judg. 2:1, 12; 6:8; 1 Sam. 8:8; 10:18; 12:6, 8; 2 Sam. 7:6; 1 Kgs. 8:16, 21, 51, 53; 9:9; 2 Kgs. 17:7; 17:36; Ps. 81:10; 105:37; 136:11; Jer. 2:6; 7:22; 11:4, 7; 16:14; 31:32; 32:21; 34:13; Dan. 9:15; Amos 2:10; 3:1; 9:7; Mi. 6:4; Hos. 11:1.

[368] It has been noted by scholars that the striking of the firstborn in Egypt does not fit properly in the so-called plague cycle. It might derive from separate sources and be incorporated into the plagues in the hands of later redactor(s). Dennie J. McCarthy, "Plagues and Sea of Reeds: Exodus 5-14," *JBL* 85, no.2 (1966): 137-158; Ziony Zevit, "The Priestly Redaction and Interpretation of the Plague Narrative in Exodus," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 66, no.4 (Apr., 1976): 193-211.

In Wisdom 10, the Exodus serves as the climax of the entire list. All the elements in the Exodus story are present in the retelling of the departure from Egypt, some more manifest than others. In the following, I will examine how leadership, the plague, and the miracles at the Red Sea are depicted in Wisdom 10:15-20.

The Exodus Elements

b.1 Leadership: Moses as the Lord's attendant

The introductory line of the Exodus unit follows the previous dichotomy between the righteous and the impious. The Israelites are portrayed as "a holy people" (λαὸν ὅσιον)[369] and "a blameless race" (σπέρμα ἄμεμπτον) while the Egyptians are "a nation of oppressors" (ἔθνους θλιβόντων) (10:15). To initiate liberation from oppression, Sophia first "entered the soul of the Lord's servant" (10:16). The identification of the Lord's servant (θεράποντος κυρίου) is straightforward, namely, Moses in the context. The same title is used in LXX Josh. 9:2 to refer to Moses.[370] Wisdom's relationship with Moses is particularly intimate, as the possessive connotation of wisdom is lacking in the depiction of other biblical figures.[371] Nevertheless, similar language is also used in Wis. 7:27b:

> καὶ κατὰ γενεὰς εἰς ψυχὰς ὁσίας μεταβαίνουσα
> φίλους θεοῦ καὶ προφήτας κατασκευάζει
> And passing into the holy souls for generations,
> she establishes friends of God and prophets.

Although Moses has a special relationship with God, indicated in his commission story, Sophia is generous in establishing close relationships with many people across generations,

[369] This description has biblical roots. See Exod. 19:6; Lev. 20:26; Deut. 14:2.
[370] Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 102; Larcher, *Sagesse*, 2:640; Goodrick, *Book of Wisdom*, 235.
[371] Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 45.

making them friends of God and prophets.[372] In this regard, Moses represents the work of wisdom in his particular milieu as God's important prophet. The prophethood of Moses is stressed in the water from the rock episode in Wis.11:1-5 where Moses is described as "a holy prophet" (προφήτου ἁγίου) through whom the actions of the Israelites are blessed by God (11:1).

Wisdom's portrayal of Moses's leadership role goes beyond a simple mention of his name in most historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible. In the majority of conventional historical recitals, the names of Moses and Aaron serve as an acknowledgement of the two figures, for they play a critical role in carrying out the divine command and leading the people out of the land of Egypt. Rarely any comment is given to either of the leaders. In Wisdom, however, Moses as God's chosen one is indicated through his intimate relationship with Sophia in the historical recital.

b.2 The Plagues

The Exodus unit in the historical recital has a very brief reference to the plagues. Wisdom uses the classic expression "signs and wonders" (אתות ומופתים/σημεῖα καί τέρατα) to refer to the plagues (cf. Exod. 7:3, 9; 11:9, 10; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19), though the order of the word is reversed (ἐν τέρασι καὶ σημείοις) here (10:16). A more elaborative account of the plagues will follow the historical recital in Ch.10 and will be explored further in this chapter.

Apart from the divine miracles, Wisdom also mentions Sophia paid a reward for the labors of the holy people. What does "paying a reward/wage" (ἀπέδωκεν…μισθὸν) refer to here? The description reflects a reading of the Israelites' "plunder of Egyptians" (Exod.

[372] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 137.

11:2, 12:35-36) before their departure from Egypt. The verb "plunder" (נצל/σκυλεύω) in the Exodus narrative seems rather violent and avaricious, making Israelites appear like thieves. This rather problematic action[373] receives quite some attention from many early Jewish interpreters and they render the event by presenting the gold and silver as a fair payment of the labor of the Israelites (e.g. Jub. 48:18; Philo, *Mos*. 1.141-142; Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 162-166). Through clarification, possibly with an apologetic intent, these interpretations justify the actions of the Israelites.

After Israelites received what is due to them, Wisdom continues to describe the guidance of Sophia:

> ὡδήγησεν αὐτοὺς ἐν ὁδῷ θαυμαστῇ
> καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῖς εἰς σκέπην ἡμέρας
> καὶ εἰς φλόγα ἄστρων τὴν νύκτα.
> She guided them on a marvelous way
> and became a covering for them by day
> and a blaze of stars by night.

The verb ὁδηγέω occurs again (9:11b, 10:10b). The guidance of wisdom is critical in shaping the path of a person and a nation. The two following lines call to mind the pillar of the cloud that functions as a major means for direction in the Exodus narrative (Exod. 13:21-22). Not only as a guide, the pillar of the cloud also provides shade for the travelling nation. The sheltering and protective feature of the pillar of cloud is readily observable in Num. 10:34 and 14:14.[374] Wisdom masterfully combines the two distinct features of the

---

[373] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 219-220; Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 53-55. Also see the discussion on "final payment" in James L. Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 586.
[374] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 283.

pillar of cloud and highlights its constancy with the temporal indicators, “by day” (ἡμέρας) and “by night” (νύκτα).

b.3 Miracles at the Red Sea

After the path leading to the sea, Wisdom transitions to describe the Israelites’ experience of the crossing of the Red Sea. This is a remarkable moment in the Exodus, as life and death become reflections of divine salvation and justice. The Egyptians are punished by death, while the Israelites are brought to life. The crossing of the Red Sea is regarded as the climax in many historical recitals’ depiction of the Exodus event. The scene by the sea has been dramatized in different historical recitals. Some highlight the parting of the sea (גזר in Ps. 136:13; בקע in Neh. 9:11). The dry land that appears below the sea becomes a path for the Israelites to walk (Ps. 106:9; Neh. 9:11). To the Egyptians, the water is overwhelmingly destructive. God made the waters cover (כסה/καλύπτω) the enemies and they were drowned (Josh. 24: 7; Ps. 78:53, 106:11). To emphasize the destructive power of the waters, Ps. 106:11 further specifies that “not one of them was left” (אחד מהם לא נותר). In a similar vein, the enemies sank into the deep water “as stone” (כמו אבן) in Neh. 9:11, a simile that is directly borrowed from the Song of Moses (Exod. 15:5).

The respective fate of Israelites and Egyptians articulated in the Exodus narrative is captured in a number of historical recitals. Such is also the case for Wisdom. Wis. 10:18 describes how Sophia “led the people across (διεβίβασεν) the Red Sea, and brought (διήγαγεν) them through much water.” The verb διαβιβάζω means “to transport” or “to carry across,” a verb that is frequently used in the LXX to denote crossing a body of water (Gen. 32:23, Num. 32:5, 30; Josh. 7:7; 2 Sam. 19:16, 19, 42).[375] In Wisdom, the sage

[375] Larcher, *Sagesse*, 2:644.

somehow leaves out the miraculous description of the parting of the sea found in Exod.14 and some other historical recitals. Rather, the two verbs διαβιβάζω and διάγω focus on more of the guidance of wisdom.

As for the fate of the Egyptians, they were drowned (κατακλύζω) by the waters (10:19a). However, drowning is not enough, Wisdom adds further details to show the miserable state of the Egyptians (10:19b-20a):

> καὶ ἐκ βάθους ἀβύσσου ἀνέβρασεν αὐτούς.
> διὰ τοῦτο δίκαιοι ἐσκύλευσαν ἀσεβεῖς
> and from the bottom of the deep she cast them up.
> Therefore, the righteous spoiled the impious.

The choice of vocabulary in these two lines overlaps with some depictions used in the Exodus narrative. For instance, the drowning experience of Pharaoh's chariots is depicted as "going down into the depth (במצולת/εἰς βυθὸν) like a stone" (Exod. 15:5). The phrase "from the depth" (ἐκ βάθους) seems to echo the Song of Moses by the sea.[376] However, in Wisdom, the impious ones not only went down into the deep, but also were "cast up" (ἀνέβρασεν) by the sea. According to Enns, the sage of Wisdom might be attempting to harmonize the different states of death among the Egyptians in the Exodus narrative.[377] Some Egyptians lay dead on the shore (Exod. 14:30) while the depiction of the death of Egyptians in Exod.15 looks rather different. In the Song of Moses, the pursuing Egyptians sank "like a stone" (15:5), "like lead" (15:10), or some of them were "swallowed by the earth" (15:12). How can it be possible that the Egyptians drowned in the depths of the sea could be found on the shore as well? In response to the question, the sage reasons that

[376] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 142.
[377] Enns, "Wisdom of Solomon," 220.

"they must have been cast up again after they had drowned."[378] The Egyptians received a double punishment.

Another added event after the death of Egyptians is the righteous plundering of the impious (20a). The verb "plunder" (σκυλεύω) echoes the episode in Exod. 12:36 (also 3:22) where the Israelites plunder the Egyptians before their departure. Nevertheless, I do not think here Wisdom attempts to invoke the event in Exodus 12.[379] One reason would be that the Egyptians were alive in Exodus 12 and the Israelites still interacted with the Egyptians according to the text. The Egyptians in this verse in Wisdom, however, are dead, a description that does not match up with the account in Exodus 12. Furthermore, the event in Exodus 12 takes place before the Israelites' departure, and precedes the crossing of the Red Sea. The chronology also does not align. In this regard, though the same word "plunder" is used, the direct connection between the two descriptions is debatable. More likely, the event in Exodus 12 is invoked and reinterpreted in v.17 where the holy people received the wage of their labor. Then what does the "plunder" of the dead Egyptians possibly entail? According to some ancient interpreters such as Demetrius the Chronographer (Fragment 5) and Josephus (A.J. 2.16.6; 3.1.4), the Israelites obtained weapons from the dead Egyptians on the seashores. These weapons help with their self-defense after they escaped from Egypt.[380] In that regard, weapons might be the things that the Israelites plundered from the Egyptians.

To end the historical list, the sage provides a final uplifting note by describing the singing voice of the holy nation who is saved from their enemies (10:20). Singing hymns

[378] Enns, "Wisdom of Solomon," 220.

[379] Here I differ from Glicksman's suggestion of the connection between the two events. See Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 144.

[380] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 221; Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 103; Goodrick, *Book of Wisdom*, 237; Hübner, *Weisheit*, 144; Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 143; Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 66-70.

(ὑμνέω) and praising the Lord (αἰνέω) are important components in the Exodus narrative as well. In response to the divine deliverance, Moses and the people of Israel dedicated a song to the Lord (Exod. 15:1). Singing is also mentioned in Ps. 106:12. Additionally, singing and praising will recur in the latter full-blown Exodus retelling in Wisdom (19:9).

The sage also pays attention to how the song was sung and the different groups of people who attended the singing. Everyone praised with "one accord" (ὁμοθυμαδόν) (10:20c). The unity of singing reflects the unity of the people in their righteousness (cf. 18:9), in contrast to the wicked unanimity (ὁμόνοια) at the Babel episode (10:5a).[381] In addition, "the dumb" (κωφός) and "infants" (νήπιοι) were able to join the choir (10:21). The recovery of speech from muteness reminds one of Isa. 35:6: "Then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy."[382] The miraculous healing implied in Isaiah can shed light on the wondrous effects when the dumb and infants start to sing and praise the Lord. Although one cannot find any instance where infants are singing by the sea in the Hebrew Bible, the depiction of infant singing developed quite earlier on in Jewish tradition (*Exod. Rab.* 23:8; *Tg. Ps.J.* Exod. 15:2). In the context of Wisdom's historical recital, one can regard the incorporation of the "dumb" and "infants" in singing as miraculous, just in line with the miraculous deliverance that has already taken place at the Red Sea. In other words, the amazing wonders that Sophia has carried out in delivering the Israelites from the oppression of their enemies compel all people to sing to God, even those who are weak.

B. The Agency of Sophia

[381] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 144.
[382] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 223; Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 104; Goodrick, *Book of Wisdom*, 238; Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 145.

As we have explored the different events from the patriarchal period and the Exodus in Wisdom 10, we can see some overlapping between the historical recitals in the Hebrew Bible and Wisdom. In a way, the form of historical recital in Wisdom 10 can find resonances in the Hebrew Bible. The traditional historical recital in Scripture focuses on God's agency and His role of deliverance. For the Israelite community, remembering the collective history has particular purposes: it either aims to call for praise and thanksgiving to the Lord or to mount a petition to God and seek repentance.[383] Seeing the agency and general purpose of historical recital in the Hebrew Bible, the retelling of the Israelite history in Wisdom is indeed novel. The novelty lies in two aspects. First, the agency of salvation falls upon Sophia. Second, Sophia reenacts a history of justice on behalf of God: the righteous are saved while the wicked are destroyed. In light of the tradition of historical recital, how shall we understand the salvific role of Sophia in Israelite history? In the meantime, how does the work performed by Sophia in Israelite history expand or enrich the nature of wisdom?

To answer these questions, it can be helpful to first compare the portrayal of Sophia in Wisdom 10 with the depictions of wisdom in other wisdom literature. We can start by exploring the similarities. The most apparent similarity is personification, in particular, wisdom as a female figure (Prov. 1:20-33; 8:1-36; 9:1-6; Job 28:12-28; Sir. 24:1-34; Bar. 3:9-4:4). In the variety of texts, verbs that describe the action of wisdom are in the form of third person feminine singular. In Proverbs, the metaphor of wisdom is closely associated with a good wife who sets order in the domestic sphere and offers hospitality (9:1, 5; 1:31; 4:17). The praise of the noble woman (אשת חיל) in the concluding

[383] Walter Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment: Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History* (Louisville, Kentucky: WJK Press, 1991), 17-18.

chapter of Proverbs can be read as a hymn to the embodied and engendered wisdom.[384] The feminine imagery of wisdom that Ben Sira employs is shared with the ones found in Proverbs (7:18-31; 14:20-15:10; 24:1-22). In addition to the wisdom-wife connection, Ben Sira further articulates the link between wisdom and the Torah. The identification of wisdom as the Torah takes place in wisdom's praise of herself (24:1-22) and is regarded as the hallmark in the instruction. In that regard, the orientation of the wisdom instruction in Ben Sira is to observe and live out the law of God. The pursuit of lady wisdom abides in the covenantal relationship between God and His people Israel.

The presentation of Sophia in the Wisdom of Solomon participates in the tradition of feminine personification of wisdom. In the Book of Wisdom (Ch. 7-9), the sage praises Sophia with a series of elaborate adjectives to stress how beautiful and precious wisdom is (7:22-23). Sophia's beauty enamored the sage, making him desire her and want to take her as his bride (8:2, 9).[385] The erotic relationship between wisdom and her pursuer remains present: she is to be loved, sought, and longed for (6:12, 13, 17; 8:2). Nevertheless, in comparison to the feminine wisdom portrayed in Proverbs and Ben Sira, Sophia in Wisdom also exhibits marked differences.

---

[384]Webster, "Sophia: Engendering Wisdom," 66. Also on the discussion about the good wife as a symbol of wisdom, see R. E. Murphy, "Wisdom and Eros in Proverbs 1-9," *CBQ* 50, no.4 (1988): 600-603; T. P. McCreesh, "Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10-31," *RB* 92 (1985): 25-46. A close study of the semantics between wisdom and the noble woman makes the connection stronger. See A. Wolters, "Sopiyya (Prov. 31:27) as Hymnic Participle and Play on Sophia," *JBL* 104 (1985), 577-87.

[385] In the old wisdom tradition, the relationship between wisdom and humanity is often depicted in marital language. According to Niccacci, the equation between wisdom and woman generates two possibilities for the pursuers of wisdom. On the one hand, one's acquisition of wisdom serves as the first step to getting a wife of one's life. Another option would be choosing wisdom as one's spouse in a spiritual sense. Niccacci suggests that Wisdom leans towards the second option, as the text only mentions wisdom, not any real woman. In that case, the sage of Wisdom remains celibate and chooses wisdom as his only spouse. See Alviero Niccacci, "Wisdom as Woman, Wisdom and Man, Wisdom and God," in *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom, Festschrift M. Gilbert*, ed. N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen (Leuven University Press, 1999), 384.

First, Sophia in Wisdom does not have her own voice, despite her prominent role in the composition of the book as a whole.[386] Her silence by no means reduces her power. Instead, the enumeration of her deeds highlights the power she exhibits in the life of many righteous men in the Israelite history (9:18). The salvific role assigned to Sophia in the historical recital brings out the second unique nature of Sophia in Wisdom. The thought that history is a medium through which divine wisdom is revealed, in fact, is not new. The prologue of Psalm 78 frames historical retelling as wisdom instruction.[387] Ben Sira's praise of the fathers (Ch. 44-50) demonstrates the wealth of wisdom in the history of Israel. Despite the precursor, the novelty of Wisdom lies in the fact that Sophia becomes the main agent by which the history of salvation is retold.

How does the particular vision of wisdom come into being? I think cultural contact plays an important role in shaping and reshaping the vision of wisdom in Jewish thought. A renewal of tradition is inseparable from the influence of new cultural currents. The praise of wisdom through Israel's history is influenced by Greek rhetoric and the aretology of Isis the Egyptian goddess. Regarding the form of the historical list, the table in Mazzinghi's commentary clearly demonstrates the style of anaphora, which is a typical rhetoric employed in aretalogies:[388]

vv.1-2 Adam	αὕτη		διεφύλαξεν	ἔδωκέν
v.3 Cain	ἀπ' αὐτῆς	ἄδικος		
v. 4 Noah	σοφία	δίκαιος	ἔσωσεν	
v.5 Abraham	αὕτη	δίκαιος	ἐφύλαξεν	

[386] Webster, "Sophia: Engendering Wisdom," 74.

[387] Cf. Rebecca W. Poe Hays, "Trauma, Remembrance, and Healing: The Meaning of Wisdom and History in Psalm 78," *JSOT* 41, no.2 (Dec 2016): 183-204; Nili Shupak, *Where Can Wisdom be Found? The Sage's Language in the Bible and in Ancient Egyptian Literature*, OBO 130 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993).

[388] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 263.

vv.6-9 Lot	αὕτη σοφία	δίκαιος	ἐρρύσατο	
vv.10-12 Jacob	αὕτη	δίκαιος	διεφύλαξεν	ἔδωκέν
vv.13-14 Joseph	αὕτη	δίκαιος	ἐρρύσατο	ἔδωκέν
vv.15-21 Moses	αὕτη σοφία	δίκαιοι	ἐρρύσατο	ἀπέδωκεν

With the repetition of αὕτη and σοφία, we can observe the importance of wisdom as a subject of action. In the meantime, the repetition of verbs that focus on "saving," "protecting," and "giving" shape the structure of the list and bring out the central message of Lady Wisdom's power and salvation.[389]

From a comparative perspective, the portrayal of Sophia in Wisdom shares many similarities with the pagan deities of the Mediterranean world, in particular with Isis. Richard Reitzenstein and Burton Mack point out many parallels between the mythologies of Wisdom and Isis.[390] Seeing many common ideas and motifs, John Kloppenborg highlights the social-cultural contacts between Jews and their surroundings and reckons that the Isis cult has critically influenced the depiction of Sophia in Wisdom.[391] Despite the similarities claimed and examined by many scholars, there still remain two major differences between wisdom and Isis.[392] First, in most Isis aretalogies, Isis speaks in the first person to recount her mighty deeds. The feature of self-praise is also present in Prov.

---

[389] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 263.

[390] Richard Reitzenstein, *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: The Basic Ideas and Significance*, trans. John E. Steely (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1978); Burton L. Mack, *Logos und Sophia: Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie im hellenistischen Judentum* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973). Streete gives a brief summary of the parallels between Isis and Wisdom: "Like Isis, Wisdom is concerned with justice; like Isis, who taught writing and the arts of civilization to humanity, Wisdom continues to instruct the wise in these arts, particularly in scripture; like Isis, Wisdom is concerned with the protection of kings and rulers. Wisdom, like Isis, is even seen as the savior of the righteous from the perils of this world (Wis. 10)." See Gail C. Streete, *Her Image of Salvation: Female Saviors and Formative Christianity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 107.

[391] John S. Kloppenborg, "Isis and Sophia in the Book of Wisdom," *The HTR* 75, no.1 (Jan., 1982), 58.

[392] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 94. Cf. Thomas R. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50*, SBLDS 75 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 43.

1:20-33; 8:1-36, and Sir. 24:1-22, but absent in Wisdom 10. As already shown in the previous discussion concerning the nature of wisdom in different Old Testament texts, Sophia is referred to throughout the historical retelling in the third person feminine pronoun and verbal forms. The second difference pertains to the elements included in a proper aretalogy. An aretalogy includes depictions of Isis's nature (*phusis*) and powers (*dynameis*), neither of which can be found in Wisdom 10.[393] Instead, a series of adjectives are found in the encomium of wisdom in Chapters 6-9. These differences, though minor, are helpful to counter a simple label of the historical recital as an aretalogy. Nevertheless, the "aretalogical nature" of the historical recital suffices to show the cross-cultural influence on the changing depiction of wisdom in Jewish thought.[394]

Then how shall we understand the borrowing and the cross-cultural effect on the Jewish conception of wisdom and God? Kloppenborg argues that the intent of portraying Sophia with terms borrowed from the Isis aretalogy is to counter the popular religion in Alexandria and to present Judaism as the saving religion.[395] The apologetical intent has its value, but it sometimes has the tendency to treat the composition of texts as merely reactionary. In fact, the vision of wisdom in association with God is theologically complicated and undergoes constant reification.

The mythic nature of wisdom persists from the Hebrew Bible to the Hellenistic Jewish sapiential literature. Elisabeth Fiorenza comments that the "concept of Wisdom as a heavenly, preexistent figure is at first glance something strange and enigmatic in Judaism and it cannot be quite harmonized with Jewish theology and thought."[396] The complication

---

[393] Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 94.
[394] Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50*, 43.
[395] Kloppenborg, "Isis and Sophia in the Book of Wisdom," 67-73.
[396] E. Schussler Fiorenza, "Wisdom Mythology and the Christological Hymns of the New Testament," in *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. R. L. Wilken (Notre Dame: University of Notre

lies in the orientation to the singleness of deity in Judaism. To address the problem, Fiorenza presents two hypotheses suggested by scholars. One is to treat "the notion of personal wisdom…as a poetic personification or hypostatization of a divine function."[397] The other is to suggest the influence of a foreign goddess in the construction of the Wisdom figure.[398] The discussion of Isis in Kloppenborg's case aligns with the second hypothesis. Nevertheless, it can be dubious to conclude that Lady Wisdom in Wisdom 10 is a goddess-like entity that parallels the Egyptian goddess Isis.[399] The cultural influence is noticeable, but it might be an overstatement to depict how the construction of Sophia is modelled after Isis, in light of the rich tradition of portraying Sophia as a feminine figure in Jewish literature.

The nature of Sophia is somehow ambiguous in Wisdom. Sophia possesses an in-between state of personhood and an instrument of God. As Helmer Ringgren comments,

> It is apparent that the author's doctrine of wisdom is no carefully prepared and non-contradictory philosophic doctrine. Wisdom has an obscure position between personal being and principle. She is both, and she is neither the one nor the other.[400]

The ambiguity that Wisdom crafts around the relationship between God and Sophia seems to downplay a possible deification of wisdom. Right after Ch.10, wisdom is implied as the subject of action in the guidance of the holy prophet Moses and the initiation of the

---

Dame, 1975), 27.

[397] E. Fiorenza, "Wisdom Mythology," 27.

[398] There are various speculations of the identity of the goddess. These goddesses can include Ishtar, Maat, Isis, Aphrodite, Psyche, Demeter and Kore. The reason for such a variety of goddesses is because of the sheer diversity in Jewish wisdom writings across time and places. See Fiorenza's comment in "Wisdom Mythology," 29.

[399] The Egyptian origin of Sophia in later Jewish traditions has been advocated by Reitzenstein and Knox. Cf. R. Reitzenstein, *Zwei religionsgeschichtilche Fragen nach ungecruckten Texten* (Strassburg, 1901). Also, W. L. Knox, "The Divine Wisdom," *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (1937): 230-237.

[400] Helmer Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund, 1947), 119.

blood plague (11:1-4). But shortly after, one can hardly detect the presence of Sophia anymore.[401] The main agent becomes God, which is signified by the use of masculine pronouns and the depiction of God as "father" and "stern king" (11:10). The relationship between Sophia and God is not clear-cut and carves out space for more than one interpretive possibility. On the one hand, Sophia and God are virtually synonymous. The hypostatization of Sophia in the series of salvific acts depicted in the historical recital shows that what God has done for the Israelites, Sophia can do likewise and exhibit her own agency. On the other hand, Sophia appears more of an instrument of God to demonstrate His power. For instance, the end of the list culminates with the crossing of the Red Sea (10:15-21), the pivotal moment in the Exodus story. After the departure, it is worthwhile to mentioning that the singing and praising are directed to God, not Sophia (10:20). In this sense, Sophia's deliverance does not claim worship of her own; rather, it points to God. The distinction in the object of worship is made clear.

In light of the reinterpretation of the historical recital, alongside the portrayal of wisdom, there is a creative merging of the historical tradition and wisdom tradition in Wisdom 10. Both traditions pick up new significance with the hybridity. Doubtlessly, the Hellenistic environment is conducive to such a development. Luca Mazzinghi's comment nicely summarizes the ethos reflected in the portrayal of Sophia:

> The figure of wisdom, received from the biblical tradition, is re-presented by the author of the book first of all in the light of the idea, of clear Stoic origin, of a logos or a divine spirit which fills the cosmos and which, therefore, is present in man, and again, is re-read by means of the echoes hailing from the suggestive figure of the Egyptian goddess, Isis, viewed in the Hellenised form in which she was well known to Alexandrian culture. Working in this way, our sage operates on two fronts simultaneously: the Jewish world, within which he moves and whose faith he

[401] Mazzinghi notes the exception in 14:2, 5. Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 264

> never submits to discussion; and at the same time, the attractions of originating in the Hellenistic world, attractions with the author seeks to make his own in so far as they can serve to revitalize the same Jewish faith and enable it to be lived within a cultural environment that can sometimes seem hostile.[402]

Conclusion

In the historical recital, different events are presented in schematic narratives. The connection between the varied historical events is refashioned. As we have examined the text, we see that prediluvian figures are incorporated into the list. Cain becomes responsible for the flood. Abraham and the Babel generation are contemporaneous. Lot-Jacob-Joseph are grouped together in light of their respective experience with the salvation of Sophia. The traditional elements of the Exodus story, namely, Moses, the plagues, and the Red Sea, also gain new insights through reinterpretation.

New literary logic is established, which generates new dimensions for the historical list. The sapiential dimension of Israelite history is signified and magnified through the depiction of Sophia's agency in these manifold historical events. Sophia as the leading factor shapes the description and reinterpretation of the different biblical characters and their life. These biblical heroes are morally qualified and regarded as "the righteous." Seeing all the interpretive changes, we can observe how didactic values are generated in the narration history. Historical narratives generate didactic values. History becomes the place where divine justice can be known, a theme is further articulated in the full-blown Exodus retelling. In the following, I will offer a close examination of Wisdom's interpretation of the Exodus story, with a focus on the plague cycle.

2. Creating Diptychs in the Exodus Retelling

[402] Mazzinghi, "I loved [Wisdom] and sought her from my youth," 237.

When the historical recital in Wisdom (Ch.10) ends with the departure from Egypt, the Exodus story and the wilderness journey call for more elaboration. In the remaining chapters of the Book of History, the Exodus, in particular the plagues, dominate the discussion. The creative juxtaposition between the experience and fate of the righteous and the impious showcases the interpretation *tour de force* of the sage who authors Wisdom.

A. The Plague Cycle in Traditions

To start with, it can be helpful to mention that the interest in narrating the plagues became more manifest in Hellenistic Jewish literature. This is not so much the case in the Hebrew Bible. The enumeration of the plagues is quite rare,[403] apart from the plague cycle in the Exodus narrative. There are only two instances where the plagues are enumerated (Ps. 78, Ps.105). The introduction to the plague cycle in both psalms resembles each other.[404] With the standard phrase "signs and wonders" (אתות ומופתים), a series of divine miracles in Egypt are presented. In addition, both psalms end the recount of the plagues with the killing of the firstborn. The language used in depicting the event is nearly identical.[405] Nevertheless, the number of the plagues and the sequence of the plagues also differ between the two historical psalms. In Psalm 78, there are seven plagues mentioned, including the blood plague (v.44), the plagues of flies (v.45a), frogs (v. 45b), hail (v.47), and the death of the livestock (v.48), and the killing of the firstborn (v.51). The plagues of lice, boils, and darkness are omitted here. In Psalm 105, the plagues include darkness (v.28), blood (v.29), frogs (v.30), flies (v.31a), gnats (v.31b), hail (v.32), locusts (v.34),

[403] B.S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (Louisville, Kentucky: WJK Press, 1974), 163.
[404] Aubrey E. Buster, *Remembering the Story of Israel: Historical Summaries and Memory Formation in Second Temple Judaism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 101.
[405] Buster, *Remembering the Story of Israel*, 101.

and the death of the firstborn (v.36), eight in total. Psalm 105 does not include the death of the livestock or the boils. The list of plagues moves rather speedily, without much elaborative depiction of each plague.

To explain the different number and order of the plagues, scholars tend to attribute the distinction to the different Pentateuchal sources available to the authors of Psalms 78 and 105.[406] Or from a historical-critical view, these psalms show an earlier tradition of the plagues that later become integral to the Passover tradition in Exod. 12.[407] According to Buster, the focus on the sources somehow deviates one from better grasping the rhetorical purpose in the order of the plagues.[408] For example, the placement of the plague of darkness as the introductory plague in Psalm 105 might be motivated by a sound play and verbal correspondence: the sending (שלח) of Moses and Aaron (v.26) forms a sound effect with God's sending the plague of darkness (שלח חשך) (v.28).[409] Furthermore, the plague cycle is appropriated and refashioned in these two psalms to convey different messages. Psalm 105 incorporates the plagues to demonstrate divine protection for the Israelites. The plague cycle in Psalm 78, however, has a blaming tone. The verbs that denote punishment, such as "devour" (אכל), "kill" (הרג), and "give over" (סגר), are used not only for the Egyptians, but also the Israelites (78:45, 63; 78:47, 31, 34; 78:48, 50b, 62).[410] The punishment of Israel serves as a warning sign for them not to forget the wonders that God once performed in the land of Egypt.

---

[406] Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, trans. Baruch J. Schwartz (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1992), esp. 71-102. Archie Lee, "The Context and Function of the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 78," *JSOT* 15, no.48 (1990): 83-89; Archie Lee, "Genesis 1 and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 105," *VT* 40, no.3 (1990): 257-263. Noted in Buster, *Remembering the Story of Israel*, 101.

[407] Samuel E. Loewenstamm, "The Number of Plagues in Psalm 105," *Biblica* 52, no.1 (1971): 34-38.

[408] Buster, *Remembering the Story of Israel*, 101.

[409] Buster, *Remembering the Story of Israel*, 102.

[410] Buster, *Remembering the Story of Israel*, 102-103.

As shown in the two historical psalms, the sequence and the number of the plagues are not fixed. Despite the elastic numbering and order, the plague cycle can bring out distinct purposes in different texts. In the Hellenistic period, we can see an increasing interest in the plague cycle in certain Jewish authors. Some preserve the tradition of listing the plagues in one section, following the literary pattern in the historical psalms. For example, the Book of Jubilees (48:5-8) briefly goes through the plagues, which are described as God's vengeance for Israel that He had ordained with Abraham. The number of the plagues is ten (48:7). Also, the order of the plagues follows the one in the Pentateuch. Similarly, the Exagoge also includes a section on the plagues, with various plagues mentioned in the list. In His divine voice, God enumerates the plagues, including plagues of blood, frogs and lice, boils, swarms, pestilence, hail, darkness, locusts, and the death of the firstborn (line 132-150). The list of plagues in the Exagoge is quite exhaustive in light of the plague cycle in the Book of Exodus.

Some other Hellenistic Jewish texts have more of a florid and elaborative account of the plagues. For instance, Artapanus offers a romance-like retelling of the life of Moses, starting from the birth of Moses to the Exodus. Artapanus' plague account is rather free-style[411] and embellished with more dramatic details than the biblical accounts. There is an intensification of the effects of the plagues on the Egyptians. In the second plague of winged creatures (ζωόν τι πτηνόν), Artapanus adds another detail: the sores that the Egyptians suffer from the sting of the animals are incurable for any physician. Also, Moses not only brought hail, but also earthquakes. The two disasters end up killing numerous

[411] For comments on Artapanus' style and reinterpretation of the Bible, see Pieter W. van der Horst, "The Interpretation of the Bible by the Minor Hellenistic Jewish Authors," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Martin-Jan Mulder (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 534-535.

Egyptians, following the collapse of many houses and temples. Seeing that Artapanus has a strong interest in portraying Moses as a "first inventor" (πρῶτος εὑρετής),[412] the role of Moses as an agent who initiates the miraculous plagues is further emphasized.

Philo and Josephus also have long and extensive depictions of the plagues in their works. In *De Vita Mosis*, Philo gives an elaborative account of the ten plagues, though with an order different from the Pentateuch. He assigns Aaron (blood, frogs, and lice, hail), Moses (hail, locusts, and darkness, hail) and finally God (the slaying of the firstborn) to the induction of different plagues.[413] In addition, Philo emphasizes the divine origin of the plagues and describes how the elements of the universe (Mos. 1.17.96-97) are under divine command to wield punishment against the Egyptians. In Philo's account of the plagues, he shows an interest in explaining why God chose to use this particular plague to punish the Egyptians.[414] For instance, Philo reckons that someone might wonder about the efficiency of the plague of gnats. "What is slighter than a gnat? Yet so great was its power that all Egypt lost heart, and was forced to cry aloud: 'This is the finger of God (Exod. 8:15); for as for His hand, not all the habitable world from end to end could stand against it, or not even the whole universe" (Mos.1.112). Here Philo explains that God is so powerful that even the seemingly most insignificant creature can be employed by him to demonstrate His power.

[412] van der Horst, "The Interpretation of the Bible," 534.

[413] In fact, the agency of the different plagues remains vague in the MT text. In the plague of the blood, flies, livestock, hail, locusts, and striking of the first-born, God is portrayed as a major agent. Aaron and Moses also have agencies in the authorization of the following plagues: the blood plague, the plagues of hail and locusts. They carry out the plagues together in these plagues. While for the plague of frogs, gnats, boils, and darkness, either Aaron or Moses brings out the plague. In this sense, the problem of agency is quite complex in the plague cycle. At times, there might be several agents involved in enacting a plague. For a discussion on the complex issue of agency in Exodus, see Terence E. Fretheim, "Issues of Agency in Exodus," in *The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception and Interpretation*, ed. Thomas Dozeman, Craig A. Evans, and Joel N. Lohr (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 591-609, esp. 600-602.

[414] This is comparable to the midrashic formulation. The question-and-answer form suggests that the plagues are not random events, rather there is an underlying reason for each plague. i.e. Midr. HaGadol Waera 9:23: How did the hail descend? At first there were roars of thunder and flashes of lightning and the earth quaked, as it is said "Your thunder rumbled in the wheels; lightning lit up the world; the earth quaked and trembled" (Ps. 77:19).

The didactic function of the plagues is made clear in both the introduction to the plagues and the conclusion of the plagues as "perdition of the [Egyptians] and the salvation to the [Israelites]" (Mos.1.26). Like Philo, Josephus also offers a lengthy discussion of the plagues and reaches a similar conclusion. Josephus's elaboration of the plagues largely follows the Pentateuchal Exodus. He highlights the stubbornness and pride of the Egyptians. With the illustration of the causes and effects of the plagues, Josephus warns people to fear God because He would be provoked and take vengeance (A.J. 2.14.1).

As for the scale of the Exodus retelling, Wisdom is comparable with Philo. Nevertheless, Wisdom does not narrate the plague cycle in a continuous and unified way, only references to the plagues.[415] In addition, each mention of the plague is juxtaposed with divine care for the Israelites. The contrast between divine provision and justice in the plague cycle in Wisdom will be further examined in the following. What are some episodes that Wisdom selects to present such a contrast? What is the literary and theological effect of such an arrangement? Also, what kind of reading practice is implied in Wisdom's interpretation of the plague cycle? In what follows, I will examine the different events incorporated in Wisdom's plague cycle in detail, point out how the interpretation of such events align with or differ from traditions, and also discuss the hermeneutical effects of the creative juxtapositions between the experiences of Israelites and Egyptians.

B. The Plague Cycle in the Wisdom of Solomon[416]

[415] Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, 106.

[416] For the different contrasts, see list 2 above. The list has been presented in the previous section on the literary feature of juxtaposition.

In reworking the plague narrative, the author of Wisdom roughly follows the sequence of the plagues in Exodus 7-12.[417] The creativity of interpretation lies in the form of the retelling: the sage creates seven antitheses (or diptychs) between the holy nation and the unrighteous nation. The holy nation refers to the Israelites, while the unrighteous people are the Egyptians. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, juxtapositions between the Israelites and the Egyptians consist of the dominant form in the Exodus retelling.[418] How shall we understand the consistent contrastive form in the sage's retelling of the Exodus story? What is the rationale behind the construction of the diptychs in which the experiences of Israelites and Egyptians are depicted and compared? Also, what are some criteria by which the events of Israelites and Egyptians are chosen and grouped together? What is the hermeneutical and theological effect of this particular reading of the Exodus account?

In the following, I will start with a discussion of the contrastive form employed in the interpretation, which I believe is indebted to the comparison between the two parties in the Exodus narratives. Then I will move on to discuss how the sage selects materials from the Pentateuch[419] by a close reading of the seven diptychs, each in turn. In particular, I want to show how the sage expands the different experiences by reading the *points and cues* across episodes in the plague cycle and the wilderness account. At last, I will highlight the power that creation exerts on the cosmos in the sage's depiction of the plague cycle. Through the different stages of creation, de-creation, and re-creation, the power of God is exhibited—He claims the ultimate justice and restores the moral order. By an examination

[417] The livestock disease and boils are omitted, and four of the plagues are combined.

[418] See my discussion on the "Creative Juxtapositions: Moral Justice and Cosmic Justice."

[419] For a discussion on the selectivity of biblical materials in Wisdom, see Glicksman, *Wisdom of Solomon 10*, 154-157. Although Glicksman mainly engages with materials in Wisdom 10, his argument has a broader application to the whole text.

of the sage's creative rearrangement of Pentateuchal materials, I contend the purpose of scriptural interpretation is to reenact the divine presence for the community—God has acted powerfully in history, and He will keep carrying out His mighty acts for His people.

1. Diptychs and The Contrastive Experience Between the Egyptians and the Israelites

First, let us begin our consideration regarding the contrastive experience between Israelites and Egyptians in the plague cycle. The idea of such comparison is not new to Wisdom. In the Exodus narratives, one can already notice certain comments on the different experiences of the two parties. When the series of plagues is first introduced, the difference is readily implied between the two recipients. For the Israelites, they are "signs and wonders," while for the Egyptians, afflictions and divine judgements (Exod. 6:6). The way in which both parties would react to the following events is clearly implied in the general introductory remark regarding what is about to happen.

When it comes to the detailed depiction of the plagues, there are explicit contrasts in experience between the Egyptians and the Israelites in the Exodus narratives, though not all plague stories contain descriptions of the Israelites' experience. In the plague of the flies, the Lord promised His people that He "will set apart פלהthe land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there" (Exod. 8:21; MT 8:18). In the LXX, the translator seems to understand פלה as פלאּ in the rendition παραδοξάσω, "make wonderful or extraordinary."[420] To stress that Egyptians and Israelites are about to undergo distinct experiences, the following verse states, "I will put a redemption פדת between my people and your people" (Exod. 8:22; MT 8:19). The mention of "redemption" in this

[420] In the NETS translation, the English translation reads, "And I will distinguish gloriously on that day…"(Exod. 8:22). The translation suggests an attempt to combine both verbs, פלה and .פלא

context seems rather awkward, despite the Exodus event as a whole being fittingly described as divine redemption. To adjust the literary flow, the LXX renders פדת as διαστολή, “difference/distinction,” a more sensible word in the context of distinguishing the Israelites from the Egyptians amidst the plagues. The distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians also occurs in the plagues of the livestock, hail, and death of the firstborn (Exod. 9:4; 9:26; 12:13).

Seeing the distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians recorded in the Exodus narrative, we can observe how the plague cycle in Wisdom inherits the contrastive experiences of the two parties from the Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, Wisdom also introduces many modifications to the narration. Specifically, Wisdom changes the state of the Israelites from passive recipients of divine grace to active participants in divine deliverance and salvation. Furthermore, the experiences of the Israelites are not constrained in the scene of the plagues in the land of Egypt, but open up to manifold places and time. This is achieved through the sage’s combination of the Egyptian plagues with events from Israel’s wilderness wandering. By a series of contrasts between the two groups, Wisdom highlights Israel’s active search for God, as opposed to Egyptians’ consistent denial and rejection of the divine. The relationship with the divine fundamentally decides their respective moral status. In light of this, divine judgement and mercy are shown to both parties accordingly.

2. Cues and Points

As we have pointed out the literary phenomenoa couple of times so far where the sage selects, rearranges, and interprets different Pentateuchal episodes in the Exodus

retelling, now let us focus on how such a selection is made, the potential rationale behind the combination of the plague cycle and the wilderness accounts, also the hermeneutical effects achieved through this innovative interpretation. In this section, I will offer a close examination of the seven diptychs in Wisdom's Exodus retelling. I argue that the sage's rearrangement of Pentateuchal materials enables him to generate the sense of presence between the two parties involved in the cosmic fight, and also most importantly, the presence of God who intervenes to demonstrate His justice and mercy.

At the outset, it is worthwhile to make a note concerning the chronology of events. Some scholars comment that Wisdom's arrangement of biblical materials is quite dismissive of the biblical chronology,[421] because of the fact that the sage combines canonically distant passages together. The comment implies a relatively rigid and fixed form of Scripture, as if Wisdom needs to demonstrate a good command of the many different complexes of the biblical traditions,[422] in line with supporters of tradition criticism, and follows the sequence of the traditions envisioned by scholars faithfully. This line of thought, in fact, misses the point. I think that the sage's "non-linear handling of sacred tradition"[423] reflects his innovative reading practice. One prominent practice in the sage's interpretation is taking points and cues in the biblical narratives, which generates a new sense of time and order of events. By doing so, there emerges a new literary logic that is not restricted to a pre-conceived literary sequence. Borrowing the thoughts of Franz

[421] For instance, this is the premise for Cheon's discussion of biblical interpretation in the Exodus retelling in Wisdom in his monograph *The Exodus Story*.

[422] See works from many representative scholars who work on tradition-historical criticism. Hermann Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964); Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972); Martin Noth, *The History of Israel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958); Bernhard W. Anderson, "Introduction: Martin Noth's Tradition-Historical Approach in the Context of Twentieth Century Biblical Research," *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, xviii-xxi; John Van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1975).

[423] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness,* 70.

Rosenzweig, “Ties and clamps in biblical narrative can join together passages lying quite near one another, but also passages divided by long stretches; indeed, they can compress wholly separate narrative into higher narrative unities,”[424] I consider such is the key to understanding the combination of Pentateuchal events in Wisdom.

Then what are the criteria by which the contrastive experiences between the Israelites and the Egyptians are chosen? In search of contrastive experiences of the Israelites, the criterion of similitude plays a prominent role. Starting with the means by which God punishes the Egyptians, Wisdom looks for similar means by which God aids the Israelites.[425] In the following, through the framework of cues and points, I will analyze how different events are interpreted in the seven diptychs in Wisdom’s Exodus retelling to demonstrate divine justice and mercy.[426]

List 3

Diptych/Plague Cycle	**The righteous (Israelites)**	**The wicked (Egyptians)**	**Connector**	**Theme**
Blood Plague (11:1-14)	Water from the rock (Exod. 17:1-7)	Water became blood	water, thirst	Bodily reactions and physical needs
Animal Plague (16:1-4)	Quails as provision (Exod. 16, Num. 11)	Creatures that they worship came to torture them	food, hunger	
Plague of Locusts and Flies (16:5-14)	Bites from venomous serpents, healing from the divine	Bites from locusts and flies, no healings or remedies	bites (shared characteristic), healing	

[424] Franz Rosenzweig, “The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form,” in *Scripture and Translation: Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig*, trans. Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox (Indiana University Press, 1994), 137-138.

[425] The table below is helpful for illustration. I marked the biblical references and allusions in the parenthesis of each depiction.

[426] For an overview of the cues and points in different diptychs, see list 3 below.

	word (Num. 21:5-9)			
Plague of Hail (16:15-29)	Heavenly bread (Exod. 16)	Rain, hail, storm, and fire; destruction of crops	means of blessing or punishment (descending from the heavens), food, hunger	
Plague of Darkness (17:1-18:4)	Pillar of fire (Exod. 10:21-29; 13:17-22)	Complete darkness	light and lack of light, mobility and paralysis	Death and life (psychological and physical)
Death of the Firstborn (18:5-25)	Aaron's incense ministry, death and healing (Num. 16:41-50)	Death of the firstborn, lament	death, healing	
Crossing the Red Sea (19:1-17)	On the way out of the Red Sea	Drown in the water and died	death, life	

The First Diptych: The Blood Plague (11:1-14)

Cues and Points: Water

In the first diptych, water is the cue for the sage to juxtapose the blood plague (Exod. 7:14-24) with the wilderness event of "water from the rock" (Exod. 17:1-7). The different changes in water and the outcomes for the Israelites and the Egyptians demonstrate divine justice and mercy.

For the Israelites, when they settled in the wilderness, the problem of thirst arose among them. They called upon (ἐπεκαλέσαντο) God, and water was given to them (ἐδόθη αὐτοῖς ὕδωρ) from the rock (11:4). The timely provision of water soon quenched their thirst. Here the request-response formula indicated in the verse not only shows that God was attentive to the needs of His people, but also that the Israelites turned to God for help in their plights. Echoing the point suggested in the previous section on the contrastive

experience between the two groups, Israelites remain active in seeking God and His help in times of trouble. Wisdom's portrayal of the Israelites in the "water from the rock" episode is entirely positive, which is not so much the case in what is recorded in Exodus 17:1-7. In the biblical account, the Israelites quarreled with Moses and complained about their thirst (Exod. 17:1-2). By the command of God, Moses struck the rock and then water gushed out from it. The water then satisfied the thirst of the Israelites. Even though the divine provision meets the needs of the people, the whole event took place in a rather unpleasant way, which is regarded as the Israelites' testing of God (Exod. 17:7).[427] In Wisdom's portrayal of the Israelites, all their iniquities are gone and they are whitewashed and become the righteous people who receive divine care.[428] The modification of the Israelites' behavior heightens the contrast against the unrighteous Egyptians in the diptych.

Unlike the Israelites who were blessed with water, the Egyptians were punished by the very things (Δι' ὧν) from which the Israelites benefited (11:5). They would suffer from unquenchable thirst, which is an immediate result of water pollution caused by the blood plague. To further explain the reason for the defiling of Nile, Wisdom employs the measure-for-measure principle: "in rebuke for the decree to slay the infants" (εἰς ἔλεγχον νηπιοκτόνου διατάγματος) (11:7). The explanation flashes back to Pharaoh's oppression of the Israelites in the opening section of the biblical Exodus. Pharaoh commanded midwives in the land to kill all Hebrew male children in response to the fear of the growing population of the Israelites in Egypt (Exod. 1:9, 16). The connection between the slaying of the Hebrew infants and the first plague reflects a cause-and-effect relationship.[429]

---

[427] The negative rendition of the "water from the rock" tradition is also prevalent in several Psalms, such are the cases in Pss.78:17-20, 106:32, 95:8.

[428] There is a general tendency to whitewash the iniquities of the Israelites in Wisdom's treatment, though at times not without discipline. More examples will follow, also the explanation for the modification of events.

[429] Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 34.

Following the retribution claim for divine justice, Wisdom turns to a discussion of divine mercy. When the Israelites compare their own experience of divine discipline with the divine punishment of the Egyptians, the attributes of God as being both just and merciful become more apparent. “When the Israelites were tried, though they were being disciplined in mercy (ἐν ἐλέει παιδευόμενοι)” (11:9). God tested (ἐδοκίμασας) His people as a father in warning (11:10). The metaphorical relationship between father and son exhibits divine love for the Israelites.

In this diptych, the sage uses water as a connector to tie the two episodes together. The Israelites received water to satisfy their needs of thirst while the Egyptians suffered from polluted and undrinkable water. The different reactions of the Egyptians and the Israelites enable the reflection on divine justice and mercy.

The Second Diptych: The Animal Plague (16:1-4)

Cues and Points: Animals, Food

After some excursus on divine mercy and idolatry, Wisdom elaborates on the second plague: the animal plague.[430] In this plague, animals or creatures serve as the cue to contrast the Egyptians’ torment from animals and divine provision of quails (Exod. 16//Num.11). While the former suffers from the hunger of the torment, the latter is satiated with the food provided by God.

Why are the Egyptians punished by the attacks of animals? The diptych starts with an explanation: “Because of this (Διὰ τοῦτο), these men were deservedly punished through

[430] Scholars have made attempts to identify the specific animals mentioned in the plague. Many have suggested that the animals refer to frogs, corresponding to the narrative in Exodus 7.26-8.11. See note 42 in Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 42. In fact, I do not find a single identification is necessary here. “A mixture of animals” is quite common in some Hellenistic Jewish texts to describe one or some of the plagues in the Exodus narrative. Such is the case in Artapanus 3.32 and Josephus, A.J. 2.14.3.

such creatures" (16:1). The expression of Διὰ τοῦτο refers to Egyptians' practice of animal worship. The rationale of punishment is that one needs to suffer what one does. As the Egyptians worshipped varied animals, they would be punished by the same things they adored. This measure-for-measure principle echoes the cause of the blood plague in the previous diptych.

The result of the animal torments is horrible to the Egyptians. The hideousness (εἰδέχθειαν) of the creatures made the Egyptians ill, making them unable to fulfill their desire for nourishment (16:3). Hunger leads to inexorable want (ἀπαραίτητον ἔνδειαν) that is detrimental to both body and soul (16:4). In contrast, the Israelites were not affected by the animal plagues, rather the Lord brought quails to nourish them (16:2). For the Israelites, animals become nutritious food that satiates their hunger. The Israelites partake in the delicacies (ξένης μετάσχωσι γεύσεως) and their desires are satisfied (16:3).

The divine provision of quails is painted in a positive light here in Wisdom. This is not the case in the biblical accounts. There are two occurrences of the quail event in the Pentateuch (Exod. 16//Num. 11), though the progress of the event differs slightly. In Exodus 16, God heard His people's grumbling over hunger and kindly offered them meat at twilight (Exod. 16:12). And then "in the evening quail came up and covered the camp" (Exod. 16:13). Despite people's complaints, the Lord still provided food to them. However, the narrative in Numbers 11 does not have a fortunate ending. Like Exodus 16, the episode starts with the Israelites' grumbles. They complained about their current situation, lamenting that they no longer had abundant food like what they had in Egypt and all they had was manna (Num.11:6). Their desire to eat meat was met by God through a superabundant provision of quails (Num.11:31-32). Yet this time God did not provide the

quails with gentle kindness, rather blazing anger. The Lord was furious and He struck down the people who were still eating the quails with a very great plague (Num. 11:33).

As we can see, neither quail events recorded in the biblical accounts takes place with a praiseworthy intention in the first place. Both accounts in Exodus 16 and Numbers 11 start with the Israelites' complaints, although God responds to these complaints differently. When Wisdom incorporates the quail event in the diptych here, the unhappy grumbles of the Israelites are omitted. In the meantime, Wisdom highlights divine kindness in providing the quails to the Israelites. The interpretive move is similar to the "water from the rock" event in the previous diptych. This removal of the Israelites' problematic behaviors and omission of divine wrath functions as an "exegetical surgery"[431] that saves the imagery of the righteous Israelite from being tainted and questioned.

In this diptych, animals and their different purposes for the respective groups connect the plague and the quail event together. Animals became tools of punishment to the Egyptians while food of nourishment for the Israelites. The cue allows the retribution principle to take force, through which divine justice is shown. At the same time, Israel remains an exemplary nation to demonstrate God's mercy and grace.

The Third Diptych (16:5-14): Plague of Locusts and Flies

Cues and Points: Bites

Following the theme of animals in the previous diptych, the third diptych begins with the Israelites' suffering from the animals. They were bitten by the venomous serpents but were soon delivered by God. As for the Egyptians, they were slain by the bites of locusts and flies. The diptych here is a regrouping of the plague of the locusts and flies

[431] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 71.

(Exod.8:16-32) and the event of the bronze serpent (Num. 21:5-9). The juxtaposition of the two events can be motivated by the shared biting characteristic of the insects and the serpents in the wilderness. This time, instead of the means by which these two parties are punished or benefited, the cue is the shared feature of the instrument of divine chastisement. The experience of the serpent bites functions as an instruction[432] (νουθεσία) for the Israelites, helping them remember the divine command (εἰς ἀνάμνησιν ἐντολῆς νόμου). Despite their righteous status, the Israelites are not exempt from correction and discipline from the merciful God.

In Wisdom's depiction of the bronze serpent event, there are some interpretive changes from the account in Numbers. According to the narrative in Numbers, the event took place due to the Israelites' improper behavior against God. With no food or water in the wilderness, the Israelites loathed their current condition (Num. 21:5). Their complaints triggered the anger of God. In His anger, God sent fiery serpents to punish the grumbling people. As a result, many people were bitten and died (Num. 21:6). Soon people realized their sin and came to Moses to confess to the Lord and sought healing. By the command of God, Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the pole. Whoever was bitten by a serpent, a look at the bronze serpent would restore her life.

Unlike the account in Numbers where the reason for the divine punishment is explained, Wisdom did not indicate any reason for the sudden rage (θυμός) that came upon the Israelites. Instead, Wisdom diverts the focus to the divine response to the event and the telos of the event. In Wisdom, divine wrath and its corresponding effects are mentioned, yet they do not last long. "Your wrath did not continue to the end" οὐ μέχρι τέλους ἔμεινεν

[432] The word νουθεσία can also be rendered as "admonition," "warning," and "correction." Cheon notes that these renditions are relatively common in Philo's writing. Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 51.

ἡ ὀργή σου (Wis. 16:5). God does not intend the Israelites to suffer without an end. The specific mention of time also introduces the telos of the event, namely, to remind the Israelites of the importance of keeping the divine commands.

In this diptych, with the shared biting feature of the animals, the sage connects the two separate narratives together and brings out the importance of keeping divine commandments.

The Fourth Diptych: The Plague of Hail (16:15-29)

Cues and Points: Descending from Heaven

Similar to the previous diptych, the cue of the fourth diptych is derived from the shared feature of the means by which God punished the unrighteous and provided for the righteous. In this diptych, the sage juxtaposes the plague of hail (Exod. 9:13-15) and the divine provision of manna to the Israelites (Exod.16, Num. 11). Both hail and manna descend from heaven—a common feature that ties the two events together. Building upon this shared feature, the sage highlights the contrastive outcomes of the Egyptians and the Israelites after receiving hail and manna respectively, which further demonstrates the divine judgement of the Egyptians and His provision for the Israelites.

The plague of hail destroyed the crops (16:19), which might lead to the lack of food for the Egyptians. For the Israelites, they had no lack of food, for the Lord provided them with heavenly bread, which alludes to the manna event. In Wisdom's portrayal of the heavenly bread, it descended like fire, a depiction that is set against the "flame-retardant manna" (Exod.16).[433] Wisdom also describes the quality of the heavenly bread in detail: the sweet manna provided the Israelites "every pleasure and suited to every taste πᾶσαν ἡδονὴν

[433] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 72.

ἰσχύοντα καὶ πρὸς πᾶσαν ἁρμόνιον γεῦσιν" and ministered "to the desire of the one who took it τῇ δὲ τοῦ προσφερομένου ἐπιθυμίᾳ ὑπηρετῶν" (16:20-21).

In this diptych, the motif of giving food or taking it away runs parallel with the animal plague (the second diptych). Just like the quails are delicacies that satisfy the desires of the Israelites, the sweet manna brings great delight and satisfaction to the Israelites. On the Egyptian side, they suffer from hail and the disastrous consequence of it, as the destruction of crops would result in hunger.

Seeing the similarity in the heavenly origin of hail and manna, the sage sets the two episodes against each other to show the different divine actions in response to the two parties. As the sage further elaborates on the Israelites' appreciation of the heavenly bread, he highlights how God provides for His people in times of need.

The Fifth Diptych: The Plague of Darkness (17:1-18:4)

Cues and Points: Light and Lack of Light

The fifth diptych starts with an explanation for why the plague of darkness befell the Egyptians: they continued to refuse to acknowledge the Lord and were incapable of giving the Lord proper thanks, their impiety and stupidity summoned divine punishment. "Great are your judgments and hard to describe; therefore, uninstructed souls (ἀπαίδευτοι ψυχαί) have gone astray" (17:1). With the brief introduction, the diptych transitions to a detailed depiction of the plague of darkness (Exod. 10:21-29) in contrast to the pillar of fire that God provided for Israel (Exod. 13:17-22). The connector for these two episodes is light and its lack thereof. The uncontrollable fear that the Egyptians experienced shows the

intensity of divine punishment, in sharp contrast to the confidence of the Israelites walking in the light provided by God.

In this long diptych, the sage employs imaginative means to enrich the account by adding vivid depictions of the psychological paralysis that the Egyptians experienced during the plague. Unlike the relatively concise account in the Book of Exodus, the diptych devotes much time to describing the suffocating experience of darkness. Fear attacked the Egyptians in a multi-sensory fashion. As for the vision, they were terribly appalled by the phantoms (17:3). In the meantime, a dreadful and self-kindled fire in the midst of darkness brought terror upon them (17:6). From an audible perspective, the sounds of passing animals, whistling wind, melodious sounds of birds, the rhythm of rushing water, the crash of rocks, echoes from the mountains—regardless of the volume and qualities of the sounds, the Egyptians were paralyzed in terror (17:9, 18-19). The binding nature of darkness becomes significant through Wisdom's vivid depictions of Egyptians' physical and emotive reactions to the plague of darkness. The art of Wisdom's poetic imagination lies in the fusion of cognitive elements.[434] Fear is not a stand-alone feeling or a state of emotion within a person, but a synesthetic effect that comes into being with a combination of "sensory, motor, and emotive."[435] Physiological changes in the body are in direct contact with emotions in the brain, and these emotions turn into feelings when they are "brought to conscious awareness."[436] The senses of hearing and vision are intermingled, as the terrifying sounds surrounding the Egyptians impel them to visualize the initiators of these

[434] Margaret H. Freeman, *The Poem as Icon: A Study in Aesthetic Cognition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 102.
[435] Freeman, *The Poem as Icon*, 102.
[436] Freeman, *The Poem as Icon*, 102.

sounds. The internal dread adds terror to the external surroundings, so much so that visual and audible illusions begin to trump the real scenes where the patients of terror inhabit.

On the other hand, the external world has a decisive impact on one's internal affective responses as well. Extreme light and darkness, along with the sounds of nature, further increased the intensity of fear among the Egyptians. The sage masterfully captures the interconnection between bodily experience and affective responses, as the extrinsic forces generated by the outer context are indispensable from the intrinsic forces that are operating within oneself. Both forces are in flux and create a dynamic interrelation between the physical and psychological.

The overwhelming fear that the Egyptians experienced not only shows the consequence of their sin, but also allows the sage to impart a lesson against the vice of fear. In Wisdom, fear is defined as "nothing but surrender of the help that comes from reason εἰ μὴ προδοσία τῶν ἀπὸ λογισμοῦ βοηθημάτων" (17:12). Fear weakens the rational mind, making it unable to call for help but lost in ignorance of the cause of such pain (17:13). Here the sage develops a literary logic that is full of irony. False reasoning leads to the plague of darkness through which the Egyptians experienced uncontrollable fear, yet again fear generates further irrational reasoning. The loop of "irrationality—fear—irrationality" indicates that vices operate in an infinite yet helpless cycle.

As the sage reworks the plague of darkness, he also adds detailed reasons for the form of such punishment, which is lacking in the biblical account. In the Exodus account in the Hebrew Bible, the implicit reason for the plague of darkness is that the plague took place due to Pharaoh's repetitive stubbornness and his refusal to let the Israelites go and worship the Lord. In Wisdom, however, the sage is not so interested in a single individual's

agency. Rather, two opposing people groups are the major concerns here.[437] Considering this, the sage offers the first reason for the form of the plague: the Egyptians' foolish presumptions make them suffer the plague of darkness. The Egyptians supposed that they mastered the holy nation (καταδυναστεύειν ἔθνος ἅγιον), and thought that their sins were unobserved (ἐπὶ κρυφαίοις ἁμαρτήμασιν). But in fact, "they themselves lay as captives of darkness and prisoners of long nights (δέσμιοι σκότους καὶ μακρᾶς πεδῆται νυκτὸς)" (17:2). Folly and wickedness lead to tremendous psychological torments during the horrible long nights. The Egyptians' incapability to think clearly is exacerbated when the fear of darkness grips them. At the same time, their wickedness (πονηρία) adds to their stress, making them trapped in the frightening experience (17:11).

Apart from the reason of being foolish and evil, the sage provides a second reason for the form of the plague that befell the Egyptians by the end of the diptych: the Egyptians had "kept your sons (the Israelites) imprisoned (οἱ κατακλείστους φυλάξαντες τοὺς υἱούς σου)" (18:4). More than a rationale of retribution, the core of the punishment lies in the fact that the Egyptians' imprisonment of the Israelites impeded the imperishable light of the law (τὸ ἄφθαρτον νόμου φῶς) from shining upon the world (18:4).[438]

The theme of light ties into the divine provision of light for the Israelites, as opposed to the Egyptians' unbearable experience of darkness. Described as the "holy ones" (Τοῖς ὁσίοις), the Israelites had great light (μέγιστον φῶς) (18:1). The Israelites did not passively immerse themselves in the divine light, rather they followed the flaming pillar of

[437] This applies to Wisdom's rendition of the plague cycle. Wisdom does not show much concern with Pharaoh's role, but treats the stories through the lens of two groups of people. Although the people of Israel and Egypt remain anonymous in the whole book, the references to the "wicked people" and the "holy people" are clear. For a discussion on Wisdom's use of anonymity, see my chapter on the issue of epistemology.

[438] As for the mission of the Israelites, Winston notes that "Both in Jewish-Hellenistic and in Rabbinic literature, we find an attempt to interpret Israel's acceptance of the Torah as including the obligation to spread Torah's teachings to the Gentile nations." Winston made a list of many examples that illustrate this argument. Cf. Winston, *Wisdom*, 311-12.

fire (πυριφλεγῆ στύλον) and embarked on an unknown journey (ἀγνώστου ὁδοιπορίας) which God set for them (18:3). The pillar of fire functions both as a guide and protector in the evening, a depiction in line with the biblical account (Exod.13:21-22). In the morning, the Israelites continued their journey with divine provision and protection. The sun was harmless for the travelers (18:3). The Lord's beneficent guidance in a long journey alludes to the passage in Isaiah: "They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them" (Isa. 49:10). These verses describe how the Lord meets Israel's physical needs and has mercy on them. In God's promise of Israel's restoration, those who were once imprisoned would receive freedom and those who were hidden by darkness would reappear (Isa. 49:9).

The contrastive concepts hinted at in the Isaianic passage—imprisonment/freedom and hiddenness/appearance—find resonances in the sage's depiction of the darkness plague. The different experiences of the Egyptians and the Israelites showcase how God can rectify injustice and deliver His people from imprisonment.

<u>The Sixth Diptych: Death of the Firstborn (18:5-25)</u>

Cues and Points: Death and Healing

Following the plague of darkness, Wisdom transitions to the final plague in the Exodus account: the death of the firstborn, an event that marks the peak of the plague cycle. In this diptych, taking the cue of death and healing, the sage incorporates the Korahite rebellion to form a literary set with the last plague (Num. 16:41-50). In Wisdom, the death of the Israelites is regarded as a divine test and is later ceased by Aaron's incense ministry (18:22). However, no healing can be found for the Egyptians and innumerable

people died in the plague (18:12). Although death touched upon both parties, the way to counter death for the Israelites and the Egyptians' inability to overcome the fate of death forms a sharp contrast. Divine judgment and mercy become manifested in the responses to death from the two groups.

In line with the previous diptych, the sage also provides two reasons for the striking of the firstborn. The first reason follows the measure-for-measure principle: what the Egyptians had done to the Israelites would be paid back to them. The massive killing of the Israelite infants recurs at the beginning of the diptych. Moses as an important figure who survived the killing is singled out, and he is remembered as "one child who had been exposed and rescued (ἑνὸς ἐκτεθέντος τέκνου, καὶ σωθέντος)." In the following line, the decree of killing the Israelite male children (Exod. 1:22-2:10) is repaid by the death of the Egyptian children: "In punishment you took away a multitude of their children, and destroyed them all together by a mighty flood" (18:5). Cheon's summary of the three contrasts in the passage illustrates the retribution principle clearly: "(a) the slaying of the Israelite infants and the killing of the Egyptian firstborn; (b) the drowning of the Israelite infants and the destruction of the Egyptians in the water; (c) the survival of one Israelite child and the death of thousands of his would-be murderers."[439] The event of the slaying of the Israelite infants plays a critical role in giving explanations for the cause of the plagues, as it is considered both as the cause of the first plague (the blood plague) and the tenth plague (the killing of the Egyptian firstborn).[440]

[439] Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 80.

[440] The connection between the Egyptians' slaying of the Israelite children and later the bereavement of their firstborn becomes a well-attested tradition. Winston made a list of references in the commentary. See Winston, Wisdom of Solomon, 314-315. In *Tanḥ.* Buber, *Bo 5*, 221, one reads: "Whatever the Egyptians intended against Israel, the Holy One blessed be He brought against them…They intended to kill the Israelites, the Holy One blessed be He killed their firstborn, as it is said, 'The Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt' (Exod. 12:29); they intended to submerge the Israelites in the water, the Holy One blessed be He likewise submerged them in the water, as it is said, 'Who hurled Pharaoh and his army

The second reason for the punishment is the Egyptians' disbelief and their trust in false magic (18:13). In other words, impiety is what the Egyptians are punished for. As they suffered the last plague and witnessed the destruction of their firstborn, the Egyptians came to realize their impiety and false beliefs. The punishment became an instructive moment, making the Egyptians realize that the people, once they despised, are in fact, the "son of God" (Θεοῦ υἱὸν) (18:13). The acknowledgement of the holy ones as the "sons of God" already occurs once in Wisdom 5:5.[441] The two references in their respective contexts form a correspondence. Wisdom 5:5 poses a question, "Why has he been numbered among the sons of God (υἱοῖς Θεοῦ)? And why is his lot among the saints?" The question is in the voice of the wicked and they were astounded by the confidence that the righteous demonstrates in the midst of afflictions. As one proceeds to the recounting of Exodus in Wisdom, an answer to the question seems to be provided. The wicked (in this case, the Egyptians) acknowledged the people of God (the Israelites) were the sons of God (18:13). The righteous people are protected and preserved because of their intimate relationship with God, as they have proper piety towards the Lord.

---

into the Sea of Reeds' (Ps. 136:15)." Also, in *Mek.* On Exodus 14:26, it reads: "'That the waters may come back upon the Egyptians.' Let the wheel [of fortune] turn against them and bring back upon them their own violence. For with the same device with which they planned to destroy Israel I am going to punish them. They planned to destroy my children by water, so I will likewise punish them only by water." Similarly, in *Mid. Yelamdenu* on Exod. 11:4: "Said the Holy One blessed by He, I will go forth among the Egyptians in the middle of the night, and I will exact punishment of the Egyptians who sought to destroy a nation who are the children of my friend Abraham who deployed against them at night in order to destroy his enemies, as it is written, 'at night, he deployed against them' (Gen. 14:15); and because they cast my firstborn into the Nile, behold I shall slay your firstborn son; and because of the ten trials which Abraham and undergone and was found perfect, I therefore smote them with ten plagues." Another similar notion can be found in Jub. 48:14: "The Lord our God cast them into the midst of the sea, even as the children of Egypt had cast their children into the river. He took vengeance on one million of them, and one thousand strong and energetic men were destroyed on account of one suckling of the children of your people which they had thrown into the river."

[441] The mention of "sons of God" also occurs in Wisdom 16:26. However, the sons in that context indicate a self-regarded status in terms of the relationship with God, not so much about an acknowledgement made by someone else.

Apart from providing reasons for the plague, the sage also creates many concrete details and imaginative embellishments in his portrayal of the catastrophic state that the Egyptians experienced when their children were slain. Even before the plague was carried out in full swing, the sage created a dream scene in which the warning of the death of the firstborn in Egypt was revealed beforehand (18:19). The setting of dreams is not in the biblical account, but may be inspired by the time indicated in the biblical account as midnight (Exod.12:29). Midnight is a time for sleep and dreams. However, the night when God struck dead the firstborn in Egypt is destined to be unsettling and disturbing. The dream produced much fear and terror, which made the Egyptians confront the reason for their punishments (18:18). "They might not perish without knowing why they suffered μὴ ἀγνοοῦντες δι' ὃ κακῶς πάσχουσιν, ἀπόλωνται" (18:19). By this statement, one can see that divine revelation of the reason for the Egyptians' upcoming suffering not only shows divine judgment of the wicked, but also divine mercy that allows the wicked to recognize their sin and repent.

Nevertheless, the Egyptians did not seize the opportunity to repent. When the final plague befell them, the Egyptians cried out discordantly (ἀσύμφωνος βοή) (18:10). The voice of their lamentation over their dead children was so great that it was carried through the land (18:10). The severity of the cry aligns with the biblical verse: "There was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where someone was not dead" (Exod. 12:30). Taking inspiration from the depiction in Exodus 12, the sage focuses more on the aural perspective, and he adds motion to the spread of sound, which vividly shows the ineffable grief and pain that each Egyptian household experienced when their firstborn was struck dead. No one can be exempt from the punishment. "Slave, master, commoners, and king"

all suffered the same fate (18:11). At another place when the sage describes the severity of the death of Egyptians, he states that "the corpses [were] too many to count (νεκροὺς εἶχον ἀναριθμήτους)," to the extent that "the living were not sufficient even to bury them (οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸς τὸ θάψαι οἱ ζῶντες ἦσαν ἱκανοὶ)" (18:12). The depiction of the Egyptians busy burying dead bodies is derived from the account in Num. 33:3-4 where it states: "On the day after the Passover, the people of Israel went out triumphantly in the sight of all the Egyptians, while the Egyptians were burying all their firstborn, whom the Lord had struck down among them." By transporting the passage from Numbers, the sage highlights Egyptians' helplessness and their busyness is in vain.

In contrast to the tremendous loss, pain, and suffering that the Egyptians went through, the Israelites were spared from the plague by observing the Passover ritual. This incorporation of the Passover liturgy in the narration of the tenth plague finds echoes in Exod.11:1-12:28 where the Lord announced the regulations of the Passover celebration. Despite its importance, the depiction of the Passover in Wisdom is short and concise. The four verses (18:6-9) cover the information about the origin, promise, and practice of the Passover. According to Wisdom, the night when the firstborns of the Egyptians were killed "was made known beforehand to our fathers προεγνώσθη πατράσιν ἡμῶν" (18:6). Here the designation of the term "our fathers" (πατράσιν ἡμῶν) is worth looking into, as different possible interpretations may impact the time when the knowledge of the event was first disclosed. Scholars have touched upon the issue. The question is whether "our fathers" (πατράσιν ἡμῶν) refer to "the patriarchs" (Gen. 15:14) or "the Israelite heads of families, who were forewarned of the death of the firstborn" (Exod.6:6; 11:4-8; 12:21-27).[442] In the context of Wisdom, the reference to "the fathers" does not apply to the Israelites generally,

[442] J. A. F. Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 172.

but specifically to the patriarchs (cf. 9:1; 12:21; 18:22).[443] Gregg argues that v.7 would be "an otiose repetition" of "your people" in v.6 if these two terms are identical.[444] Furthermore, the recurrence of the expression "oaths and covenants given to our fathers ὅρκους πατέρων καὶ διαθήκας ὑπομνήσας" (18:22) in the latter part of the literary unit suggests that the oath reference in v.6 can be considered as an equivalent expression. In this light, "our fathers" refers to the patriarchs.

Seeing this reading of the patriarchs, we can infer that, to Wisdom, the Passover night has long been extant in the promise that God made with the ancestors of the Israelites. The event signifies divine faithfulness and justice: "The deliverance of the righteous and the destruction of their enemies (σωτηρία μὲν δικαίων, ἐχθρῶν δὲ ἀπώλεια)" (18:8). As the Israelites offered their Passover sacrifices (ἐθυσιαζον ὅσιοι παῖδες ἀγαθῶν), they agreed to the divine law with one accord (ἐν ὁμονοίᾳ) (18:9). The agreement is not only a response to God, but also an imitation of the holy ones (18:9). Following the sacrifice, Wisdom portrays that the Israelites sang the praises of the fathers (πατέρων ἤδη προαναμελπόντων αἴνους).[445] The sage's depiction of the Passover ritual moves beyond simply a narration of the historical past, rather it invites one to partake in the ritual to experience divine deliverance and witness justice being enacted by God. For the sage, the practice of the Passover ritual from the past generation, to the present moment, and even in the future creates a series of threads that testify to divine goodness and faithfulness. Time collapses in each activation of the Passover ritual. By linking the Passover promises to the patriarchs, the sage reenacts the fulfillment of the Passover hope for his community. In the

[443] Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 172.
[444] Gregg, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 172.
[445] Some texts also read, "the fathers already leading the songs of praise."

words of Winston, the depiction of Passover here marks "the intense, if veiled, eschatological expectation characterized the period of Pseudo-Solomon."[446]

After the sage depicts the two groups' different responses to the final plague, he builds upon the motif of death and transitions to the episode of the Korahite rebellion. In the reworking of the divine punishment after the Korahite rebellion (Num. 16:41-50, LXX Num. 17:6-15), the sage indicates that the righteous also experienced death and highlights the way they countered death through liturgical intervention. In Numbers, the passage starts with people's murmuring against Moses and Aaron, as they accused them of killing the people of the Lord. In fact, the death of many people is an outcome of Korah's rebellion. Nevertheless, the opponents of Moses and Aaron regarded them as the main cause of the event. When the congregation had assembled against Moses and Aaron, God sent a plague that would consume the rebellious people. When the plague started, Aaron took the incense as Moses told him and made atonement for the people. Although the plague ceased afterward, still a large number of people died in the event. According to the biblical account, 14,700 in total died, which is an astonishing number, nearly one-fortieth of the whole congregation.

When Wisdom incorporates the episode, there are many modifications to the cause of the event, its details, and motives. First, Wisdom eliminates the exact biblical number of people who died and uses the general adjective "many" (πλήθους) instead (18:20), which contrasts the innumerable (ἀναριθμήτους) Egyptians who died during the last plague (18:12). Moving beyond the literary link of quantity, Wisdom further compares the length of time in suffering. For the Israelites, they experienced death in a short time, as the wrath

[446] David Winston, "Book Review of Michelangelo Priotto, *La prima Pasqua in Sap 18.5-25*: Rilettura e attualizzazione (RivBSup, 15; Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1987)," *CBQ* 52 (1990), 131.

did not last long (ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐπὶ πολὺ ἔμεινεν ἡ ὀργή) in the wilderness (18:20). How did wrath come upon the Israelites in the first place? To answer this question, Wisdom changes the negative event in the biblical account to a positive one. Wisdom omits the reference to the people’s rebellion. Instead, Wisdom regards the event as a divine test (ἦν γὰρ μόνη ἡ πεῖρα) (18:25). The Greek word πεῖρα implies that suffering can be instructive for the righteous and formative to their character building.[447] The suffering of the righteous without sins is a theme in the first part of the book (chs.1-6). God allowed misfortune and suffering to take place while creating opportunities for people to learn to trust Him and become mature in their faith and understanding of who He is.

After explaining the reason for the plague and its purpose, Wisdom focuses on Aaron who intercedes for the people and brings propitiation by incense (προσευχὴν καὶ θυμιάματος ἐξιλασμὸν κομίσας) (18:21). The ministries performed by Aaron here align with the biblical account. In the meantime, Wisdom modifies the way Aaron carries out his ministry. “He conquered the multitude not by the strength of body, and not by force of arms, but by the word (λόγῳ) he subdued the punisher, appealing to the oaths and covenants given to our fathers (ὅρκους πατέρων καὶ διαθήκας ὑπομνήσας)” (18:22).

Besides adding performative details to Aaron’s incense ministry, Wisdom also changes the agent of punisher from God to a personified destroyer τὸν κολάζοντα (18:22) or ὁ ὀλοθρεύων (18:25). Moving away from God’s direct involvement, Wisdom suggests that an angelic figure cast punishments on God’s behalf. A similar understanding can be found in 4 Macc. 7:11 where Aaron overcame the “angel of fire” in the plague event. This interpretive move is in line with the replacement of Logos in punishing the Egyptians (18:15). As Watson observes, Wisdom transplants the angel of death/the destroyer in the

[447] Cheon, *The Exodus Story*, 88.

Exodus account (Exod. 12:23) to the Numbers retelling.[448] By changing the agents, Wisdom reduces "the negative exercise of punitive wrath," (Num. 16, LXX 17) and highlights divine deliverance through the divine servant Aaron.[449]

By the end of the literary unit, Wisdom also draws attention to Aaron's priestly garment. The whole cosmos (ὅλος ὁ κόσμος) was depicted on Aaron's robe, and ancestral glories and divine majesty were reflected on his vesture (18:24). Each section of the high priest's long robe has symbolic meanings that map onto the constituents of the cosmos.[450] The reflection of the universe on the sacred vesture reminds the high priest of living a life that is worthy of divine calling. "First, the high priest should have in evidence upon him an image of the All, that so by constantly contemplating it be should render his own life worthy of the sum of things, secondly that in performing his holy office he should have the whole universe as his fellow-ministrant."[451]

This priestly focus by the end of the diptych showcases the importance of liturgical intervention to counter the spread of death among the Israelites. Although death is a shared motif that connects the experience of the Egyptians in the final plague with the Israelites' loss of many lives under divine test, the reaction to death between the two groups is drastically different. The helplessness of the Egyptians shows the severity of divine punishment, while the halt of the plague among the Israelites demonstrates the importance of proper worship of God.

<u>The Seventh Diptych: Crossing of the Red Sea (19:1-17)</u>

[448] Francis Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith* (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 403.
[449] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 75.
[450] Winston, *Wisdom*, 321.
[451] Winston, *Wisdom*, 322. Cf. *Mos*. 2.117-135; *Cher*. 100; *QE* 2.73, 76, 91; *Somn*. 1:214-215; *Jos. Ant*. 3.7.7; 3.7.5; *J. W.* 5.5.4-5; Plutarch *Is. Et Os.*77 (382C).

Cues and Points: Death and Life

In the seventh and last diptych, Wisdom comes to the epic moment of crossing the Red Sea. In this literary unit, death and life as a comparative motif between the Egyptians and the Israelites comes to the fore. The Israelites received life and liberation as they stepped on a path of deliverance that was crafted by God (19:7). In contrast, death is the fate of the Egyptians. They were drowned in the water as their sins deserved (19:4). Divine deliverance and salvation of the Israelites reach its climax in this last diptych.

Similar to the previous diptychs, the sage offers several reasons for the final punishment of the Egyptians. The first reason is articulated in the introductory line to the diptych: their foolish calculations and plans led them to fatal consequence (19:1-3). This line of thought is not new, as Egyptians' false reasoning and irrational decisions are already mentioned in the plague of darkness.[452] To further elaborate on the stupidity of the Egyptians, Wisdom describes how they made the decision to chase after the Israelites in a hasty and untimely manner: they were in the middle of mourning and lamenting their dead people (ἔχοντες τὰ πὲνθη, καὶ προσοδυρόμενοι τάφοις νεκρῶν) (19:3).[453] Without plan or preparation, the Egyptians plunged into the pursuit.

Immediately following the reason for their bad calculations, the sage mentions the second reason for the destruction of the Egyptians: it is due to their forgetfulness. They forgot what had happened beforehand (τῶν συμβεβηκότων ἀμνηστίαν), that is to say, they forgot the gruesome effects of the plagues and the reason for such punishment (19:4). Despite the Egyptians' foolish and hasty actions, it was not unknown to God. Their fervent

[452] There is an exegetical tradition that depicts Egyptians' lacking intelligence in their pursuit of the Israelites. See Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 99-103.

[453] Here Wisdom draws upon the scene of the Egyptians by the graves lamenting in the Numbers account (Num. 33:4). The passage in Numbers is also referred to in Wisdom 18:12.

pursuit of the Israelites took place in accordance with divine knowledge (19:1). The mention of divine foreknowledge here might derive from a reading of the biblical account where God commanded Moses to lead the Israelites on a farther route (Exod. 14:1-2). With His foreknowledge of the progress of events, God promised His people that "I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord" (Exod. 14:3-4). In the biblical account of the Exodus, Pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites becomes an instructive event that God manifests His glory to both Israel and the enemies of His people so that they know the power of God. In a similar vein, God's foreknowledge about the Egyptians' upcoming pursuit of the Israelites in Wisdom not only indicates that everything is under divine control, but also implies that God will turn this event into a pedagogical lesson in which the Egyptians are punished for their injustice and forgetfulness while the Israelites experience divine deliverance (19:4-5).

In the postscript of the unit, the third reason for the punishment of the Egyptians is mentioned. The wicked were punished because they "practiced a more bitter hatred of strangers (χαλεπωτέραν μισοξενίαν ἐπετήδευσαν)" and they "made slaves of guests (εὐεργέτας ξένους ἐδουλοῦντο) who were their benefactors" (19:13-14). One prominent moral inadequacy of the unrighteous nation is inhospitality.[454] Because of their inhospitality and terrible treatment of the Israelites, the Egyptians were punished.

In contrast to the Egyptians, the Israelites walked past the Red Sea depicted as "an unhindered way" (ὁδὸς ἀνεμπόδιστος) (19:7). The path for them is like "a grassy plain"

[454] According to Enns, the theme of inhospitality is derived from biblical traditions—not so much the exodus tradition—but rather the exegetical traditions concerning the destruction of the city of Sodom. Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 24-25.

(χλοηφόρον πεδίον).[455] God orchestrated different creation elements to aid His people. The final deliverance is marked by a miraculous restoration of the created order (19:6-12).[456] Bringing life to His people and the restoration of the cosmic and moral order demonstrate the power of God. Through this retelling of the Exodus story, the sage points out to his community that God has established justice in the past, and He would surely do it again.

3. Creation, De-Creation, and Recreation

Through the detailed analysis of the seven diptychs in Wisdom's Exodus retelling, we have noticed the cosmic impact that the historical retelling aims to bring out. This cosmic influence is inseparable from Wisdom's portrayal and perception of the involvement of the cosmic elements in saving the righteous while punishing the divine. These cosmic elements function as God's instruments and are critical in reestablishing the order of the world and the moral universe. I consider this incorporation of the natural elements show the merge of the creation theme with the Exodus event. By using the different stages—creation, de-creation, and recreation, I hope to illustrate how divine justice brings out its cosmic impact through Wisdom's Exodus retelling.

First, let us take a look at some relevant passages where the natural elements occur in Wisdom. In the plague of hail, natural elements demonstrate destructive power in punishing the wicked. The Egyptians were pursued by "rains, hail, and relentless storms (ὑετοῖς καὶ χαλάζαις καὶ ὄμβροις διωκόμενοι ἀπαραιτήτοις)," also accompanied by consuming fire (πῦρ) (16:16). The climate vocabularies nearly match the biblical account

[455] The depiction implies a reference to Isa 63:13. Peter Enns cites Deane and Larcher's proposal on the reading and agrees with them. Other commentators, like Gregg as one representative consider the "grassy plain" as "legendary embellishments of the Scriptural narrative" in v.7. Cf. Enns, *Exodus Retold*, 119.
[456] The theme of creation will be examined more extensively in the following section.

of Exodus. “The Lord sent thunder and hail (φωνὰς καὶ χάλαζαν), and fire (πῦρ) ran down to the earth…There was hail and fire (ἡ χάλαζα καὶ τὸ πῦρ) flashing continually in the midst of the hail…” (LXX Exod. 9:23-24). The different elements with opposing natures work cooperatively to enact divine judgement against the wicked.

Shortly after the illustration of the different cosmic elements in the plague of hail, Wisdom highlights the miraculous scene: “For, what was most unexpected, in water that quenches all things, the fire had still greater effect” (16:17). Fire by nature consumes things, while water by nature quenches fire. Yet surprisingly, the antithetical elements of water and fire coexist, creating a strong sense of amazement. Under the divine command, the created elements are able to reconcile with each other in their natural function. In other words, natural elements forsake their opposing natures and join the battle against the ungodly by cooperating with each other and magnifying their disciplinary effects. “For the universe defends the righteous (ὑπέρμαχος γὰρ ὁ κόσμος ἐστὶ δικαίων)” (16:17)—the conclusive statement shows an orientation to justice in the divine execution of punishments.

Wisdom’s emphasis on the involvement of natural elements in the plague cycle shows one strand of interpretive tradition in the Hellenistic period. In Philo’s retelling of the plagues, we can also observe a similar line of thought. In the introduction to the ten plagues, Philo states:

> The punishments inflicted on the land were ten—a perfect number for the chastisement of those who brought sin to perfection, for the elements of the universe (τὰ γὰρ στοιχεῖα τοῦ παντός)—earth, fire, air, water (γῆ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ ἀὴρ καὶ πῦρ)—carried out the assault. God’s judgement was that the materials which had served to produce the world should serve also to destroy the land of the impious; and to show the mightiness of sovereignty which He holds, what He

> shaped in His saving goodness to create the universe He turned into instruments for the perdition of the impious whenever He would." (*De Vi Mosis* 1.17.96)

Philo's understanding of the plagues is rooted in the operation of natural elements. Philo confirms that God first created the natural elements with good intentions, as the whole universe manifests his saving goodness (σωτηρίως ἐπὶ γενέσει τῶν ὅλων σχηματίζοντος). God also has the authority to employ these elements to punish the wicked. Different effects of the elements reflect divine judgements corresponding to the actions of particular groups of people.

In a similar vein, Wisdom highlights the role of cosmic forces in enacting justice and their distinct approaches to Egyptians and Israelites. Different degrees of tension and relaxation in the works of elements suggest certain influences from Stoic cosmology.[457] For the wicked, the flame of fire was restrained at times so that the animals sent to them previously would not be consumed (16:18).[458] Another time fire exhibits its power and destroys the crops of the Egyptians (16:19). For the righteous, fire "forgot its native power" (τῆς ἰδίας ἐπιλελῆσθαι δυνάμεως) so that the heavenly provision for them would not be interrupted (16:23). In a general conclusion, "creation exerts itself to punish the unrighteous and in kindness relaxes on behalf of those who trust in you (God) Ἡ γὰρ κτίσις σοι τῷ ποιήσαντι ὑπηρετοῦσα, ἐπιτείνεται εἰς κόλασιν κατὰ τῶν ἀδίκων, καὶ ἀνίεται εἰς εὐεργεσίαν ὑπὲρ τῶν εἰς σὲ πεποιθότων" (16:24).[459] The similar rationale also lies behind the plague of darkness and the final event of crossing the Red Sea. All light was deprived from the wicked in the plague of darkness. To highlight the helplessness of the wicked,

---

[457] Collins, "The Reinterpretation of Apocalyptic Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon," 151.

[458] Wisdom seems to group the plagues of frogs, lice, locusts, and hail altogether here. All these plagues happen simultaneously, instead of consecutively. The order of the plagues is quite different from the biblical account. In Artapanus' plague retelling, he combines frogs, lice, and frogs into one plague as well.

[459] The theme of creational justice occurs again in the crossing of the sea (19:6-12, 18-21).

Wisdom states, "No power of fire (πυρὸς) was able to give light, nor did the brilliant flames of the stars (ἄστρων ἔκλαμπροι φλόγες) avail to illumine that hateful night" (17:5). Natural phenomena that can possibly bring light lose their power. At the crossing of the sea, water plays a crucial role in setting apart the wicked and the righteous. "The cloud was seen overshadowing the camp, and dry land (ξηρός…γῆ) emerging out of what before was water (ἐκ δὲ προϋφεστῶτος ὕδατος), and an unhindered way out of the Red Sea, and a grassy plain out of the violent surge" (19:7). Here the depths of the sea turned into a safe path for the Israelites while becoming a deadly trap for their pursuers. In Wisdom's illustration of the different natural elements, water, fire, and light represent both a barrier and a means of salvation to the different groups involved in the cosmic battle, demonstrating the power of God and how He uses these cosmic elements to enact justice.

In both Wisdom and Philo, these dramatic manifestations of natural powers and their transformative essence evidence the belligerent impulses of cosmic forces against the ungodly, the unjust, and the evil ones. In the meantime, how shall we understand the relationship between God and all the created elements in carrying His divine judgment? These references to creation as combating forces, in one way or another, participate in a well-attested correlation between the cosmos and justice.[460] Attributing intermediaries—in the form of angels and natural elements—to the carrying out of divine punishments and rescues hints at a concern for the issue of agency. The concern goes back to the

[460] The correlation can be both positive and negative. Shannon Burkes incorporates Perdue's insights to illustrate the two-sidedness of the correlation in biblical wisdom literature. See Burkes, "Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Wisdom of Solomon," 32-33. "Qoheleth depicts the cosmos as a tyranny, and that it while beautiful, is not a just order deriving from the righteousness of God. Humans cannot understand time, and therefore cannot know how to select the proper moments of activity. This precludes being in harmony with the cosmic order." See Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), 239. As to Job, Purdue claims that justice does not lie in the cosmic order, but "an active process in which God and humanity struggle against chaos to establish and sustain the structures of life." Perdue, "Cosmology and Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," in *The Sages in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 461.

philosophical engagement regarding the nature and actions of an all-merciful and loving God.[461] How can a life-giving God bring such severe destruction and painful death?[462] In his grapplings with the problem, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo reasons that intermediary forces act on behalf of God. Pevarello discusses Philo's arguments in the following:

> In *De confusion linguarum*, Philo states that God, whose nature is to save, cannot be the cause of evil and destruction. Actions that deal with evil matters, such as punishments (κολάσεις) and torture, are thus entrusted to God's subordinates (τῶν ὑπ᾽αὐτόν). However, these subordinates do not possess "absolute power of punishment," so the sovereignty of God is preserved. In *De fuga et inventione*, Philo similarly states that punishment is administered by God's intermediaries, although on God's orders, preserving God's supreme rule: It is unbecoming to God to punish (κολάζειν), seeing that He is the original and perfect Lawgiver: He punishes not by His own hands but by those who act as His ministers (δι᾽ ὑπηρετούντων).[463]

Sharing the same concern and participating in a common interpretive tradition, Wisdom incorporates creation and describes it as attending (ὑπηρετοῦσα) to God (16:24, 19:6) when God executes His justice.[464] The subordinate role of creation, on the one hand, does not eliminate the sovereignty of God. On the other hand, the service of creation in dispensing punishments exhibits Wisdom's reflection of God who ministers and authorizes

---

[461] In the following section of this chapter, I will discuss the mercy dialogue in Wisdom. I consider the mercy dialogue shows how the sage offers a theological reflection on the nature of God through his interpretation of history.

[462] The concern is also central to Wisdom's thinking. In Wisdom 1:13-14, it states that "God did not make death, and he does not delight in the death of the living. For he created all things that they might exist, and the generative forces of the world are wholesome, and there is no destructive poison in them, and the dominion of Hades is not on earth." It is clear that Wisdom is concerned with the question of death and life, good and evil, and their corresponding relation to the divine.

[463] Daniele Pevarello, "Looking for Wisdom in Wis 11:2-19:2: Between Universalism and Particularism," *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 30, no.1 (2020), 31. The statement of Philo can be found in *De fuga et inventione* 66 (Colson, LCL).

[464] In Wisdom, the person or force that performs punishments or deliverance is not constant at times. In Wis. 11:8 and 12:14, one can find that God punishes the wicked on his own. Wis. 16:8 shows that God saves His people from evil directly.

all these natural elements. As Pevarello argues, the interpolation of creation in Israelite history demonstrates that divine justice is activated both in Israelite history and is embedded in the cosmic structures of creation.[465] In other words, "justice regulates the cosmic order."[466] God expressed His justice through history and creation and He allows creation to intervene in history for the expression of divine justice.

When God executes punishments with the cosmic elements, the inhabited land also experiences a de-creation process. Blood, the torture of and by animals, hail, darkness, violent water—the different plagues leave catastrophic marks on the land. In this regard, a restoration is needed which corresponds to the rectification of cosmic order. By the end of the Crossing of the Sea, Wisdom writes,

> ὅλη γὰρ ἡ κτίσις ἐν ἰδίῳ γένει πάλιν ἄνωθεν
> διετυποῦτο ὑπηρετοῦσα ταῖς σαῖς ἐπιταγαῖς,
> ἵνα οἱ σοὶ παῖδες φυλαχθῶσιν ἀβλαβεῖς.
> For the whole creation was fashioned again in its original nature,
> serving your commands
> in order that your children might be kept unharmed (19:6).

The effects of the renewed creation are not short of miracles. In Wisdom 19:18-21, a series of remarkable and supernatural events occurred post-Exodus. The restoration and renewal of the natural elements showcase the extraordinary power of God. Starting with a simile that uses the imagery of a harp to draw a parallel between the changing notes in music and the transformation of natural elements, we see the profound and miraculous nature of the events unfolded in Exodus (19:18). Following the opening simile, there is a transformation of creatures and their habitats. Land animals became aquatic, while creatures of water

[465] Pevarello, "Looking for Wisdom," 33.
[466] Pevarello, "Looking for Wisdom," 33.

moved on to the land (19:19). This change of habitat symbolizes God's power to reshape the natural order in His renewal and restoration, for He is always sovereign over creation. The persistence of fire in water in the following verse (19:20) echoes the passages in the plague of hail. Similarly, the reference to the flame and the manna (19:21) reminds one of God's continuous provision for the righteous.

Through a vivid depiction of the universe and the operation of elements, these final verses (19:18-21) in Wisdom demonstrate the extraordinary effects of the Exodus. The fusion of the creation theme with the historical retelling invites us to contemplate the interconnectedness of creation and redemption, emphasizing the continuous presence of God in both the natural and historical realms.

Conclusion

Based on similitude and common motifs, Wisdom fashions a logic of events in the Exodus retelling peculiar in its own right. The literary imagination of Wisdom does not come out of a vacuum nor go wild without bounds. Each juxtaposition manifests a thoughtful reading of the biblical accounts, as the author of Wisdom evaluates the materials carefully, locates the connecting word derived from the plague cycle, and finds and interweaves the corresponding accounts.

It is also worth noting that the plague cycle in Wisdom's interpretation lacks chronological sequence. It seems as though every event that constitutes the plague cycle happens concurrently and the participants of these events—both the righteous and the wicked—witness each other's experience in a present "here-and-now" that is constructed by Wisdom. The lack of temporal or spatial transitional markers in each diptych is

pronounced. Wisdom freely switches the subject between the Israelites and the Egyptians, as if a shorthand ’αντί is adequate to note a transition. For instance, when God delivers the Israelites from the venomous serpents, the Egyptians witness the delivery amidst their suffering from the bites of locusts and flies. Wisdom comments on the event: “By this you convinced our enemies, that it is you who deliver from every evil” (16:8). In another passage where the creational elements execute divine judgments, the wicked witness the protection of the righteous while being consumed by the elements themselves, become aware that “they were being pursued by the judgment of God” (16:18).

These instances imply an interpretive possibility that both parties are situated in the same environment where divine mercy and judgements are demonstrated. This proximity between the two groups creates a sense of presence, both in terms of the direct contact between the Egyptians and the Israelites and that of God. To highlight the presence of each group of people in the same scene, Wisdom pays attention to depicting sensory experiences. In many fields, presence is understood as “an interpretation of bodily sensation in response to environmental cues; one that contributes to the sense of ‘being there,’ the sense of reality or realness.”[467] When Wisdom delineates the effects of the plagues, a special focus is given to the contrastive physical reactions and needs that the two people groups undergo. Among the multiple sensory faculties, sight plays a critical role. By witnessing each other’s different outcomes, the wicked and the righteous gain knowledge of divine justice and mercy. The dynamism of sight creates an immersive effect that invites the readers to identify with the characters and have a sense of being at the scene.

[467] Erickson-Davis, et al, “The Sense of Presence: Lessons from Virtual Reality,” *Religion, Brain, and Behavior* 11, no.3 (2021), 347.

These visual observations generate another factor of presence, that of God. James Reese readily points out that "seeing" serves as a significant theological theme in the book. Reese interprets true seeing does not "come from the power of bodily eyes, but requires a divine revelation or intervention, or at least good will on man's part to view the nature of things correctly."[468] Divine intervention is a crucial motif in the book of Wisdom. It occurs frequently when the righteous suffer injustice or God executes His punishments against the wicked. As representatives of the divine, Logos and creational elements come to aid the righteous. God punishes and delivers in detailed and concrete situations, through which the divine and His nature of justice and kindness become known and understood.

Seeing and knowing are perpetually referential, and the relation of the two can hardly be settled.[469] Do the righteous first believe that God is just and merciful, then they can see the manifold acts of God in their times of trouble and uncertainties and regard these acts as divine acts of mercy? Or do they first see the great acts of divine deliverance and then believe that God "has not neglected to help them at all times and in all places?" (19:22) "The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe."[470] The belief in the divine promise is invoked when the righteous appeal for divine help. Tokens of deliverance are inscribed in the oaths and covenants of the fathers (12:21; 18:6, 9, 22), law's commands (16:6) and the divine oracles (16:11). Having faith in these messages that they had received and inherited from their ancestors, the people of God expected "the deliverance of the righteous and the destruction of their enemies" (18:7). The vision of the righteous is enabled and clarified by God. Divine promises are confirmed by the experiences of the people of God. At the same time, by sight, people grow more assured of

[468] Reese, *Hellenistic Influence*, 141.
[469] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972), 6.
[470] Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 8.

the nature of God whom they worship and glorify. Vision, in this sense, is continually active and moving, as it compels one to look to God and rely on Him. And here, it is through the sage's active interpretation of scripture that the presence of God is invoked, and the faith and hope of the community established.

Chapter Six

Sage's Performance of History

Introduction

The significance of an event can be observed from its repetitive and ceaseless retelling. Such is the case for the Exodus story. Pamela Barmash summarizes the importance of the Exodus story powerfully in the following:

> …Exodus refers to much more than a specific limited one-dimensional religious-historical event. Rather, it represents the central, enduring, generative Jewish *concept* or *trope* of self-understanding and existential imagination. That is to say, "Exodus" throughout Jewish history is an ongoing process of Jewish meaning-making—an eternal production, re-appropriation and refashioning of Jewish ideas, events, rituals, symbols, all images in response to the dynamic created between the cultural memory of Jewish past and the reality of Jewish present. There exists a concrete correspondence between remembering one's past and forming one's identity in the present. For Jews and Judaism, this correspondence is mediated through the lens of the exodus experience fully constituted and broadly writ.[471]

[471] Pamela Barmash, "Introduction: The Exodus: Central, Enduring, and Generative," in *Exodus in the Jewish Experience: Echoes and Reverberations*, ed. Pamela Barmash and David W. Nelson (Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2015), viii.

In Wisdom, we see how the sage interprets the Exodus narrative through creative rearrangement of Pentateuchal materials and a merge with the creation themes. It is through scriptural interpretation that meaning-making for the Jewish community in Alexandria becomes manifest. For the community, the story of Exodus embodies divine justice and righteousness which the community also actively longs for. In the meantime, each retelling of the Exodus story generates or renews thoughts and reflection about God and the divine-human relationship. This is not an exception for the sage of Wisdom.

In the sage's historical retelling, he also offers his theological insights. In between the historical recital and the full-blown Exodus retelling lie two excursions on the nature of God and anti-idolatrous discourse. I think these two excursions are integral to the historical retelling in that this structure of the historical retelling showcases the sage's reflection on the meaning of history, with a particular focus on the Exodus story. In this lens, the placement of these theological ruminations demonstrates that knowledge of God is deeply intertwined with the historical experience of God as a nation. I argue such structure in the historical retelling exhibits the sage's reflection of history and its consequences. That is to say, as the sage is performing history, he is also actively thinking about the meaning of history and its theological implications. By the sage's performance of history, I want to demonstrate that history of the past, with the Exodus account as the center, not only evokes memory, but also elicits hope. In other words, the theology of hope is deeply embedded in the biblical historical imagination.

In this chapter, I will start with a description of the structure of the historical retelling in Wisdom and explain how the correspondences of certain elements in the historical retelling lead to a focus on the praise of God. Then I move on to examine the

sections on divine mercy and anti-idolatrous discourse in detail to show how historical experience and knowledge of God are deeply intertwined. Finally, I turn to an analysis of the mode of conversation in the Book of History that frames the section, aiming to show the significance of dialogical form in shaping the sage's performance of history. I argue that this conversational mode of historical retelling aims to invite the congregation as a whole to participate in history and give the Lord due praise (19:22).

I. Sage's Reflection of History and Its Consequences

As the literary examination of the historical recital in the previous chapter shows, the historical retelling in Wisdom does not present a continuous form. Rather, in between the survey of early Israelite history and the full-blown Exodus retelling lies some theological reflection on divine mercy and the true form of worship. To understand the sage's theological reflection of history, I think it is important to first examine the internal structure of the historical retelling and observe how history interacts with theology. With this current form, we can notice the centrality of the Exodus story, as it is mentioned twice in the Book of History—once by the end of the historical recital (10:15-21), once a full-fledged account (11:1-14, 16:1-19:17). How shall we understand the repeated depiction of the Exodus story in Wisdom? What is the effect of historical retelling that centers around the Exodus? Also, how do the excursions on divine mercy and idolatry fit into the historical retelling? In the following section, I will address these questions by examining the structure of historical retelling and the placement of different materials in Wisdom's retelling.

1. The Structure of Historical Retelling

The structure of historical retelling in Wisdom centers on the Exodus event. Starting with Ch.10, the historical moments presented in the list are wide in scope and fast in pace until history reaches the Exodus. In light of the proportion of lines, it is clear that the spotlight in the enumeration of events is on the Israelites' departure from Egypt. For the remaining chapters in the Book of History, the importance of the Exodus event is apparent in its literary scale and contribution to theological reflection.

The depiction of the departure from Egypt serves as a central element in the Exodus retelling. It occurs twice (10:15-21, 19:1-9) and the corresponding praise by the end of the event forms an inclusio in the Book of History. The departure from Egypt as the climax of the historical recital in Ch.10 enables a multi-directional reading that allows the reader to move forward and backward freely. As a transitional unit, the departure passage generates different levels of meaning when one situates it 1) in the historical list (Chapter 10); 2) the Book of History (Ch.10-19); and 3) in Wisdom of Solomon the book as a whole. First, when one situates the exodus event in the historical list, one can see the narrative moves from individual heroes to a collective nation. The narrative arc of the chapter forms a crescendo effect and leads to the pivotal moment of the birth of a nation. When we position the departure section in the Book of History, it serves as a literary link to the narration of the first plague. In the first plague of blood, the Israelites are supposed to set out on their journey in the wilderness under the guidance of Moses (11:1-4). The wilderness scene then sets the stage for the upcoming plagues. At last, taking the section of departure into the whole book, the reaction of praise and singing in response to divine deliverance brings out the ultimate purpose of retelling the Israelite history: to praise and give thanks to the Lord (19:22).

The mention of singing in the double accounts of the Exodus retelling ties the two cycles of departure from Egypt together. The verbs ὑμνέω “to sing hymns” (10:20) and αἰνέω “to sing” (19:9) echo with each other, especially since both verbs occur after the crossing of the Red Sea, alongside a vocative use of κύριε.[472] In addition, the act of singing creates a connection with the Exodus event in the Book of Exodus. After the crossing of the Red Sea, Moses and the people of Israel sang a song to the Lord (ישיר...את השיר הזאת/ ᾖσεν…τὴν ᾠδὴν ταύτην τῷ θεῷ) (Exod. 15:1) in response to the salvation they received. This singing tradition also occurs briefly in Psalm 106:12 (וישירו תהלתו) in the context of the Exodus. Early interpreters of the Exodus event added more details of how the singing was conducted. Philo envisioned a choir, with Moses leading the men and Miriam leading the women, singing hymns of thanksgiving to God (*Moses* 1:180; *The Contemplative Life* 87). The depiction of the singing Israelites continues to develop in the Passover tradition as a proper expression of thanksgiving to God.[473] In short, singing is regarded as a proper response to divine deliverance, a way to celebrate and remember the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord.

2. Historical Experience and the Knowledge of God

Now let us transition to a detailed examination of the different units in the historical retelling. Situated between the first and second diptychs, are the two theological reflections, the so-called “Mercy Dialogue” (11:17-12:27) and the “anti-idolatrous discourse” (13:1-15:19).[474] How do these two sections relate to the Exodus retelling that is

[472] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 281.
[473] Baruch Bokser, *The Origins of Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1984), 22.
[474] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 11; Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 294, 322.

in progress in these chapters? How do the theological reflections interact with the historical retelling? To answer these questions, I will first start by looking at the relationship between each theological reflection and the diptychs that are located by proximity. Then I will consider the two thematic reflections in the broader context of the Exodus retelling.

On a smaller literary scale, we will first locate the discussion on divine mercy and critique of idolatry in their immediate context. For the mercy dialogue, it appears after the first plague (11:1-14). Wisdom 11:15-16 provides the reason for the punishment of the Egyptians and the principle by which they are punished:

> ἀντὶ δὲ λογισμῶν ἀσυνέτων ἀδικίας αὐτῶν,
> ἐν οἷς πλανηθέντες ἐθρήσκευον ἄλογα ἑρπετὰ καὶ κνώδαλα εὐτελῆ,
> ἐπαπέστειλας αὐτοῖς πλῆθος ἀλόγων ζῴων εἰς ἐκδίκησιν,
> ἵνα γνῶσιν ὅτι, δι’ ὧν τις ἁμαρτάνει,
> διὰ τούτων κολάζεται.
> In return for their senseless and wicked thoughts
> through which they were led astray
> to worship irrational reptiles and worthless vermin,
> you sent on them a multitude of irrational creatures to take vengeance
> in order that they might learn that a person
> is punished by the very things by which the person sins.

In these verses, the critique of animal worship (11:15) foregrounds the later polemic against idolatry in various forms, as shown in 13:1-14:31, 15:5-19.[475] In addition, the principle of *lex talionis*[476] (11:16) explains the transition from the enumeration of idolatrous practices, in particular zoolatry, to the plagues of animals, locusts, and flies. The second plague of animals starts with the prepositional phrase διὰ τοῦτο, which explains the rationale for the divine punishment and torment of sending animals and swarms of vermin

[475] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 63.
[476] For instances in the Bible, cf. Exod. 21:23-25; Lev. 24:19-20; Deut. 19:21.

(16:1, cf. 11:17-20). Now we will turn to a closer examination of the two theological reflections on divine mercy and criticism against idolatry.

A. Divine Mercy (11:17-12:27)

Despite the unrighteous people receiving their due punishments, the sage also reflects the severity of the punishment and highlights that God not only brings justice but also shows mercy. In the historical retelling, the sage invites one to ponder the divine mercy (11:17-12:27).[477] Instead of destroying the unrighteous people completely, the Lord grants chances for repentance before undertaking His punitive action.

The combination of divine justice and mercy is consistent throughout the reflection on the nature of God. The "all-powerful hand" (παντοδύναμος χείρ) of the Lord not only brought the whole world into existence (11:17), but is also capable of wiping out (συνεκτρῖψαι) the corrupting world (11:17-20c, 21-22). Nevertheless, the Lord demonstrates His power with moderation. "By measure and number and weight" (μέτρῳ καὶ ἀριθμῷ καὶ σταθμῷ), He ordered the universe.[478] Why is there such constrained use of the divine power? The sage offers the following reason: God has all-inclusive love for all creatures. To demonstrate God's incredible love for His creation, the sage repetitively uses "all," the encompassing word to describe divine love towards His creatures:

> You have mercy on all (πάντας), because you can do all things (πάντα), (11:23)
> For you love all things that exist (τὰ ὄντα πάντα), and detest none of the things (οὐδὲν) that you have made (11:24)
> You spare all things (πάντων), because they are yours, (11:26)
> For your incorruptible spirit is in all things (ἐν πᾶσιν) (12:1)

[477] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 63.

[478] For a discussion on the Neo-Pythagorean influence on this particular expression, see Larcher, *Sagesse*, 218-232; McGlynn, *Divine Judgment*, 39-42.

Since "soul-loving" (φιλόψυχε) is the essential nature of God, He slows down His punishment (11:26). He warns the sinners "little by little" (κατ' ὀλίγον),[479] offering them chances to put aside their wickedness and find faith in Him (12:2). The divine moderation in punishment is illustrated through the case of the Canaanites (12:3-11). The enumeration of the wicked acts performed by the Canaanites, including sorcery, unholy rites, human and child sacrifice (12:3-7)[480], shows sufficient reason for them to be wiped out (12:9). Nevertheless, God relents and judges them by sending "wasps to destroy them little by little" (ἀπέστειλάς σφῆκας…ἵνα αὐτοὺς κατὰ βραχὺ ἐξολεθρεύσωσιν) (12:8), in hope that the evil ones might repent (12:10a). Furthermore, Wisdom affirms the foreknowledge of the Canaanites' thoughts and actions that they would never change (12:10). If this is the case, why would God not destroy them completely in the first place? Barclay notices the seeming paradox and explains, "There is some cost to the logic: if God knew in advance that they could not change, it makes little sense for him to give them time to do so. That our author [of Wisdom] risks this logical incoherence is a sign of the stress he wishes to lay on God's boundless mercy."[481] The "logical tension"[482] reinforces the sage's commitment to divine justice and mercy in his theological reflection on the divine nature.

Following the example of the Canaanites, Wisdom continues to reflect upon divine justice and power. In the face of four rhetorical questions concerning divine justice and punishment (12:12), Wisdom makes it clear the sovereignty of God and His justice is

---

[479] The expression finds echoes in the Bible. Cf. Exod. 23:30, Deut. 7:22 κατὰ μικρὸν μικρόν.

[480] A similar list of practices can be found in Ps. 106:34-39 where the psalmist critiques the Israelites for their adaptation of Canaanites' wicked practices.

[481] J. M. G. Barclay. "Unnerving Grace: Approaching Roman 9-11 from the Wisdom of Solomon," in *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, ed. F. Wilk and J. R. Wagner (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 102.

[482] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 65.

inseparable from His mercy (12:18). Once again, Wisdom employs the all-encompassing language to describe the dual nature of God.

> For neither is there any god beside you, whose care is for all (περὶ πάντων) (12:13).
> But being righteous, you manage all things (τὰ πάντα) righteously (12:15).
> …and your sovereignty over all (τὸ πάντων) causes you to spare all (πάντων) (12:16).

By being a God of justice and mercy, the Israelites also learnt from their historical experience that "the righteous ought to be loving towards human beings…and [God] gives repentance of sins" (12:19). This rings true in future divine judgement and discipline as well (12:20-22). The portrayal of the Lord reminds one of the classic reflection of the divine nature in Exod 34:6-7, which later evolves into a formulaic address to God (cf. Num.14:18; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Nah. 1:3; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh. 9:17). God is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (אל רחום וחנון ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת/ ὁ θεὸς οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινὸς); in the meantime, He will "by no means clear the guilt" (ונקה לא ינקה/οὐ καθαριεῖ τὸν ἔνοχον) and will seek the iniquity of the coming generations. The dual nature of God is deeply rooted in the biblical reflection of who God is. Like the biblical authors, the sage of Wisdom draws upon historical events to illustrate the essence of God. The historical events and characters show a didactic nature, for through history, one continues to gain knowledge of God.

Even though God carries out "merciful justice,"[483] the Egyptians remain obstinate in their evil practice of worshipping animals. Their folly and lack of reason (12:23-24) continue to drag them into the wrong subject of worship until more judgements make them

[483] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 66.

aware that the Lord is the "true God" (θεὸν ἐπέγνωσαν ἀληθῆ) (12:27). The ending of divine mercy provides a transition to the following criticism against idolatry. Also, it brings out the core of the anti-idolatrous discourse: to worship the true God and abandon any other form of illicit worship.

B. Criticism Against False Worship (13-15)

The harsh critique against illicit worship is infused with rhetoric and eloquence.[484] The polemic consists of three main sections. The threefold progression of the attack against idolatry finds parallels in Philo (*Decal*. 52ff; *Sepc*. 1.13ff; *Cont*. 3ff; *Congr*.133).[485] The tripartite division is quite common in Hellenistic Jewish apologetic literature, a model that is possibly built upon a Stoic schema.[486] The initial section reproves the worship of nature (13:1-9), followed by a long critique against a variety of idolatrous practices (13:10-15:13). The final section targets idolatrous practices in Egypt, in particular the animal worship (15:14-19), which has been a recurring critique in the Book of History (cf. 11:15, 15:18-19, 16:1). The sage describes the three forms of illicit worship in the following terms: "mindless" μάταιοι (13:1), "wretched" ταλαίπωροι (13:10), and "the most foolish of all" ἀφρονέστατοι (15:14). Seeing the ethical deterioration and intellectual errors caused by varied forms of idolatrous practice, Wisdom justifies the numerous plagues that fell upon the Egyptians as proper divine punishment.

Starting with the worshippers of the elements, the sage is likely offering a rebuttal of the religion of the philosophers (13:1-9).[487] In the first verse, God is evoked three times

[484] For a study of the internal structure of Ch.13-15, see Gilbert, *La critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse*.
[485] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 248.
[486] Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon*, 248.
[487] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 323.

(θεός, τὸν ὄντα, τεχνίτης) (13:1).[488] The philosophers must have been ardently seeking God, as they "pay attention to the works of God" (τοῖς ἔργοις προσέχοντες) and the operation of the natural elements[489] (13:1-2). However, their problem is that they fail to understand the identity of the true God and mistake the created for the creator (13:3, 7). Using comparative reasoning,[490] the sage states that if the nature worshippers find beauty in God's creation, how much more in the one who created them (13:3-4). The sage's attitude to the philosophers might be the most lenient among the other forms of illicit worship. On the one hand, the sage affirms the philosophers' genuine search for God (13:6). On the other hand, the philosophers are not excused (οὐδ᾽ αὐτοὶ συγγνωστοί) from their wrong conclusion, as since they had been investigating the world (αἰών) so thoroughly, how could they still miss the mark? (13:8-9)

After a relatively mild critique of the worshippers of nature, the sage has no reservations in attacking the stupidity of idol worshippers. In the longer section of the discourse against false worship (13:10-15:13), the sage unleashes his critiques of hand-made idols (13:10-19, 14:8-21; 15:7-17). There are two reasons that the sage offers to explain the origin of idol-making that reflect mystery cult and imperial cult in the Hellenistic world. First, people make idols of their deceased family members to cope with grief (14:15), a practice that gradually evolved into "mysteries and sacred rites" (μυστήρια καὶ τελετάς) that are associated with worshiping "a dead human being as god" (νεκρὸν ἄνθρωπον νῦν ὡς θεὸν ἐτίμησεν) (14:15). Second, people attempt to pay homage to a king

[488] Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 323.
[489] The discussion of the elements, alongside the divinization of the elements, is quite prevalent in different philosophical schools at the time. See Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 329; Larcher, *Sagesse*, 3:756-760.
[490] The type of *a minori ad maius*, see Mazzinghi, *Wisdom*, 331.

that is far off at the command of the royals (14:16-17).[491] The worship is purely based on illusion (14:17). The craftsman[492] further embellishes the image of the king with skills. The veracity of the painting confuses a multitude of people about the distinction between human and divine (14:19-20). Then idolatry becomes a "trap for human life" (τῷ βίῳ εἰς ἔνεδρον) and makes humans enslaved to inanimate stone and wood (14:21). The enslaving feature of idolatry and its decadent consequence is summarized in 14:12 "For the invention of idols was the beginning of fornication (αρχὴ…πορνείας),[493] and the discovery of them the corruption of life (φθορὰ ζωῆς)." The parody against handmade idols in Wisdom has its precursor in many biblical passages that oppose illicit worship.[494] One prominent feature of the idols is their lifelessness. Idols are "lifeless objects," something that is "dead," and have no mobility, merely "objects of stone and wood" (13:17-19, 14:21, 29, 15:15-17). Worshipping the lifeless objects brings death to one's life.

Continuing his critique, the sage makes a list of vices that are associated with idolatry in 14:23-31, and stresses that "For the worship of idols that may not be named is the beginning and cause and end of every evil (παντὸς ἀρχὴ κακοῦ καὶ αἰτία καὶ πέρας ἐστίν)" (14:27). The intellectual unsoundness and ethical immorality indicated in the list forms a sharp contrast with the list of virtues in the praise of wisdom (7:22-26). Religious stupidity and moral evil become most magnified in Egyptian animal worship. "They

---

[491] Drew Strait, "The Wisdom of Solomon, Ruler Cults, and Paul's Polemic Against Idols in the Areopagus Speech," *JBL* 136, no.3 (2017), 618-619.

[492] Here the human craftsmen are motivated by their ambition to make idols, which leads to disastrous consequences. In Wisdom, craftsman as a title is also attributed to God (13:1) and wisdom (7:22, 14:2). In the latter two cases, craftsmanship is highly respected and praised in the beauty of the world and the knowledge that they bring into the world.

[493] For a discussion on the erotic stimulation of idol worship, see Jason von Ehrenkrook, "Image and Desire in the Wisdom of Solomon," *Zutot* 7 (2011): 41-50.

[494] Exod 20:3-5 (Deut. 5:7-9); Deut. 4:16-19; Isa. 44:9-20; Jer. 7:16-8:3; Bel; Ps. 115:4-8 MT (113:12-16 LXX).

worship the most detestable animals (τὰ ζῷα δὲ τὰ ἔχθιστα)" (15:18), which is considered as the worst case of a lack of intelligence (ἀνοίᾳ γὰρ συγκρινόμενα τῶν ἄλλων).

Apart from the harsh critique against illicit worship of many forms, the sage does not forget to articulate what true worship entails. In comparison to the many idolaters who fail to acknowledge the true God and give Him due honor, he states that the Israelites demonstrate proper knowledge of God. The knowledge of God, as the Israelites believe, leads one to "perfect righteousness" (ὁλόκληρος δικαιοσύνη) and "immortality" (ἀθανασίας), which are the direct opposites to immorality and death in the case of the idolaters (15:3). The mention of righteousness and immortality echoes the rewards for those who seek and obtain wisdom (3:4, 4:1, 8:13, 8:17). In this regard, the knowledge of the true God is closely tied to the pursuit of wisdom.

C. Theological Reflection: History and Theology of Hope

Seeing that the two theological excursions are sandwiched between the first diptych and the second diptych, an integral relationship between the two reflections and the recounting of the exodus and wilderness episodes is readily suggested. From a structural point of view, the discussion on divine mercy and polemic against idolatry explains the reason for God sending the plagues among the Egyptians. Also, the series of diptychs demonstrates the integration of divine mercy and judgement, as God punishes the enemies for their evil-doing while preserving the righteous. The theological reflections undergird Wisdom's interpretive motivation to rearrange the Pentateuchal materials in numerous juxtapositions.[495] In this regard, the Exodus account is retold through the prism of the sage's understanding of the nature of God.

[495] Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness*, 70.

On the other hand, it is also fitting to state that the understanding of God's dual nature, being both just and merciful, is deeply rooted in the Israelites' historical experience. In the historical retelling in Ch.10, the direct address to God (10:20) shows the sage's clear orientation of praise to God. Even though the historical retelling is recounted through a sapiential lens, the interpretation of the historical events through the agency of Sophia by no means diminishes the knowledge of divine presence throughout Israelite history. In the full-blown exodus retelling, the second occurrence of praising God for His mighty deliverance of the Israelites (19:9) further reinforces the fact that God Himself remains the main object of praise in the Book of History. Seeing the repetition of the exodus account, Watson notes that "the two Exodus passages represent a line of demarcation between divine acts of judgment (the plague traditions) and a mercy (the wilderness traditions)."[496] In between the two exodus accounts, we see God as both merciful and just in the numerous encounters between the righteous and the evil, and their interactions with the ultimate judge, God Himself.

As acknowledged and examined by many, the sage's interpretation of history in Wisdom is fascinating and innovative. Nevertheless, the sage still follows the steps of his precursors in his presentation of the meaning of history. First and foremost, the knowledge of God is inseparable from the historical reality. "God becomes identifiable where He identifies himself with himself in the historic act of faithfulness."[497] At times, the sage would invoke "the oaths and covenants of good promises" (ὅρκους καὶ συνθήκας) that God has promised to the Fathers (12:21). The promises are embedded in the historical past and exhibit ongoing potential to be actualized. The divine promises, coupled with laws and

[496] Watson, *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*, 386.
[497] Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. James W. Leitch (London: SCM Press, 1967), 116.

divine oracles (16:6, 11), are pregnant with future implications that demand a need to "re-cognize God"[498] in new situations and historical experiences. This leads to the second important feature of meaning-making for Israelite history: history is never a static past, but a vibrant interaction between traditions, both old and new.

Hope for the future is inscribed into the historical events, not only because of the divine promises and covenants in history, but also a longing for God to reenact His salvific works. The liberation one generation had experienced speaks powerfully to the upcoming generation. Seeing the divine acts in the past, future interpreters of the historical past have assurance in divine faithfulness, also are highly motivated to articulate the significance of the events to the present community and exhort them to stay hopeful and faithful. The trans-temporal nature of the historical events is well elucidated in Fishbane's thoughts on the meaning of the Exodus event:

> The simultaneous capacity of the Exodus paradigm to elicit memory and expectation, recollection and anticipation discloses once again its deep embeddedness as a fundamental structure of the biblical historical imagination… The very capacity of a historical event to generate future expectation is dependent on the transfiguration of that event by the theological intuition that in it and through it the once and future power of the Lord of history is revealed. Without such symbolic transformation, the Exodus wouldnever have given birth to hope.[499]

[498] Martin Buber distinguishes the experience of God and the knowledge of God. The major distinction lies in the repetition of historical remembrance. He states, "It may be claimed to be a fundamental principle of history of religion that experience of God begins with the experience of a single phenomenon, but knowledge of God begins with the identification of the two, i.e. cognition begins with re-cognition." This insight is applicable to the exodus event and its interpretation throughout ages. Through interpretation of the pivotal salvific event in Israelite history, the Jewish community continues to "re-cognize" God. Martin Buber, *Königtum Gottes*, 2nd ed, (Berlin: Schocken, 1936), xliii. Cited by Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 112.

[499] Michael Fishbane, *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts* (New York: Schocken, 1979), 14.

History becomes a fruitful realm for the Israelites to acquire proper knowledge of God[500] and also transforms the theological understanding of God. Apart from theological reflection, history also demands new interpretations in response to new contexts. Such is the case we have observed in the sage's theological reflection of history in Wisdom. The ongoing interpretation of the historical tradition creates "the whole value of hermeneutical experience" to the community—it is an "encounter in a tradition [that] says something to us…something that asserts itself as truth."[501] In light of this, each new interpretation of the same historical events provides an avenue to experience the "truth" over and over again.

II. The Sage's Performance of History

As we have examined the sage's innovative interpretation of Israelite history, with a focus on the Exodus retelling, alongside the theological reflection that goes in tandem with the historical retelling, now we shall turn to the final section of the second part of the thesis, and focus on how the sage frames the whole historical retelling in a mode of conversation. In other words, historical retelling in Wisdom presents itself as a public performance that addresses the community and God. The performative feature of historical retelling in Wisdom demonstrates how history is "intergenerational, covenantally shaped, morally serious, dialogically open, and politically demanding."[502] I argue that the ultimate purpose for the interactive performance of history is to invite the whole congregation to participate in history and give the Lord due praise (19:22).

1. The Mode of Conversation in the Historical Retelling

[500] Such is the case in comparison to the worshippers of nature, hand-made idols, and animals in Wisdom 13-15.
[501] Hans Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinscheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 1996), 489.
[502] Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment*, 21.

Many social scientists have shown that "conversational remembering" is crucial to the formation of collective memory.[503] As Erving Goffman has shown persuasively, framing devices are pivotal in shaping and organizing our everyday experience.[504] The past experience, through conversation, is passed down and experienced again by the current community. In Wisdom's historical retelling, one can also observe the features of conversational remembering. In particular, history has a communicative dimension when the sage consistently uses "you," the second person pronoun to address God in the Exodus retelling. Apart from God as one of the addressees, the sage also speaks to his community by employing either the first-person plural pronoun "we" or the collective noun "your people." In the following, I will first locate the different addressees in the historical retelling and then examine their significance in the context where they occur. I argue that the sage transforms his personal reflection of Israelite history into the expression of a corporate heart, thus creating an "I-Thou" dialogue that leads to the community's praise of God.

A. Locating the Addressees

a. They—the ancestors, the Exodus and the wilderness generation

In the series of diptychs, both the righteous and the impious are described with third-person plural verbs. For instance, in the blood plague, the activities of the righteous, i.e. the Israelites of the exodus generation, are introduced with a series of verbs "they

---

[503] Cf. David Middleton and Derek Edwards, *Conversational Remembering: A Social Psychological Approach* (Sage Publications, Inc., 1990); William Hirst and Gerald Echterhoff, "Remembering in Conversations: The Social Sharing and Reshaping of Memories," *Annual Review of Psychology* 63 (2012): 55-79.

[504] Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974).

journeyed” (διώδευσαν), “they pitched their tents” (ἔπηξαν σκηνάς), “withstood their adversaries” (ἀντέστησαν), “defended themselves” (ἠμύναντο) (11:2-3). Regarding the water from the rock episode, the agents also center around the Israelites. When the ancestors went through the wilderness, they became thirsty (ἐδίψησαν) and called upon (ἐπεκαλέσαντό) God (11:4). All the third person plural aorist verbs reflect the sage is recalling the past events that his ancestors once experienced.

As opposed to the righteous, the impious ones suffer from torments and punishments as their sins deserved (cf. 16:1). The sage also treats the impious ones, i.e. the Egyptians who oppressed the ancestors, as a collective group. The verbs used to describe the Egyptians are often related to the punishments they experienced. For example, in the animal plagues, two aorist passive verbs are used to depict their situation: “there were deservedly punished” (ἐκολάσθησαν), and “were tormented” (ἐβασανίσθησαν) (16:1). Similarly, the Egyptians’ resistance to know the Lord leads them to be “scourged (ἐμαστιγώθησαν) by the strength of God’s arm”, “pursued” (διωκόμενοι) by rains, hail, and storms, and “consumed” (καταναλισκόμενοι) by fire (16:16). In this short line, the passive form of all the verbs show the severity of the punishment. Also, the sudden change of tense —from an aorist verb (μαστιγόω) to present participles (διώκω, καταναλίσκω)—shows the endurance of the punishments. When one punishment is finished, there are more happening simultaneously.

The choice of third person plural form of verbs is common to illustrate a story of the past and to depict what happened to the ancestors during their Exodus and following journey in the wilderness.

b. Your people—the community, alongside the Exodus generation

Despite the Exodus generation was long gone, the sage in his performance of the past at times shows a conflation between the current community and the ancestral generation. This conflation, either intentionally or unintentionally, consciously or unconsciously, is well captured in the phrase "your people" (σου ὁ λαός). In the Book of Exodus, the Israelites are always depicted as "my people" (עמי) in relation to God.[505] The phrase "your people" occurs six times in the Book of History. Two occasions take place in the theological reflection on divine mercy and critique against idolatry. After a depiction of divine sovereignty and justice, the sage comments,

> You taught your people (σου τὸν λαόν) by such acts as these
> that the righteous ought to be loving towards human beings,
> and you have made your sons (τοὺς υἱούς σου) hopeful,
> because you give repentance for sins (12:19).

The rationale here is clear: by being a righteous, merciful, and humanity-loving God, the people of Israel can learn how to be loving to others and stay hopeful. Taking the broader context of the Exodus narrative into account, "your people" fittingly refers to the exodus generation. Nevertheless, the experience of divine mercy and justice in the past event is by no means restricted to the ancestors. The current community as the new generation of Israel also participates in the peoplehood of God.

This interconnectedness between the Exodus generation and the current generation is further magnified by the end of the anti-zoolatry message. The Egyptians are described as the "enemies of your people" (οἱ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ λαοῦ σου) (15:14). The past depiction of the Egyptians possibly remains true in the Hellenistic Alexandrian context where the Egyptians

[505] Exod. 3:7, 10; 5:1, 7:4, 16, 26; 8:4, 16-19; 9:1, 13, 17, 27; 10:3-4; 12:31; 22:24.

worship all sorts of detestable animals that the Jews abhor. Jews in the sage's community might find deep resonance with their ancestors.

In addition to the occurrence in theological reflections, other mention of "your people" occurs in the remaining diptychs (16:2, 16:20, 18:7, 18:13). Each mention of "your people," with the connotation of the groups both ancient and present, somehow reenacts the Exodus experience within the present community. The identification of "your people" is ultimately inclusive. This inclusion embodied by the simple term creates a continuity with the past and expresses faithfulness to God from the current community. For the Alexandrian Jews who might have undergone a difficult time, they can have assurance and hope that they are the people of God, just as their ancestors who have established the covenantal relationship with God.

c. We—the community

In the theological reflection on divine mercy and critique against idolatry, the sage uses the first-person plural pronoun "we" frequently. In describing how the Lord judges yet still giving chances for the sinners to repent, the sage associates the nature of God with the experience of the community:

> While therefore you chastise us, you scourge our enemies ten thousand times more
> in order that, when we judge, we may think about your goodness,
> and when we are judged, we may look for mercy (12:22).

Divine mercy and justice are pedagogical in nature—by observing how God deals with the enemies, the community learns how to respond to the dual nature of God. One learns to carry out fitting judgments in light of God's merciful justice. In the meantime, one is also

not exempt from any discipline from the divine. In the face of judgement, one learns to plead for divine mercy. The sage is mindful of the possibility of sinning within the community. Regardless of the potential to sin, the sage still believes that the wayward experience would never dissolve the relationship between God and His people. The sense of belonging is clear: “For even if we sin, we are yours, knowing you might” (15:2a). The sage even goes further with the assurance that “knowing we are considered yours, we will not sin” (15:2b). The hypothetical context, combined with a deep awareness that the community belongs to God, reshapes the evaluation of the community. The sage envisions a wholly righteous community that honors God.

Furthermore, the notion of “we” as a blameless community forms a sharp contrast with that of “we” as the lawless gang in the first section of Wisdom (Ch.1-6). In the first several chapters, the lawless people gather together as a group. Frequently, those people use the language of “we” to plot against the righteous amongst themselves. In those imaginary conversations among the impious people, the use of “we” shows how the group commits insidious activities without fear and knowledge of God. When it comes to the community in which the sage is part of, the use of “we” shows the faithful commitment to God.

d. You—God

Throughout the historical retelling, God remains an important addressee of events, and also the most important actor in the unfolding of the story. The retelling can be regarded as framed in a long speech directed to God. The actions of God, both divine deliverance and punishment, do not occur in the narrator’s voice. It is not a summary of God’s actions in the Exodus account through the third-person perspective. Rather, divine

actions are portrayed in a dialogue. The sage directly addresses God in the manifold episodes of the exodus experience. God is constantly and consistently addressed as a "you." This direct communication to God has long become apparent in Wisdom, with the sage addressing God through prayers in the central section of Wisdom.[506]

Returning to our discussion about God in the historical retelling, God's intervention in Israelite history in the series of diptychs is made even more manifest with His innumerable activities in saving and delivering His people, in listening to the pleas and prayers of His people, and in carrying out judgements of the unjust. As opposed to the unjust who suffer from the blood plague, the Lord provided water for the Israelites: "You…gave them abundant water…you punished their opponents" (11:7-8). God's constant provision starts off the animal plague: "…you benefited your people and prepared quails for food" (16:2). Seeing God's provision and protection, it becomes clear that salvation is closely associated with the acknowledgement of the true savior: "…you convinced our enemies that you are the one who rescues from every evil" (16:8). When the Lord carries out punishments, the sage proclaims that "to escape from your hand is impossible…for the impious…were scourged by the strength of your arm" (16:15). As we move on to the Passover liturgy, we find, again, that the expected salvation of God's people is expressed in an intimate relationship between God and His people. "You called us to yourself and glorified us" (18:8). By using second-person verbs to describe God's actions, the presence of the Lord is made more manifest. In the retelling, the sage is not merely recalling a distant past, but rather is engaged in active communication with God.

In the theological reflection on divine mercy, God as a subject of address is made particularly prominent. Nearly every line constitutes a reference to God in the mode of

[506] The examination of the prayer can be found in Chapter Three, Section I.

conversation. God's merciful justice is worth praising and proclamation. The sage's assurance in divine care and sovereignty critically shapes the reception and response of God in his community.

Conclusion: Reflection on the "I-Thou" Dialogue

The concept of "I-Thou" dialogue can be traced back to the theologian and philosopher Martin Buber and his seminal work with an eponymous title.[507] The I-thou relationship focuses on genuine and profound encounters between people. Presentness is one of the major characteristics in such a relationship, which I consider as the critical element in the sage's construction of the speech to God. In this formation of the dialogue, the sage is acutely aware of God's presence. He addresses God in the performance of history, either as an individual or on behalf of the community. Through active interpretation, I argue that the sage enacts the presence of God for his community and incorporates them into this ongoing dialogue with God.

Through the list of pronouns involved in the historical retelling, we can readily observe how the speech framework enables a reflection on a profound and intimate interaction between the sage (on behalf of his community) and God. Both past and present communities are involved in the references. The overlapping of the two communities allows history to become present. Thus, "an atemporal unity, a structural continuity" is formed "between the 'present' of the [Exodus generation's] initial response and the present of the listener in the sage's community."[508] The sage's presentation of Israelite history in the conversational mode "provides a structure for discourse, a paradigm which overcomes

[507] Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Scribner Book Company, 2000).
[508] Rose A. Zak, "Dialogue and Discourse in Stravinsky's 'Symphony of Psalms,'" *Criticism* 22, no.4 (Fall 1980), 360.

and transcends historical decay, which allows for the necessary immediacy of discourse to become present."[509]

This presence matters to historical memories, also more so to the presence of God. In the sage's performance of history, there are many elements that collectively contribute to the recognition of divine presence. These elements include the reflection on divine nature, one's sin and repentance, acknowledgement of God's manifold actions in history—the judgement against the wicked and the provision for the righteous, and emotional engagement regarding reverence of God and gratitude to Him.

The creative interpretation of history embodies the sage's reflection on the significance and the nature of history, which is oriented to the community. The sage interprets Israelite history for pedagogical purposes and shows the community how justice would ultimately triumph. By presenting Israelite history in a paradigmatic fashion, with individual and nation being exemplary, the sage demonstrates to the community how "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," borrowing a classic expression from Martin Luther King.

At the same time, by the use of collective terms to describe the community, the sage also incorporates the community into this participation of history and gives praise to a God who is both merciful and just. The past and present generations of Israel continue to pray to, rely on, and have faith in God. Furthermore, the constancy of God shown in history remains true in the generations to come. The past and present together invite a future where God continues to stand with His people and fight on their behalf. The end of the Book of History, also the end of Wisdom as a whole book, proclaims this hope built upon the past:

For in all things, O Lord, you magnified

[509] Zak, "Dialogue and Discourse," 360-361.

> your people and glorified them
> and did not disregard them, standing by them
> in every time and place (19:22).

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

In the Hebrew Bible, the concurrence of Solomon and the Exodus is rather rare. In 1 Kgs. 8:16-21 (also 2 Chron. 6:1-11), Solomon and the Exodus are both mentioned in the context of the ark being brought into the temple and Solomon's dedication of the temple:

> [In the voice of God] "Since the day that I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel in which to build a house, that my name might be there. But I chose David to be over my people Israel." Now it was in the

> heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. But the Lord said to David my father, "Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your heart. Nevertheless, you shall not build the house, but your son who shall be born to you shall build the house for my name." Now the Lord has fulfilled his promise that he made. For I have risen in the place of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised, and I have built the house for the name of the Lord, the God of Israel. And there I have provided a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord that he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

This passage both starts and ends with a reference to the Exodus. The central focus is on the temple and its construction. It is a significant moment in the history of Israel, where God's promise to King David is fulfilled through Solomon's successful building of the temple. The temple symbolizes that the Exodus has come to an end. It also indicates the fulfillment of the hope of the Exodus generation that the Lord one day will "bring [His] people in and plant them on [His] own mountain, the place which [He has] made for His abode, the sanctuary which [His] hands have established" (Exod. 15:17).

In the Wisdom of Solomon, the biblical triangular connection between Solomon, the temple, and the Exodus seems to be brought forth in an unprecedented way. Solomon becomes an ideal sage-king in the Hellenistic context (Ch. 7-9) and retells the history of Israel with a focus on the Exodus story (Ch.10-19). It is fitting to have a king with unparalleled wisdom recount the salvific works of wisdom in his ancestral history. When it comes to the temple, Solomon's physical temple does not seem to be the focus in Wisdom. Nevertheless, a new form of worship is instantiated through Wisdom's imagination of religious piety in the diaspora context where geographical and cultural distance from the temple can be a barrier. I believe it is through active scriptural interpretation that one draws closer to the divine, and reassures the community of God's faithfulness, justice, and mercy. Through the prism of the life of the sage who authored the book, I think we can gain

insights into the practice of scriptural interpretation, which functions as a new vision of religious piety for the Hellenistic Jewish sage and his community.

My proposal of an interconnected reading for the Book of Wisdom and the Book of History largely depends on the thread of the sage's voice. The voice of the sage is first established through his reading and interpretation of Solomon's life. Then the voice of the sage provides the subsequent historical retelling in Wisdom with a clear and powerful speech framework that highlights the didactic and participatory nature of biblical history. As the sage becomes Solomon-like, he crafts his autobiography by envisioning the highest learning in the Hellenistic world and demonstrating the profound religious commitment to God who is the source of all wisdom. Through active and innovative interpretation of biblical history, the sage showcases the practices of reading and interpretation are critical in building one's relationship to God.

The intellectual and spiritual life of the sage is deeply connected to his experience with wisdom, both on an individual and a collective level. This connection to wisdom is analogous to that of Solomon. McGlynn comments on the resemblances:

> In Wisdom, the account of Solomon's reign is resting on his experience of a personified, divine wisdom, who alone knows God's purpose. Like 1 Kings, the enduring promise of Solomon's reign is rooted in his ability to govern as part of a redemptive plan, in continuity with the other major events of Israel's history[510]

In the autobiography, the sage's successful reign also derives from his reception of wisdom, which is attained through his earnest prayer and plea for wisdom to God. The promise of wisdom is also ingrained in national history. Moving from an individual reflection on the quest for wisdom, the sage of Wisdom recognizes his participation in the redemptive history and incorporates his individual story into the story of the nation. By

[510] McGlynn, "Solomon, Wisdom, and the Philosopher-Kings," 75.

presenting himself and the nation as exemplary, the Hellenistic sage invites people to pursue the immutable things granted and guided by God: wisdom, knowledge, truth, and virtue.

Bibliography

Adorno, Theodore. *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*. Translated by E. F. N. Jephcott. London: Verso, 1951.

Aejmelaues, Anneli. "What Can We Know about the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint." *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 99, no.1 (1987): 58-89.

Aitken, James K., ed. *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.

Andruska, Jennifer. *Wise and Foolish Love in the Song of Songs*. Old Testament Studies 75. Leiden: Brill, 2019.

Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Assmann, Aleida. "Wholesome Knowledge: Concepts of Wisdom in a Historical and Cross- Cultural Perspective." In *Life-Span Development and Behavior*, vol.12, 187-224, edited by David L. Featherman, Richard M. Lerner, and Marion Perlmutter. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, 1994.

Awabdy, Mark A. "Babel, Suspense, and the Introduction to the Terah-Abram Narrative." *JSOT* 35, no.1 (Sep. 2010): 3-29.

Bakker, Arjen F. *The Secret of Time: Reconfiguring Wisdom in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah 143. Leiden: Brill, 2023.

Barclay, John M. G. *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: From Alexander to Trajan* (323 BCE-117 CE). Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996.

Barclay, John M. G. "Unnerving Grace: Approaching Roman 9-11 from the Wisdom of Solomon." In *Between Gospel and Election: Explorations in the Interpretation of Romans 9-11*, 91-109, edited by F. Wilk and J. R. Wagner. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1989.

Barmash, Pamela. "Introduction: The Exodus: Central, Enduring, and Generative." In *Exodus in the Jewish Experience: Echoes and Reverberations*, vii-xiv, edited by Pamela Barmash and David W. Nelson. Lanham: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2015.

Barthes, Roland. "The Death of the Author." In *Image, Music, Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana, 1977.

Beentjes, P. C. "The Countries Marveled at You: King Solomon in Ben Sira 47:12-22." *Bijdragen, Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie* 45 (1984): 6-14.

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing.* London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1972.

Berlin, Thomas M. *Ecclesiastes and the Riddle of Authorship*. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Billings, Joshua. *The Philosophical Stage: Drama and Dialectic in Classical Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021.

Bizzeti, Paolo. *Il libro della Sapienza: Struttura e genere letterario.* Bologna: Dehoniane, 1984.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Abraham: The Story of a Life*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2015.

Bokser, Baruch. *The Origins of Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism.* Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1984.

Braun, Roddy L. "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles." *JBL* 92 (1973): 503-516.

Brooke, George J. "Between Authority and Canon: The Significance of Reworking the Bible for Understanding the Canonical Process." In *Reworking the Bible: Apocryphal and Related Texts at Qumran: Proceedings of a Joint Symposium*, STDJ 58, 85-104, edited by E. G. Chazon, D. Dimant, and R. A. Clements. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Brooke, George J. "From Adam to the Patriarchs: Some Biblical Figures in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi Library." In *The Dead Sea Scrolls and The Nag Hammadi Codices*, 177-195. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

Brooke, George J. "Rewriting Authorship in the Dead Sea Scrolls." In *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*, 59-74, edited by Sonja Ammann, Katharina Psychny, and Julia Rhyder. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Abiding Astonishment: Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History*. Louisville, Kentucky: WJK Press, 1991.

Brueggemann, Walter. "The Social Significance of Solomon as a Patron of Wisdom." In *A Social Reading of the Old Testament: Prophetic Approaches to Israel's Communal Life*, 245-262, edited by Patrick D. Miller. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith. Scribner Book Company, 2000.

Burkes, Shannon. “Wisdom and Apocalypticism in the Wisdom of Solomon.” *HTR* 95, no.1 (2002): 21-44.

Buster, Aubrey E. *Remembering the Story of Israel: Historical Summaries and Memory Formation in Second Temple Judaism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

Burrows, Eric. “Wisdom 10.” *Biblica* 20, no.4 (1939): 405-407.

Camp, Claudia. “Killing the Father: Gender, and the Figure of Solomon in Ben Sira’s Hymn to the Fathers.” In *On Prophets, Warriors, and Kings: Former Prophets through the Eyes of their Interpreters*, 65-76, edited by George J. Brooke and Ariel Feldman. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016.

Centry, Jim, Stacey Menzel Baker, and Fredric B. Kraft. “The Role of Possessions in Creating, Maintaining, and Preserving One’s Identity: Variation Over the Life Course.” *NA-Advances in Consumer Research* 22 (1995): 413-418.

Charlesworth, James H. “Jewish Astrology in the Talmud, Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and Early Palestinian Synagogues.” *HTR* 70 (1977): 183-200.

Charlesworth, James H. *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* Vol.1. New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1983.

Cheon, Samuel. *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation.* JSPSupp 23. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

Cheon, Samuel. “Anonymity in The Wisdom of Solomon.” *JSP* 9, no.18 (1998): 112-114.

Cheon, Samuel. “Three Characters in the Wisdom of Solomon 3-4.” *JSP* 12, no.1 (2001): 105-113.

Childs, B.S. *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary*. Louisville, Kentucky: WJK Press, 1974.

Christianson, Eric S. *A Time to Tell: Narrative Strategies in Ecclesiastes*. JSOTSup 280. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1998.

Christianson, Eric S. *Ecclesiastes Through the Centuries.* Blackwell Bible Commentaries. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2007.

Church, Philip. *Hebrews and the Temple: Attitudes to the Temple in Second Temple Judaism and in Hebrews*, Novum Testaentum Supplements 171. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Clarke, Ernst G. *The Wisdom of Solomon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Clifford, Richard J. *The Wisdom Literature*. Interpreting Biblical Texts Series. Nashville: Abingdon, 1998.

Clifford, Richard J. “Proverbs as a Source for Wisdom of Solomon.” In *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom: Festschrift Maurice Gilbert*, BETL 143, 255-63, edited by N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen. Leuven: Peeters, 1999.

Collins, John J. “Cosmos and Salvation: Jewish Wisdom and Apocalyptic in the Hellenistic Age.” *History of Religions* 17, no. 2 (1977): 121-142.

Collins, John J. “The Root of Immortality: Death in the Context of Jewish Wisdom.” *HTR* 71, no. 3 (1978): 177-192.

Collins, John J. “Before the Canon: Scriptures in Second Temple Judaism.” In *Old Testament Interpretation: Past, Present and Future: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, 225-41, edited by J. L. Mays, D. L. Petersen, and K. H. Richards. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

Collins, John J. *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997.

Collins, John J. "The Interpretation of Apocalyptic Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon." In *Jewish Cult and Hellenistic Culture: Essays on the Jewish Encounter with Hellenism and Roman Rule*, 143-158. Leiden, Brill: 2005.

Cogan, Mordechai. *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 10. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001.

Coggins, Richard J. *Sirach*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.

Cook, Johann. "The Septuagint of Proverbs." In *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*, 87-174, edited by Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.

Cowley, R. W. "The Biblical Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Today." *OKS* 23 (1974): 318-323.

Crenshaw, James. "Wisdom." In *Old Testament Form Criticism*, 225-264, edited by John H. Hayes. San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1974.

Crenshaw, James. *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction*. 3rd edition. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010.

Dell, Katherine. *"Get Wisdom, Get Insight": An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Literature*. Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2000.

Dell, Katherine. *The Solomonic Corpus of "Wisdom" and Its Influence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Dell, Katherine. "Does the Song of Songs Have Any Connections to Wisdom?" In *Perspectives on the Song of Songs/Perspektiven der Hoheliedauslegung*, 8-26, edited by Anselm C. Hagedorn. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005.

DeSilva, David A. "Wisdom of Solomon: 'The Righteous Live Forever." In *Introducing the Apocrypha: Message, Context, and Significance*. 2nd ed., 131-60. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2018.

Di Lella, Alexander A. "Sirach 51:1-12: Poetic Structure and Analysis of Ben Sira's Psalm." *CBQ* 48, no.3 (1986): 395-407.

Dillard, Raymond B. "The Literary Structure of the Chronicler's Solomon Narrative." *JSOT* 30 (1984): 85-93.

Dimant, Devorah. "Pseudonymity in the Wisdom of Solomon." In *From Enoch to Tobit: Collected Studies in Ancient Jewish Literature*, 313-324. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.

Duling, Dennis. "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David." *HTR* 68, no.3/4 (1975): 235-252.

Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent." *Perspecta* 19 (1982): 36-42.

Emanuel, David. *From Bards to Biblical Exegetes: A Close Reading and Intertextual Analysis of Selected Exodus Psalms.* Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012.

Enns, Peter. *Exodus Retold: Ancient Exegesis of the Departure from Egypt in Wis 10:15-21 and 19:1-9*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

Enns, Peter. "Wisdom of Solomon and Biblical Interpretation in the Second Temple Period." In *The Way of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of Bruce K. Waltke*, 212-225, edited by J. I. Parker and Sven K. Soderlund. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000.

Erickson-Davis, Cordelia, Tanya M. Luhrmann, Lianne M. Kurina, Kara Weisman, Naomi Cornman, Anna Corwin, and Jeremy Bailenson. "The Sense of Presence: Lessons from Virtual Reality." *Religion, Brain & Behavior* 11, no. 3 (2021): 335-351.

Evans, Craig A. *Noncanonical Writings and New Testament Interpretation*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992.

Feldman, Louis H. "Josephus Portrait of Solomon." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 66 (1995):103-167.

Fiorenza, Schussler E. "Wisdom Mythology and the Christological Hymns of the New Testament." In *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity*, 17-41, edited by R. L. Wilken. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1975.

Fishbane, Michael. *Text and Texture: Close Readings of Selected Biblical Texts.* New York: Schocken, 1979.

Fletcher-Louis, Crispin H.T. *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls.* Leiden: Brill, 2002.

Fletcher-Louis, Crispin H.T. "The Cosmology of P and Theological Anthropology in the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira." In *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture*, 69-113, edited by Craig A. Evans. London: T & T Clark, 2004.

Flynn, W. Shawn. *YWHW is King: The Development of Divine Kingship in Ancient Israel*. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Foucault, Michel. "What is an Author?" In *Aesthetics, Methods, and Epistemology.* Translated by Robert Hurley. Edited by James D. Faubion, 205-222. New York: The New Press, 1998.

Fox, Michael V. *Proverbs 10-31*. AB 18B. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Fox, Michael V. *A Time to Tear Down and a Time to Build Up: A Rereading of Ecclesiastes*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans, 1999.

Freedman, H. and Maurice Simon, eds. *Canticles Rabbah.* Vol. 9. London: Soncino Press, 1961.

Freeman, Margaret H. *The Poem as Icon: A Study in Aesthetic Cognition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Fretheim, Terence E. "Issues of Agency in Exodus." In *The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception and Interpretation*, 591-609, edited by Thomas Dozeman, Craig A. Evans, and Joel N. Lohr. Leiden: Brill, 2014.

Gadamer, Hans. *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joel Weinscheimer and Donald G. Marshall. New York: Continuum, 1996.

Gambetti, Sandra. *The Alexandrian Riots of 38 CE and the Persecution of the Jews: A Historical Reconstruction.* Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Georgi, Dieter. *Weisheit Salomos*. JSHRZ. Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1980.

Gilbert, Maurice. *La critique des dieus dans le liver de la Sagesse (Sg 13-15)*. Rome : Biblical Institute Press, 1973.

Gilbert, Maurice. "Sagesse de Salomon (ou Livre de la Sagesse)." *DBSup* XI (1991): cols. 8-119.

Gilbert, Maurice. "The Literary Structure of the Book of Wisdom: A Study of Various Views." In *The Book of Wisdom in Modern Research,* 18-32, edited by Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia. Boston/Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005.

Glicksman, Andrew. *Wisdom of Solomon 10: A Jewish Hellenistic Reinterpretation of Early Israelite History Through Sapiential Lens*. Boston: De Gruyter, 2011.

Glicksman, Andrew. ""Set Your Desire on My Words": Authoritative Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon."" In *Scriptural Authority and Early Judaism and Ancient Christianity*, 167-184, edited by Geze G. Xeravits, Tobias Nicklas, and Isaac Kalimi. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013.

Goering, Gregory S. "Election and Knowledge in the Wisdom of Solomon." In *Studies in the Book of Wisdom*, 163-82, edited by Géza G. Xeravita and József Zsengellér. JSJSup *142*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Goffman, Erving. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974.

Grabbe, Lester L. *Wisdom of Solomon*. Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

Grabbe, Lester L. "Intertextual Connections Between the Wisdom of Solomon and Qoheleth." In *Reading Ecclesiastes Intertextually*, 201-213, edited by Katharine Dell and Will Kynes. Bloomsbury: T & T Clark, 2014.

Gray, John. *1 & 2 Kings: A Commentary*. 3rd edition. SCM Press, Ltd, 1977.

Gregg, J. A. F. *Wisdom of Solomon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Grillo, Jennie. "Ecclesiastes." In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Wisdom Literature*, 49-66, edited by Samuel L. Adams and Matthew Golf. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2020.

Grimm, C. L. W. *Das Buch der Weisheit.* Leipzig, 1860.

Haglund, Erik. *Historical Motifs in the Psalms*. Uppsala, Sweden: Liber Tryck Stockholm, 1984.

Harkins, Angela K. "The Odes of Solomon as Solomonic Pseudepigrapha." *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 25, no.4 (2016): 247-273.

Harrington, Daniel J. "The Wisdom of Solomon: Immortality, Wisdom, and History." In *Invitation to the Apocrypha*, 55-77. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Hartog, Pieter. "Jubilees and Hellenistic Encyclopaedism." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 50 (2019): 1-25.

Hawes, Tara. "Janet Frame: The Self as Other/Othering the Self." *Deep South* 1, no.1 (Feb, 1995). https://www.otago.ac.nz/deepsouth/vol1no1/hawes1.html.

Hayward, Robert. *The Jewish Temple: A Non-Biblical Sourcebook.* London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Hengel, Martin. *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine During the Early Hellenistic Period*. Translated by J. Bowden. Vol. 1. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974.

Hirst, William and Gerald Echterhoff. "Remembering in Conversations: The Social Sharing and Reshaping of Memories." *Annual Review of Psychology* 63 (2012): 55-79.

Horbury, William. "The Christian Use and the Jewish Origins of Wisdom of Solomon." In *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honor or J. A. Emerton*, 182-196, edited by Day, Gordon, and Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Horbury, William. "The Wisdom of Solomon." In *The Oxford Bible Commentary: The Apocrypha*, 45-68, edited by Martin Goodman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Hurowitz, V. *I Have Built You an Exalted House: Temple Building in the Bible in Light of Mesopotamian and Northwest Semitic Writings*. JSOPSup 115. American Schools of Oriental Research Monograph Series. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

Jacobson, Karl N. *Memories of Asaph: Mnemohistory and the Psalms of Asaph*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017.

Japhet, Sara. *The Ideology of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought*. BEATAJ 9. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989.

Japhet, Sara. *I and II Chronicles: A Commentary*. OTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.

Josephus, Flavius. *Jewish Antiquities*. Translated by Henry St. J. Thackeray. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930.

Kapelrud, A. S. "Tradition and Worship: The Role of the Cult in Tradition Formation and Transmission." In *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, 101-124, edited by D. A. Knight. London: SPCK, 1977.

Kloppenborg, John S. "Isis and Sophia in the Book of Wisdom." *HTR* 75, no.1 (Jan., 1982): 57-84.

Knoppers, Gary. "Prayer and Propaganda: Solomon's Dedication of the Temple and the Deuteronomist's Program." *CBQ* 57 (1993): 229-254.

Knox, W. L. "The Divine Wisdom." *Journal of Theological Studies* 38 (1937): 230-237.

Koenig, Sara. "Solomon in Reception History." In *The Handbook of the Historical Books of the Hebrew Bible*, 511-525. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Koester, R. Craig. *The Dwelling of God: the Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature and the New Testament*. CBQMS 22. Washington DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989.

Koh, Y. V. *Royal Autobiography in the Book of Qoheleth.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006.

Kohlmoos, Melanie. "Authorial Intention(s) in Old Testament Texts." In *Authorship and the Hebrew Bible*, 75-92, edited by Sonya Ammann, Katharina Pyschnny, and Julia Rhyder. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

Kolarcik, Michael. *The Ambiguity of Death in the Book of Wisdom 1-6: A Study of Literary Structure and Interpretation*. Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991.

Kolarcik, Michael. "The Book of Wisdom: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections." In *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol.5, 433-600, edited by Leander E. Keck. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997.

Kolarcik, Michael. "Universalism and Justice in the Wisdom of Solomon." In *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom*: *Festschrift M. Gilbert*, 289-301, edited by Núria Calduch-Benages and Jacques Vermeylen. BETL 143. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999.

Kozlova, E. E. "King Solomon and the 'Anatomy' of Wisdom." *JSOT* 46, no. 2 (2021): 249-268.

Kugel, James. "Wisdom and the Anthological Temper." *Prooftexts* 17, no.1 (1997): 9-32.

Kugel, James. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible as it was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

LaCoste, Nathalie. "Solomon the Exemplary Sage: The Convergence of Hellenistic and Jewish Traditions in the Wisdom of Solomon." *University of Toronto Journal of Jewish Thought* 1 (2010): 1-23.

Lanfer, Peter T. *Remembering Eden: the Reception History of Genesis 3:22-24.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
Larcher, C. *Le Livre de la Sagesse, ou, La Sagesse de Salomon*. Vol.1. Paris: Gabalda, 1983.
Lawrie, Douglas. "The Dialectic of Human Dignity and Human Finitude in the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature." *Scriptura: Journal for Contextual Hermeneutics in Southern Africa* 105, no.1 (Jan 2010): 608-620.
Lee, Archie. "The Context and Function of the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 78." *JSOT* 15, no.48 (1990): 83-89.
Lee, Archie. "Genesis 1 and the Plagues Tradition in Psalm 105." *VT* 40, no.3 (1990): 257-263.
Lee, Thomas R. *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50*. SBLDS 75. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.
Legaspi, Michael. *Wisdom in Classical and Biblical Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
Leiter, Sheila. *Perils of Wisdom: The Scriptural Solomon in Jewish Tradition*. Judaism in Context 28. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2021.
Levenson, Jon D. "The Temple and the World." *The Journal of Religion* 64, no.3 (1984): 275-298.
Levenson, Jon D. *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Drama of Divine Omnipotence.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988.
Levison, John R. *Portraits of Adam in Early Judaism: from Sirach to 2 Baruch*. London: Bloomsbury, 1988.
Lim, Timothy H. "Authoritative Scriptures and the Dead Sea Scrolls." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 303-22, edited by J. J. Collins and T. H. Lim. Oxford: Oxford University of Press, 2010.
Lim, Timothy H. "How Was the Canon Formed?" *The Expository Times* 133, no. 9 (June 2022): 357–69.
Linebaugh, Jonathan. *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans.* Boston: Brill, 2013.
Lioy, Dan. *Axis of Glory: A Biblical and Theological Analysis of the Temple Motif in Scripture*. New York: Peter Lang, 2010.
Loewenstamm, Samuel E. "The Number of Plagues in Psalm 105." *Biblica* 52, no.1 (1971): 34-38.
Loewenstamm, Samuel E. *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*. Translated by Baruch J. Schwartz. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1992.
Lombaard, C. J. S. "Some Remarks on the Patriarchs in the Psalms." *Old Testament Essays* 11, no.1 (Jan. 1998): 59-70.
Longman, Tremper. *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Michigan, W. B. Eerdmans, 1998.
Loretz, O. *Qohelet und der Alte Orient. Untersuchungen zu Stil und theologischer thematik des Buches Qohelet.* Freiburg: Herder, 1964.
Mack, Burton L. *Logos und Sophia: Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie im hellenistischen Judentum.* Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973.
Mack, Burton L. *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic: Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1985.

Makipelto, Ville. *Uncovering Ancient Editing: Documented Evidence of Changes in Joshua 24 and Related Texts.* Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018.
Marcus, Ralph. "On Biblical Hypostases of Wisdom." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 23, no.1 (1950): 157-171.
Marguerat, Daniel and Yvan Bourquin. *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism*. Translated by John Bowden. London: SCM Press, 1999.
Martínez, García F. "Rethinking the Bible: Sixty Years of Dead Sea Scrolls Research and Beyond." In *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, 19-36, edited by M. Popović, JSJSup141. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
Mazzinghi, Luca. "I loved [Wisdom] and sought her from my youth; I desired to take her for my counsellor" (Wis 8:2a). Solomon and Wisdom: An Example of the Closest Intimacy." In *Family and Kinship in the Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature*, Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Yearbook 2012/13 series, 229-252, edited by Angelo Passora. Boston: De Gruyter, 2014.
Mazzinghi, Luca. *Wisdom*. IECOT. Translated by Michael Tait. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2019.
McCreesh, T. P. "Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10-31." *RB* 92 (1985): 25-46.
McDonald, L. M. and J. A. Sanders, eds. *The Canon Debate: The Origins and Formation of the Bible*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002.
McGlynn, Moyna. *Divine Judgement and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001.
McGlynn, Moyna. "Solomon, Wisdom, and the Philosopher-Kings." In *Studies in the Book of Wisdom*, 61-81, edited by G. G. Xeravits and J. Zsengeller. JSJSup 142. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
Middleton, David and Derek Edwards. *Conversational Remembering: A Social Psychological Approach.* Sage Publications, Inc., 1990.
Mies, Francoise Mies. " Le Psaume de Ben Sira 51, 12a-o Hebreu: L'Hymme aux Noms divins (Deuxieme partie). " *Revue biblique* 116, no.4 (2009): 481-504.
Moltmann, Jurgen. *Theology of Hope*. Translated by James W. Leitch. London: SCM Press, 1967.
More, Jonathan. "On Kingship in Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon." In *Text-Critical and Hermeneutical Studies in the Septuagint*, 409-425, edited by Johann Cook and Hermann-Josef Stipp. Leiden: Brill, 2012.
Mroczek, Eva. "How Not to Build a Temple: Jacob, David, and the Unbuilt Ideal in Ancient Judaism." *JSJ* 46 (2015): 512-546.
Mroczek, Eva. *The Literary Imagination in Jewish Antiquity.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Murphy, Roland E. "Wisdom and Eros in Proverbs 1-9." *CBQ* 50, no.4 (1988): 600-603.
Murphy, Roland E. *The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature*. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 1990.
Murray, Campion and Robert J. Karris trans. *Works of St. Bonaventure: Commentary on Ecclesiastes.* New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005.
Najman, Hindy. *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*. JSJSS 77. Leiden: Brill, 2003.
Najman, Hindy. "How Should We Contextualize Pseudepigrapha?" In *Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honor of Florentino Garcia Martinez*, 529-36,

edited by Anthony Hilhorst, Emile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Najman, Hindy. "Text and Figure in Ancient Jewish Paideia." In *The Authoritativeness of Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, 253-265, edited by Mladen Popovic. JSJSup 141. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Najman, Hindy. "The Vitality of Scripture Within and Beyond the Canon." *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43 (2012): 497-518.

Najman, Hindy. "Traditionary Process and Textual Unity in 4 Ezra." In *Fourth Ezra and Second Baruch: Reconstruction after the Fall*, 99-117, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini and Matthias Henze. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Najman, Hindy. *Losing the Temple and Recovering the Future: An Analysis of 4 Ezra*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Najman, Hindy. "Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Period." In *Is There a Text in this Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke*, 459-472, edited by Ariel Feldman, Charlotte Hempel, and Maria Cioata. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Newman, Judith. *Praying by the Book: The Scriptualization of Prayer in Second Temple Judaism*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999.

Newman, Judith. "The Democratization of Kingship in the Wisdom of Solomon." In *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, 309-328, edited by Hindy Najman and Judith Newman. Boston: Brill, 2004.

Newman, Judith. "Liturgical Imagination in the Composition of Ben Sira." In *Prayer and Poetry in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature: Essays in Honor of Eileen Schuller on the Occasion of Her 65th Birthday*, 323-338, edited by. Jeremy Penner, Ken Penner, and Cecilia Wassen. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Newman, Judith. *Before the Bible: the Liturgical Body and the Formation of Scriptures in Early Judaism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Newsom, Carol. "Rhyme and Reason: The Historical Resume in Israelite and Early Jewish Thought." In *Congress Volume*, 215-233. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Niccacci, Alviero. "Wisdom as Woman, Wisdom and Man, Wisdom and God." In *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Ben Sira and the Book of Wisdom: Festschrift M. Gilbert*, 369-386, edited by N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen. Leuven University Press, 1999.

Niebuhr, Karl-Wilhelm. "Einführung in die Schrift." In *Sapientia Salomonis* (Weisheit Salomos), edited by K. W. Niebuhr, SAPERE 27, 3-37. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015.

Nickelsburg, George W. E. *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972.

Nickelsburg, George W. E. *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: A Historical and Literary Introduction*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005.

Nickelsburg, George W. E. "The Temple According to Enoch." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no.1 (2014): 7-24.

Owens, Joseph. "Aristotle's Notion of Wisdom." *Apeiron* 20, no.1 (1987): 1-16.

Otto, Eckart. *Deuternomium 12-34: Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament*. Freiburg: Herder, 2017.

Pevarello, Daniele. “Looking for Wisdom in Wis 11:2-19:2: Between Universalism and Particularism.” *Journal for the Study of Pseudepigrapha* 30, no.1 (2020): 21-34.

Perdue, Leo G. “Cosmology and Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition.” In *The Sages in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 457-478, edited by John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990.

Perdue, Leo G. *Wisdom and Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature.* Nashville: Abingdon, 1994.

Perdue, Leo G. “Wisdom During the Roman Empire: The Wisdom of Solomon.” In *The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires*, 292-355. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008.

Pfeiffer, Robert H. “Wisdom of Solomon.” In *History of New Testament Times: With an Introduction to the Apocrypha*, 313-351. New York: Greenwood Press, 1949.

Pike, Burton. “Time in Autobiography.” *Comparative Literature* 28, no.4 (1976): 326-342.

Pioske, Daniel. “Retracing a Remembered Past: Methodological Remarks on Memory, History, and the Hebrew Bible.” *Biblical Interpretation* 23 (2015): 291-315.

Popvoic, M. “Pseudepigraphy and a Scribal Sense of the Past in the Ancient Mediterranean: A Copy of the Book of the Words of the Vision of Amram.” In *Is There a Text in This Cave? Studies in the Textuality of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of George J. Brooke*, STDJ 119, 308-18, edited by A. Feldman, M. Cioata, and C. Hempel. Leiden: Brill, 2017.

Priotto, Michelangelo. “Building a Temple to Wisdom (Wis 9:8).” In *Wisdom for Life*, 260-271, edited by Nuria Calduch-Benages, John Barton, and Renhard G. Kratz. Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, Inc., 2014.

Puriton, Carl E. “Translation Greek in the Wisdom of Solomon.” *JBL* 47, no.3 (1928): 276-304.

Qian, Zhongshu. *The Essay Collection of Qian Zhongshu*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2002.

Rainbow, Jessie. “The Song of Songs and the *Testament* of Solomon: Solomon’s Love Poetry and Christian Magic.” *HTR* 100, no.3 (2007): 249-274.

Randall, Chesnutt D. “Wisdom of Solomon.” In *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Wisdom Literature*, 104-121, edited by Samuel L. Adams and Matthew Goff. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2020.

Reed, Annette Y. “Abraham as Chaldean Scientist and Father of the Jews: Josephus, Ant. 1.154-168, and the Greco-Roman Discourse about Astronomy/Astrology.” *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 35, no.2 (2004): 119-158.

Reed, Annette Y. “Pseudepigraphy, Authorship, and the Reception of “The Bible” in Late Antiquity.” In *The Reception and Interpretation of the Bible in Late Antiquity: Proceedings of the Montreal Colloquium in Honor of Charles Kannengiesser,* 467-490, edited by Lorenzo DiTommaso and Lucian Turcescu. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Reed, Annette Y. “The Construction and Subversion of Patriarchal Perfection: Abraham and Exemplarity in Philo, Josephus, and the Testament of Abraham.” *JSJ* 40 (2009): 185-212.

Reese, James M. “Plan and Structure in the Book of Wisdom.” *CBQ* 27 (1965): 391-399.

Reese, James M. H*ellenistic Influence of the Book of Wisdom and Its Consequences*. AnBib 43. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970.

Reitzenstein, Richard. *Hellenistic Mystery-Religions: The Basic Ideas and Significance*. Translated by John E. Steely. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1978.
Rey, Jean-Sebastien and Jan Joosten eds. *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation.* JSJSup 150. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
Ricouer, Paul. "Narrative Time." In *On Narrative*. Edited by W. J. T. Mitchell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.
Ringgren, Helmer. *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East*. Lund, 1947.
Roddy, Braun. "Solomonic Apologetic in Chronicles." *JBL* 92, no.4 (Dec., 1973): 503-516.
Rorty, Richard. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
Rosenzweig, Franz. "The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form." In *Scripture and Translation: Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig*, 129-42, translated by Lawrence Rosenwald and Everett Fox. Indiana University Press, 1994.
Rüsen, Jörn. *History: Narration, Interpretation, Orientation.* New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005.
Rüsen, Jörn. "Die vier Typen des historischen Erzählens." In *Zeit und Sinn: Strategien historischen Denkens*, 153-230. Frankfurt am Main: Humanities Online, 2012.
Russell, Nicholas. "Collective Memory Before and After Halbwachs." *The French Review* 79, no.4 (2006): 792-804.
Sanders, Seth L. and Jonathan Ben-Dov eds. *Ancient Jewish Sciences and the History of Knowledge in Second Temple Literature.* New York: New York University Press, 2014.
Schafer, Peter. *Mirror and His Beauty: Feminine Images of God from the Bible to the Early Kabbalah.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.
Schliesser, Benjamin, Jan Rüggemeier, Thomas J. Kraus, and Jörg Frey, with the assistance of Daniel Herrmann., eds. *Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2021.
Schmid, Konrad. "The Canon and the Cult: The Emergence of Book Religion in Ancient Israel and the Gradual Sublimation of the Temple Cult." *JBL* (2012): 291-307.
Schmid, Konrad. *The Old Testament: A Literary History.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012.
Schmitt, Armin. *Das Buch der Weisheit—Ein Kommentar*. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1986.
Schweitzer, Steven J. *Reading Utopia in Chronicles*. Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies 442. New York: T & T Clark International, 2007.
Schweitzer, Steven J. "The Temple in Samuel-Kings and Chronicles." In *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, 123-138, edited by Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.
Schwenk-Bressler, Udo. *Sapientia Salomonis als ein Beispeil frühjüdischer Textauslegung: Die Auslegung des Buches Genesis, Exodus 1-15, und Teilen der Wüstentradition in Sap 10-19*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1993.
Scott, R. B. Y. *The Way of Wisdom in the Old Testament.* New York: Macmillan, 1971.
Seow, C. L. "Qoheleth's Autobiography." In *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, 275-87, edited by A. Beck, Andrew H. Bartelt, Paul R. Raabe, and Chris A. Franke. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995.

Seow, C. L. *Ecclesiastes*. AB 18C. Doubleday, NY: 1997.
Shields, Christopher. "Aristotle's Philosophical Life and Writings." In *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, edited by Christopher Shields, 1-16. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
Skehan, Patrick W. "The Literary Relationship of the Book of Wisdom to Earlier Wisdom Writings." In *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, 172-91. Catholic Biblical Association, 1971.
Smith, Mark S. "The Psalms as a Book of Pilgrimage." *Interpretation* 46 (1992): 156-166.
Smith, Elizabeth B. ""Who is the King of Glory?" Solomon's Temple and Its Symbolism." In *Scripture and Other Artifacts: Essays on the Bible and Archeology in Honor of Philip J. King*, edited by Michael D. Coogan, Cheryl Exum, and Lawrence E. Stager, 18-31. Westminster: John Know Press, 1994.
Spence, Jean. "Concepts of Youth." In *Working with Young People*, edited by Roger Harrison and Christine Wise. London: Thousand Oaks, 2005.
Stahlberg, Lesleigh C. *Sustaining Fictions: Intertextuality, Midrash, Translation and the Literary Afterlife of the Bible*. New York/London: T & T Clark, 2008.
Strait, Drew. "The Wisdom of Solomon, Ruler Cults, and Paul's Polemic Against Idols in the Areopagus Speech," *JBL* 136, no.3 (2017): 609-632.
Streete, Gail C. *Her Image of Salvation: Female Saviors and Formative Christianity*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992.
Stuart, Streeter S. "The Exodus Tradition in Psalm 105 and the Wisdom of Solomon: Notable Similarities." *Evangelical Quarterly* 92, no.2 (2019): 132-141.
Suggs, Jack M. "Wisdom of Solomon 2:10-5: A Homily Based on the Fourth Servant Song." *Journal of Biblical Literature* (1957): 26-33.
Suter, David. "Temples and the Temple in the Early Enoch Tradition: Memory, Vision, and Expectation." In *The Early Enoch Literature*, JSJSupp 121, edited by Gabriele Boccaccini and John J. Collins, 195-218. Boston: Brill, 2007.
Sweeney, Marvin. *I and II Kings: A Commentary*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
Talmon, Shemaryahu. *Literary Motifs and Patterns in the Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013.
Talshir, Zipora. "The Reign of Solomon in the Making: Pseudo-Connections between 3 Kingdoms and Chronicles." *VT* 50, no.2 (2000): 233-249.
Torijano, Pablo A. *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magnus, Development of a Tradition*. JSJSup 73. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
Tulving, Endel. "Episodic and Semantic Memory." In *Organization of Memory*, edited by Endel Tulving and Wayne Donaldson, 382-402. New York: Academic Press, 1972.
Tulving, Endel. "How Many Memory Systems are There?" *American Psychologist* 40 (1985): 385-98.
Ulrich, E. "The Bible in the Making: The Scriptures at Qumran." In *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible*, 17-33. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999.
VanderKam, J. C. "Questions of Canon Viewed through the Dead Sea Scrolls." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11, no.2 (2001): 269-292.
van der Horst, W. Pieter. "The Interpretation of the Bible by the Minor Hellenistic Jewish Authors." In *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew*

Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity, 519-546, edited by Martin-Jan Mulder. Leiden: Brill, 1988.
Van Seters, John. "Solomon's Temple: Fact and Ideology in Biblical and Near Eastern Historiography." *CBQ* 59, no.1 (1997): 45-57.
Vayntrub, Jacqueline. *Beyond Orality: Biblical Poetry on its Own Terms.* London: Routledge, 2019.
Vayntrub, Jacqueline. "Tyre's Glory and Demise: Totalizing Description in Ezekiel 27." *CBQ* 82, no.2 (2020): 214-236.
Verheyden, Joseph, ed. *The Figure of Solomon in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
Vogels, W. "The God who Creates is the God who Saves." *Eglise et Theologie* 22 (1991): 315-35.
Von Ehrenkrook, Jason. "Image and Desire in the Wisdom of Solomon." *Zutot* 7 (2011): 41-50.
Von Rad, Gerhard. "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch." In *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, 1-78. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2005.
Von Rad, Gerhard. *Old Testament Theology: The Theology of Israel's Historical Traditions*. Vol. 1. San Francisco, California: Harper and Row, 1962.
Von Rad, Gerhard. *Wisdom in Israel*. Translated by J. D. Martin. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1972.
Waltke, Bruce K. *The Book of Proverbs 15-31*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005.
Watson, Francis. *Paul and the Hermeneutics of Faith*. London: T & T Clark, 2004.
Webster, Jane S. "Sophia: Engendering Wisdom in Proverbs, Ben Sira, and the Wisdom of Solomon." *JSOT* 23, no. 78 (1998): 63-79.
Weitzman, Steven. *Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011.
Whitelam, Keith W. "Israelite Kingship: The Royal Ideology and Its Opponents." In *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological, and Political Perspectives*, edited by R. E. Clements, 119-140. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
Whybray, R. N. *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs*. JSOT 168. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994.
Williamson, H. G. M. "The Accession of Solomon in the Books of Chronicles." *VT* 26 (1976): 351-361.
Williamson, H.G.M. *1 and 2 Chronicles*. New Century Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982.
Wimsatt, W. K. and M. C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *The Sewanee Review* 54, no.3 (1946): 468-488.
Winston, David. *The Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. AB 43. Garden City, NY: Doubleday,1979.
Winston, David. "Book Review of Michelangelo Priotto, *La prima Pasqua in Sap 18.5-25*: Rilettura e attualizzazione (RivBSup, 15; Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 1987)." *CBQ* 52 (1990): 131.
Winston, David. *The Ancestral Philosophy: Hellenistic Philosophy in Second Temple Judaism*. Brown Judaic Studies, 2001.

Witte, Markus. “Emotions in the Prayers of the Wisdom of Solomon.” In *Jewish Prayers and Emotions: Emotions Associated with Jewish Prayer in and around the Second Temple Period*, edited by Stefan C. Reif and Renate Eggar-Wenzel, 161-176. Boston: De Gruyter, 2015.

Wright, Addison G. “The Structure of the Book of Wisdom.” *Bib* 48 (1976): 165-184.

Wright, Benjamin G. “The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 89, no. 3/4 (1999): 470-472.

Wright, Benjamin G. “Ben Sira on the Sage as Exemplar.” In *Praise for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas, and the Septuagint*, 165-82, edited by Benjamin G. Wright. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Wright, Benjamin G. “Solomon in Chronicles and Ben Sira: A Study in Contrast.” In *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, 139-157, edited by Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011.

Wright, Benjamin G. and Eva Mroczek. “Ben Sira’s Pseudo-Pseudepigraphy: Idealizations from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages.” In *Sirach and Its Contexts: The Pursuit of Wisdom and Human Flourishing*, 213-239, edited by Samuel L. Adams, Greg Schmidt Goering, and Matthew Golf. Leiden: Brill, 2021.

Wyatt, Nick. “Jedediah and Cognate Forms as a Title of Royal Legitimation.” *Biblica* 66, no.1 (1985): 112-25.

Zak, Rose A. “Dialogue and Discourse in Stravinsky’s ‘Symphony of Psalms.’” *Criticism* 22, no.4 (Fall 1980): 357-375.

Zurawski, Jason. “Paideia: A Multifarious and Unifying Concept in the Wisdom of Solomon.” In *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, 195-214, edited by Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman. Society of Biblical Literature, 2017.