

*Scribal Culture in Ben Sira*  
(*Sir 38:1-15; 41:1-15; 43:11-19; 44-50*)

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## **Preface**

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University of similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Faculty of Divinity Degree Committee.

## Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Yale Bible Commentary
AJS	<i>Association for Jewish Studies</i>
BZAW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
BNZW	<i>Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
BEAT	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BVC	<i>Bible et vie créétienne</i>
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BN	<i>Biblische Notizen</i>
BDB	<i>Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon</i>
BAR	British Archaeological Reports
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BHM	<i>Bulletin of the History of Medicine</i>
BIOSCS	<i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>
CBAA	Catholic Biblical Association of America
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
Clines	D.J.A. Clines, ed., <i>The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew</i>
DSD	<i>Dead Sea Discoveries</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan
ESV	English Standard Version
EstBib	<i>Estudios bíblicos</i>
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HAR	<i>Hebrew Annual Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
HBS	Herders biblische Studien
HCOT	Historical Commentary on the Old Testament
IOSCS	International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
IDB	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
Jastrow	Marcus Jastrow, <i>A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature</i>
JIGRE	Horbury and Noy, <i>Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt</i>
JQS	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
JAJ	<i>Journal of Ancient Judaism</i>
JAJSup	Journal of Ancient Judaism Supplement
JANER	<i>Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JHebS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JSJSup	Journal of Jewish Studies Supplements
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of Old Testament</i>

JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of Old Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
LDAB	Leuven Database of Ancient Books
LBH	Late Biblical Hebrew
LXX	Septuagint (Rahlfs-Hanhart)
MT	Masoretic Text ( <i>BHS</i> )
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta
QH	Qumran Hebrew
<i>REJ</i>	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
Skehan and Di Lella	P.W. Skehan and Alexander A. Di Lella, <i>The Wisdom of Ben Sira</i> , AB 39 (London: Doubleday, 1987).
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
TVZ	Theologischer Verlag Zürich
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
B	Manuscript B
B <sup>text</sup>	Manuscript B main body text
B <sup>mg</sup>	Manuscript B marginalia
<i>l.</i>	line(s)
Mas1 <sup>h</sup>	Masada Scroll of Ben Sira
MS(s)	Manuscript(s)
<i>r.</i>	<i>recto</i>
<i>v.</i>	<i>verso</i>

## Chapter One

### Introduction

This thesis analyses how Ben Sira wrote his text.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, this study will explore Ben Sira's reuse of texts in order to characterize his individual scribalism—that is, the personal compositional style—as witnessed by his surviving Hebrew text. The aim is to avoid generalizations about scribes by focusing on scribal culture. Scribal culture is the evidence reading and writing left behind by material culture<sup>2</sup> and textual data from societies with handwritten texts (manuscripts) and a scribal profession. In a manuscript society, scribes are the creators and copyists of texts.<sup>3</sup> However, scribes are also individuals with different agendas, levels of training, and environments. Analysing characteristics of Ben Sira's individual scribalism will tell us more about Ben Sira: his education and compositional habits, his sociocultural concerns, his social background, and his use of the texts around him. The central argument is that seeing Ben Sira through the lens of scribal culture helps reveal the complexity behind his compositional style.

Recently, biblical scholarship has renewed interest in scribal culture. In particular, scholarship on Ben Sira has long been interested in the question of Ben Sira as a scribe. This interest is because of his advice and autobiographical comments on the scribal profession and on the importance of a lasting name. He is also the first Jewish author to assign his own name to his text. Studies on Ben Sira have broadly concentrated on two issues: his sociocultural background and his interpretation of other texts. Both issues make Ben Sira an excellent case study for scribalism during the Second Temple period.

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<sup>1</sup> The Book of Ben Sira (also known as Ecclesiasticus, Sirach, or the Wisdom of Ben Sira) was written sometime between 198 and 175 BCE in Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Material culture is a term from archaeology meaning the physical objects left by people of the past.

<sup>3</sup> Note that scribal culture can also be left behind by educated people who were not professional scribes.

## *Literature Review*

### *Ben Sira Scholarship*

The textual history of Ben Sira is complex. Six medieval manuscripts of Hebrew Ben Sira were found in the genizah of the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo in 1896 by Solomon Schechter<sup>4</sup> and by Neubauer and Cowley.<sup>5</sup> These finds revealed the long-lost Hebrew of Ben Sira. Other fragments have been uncovered from the Cairo Genizah, including an imprint of Sir 1 discovered by Reymond in 2014.<sup>6</sup> The other Hebrew witnesses discovered are 11QPs<sup>a</sup> which includes Sir 51:13-30,<sup>7</sup> and the Masada Scroll of Ben Sira (Mas1<sup>h</sup>) found in 1964 by Yigael Yadin.<sup>8</sup> Two-thirds of the Hebrew survives today. Because of the incomplete survival of the Hebrew and the differences between the ancient and medieval manuscripts, the Hebrew must be compared to the other ancient versions: the Greek, Latin, and Syriac. The Greek version (Sirach), written by Ben Sira's grandson, is an important early witness to the Hebrew. A Syriac version was translated from the Hebrew, probably around the third century.<sup>9</sup> The Latin version is dependent on the Greek, and therefore it is

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<sup>4</sup> Solomon Schechter and Charles Taylor, ed., *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Portions of the Book Ecclesiasticus from Hebrew Manuscripts in the Cairo Genizah Collection Presented to the University of Cambridge by the Editors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899). Solomon Schechter, 'A Fragment of the Original Text of Ecclesiasticus,' *Expositor* 5:4 (1896): 1-15.

<sup>5</sup> A.E. Cowley and Adolf Neubauer, eds., *The Original Hebrew of a Portion of Ecclesiasticus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1897).

<sup>6</sup> Eric D. Reymond, 'New Hebrew Text of Ben Sira Chapter 1 in MS A (T-S 12.863) (1),' *RevQ* 105/26 (2015): 1-16.

<sup>7</sup> DJD IV. 11QPs<sup>a</sup> dates to between 30-50 CE. For full references to DJD volumes in this thesis see the bibliography.

<sup>8</sup> Mas1<sup>h</sup> dates to between the first century BCE and first century CE. Yigael Yadin, Elisha Qimron, and Florentino García Martínez, *Masada VI: The Yigael Yadin Excavations, 1963-1965: Final Reports* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society; Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999).

<sup>9</sup> Núria Calduch-Benages, Joan Ferrer, and Jan Liesen, *La Sabiduría del Escriba* (Estella, Spain: Verbo Divino, 2003), 40. Michael M. Winter, 'The Origins of Ben Sira in Syriac,' *VT* 27 (1977): 237-53; 494-507; 'Interlopers Reunited: The Early Translators of Ben Sira,' *JBL* 131 (2012): 251-69. W.T. van Peursen, *Language and Interpretation in the Syriac Text of Ben Sira* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), argues for a Jewish background of the author of the Syriac.

an important witness for the transmission of the Greek.<sup>10</sup> In order to remain as close as possible to Ben Sira's compositions, the five textual portions examined in this thesis come from the Hebrew text.

Modern Ben Sira scholarship began with Schechter, who argued that Ben Sira 'thought like a rabbi,' concluding that Ben Sira had little creativity since his text was saturated with quotations from the Hebrew Bible.<sup>11</sup> Schechter and Smend saw Ben Sira's late biblical Hebrew and Aramaic words as diminishing the quality of its high literary style.<sup>12</sup> Later in the 1960s scholars such as Snaith, Di Lella, and Skehan explored the quotations in Ben Sira as interpretation.<sup>13</sup>

Scholarship also debates Ben Sira's attitudes to the Hellenistic world.<sup>14</sup> In response to Conzelmann who found some parallels with Egyptian and Greek literature, Middendorp determined that Ben Sira did not quote from such texts since he believed that Ben Sira was opposed to Hellenistic culture.<sup>15</sup> Other scholars responded further, for example Hengel, Sanders, and Tcherikover, who saw Ben Sira as clearly part of the Mediterranean world.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Hengel identified potential quotes from Homer and Heraclitus.<sup>17</sup> Jack T.

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<sup>10</sup> By the Latin version (Ecclesiasticus), it is meant technically the Vetus Latina. The Vetus Latina itself only survives up to Sir 19, but the rest of the Vetus Latina Ecclesiasticus is preserved through the Vulgate, since Jerome did not re-translate Ben Sira but incorporated the Vetus Latina. B.F. Osb et al., *Biblia Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem II Proverbia-Apocalypsis* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969). Latin Ecclesiasticus will be abbreviated as Sir not *Ecclesiastic*. On the Vetus Latina see Maurice Gilbert, 'The Vetus Latina of Ecclesiasticus,' in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. József Zsengellér and Géza G. Xeravits (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 1-9.

<sup>11</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 8-9; 32-34.

<sup>12</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 32-34. Rudolf Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach erklärt* (Berlin: Reimer, 1906), xlii-vi.

<sup>13</sup> J.G. Snaith, 'Biblical Quotations in the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus,' *JTS* 18:1 (1967): 1-12. J.G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974). A.A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966). P.W. Skehan, *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* (Washington: CBAA, 1971).

<sup>14</sup> The Mediterranean world ruled by Alexander's successors from 323-31 BCE.

<sup>15</sup> T. Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill, 1973). Hans Conzelmann, 'Die Mutter der Weisheit,' in *Zeit und Geschichte*, ed. Erich Dinkler (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1964), 225-34.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 2 vols., trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1974), 1:152, however, he interprets בני אדם in Sir 3:24 as Greeks (citing Smend, *Erklärt*, 31), arguing Ben Sira is criticizing Greek and Hellenistic learning (Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:139). Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, trans. S. Applebaum (New York: Atheneum, 1977), 148 (117-51).

<sup>17</sup> Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:148. See §5.f for the likelihood of a Homer quote in Ben Sira.

Sanders compared Ben Sira to Demotic wisdom text P.Insinger and to Theognis.<sup>18</sup> Following the findings of Hengel and Sanders, Skehan and Di Lella argued that Ben Sira disagreed with the Hellenization of Jews though they did not think he was actively anti-Hellenistic.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, Lee compared Ben Sira's Praise of the Fathers (Sir 44-50) to a Greek *encomium*. However, Rollston later emphasized differences between Sir 44-50 and *encomia*.<sup>20</sup> By comparison, Kieweler argued that Ben Sira was familiar with Greek literature but refrained from making use of that knowledge for the sake of his students.<sup>21</sup>

The problem with past scholarship on Ben Sira and Hellenism is the conflation of parallel traditions and direct textual dependence. Today in biblical scholarship, scholars such as Nissinen and Weeks view overlapping parallels of Near Eastern or Egyptian texts as examples of broader scribal practices of common literary conventions, traditions common to ancient manuscript societies but not directly dependent.<sup>22</sup> The same must be done with Ben Sira, but it should be emphasized that material culture and evidence of the physical handling of texts can complete the picture.

Over time, the debate on Ben Sira's relationship with the Mediterranean world has also become problematic from debates about Hellenism. Much of the debate was indirectly searching for the beginnings of anti-Hellenistic sentiment which was claimed to have led to the Maccabean Revolt. Scholarship today now understands the Maccabean Revolt as a political feud of warring priestly families, and not about Hellenization.<sup>23</sup> The term 'Hellenistic' has become less helpful over time with associations of Greek colonial influence rather than local cultural synthesis. Every effort is made in this thesis to avoid

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<sup>18</sup> J.T. Sanders, *Ben Sira and Demotic Wisdom* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983). However, Lichtheim dates P.Insinger to the *late* Ptolemaic period. Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 3:184. For the limited audiences of Theognis and P.Insinger, see §5.f.

<sup>19</sup> P.W. Skehan, and A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, AB 39 (London: Doubleday, 1987), 16. Hereafter Skehan and Di Lella.

<sup>20</sup> T.R. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44-50* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986). C.A. Rollston, 'The Non-Encomiastic Features of Ben Sira 44-50' (M.A. thesis; Emmanuel School of Religion: 1992). Rollston, 'Non-Encomiastic,' 40-60, stresses how *encomia* refer to their contemporary subjects throughout.

<sup>21</sup> H.V. Kieweler, *Ben Sira zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1992), 37-47.

<sup>22</sup> Marti Nissinen, *Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Stuart Weeks, *Ecclesiastes and Scepticism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> For Hellenism as a problematic term in general, see Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E to 640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 12. Against Tcherikover, *Hellenistic*, 348-56.

the term Hellenism (while the Hellenistic period 323-31 BCE is not in question) in favour of Mediterranean culture, as defined by Schwartz.<sup>24</sup> Schwartz identifies the overall sociocultural concerns Ben Sira has (glory, honour, and reciprocity), arguing that culturally Ben Sira can be thought of as Mediterranean.<sup>25</sup> By Schwartz's definition, Ben Sira need not use Greek texts to be part of Mediterranean society.

Recently, scholarship has returned to Ben Sira's interpretation of his Hebrew sources. Beentjes examines Ben Sira's strategies of textual quotation as originality.<sup>26</sup> Other scholars look for information about Ben Sira's sociocultural concerns through his textual reuse of the Hebrew Bible. In particular, Wright<sup>27</sup> and Aitken<sup>28</sup> examine Ben Sira's relationship to Hellenistic administration. Aitken analyses Ben Sira's historical context, arguing that Ben Sira approved of Seleucid political rule since he praised Simon II's infrastructure projects, necessarily funded by Seleucid tax revenue.<sup>29</sup> By contrast, Wright sees Ben Sira as subtly subversive against earthly kingship in response to Ptolemaic king-cults.<sup>30</sup> As shown in these studies, Ben Sira's political and sociocultural issues are in one way distinct from the direct textual sphere of textual reuse, although on the other hand these issues plainly interact with the textual sphere through the selection of source material.

Another area of scholarship is Ben Sira's place in Second Temple literature and language. In recent years, several linguistic studies explore Ben Sira's Hebrew in

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<sup>24</sup> Schwartz defines and discusses Mediterranean culture, or mediterraneanism. Seth Schwartz, *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 21-25; 30.

<sup>25</sup> Schwartz, *Mediterranean*, 46-79.

<sup>26</sup> P.C. Beentjes, 'Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern [Sir 46:19],' *Biblica* 63 (1982): 506-23.

<sup>27</sup> B.G. Wright III, 'The Use and Interpretation of Biblical Tradition in Ben Sira's "Praise of the Ancestors,"' in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. József Zsengellér and Géza G. Xeravits (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 183-207; 'Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Ben Sira,' in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, ed. M. Henze (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 363-388.

<sup>28</sup> J.K. Aitken, 'Biblical Interpretation as Political Manifesto: Ben Sira in His Seleucid Setting,' *JJS* 41 (2000): 191-208.

<sup>29</sup> Aitken, 'Manifesto,' 202; 207.

<sup>30</sup> B.G. Wright III, 'Ben Sira on Kings and Kingship,' in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers*, eds. Tessa Rajak et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 76-91. However, the sharp rise in cases of deification after Alexander was in fact for all humans such as heroes and benefactors, not just kings, as pointed out by David Potter, 'Hellenistic Religion' in *A Companion to the Hellenistic World*, ed. Andrew Erskine (London: Blackwell, 2003), 416-19 (415-30).

comparison with Qumran Hebrew (QH) or Late Biblical Hebrew (LBH)<sup>31</sup> and Classical Hebrew.<sup>32</sup> Argall examines the similarities and differences between Ben Sira and 1 Enoch.<sup>33</sup> Wright compares Ben Sira to Jubilees and the Aramaic Levi Document (ALD), showing how they form part of the same wisdom tradition.<sup>34</sup> Rey argues a common wisdom tradition for Ben Sira and 4QInstruction.<sup>35</sup> These comparative studies illustrate the richness of Second Temple scribal culture and the Second Temple Jewish characteristics of Ben Sira.

Ben Sira's profession and social background have been an ongoing debate since Schechter and Smend. Ben Sira grew up in third-century BCE Judea, then part of the Ptolemaic province Syro-Phoenicia, and wrote his text in Jerusalem sometime between 198 and 175 BCE. The earliest date is not based on Simon II's death but on the repair of the city walls by the Seleucid administration in that year (Sir 50:1).<sup>36</sup> After four Ptolemaic-Seleucid wars Judea became part of the Seleucid Empire in 201/200 BCE, but evidence suggests Judea went largely unaffected.<sup>37</sup> Attuned to both politics and learning, Ben Sira

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<sup>31</sup> For Qumran Hebrew and Ben Sira, see: Avi Hurvitz, 'The Linguistic Status of Ben Sira as a Link between Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew: Lexicographical Aspects,' in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, eds. T. Muraoka and J.F. Elwolde (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 72-86; J. Carmignac, 'Les rapports entre l'Éclésiastique et Qumrân,' *RevQ* 3 (1961-62): 209-18; J.K. Aitken, 'The Semantics of "Glory" in Ben Sira—Traces of a Development in Post-Biblical Hebrew?' in *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages*, eds. T. Muraoka and J.F. Elwolde (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1-24.

<sup>32</sup> Joosten calls archaizing elements in Ben Sira's Hebrew pseudo-classicisms. This phenomenon might be compared with Middle Egyptian or Medieval Latin, calcified as literary-only languages long after dying out as spoken language. Jan Joosten, 'Pseudo-Classicism in Late Biblical Hebrew' in *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages*, 146-59.

<sup>33</sup> R.A. Argall, *1 Enoch and Sirach* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), especially 249-55.

<sup>34</sup> B.G. Wright III, 'Jubilees, Sirach, and Sapiential Tradition' in *Enoch and the Mosaic Torah*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini and Giovanni Ibba (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 116-30. See also J.C. Greenfield, M.E. Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Jean-Sébastien Rey, *4QInstruction: sagesse et eschatologie* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 17; 20-21. Related studies: E.G. Chazon and M.E. Stone, eds., *Pseudepigraphical Perspectives* (Leiden: Brill, 1999); E.G. Chazon, Devorah Dimant, and R.A. Clements, eds., *Reworking the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>36</sup> Scholars agree unanimously that Simon II was dead at the time of writing, making the earliest date possible 195 BCE, the year of his death. However, 'in his day' in Sir 50:1 does not without a doubt mean he was dead. It would make much more sense as an ancient composition if Ben Sira were patronized by Simon II to write his text, because it would not make much sense to waste praise (and the time and cost of writing) on a significant authority figure who was dead. More will be discussed on this idea of Simon as patron rather than eulogy subject in a forthcoming study.

<sup>37</sup> J.D. Grainger, *The Syrian Wars* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 44, writes that Judea was not greatly affected by this political shift because it was not on the Via Maris, the major coastal trade route from Egypt to Syria. However, also see Aitken, 'Manifesto,' 204.

worked as a scribe, administrator, and advanced-level teacher.<sup>38</sup> Scholars have proposed various professions for Ben Sira over time. Smend<sup>39</sup> and Hengel<sup>40</sup> saw Ben Sira as a scribe and sage. Stadelmann,<sup>41</sup> Olyan,<sup>42</sup> and Sawyer<sup>43</sup> suggest a priestly background because of Ben Sira's praise of Simon II and Aaron.<sup>44</sup> Wischmeyer proposes the idea of Ben Sira as physician,<sup>45</sup> while Carr examines Ben Sira as a priest and advanced teacher.<sup>46</sup> The questions of Ben Sira's background and his relationship to the Mediterranean world will be treated throughout this thesis.<sup>47</sup>

### *Scholarship on Scribal Culture*

Scribal culture is the textual evidence and material culture of reading and writing left behind by manuscript societies, in this case specifically those societies of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East from the invention of writing to late antiquity. Studies of scribal culture explore questions concerning what education was like, how texts were handled physically by readers, and how texts were composed, copied, and edited.

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<sup>38</sup> Probably not all roles at once as assumed by Smend, *Erklärt*, xiv.

<sup>39</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, xiv.

<sup>40</sup> Hengel sees Ben Sira's political and pedagogical work as in tension with each other due to his dichotomization of Hellenistic and Jewish culture during Ben Sira's time. Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:132-36.

<sup>41</sup> Helge Stadelmann, *Ben Sira als Schriftgelehrter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1980).

<sup>42</sup> S.M. Olyan, 'Ben Sira's Relationship to the Priesthood,' *HTR* 80 (1987): 261-86.

<sup>43</sup> J.F.A. Sawyer, 'Was Jeshua Ben Sira a Priest?' in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Div. A* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1982), 65-66 (65-71).

<sup>44</sup> Otto Mulder, *Simon the High Priest in Sirach 50* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

<sup>45</sup> Oda Wischmeyer, *Die Kultur des Buches Jesus Sirach*, BZNW 77 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), 47 (note 55).

<sup>46</sup> D.M. Carr, *Writing on the Tablet of the Heart: Origins of Scripture and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 206-11. Ben Sira represents 'a more widespread tendency in Israel and the Ancient Near East to house indigenous textuality and education in the temple and with the priests.' Carr, *Writing*, 211.

<sup>47</sup> The spoken language of Ben Sira is another factor. Generally scholars agree Aramaic was spoken in Ben Sira's time, though Hurvitz says several languages could have been spoken contemporaneously. Corley see evidence of Aramaic, Greek, and Hebrew. Jeremy Corley, 'Elements of Jewish Identity in Ben Sira,' *Biblische Notizen* 164 (2015), 8 (3-19). Hurvitz maintains Qumran Hebrew was spoken but has literary elements. Avi Hurvitz, 'Was QH a "Spoken" Language? On Some Recent Views and Positions: Comments,' in *Diggers at the Well*, eds. T. Muraoka and J.F. Elwolde (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 113 (110-14).

Biblical scholars formerly assumed the problematic theory that alphabetic language enabled widespread literacy and no need for schools.<sup>48</sup> Scholars also struggled to find hard evidence for scribal schools in Ancient Israel outside of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>49</sup> Looking for more indirect evidence, Jamieson-Drake shows that increased luxury goods and dependent cities necessitated administrative scribes in Jerusalem,<sup>50</sup> while Rollston<sup>51</sup> and Schniedewind<sup>52</sup> point to epigraphic evidence from Ancient Israel. Carr surveys a range of Ancient Near Eastern, Classical, and Egyptian evidence of scribal education, arguing that most schools were in temples or private homes.<sup>53</sup> Scholarship needs to understand there is not ‘insufficient evidence’<sup>54</sup> of schools. Cribiore shows that ancient schools were in temples, courtyards, and patrons’ homes—never in purpose-built school *buildings*.<sup>55</sup> These settings were the norm in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia since the third millennium BCE.<sup>56</sup> Large ancient libraries, such as the Library of Alexandria, were housed in temples.<sup>57</sup> After Alexander, education was systematized through the Mediterranean

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<sup>48</sup> W.F. Albright, ‘Discussion,’ in *City Invincible: A Symposium on Urbanization and Culture Development in the Ancient Near East*, eds. C.H. Kraeling and R.M. Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 123 (94-123). D.W. Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes and Schools in Monarchic Judah* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1991), 154-56.

<sup>49</sup> G.I. Davies, ‘Were There Schools in Ancient Israel?’ in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*, eds. John Day, Robert P. Gordon, and H.G.M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 199-211. J.L. Crenshaw, *Education in Ancient Israel: Across the Deadening Silence* (New York; London: Doubleday, 1998), 86-90. K.J. Dell, *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 24-50.

<sup>50</sup> Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes*, 107-16; 145-57.

<sup>51</sup> C.A. Rollston, ‘Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence,’ *BASOR* 344 (2006): 47-74. C.A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age* (Atlanta: SBL, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> W.M. Schniedewind, *How the Bible Became a Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>53</sup> Carr, *Writing*, 52-53.

<sup>54</sup> Davies, ‘Were There Schools?’ 210.

<sup>55</sup> Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Oxford; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 17-18; 21; 25-31. The temple at Ebla (third millennium BCE) had traces of a library and school. Lionel Casson, *Libraries in the Ancient World* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), 3.

<sup>56</sup> Rosalind Janssen, and Jacobus J. Janssen, *Growing up and Growing Old in Ancient Egypt* (London: Rubicon, 1990), 65.

<sup>57</sup> This was the case until Nero. David Sider, *The Library of the Villa dei Papiri* (Los Angeles: Getty, 2005). G.W. Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 238, notes that imperial libraries were extensions of philanthropic activity but mainly used by the imperial administration. See also G.W. Houston, ‘Papyrological Evidence for Book Collections and Libraries in the

world.<sup>58</sup> Schools were elementary level, intermediate, or advanced; all cost money to attend.<sup>59</sup> The quality of rural education was often rudimentary at best, though even urban teachers of advanced schools could be of poor quality.<sup>60</sup> Intermediate and advanced schools had pupils copy longer tracts of classical texts, and often employed florilegia or teachers' miscellanies,<sup>61</sup> though even elementary teachers were expected to own scrolls.<sup>62</sup> Each ancient culture had its own corpus of classical texts.<sup>63</sup> Second Temple Jewish copying practices were similar to Greek practices,<sup>64</sup> using similar materials to those of other ancient Mediterranean peoples.<sup>65</sup>

Scholarship is frequently concerned with the role of memory in ancient literacy. Because of how diverse the levels of education were, from basic levels shown by epigraphy to advanced levels evident from literature, scholars today speak of multiple levels of ancient *literacies* instead of one definition of literacy.<sup>66</sup> It is no longer accurate to

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Roman Empire,' in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, eds. W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 233-67.

<sup>58</sup> Criore, *Gymnastics*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Professional apprenticeships followed school. Janssen and Janssen, *Growing Up*, 68. 4QInstr (4Q418) 9:13 reads, 'do not say I am poor and therefore I cannot seek knowledge.'. Also Sir 51:28.

<sup>60</sup> Criore, *Gymnastics*, 17-18; 55-61.

<sup>61</sup> Janssen and Janssen, *Growing Up*, 63. Criore, *Gymnastics*, 134-38.

<sup>62</sup> Criore, *Gymnastics*, 131-150, referring to Plutarch, *Alcibiades* 7.1. For Proverbs 1-9 as a possible school text see Dell, *Proverbs*, 24-50. For Mesopotamian texts see Carr, *Writing*, 47-61.

<sup>63</sup> Which texts were instrumental and thus 'classical' or authoritative can be shown by the quantity of copies that survive, and quotations in epigraphy and literature. See Peter Liddel and Polly Low, eds., *Inscriptions and their uses in Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 176. See also §5.f.

<sup>64</sup> Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (Leiden: Brill, 2004) 273-74.

<sup>65</sup> Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 31-55.

<sup>66</sup> Rosalind Thomas, 'Writing, Reading, Public and Private "Literacies",' in *Ancient Literacies* (ed. W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker), 13-45; Greg Woolf, 'Literacy or Literacies in Rome?,' in *Ancient Literacies* (ed. W.A. Johnson and H.N. Parker), 46-68; Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind* (London: Routledge, 1997). MacDonald treats this well for Ancient Israel: M.C.A. MacDonald, 'Literacy in an Oral Environment,' in *Writing and Ancient Near East Society* (ed. P. Bienkowski, C. Mee, and E. Slater; London: T&T Clark, 2005), 49-118. By contrast, Baines and Eyre narrowly define 'literacy' as being employed in a literate profession. John Baines and C. Eyre, 'Four Notes on Literacy,' in *Visual and Written Culture in Egypt*, ed. John Baines (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 63-94.

call Ancient Israel, Ancient Egypt, or Archaic Greece ‘oral cultures.’<sup>67</sup> The physicality of ancient reading and writing show that memory was important during the act of composition on itself—although memory was supplemented by the standard use of notebooks<sup>68</sup> and secretaries.<sup>69</sup> Memorization played a large role in education, as Carr points out;<sup>70</sup> further evidence shows that ancient writers and readers worked with supporting boards or laps instead of tables and desks, making the physical use of multiple scrolls at once (a scroll required two hands) untenable.<sup>71</sup> However, evidence from writers and copyists also demonstrate that editing too was an essential stage of creating a text.<sup>72</sup>

### *Methodological Issues*

Scholarship on Ben Sira and on scribal culture presents several issues. First, any approach focused on textual reuse must be sensitive to the differences between textual and sociocultural ideas, as well as inclusive of scribal culture. A scribe may be defined as an educated person professionally employed in tasks of written activity, yet still scribes did not receive a categorically different education from other educated people—just *more* of

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<sup>67</sup> The now-outdated Parry-Lord theory of oral composition. Carr, *Writing*, 104-6. Rosalind Thomas, ‘Literacy in Archaic and Classical Greece,’ in *Literacy & Power in the Ancient World* (ed. Bowman and Woolf; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33-50; H.N. Parker, ‘Books and Reading Latin Poetry,’ in *Ancient Literacies*, 193-94; 217 (186-229). See also Stuart Weeks, ‘Literacy, Orality, and Literature in Israel,’ in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, eds. J.K. Aitken, K.J. Dell, and B.A. Mastin (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 465-478. Weeks warns how orality and literacy are too often conflated in scholarship. Carr, *Writing*, 7, speaks of an orality-and-literacy overlap or spectrum.

<sup>68</sup> Criatore, *Gymnastics*, 154. Adam Bülow-Jacobson, ‘Writing Materials in the Ancient World,’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. R.S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3-29.

<sup>69</sup> Pliny the Elder, *Nat.Hist.*, Preface 17, 21-23.

<sup>70</sup> Carr, *Writing*.

<sup>71</sup> Small, *Wax Tablets*, 165. T.C. Skeat, ‘Two Notes on Papyrus,’ in *Scritti in onore di Orsolina Montevicchi*, eds. Edda Bresciani et al. (Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1981), 373-78. See also discussion about tables and scroll use in §2.d.

<sup>72</sup> See especially Catullus (68a) and Virgil (Suetonius, *Poet. - Life of Vergil* 22-25), cited by Small, *Wax Tablets*, 158; 185; 206-212. For the re-drafting of letters by scribes: Martti Leiwo, ‘Scribes and Language Variation’ in *Grapta Poikila I*, eds. Leena Pietilä-Castrén and Marjaana Vesterine (Helsinki: Foundation of the Finnish Institute at Athens, 2003), 5 (1-11).

that same system of education. This education was within a framework of a scribal culture: a culture of handwritten texts.

There is a risk if we begin by labelling Ben Sira as a scribe since it can lead to narrowed focus on particular assumptions about scribes. Scholarship presumes, for example, that ancient scribes had a system of values broadly held in common across the ancient Mediterranean and Near East. This system valued antiquity and imitation over creativity and originality.<sup>73</sup> This is broadly correct but must not limit our scope. Beginning our study with the text of Ben Sira ensures that a range of data emerges, preventing narrow results which do not capture the full range of what is occurring in his text. From this data we can detect more comprehensive patterns of individual practices and concerns. Applying the label of scribe to Ben Sira without being specific about what that entails confirms our conclusions before we start, narrowly suiting Ben Sira according to a predetermined view of scribal culture.<sup>74</sup>

Several surrounding issues related to Ben Sira's scribalism will also be treated where appropriate. One of these is whether there are discernible choices affecting the structure of Ben Sira's text as a whole. Another issue is whether Ben Sira tends to echo P material of the Pentateuch, which would suggest that Ben Sira is part of a longstanding P tradition from the early post-Exilic period.<sup>75</sup> Ben Sira favouring P would also reveal much about his social background and the reception of P in Ben Sira's time. A final issue concerns Ben Sira's attitudes to kingship and priests, which aids our understanding of his sociocultural location.

### *Methodology*

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<sup>73</sup> I define creativity strictly as the act of creating a new text or product, excluding copying. Creativity is often employed in scholarship as originality to mean innovation or eschewing tradition. Imitation means the modelling of a new text on the literary features of older texts via textual reuse: quotation, allusion, structure, subject, expression, formula, and/or literary conventions. I define imitation as creative by virtue of creating a new text. Textual reuse is defined as the direct textual use of other sources in a text, usually through quotation (direct, interspersed, or indirect), allusions, or other echoes. Textual reuse can also be basing a text's layout or themes on a literary genre, such as proverbial sayings. For Ben Sira's literary genres, see: Skehan and Di Lella, 21-30.

<sup>74</sup> What scribes are, do, know, and believe.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter Two.

Considering the issues discussed above, the proposed methodology begins with close examination of the primary sources available for each selected text portion. Relevant issues of scholarship and dating will be briefly considered for each source text from the Hebrew Bible. The textual commentary will be focused mainly on textual reuse (quotation and allusion).<sup>76</sup> Chapters Two and Three will include two short texts, while Chapters Four to Six will treat longer text portions and are arranged into sections according to specific requirements.<sup>77</sup> Comparisons will be made with other ancient sources when applicable. The results will focus on analysing characteristics of Ben Sira's individual scribalism. Characteristics will be categorized into three interacting spheres of operation. These spheres are direct textual use,<sup>78</sup> scribal culture, and sociocultural ideas.<sup>79</sup> To clarify, the scribal cultural sphere of operation includes education, compositional habits, and physical handling, and to some extent overlaps with textual reuse. Distinguishing these spheres of operation will allow more precise conclusions in the process about patterns in Ben Sira's compositional style, telling us much more about his text and about his time without conflating ideas with texts or overestimating parallels.

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<sup>76</sup> Lange and Weigold present a thorough discussion of quotation and allusion. They define an implicit quotation (without quotation marker) as the use of four shared words, and implicit allusion as three shared words. Armin Lange and Matthias Weigold, *Biblical Quotations and Allusions in Second Temple Jewish Literature* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 19-29.

<sup>77</sup> Chapters will include summaries of findings where needed for longer portions of text.

<sup>78</sup> 'Direct' here means not direct quotation (a further distinction) but textual reuse that directly engages with another text, not parallels. Speaking of 'influence' will be avoided in favour of textual reuse here since influence is too vague on its own.

<sup>79</sup> It is more appropriate to speak of contemporary sociocultural ideas rather than Hellenistic or Mediterranean ideas.

## Chapter Two

### Noah (Sir 44:17-18) and Phinehas (Sir 45:23-26):

#### Originality and the Use of Texts

##### 2.a. *General Introduction*

A longstanding question within Ben Sira scholarship is how to express Ben Sira's creativity in light of his textual use. Ancient scribes are often said to have aimed for close imitation of earlier texts, eschewing creativity, by which it is meant originality.<sup>1</sup> The theory of scribes as imitators is partially correct in that scribes like Ben Sira wrote using established written modes of expression with textual reuse: modelling their compositions on established conventions of structure and genre, and harmonizing multiple sources together. Even while patterned by established conventions, ancient composition still requires individual creativity in order to produce any new text that is not a copy of another text. Therefore the aim of this chapter will be to establish the balance of textual use and originality in Ben Sira's portrayals of Noah and Phinehas, and then compare these results with other Second Temple sources and known compositional practices.

The presence of quotations and allusions in the Praise of the Fathers has been demonstrated by previous scholarship, although this feature was deemed proof of Ben Sira's avoidance of originality to the extreme. In 1899, Schechter conceded almost no originality or creativity to Ben Sira by stressing how the biblical text was altered and directly 'transplanted.'<sup>2</sup> Schechter concluded that Ben Sira consciously thought and wrote like a rabbi, 'directly copying' ready-made quotations.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter One for definitions of imitation, textual reuse, and creativity.

<sup>2</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 12-13; 26; 32.

<sup>3</sup> By comparison, Robert Gordis argued that the quotations in Job and Qoheleth, which make sense of what may be construed as interpolations, are quotations which reinforce and add authority to points made in the text. Robert Gordis, 'Quotations in Wisdom Literature,' *JQR* 30:2 (1939): 124-47.

Since Schechter and Smend, scholarship began to appreciate Ben Sira's techniques as creative, for example the studies of Snaith, Skehan, and Di Lella. Snaith, for example, argued that what Ben Sira does with his quotations is more important than the presence of quotations, many of which should be looked at as unconsciously made.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Beentjes examined inverted quotations in the Praise of the Fathers, stressing the creativity of this technique.<sup>5</sup> Wright emphasizes Ben Sira's creativity in the textual reuse of Genesis in Ben Sira's Noah (Sir 44:17-18).<sup>6</sup> He argues that Ben Sira uses textual reuse to create new interpretations.<sup>7</sup> Wright claims that Ben Sira's concern in writing the Praise of the Fathers 'is not to reproduce the texts, but to carry out his own agendas and ideological commitments using these textual traditions as his raw material.'<sup>8</sup> Scholarship has thus created the opposite problem of placing Ben Sira's creativity at odds with his imitation of texts, equating the creative process with originality.

The creativity-imitation dichotomy requires unpacking and further clarity in the light of scribal culture. For example, recent scholarship shows that Rewritten Scripture creates new meanings and interpretation, often by the synthesis of harmonization.<sup>9</sup> The same features of harmonization are found in Ben Sira. This chapter will therefore investigate Ben Sira's originality in his textual reuse, compare this to other sources, and evaluate his overall creative method.

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<sup>4</sup> J.G. Snaith, 'Biblical Quotations in the Hebrew of Ecclesiasticus,' *JTS* 18 (1967): 11 (1-12). Snaith, Di Lella, and Skehan form the focal points of studies on Ben Sira's textual reuse and creativity in the 1960s and 1970s.

<sup>5</sup> With inverted quotations, reused vocabulary has a different word order from that of the original passage. Beentjes, 'Inverted,' 506-23.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, 'Biblical Interpretation,' 382-84.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, 'Biblical Interpretation,' 363-88.

<sup>8</sup> Wright, 'Use and Interpretation,' 190.

<sup>9</sup> Rewritten Scripture is defined as texts which retell biblical texts and show traces of scribal reworking of the text such as re-ordering, omission, and expansion, all of which indicate exegesis at work. Molly Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). G.J. Brooke, 'E Pluribus Unum: Textual Variety and Definitive Interpretation in the Qumran Scrolls,' in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context*, ed. T.H. Lim (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 107-22. Ariel Feldman and Liora Goldman, *Scripture and Interpretation: Qumran Texts that Rework the Bible*, ed. Devorah Dimant (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2014). David Katzin, 'The Use of Scripture in 4Q175,' *DSD* 20 (2013): 200-36. T.H. Lim, *Pesharim* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002).

Noah and Phinehas have been chosen here for analysis because they are good examples of different cases of Ben Sira's textual reuse in *short* sections of text.<sup>10</sup> Noah (Sir 44:17-18) is presented as a case study of Ben Sira's use of a single major text. By comparison, Phinehas (Sir 45:23-26) shows use of two major texts from different parts of the Hebrew Bible: Numbers and Psalms. The structure of this chapter, which will be broadly followed in the subsequent chapters, is as follows. §2.b.1-4 will treat Noah with introduction, textual commentary, and comparison with other sources, and the same for Phinehas (§2.c.1-4). Next, Ben Sira's textual reuse will be compared with wider scribal culture in §2.d, and final conclusions will be drawn in §2.e.

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<sup>10</sup> Chapter Three examines harmonization specifically in a medium-length text. Chapters Four to Six will examine textual reuse in longer-length portions.

### 2.b.1. *Introduction to Noah*

The first section of this chapter (§2.b.1-4) explores Ben Sira's Noah (Sir 44:17-18) with an introduction to Noah in the Hebrew Bible followed by textual commentary highlighting Ben Sira's textual reuse and scribal techniques, and finally a discussion of other Second Temple and early Jewish sources. The use of a single text in Ben Sira's Noah makes an excellent pattern for comparison with Ben Sira's multi-layer harmonisations of multiple texts. In each of the three lines, he quotes, alludes to, and harmonizes key vocabulary and phrases that appear in Genesis 6-9. He pays particular attention to the Flood and the covenant made with Noah.

There are few scholarly analyses on Ben Sira's Noah.<sup>11</sup> Schechter, Segal, and Skehan and Di Lella all note the Genesis quotations present in Sir 44:17-18.<sup>12</sup> Using these quotations as a starting point, Wright presents how Ben Sira incorporates reused words from Genesis 6-9 and prophetic connotations of 'remnant' in order to both summarize the story and present a creative interpretation of Noah.<sup>13</sup> Wright argues that Ben Sira justifies the inclusion of Noah by making him a remnant and therefore an ancestor of Abraham (Abraham follows directly after Noah in the Praise).<sup>14</sup> However, the ancestry of Abraham is not the central reason for including Noah, since the most space is dedicated to priests (Aaron, Simon) and because of Ben Sira's focus on covenant: Noah is most likely included because his is the first covenant with God in Genesis.<sup>15</sup> The close adherence to vocabulary and phrases from Genesis 6-9 in Sir 44:17-18 should be examined on their own merit and

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<sup>11</sup> A recent study by Weigold examines the Flood. Matthias Weigold, 'Noah in the Praise of the Fathers: The Flood Story *in nuce*,' *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. József Zsengellér and Géza G. Xeravits (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 229-44. Most of the secondary literature that mentions Noah are arguments concerning whether Sir 44:16 (Enoch) is original to the Hebrew text. The most recent and convincing of which is Winter, 'Interlopers Reunited,' 251-69. See also Argall, *I Enoch*, 10. Wright, 'Sapiential Tradition,' 116-30.

<sup>12</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 21. Moshe Zvi Segal, *ספר בן סירא השלם*, 2nd ed (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1958), 308. Skehan and Di Lella, 498-99; 504-5.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, 'Biblical Interpretation,' 382-84.

<sup>14</sup> Wright, 'Use and Interpretation,' 191.

<sup>15</sup> John J. Collins, 'Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach,' in *The Apocrypha*, eds. Martin Goodman, John Barton, and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 106 (68-111).

compared with other similar early Jewish texts in order to better understand Ben Sira's underlying meanings and the overall proportions of creativity and imitation.

Some background is necessary on Noah in the Hebrew Bible. The scholarly division of Genesis 6-9 into P and Non-P sources is relevant for this study owing to the continuing discussion over whether or not Ben Sira has a tendency towards favouring what is now called P in his textual reuse.<sup>16</sup> Ben Sira favouring P sentiments would tell us two things: the possibility of a continuing tradition of P from P's beginnings to Ben Sira, and secondly, the strength of his association with the Temple priesthood.<sup>17</sup> Gen 9:16 is argued to be part of the P tradition, since it maintains that Noah does not cut a covenant, since it would imply sacrifice before the Temple existed.<sup>18</sup> Ben Sira's language about the covenant with Noah will therefore be of interest in this study. Scholarship on Noah focuses on two key areas: the P and Non-P strata in Genesis 6-9, and the parallels of Noah in Ut-napištim from *Gilgamesh* or Atrahasis from the *Atrahasis Epic*.<sup>19</sup>

The second area of Noah scholarship is on Near Eastern parallels. Westermann, Skinner, Speiser, and others have pointed out the similarities of concept and numerous parallels in narrative events (landing on a mountain, sending out birds, covenant and promise not to flood the earth again), arguing some form of debt and heritage but not direct textual borrowing.<sup>20</sup> Carr sees Non-P Primeval in Genesis 6-9<sup>21</sup> as an Israelite version of

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<sup>16</sup> Scholars agree that J (or Non-P) is earlier than P, and most scholars argue that P is Exilic or post-Exilic (around fifth century BCE). Gen 9:1-17 is agreed to be P. Baruch J. Schwartz, 'Introduction: The Strata of the Priestly Writings,' in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions*, eds. Sarah Schectman and J.S. Baden (Zürich: TVZ, 2009), 10 (1-12). Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*, trans. J. Feldman and P. Rodman (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 200-12. Genesis 6-9 is traditionally divided thus: J, P, and R<sup>P</sup> (Redaction of P) in Gen 6-8 and P or R<sup>P</sup> in Gen 9:1-20. See, for example: E.A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB 1; London: Doubleday, 1964), 57. John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, 2nd ed, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1930), 171-73.

<sup>17</sup> Olyan, 'Priesthood,' 282-86. Olyan discusses Ben Sira's 'pan-Aaronid' alignment, not a pan-Levitic supporter or Zadokite exclusivist. However, Reiterer argues the use of כרת in Sir 50:24 is a general statement, not a wish for an eternal priesthood. F.V. Reiterer, 'The Hebrew of Ben Sira Investigated on the Bases of his Use of כרת: A Syntactic, Semantic, and Language-Historical Contribution,' in *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages*, 275 (253-77).

<sup>18</sup> Instead a covenant is 'established' with Noah.

<sup>19</sup> *Gilgamesh* is the standardized Babylonian version from the twelfth century BCE, and the *Atrahasis Epic* is Assyrian seventeenth century BCE. Parts of *Atrahasis* are quoted in *Gilgamesh*. Earlier versions of the myth date to the southern Babylonia during the third millennium BCE from the *Eridu Genesis* and the *Sumerian King List*. *Gilgamesh* is referred to in the Enochic Book of the Giants (4Q530 II:2 and 4Q531 17:2).

<sup>20</sup> E.A. Speiser, *Genesis*, AB 1 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983), 44-59, esp. 55. Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary*, trans. John J. Scullion (London: SPCK, 1984), 369. Skinner, *Genesis*, 139-81, esp. 174-77. See also John Day, 'The Genesis Flood Narrative in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Flood

Atrahasis, which also begins with creation and ends with a Flood narrative.<sup>22</sup> Carr argues that non-P Primeval History adapted Mesopotamian material in ‘generic forms and thematic motifs.’<sup>23</sup> Another view is that of Day, who argues that J knew the Flood story through Ugaritic contact, and that P independently encountered Babylonian material during the Exile.<sup>24</sup> With the complex background of Genesis 6-9 in mind, the following section will comment on the text of Sir 44:17-18.

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Accounts,’ in *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1-11*, ed. John Day (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 98-112.

<sup>21</sup> Carr calls the Non-P material of Gen 1-11 Non-P Primeval History, which he dates to late pre-Exilic. David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 246, citing Jamieson-Drake, *Scribes*. Carr concludes there are four layers of Gen 1-11: protoGenesis, retouching of pG, P counter version of non-P, and Rp. Carr, *Fractures*, 248. The versions of Genesis are charted clearly in Carr, *Fractures*, 339-40.

<sup>22</sup> He terms the J (Non-P) material ‘non-P primeval history.’ Carr, *Fractures*, 241-47; 268. Carr relativizes how texts can both compare and differ, arguing: ‘the Lagash king list offers a fundamentally reconceptualised counterversion to the Sumerian king list, so also the Israelite non-P primeval story was hardly a repetition of Atrahasis.’ Carr, *Fractures*, 245. Carr dates P material to the Exilic period, citing thematic concerns (covenant, obedience to God) and linguistic comparisons, for example Deuteronomistic language in Gen 22:15-18; 26:3-5. Carr, *Formation*, 152-59; 297.

<sup>23</sup> Carr, *Formation*, 464-65.

<sup>24</sup> Day, ‘Genesis Flood,’ 109-10. Copies of *Atrahasis* are attested at Ugarit. Another recent study contextualizing texts of the Hebrew Bible with Ugaritic literature is by Wikander, who similarly concludes that an earlier common tradition existed, becoming two parallel traditions, finding not enough evidence of direct textual dependence. Ola Wikander, *Drought, Death, and the Sun in Ugarit and Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014).

## 2.b.2. Primary Texts for Sir 44:17-18

### Hebrew<sup>25</sup>

(7a l.1)	לַעַת כְּלָה הִיָּה תַחֲלִיף <sup>ב</sup>	[נ]ח צדיק נמצא תמים	44:17ab
	ובבריתו חדל מבול:	בעבורו היה שארית	cd
	לבלתי השחית כל בשר:	באות עולם נכרת עמו	כרת 44:18ab

### Translation of Hebrew<sup>26</sup>

44:17 [No]ah the Righteous was found perfect  
 In<sup>27</sup> the time of annihilation he was a successor  
 For his sake he was a remnant

<sup>25</sup> I am sorry to report that the fragment containing Sir 44:17 is no longer extant in Mas1<sup>h</sup> as of April 2015 due to deterioration and possibly transportation from Shrine of the Book to IAA. IAA, 'Infrared and Multispectral Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>' (Courtesy of the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library; Israel Antiquities Authority; Photo: Shai HaLevi, Image taken 24 April 2015). This Hebrew is therefore only MS.Heb.e.62, 7a (MS B XIVr.) l.1-3, although Yadin, *Masada VI*, Plate 8, shows the same text except for the *plene* spelling of נוה. The following images and critical editions are used throughout for all use of B in this thesis, except where noted otherwise. Images of MS.Heb.e.62 consulted: Friedberg Genizah Project, 'Oxford MS Heb.e.62,' <https://fgp.genizah.org/>; Oxford Bodleian Library, 'MS.Heb.e.62,' [http://genizah.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/fragment/MS\\_HEB\\_e\\_62/](http://genizah.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/fragment/MS_HEB_e_62/); Solomon Schechter, ed., *Facsimiles of the Fragments Hitherto Recovered of the Book of Ecclesiasticus in Hebrew* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901). Critical editions: Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim, *ספר בן סירא: המקור, קונקורדנציה וניתוח אוצר המלים* (Jerusalem: Academy of Hebrew Language, 1973). Hereafter Ben-Hayyim. Martin Abegg, 'Transcription of MS B XIVr.,' [bensira.org](http://bensira.org). Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*. Segal, *השלם*. Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Smend, *Erklärt; Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach: Hebräisch und Deutsch* (Berlin: Reimer, 1907). Francesco Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico: Testo ebraico con apparato critico e versione greca, latina e siriana* (Naples: Istituto Orientale di Napoli, 1968). Skehan and Di Lella. Also consulted: Norbert Peters, ed., *Liber Jesu filii Sirach sive Ecclesiasticus hebraice* (Freiburg: Herder, 1905); Norbert Peters, *Der jüngst wiederaufgefundene hebräische Text des Buches Ecclesiasticus* (Freiburg: Herder, 1902); Israel Lévi, *L'Écclésiastique ou la Sagesse de Jésus, fils de Sira*, 2 vols. (Paris: Leroux, 1898-1901).

<sup>26</sup> All translations are my own unless otherwise noted as such. Dictionaries consulted: BDB; Clines; Jastrow; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, rev. ed., 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

<sup>27</sup> B<sup>mg</sup> and Greek reading used instead of B<sup>text</sup>.

And by His covenant the flood ceased  
 44:18 In an everlasting sign it was cut with him  
 So that all flesh should not be destroyed

### Greek<sup>28</sup>

44:17 Νωε εὐρέθη τέλειος δίκαιος·  
 ἐν καιρῷ ὀργῆς ἐγένετο ἀντάλλαγμα·  
 διὰ τοῦτο<sup>29</sup> ἐγενήθη κατάλειμμα τῆ γῆ,  
 ὅτε ἐγένετο κατακλυσμός·  
 44:18 διαθῆκαι αἰῶνος ἐτέθησαν πρὸς αὐτόν,  
 ἵνα μὴ ἐξαιφθῆ κατακλυσμῷ πᾶσα σὰρξ.

### Latin<sup>30</sup>

44:17 Noe inventus est perfectus iustus  
 et in tempore iracundiae factus est reconciliatio  
 44:18 ideo dimissum est reliquum terrae  
 cum factum est diluvium  
 44:19 testamenta saeculi posita sunt apud illum

<sup>28</sup> The following images and critical editions are used throughout for all use of the Greek Sirach in this thesis. Codex Sinaiticus Project, 'Codex Sinaiticus,' [codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx](http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx). Codex Sinaiticus has several variations (*folio* 181b, Scribe A), and Sir 44:17b has a case of parablepsis: *δια τουτο εγενετο κατακλυσμος* [*sic* without accents] with marginal addition: *δια τουτο εγενηθη καταλιμμα τη γη*. Critical editions: Joseph Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 299-301; Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*; Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, eds., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Note that Ziegler (cf. Rahlfs) emends *διὰ τοῦτο* (because of this) to *διὰ τοῦτον* (because of this man) in order to match the Hebrew.

<sup>30</sup> Note that Jerome copied the Vetus Latina Ben Sira for the Vulgate instead of making a new translation. These critical editions are used throughout for all use of the Latin version of Ben Sira in this thesis: Boniface Fischer Osb et al., *Biblia Sacra: Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem II Proverbia-Apocalypsis* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1969). Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*. Note that the Latin follows the Greek in removing the reference to Noah's covenant in the Hebrew Sir 44:17 (Greek Sir 44:17, Latin 44:18), and harmonizing it into *διαθῆκαι* and *testamenta* in the last verse. By comparison, the Syriac version (below) follows the Hebrew more closely with covenant *ܡܨܚܐ* for *בריתו* and oaths *ܐܘܫܘܘܬܐ* for *אורח*.

ne deleri possit diluvio omnis caro

Syriac<sup>31</sup>

44:17 ܘܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ  
 ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ  
 ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ ܕܘܢܘܨܘܢܐ

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<sup>31</sup> Syriac editions consulted throughout this thesis: Calduch-Benages, Ferrer, and Liesen, *Sabiduria*; Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*. Vattioni uses both the Codex Ambrosianus as well as Cod. Mus. Brit. 12142. Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*, xxv-xxvii. Resources for Syriac: Michael M. Winter, *A Concordance to the Peshitta Version of Ben Sira* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). D. Barthélemy and O. Rickenbacher, *Konkordanz zum hebräischen Sirach: mit syrisch-hebräischem Index* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973).

### 2.b.3. Textual Commentary on Noah (Sir 44:17-18)

#### Sir 44:17ab

In Sir 44:17ab, the two attributes of Noah are צדיק (Gen 6:9, 7:1) and תמים (Gen 6:9).<sup>32</sup> Ben Sira's syntax in the first line resembles what is found in Gen 6:9. These two passages are compared in the table below, showing how Ben Sira keeps the same word order as Gen 6:9.

SIR 44:17AB COMPARED WITH GEN 6:9	
Sir 44:17ab (MS B)	<u>נ]ה צדיק נמצא תמים</u>
Gen 6:9 (MT)	נח איש צדיק תמים היה בדרתיו

In the Praise of the Fathers, while צדקתם is used of the patriarchs in Sir 44:13, only Noah is called צדיק, although Job holds fast to the paths of צדק (Sir 49:9).<sup>33</sup> Yet Job receives a single line (Sir 49:9) just between Ezekiel and the Twelve, while Noah has three. This added attention may be because Noah receives a covenant, which makes him more important in the Praise of the Fathers.

Ben Sira's term to describe the Flood כלה (n.f.) is never used in the Genesis account of Noah.<sup>34</sup> Neither is the term characteristic of Ben Sira's vocabulary, as it appears only in one other place, Sir 40:10, which also refers to the Flood: 'On their [the wicked's] account, the annihilation came.' Segal mentions Nah 1:8, which refers to God's destruction of his adversaries via a שטף עבר, a downpour (or flood) that carries things away. Nah 1:8-9

<sup>32</sup> The Greek version is evidence that this line originally had 'righteous' in the line, and that B reversed 'their glory' and 'their righteousness.' However, Sir 44:13 (B) has וצדקתם, while M reads וכבודם, which matches the Greek.

<sup>33</sup> See B. Job is also called a prophet in Sir 49:9, perhaps because he is mentioned in Ezek 14:14. Ben-Hayyim, 212.

<sup>34</sup> Meaning 'annihilation' or 'complete end.'

refers to this flood as כלה.<sup>35</sup> The complete phrase עת כלה is not found in the Qumran non-biblical literature or the Hebrew Bible,<sup>36</sup> and therefore the phrase may be an innovation of Ben Sira drawn from an exegetical connection he has made between Genesis and Nahum.

*Sir 44:17cd*

In the second line, Noah is called שארית which here balances תהליף in Sir 44:17b. Elsewhere, Jacob is given a remnant (Sir 47:22).<sup>37</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the word שארית refers to a remnant particularly of violence or destruction (Mic 5:7-8; Isa 10:21, 11:11-12, 46:3). In CD 2:14-4:12a, the 'remnant of Jacob' of the Hebrew Bible is understood as the author's righteous community.<sup>38</sup> Jonathan Campbell argues that texts concerning the remnant of Jacob in the Hebrew Bible were reused in CD in order to be interpreted for CD's context.<sup>39</sup> In Ben Sira, however, Noah is the שארית, not Jacob or a descendent of Jacob, a distinction which distances Ben Sira's interpretation from wider Second Temple literature.<sup>40</sup> In a similar way to CD's recontextualization of the Hebrew Bible for the present, Ben Sira balances imitation and creativity with his use of interpretive terms like שארית and כלה alongside quotation.<sup>41</sup> Naturally, analysis cannot confirm whether Ben Sira himself came up with these interpretations or if they were well known in his day.

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<sup>35</sup> Again meaning 'annihilation.' Segal, *השלים*, 308. Euphemism remains a well-known scribal technique in the Hebrew Bible. Stefan Schorch, *Euphemismen in Der Hebräischen Bibel* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2000).

<sup>36</sup> Sir 44:17 is the only occurrence, as כלה is regularly found. Clines, 4:418-19.

<sup>37</sup> Segal, *השלים*, 327.

<sup>38</sup> CD 1:4-5.

<sup>39</sup> Jonathan G. Campbell, *The Use of Scripture in the Damascus Document 1-8, 19-20* (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1995), 86-87.

<sup>40</sup> The possibility that it is a wider interpretation cannot be ruled out completely, but the lack of extant references to Noah as שארית in other Second Temple texts strongly decreases the possibility.

<sup>41</sup> More interpretation and creativity is present in the use of *הדל* in Sir 44:17d, a word which is also not found in Genesis account, and found only three times in Ben Sira. However, *הדל* is common in the Hebrew Bible, so may alternatively reflect creativity or development of language choice. For another example, the word *לבלתי* in Sir 44:18 is not in the Flood story, but it is found frequently in Genesis (Gen 18:12, 21:26, 43:3, 43:5, 47:18) though not in the Noah account, and Sir 44:18 is the only occurrence of *לבלתי* in the extant Hebrew. By comparison, *בשר* is used repeatedly to describe the corrupted humankind (Gen 6:3, 12, 13, 17, 19; 7:16, 21; 8:17; 9:4, 11, 15-17). In Gen 6:12 and 9:15, both *בשר* and *שחת* are found.

Sir 44:17d states the creation of the covenant causes the מבול to subside. The word מבול is found numerous times in Genesis 6-9 (Gen 6:17; 7:6; 7:10; 9:11; 9:28). Gen 9:11 contains God's covenant after the Flood, and covenant is mentioned frequently in Praise of the Fathers.<sup>42</sup> Sir 44:17cd is also the only mention of the Flood as a מבול in the whole Hebrew text of Ben Sira.<sup>43</sup> With all these terms, מבול and עת כלה, שארית, צדיק and תמים, Ben Sira creates a balance between imitation and creativity in his textual reuse and interpretation. With Sir 44:18, below, he continues to refer to the covenant with Noah (Genesis 9:11-16).

The covenant is a prominent feature in Ben Sira's Noah, reflecting Ben Sira's emphasis on covenant in the Praise of the Fathers. In the table below, the full speeches of Gen 9:8-17 are compared with Sir 44:17-18. This comparison shows how Ben Sira echoes certain terms (underlined below) to refer to the covenant and the eternal sign (rainbow) with which the covenant was cut. It is clear how Sir 44:17-18 imitates the order and structure of Gen 9:8-17, which begins with the covenant and then describes the 'sign' of the covenant. The final phrase of the 'destruction of *all flesh*' further echoes the vocabulary of Gen 9:8-17, which refers five times to 'all flesh.' In Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11 בריתי is found, which Ben Sira expresses as בריתו in Sir 44:17d. Because of the inclusion of other phrases (eternal sign, all flesh) this chapter argues that Ben Sira focuses on Gen 9:8-17 slightly more than Gen 6:18 (והקמתי את־בריתי אתך).

TABLE: GEN 9:8-17 COMPARED WITH SIR 44:17-18			
SIR 44:17-18 (MS B)			
	לעת כלה היה תחליף <sup>4</sup>	[נ]ח צדיק נמצא תמים	17ab
	<u>ובבריתו חדל מבול:</u>	בעבורו היה שארית	17cd
	<u>לבלתי השחית כל בשר:</u>	<u>באות עולם נכרת עמו</u>	<sup>ברת</sup> 18ab

<sup>42</sup> Sir 44:17, 20, 22, 23; 45:5; 45:7; 45:15; 45:24; 45:25 and 47:11. Notably, it is like the Book of Jubilees (Jub. 1:7; 15:21) which is at pains to mention that God directly made a covenant with all three, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (all three patriarchs are said to have made covenants with God in Exod 2:24) even though Isaac never directly makes a covenant with God in Genesis, although it was promised for the future in Gen 17:21.

<sup>43</sup> The Greek version Sirach uses κατακλυσμός twice (once for מבול in 17d and in 18b instead of השחית), the term for the Flood in the Septuagint of Genesis 6-9.

## GEN 9:8-17 (MT)

- 8 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ וְאֶל־בָּנָיו אִתּוֹ לֵאמֹר:
- 9 וְאֲנִי הִנְנִי מְקִים אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְאֶת־זֶרְעְכֶם אַחֲרֵיכֶם:
- 10 וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם בְּעוֹף בְּבֹהֶמָה וּבְכָל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ אִתְּכֶם מִכָּל יִצְאֵי הַתְּבֵה לְכָל חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ:
- 11 וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר עוֹד מִמֵּי הַמַּבּוּל וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד מַבּוּל לְשַׁחַת הָאָרֶץ:
- 12 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים זֹאת אֹת־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי נֹתֵן בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֲשֶׁר אִתְּכֶם לְדוֹרֹת עוֹלָם:
- 13 אֶת־קִשְׁתִּי נִמְתִּי בְּעָנֹן וְהָיְתָה לְאוֹת בְּרִית בֵּינִי וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ:
- 14 וְהָיָה בְּעָנְנִי עָנָן עַל־הָאָרֶץ וְנִרְאָתָה הַקִּשְׁתׁ בְּעָנָן:
- 15 וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל־בֶּשֶׂר וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה עוֹד הַמַּיִם לַמַּבּוּל לְשַׁחַת כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר:
- 16 וְהָיְתָה הַקִּשְׁתׁ בְּעָנָן וְרֵאִיתֶיהָ לְזָכַר בְּרִית עוֹלָם בֵּין אֱלֹהִים וּבֵין כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה בְּכָל־בֶּשֶׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ:
- 17 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־נֹחַ זֹאת אֹת־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר הִקְמַתִּי בֵּינִי וּבֵין כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: פ

## Sir 44:18

As with the textual reuse of Gen 6:8-9 in Sir 44:17ab above, Ben Sira combines the ‘sign of the covenant’ (Gen 9:12) and ‘eternal covenant’ (Gen 9:16) with אות עולם. Scholars recognize that P material stresses the ברית עולם, marking a change in understanding of covenants.<sup>44</sup>

Concerning verb choice, Ben Sira describes making the covenant with נכרת in Sir 44:18a, rather than a קום in *hiphil*, or נתן, which are preferred by P. This is an unusual choice, because the only use of כרת in Gen 9:8-17 is יכרת in reference to destroying all flesh. In Gen 9:9, it is the *hiphil* participle מקים which describes making the covenant. Elsewhere, Ben Sira balances כרת and the *hiphil* of קום (see Sir 44:20, 24; 50:24). Yet here, the choice is made for simply נכרת by itself.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Christophe Nihan, ‘The Priestly Covenant, Its Reinterpretations, and the Composition of “P”,’ in *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 99-100 (87-134).

<sup>45</sup> Scholarship argues that P tended to avoid pre-Temple sacrificial overtones, for example by avoiding כרת. For a sample discussion of why Genesis 9:11 uses מקים instead of כרת for creating the covenant see, for example, Day, ‘Why Does God ‘Establish’ rather than ‘Cut’ Covenant with Noah?’ in *From Creation to Babel*, 123-36.

P material never uses כרת with ברית, while Ben Sira does: the covenant is *cut* through the intermediary eternal sign.<sup>46</sup> Ben Sira's use of כרת with ברית in reflection of a text which does not use כרת with ברית (while כרת is present several times in reference to all flesh) indicates he does not distinguish between J and P themes or agenda: while P avoids כרת with covenant, here Ben Sira does not. This distinction matters because it is assumed by some that P's avoidance of כרת with covenant is to do with an avoidance of sacrificial overtones in an Exilic setting;<sup>47</sup> with Ben Sira in a post-Exilic setting close to the Temple, כרת is not a problem. This shows that perhaps by Ben Sira, the use of כרת for covenant-making had ceased to be an issue among his contemporary circle.

To conclude this textual commentary, there is a balance between textual imitation and creativity in Sir 44:17-18, but creative word choices are outweighed by the amount of textual reuse. Ben Sira interprets Noah as righteous and perfect, closely following Genesis terms. More creatively, he interprets Noah as a 'remnant' of the 'time of annihilation', drawn from an interpretation of Nahum that was probably known in Ben Sira's day. Each word choice indicates an internalized and harmonized infusion of Ben Sira's interpretation with the Genesis terminology. The combination of Ben Sira's creativity and his use of Genesis (and Nahum) is best seen in light of the well-known scribal practice of composing from memory with prior reading and/or the aide of notebooks (for quotations, drafting, or both).<sup>48</sup> Ben Sira's Noah highlights the harmonic relationship between textual imitation and creativity with the textual reuse of a single major textual source. How textual reuse and creativity in Noah compare with other early Jewish and Second Temple sources will explain more about the role of each in Ben Sira's scribalism.

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<sup>46</sup> William K. Gilders, 'Sacrifice before Sinai and the Priestly Narratives,' in *Strata of the Priestly Writings*, 60 (45-72). This is a vast area of scholarship that cannot be covered within the limits of this study.

<sup>47</sup> Scholars of this view discussed in Day, 'Establish,' 129-30.

<sup>48</sup> Small, *Wax Tablets*, 158; 185; 206-12. Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 121. For recent archaeological remains of late fifth-century BCE Greek notebooks, see: Martin L. West, 'The Writing Tablets and Papyrus from Tomb II in Daphni,' *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* 1 (2013): 73-92. For notebooks of the Hellenistic period, see: Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 151-59. For notebooks and quotations in antiquity, Sabrina Inowlocki, *Eusebius and the Jewish Authors: His Citation Technique in an Apologetic Context* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 35.

### 2.b.4. *Noah and Other Sources*

In other Second Temple and early Jewish texts besides Ben Sira, Noah appears in Jubilees, Josephus, and Philo. In Jubilees, the Flood story is recounted with considerable expansion (Jub. 5:1-6:38). Noah is called righteous in Jub. 5:19. The end of the Flood is associated with Sukkot, and the rainbow plays an unimportant role compared to the calendar—the solar calendar and jubilee reckoning are critical agendas in Jubilees. The covenant with Noah is explained as the reason for the date and length of Shavuot, and the reason for its celebration as a renewal anniversary of the covenant.<sup>49</sup> Jubilees expands the narrative with concerns about heavenly tablets, divine judgement, and calendrical topics: the date of each event in terms of jubilees, years, and months, the establishment of festivals (Jub. 6:15-28), and the solar calendar (Jub. 6:29-38).

Josephus comments on the Flood story with discussions of historicity in *Antiquities* (*A.J.* 1.67-108). He comments on the Armenian site where the ark landed, tells how Noah sacrificed and supplicated God not to destroy the world again, emphasizes God's justification at length on why God was 'forced' by human wickedness to destroy the world, and defends the longevity of antediluvian ancestors with a long list of Greek historians. Josephus clarifies the Greek version of Genesis, explaining that ἵρις (the rainbow) is meant by τόξος since the rainbow was believed to be God's archery bow (*A.J.* 1.103). The main issues in Josephus are the defence of the story's historicity, the justification of world destruction, and the believability of Noah living to 950 years.

While Josephus calls Noah righteous (δικαιοσύνη),<sup>50</sup> Philo mentions the grace (χάρις) of Noah, discussing ἡ in Gen 6:8.<sup>51</sup> Like Josephus, Philo considers the historicity and rationality behind the Flood narrative (*QG* 1.87-100, 2.1-65). Philo mentions the confusion over the bow, saying that many assume it may not be the rainbow but a weather phenomenon known as Jupiter's belt (*QG* 2.64). The covenant is not explicitly mentioned.

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<sup>49</sup> Instead of Sukkot as a remembrance of the Israelites dwelling in the wilderness.

<sup>50</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 1.75.

<sup>51</sup> Philo, *Deus* 86.

In Philo and Josephus in general, historicity is their major concern, while Jubilees is focuses on the Flood story's role in establishing the correct Jewish calendar as part of its larger concerns with determinism. By contrast, in Sir 44:17-18, Ben Sira remains far closer to the text, and his concerns are to maintain a close reading of the Hebrew Bible: the renewal of the world through Noah as a remnant, and calling the Flood annihilation. His interpretations are very close to Genesis, not far at all from what it is possible to read in the text. It is therefore only in terms of textual reuse and scribal culture, not theme or agenda, that we can find a context for Ben Sira's Noah.

### 2.c.1. Introduction to Phinehas

The second half of this chapter (§2.c.1-4) analyses Phinehas in Ben Sira (Sir 45:23-26) as an example of Ben Sira's use of multiple major sources. Beentjes shows how alternating hemistichs in Sir 45:23-24 allude to Num 25:11-13.<sup>52</sup> To begin with Phinehas in the Hebrew Bible, the main narrative concerning Phinehas is the Baal Peor event (Num 25:1-15).<sup>53</sup> The Israelites are led astray by Moabites to worshipping Baal of Peor and committing immoral acts, and during an assembly, Phinehas witnesses the Israelite man Zimri bringing a Midianite woman into the camp. Phinehas rises with his spear and kills them both, and the Lord makes a covenant with Phinehas of an eternal priesthood with his descendants (Num 25:10-13), since through his zeal he made atonement for the sins of Israel. The Baal Peor event and Phinehas are mentioned in Ps 106:28-31, in a list of the works of the Lord in the early history of the Israelites.<sup>54</sup> Phinehas is found one other time at Sir 50:24: 'May his loyalty with Simon be confirmed, and may he establish with him the covenant of Phinehas.'<sup>55</sup> By the 'covenant of Phinehas', Ben Sira alludes to Num 25:10-13.

Ben Sira's interest in Phinehas is concentrated entirely on the Baal Peor incident and the resulting covenant, as found in both Num 25:1-15 and Ps 106:28-31. Because Ben Sira alludes and quotes Numbers 25 and Psalms 106 throughout his lines on Phinehas, it is important to explore the scholarly background for these passages in particular before exploring Ben Sira.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> P.C. Beentjes, 'Canon and Scripture in the Book of Ben Sira (Jesus Sirach, Ecclesiasticus),' in: P.C. Beentjes, *"Happy the One who Meditates on Wisdom" (Sir. 14,20): Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 180 (169-86).

<sup>53</sup> Throughout this thesis, possible variant readings from the MT have been consulted in: Eugene Ulrich, ed., *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); Martin Abegg, Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999).

<sup>54</sup> Moses and Aaron are also mentioned in Psalm 106.

<sup>55</sup> יאמן עם שמעון חסדו ויקם לו ברית פינהס (Sir 50:24, MS B). Segal, *השלים*, 342.

<sup>56</sup> In the rest of the Hebrew Bible, Phinehas fights the Midianites in Num 31:6. He is sent with other chief men to the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead in Josh 22:9-34, while his birth is mentioned in Exod 6:25 and genealogy in 1Chr 6:4. Phinehas, one of the two sons of Eli, priest of Shiloh, is mentioned in 1Sam 4:19; 14:3. A Phinehas is mentioned in Ezr 8:2. Another Phinehas, grandfather of another Eleazar, is mentioned in Ezr 8:3.

Numbers 25 is considered a late P text, as argued by Nihan.<sup>57</sup> Manuscript evidence shows minor textual variants, with one minor variant in the relevant extant material of Numbers 25.<sup>58</sup> By comparison, Psalms still had at least two major known editions with significantly different ordering between Psalms 91-150 as late as the mid-second century BCE.<sup>59</sup> Only the final line of Psalm 106 survives in 4QPs<sup>d</sup>, with no textual variation from the MT, and there are no traces of the psalm in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. In 4QPs<sup>d</sup>, Psalm 147 follows Psalm 106, while in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, 147 probably follows 104.<sup>60</sup>

The debate over Ben Sira's tendencies towards favouring P sentiments was mentioned above in §2.b. Olyan argues that Sir 45:23-26 is strong evidence of Ben Sira sharing a common ideology with P: placing express value on the priesthood and cult.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Nihan, 'Priestly Covenant,' 99-100 (87-134).

<sup>58</sup> The text of 4QNum<sup>b</sup> between Num 25:7 and 25:15b is missing, and Ps 106:23, 30 are also no longer extant. 4QNum<sup>b</sup> (cf. LXX, not in MT or SP) adds in Num 25:16 the formula: 'Speak to the Israelites, saying-.' Ulrich, *Biblical Qumran Scrolls*, 156.

<sup>59</sup> Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). See Chapter Four for a discussion of the impact of Ben Sira's version of Psalms on the Psalms Scroll debate.

<sup>60</sup> DJD XII. DJD IX.

<sup>61</sup> Olyan, 'Priesthood,' 272.

## 2.c.2. Primary Texts for Sir 45:23-26

### Hebrew<sup>62</sup>

(6a l.18)	בגבורה [נחל שלישי:] <sup>63</sup>	וגם פינחס [ב]ן אלעזר	45:23ab
(6b l.1)	ויעמד בפרץ עמו:	בקנאו לאלוה' כל	cd
	ויכפר על בני ישראל:	אשר נדבו לבו	ef
	ברית שלום לכלכל מקדש:	לכן גם לו הקים חק	45:24ab
	כהונה גדולה עד עולם:	אשר תהיה לו ולזרעו	cd
	בן ישי למטה יהודה:	וגם בריתו עם דוד	45:25ab
	נחלת אהרן לכל זרעו:	נחלת אש לפני כבודו	cd
	המעטר אתכם כבוד:	ועתה ברכו נא את ייי הטוב	ef
		ויתן לכם חכמת לב: <sup>64</sup>	45:26a
		למען לא ישכח טובכם [וגב]ורתכם לדורות עולם:	45:26cd

### Translation of Hebrew

45:23 And also Phinehas [so]n of Eleazar, | On account of his might he [inherited thirdly.]

When he was zealous for the God of All, | He arose in the breach (against) his people.

Whose heart incited him, | He made atonement for the sons of Israel.

<sup>62</sup> MS.Heb.e.62, 6a (MS B XVr.) l.18 to 6b (XVv.) l.1-8.

<sup>63</sup> Smend, *Hebräisch*, 51, reconstructs [נה]דר שלישי; Peters, *Liber Iesu*, 120-21, [נה]ל שלישי, noting space in the damage does not permit adding כבוד. Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*, 247, and Lévi, *Hebrew Text*, 62, reconstruct [נה]ל שלישי בהוד. I agree with Peters on the basis of spacing.

<sup>64</sup> Note below in the commentary on the absence of Sir 45:26b in the Hebrew.

45:24 Thus also for him (God) established a statute, | A covenant of peace to maintain the Sanctuary.<sup>65</sup>

That will be given to him and his descendants, | A High Priesthood forever,

45:25 And also his covenant was with David | Son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah.

An inheritance of fire before His glory | Is the inheritance of Aaron for all his descendants.

And now bless the Lord, the Good One, | The one who crowns you with glory,

45:26 And may He give to you skill | | so that He will not forget your goodness and your [mig]hty deeds throughout the generations forever.

### Greek

45:23 Καί Φινεες υἱὸς Ελεαζαρ τρίτος εἰς δόξαν  
ἐν τῷ ζηλωσάσῃ αὐτὸν ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου  
καὶ στηναί αὐτὸν ἐν τροπῇ λαοῦ  
ἐν ἀγαθότητι προθυμίας ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ·  
καὶ ἐξιλιάσατο περὶ τοῦ Ἰσραηλ.

45:24 διὰ τοῦτο ἐστάθη αὐτῷ διαθήκη εἰρήνης  
προστατεῖν ἁγίων καὶ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ,  
ἵνα αὐτῷ ἦ καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ  
ἱερωσύνης μεγαλεῖον εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

45:25 καὶ διαθήκην τῷ Δαυιδ  
υἱῷ Ἰεσσαὶ ἐκ φυλῆς Ἰουδα  
κληρονομία βασιλέως υἱοῦ ἐξ υἱοῦ μόνου·  
κληρονομία Ἀαρων καὶ τῷ σπέρματι αὐτοῦ.

45:26 δῶν ὑμῖν σοφίαν ἐν καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν  
κρίνειν τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ  
ἵνα μὴ ἀφανισθῇ τὰ ἀγαθὰ αὐτῶν  
καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν εἰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν.

<sup>65</sup> That is, the tabernacle (Exod 25:8).



### 2.c.3. Textual Commentary on Phinehas (Sir 45:23-26)

#### *Sir 45:23ab*

For בגבורה, the clause ב + noun is regularly found in Ben Sira, with ב in the causal meaning of ‘through’ or ‘on account of.’<sup>67</sup> Phinehas inherits not just because of his גבורה, though, but primarily because of his genealogy: third in line after Aaron. Ben Sira’s emphasis is more focused on genealogy for priestly inheritance than Numbers 25.

The title of Phinehas in Sir 45:23a is ‘Phinehas son of Eleazar’, while Numbers reads, ‘Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest’ (Num 25:7, 10) and ‘Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest’ (Num 31:6).<sup>68</sup> The choice is less accidental than it seems. Ben Sira directs attention to Phinehas’ elevated status as the son of Eleazar, and Ben Sira is also himself the son of an Eleazar himself (Sir 50:27). Patronyms could distinguish two people of the same name (such as Matt 10:2-3), although in the Second Temple period, it is mostly high social-status families that bear the ‘son-of’ surname in epigraphy.<sup>69</sup> If this title aimed to be merely genealogical, the full ‘son of Aaron’ in Numbers may have been included to emphasize which Eleazar is implied, or to stress direct lineage from Aaron (as in Sir 45:23b with ‘inherited thirdly’). Therefore by calling Phinehas ‘Phinehas son of Eleazar’ Ben Sira is revealing his own impressions of the high status of priestly families.

<sup>67</sup> The causal use of ב as ‘through’ or ‘on account of’ is rare in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 9:28; 19:16). S.E. Fassberg, ‘On the Syntax of Dependent Clauses in Ben Sira,’ in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, 65 (56-72). Similarly, some rare uses of ב have the meaning of ‘when’ without infinitive construct. *BDB*, 90 (entry on ב, 5.3). Muraoka argues that LBH also further developed the use of ב + infinitive construct and sometimes ל, whereas in Biblical Hebrew the infinitive construct is typically on its own. Here the combination is ב + noun, but the development may be applicable to both. Takamitsu Muraoka, ‘An Approach to the Morphosyntax and Syntax of Qumran Hebrew,’ in *Diggers at the Well*, 194-95 (193-214).

<sup>68</sup> In an otherwise complete verse, the first line is missing a letter in the first stichometric half (Sir 45:23a) and two words missing in the second half (Sir 45:23b). Schechter, *Facsimiles*, xlv,5-xlv,23a; xlv 23<sup>b</sup>-xlvi,6<sup>a</sup>. Reconstructing [.] in Sir 45:23a as בן is not problematic. Segal reconstructs the lacuna of Sir 45:23b בגבורה [חל שלישי]. Segal, *קושט*, 312. It is reasonable to reconstruct שלישי here through comparison to the Greek and Latin The Greek: ‘third in glory’; Latin: *tertius in gloria*. The Syriac has a different interpretation, that Phinehas receives three marks of honour for his might.

<sup>69</sup> Note Rachel Hachlili, *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices, and Rites in the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 204-19; 231.

The word *גבורה* is not found in any description of Phinehas in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>70</sup> while in Numbers 25 he is described multiple times as possessing *קנאה*, and here Ben Sira stresses causation between Phinehas' zeal in his actions and the subsequent eternal priestly inheritance, instead of his zeal as in Num 25:12-13.<sup>71</sup> Alternatively, 'might' could echo Isa 11:2. In Sir 45:26, the final benediction, he reminds the reader of Phinehas' bravery with *גב[ור]תכם*. The word *גבורה* is found in Sir 44:3 describing the patriarchs,<sup>72</sup> using a variant of *גבורה*,<sup>73</sup> and in Sir 48:24 there is God's spirit of might. Might is not used to describe any other patriarch, not even Joshua. In the non-biblical Qumran literature *גבורה* is found normally describing God, not humans.<sup>74</sup> And in the Hebrew Bible, God is frequently called mighty (Ps 24:8; Isa 10:21), as are warriors and mighty men in Judges, and David (1Sam 16:18). Finally, Phinehas is the third of the line of Aaron (Num 18:7) implicitly in the Hebrew Bible (Ezra 8:2; Exod 6:25), but made explicit in Ben Sira with *שלישי*.<sup>75</sup> Aaron plays an important role in Ben Sira's Praise of the Fathers (Sir 45:6-22), and the lines on Phinehas begins directly after Aaron.

<sup>70</sup> The word may be safely reconstructed *בגבורה*. B clearly has a *ג* at Sir 45:23b, as its distinctiveness can be discerned elsewhere in B, for instance *גם* at 45:23a. The Syriac reads *ܟܢܘܢܐܘܬܐ* ('in might'). The shift from might to glory in the Greek and Latin may be a theological change or a scribal error from the Hebrew to Greek, which suggests that the Syriac came from an earlier or different Hebrew version. Elsewhere *כבוד* is a reference to God in B<sup>mg</sup>, but here there are no marginal notes from the copyist. It is likely an error of a scribal copyist since Ben Sira frequently uses the word *כבוד*, and the common scribal confusion between *ד* and *ר* is found in MS B (Sir 32:10c, 36:8a, or 36:21a with *נדל* when it should probably read *גבר*). Such letter confusions are also found in the Qumran scrolls and in rabbinic copying and the Greek Bible, such as Isa 5:17. Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1981), 18-19. Even more common is the confusion between *י* and *ו*, which is also common in MS B. In light of the traces found in B and the Syriac, the Hebrew is read here as *גב[ור]תכם*.

<sup>71</sup> God is called 'mighty' many times in the Hebrew Bible (BDB, 150) and by Ben Sira (Sir 15:18; 33:3 (Heb only); 43:12, 13, 29. Ben-Hayyim, 113. It is noticeable that Ben Sira calls Phinehas 'mighty' and not Joshua.

<sup>72</sup> The line in B<sup>text</sup> reads *ואנשי שם בגבורתם*, but B<sup>mg</sup> reads *בגבורם*.

<sup>73</sup> In Sir 44:3 Ben Sira uses the related term *גבור*, which is a variant use of *גבורה* as argued by John Elwolde, 'Developments in Hebrew Vocabulary between Bible and Mishnah,' in *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, 31 (17-55).

<sup>74</sup> M.G. Abegg, J.E. Bowley, and E.M. Cook, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2003-), 1:168-70.

<sup>75</sup> Since the Syriac was based on an unknown Hebrew translation, the Syriac witness suggests that Segal may be accurate. Di Lella and Skehan, 57. Winter, 'The Origins of Ben Sira in Syriac,' 237-53; 494-507. Moreover, MS B has sufficient space for *נחל שלישי* given the iron-ink deterioration and the average spacing of the lines. Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*, 247, suggests adding *בהוד* as well but there is not enough room on the line. Smend's transcription of *י* at the end of the line should also be taken into context since often detached fragments were present that were not kept with the manuscripts during photography (Smend, *Hebräisch*, 51; 56). See Sir 48:17-25. Finally, there is an ink mark in the deterioration that has the shape of a *nun*. Altogether given this evidence and that of the other translations, the reconstruction *נחל שלישי* is best.

*Sir 45:23cd*

In Sir 45:23c, Ben Sira selects certain keywords in Num 25:1-15. Beentjes demonstrates how Sir 45:23-24 allude to Num 25:23-24.<sup>76</sup> One of the keywords קנא is found four times in Num 25:1-15 in relation to Phinehas, including בקנאו את־קנאתי and בקנאתי (both in Num 25:11). Ben Sira implies both of these words with גבורה. Elsewhere in Ben Sira קנא is used of Ben Sira himself in Sir 51:18 with קנאתי בטוב.<sup>77</sup> Num 25:11-15 uses the word four times, making it hardly an incidental word choice. Here, קנא draws attention to Num 25:1-15.

The title כול אלוהי here is unusual here since the direct object marker ה is missing from כול.<sup>78</sup> This is interesting because in Late Biblical Hebrew the use of הכול as a non-construct indefinite rose in popularity, indistinguishable in use from כל.<sup>79</sup> The Greek adds ἐν φόβῳ κυρίου, which is notable since in the Greek κύριος is attested even where the Hebrew is אלוהים and not the Divine Name.<sup>80</sup> The phrase כול אלוהי as a standalone phrase is not found in the Hebrew Bible; the closest title is אלוה כל בשר (Jer 35:27) or אלהי (Jer 32:27). However, the phrase can be found in other Second Temple literature: אדון הכול (11Q5 28:7 (Psalm 151A); 4Q409 1.i.8), אלוה הכול (11Q5 28:7-8); אלוהי כול קדושי קדשים (4QShirShabb<sup>a</sup> 1.i.2).<sup>81</sup> Except for 4QShirShab, all use the direct object marker ה. Comparing these examples, Skehan suggests that the original form of the phrase כול אלוהי is found in Psalm 151, and that the MS B error is a case of parablepsis of the ה of הכול being

<sup>76</sup> Beentjes, 'Canon and Scripture,' 179-80.

<sup>77</sup> Another use of קנא is in Sir 45:18 to describe the Israelites' envy against Aaron.

<sup>78</sup> B attests to כול אלוהי, the supralinear י could have been written by the original copyist or added later by another scribe, but in B corrections are normally in the margins. Above the letter (or superscript) corrections are seen in Qumran literature, Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 222.

<sup>79</sup> Alexey (Eliyahu) Yuditsky, 'The Non-Construct כל/הכול in the Dead Sea Scrolls' in *Hebrew in the Second Temple Period*, eds. S.E. Fassberg, M. Bar-Asher, and R.A. Clements (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 267 (259-68).

<sup>80</sup> William Horbury, 'Deity in Ecclesiasticus,' in *The God of Israel*, ed. Robert Gordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 269; 275 (267-92). The Syriac version digresses again from the Hebrew: כול אלוהי (‘for the zeal with which he was zealous against the Midianite woman and the son of Israel’). The Syriac does not translate the phrase ‘God of All,’ and the Greek switches to simply ‘Lord.’

<sup>81</sup> Yuditsky, 'Non-Construct,' 266. Note that MS B has the form אלוה in Sir 35:13.

mistakenly transferred to אלוהי and dropped.<sup>82</sup> In light of Qumran texts, however, it is likely the phrase was originally אלוהי הכול.<sup>83</sup>

Sir 45:23d includes a phrase from Psalm 106, עמד בפרץ, not found elsewhere in Ben Sira.<sup>84</sup> Ps 106:23 reads עמד בפרץ pertaining to Moses. Ps 106:30 reads ויעמד פינהס, while by contrast, Num 25:7 reads ויקם.<sup>85</sup>

The phrase in Sir 45:23d עמד בפרץ is best seen in light of the phrase in Num 25:7 מתוך העדה, a case of harmonization and perhaps synonymous quotation with Ps 106:23, 30. Synonymous quotation, a term from Tov's work on ancient scriptural translation,<sup>86</sup> is defined as any phrase which has a near synonymous equivalent and close syntactic arrangement in the Hebrew Bible. Synonymous quotations are frequent in Ben Sira, and are attested in Samaritan Pentateuch and 4QRP.

Why Ben Sira chooses עמד instead of קום is due to influence from Aramaic, although the two appear in parallel in Job 8:15. In LBH, עמד expands in usage where קום might have once been used.<sup>87</sup> The phrase עמד בפרץ is not found elsewhere in Ben Sira. Thus it is likely a harmonization of Num 25:7 and Ps 106:23. The phrase is found once elsewhere in Second Temple texts in 4QM<sup>a</sup>.<sup>88</sup> This suggests the importance of Psalm 106

<sup>82</sup> P.W. Skehan, 'Again the Syriac Apocryphal Psalms,' *CBQ* 38 (1976): 147 (143-158). Other cases of parablepsis are found in the Qumran scrolls, too, as well as forgotten letters or lines inserted in margins or supralinearly. Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 227-29.

<sup>83</sup> Alternatively, if אלוה in the rare absolute 'Eloah' form was the original, the designation could be a reference to Deut 32:1-43, the Song of Moses, which refers to God as אלוה in Deut 32:15. The Song of Moses held special significance as early as Josephus and in rabbinic Judaism special blessings were attached to reading it. Josephus, *A.J.* 4.303. The blessings attached to reading Deuteronomy 32 are in *Masekhet Soferim* 12. R.H. Bell, *Provoked to Jealousy: The Origin and Purpose of the Jealousy Motif in Romans 9-11* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 227-28. In addition, Deuteronomy 32, Exodus 15, and many psalms have stichometric layouts in certain Qumran biblical scrolls. Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 156-59. Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 212. Having said this, in this case, the one word is not enough for a quotation of Deuteronomy 32, because the context is not directly relevant to Phinehas and the word quoted can equally be a variant or scribal error. The most likely solution is that the original read אלוה(י) הכול due to Late Biblical Hebrew changes noted in Yuditsky, 'Non-Construct,' 259-68.

<sup>84</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 244-45; 259. Even פרץ by itself is found only one other time in Hebrew Ben Sira.

<sup>85</sup> In Psalm 106, both Moses and Phinehas turn away the wrath of God. Psalm 106 forms a good literary model for the Praise of the Fathers. See discussion in Chapter Four on the structure of the Hymn followed by the Praise.

<sup>86</sup> Throughout Tov, *Textual Criticism*.

<sup>87</sup> Hurvitz, 'Linguistic Status of Ben Sira,' 78-83. See also: Avi Hurvitz, Leeor Gottlieb, Aaron Hornkohl, and Emmanuel Mastéy, *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 217-20. The verb קום is found later in Sir 45:24a (see below).

<sup>88</sup> 4QM<sup>a</sup> 11.2.13. Instructing the reader to stand in the breach in the battle against the Kittim. Clines, 6:779.

in Second Temple Judaism. The most likely option for Ben Sira's time is harmonization of the two passages from Numbers and Psalms. Other alternative explanations could be a case of Tov's 'synonymous readings',<sup>89</sup> or a textual variant of unknown origin.<sup>90</sup> Considering the materiality of reading and composition practices in the ancient world, it is more likely a harmonization or synonymous quotation. However, it could be a textual variant in Ben Sira's Hebrew Scriptures and not on Ben Sira's part. For that, though, demonstrable evidence for substantial textual variation would have to be shown in the ancient witnesses, which is not the case in Numbers 25 and not feasible with Psalm 106.

To summarize comments on Sir 45:23cd, the use of עמד is due to linguistic development. There is also a case of harmonization or synonymous quotation with בפרץ עמו for מתוך העדה in Num 25:7 and עמד בפרץ in Ps 106:23.

#### *Sir 45:23ef*

In Sir 45:23e לבו נדברו can be compared with the phrase לב נדב in Exod 25:2; 35:29,<sup>91</sup> and the verb נדב in *hithpael* refers to military volunteering (2Chr 17:16; Judg 5:2, 9). Ben Sira creates a play on words to emphasize the priestly atonement of sins, and perhaps even a military context. By comparison, in the Qumran non-biblical literature נדב implies offering oneself or one's deeds or holiness to the community. Here, the phrase is an existing idiom in the Hebrew Bible, the same as עמד בפרץ above. The phrase in Sir 45:23: ויכפר על בני ישראל, a direct quotation from Num 25:13, confirms this sacrificial-liturgical meaning for לב נדב.<sup>92</sup> The result is that Num 25:13 is stressed: Phinehas' slaying of the Israelite man Zimri and Midianite woman is a freewill sacrificial offering for atonement of sin.

<sup>89</sup> Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 260-61. Carr calls them 'non-graphic memory variants.' Carr, *Writing*, 26-29.

<sup>90</sup> Ulrich, *Biblical Qumran Scrolls*, 156; 670 (Psalm 106:23 not extant).

<sup>91</sup> Segal vocalises לבו נדברו in Sir 45:23e as *qal* with a pronominal suffix. The words לבו נדברו are slightly different from Exod 25:2, 35:29, which are both *qal* without pronominal suffix. It is reasonable to conjecture Ben Sira added a suffix because Exod 35:21 contains two very similar phrases to לבו נדברו, which are נדבה רוחו and נשאו לבו. Both cases are *qal* with pronominal suffix. Incidentally, Exod 35:21 is reminiscent of the Greek for Sir 45:23f, which reads *ἐν ἀγαθότητι προθυμίας ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ*, instead of 'heart.' In the LXX ψυχῆ corresponds to נפש, and Exod 35:21, above, is the only biblical witness to a variation with this idiom. The Syriac digresses from Sir 45:23f, saying that Phinehas prayed, which indicates the Syriac's post-Temple context. In the Hebrew the full effect of this line is to give a cultic interpretation which stresses Phinehas' sacrifice performed for atonement on behalf of the Israelites, as God suggests in Num 25:13.

<sup>92</sup> A similar phrase begun with an infinitive is used earlier of Aaron (Sir 45:16), containing a direct quotation from Lev 16:34.

*Sir 45:24ab*

In Sir 45:24a, Ben Sira says God established a חק with Phinehas, which he then describes as ברית שלום for the maintenance of holiness (Sir 45:24b). The word חק, meaning statute or law, in Sir 45:24a acts as a parallelism with ברית שלום in Sir 45:24b. However, חק might also on first inspection appear to be a synonymous quotation of the ברית שלום in Num 25:13. Instead it is an association of the ברית שלום (Num 25:13; Mal 2:5)<sup>93</sup> with the חקת עולם in Num 18:23 (cf. Exod 29:9), the eternal statute of the priesthood with Aaron and the tribe of Levi.<sup>94</sup> In sum, Ben Sira may be associating all the above priestly covenants together through harmonization.

The comparison with David (Sir 45:25a) merits further possibilities for the harmonization of covenants. In Ezek 34:25, the ברית שלום comes after God's promises to David, and 2Sam 7:13, 16 mention the ממלכת עד עולם with David. These examples, especially Num 18:23, explain how חק as meaning covenant makes sense: Ben Sira sees the eternal priestly covenant as both a ברית שלום and a חקת עולם, and further points out that a ברית שלום is established for David as well as for the Levite priesthood.<sup>95</sup> The word חק is probably used in Sir 45:25a instead of ברית because of Num 18:23.

Ben Sira writes of Aaron in Sir 45:6 וישימהו לחק עולם. In the same way, חק is again found with David: חק ממלכת (Sir 47:11c). These connections, tabled below for comparison, all indicate that Ben Sira is making an exegetical connection between Aaron, David, and Phinehas with the use of חק and ברית שלום.

TABLE: COMPARISON OF חק AND ברית שלום		
Phinehas: (Sir 45:24a)	הקים חק	Num 18:23 (cf. Exod 29:9): חקת עולם
Aaron/Phinehas: (Sir 45:24b)	ברית שלום	Mal 2:5: בריתי היתה אתו החיים והשלום
Aaron/Phinehas: (Sir 45:24d)	כהנה גדולה עד עולם	Num 25:13: ברית כהנת עולם
Aaron: (Sir 45:6)	חק עולם	Num 18:23 (cf. Exod 29:9): חקת עולם

<sup>93</sup> It is the חקת עולם from Exod 29:9 and Num 18:23 which Mal 2:5 describes as ברית אתו החיים ושלום.

<sup>94</sup> Olyan, 'Priesthood,' 270, discusses the חקת עולם in the context of Ben Sira's view of the Aaronide lineage.

<sup>95</sup> Beentjes, 'Canon and Scripture,' 178, argues Ben Sira viewed the priesthood as taking over the promises made to the Davidic line.

David: (Sir 47:11c) (Sir 45:25ab)	חק ממלכת בריתו עם דוד	2Sam 7:13,16: Ezek 34:25:	ממלכתו עד עולם ברית שלום
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In the Qumran non-biblical literature, חק refers to individual laws and statutes but is never a synonym for covenant.<sup>96</sup> In LBH and BH, חק often has a sense of fate, a development found in Ben Sira (for example Sir 41:3). However, חק as a synonym of ברית is not found elsewhere in extant Second Temple Hebrew texts besides Ben Sira.<sup>97</sup> Thus, Ben Sira's use of חק as fate demonstrates that he is aware of a developed meaning of חק, in addition to the standard meaning of statute. In sum, however, exegesis of Num 18:23 is a stronger reason for Ben Sira's use of חק with ברית.

The meaning of חק in Sir 45:24a may be further clarified by linguistic comparison with Greek and Aramaic. Aitken writes that the translator of Sirach rendered both חק and ברית as  $\delta\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$ , much like the double meaning of קימא in Aramaic.<sup>98</sup> The Aramaic may have influenced Ben Sira's understanding of חק, and further convinced him to read חקת עולם in Num 18:23 as eternal covenant and make a connection with Num 25:11-13. It is certainly vital to discussion in this case if both words are translated by a single word in both Aramaic and Greek.

Finally, the verb with which the חק is established, קום in *hiphil*, is the more common verb for creating covenants in Priestly material, as discussed above. The *hiphil* of קום for making covenants continued from Priestly material of the Torah and carried into Qumran non-biblical literature.<sup>99</sup>

#### *Sir 45:24cd*

<sup>96</sup> Clines, 3:299-302. For an example of קום and חק: 4Q414 13:3: והקם לו חוק כפור. 4Q417 frag 2, col I, 14-16 has חוק of remembrance.

<sup>97</sup> The Syriac does not include a covenant of peace, instead reading that 'God swore to him with oaths' (Sir 45:24 Syr), perhaps regarding Ben Sira's use of חק as different from a covenant.

<sup>98</sup> James K. Aitken, 'The Literary Attainment of the Translator of Greek Sirach,' in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira: Transmission and Interpretation*, ed. Jan Joosten (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 110 (95-126). Also see Wright, *No Small Difference*, 178-81, and Marko Marttila, "'Statute' or 'Covenant'?" Remarks on the Rendering of the Word חק in the Greek Ben Sira,' in *Scripture in Transition*, ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 73-87.

<sup>99</sup> Abegg, Bowley, and Cook, *Concordance*, 2:651-53. Clines, 7:231-35.

In the following line, Sir 45:24cd is a mix of Biblical Hebrew and Late Biblical Hebrew expression. Biblical Hebrew words which are unusual to the rest of Ben Sira normally indicate textual reuse, although they sometimes may also be the result of poetic balance in the line. Ben Sira uses לכן once (Sir 45:24) and once as לכם (46:8), preferring כן and על כן.<sup>100</sup> The word לכן is not attested in Qumran non-biblical literature. Incidentally, though, לכן is the first word of Num 25:12.<sup>101</sup>

The word לְכַלְכַּל מִקְדָּשׁ (Sir 45:24b) are an unusual phrasing of Levite priestly duty.<sup>102</sup> The *pilpel* of כּוֹלֵל, כַּלְכַּל, is found in the Hebrew Bible referring to food and households, not to priestly duties. Looking elsewhere, however, the *hiphil* of כּוֹלֵל is found in 1Kgs 8:64, מִהַכִּיל אֶת־הָעֵלֶה, which is similar to Sir 45:24b here.<sup>103</sup> Thus Ben Sira's לְכַלְכַּל מִקְדָּשׁ could be drawn from this expression in 1Kgs 8:64. Ben Sira uses the *pilpel* of כּוֹלֵל in a wide variety of ways not found in the Hebrew Bible: remaining (Sir 6:20), withstanding (43:3), or maintaining (45:24, 49:9). The best comparison is with 4QShirShabb<sup>f</sup> (4Q405) 18.2: לְכַלְכַּל קְדוּשִׁים. Therefore since Ben Sira's phrase is corroborated by 4QShirShabb, 'to maintain holiness' may be a Late Biblical Hebrew expression, or evidence of a LBH preference for the *pilpel* over *hiphil* for 'maintain.'

The interspersed quotation continues with the next phrases לוֹ וּלְזֵרְעוֹ (Sir 45:24c) and כְּהֵנָּה גְדוּלָה עַד עוֹלָם (Sir 45:24d). Both of these hemistichs use words and phrases present almost exactly as found in Num 25:13, which reads, וְהִיתָה לוֹ וּלְזֵרְעוֹ אַחֲרָיו. ברִית כְּהֵנָּה עוֹלָם תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר קָנָא לְאֱלֹהֵיו וַיִּכְפַּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. The Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature refer to both high priests and eternal priesthoods, for example כְּהֵנָּה עוֹלָם in 1QS<sup>b</sup> 3:26, but never an eternal high priesthood as Ben Sira does.<sup>104</sup> The phrase כְּהֵנָּה גְדוּלָה עַד עוֹלָם seems to be Ben Sira's own. The emphasis on the eternal *high* priesthood makes this

<sup>100</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 177-78.

<sup>101</sup> Smend, *Index*, 47, lists other cases (Sir 2:13; 18:11, 12; 34:13; 39:32) where the Hebrew is not extant and the Greek is δὲ τὸ τοῦτο as it is in Sir 45:24, though other cases of δὲ τὸ τοῦτο where the Hebrew is extant are usually על כן, בעבור כן, למען. The chances are therefore slim that there are other cases of לכן in the non-extant Hebrew.

<sup>102</sup> The Greek version adds to this line προστατεῖν ἁγίων καὶ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, maintenance of the *people*, a change which is reminiscent of the Ptolemaic and Seleucid policies of having native religious leaders as local administration, or the later dual priest-ruler roles of the Hasmoneans, although this political impression could also be due to the inclusion of David in Sir 45:25a. The Syriac reads instead: גִּבְרָה לִמְ גִּבְרָה (‘that he would build an altar to Him [God]’). An altar is not mentioned in the covenant of Numbers 25 but could refer to the altar in Numbers 18, or more generally to priestly duties.

<sup>103</sup> Meaning ‘to contain the offering.’

<sup>104</sup> Ben Sira also mentions priests in Sir 7:29; 7:31; 50:1; 50:16.

statement distinct. The statement is also a confident declaration that the Aaronide priestly line will last forever.<sup>105</sup>

Mizrahi demonstrates from epigraphic, linguistic, and textual evidence that the archaic term כהן גדול was still used into the Hellenistic period despite the rise of the Exilic/Post-Exilic term כהן הראש.<sup>106</sup> The term כהן גדול is not in Numbers 25, but it is used in Ben Sira and on coins in the early Hasmonean Period, coins which incorporated paleo-Hebrew lettering as part of a nationalist agenda.<sup>107</sup> Ben Sira's כהנה גדולה strengthens Mizrahi's argument, but Ben Sira's use of the archaic כהן גדול also displays a preference for the antiquated to the new, which is appropriate for the description of a longstanding priesthood which is hoped to continue *forever*. A similar sentiment must have been felt by the Hasmoneans in the establishment of their legitimacy, exemplified also their case with the use of paleo-Hebrew on coins. In the case of Ben Sira and perhaps also the Hasmonean priest-rulers, כהן הראש must have sounded too modern by contrast, and thus כהן גדול was preferred for establishing longstanding and enduring legitimacy.

#### *Sir 45:25ab*

In Sir 45:25ab, the covenant with David is mentioned (2Sam 7:13, 16), and David is son of Jesse of the tribe of Judah.<sup>108</sup> David's father Jesse is known to be from Bethlehem in Judah (Ruth 1:1; 1Sam 17:58), and his tribal ancestry descended from Judah is at 1Chr 2:3-15.<sup>109</sup> Blood may again be at the fore of Ben Sira's mind since both covenants—eternal priesthood and eternal kingship—are established according to bloodlines.<sup>110</sup>

Ben Sira is the only ancient reference to David or Jesse belonging to the tribe of Judah, not just from Bethlehem. The puzzle, as with similar cases of interpretation in Ben

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<sup>105</sup> See discussion in §2.c.4.

<sup>106</sup> Noam Mizrahi, 'The History and Linguistic Background of Two Hebrew Titles for the High Priest,' *JBL* 130:4 (2011): 687-705. The line between Ben Sira's textual reuse and pseudo-classicism or pseudo-archaizing (as in Carr, *Writing*, 208) is a difference in terminology. Joosten, 'Pseudo-Classicism,' 146-59.

<sup>107</sup> Ya'akov Meshorer, *מטבעות היהודים בימי בית שני* (Tel Aviv: Am HaSefer, 1967). For Hasmonean coins as nationalist agenda, see: L.A. Askin, 'Jubilees' Attitudes to Hebrew and Writing in Historical Context' (M.A. diss., Durham University, 2012).

<sup>108</sup> Again see discussion of 'son-of' surnames above in Sir 45:23a.

<sup>109</sup> See also 4Q381 24:5.

<sup>110</sup> Martha Himmelfarb, *A Kingdom of Priests: Ancestry and Merit in Ancient Judaism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

Sira, is how far back the idea goes. In 4Q380-383 (the Apocryphal Psalms), the tribe of Judah is exalted (for example 4Q3811 24:5), but the connection between Jesse and the tribe of Judah is not explicit as it is here in Ben Sira.

David is mentioned elsewhere in Sir 49:4 as one of three good kings along with Hezekiah and Josiah. The ‘house of David’ is mentioned again in Sir 48:15, 48:22, and 51:12 (Heb only). The Syriac version here lacks the word covenant, connecting the reference to David to the following line as found in the Greek (Sir 45:25c). Yet in the Hebrew, Ben Sira connects Davidic kingship as closely as possible with priesthood and ancestry—with both priestly and kingly lines established firmly with covenants.

*Sir 45:25cd*

In Sir 45:25c, scholarly views vary over the treatment of נחלת אש.<sup>111</sup> Smend, Segal, and Clines suggest that אש is a shortened spelling of אשׁ, making the phrase ‘inheritance of man,’ especially in light of the Greek.<sup>112</sup> Olyan leaves the issue open.<sup>113</sup> However, as Corley notes,<sup>114</sup> Josh 13:14 clarifies why the line in Hebrew *should* read fire, not man: רק לשבט הלוי להם נתן נחלה אשׁ יהוה אלהי ישראל הוא נחלת כאשר דבר-לו (Josh 13:14 MT). While אשׁ is a different word from אש, perhaps Ben Sira thought of them as derived from the same root.

The Greek (τιοῦ ἐξ τιοῦ μόνου) and Syriac versions understood נחלת אש as a reference to kingship.<sup>115</sup> Aitken argues that this may be the result of confusion on the part of the grandson of Ben Sira over the spelling of אש and a mistake of כבודו for לבדו in Sir 45:24c.<sup>116</sup> Besides these reasons, there is also a lack of other examples of the error of אשׁ as אש in the manuscript witnesses of Ben Sira.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 508; 510; 514.

<sup>112</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 437; 3:35. Segal, *השלם*, 316. Skehan and Di Lella, 510. Clines, 1:401; 5:661.

<sup>113</sup> Olyan, ‘Priesthood,’ 285.

<sup>114</sup> Jeremy Corley, ‘Seeds of Messianism in Hebrew Ben Sira and Greek Sirach,’ in *The Septuagint and Messianism*, ed. M.A. Knibb (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 309 (301-12). See also Olyan, ‘Priesthood,’ 284-85.

<sup>115</sup> James D. Martin, ‘Ben Sira’s Hymn to the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective’ in *Crises and Perspectives*, ed. A.S. van der Woude (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 113-115 (107-23). Martin favours the Hebrew over the Greek and Syriac, agreeing with Beentjes, ‘Hezekiah,’ 77-88.

<sup>116</sup> Aitken, ‘Glory,’ 18.

<sup>117</sup> Sir 3:11, 8:2, 8:12, 9:18.

To continue with the line, the words לפני כבוד in Sir 45:25c refer to God as ‘His Glory.’ While elsewhere in his Hebrew text, Ben Sira uses the word כבוד of both God and humans (for example Sir 47:20), in this case לפני combined with the prepositional לפני recalls the presence of God in the desert Tabernacle, the Divine Presence (Deut 5:24; 1Sam 4:21). Besides this association, there are also numerous references to the glory of God in the Hebrew Bible such as Ezek 43:2, Prov 25:2, and אלהי-כבוד in Ps 29:3. Moreover, there is evidence that ‘His Glory’ was a standalone title or euphemism for God at least by the Qumran non-biblical literature: ‘thrones of His Glory’ (4QShirShabb<sup>d</sup> 1.1.25; 11QShirShabb 1:6), ‘Temples of His Glory’ (11QShirShabb 1:7), ‘wonder of His Glory’ (4QAg<sup>b</sup> 1.2.3), and simply כבוד (1QS 4:18; 4Q1Q54 1:2).<sup>118</sup> Aitken notes that Ben Sira refers regularly to the Divine Presence as God’s glory (Sir 36:14; 42:17c-d; 42:16b).<sup>119</sup>

Finally, Aitken argues that reading כבוד as ‘His glory’ here further clarifies the reading of אש as ‘fire’ earlier in Sir 45:24c, by making an appropriate liturgical-sacrificial context for the line. Due to this liturgical context, Josh 13:14, and the manuscript evidence above, אש in נחלת אש is not a scribal error for איש. If נחלת אש were inheritance of fire, it would be appropriate paired with the inheritance of Aaron in Sir 45:24d.

‘Inheritance of fire’ and ‘inheritance of Aaron’ in Sir 45:25cd (Num 18:23-24; Josh 13:14; 18:7) are therefore another case of liturgical language and the harmonization of sources within Numbers, linking Phinehas’ covenant in Numbers 25 to that of Aaron.

#### *Sir 45:25ef*

The final two lines of the Phinehas section (Sir 45:25e-26) are a blessing for the priesthood which concludes both the Phinehas and Aaron sections (Sir 45:6-22).<sup>120</sup> The other prayers in Ben Sira are Sir 50:22-24 and 51:1-12, his final prayers for Simon and for himself, respectively. Within the Praise of the Fathers, Sir 45:25e-26 is the only benediction that directly follows the description of any patriarch, except perhaps Simon (Sir 50:22-24). Ben Sira thus sets apart the priestly patriarchs from all the other patriarchs with benedictions.

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<sup>118</sup> Clines, 4:353-54.

<sup>119</sup> Aitken, ‘Glory,’ 14-17.

<sup>120</sup> In the Greek and Syriac versions, certain changes are made to the prayer. The Greek leaves out Sir 45:25e/f (Heb), while the Syriac reads, ‘Let us bless God who gave you wisdom of heart’ (Sir 45:25d-26a Syr). The Syriac indicates that the Greek MSS perhaps missed out the final lines of Sir 45:25.

The benediction contains a number of terms often found in prayer language, but with some differences. To begin with *וַעֲתָה בִּרְכוּ נָא*, in the Hebrew Bible *נָא* does not usually follow *בִּרְכוּ*,<sup>121</sup> except in one place: 1Chr 29:20 reads *בִּרְכִינָא*. More often, though, *נָא* follows *הִנֵּה*, as in Gen 12:11. Elsewhere, Ben Sira uses *נָא* at Sir 42:15, 44:1, and 50:22.<sup>122</sup> The last example Sir 50:22 is significant as it is the only other benediction in the text for a priest: making the two blessings in Ben Sira for Phinehas and Simon (Sir 45:25//50:22), both high priests.<sup>123</sup> The word *נָא* is found frequently in the Psalms, and indicating prayer language in combination with *בִּרְכוּ*. In the Psalms, *בִּרְכוּ* in *piel* is found regularly (for example Ps 103:20), although in the Qumran non-biblical literature, *נָא* is never found in combination with *בִּרְכוּ*.<sup>124</sup> Qumran blessings share more characteristics with psalms language and Ben Sira rather than later rabbinic blessings.<sup>125</sup>

Ben Sira's benediction formula is shaped by Late Biblical Hebrew as evidenced by 1Chr 29:20, daily prayers which conventionally conclude with *בִּרְכוּ אֲדוֹנָי אֲשֶׁר*,<sup>126</sup> and festival prayers.<sup>127</sup> Concluding prayers with blessings is a practice found frequently in Qumran literature.<sup>128</sup> Ben Sira is similarly concluding Aaron and Phinehas with a blessing in Sir 45:25ef-26.<sup>129</sup>

The title of God in the blessing, *יְיָ הַטוֹב*, is also worth comment. The title is also found in 2Chr 30:18; Ps 118:1, 29; while 'Bless the Lord for He is good' is sung in Ezr 3:11.<sup>130</sup> The Greek version, however, leaves out 'for He is good', continuing instead, *δοξα ὑμῶν σοφίαν ἐν καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν*. Skehan argues that this means *הַטוֹב* was an expansion in MS

<sup>121</sup> The verb in Sir 45:25e is *piel* imperative m. plural.

<sup>122</sup> Ben-Ḥayyim, 211.

<sup>123</sup> Beentjes, 'The Praise of the Famous and its Prologue,' in *Happy the One*, 129-30 (123-33).

<sup>124</sup> James K. Aitken, *The Semantics of Blessing and Cursing in Ancient Hebrew* (Louvain: Peeters, 2007), 99 (96-102). Abegg, Bowley, and Cook, *Concordance*, 1:160-63.

<sup>125</sup> Bilha Nitzan, *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry*, trans. Jonathan Chipman (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 45.

<sup>126</sup> Daniel Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 79-84.

<sup>127</sup> Falk, *Prayers*, 183.

<sup>128</sup> Falk, *Prayers*, 183.

<sup>129</sup> Falk, *Prayers*, 79.

<sup>130</sup> God is also called 'good' in Ps 106:1 and 1Chr 16:34.

B, as it destroys the ‘balance of the poetic line.’<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, neither is there an equivalent of הַטוֹב in the Syriac, which strengthens Skehan’s argument.<sup>132</sup> As the Greek and Syriac leave out any reference to God, there is no sure way of telling whether הַטוֹב is original to the Hebrew with B as the only Hebrew witness for this line.

The expression המַעֲטָר אֶתְכֶם כְּבוֹד (Sir 45:25f) quotes Ps 8:6. The phrase ‘crown of glory’ is also found in 1 Pet 5:4, showing that Ben Sira’s use of the term may indicate early significance for Psalm 8. While earlier in Sir 45:25c, ‘His glory’ referred to God, here Ben Sira uses it here to refer to the glory of man. The importance of Psalm 8 in Second Temple Judaism may be found from epigraphic evidence of ‘crown of wisdom’ in Greco-Roman Egypt (JIGRE 39).<sup>133</sup>

#### *Sir 45:26*

In Sir 45:26 לב חכמת is similar to Sir 50:28 על לבו יחכם. Sir 6:37 (A) reads a similar sentiment: והוא יבין לבך | ואשר איותה יחכמך. Note that MS B lacks Sir 45:26b in the Greek and Syriac, which echo Ps 72:2.

In the Greek and Syriac, the phrase לב חכמת loses any remaining craftsmanship connotation. In the Hebrew Bible, there are many examples of ‘wisdom of heart’ meaning craftsmanship.<sup>134</sup> The one exception to this is in Ps 90:12: לִבְבִּי חִכְמָה, in the context of gaining wisdom. Ben Sira uses the phrase so infrequently in a text full of wisdom sayings that it is hard not to notice his neglect of it. However, the other use of לב חכמת is actually in Sir 50:23 (of Simon), which ties together the link with the priestly figures in the Praise to an even greater degree.

In Sir 45:26c, לדורות עולם is a synonymous quotation of ... לזרעו in Num 25:13. The phrase לדורות עולם is also found in Gen 9:12 in the covenant with Noah. Ben Sira may have intentionally switched זרע for דור in further harmonization with Ps 106:31, where

<sup>131</sup> Di Lella and Skehan, *Ben Sira*, 510.

<sup>132</sup> The Divine Name as יי is found throughout the Genizah Ben Sira manuscripts, and the practice is similar to יי in rabbinic texts, or the use of Paleo-Hebrew letters or the *Tetrapuncta* •••• with the Dead Sea Scrolls (Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 218-19). Mas<sup>1</sup> uses עליון or אדוני. P.W.Skehan, ‘The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll, and in the Septuagint,’ *BIOSCS* 13 (1980): 14-44.

<sup>133</sup> JIGRE 39 reads πανδημιον εἰθναυη εἰστέφει ἐν σοφίᾳ. William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>134</sup> See (ב) חכמת לב in Exod 28:3, 31:6, 35:25, 35:35, 36:8; Job 9:4, 37:24; Prov 10:8, 11:29, 16:21. BDB, 315.

Phinehas' deeds are reckoned to him as righteousness לדר ודר עד עולם. On the other hand, לדורות עולם is found often in the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>135</sup> This case then could be either a use of contemporary expression, or harmonization of Ps 106:31 and Num 25:13.<sup>136</sup> In this line there are several differences in the Greek and Syriac versions<sup>137</sup> and an added hemistich ('and govern his people in righteousness'), which has led commentators to either reconstruct a Sir 45:26b from the Greek, or transcribe the entire verse on one line.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>135</sup> 1QH 1.7.18, 6.11, 14.6; 4QBibPar 1.9; 4QpGen<sup>a</sup> 1.5.4. Clines, 2:428.

<sup>136</sup> At Sir 46:26d the Greek reads καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν. The Syriac agrees with the Hebrew ('might') here. Calduch-Benages, Ferrer, and Liesen, *Sabiduría*, 248-49. Antonino Minissale, *La versione greca del Siracide* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1995) 222, 238.

<sup>137</sup> The Greek change (Sir 45:26cd) appears to be theological, resisting attributing these traits to humans. Moreover, in another change for the Syriac understanding of leadership, the Syriac interprets the Hebrew as 'authority over all the generations forever.' Against: Calduch-Benages, Ferrer, and Liesen, *Sabiduría*, 248-49. The Syriac critical edition translates this as 'of the world,' closer to the Rabbinic Hebrew definition of עולם. There is no indication that it should, considering almost all other uses of עולם in Ben Sira are 'forever' (Barthélemy, *Konkordanz*, 290-91) and the Greek αὐτῶν here. The Syriac here hints that power/might is implied, as one meaning of ܥܘܠܡܐ can be 'power.' The Greek reads strangely εἰς γενεὰς αὐτῶν, when it should probably read εἰς γενεὰς αἰώνων, suggested in Ziegler's critical apparatus due to the Hebrew and Latin (*aeternam fecit*), Ziegler, *Sapientia*, 341. These arguments strengthen the translation of עולם (and of עולם here as 'forever' not 'of the world.'

<sup>138</sup> Peters (*Liber Iesu*, 122; *Der jüngst weideraufgefundene Hebräische Text*, 248-249), Segal, and Ben-Hayyim transcribe as found in B, but Lévi (*Hebrew Text*, 62) and Smend, *Hebräisch*, 51, reconstruct a Sir 45:26b. Skehan and Di Lella, 508; 510, add the Greek to the translation but note its absence in the Hebrew. Abegg, 'MS B V verso,' and Beentjes, *Ben Sira in Hebrew*, transcribe as if it were one line in Hebrew.

#### 2.c.4. Phinehas and Other Sources

Hengel discusses the importance of the zeal of Phinehas in Second Temple literature, for example of Levi in Jubilees and Aramaic Levi Document (ALD).<sup>139</sup> 2 Maccabees models Mattathias after Phinehas in describing Mattathias killing an idolatrous Israelite with zeal (1 Macc 2:24-27).<sup>140</sup> Paul says he is zealous for God just as his audience is (Acts 22:3).<sup>141</sup> Elsewhere Phinehas is a prophet of the judge Kenaz in Pseudo-Philo (LAB 28:1-4), mentioning his zealous actions in a speech before the battle against the Midianites (LAB 47:1-2).<sup>142</sup>

According to Josephus, Phinehas is an honourable warrior more than a priest.<sup>143</sup> Josephus makes the idolatry and pride of Zimri more central to his sin in order to justify his death.<sup>144</sup> Furthermore, the slaying of Zimri and Kosbah serves as the reason why Moses chose to wage war on the Midianites and why he let Phinehas lead the army (*A.J.* 4.156). Central themes to Josephus' Phinehas are his characterization as a warrior and a general, and justification for the death of Zimri and the war against the Midianites. The Baal Peor event sets the war against the Midianites into motion—the covenant with Phinehas is not mentioned in *Antiquities*.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Here by ALD I mean the Genizah, Qumran, and Greek (parts of ALD extracted into the Testament of the Twelve Patriarches) witnesses. Jonas C. Greenfield, Michael E. Stone, and Esther Eshel, *The Aramaic Levi Document: Edition, Translation, Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1-6. Both Jubilees and ALD have Levi as an important subject, notably in Levi and Simon's vengeance for Dinah (Jub. 30:5-18; ALD 5:3, 6:3). Discussed in Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I Until 70 A.D.*, trans. David Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 178.

<sup>140</sup> Hengel, *Zealots*, 151. For the full discussion see Hengel, *Zealots*, 146-79. See also J.J. Collins, 'The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence,' *JBL* 122 (2003): 3-21.

<sup>141</sup> Hengel, *Zealots*, 177.

<sup>142</sup> L.H. Feldman, 'The Portrayal of Phinehas by Philo, Pseudo-Philo, and Josephus,' *JQR* 93 (2002): 315-45.

<sup>143</sup> Josephus covers the Baal Peor event (*A.J.* 4.131-154), Phinehas as military general (*A.J.* 4.159-162), the delegation across the Jordan (*A.J.* 5.104-113), and Phinehas' inheritance of the high priesthood (*A.J.* 5.119, 8.11).

<sup>144</sup> Zimri in his speech calls Moses a tyrant more oppressive than the Egyptians (*A.J.* 4.147).

<sup>145</sup> Josephus notes that the line of Zadok comes through Phinehas son of Eleazar (*A.J.* 7.110, 8.12). Cf. 1Chr 24:3.

Philo's discussion on Phinehas is concerned with why a man of great piety would slay evil men (*Contempl.* 1.45.300-304). When Phinehas kills Zimri, he is rewarded by Moses with the appointment as general in the war against the Midianites (*Contempl.* 1.45.306). That is, Phinehas is not rewarded by God with a covenant as in Numbers 25 and Ben Sira. Philo justifies Phinehas' actions, arguing that if Zimri was not killed, the morality of the Israelite community would be put at risk through association with idolatry.<sup>146</sup>

By comparison, Ben Sira's Phinehas is a thoroughly priestly figure. Phinehas' actions are described in sacrificial overtones, and he is rewarded with the priestly covenant. Ben Sira's priestly Phinehas contrasts starkly with Philo's justification of violence for virtue's sake, and Josephus' warrior-general. Conversely, Ben Sira briefly implies Phinehas' role as a military general in the term גבורה, but prefers to emphasize his priestly identity.

Not many Second Temple texts treat Phinehas, so we must look at other sources which are concerned with *priestly lineage*. In other Second Temple literature, Levi is more important as a model of the priesthood.<sup>147</sup> Ben Sira noticeably leaves out any mention of Levi in the Praise of the Fathers, dedicating much more space to Aaron and Phinehas. Only in Sir 45:6 is Aaron said to be of the tribe of Levi—Levi himself receives no portrayal as a patriarch in his own right. Ben Sira is an Aaronide, rather than a pan-Levite, or a Zadokite, in favour of descent solely from Zadok as in Ezra.

The question of Levitical and Aaronide priestly rights is an enormous issue beyond the scope of this thesis, though a few texts can be discussed here briefly.<sup>148</sup> Much of Chronicles is in favour of Levites, except for some places which are more Aaronide (1Chr 15:4; 23:28; cf. 2Chr 13:10). In other post-Exilic writings such as 1 Macc 7:14 and Tob 1:6, an Aaronide view is espoused: the priesthood is claimed by the line of Aaron through Eleazar and Phinehas. Josephus likewise traces the pre-Hasmonean priestly line through Aaron (*A.J.* 20.224-241). Written during the third century BCE, ALD is a good comparison

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<sup>146</sup> Philo also justifies Moses' war against the Midianites along this same argument (*Contempl.* 1.45.305-314).

<sup>147</sup> Texts such as Sifre Numbers (ca. 300 CE) and Tg. Onq. Numbers (ca. 400 CE), expand on the Phinehas' story by presenting Phinehas as a warrior. Robert Hayward, 'Phinehas — The Same Is Elijah: The Origins of a Rabbinic Tradition,' *JJS* 29:1 (1978): 22-34.

<sup>148</sup> Ben Sira's place in the disagreement between an Aaronide and pan-Levite priesthood is explored well in Olyan, 'Priesthood,' 275-76; 285-86. For the topic in general see D.W. Rooke, *Zadok's Heirs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

to Ben Sira's attitudes to the priesthood, since it predates Ben Sira. Moreover, ALD 13 bears comparisons with the wisdom sayings of Ben Sira. ALD favours pan-Levite descent. Concerning Levi, ALD includes a vision of Levi in which Temple ritual laws are given and the eternal priesthood is established with Levi.

Another example of priestly lineage concerns is Jubilees, as Jub. 31:13-17 adds a promise of eternal priesthood to Jacob's blessing of Levi (cf. Gen 49:5-7) after avenging Dinah. In Jubilees, Levi has a vision about the priestly duties and lineage at Bethel (Jub. 32:1-9) which is quite similar to ALD. Both of these texts make it clear how important the divine establishment of the 'covenant of peace' for an eternal priesthood was in the third and second centuries BCE. Clearly, it is not just Ben Sira who is focused on priestly lineage and office.

While ALD and Jubilees focus on visions and divine messages, Ben Sira's creates meaning out of Phinehas' actions via sacrificial language and the reward of a priestly covenant which is plainly Aaronide. Carr argues that Ben Sira pays attention most of all to Moses as a foil to Homer.<sup>149</sup> In fact, however, Ben Sira gives more space and prominence in the Praise of the Fathers to the high priests: Aaron, Phinehas, and Simon. The importance of the priests is also shown by the benedictions in Sir 45:25e-26 and Sir 50:22-24. The importance of Phinehas is, then, the importance of the Aaronide priesthood as an eternal institution. In sum, priestly issues and the lineage of Aaron are central to Ben Sira in Phinehas.

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<sup>149</sup> Carr, *Writing*, 212. Carr is citing Bickerman, *Jews*, 170-74, 191.

### 2.d. *Ben Sira's Textual Reuse and Creativity Compared with Other Sources*

Ben Sira's textual reuse incorporates quotations and harmonizes multiple textual sources, with consistent closeness to his sources in the Hebrew Bible. His textual reuse through quotations, key words, and harmonization of sources is similar to other cases of textual reuse or 'biblical interpretation' in the Hebrew Bible and in Second Temple Jewish texts discussed in the sections above. On the other hand, in contrast to other Second Temple sources, Ben Sira does not rely on expansions and overt interpretations to reach his point (Josephus, Philo, Jubilees, ALD, etc.). Instead he is by comparison very restrained. He nevertheless shares with other early Jewish writers and pseudepigrapha strong textual reuse and harmonization of sources.

Using multiple texts together in harmonization is reminiscent of the much later rabbinic exegetical technique of transposing two unrelated biblical passages, though Ben Sira clearly comes from a scribal background rather than a rabbinic context. In Qumran literature, the exegetical technique is found in 4QRP, which sometimes transposes texts onto each other, such as Lev 11:7 onto Deut 14:8a.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, some harmonisations in the Samaritan Pentateuch were made on the basis of nearby biblical passages, such as changing *איש ואשתו* for *זכר ונקבה* in Gen 7:2 (cf. Gen 1:27; 6:19; 7:3, 9).<sup>151</sup> Similar techniques are found in the Targumim<sup>152</sup> and Qumran biblical manuscripts.<sup>153</sup>

The remaining question is how Ben Sira and other early Jewish scribes physically handled texts and sources for composition: how textual reuse was physically produced. Fishbane<sup>154</sup> and Tov<sup>155</sup> present evidence of scribal exegesis.<sup>156</sup> However, considering

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<sup>150</sup> Zahn, *Rethinking*, 168-72. On 4QRP (including 4Q364-367) see Sidnie White Crawford, *Rewriting Scripture in Second Temple Times* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 39-59.

<sup>151</sup> Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 86-88.

<sup>152</sup> The same general translation and exegetical techniques as found in the Targumim are atomization, actualization (updating), doublets, and translational changes that are theologically or logic-based choices—similar to techniques in the Greek Bible. Tosef. Sanh. 7; Sifra, Introduction; Ab. Reb Nathan, 37. P.S. Alexander, 'Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures,' in *Mikra*, ed. M.J. Mulder (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), 225-29 (217-54).

<sup>153</sup> Gen 25:20; Lev 4:25b. Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 83.

<sup>154</sup> Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

scroll handling and material culture will better clarify whether Ben Sira is likely to have depended entirely on memory, copied directly while writing, or used compositional aides such as notebooks. This consideration will show two things: first, how he physically handled his sources; and secondly, whether variations in his quotations (synonymous and indirect quotations) and his harmonization of sources can be solely attributed to memory error, or the use of other media factor into his compositional methods.

Studies of the Mediterranean world and early Christianity have explored source-handling in ancient writing by examining the texts of Greek and Roman writers (such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Catullus, Virgil, and Pliny the Elder) and early Christian writers (for example Paul, Jerome, and Eusebius).<sup>157</sup> These finds have been corroborated by material culture and the archaeological evidence of libraries and education.<sup>158</sup> Studies in these areas have shown that tables or desks were not used for reading, writing, or teaching throughout the Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Mediterranean civilizations.<sup>159</sup> The earliest

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<sup>155</sup> Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 258-85.

<sup>156</sup> Carr, *Writing*, 98-99 (Greece); 209 (Ben Sira), notes memory technique, but most of his evidence concerns literary expression ('hearing') and memory as an ideal of training (*Writing*, 71-77; 125; 137).

<sup>157</sup> Thomas, *Orality*. Thomas, 'Archaic,' 33-50. Small, *Wax Tablets*. Inowlocki, *Eusebius*, especially 35. Megan Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 166. Williams is mistaken in her calculations because the library she imagines for Jerome would be larger than that of Julius Caesar's father-in-law, Lucius Calpurnius Piso, found in the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum. Her estimates of book costs are also problematic, assuming that Jerome would want to *own* every book he read for his writing, when book borrowing and library visiting was common (Cicero, *Att.* 8.11.7, 8.12.6, 9.9.2, 4.14.1, 13.31.2 (of Marcus Cato), 4.10.1). Against Williams, Jerome could have used the library of Damasus while working as his secretary, and those of other powerful connections later. Williams, *Monk*, 50-54; 63. Casson, *Libraries*, 27, says that in Classical Greece a cheap book was about a day's wage for a labourer.

<sup>158</sup> For example, the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum. David Sider, *Library of the Villa Dei Papiri*. Houston, 'Papyrological Evidence,' 233-67.

<sup>159</sup> See Skeat for evidence about physical scroll handling, Skeat, 'Two Notes,' 372-78; and the cost of papyrus, T.C. Skeat, 'Was Papyrus Regarded as « Cheap » or « Expensive » in the Ancient World?' *Aegyptus* 75:1/2 (1995): 75-93. Yet see also Martial 14.84, noted by Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries*, 202-3, concerning a wooden holder that kept edges of a scroll from fraying while in use and could keep a scroll held open. Still, literary and material culture evidence, including visual depictions of reading and writing, show readers and writers without desks and tables. L.A. Askin, 'What Did Ben Sira's Bible and Desk Look Like?' in *Proceedings Volume for St Andrews Symposium 2014: Readers and Their Texts*, eds. John Dunne and Garrick Allen (forthcoming), discusses the size of table furniture in the ancient world, particularly the emergence of large tables in the Hellenistic world used for manual craftsmanship outside, which only became popular in the Roman world. Tables in homes were used primarily for dining and kept out of the way (hence their small size) when not in use, while in banks tables were used for counting coins but not for recording sums. See: G.M.A. Richter, *The Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans* (London: Phaidon, 1966), 63-72; 113; figs. 377, 379, 420. Jean-Paul Descœudres, 'History and historical sources,' in *The World of Pompeii*, ed. John J. Dobbins and Pedar W. Foss (London: Routledge, 2007), 12 (9-27). Small, *Wax Tablets*, 150-51. Only in a well-known Pompeian relief are writing tools found on a long table

evidence of tables for reading or writing is late antiquity.<sup>160</sup> Ancient writers used compositional aides such as notebooks (wax tablets, papyrus notebooks, *membranae*) for composition and compiling source material (for example florilegia) for all types of literature: speeches, poetry, history, and commentaries.<sup>161</sup> Harmonization is the result of prior reading of multiple sources, even and especially of already familiar sources, and often the use of notebooks, followed by composition (sometimes mental, especially for Roman writers) and editing on erasable material. This method is a consistent picture across antiquity. Since Ben Sira uses the same strategies of quotation and harmonization, as found in the textual analysis, and the material culture for writing and reading is almost identical, it is arguable that he too used prior study, compositional aides, editing, and perhaps mental composition in the formation of his text. This material culture of scroll handling creates the balance of textual reuse in Ben Sira, not the copying out of quotations while writing with one finger remaining on Genesis or Numbers.<sup>162</sup>

No literary strategy of textual reuse is entirely without exception. Tov acknowledges that Second Temple scribal choices are not thoroughly systematic in every case,<sup>163</sup> but that overall patterns suggest a common scribal background of training in making these recurring compositional choices. Jan Joosten also suggests that the Greek translators often had their own exegetical logic, though again not entirely systematic.<sup>164</sup> Likewise, Ben Sira's strategies too are patterns, not rigid rules without exception.

While it has been theoretically understood that Ben Sira is a scribe, the meaning of the word is unclear when Ben Sira's biblical interpretation is not connected with his Second Temple context and the material culture of scribalism. Therefore, by analysing sections of Ben Sira such as Noah and Phinehas and comparing the resulting data with

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(Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries*, 201), but this is decorative and the tools are not being used. Furthermore, the tools are very small in comparison to the size of the table.

<sup>160</sup> Small, *Wax Tablets*. Cribiore, *Gymnastics*. Johnson and Parker, eds., *Literacies*. Askin, 'Bible and Desk.' Houston, *Inside Roman Libraries*, 198-200.

<sup>161</sup> Askin, 'Bible and Desk.'

<sup>162</sup> For more on Ben Sira as a scribe, see Frank Ueberschaer, *Weisheit aus der Begegnung: Bildung nach dem Buch Ben Sira* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007).

<sup>163</sup> Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 260-85.

<sup>164</sup> Jan Joosten, 'Al tigré as a Hermeneutical Device and the Septuagint' in *Die Septuaginta*, eds. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 389 (377-90).

other evidence about ancient writing, more concrete information about Ben Sira's scribalism is revealed.

## *2.e. Chapter Two Conclusions*

This chapter's textual analysis and comparison with other relevant sources have revealed several new conclusions about Noah and Phinehas in Ben Sira. With the results found in this chapter, we can produce a more solid characterization of Ben Sira's scribalism.

The central concern in Sir 44:17-18 is the covenant of Noah. To project this theme, Ben Sira largely uses words and phrases from Genesis 6-9 with direct and synonymous quotation and allusion. This contrasts strongly with Jubilees, Philo, LAB, and Josephus. Moreover, far from Ben Sira's concerns, in comparison to other early Jewish writers, are questions of historicity or calendrical problems.

With Phinehas, Ben Sira stresses the priestly covenant. He harmonizes Numbers 25 and Psalm 106 and echoes the language of each text. Phinehas' slaying of Zimri, interpreted by Ben Sira as a freewill offering, is rewarded with the covenant of eternal high priesthood, which harmonizes priestly covenants in Numbers 18 and 25. The use of Psalm 106 is notable because of the psalm's similarity to the Praise of the Fathers. Ben Sira interprets Phinehas' actions as a freewill offering with textual reuse. These same textual reuse techniques of textual quotation and harmonization are found throughout Ben Sira.

The title of Phinehas (Sir 45:23a) and the final benediction (Sir 45:25e-26) reveal the importance of the Aaronide priestly lineage for Ben Sira. His sociocultural background is at play in this, indicating a priestly background. However, his espousal of Aaronide priestly lineage is subtle and contained when compared with espousals of pan-Levite lineage in ALD and Jubilees, for example.

Ben Sira's textual reuse is very high in these two small sections on important figures, both of which have covenants, and one of which is a high priest. It is surprising then, that his opinions are as contained as they are compared with other Second Temple sources. Ben Sira's subtle interpretations (priesthood, renewal of the earth) have been argued to give something of Ben Sira's primary agendas or concerns, such as in Wright. Upon further examination, perhaps they are better seen as indicators of historical background.

Ben Sira's composition is chiefly concerned with recognizable textual reuse. That scribes were concerned with the recognisability of quotations is shown by the fact quotations were the first teaching resources (teachers' models: wooden boards with quotations written on them for copying).<sup>165</sup> Another example of 'quotation consciousness' is Jerome, who consciously tried to avoid the recognisable rhetorical style of Cicero and Origen.<sup>166</sup> Good literature echoed well-known texts as a way of displaying skill. Strong textual reuse often characterizes Ben Sira's scribalism, as in the highly concentrated textual reuse in Phinehas and Noah, displaying his knowledge as a learned scribe.

After comparison with Noah and Phinehas in Josephus, Philo, Jubilees, ALD, and the early translations of the Hebrew Bible, Ben Sira's creativity is found in his skill at selecting and adapting his sources. He employs this creativity for aims which belie his sociocultural background, including his Aaronide views. Ben Sira's interpretations are by far more subtle than other Second Temple texts we have examined. His subtlety suggests his aim is displaying skill and education. This is especially likely since his priestly views should be understood as his historical background being from a priestly family<sup>167</sup> and directing the reader's attention to Simon II, an Oniad high priest. They are less agenda and more place in life.

It might be claimed that Ben Sira's creativity is insignificant, however, if he does not have an agenda. The opposite is true, rather. We may conclude that his scribalism is of a distinct character from other Second Temple sources due both to his period of activity (pre-Maccabean) and his social location. Ben Sira's creativity is expressed in his selection and composition of a new text rich with quotation and allusion, with harmonization and synthesis demonstrating ease and faithfulness to the text.

In sum, Ben Sira's role as an advanced scribe and teacher make his 'agenda'—if sociocultural background and place in life can be an agenda—the sheer display of such textual reuse in the first place. The textual reuse itself is an agenda here; it does not point to an agenda outside of itself.

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<sup>165</sup> Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 19; 28; 31-34.

<sup>166</sup> Williams, *Monk*, 48-49.

<sup>167</sup> Stadelman, *Ben Sira*, 25-26; Olyan, 'Priesthood,' 285. Others doubt his priestly association: F.V. Reiterer, 'Aaron's Polyvalent Role according to Ben Sira,' in *Rewriting Biblical History: Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011) 52 (27-56); Maurice Gilbert, 'Ben Sira dans la tradition,' in Maurice Gilbert, *Ben Sira: Recueil d'Études* (Leuven: Peeters, 2014) 65 (61-84).

## Chapter Three

### **Multiple Source Handling: Harmonization and Paraphrase in Hezekiah-Isaiah (Sir 48:17-25) and Josiah (Sir 49:1-3)**

#### ***3.a. General Introduction***

In the previous chapter, many direct and indirect or interspersed quotations were found in the short sections on Phinehas and Noah. To better understand Ben Sira's scribalism and text reuse, this chapter will turn now to two more selections from the Praise of the Fathers: Sir 48:17-25 on Hezekiah-Isaiah and Sir 49:1-3 on Josiah. The aim of this chapter is to gather more types of evidence in order to characterize Ben Sira's scribalism with different types of data.

This study will therefore examine how Ben Sira handles multiple major sources. Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah have been selected because they have more than one major textual source and appear to use both. Hezekiah is a good example of a medium-length composition where there are two or even three large separate sources (Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles). Josiah is a case of a shorter piece of text but still large amount of potential harmonization (Kings and Chronicles). This study will try to discern in each section any examples or patterns of preference for one source or another.

Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah present a problem to modern scholarship of how Ben Sira viewed rulers, and what qualities he valued in them, and whether or not these values are distinct from or opposed to qualities in priests. Therefore the second aim of this chapter will be to further examine Ben Sira's treatment of Isaiah in the context of Second Temple Judaism and of Hezekiah and Josiah as rulers, particularly his use of metaphor in his portrayal of Josiah. This study will also consider the place of the kings of Judah in the Praise of the Fathers as a whole. Wright has argued that Ben Sira's treatment of kingship indicates a distinct preference for priests in the Praise and for espousing God as the ideal

ruler, against the idea of an earthly ruler.<sup>1</sup> Isaiah, portrayed as Hezekiah's prophet, may also be considered to be part of Ben Sira's perspectives on kingship. The present chapter will therefore look at this issue in terms of how Ben Sira's sociocultural sphere of operation impacts his portrayals of Hezekiah, Isaiah, and Josiah.

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, 'Kingship,' 76-91.

### 3.b.1. Introduction to Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah

Ben Sira uses Kings, Isaiah, and Chronicles for Sir 48:17-25 and Kings and Chronicles for Sir 49:1-3. Many scholars continue to date First Isaiah to the Exilic or early post-Exilic period.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between Isaiah 36-39 and 2 Kings 18-21 is thought to be an example of text reuse of Kings or an earlier version of Kings by Isaiah. Kings is usually dated to the Exilic or post-Exilic period<sup>3</sup> while Chronicles is considered to be later, anywhere between the fifth to mid-third centuries BCE.<sup>4</sup>

The complex relationship between Kings and Chronicles is still debated. The old position was that Chronicles used Kings, thus downplaying the importance of the study of Chronicles in scholarship until more recent theories emerged.<sup>5</sup> Knoppers points out that Chronicles is often more ‘primitive’ than Kings at certain points, showing that Chronicles is not a simple expansive recension of Kings. He argues that both may share a common earlier source or perhaps that Chronicles used a much earlier version of Kings and that through editing, the two were thus separated by further degrees at different stages.<sup>6</sup>

Scholarship on Ben Sira’s treatment of Hezekiah, Isaiah, and Josiah highlights his use of the biblical text.<sup>7</sup> In particular, Egger-Wenzel notes how Ben Sira uses both Kings and Chronicles in his portrayal of Josiah and his prophet Jeremiah.<sup>8</sup> Aitken considers the historical context of Ben Sira’s attitudes to infrastructure works under Seleucid Judea pre-

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Blekinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, AB 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 73-74.

<sup>3</sup> Mordechai Cogan, *I Kings*, AB 10 (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); ‘Israel in Exile: The View of a Josianic Historian,’ *JBL* 97 (1978): 40-44.

<sup>4</sup> G.N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, AB 12A (London; New York: Doubleday, 2004), 105-17.

<sup>5</sup> For scholarship see Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 66-68.

<sup>6</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 68, uses the evidence of manuscript variation as witnessed by the Dead Sea Scrolls.

<sup>7</sup> For Isaiah in Sir 48 see Stadelmann, *Ben Sira*, 204-8. On Sir 48:1–49:16 see Ralph Hildesheim, *Bis daß ein Prophet aufstand wie Feuer: Untersuchungen zum Prophetenverständnis des Ben Sira* (Trier: Paulinus, 1996). On Josiah see also P.C. Beentjes, ‘Sweet is his Memory, like Honey to the Palate: King Josiah in Ben Sira 49,1-4,’ in Beentjes, *Happy the One*, 159-65.

<sup>8</sup> Renate Egger-Wenzel, ‘Josiah and His Prophet(s) in Chronicles and Ben Sira: An Intertextual Comparison,’ in *Rewriting Biblical History*, ed. Corley and van Grol, 231-56.

Antiochus IV, showing that Ben Sira's praise of infrastructure under Simon II—creating comparisons with Hezekiah earlier—indicate a benign relationship with Seleucid rule.<sup>9</sup> By comparison, Wright speculates that in Ben Sira's treatment of kingship (including Hezekiah) responds to post-Alexander Mediterranean king-cults. Wright argues that Ben Sira consistently tones down his approval of kings directing praise instead to priests and the ideal ruler, God.<sup>10</sup> Di Lella highlights examples where Ben Sira uses 2 Kings, Isaiah, and 2 Chronicles for both Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah.<sup>11</sup> Di Lella argues that the last lines of Hezekiah-Isaiah (Sir 48:24-25) seem to divide Isaiah into First, Second, and Third Isaiah, though Di Lella maintains Ben Sira thought of Isaiah as a whole.<sup>12</sup> Delamarter argues that Josiah is depicted in Ben Sira in purely positive terms, a theme reflected in later Jewish literature.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Aitken, 'Manifesto,' 191-208.

<sup>10</sup> Wright, 'Kingship,' especially 77; 79-80; 86-87. Wright asks whether Ben Sira might have been familiar with *peri basileias* literature ('Kingship,' 80; 88), which include benedictions to kings. This is an interesting issue worth further study because of Ben Sira's blessings of priests: Aaron and Phinehas (Sir 45:25-26) and Simon (Sir 50:22-24).

<sup>11</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 537-38; 542-43.

<sup>12</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 539. Likewise: Collins, 'Ecclesiasticus,' 108.

<sup>13</sup> Steve Delamarter, 'The Death of Josiah in Scripture and Tradition: Wrestling with the Problem of Evil?' *VT* 54:1 (2004): 43 (29-60).

### 3.b.2. Primary Texts for Sir 48:17-25

#### Hebrew<sup>14</sup>

(9b, l.8)	: בהטות אל תוכה מים :	יחזקיהו חזק עירו	48:17ab
	: ויחסום הרים מקוה :	ויחצב כנחשת צורים	cd
	: וישלח את רב שקה :	בימיו עלה סנחריב	48:18ab
	: ויגדף אל בגאונו <sup>15</sup> :	ויט ידו על ציון	cd
	: ויחילו כילודה :	[ונ]מוגו בגאון לבם <sup>16</sup>	48:19
	: ויפרשו אליו כפים :	[ויקר]או אל אל עליון <sup>17</sup>	48:20ab
	: ויושיעם ביד ישעיהו :	[וישמע]בְּקוֹל תפלתם <sup>18</sup>	cd
	: ויהמם במגפה :	[ויך ב]מְחַנֵּה אשור <sup>19</sup>	48:21
	: [ו]יחזק בדרכי דוד :	[כי עשה יח]זְקִיֵהוּ אֶת הַטוֹב <sup>20</sup>	48:22ab
	[.....]	[.....] <sup>21</sup>	cd

<sup>14</sup> MS.Heb.e.62, 9b (MS B XVIIIr.) l.8-18 to 9a (XVIIIv.), l.1-2. My transcription is mostly in agreement with Smend, Lévi, Peters, and Beentjes except where noted.

<sup>15</sup> Smend writes that גאונו could also be בגאון but argues it is a corruption for בגבה. I think it could be either but have opted for how B reads (גאונו). Smend, *Hebräisch*, 56.

<sup>16</sup> See [ונ]מוגו in Abegg. Compare to Ben-Ḥayyim [נ...]; or [אז נ]מוגו in Segal.

<sup>17</sup> In agreement here with Peters and Abegg. Compare Ben-Ḥayyim, Lévi, and Smend who read [ויקר]או. Compare also Beentjes, who reads only [ו]. There are distinct traces of the א still.

<sup>18</sup> Aligned here with transcriptions in Segal, Abegg, and Ben-Ḥayyim, but I reconstruct the space too since only traces of the ב are visible. Compare Beentjes: [קול]. Also compare Ben-Ḥayyim and Smend, both reading [וישמע]בְּקוֹל. However, there is nothing left of the manuscript to the right of בְּקוֹל.

<sup>19</sup> With the three lines containing Sir 48:20a-21, Smend and Ben-Ḥayyim transcribe fragmentary letters at the right hand side. Smend indicates these readings are obtained from the manuscript but not in the facsimiles or photographs. Smend, *Erklärt*, 56. This fragment is no longer extant in the manuscript or the current digitized images. For example, on this line, the other critical editions transcribe [ויך במ]מְחַנֵּה, Smend and Lévi transcribe [ויך], but not Peters who tended to be more conservative in his reconstructions. For במְחַנֵּה, looking at B, I can see traces of the מ. Compare also Abegg, [מ]מְחַנֵּה [ - ].

<sup>20</sup> Reconstruction in agreement with Segal, Abegg, and Smend. Segal and Beentjes do not transcribe [יח]זְקִיֵהוּ but there are traces of it in the manuscript, and likewise with ב in הַטוֹב. I do not see any more traces of the ו in verse 22b but the ו is still discernible. By comparison, Abegg transcribes only: [יח]זְקִיֵהוּ. Such a reconstruction would not leave room for a verb.

	[.....]	[.....]	48:23
(9a, l.1)	: וינחם אבלי ציון :	ברוח גבורה חזה אחרית	48:24
	: ונסתרות לפני בואן :	עד עולם הגיד נהיות	48:25

### Translation of Hebrew

- 48:17 Hezekiah fortified his city, | He diverted waters towards the midst of it,  
And he hewed out stones like bronze; | He stopped up the spring in the mountains.
- 48:18 In his days Sennacherib arose, | And he sent Rab-Shaqeh,  
And he raised his hand against Zion, | And he blasphemed God in his arrogance.
- 48:19 [And they were melted away] in the arrogance of their hearts, | And they writhed  
as in childbirth.
- 48:20 [But they call]ed upon God the Most High, | And they spread out to Him their  
hands.  
[God heard] the sound of their prayers, | And He delivered them by the hand of  
Isaiah.
- 48:21 [He struck the c]amp of Assyria, | And He destroyed them with a plague.
- 48:22 [For He]zekiah did what was good, | And he was strong in the ways of David,  
[Greek: Which Isaiah the great prophet commanded, who was great and faithful in  
his vision.]
- 48:23 [Greek: In his days the sun went backward, and he lengthened the life of the king.]
- 48:24 With a spirit of might he saw what would come latter, | And he comforted the  
mourners of Zion,
- 48:25 He revealed the things that will be forever, | And the hidden things before they will  
come.

<sup>21</sup> Segal reconstructs these two lines: Sir 48:22cd, as [הגדול והנאמן בחזיונו | וכאשר צוהו ישעיהו הנביא | ויגדול והנאמן בחזיונו], while Smend reconstructs only 22c and leaves 22d blank. Segal reconstructs Sir 48:23 [בימיו עמד השמש | ויוסף על חיי | ויגדול והנאמן בחזיונו], while Smend begins 23 [גם בידו | מלך].

## Greek

- 48:17 Εζεκίας ὠχύρωσεν τὴν πόλιν αὐτοῦ  
καὶ εἰσήγαγεν εἰς μέσον αὐτῆς ὕδωρ,  
ᾧ ῥυξεν ἐν σιδήρῳ ἀκρότομον  
καὶ ᾠκοδόμησεν κρήνας εἰς ὕδατα.
- 48:18 ἐν ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ ἀνέβη Σενναχηριμ  
καὶ ἀπέστειλεν Ῥαψάκην, καὶ ἀπῆρεν·  
καὶ ἐπῆρεν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Σιών  
καὶ ἐμεγαλύχησεν ἐν ὑπερηφανίᾳ αὐτοῦ,
- 48:19 τότε ἐσαλεύθησαν καρδίαι καὶ χεῖρες αὐτῶν,  
καὶ ᾠδίνησαν ὡς αἱ τίκτουσαι·
- 48:20 καὶ ἐπεκαλέσαντο τὸν κύριον τὸν ἐλεήμονα  
ἐκπετάσαντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν πρὸς αὐτόν.  
καὶ ὁ ἅγιος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ ταχὺ ἐπηκουσεν αὐτῶν  
καὶ ἐλυτρώσατο αὐτοὺς ἐν χειρὶ Ἡσαίου·
- 48:21 ἐπάταξεν τὴν παρεμβολὴν τῶν Ἀσσυρίων,  
καὶ ἐξέτριψεν αὐτοὺς ὁ ἄγγελος αὐτοῦ.
- 48:22 ἐποίησεν γὰρ Εζεκίας τὸ ἀρεστὸν κυρίῳ  
καὶ ἐνίσχυσεν ἐν ὁδοῖς Δαυὶδ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ,  
ὡς ἐνετείλατο Ἡσαίας ὁ προφήτης  
ὁ μέγας καὶ πιστὸς ἐν ὁράσει αὐτοῦ.
- 48:23 ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις αὐτοῦ ἀνεπόδισεν ὁ ἥλιος  
καὶ προσέθηκεν ζωὴν βασιλεῖ.
- 48:24 πνεύματι μεγάλῳ εἶδεν τὰ ἔσχατα  
καὶ παρεκάλεσεν τοὺς πενθοῦντας ἐν Σιών.
- 48:25 ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος ὑπέδειξεν τὰ ἐσόμενα  
καὶ τὰ ἀπόκρυφα πρὶν ἢ παραγενέσθαι αὐτά.

## Latin

- 48:19 Ezechias munivit civitatem suam  
et induxit in medium ipsius aquam





### 3.b.3. *Textual Commentary on Hezekiah-Isaiah*

#### *Sir 48:17ab*

The first line refers to Hezekiah's infrastructure, recalling 2Chr 32:2-8, 30 and 2Kgs 20:20. In 2 Chronicles, Hezekiah's fortification of the city is mentioned after the arrival of Sennacherib (2Chr 32:5-8). In 2 Kings 20:20, reference to Hezekiah's fortifications is much shorter, in the final verse on Hezekiah. Ben Sira places the fortifications and water redirection before any mention of the Neo-Assyrian invasion that spurred their creation: placing the emphasis on Hezekiah's civic welfare. The Neo-Assyrians are mentioned again after the siege (Sir 48:21). Perhaps this is a way of dealing with Chronicles' order which leaves the invasion (2Chr 32:1-22) at the end of the account of Hezekiah's reign, spanning four chapters (2 Chronicles 29-32). Ben Sira's arrangement of events here is closer to Chronicles than Kings. Although 2Chr 32:3-8, 30 mentions water redirection both before and after the wall, 2Kgs 20:20 does not mention wall fortifications at all. As these two separate texts both tell stories of the kings of Israel and Judah, this commentary will scrutinize where and how exactly Ben Sira chooses one text over the other, where and how he harmonizes the two together into one, and investigate possible reasons for these compositional choices in each example of this textual commentary. This will give greater insight into the characteristics of multiple source handling in Ben Sira.

Beentjes argues that the fortification of the city should be equated with Hezekiah's water infrastructure only, that is the Siloam Tunnel and closing the upper outlet of the spring (2Kgs 20:20; 2Chr 32:3-5, 30).<sup>23</sup> Beentjes' evidence for this argument is the variation between 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles mentioned above: only water mentioned in 2 Kings. Yet Beentjes does not consider the Broad Wall, which Nahman Avigad dates to Hezekiah's reign in the late eighth century BCE,<sup>24</sup> which is also mentioned in Neh 3:8 and

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<sup>23</sup> P.C. Beentjes, 'Hezekiah and Isaiah' in *New Avenues in the Study of the Old Testament*, ed. A.S. van der Woude (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 82 (77-88). Also argued in Skehan and Di Lella, 538.

<sup>24</sup> R. Amiran, 'The Water Supply of Israelite Jerusalem,' in *Jerusalem Revealed: Archaeology in the Holy City 1968-1974*, ed. Yigael Yadin (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 75-78.

Isa 22:9-10. The Siloam Tunnel<sup>25</sup> (or a nearby tunnel)<sup>26</sup> redirected water from the underground Gihon spring before it reached the Siloam Pool (or Mamilla Pool), which lay outside David's City.<sup>27</sup> This blocked water from flowing into the Pool and provided Jerusalem with water during a siege, making it both a defensive and offensive strategic measure. The Siloam Tunnel is in an S-shape to reduce sound, making it less detectable during a military siege. The verb נטה, in Sir 48:17b in the form הטה, is seen again in *qal* in Sir 48:18c several lines later, ויט ידו על ציון.

There are other reasons why Ben Sira chose to mention the wall before the waterworks. Chronicles might have been chosen out of a preference for Chronicles overall in the story of Hezekiah (or Chronicles and Isaiah 36-39), making Chronicles Ben Sira's main text of choice over the others, which would be a significant claim on Ben Sira's composition method. Ben Sira would then not be handing multiple sources evenly but depending primarily on one with the other texts as supplementary; this hypothesis will be tested further, as it has implications for Ben Sira's scribalism and his literary self-alignment. A second reason for the arrangement, however, could be that the fact the Tunnel and Wall are mentioned in other parts of the Hebrew Bible (Neh 3:8; Isa 22:9-10), and thus Ben Sira is handling together not just the stories of Kings and Chronicles here, but also Nehemiah and Isaiah. A third reason Ben Sira could have chosen to mention the fortifications first (before, for instance the bronze serpent or Hezekiah's prayer instead) is because of the wordplay possible with Hezekiah's name, יהזקיהו הזק עירו.<sup>28</sup> This wordplay is also in 2Chr 29:3 and 2Chr 32:5 in the same context of strengthening the city.

Another reason for Ben Sira's alignment here with Chronicles' arrangement may be because of the Praise's dedication to Simon II and his achievements (Sir 50:1-24). The first action Ben Sira lists for Simon as priestly local ruler of Judea is that he fortified the walls and built a water cistern, a civic declaration that Aitken argues is an indirect

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<sup>25</sup> In Hebrew נקבת השילוח.

<sup>26</sup> Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, 'The date of the Siloam Tunnel reconsidered,' Tel Aviv 38 (2011): 147-57. Reich and Shukron argue that owing to pottery, the Siloam tunnel is ninth century BCE, pre-dating Hezekiah's reign, and that Hezekiah's tunnel in 2Chr 32:30/2Kgs 20:20 is a nearby tunnel which channels the Gihon to the Mamilla Pool, west of the City of David. The Siloam inscription does not refer to Hezekiah.

<sup>27</sup> Amiran, 'The Water Supply,' 77. Biblical Archaeology Society, 'Hezekiah's Tunnel Revisited,' <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/hezekiahs-tunnel-revisited/>.

<sup>28</sup> The word הזק is also found in Sir 43:15 of the clouds in general (see §4.c.), and in Sir 45:3 God strengthens Moses before Pharaoh. The word הזק is found a second time with Hezekiah in Sir 48:22 to describe how Hezekiah holds to the ways of his ancestor David.

approval of Seleucid rule because of the imperial support necessary for building works.<sup>29</sup> By mentioning fortifications first, though, I will add that the Praise's climactic subject is alluded to far more effectively. A fourth and final reason for the choice may be to build climax: Hezekiah's infrastructure is placed at the start of the section in anticipation of the divine intercession that saves Jerusalem from Sennacherib's army.

As mentioned above, Wright, Aitken, and others have noted the comparisons Ben Sira makes between Hezekiah and Simon. In Sir 48:17, calling Jerusalem עירו for both Hezekiah and Simon (Sir 50:3, ומחזק עירו בצר) reminds the reader of the dual roles of Simon as both high priest and local administrative ruler under the Seleucids and earlier the Ptolemies. Wright compares Hezekiah's waterworks with Ben Sira's royal imagery of Simon.<sup>30</sup> To call the Hezekiah-Simon comparisons *royal* imagery of the high priest as Wright does is not the best categorization, because the Ptolemaic and Seleucid policy systematically preferred using priests as local rulers over aristocracy. Hence there is nothing unusual or suggestive about Simon's administrative role in Ben Sira's context and it would be a stretch to equate administrative leadership with kingship and royalty.

*Sir 48:17cd*

In this line, the reference to hewing out stones indicates the Siloam Tunnel, which is over five hundred metres long, especially as Ben Sira compares it to bronze. Bronze in the ancient world was far more malleable than iron and was preferred even in the Iron Age for objects that needed shaping,<sup>31</sup> such as pipes (Rome) or flutes (Egypt). Therefore the reference probably pertains more to the carving out of the tunnel than hewing stones for a wall, especially as the Broad Wall like other Near East defensive walls used stones in their natural shape with very little hewing.<sup>32</sup>

Ben Sira's description is idealistic, as the Siloam Tunnel is a karstic tunnel, hewed out of irregular bedrock. Hezekiah therefore carved it not at an easier natural angle but in a

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<sup>29</sup> Aitken, 'Manifesto,' 202-3.

<sup>30</sup> Wright, 'Kingship,' 96.

<sup>31</sup> David Sacks and Oswyn Murray, 'Bronze,' in *Encyclopedia of the Ancient Greek World* (London: Constable, 1995), 48-49.

<sup>32</sup> Note the Greek σιδήρος (iron) and Latin *ferro*. The Syriac leaves out any mention of infrastructure except the spring.

much more difficult (but necessary) angle. Di Lella notes that ‘neither Ben Sira nor his grandson was an archaeologist’, or a labourer for that matter.<sup>33</sup>

The metaphor of bronze in this line could also allude to the cultic reforms during Hezekiah’s reign (2Kgs 18:4; 2Chr 29-30), particularly when Hezekiah breaks the bronze serpent נחשתן worshipped by the Israelites (2Kgs 18:4).<sup>34</sup> Here, Ben Sira can only use 2 Kings as a source. The religious reforms are the first story in the reign of Hezekiah in both Kings and Chronicles, but they are glossed over by Ben Sira. Since the reforms and Passover celebrations take up such a considerable amount of space in 2 Chronicles (two whole chapters), this would be the only case where a clear inexplicable preference for the other two sources is discernible. It is unusual for Ben Sira to neglect Temple-related activity, especially as Josiah’s section, following Hezekiah-Isaiah, is so focused on sacrificial metaphor and atonement. He has neglected this substantial part of 2 Chronicles either because of a preference for Kings here, or because he perhaps wished to depict Hezekiah primarily as a leader in a time of war.

Finally, the מקוה here means a living water source (specifically the Gihon Spring), in agreement with its meaning in the Hebrew Bible, and is not restricted to the ritual immersion bath. The word was not used to describe the ritual bath until the first century bce—no doubt because mikvaot were normally natural water sources in areas that had them. Ben Sira indicates that מקוה metaphorically to mean a manmade water source in Sir 50:3. Another example of מקוה as water cistern is Sir 10:13. The remaining extant examples of מקוה are Sir 43:20 (natural water source) and Sir 48:17 (the Gihon Spring).

#### *Sir 48:18*

These first few lines has exhibited a lack of direct or indirect quotation and a high use of paraphrase, with no predilection for one major source over another. While Ben Sira possibly alludes to the bronze serpent (2 Kings only) he also mentions the wall (2 Chronicles only). In this line, the harmonization of both sources, 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, is continued with Sennacherib and Rav-Shaqeh. Rav-Shaqeh is Assyrian for ‘chief cup-bearer,’ but in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles Rav-Shaqeh is written רב־שקה without a definite

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<sup>33</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 537.

<sup>34</sup> Also called נחש נחשת (Num 21:9), a play on serpent נחש and bronze נחשת. Note Peters, *Liber Iesu*, 134, Lévi, *Hebrew Text*, 68, and Smend, *Hebräisch*, 56, correct כ to ב.

article. Ben Sira too writes רב־שקה as if it were a name instead of a title.<sup>35</sup> It is with the arrival of the Assyrian army that the Isaiah narrative of Hezekiah's reign begins (Isa 36:1-37:38; while Isa 38:1-39:8 contains Hezekiah's illness and display of the treasury). However, earlier in the text, Isa 22:9-11 mentions the fortifications and water redirection.

Scholars have argued that ויט ידו על ציון (Sir 48:18c) is a quotation of Isa 10:32.<sup>36</sup> Beentjes argues that the mention of Zion is connected with the quotation of Isa 61:3, since Ben Sira mentions later the אבלי ציון in Sir 48:24b. Beentjes argues that if the line in Ben Sira were quoting Isa 10:32, a form of the verb נוף would be used instead of ויט.<sup>37</sup> On the one hand, Ben Sira does use synonymous quotation frequently in his text. On the other hand, Isa 10:32 does call Jerusalem Zion. However, the alternative, Isa 61:3, is not relevant as a passage for Ben Sira to quote, since it is part of a comfort speech to Zion, not a warning of destruction as with Isa 10:32. Finally, the phrase ויט ידו על is a paraphrase, rather than a direct quotation. What is significant is the term Zion, which, rather than being a direct quotation of one verse or another in Isaiah, indicates that Ben Sira is thinking of Isaiah more generally, since Zion is found frequently throughout Isaiah. Furthermore, אבלי ציון is a phrase found numerous times in Isaiah. Since Ben Sira is conversant with poetic and psalmist literary style and Isaiah is quoted regularly throughout his text, the few occurrences of Zion in Ben Sira (four times)<sup>38</sup> are due to content and genre and thus do not indicate quotation.<sup>39</sup>

Ben Sira's use of גדף in this line can be compared to 2Kgs 19:6 (גדפו),<sup>40</sup> Isaiah's command to Hezekiah's servants, cf. Isa 37:6 (גדפו).<sup>41</sup> In 2Kgs 19:6 (cf. Isa 37:6),

<sup>35</sup> For this reason, my translation of B above in §3.b.2 renders רב־שקה a proper noun in English.

<sup>36</sup> Such as Skehan and Di Lella, 538. Segal, *השולט*, 335. Smend, *Erklärt*, 465.

<sup>37</sup> Beentjes, 'Hezekiah,' 83. Beentjes may have made a slight error since he says Isa 10:32 uses the *hiphil* of נוף when it in fact uses the *poel* ינפף.

<sup>38</sup> Sir 24:10 (Gr); 36:19 (Heb); 48:18, 24; 51:12.

<sup>39</sup> To compare, occurrences of ירושלם in Ben Sira (Sir 24:11 (Gr); 36:18; 47:11; 50:27) are due to Ben Sira's conventionality of poetic style with Isaiah and Psalms, especially Sir 24:10-11; 36:18-19.

<sup>40</sup> Although Isa 37:17 and 2Kgs 19:16, the prayer itself, both read להרף.

<sup>41</sup> In addition to being in 2 Kings 18-20 and Isaiah 36-39, the nominal form גדפן (blasphemer) is found a few times in Qumran non-biblical literature (4Q385a 4:6; 4Q387 2.ii.8; 4Q388a 7.ii.3; 4Q389 8.ii.9) and later in Mishnaic Hebrew. Abegg, Bowley, and Cook, *Concordance*, 1:173, Jastrow, 214. Ben Sira does not mention גדף often in his text (only Sir 3:16), and by comparison neither שאנן or its nominal form שאנן 'arrogant' are found in the extant Hebrew. It is very likely that Sir 22:22 'reviling, arrogance' would contain both words in Hebrew, as Sir 22:22 Gr has ὀνειδισμοῦ καὶ ὑπερηφανίας and Sir 48:18 Gr reads ὑπερηφανία.

Sennacherib has ‘reviled’ the Lord. By comparison, however, the final word of the line בגאון (גאון) is not found in any of the three major sources of Hezekiah. In Prov 8:13 and 16:18, though, the fear of the lord is to hate גאון. There is some alliteration between גאון and גאון, which is significant since שאן is also found in 2Kgs 19:28 and Isa 37:29. In this final hemistich Sir 48:18d, then, the word choice seems to be primarily for wordplay rather than suggestive of direct quotation. Paraphrase is the key tool used again by Ben Sira in introducing Sennacherib’s arrogance.

#### *Sir 48:19*

Sir 48:19 again paraphrases the story in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah. The word גאון, not found in the Hezekiah narratives, is repeated from Sir 48:18d (בגאון) here as בגאון. Here the phrases ונמוגו...לבם and ויחילו כיולדה are the first substantial, strong interspersed quotation, drawn from Isaiah. Isa 13:7-8 reads וכל-לבב אנוש ימס, which we can compare with (מוג) ונמוגו in Ben Sira.<sup>42</sup> Instead of using ימס (מסס) as in Isaiah, he uses ונמוגו. Furthermore, לבם בגאון לבם makes sense in the context of 2Chr 32:25, when Hezekiah is proud of heart during his illness (כי גבה לבר). Ben Sira, by emphasizing the arrogance of the Israelites, puts Hezekiah in a better light altogether. Next, a direct textual reuse in reversed order is found with ויחילו כיולדה, which in Isa 13:8 is כיולדה יחילון. This shows Ben Sira’s familiarity with the language of Isaiah, which he also does for example in Sir 43:11 (Chapter Four). The quotation of Isaiah 13, an oracle against Babylon seen by Isaiah son of Amoz, may also hint at Ben Sira’s later statement about Isaiah in Sir 48:25 that he ‘revealed the things that would occur’ and ‘hidden things before they come to pass.’

ISA 13:7-8 (MT)	SIR 48:19 (B)
<p>על-כן כל-ידיים תרפינה וכל-לבב אנוש ימס:  ונבהלו צירים וחבלים יאחזון <u>כיולדה יחילון</u> איש אל-רעהו  יתמהו פני להבים פניהם:</p>	<p>[וינ]מוגו בגאון לבם <u>ויחילו כיולדה</u> :</p>

#### *Sir 48:20*

<sup>42</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 466. By contrast, Skehan and Di Lella, 538, and Segal, *השלים*, 334-35, mention only 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

Di Lella argues that the people are the subject (ויפרשו, ויקראו) in Sir 48:20ab. This would presumably contradict 2Kgs 19:14-19 and Isa 37:15-20, which say that Hezekiah prays alone and not the people. To consider all possibilities, however, we should examine 2Chr 32:20 in which both Hezekiah and Isaiah pray together; if this source were the aim in Ben Sira, the subject would be Hezekiah and Isaiah.<sup>43</sup> Thus Ben Sira has chosen 2 Chronicles over and against 2 Kings and Isaiah here.<sup>44</sup> However, Sennacherib earlier is called *arrogant* against the Lord (Sir 48:18d), a description which is not found in 2 Chronicles but in Hezekiah's prayer (2Kgs 19:14-19 and Isa 37:15-20, but only alluded to in 2Chr 32:20). Thus Ben Sira cannot be said to have preferred 2 Chronicles for the prayer that delivers Jerusalem from Sennacherib; instead he has combined the two—evidence for harmonization. Thus it is possible that through harmonizing, Ben Sira creates the impression Hezekiah and Isaiah pray together. The praying involved includes raising their hands, a style of praying found throughout antiquity.

The phrase אל עליון קרא אל אל עליון is found in Sir 46:5, 46:16, and 47:5, while אל עליון as a title is found only here and at Sir 47:5, which concerns David, another of the 'good' kings. However, the verb ויפרשו (פרש) is not found elsewhere in the extant Hebrew of Ben Sira.<sup>45</sup>

Sir 48:20cd reads that God saves the people. There is clear wordplay with the root of Isaiah's name (ישע) in ויושיעם ביד ישעיהו.<sup>46</sup> This is also significant because there is a major variant in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 37:20 (Col. 30, line 25), which has Hezekiah saying *I will deliver us* (אוישיענו) while the MT has Hezekiah asking God to save them (הושיענו).<sup>47</sup> No ancient (pre-MT) witnesses for 2Kgs 19:14-19 or 2Chr 32:30 exist to compare whether any ancient editions of Kings or Chronicles also agreed with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.<sup>48</sup> An alternative proposal is that this difference is the result of a dictation error between א and ה. If it is not a dictation error,

<sup>43</sup> Others spread out their hands in prayer in Ben Sira, the ill patient (Sir 38:10) and Ben Sira himself in prayer (Sir 51:13). Ben-Hayyim, 179.

<sup>44</sup> Another option is a scribal error in the medieval manuscript of extra ו making the singular plural, but this option presents numerous difficulties in the agreement of the Hebrew (Sir 48:20c תפלתם and 20d ויושיעם). Besides this the Greek, Latin and Syriac versions all have the relevant verbs and possessive adjectives consistently in third person plural.

<sup>45</sup> In 2Kgs 19:14 (cf. Isa 37:14), Hezekiah spreads (ויפרשהו) the letter before the Lord's presence, before Hezekiah's prayer.

<sup>46</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 466; Segal, *השלט*, 335. Not noted in Skehan and Di Lella, 538-39.

<sup>47</sup> DJD XXXII, 60-61. Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 327.

<sup>48</sup> Ancient witnesses do survive of Chronicles and Kings, but not of these specific verses. DJD XIV. DJD III.

1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 37:20 may indicate that Ben Sira knew a text of Isaiah similar to the MT, instead of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. The case for which text Ben Sira use may be more open with Psalms (see Chapter Four). This variant is a specific example of how the textual sources of Ben Sira can be revealed.

*Sir 48:21*

Here Ben Sira leaves out the angel of the Lord (2Kgs 19:35, cf. Isa 37:36; 2Chr 32:20-22). He uses the same verb (וַיִּךְ, from נָכָה) as 2Kgs 19:35. Isa 37:36 reads וַיִּכֶּה (also from נָכָה). The text of 2Chr 32:21, reading וַיִּכְחַד instead of וַיִּךְ, is also markedly different from 2 Kings and Isaiah.

The first half of Sir 48:21 echoes both the vocabulary of 2Kgs 19:35 and Isa 37:36, but the second half of the line instead reads into the sources rather than reflecting what is given by the text. Ben Sira infers a plague striking and dissolving the camp, while all three sources mention only an angel of the Lord smiting ('cut down' in 2 Chronicles) and the entire camp dying overnight, without explicitly citing a plague. The inference of a plague can be inferred by other uses of נָכָה and כָּחַד in the Hebrew Bible, especially נָכָה.<sup>49</sup> For instance, Di Lella argues that the plague is already implied in וַיִּךְ in 2Kgs 19:35 and Isa 37:36.<sup>50</sup> The inference is not too unusual an interpretation considering the words used in both of these accounts. Also, in other early Jewish texts, Josephus similarly wrote that the Assyrians were struck by a plague, quoting the Greek historian Berossus.<sup>51</sup> Ben Sira forms this line with a parallelism of synonymous words with וַיִּךְ and וַיַּהֲמֵם (הָמָם), 'He struck' and 'He destroyed them.'<sup>52</sup> The latter reflects other examples of divine deliverance.<sup>53</sup> As this episode plays a minor part in 2 Chronicles (though it is summarized and does not

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<sup>49</sup> The form וַיִּכְחַד is found in Exod 9:15, describing the Egyptians being 'cut down from the earth' after the ten plagues (Exod 9:14) that the Lord will smite (וַיִּךְ) them with. Exod 23:23 says that an angel will cut down (וַיִּכְחַדְתִּי) all the tribes of Canaan. The word נָכָה is more frequently used with plague (Num 14:12) and other diseases (Gen 19:11; 1Sam 5:6; 2Kgs 6:18; Zech 12:4; Mal 3:24) and of striking enemies or scattering them (Gen 14:5; Deut 4:45; Josh 12:7; 1Sam 13:4, 17:9). The combination of נָכָה and מָגֵפָה is found in Num 14:12 and Deut 28:22.

<sup>50</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 537.

<sup>51</sup> Josephus, *A.J.* 10:20. Herodotus records this event happening instead at Pelusium on the Sinai Peninsula. Herodotus, *Hist.* 2:141.

<sup>52</sup> 'He' meaning God.

<sup>53</sup> Josh 10:10; 1Sam 7:10; Ps 18:15; 2Sam 22:15 (*ketiv*). BDB 243.

contradict the other texts), language comparison cannot prove a preference for 2 Kings or Isaiah; it can only show that Ben Sira's version of all three were similar to our own in 2 Chronicles not having this story at length—hence it is not active preference but availability of sources.

*Sir 48:22ab*

Ben Sira harmonizes and paraphrases either or both 2Kgs 18:3 and 2Chr 29:2 with similar vocabulary in this line. While both sources describe Hezekiah's deeds as *ישר*, Ben Sira has *טוב* instead. These phrases are compared in the table below:

SIR 48:22AB COMPARED WITH 2KGS 18:3 AND 2CHR 29:2		
SIR 48:22AB	2KGS 18:3	2CHR 29:2
<p>[כי <u>עשה</u> יח] זקיהו את <u>הטוב</u>  [ו] יחזק בדרכי <u>דוד</u></p>	<p><u>ויעש הישר</u> בעיני יהוה ככל אשר-  עשה <u>דוד</u> אביו:</p>	<p><u>ויעש הישר</u> בעיני יהוה ככל אשר-  עשה <u>דוד</u> אביו:</p>

One other reason why Ben Sira may have opted for *טוב* instead of *ישר* is the context of 2Kgs 20:3 and Isa 38:3, which read that Hezekiah says he has done what is good in the Lord's eyes (והטוב בעיניך עשיתי) and thus deserves healing. In the Lord's reply through Isaiah, (2Kgs 20:4-6; Isa 38:4-5) God is self-titled *אלהי דוד אביך* (2Kgs 20:5; Isa 38:5). However, this does not imply that Ben Sira is conflating the words of the prayer of Hezekiah with the Sennacherib section. The use of a formula, albeit in paraphrase and with synonymous language, demonstrates instead that Ben Sira is echoing the language used in both the introductory formula and perhaps also the prayer of Hezekiah's illness. In this way, Ben Sira echoes language in the Hezekiah sources, that Hezekiah 'did what was good' and emulated his father David.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Beentjes argues that Ben Sira includes this line here after the divine intercession in order to emphasize that Hezekiah fully deserved God's help since he was an exemplary king. Beentjes, 'Hezekiah,' 84.



Segal reconstructs Sir 48:23 following the Syriac, reconstructing ‘stood still,’ [בימיו] ויִוֹסֵף עַל חַיֵּי מֶלֶךְ. עַמַּד הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ | ויִוֹסֵף עַל חַיֵּי מֶלֶךְ. The Greek, however, has ἀνεπρόδισεν (went backwards).<sup>61</sup> Therefore it might be more appropriate to reconstruct with a word closer to ‘went backwards’ as in the Hebrew sources (2 Kings and Isaiah have שׁוּב throughout).<sup>62</sup> In this case, the line paraphrases Isaiah 38 and 2Kgs 20:1-11 (the sun miracle is not found in 2Chr 32:24-26).<sup>63</sup> In this case, Ben Sira must have noticed that 2 Chronicles did not include the sun miracle, but as 2 Chronicles summarizes the story instead of contradicting it, it is doubtful whether the inclusion of the sun miracle is an active neglect of 2 Chronicles as a source.

#### *Sir 48:24*

Scholarship on this line is concerned with possible allusions to Isaiah as a whole and apocryphal literature. Scholarship on Sir 48:24 draws attention to Isaiah comforting the ‘mourners of Zion’ (Sir 48:25), a phrase found in Isa 61:3.<sup>64</sup> However, Beentjes argues that this line does not subdivide Isaiah into First, Second, and Third Isaiah but instead simply quoting Isa 56:2-3 and echoing other language in Isaiah.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, Beentjes notes that Ben Sira never refers to the Exile in the Praise.<sup>66</sup> Ben Sira’s attitude to pseudepigrapha and ‘hidden things’ is also a stretch.<sup>67</sup> This thought makes it appear that Ben Sira has finished entirely with Hezekiah’s story and moved on to Isaiah. What this thought takes for granted

<sup>61</sup> The Latin likewise reads *retro rediit sol*. The Syriac reads ܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܘܢܐ ܡܢ ܥܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ.

<sup>62</sup> 2Kgs 20:10-11; Isa 38:8.

<sup>63</sup> It is interesting to note the strong similarities between Sir 41:1-15 (Chapter Three) and Hezekiah’s ‘writing’ (מכתב) after his healing (Isa 38:9-20), which laments the shortness of life, how he has become slow על־מַר נִפְשִׁי (Isa 38:15), and how those in Sheol do not hope or praise God (Isa 38:18).

<sup>64</sup> These lines have also compelled one scholar to conclude that Ben Sira differentiated between First, Second and Third Isaiah. A.L.H.M. van Wieringen, ‘Sirach 48:17-25 and the Isaiah-Book: Hezekiah and Isaiah in the Book of Sirach and the Reader-Oriented Perspective of the Isaiah-Book,’ in *Rewriting Biblical History*, ed. Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 191-210. However, van Wieringen’s argument is problematic because the style of the poem so strongly indicates paraphrase of the *Hezekiah* story. See Beentjes, ‘Hezekiah,’ 87.

<sup>65</sup> For example, ‘spirit of might’ echoes Isa 11:2, while אַחֲרִית echoes Isa 2:1. Beentjes, ‘Hezekiah,’ 86. Against: Smend, *Erklärt*, 467; Segal, *השלים*, 334-35.

<sup>66</sup> Beentjes, ‘Hezekiah,’ 87.

<sup>67</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 539. Michael A. Knibb, ‘Isaianic Traditions in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha,’ in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition*, ed. C.C. Broyles and C.A. Evans, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997) 2:649 (633-50).

is that it is assumed that Ben Sira neglects the final story when Hezekiah showed the treasury to Merodak-Baladon, prince of Babylon, resulting in a prophecy about the fall of Babylon (2Kgs 20:12-19; Isa 39:1-8). It would make much more sense if Sir 48:24-25 was first and foremost alluding to the treasury story which resulted in a prophecy about the Exile: making better sense of the textual order. This allusion then could simultaneously be a wider comment about Isaiah 40-55 (comfort) and 56-66 (end times), but it primarily refers to the Hezekiah sources. In all three sources, 2 Kings, Isaiah, and the brief allusion to the story in 2Chr 32:31, the visit of Merodak-Baladon is the last of the deeds of Hezekiah mentioned. Hence, it is Ben Sira's last note on Hezekiah-Isaiah. 2Chr 32:31 gives the story in a positive light that God 'tested' Hezekiah, Ben Sira similarly interprets Hezekiah in a favourable light because his sources conclude that Hezekiah 'did what was good.'

#### *Sir 48:25*

In this final line we will consider the meaning of נהיות ... עד עולם (things that will be forever) and נסתרות (hidden things).<sup>68</sup> Scholarship has made much of Ben Sira's attitude to the revealed and hidden, citing Sir 3:22, and Di Lella says that this sequence refers to First, Second and Third Isaiah.<sup>69</sup> The sense of Sir 48:24-25 is that Isaiah saw the End, comforted, and revealed hidden things. Several words, אחרית, הגיד, and נסתרות, reflect and summarize Isaiah's comparisons of the hidden and the revealed (Isa 28:17; 45:19; 48:16). Scholarship sees use of Isa 42:9, which has הראשונה and חדשות.<sup>70</sup> Ben Sira's word choices reflect over eleven lines of harmonization and paraphrase, and thus it is not surprising that Ben Sira paraphrases rather than quoting one particular passage. This pattern of harmonization paraphrase will continue with Josiah in the next section (Sir 49:1-3). Here, it is probably best to see Sir 48:25 as a general summation of Isaiah's repeated references to the hidden and revealed, the end and the future. Moreover, familiarity with Isaiah's language is not surprising in Ben Sira, either. Knibb suggests these alternative word

<sup>68</sup> The construction of נהיות ... עד עולם is a use of LBH, found also in Qumran literature. For example: נהיה עולם in 4QInstr<sup>d</sup> 69.2.7; נהיות עולם in CD 13:8; נהיי עולמים in 1QM 17:5; רז נהיה in 1QMyst 1.1.3; קץ נהיה in 1QS 10:5. Clines, 6:305. Only in the Syriac is עד עולם translated 'to the world,' while in the Greek and Latin the sense is of time: 'at the end.'

<sup>69</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 539.

<sup>70</sup> Knibb, 'Isaianic Traditions,' 649. Skehan and Di Lella, 539.

choices indicate apocalyptic predictions he says are absent in Isaiah. Knibb's argument requires an interpretation of the meaning of אהרית as End Times, when the word could also mean 'later' or 'after.' First Isaiah can be a future prediction of the Exile, or the predictions during the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah. Knibb depends on a hypothesized Jewish version of *Ascension of Isaiah*. There is much evidence supporting the conclusion that Isaiah was already considered a great prophet in Second Temple times even without the *Ascension*; the *Ascension* should be considered an effect of popularity not the cause.<sup>71</sup> Isaiah's popularity in Second Temple times will be discussed below (§3.b.4; 3.d).

Earlier the רוּחַ גְּבוּרָה (Sir 48:24) may be compared with Isaiah's frequent references to the spirit of the Lord and references to God as a warrior.<sup>72</sup> Thus in referring to Isaiah's prophecy in the Hezekiah narrative (and his prophecies in general), Ben Sira uses typical vocabulary prevalent in Isaiah. This is not unusual, as it simply suggests a strong use of 'Isaiah words' owing to content overlap and familiarity with prophetic literature. This shows a continued preference for paraphrase of the story.

### *Summary of Findings*

Owing to the second section, the key findings on Hezekiah-Isaiah will be briefly summarized. Ben Sira's portrayal of Hezekiah-Isaiah does not show a strong preference for any one source alone (2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, or Isaiah). Rather, these texts are harmonized where they vary in detail or contradict each other (such as Sir 48:20cd). At certain points there is an active use of 2 Chronicles, so the argument that Ben Sira might prefer 2 Kings or Isaiah alone cannot be supported. At other points, though, the sources can equally be 2 Kings, Isaiah, or 2 Chronicles, due to similarities between these sources and the extent of paraphrase. Indeed, paraphrase and harmonization in Sir 48:17-25 is so prevalent that it is unfair to exclude 2 Chronicles.<sup>73</sup> His overall source handling is also

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<sup>71</sup> Knibb, 'Isaianic Traditions,' 649-50.

<sup>72</sup> Isa 11:1-3, 61:1.

<sup>73</sup> As noted above in the commentary on Sir 48:17cd, Ben Sira does leave out 2 Chronicles 29-30, which is a large portion of the story in Chronicles, but in Kings and Isaiah this story is much shorter and focused on the bronze serpent. However, the textual commentary above has shown that Ben Sira does use 2 Chronicles in his treatment of Hezekiah-Isaiah. By comparison, Knibb mentions only the use of 2 Kings and Isaiah. See Knibb, 'Isaianic Traditions,' 648-50.

limited to details offered by 2 Kings, Isaiah, and 2 Chronicles themselves, and it can be best characterized as a harmonization of all three into one inclusive narrative.

Another finding affects our understanding of what Ben Sira's sources looked like. Sir 48:20cd reads that God saves the people from Sennacherib, which aligns with the MT of Isa 37:20. The variant in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 37:20 says that Hezekiah saved the people. This is an example of a case where Ben Sira's textual source is more similar to the MT instead of the edition of Isaiah represented by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

### 3.b.4. *Hezekiah-Isaiah and Other Sources*

Only three copies of Kings (4QKings; 5QKings; pap6QKings)<sup>74</sup> and one copy of Chronicles (4QChr) survive from Qumran.<sup>75</sup> In the *Ascension of Isaiah*, possibly an early Christian text,<sup>76</sup> Hezekiah and Manasseh are contrasted as good and evil kings, respectively, drawing upon 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and Isaiah 36-39.<sup>77</sup> In Josephus, Hezekiah is depicted as an exemplary king, although he receives little treatment by Josephus (*A.J.* 9.257-10.36).

Isaiah was by comparison far more popular in Second Temple times. Twenty-one separate copies of Isaiah were found at Qumran. Since not all of these were produced at Qumran, Tov argues that this quantity shows clearly how popular Isaiah was at large in Judea not just Qumran.<sup>78</sup> Isaiah's popularity at Qumran is shown by the large amount of direct and indirect quotations in the *pesharim* of Isaiah, which date from the first century BCE,<sup>79</sup> and a large amount of quotation from Isaiah in 1QH compared to Jeremiah and Ezekiel.<sup>80</sup> Most interestingly, Brooke notes that among these *pesharim* there is no surviving commentary or quotation of Isaiah 36-39.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>74</sup> 4QKings: DJD XIV, 171-83. For 5QKings and 6QpapKings, see: DJD III, 107-11; 171-72.

<sup>75</sup> DJD XVI, 295-97. The fragment contains 2Chr 28:27-29:3.

<sup>76</sup> See Knibb, 'Isaianic Traditions,' 644-45. Brooke argues it might be an accident that no Jewish recension of *Ascension of Isaiah* survives in the Dead Sea Scrolls (however, neither was a Jewish recension of 4 Ezra found, for that matter). G.J. Brooke, 'Isaiah in the Pesharim and Other Qumran Texts,' in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 2:609 (609-32).

<sup>77</sup> The text is summarized in Knibb, 'Isaianic Traditions,' 638-47.

<sup>78</sup> Tov compares the figures: there are twenty-six copies of Deuteronomy and thirty-six of Psalms, and says that the Qumran community produced their own compositions modelled on each. Emanuel Tov, 'The Text of Isaiah at Qumran,' in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 2:491-92 (491-511).

<sup>79</sup> Brooke states there may be between two and six separate *pesharim* on Isaiah, represented by six manuscripts. Brooke, 'Isaiah in the Pesharim,' 609.

<sup>80</sup> There are 154 allusions to Isaiah, forty-three to Jeremiah, and twenty-six to Ezekiel. Brooke, 'Isaiah in the Pesharim,' 611.

<sup>81</sup> Brooke, 'Isaiah in the Pesharim,' 631.

In other Second Temple literature and early Christianity, Isaiah continued to play an important role, including for messianic passages.<sup>82</sup> Isaiah seems to have been respected a great deal, which makes it interesting that only *pesharim* of Isaiah survive and not extra-biblical explorations or pseudepigraphal works, as Jeremiah and Ezekiel do.<sup>83</sup> Philo cites Isa 1:9 and calls Isaiah a ‘disciple and friend of Moses’,<sup>84</sup> but did not treat either Hezekiah or Isaiah as subjects in his writings.

Josephus defends the accuracy of Isaiah in *Ag. Ap.* 1.7 and *A.J.* 9.276, 10.35.<sup>85</sup> Feldman argues that Isaiah was less important than David in Josephus’ time, but nonetheless Josephus calls Isaiah θεῖος, ‘divine.’<sup>86</sup> Where Isaiah is used, particularly as an example of a royal advisor, Josephus is carefully selective based on his contemporary politics and audience.<sup>87</sup> Josephus changes major parts of the Hezekiah story in omitting Isaiah’s prophecy that Hezekiah would die of his illness (*A.J.* 10.35),<sup>88</sup> and omitting reference to David to distance the two (Isa 38:5). The last change is notable because of Sir 49:4 which does link Hezekiah, Josiah, and David together.

Because of allusions to Isaiah in 1 Enoch and elsewhere, there are precedents for Ben Sira’s estimation of Isaiah as ὁ μέγας καὶ πιστός. Ben Sira’s positive treatment of Isaiah is also similar to extant extra-biblical literature: Second Temple literature often quotes and alludes to Isaiah, but does not for some reason (perhaps text survival) offer pseudepigraphal and apocryphal works attached to Isaiah.

A silent issue arises from comparison of these texts, however. It is that Ben Sira’s Isaiah, despite his unequalled popularity in the Second Temple period, receives far less space (though not less positive) than Hezekiah: a king who hardly figures at all in pseudepigrapha and whose main texts 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles, barely survive in the finds

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<sup>82</sup> Knibb cites Pss. Sol. 8:14-17; 17:23-24, 29, 35-37; 18:7-8; 1 En. 46:3; 48:1-4; 62:2-3; 2 Esd 13:10; T. Levi 18:7; T. Jud. 24:5b-6a. Knibb, ‘Isaianic Traditions,’ 633. Knibb also mentions citations of Isaiah’s name in 4 Macc. 18:14.

<sup>83</sup> Brooke mentions this as an accident of text survival. Brooke, ‘Isaiah in the Pesharim,’ 609.

<sup>84</sup> Philo, *QG* 2.43.

<sup>85</sup> L.H. Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait of Isaiah’ in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 2:583; 587 (583-608). Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait,’ 585, notes that Josephus’ treatment of Isaiah has been overlooked in scholarship.

<sup>86</sup> Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait,’ 605.

<sup>87</sup> Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait,’ especially 607.

<sup>88</sup> Feldman, ‘Josephus’ Portrait,’ 605-6.

of the Dead Sea and Judean Desert. The discrepancy must be due to a motivation behind the Praise of the Fathers that dedicates far more space to rulers and priests than to prophets, even bestselling prophets such as Isaiah.

### 3.c.1. Primary Texts for Sir 49:1-3

#### Hebrew<sup>89</sup>

(9a l. 3)	הממלח מעשה רוקח	שם יאשיהו כקטרת סמים	49:1ab
	וכמזמור על משתה היין	בחד כדבש ימתיק זכרו	cd
	וישבת תועבות הבל	כי נחל על משובתינו	49:2
	ובימי חמס עשה חסד	ויתם אל אל לבו	49:3

#### Translation of Hebrew

49:1ab	The name of Josiah is like burnt incense of odours,   The salted work of a perfumer,
49:1cd	On the palate like honey his memory is sweet,   And as a song at a wine feast,
49:2	For he was grieved <sup>90</sup> with our apostasies,   And he destroyed vain abominations,
49:3	And he perfected his heart with God, <sup>91</sup>   And in the days of violence, he practised piety.

#### Greek

49:1 Μνημόσυνον Ἰωσίου εἰς σύνθεσιν θυμιάματος

<sup>89</sup> MS.Heb.e.62 9a (XVIIIv.), l.3-6. There are no major transcription or reconstruction issues in these lines, as B is not damaged badly, although the ink is faint. In the manuscript, Sir 49:1b is unaligned, further to the right, the text becoming smaller and more cramped. My transcription has neatened the column width for research purposes.

<sup>90</sup> Compare to Greek ('he himself was kept straight in the conversion of the people') and Syriac ('he hid himself'). Note that in Sir 49:2, נחל should be read as a defective *niphal* of חלה (cf. Amos 6:6), 'he was grieved.' See Hildesheim, *Bis daß ein Prophet*, 169; Egger-Wenzel, 'Josiah and His Prophet(s),' 237; Beentjes, 'Sweet is his Memory,' 162.

<sup>91</sup> Compare to Latin ('he directed his heart to the Lord') and Syriac ('he surrendered his heart').

ἔσκευασμένον ἔργῳ μυρεψοῦ·  
 ἐν παντὶ στόματι ὡς μέλι γλυκανθήσεται  
 καὶ ὡς μουσικὰ ἐν συμποσίῳ οἴνου.  
 49:2 αὐτὸς κατευθύνθη ἐν ἐπιστροφῇ λαοῦ  
 καὶ ἐξῆρεν βδελύγματα ἀνομίας·  
 49:3 κατεύθυνεν πρὸς κύριον τὴν καρδίαν αὐτοῦ,  
 ἐν ἡμέραις ἀνόμων κατίσχυσεν τὴν εὐσέβειαν.

### Latin

49:1 memoria Iosiae in conpositione  
 odoris facti opus pigmentarii  
 49:2 in omni ore quasi mel indulcabitur eius memoria  
 et ut musica in convivio vini  
 49:3 ipse est directus divinitus in paenitentia gentis  
 et tulit abominationes impietatis  
 49:4 et gubernavit ad Dominum cor ipsius  
 in diebus peccatorum corroboravit pietatem

### Syriac

ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ . ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ 49:1  
 ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ  
 . ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ  
 . ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ 93 ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ 92 ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ 49:2  
 . ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ 49:3

<sup>92</sup> Note the differences in the Syriac ('he hid himself') and the Latin, *et gubernavit ad Dominum* ('and he was directed unto God'). Compare with the Hebrew לָהַךְ and the Greek κατευθύνθη ('he was wounded').

<sup>93</sup> Calduch-Benages, Ferrer, and Liesen, *Sabiduría*, 261, note it is preferable to read this word as ܟܘܢܘܩܘܣܘܢܘܢ, changing ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ for ܘܦܘܣܘܢܘܢ.

### 3.c.2. Textual Commentary on Josiah (Sir 49:1-3)

#### *Sir 49:1ab*

The Josiah section is demarcated as Sir 49:1-3 by Skehan and Di Lella, Segal, and Smend, in line with Ziegler.<sup>94</sup> However, in his article on ancient accounts of Josiah's death, Delamarter includes Sir 49:4-7, which is interesting because if the Josiah section is Sir 49:1-7, Jeremiah becomes Josiah's prophet just as Hezekiah is paired with Isaiah. This would make the sections Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah-Jeremiah. Di Lella notes that 49:1 begins the final twenty-two line section of the Praise of the Fathers, treating Sir 49:1-13 as one poem.<sup>95</sup> In other ways, however, Sir 49:4-7, while it comments on Jeremiah, does not strictly tie itself in narrative to the story of Josiah—rather it comments on the Exile and the other kings who were such sinners that Ben Sira does not even mention them by name.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, while it does add a new insight to see Josiah as Josiah-Jeremiah, Sir 49:1-3 will be considered by itself in this thesis.

The comparison of Josiah's name with burnt incense and the work of perfumers is closest to Exod 37:29. This line has been noted by Wright as evoking Exodus 30 and Temple practices, since Ben Sira elsewhere mentions incense and perfumers in the context of Temple worship.<sup>97</sup> The word combination קטרת סמים is found in Exodus many times,<sup>98</sup> and the context of Exodus 30 presents prescriptions for offering burnt incense in the Tabernacle, making it particularly relevant for Josiah as the reformer of the Temple. The closeness with Exod 37:29 is particularly interesting, however, as it is also found in 4QRP<sup>c</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 543. Segal, *משלים*, 346. Smend, *Hebräisch*, 88; 2:469. Ziegler, *Sapientia*, 354. Codex Sinaiticus (folio 183b) is very faded at Sir 49:1-4, but there are no paragraph markers or other markers to separate Sir 49:3 and 49:4. Codex Sinaiticus Project, 'Codex Sinaiticus.'

<sup>95</sup> However, Skehan in his translation arranges no section division between Sir 49:1-3 and 49:4-8. Skehan and Di Lella, 540.

<sup>96</sup> Not to mention them by name in this case is quite a condemnation, especially following שם יאשיהו כקטרת שם יאשיהו in Sir 49:1a and Josiah's *memory* compared with honey and music in Sir 49:1cd.

<sup>97</sup> Wright, 'Biblical Interpretation,' 372. Sir 38:7 should be added to this list.

<sup>98</sup> Exod 25:6; 30:7, 34; 31:11; 35:15; 37:29; 39:38; 40:27. To burn (קטר) spices (סמים) is found in Leviticus and Numbers.

(4Q365). In 4Q365 12a-b ii, line 6, the top of the second half the line is cut off but likely reads [ר]וק[ה] מ[עש]ה קטרת הסמים טהור<sup>99</sup> which quotes Exod 37:29.<sup>100</sup> Exod 37:29 describes how Bezalel made, last of all, the anointing oil and incense, before Exod 38:1 begins the making of the altar for burnt offerings.<sup>101</sup>

In addition, Sir 45:16 reads that God chose Aaron to offer sacrifice ולהקטיר ריח ניחה ואזכרה.<sup>102</sup> The Greek *θυμιάματος* (gen. of *θυμιάμα*) is only found here at Sir 49:1, while *θυμιάμα* is found at Sir 45:16.<sup>103</sup> This makes it likely that the hiphil verb להקטיר is found only at Sir 45:16 (Aaron), while the hophal verb תקטר occurs only at Sir 45:14 (also Aaron), and the noun קטרה is found only at Sir 49:1 (Josiah).<sup>104</sup> This makes it more probable that it is citing a known phrase, but as both Exod 30:34-35 and Exod 37:29 are instructions for incense offerings and have similar words, it is not pertinent to categorize the textual reuse as a kind of quotation of either. Rather, the textual reuse is probably due to Ben Sira's familiarity with both. Both passages in Exodus appear to be set expressions. Hence, it indicates a familiarity with language in Exodus.

Smend translates the word הממלה as 'well-mixed' and Skehan 'made lasting,' while Parker and Abegg translate this word as 'infused with spices.'<sup>105</sup> These translations resemble the Greek here *ἐσθλασμένον* (prepared). The meaning of הממלה should be compared with Exod 30:34-35, which uses it in the sense of seasoned or salted (Exod

<sup>99</sup> Abegg, Bowley, and Cook, *Concordance*, 2:654. Qimron has the same transcription and reconstruction. Elisha Qimron, *מגילות מדבר יהודה: החיבורים העבריים*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi, 2014), 3:118.

<sup>100</sup> DJD XIII, 187-194; 255-318 (especially 262; 279; Plate XXVI). DJD XIII, 279, notes that the ה in רוקה may have been above the line. 4Q365 12a-b ii reworks Exod 37:29-38:7. IAA, '4Q RP C, Plate 807, Frag 19: High-Resolution Image,' <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-295383>. IAA, '4Q RP C, Plate 807, Frag 19: Infrared Image,' <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/explore-the-archive/image/B-295963>.

<sup>101</sup> If more of 4Q365 survived, it would have likely contained Exod 30:34-35. See DJD XIII, 275-76.

<sup>102</sup> Clines mentions קטרת ניחה in one of the Syriac Psalms (Syriac Ps 154) of 11Q5 (11QPs<sup>a</sup>) XVIII, 9 (cf. Syr Ps 154:11). Clines, 7:246.

<sup>103</sup> Greek Sir 32(35):8 reads *εὐδία*, and Sir 24:15 *εὐδία*, so these might be ניחה not סמים. See Smend, *Griechisch-Syrisch-Hebräischer Index zur Weisheit des Jesus Sirach* (Berlin: Reimer, 1907), 108.

<sup>104</sup> The word סמים (spices or aromas) is found once in B<sup>mg</sup> at Sir 38:4, but it is unlikely to be correct. In the Greek a probable location for סמים is Sir 24:15, in which Wisdom grows like certain spices and offers pleasant aromas. In the Greek, the word in Sir 24:15 is *ἀρωμάτων* (*ἀρωμάτος*). See Ziegler, *Sapientia*, 238; Smend, *Index*, 31. However, the Greek changes Sir 49:1 slightly so that it is not like an incense of spices/odours, but 'one blended incense' (*εἰς σύνθεσιν θυμιάματος*), but the Hebrew is likely correct (against the Greek) as the Syriac reads *ܦܝܢܟܐ ܘܢܚܝܚܐ*.

<sup>105</sup> B.H. Parker and M.G. Abegg, 'Translation of MS B XVIII Recto,' [bensira.org](http://bensira.org). Smend translates 'wohlgemischte,' Smend, *Hebräisch*, 88.



metaphor in particular as a conventional expression, itself found in Proverbs for both wisdom (Prov 24:13; 25:16), pleasant words or things (Prov 16:24; 25:27) and evil (Prov 5:3).

There is resonance in Sir 49:1. Sir 49:1a, 1b, and 1c use metaphors, thus beginning כֹּ. The echo of initial letters is seen at Sir 49:1b מעשה | ממלה and 1d משתה | מזמר. There is also an overall balance of length with these two lines (1ab, 1cd).

The words משתה היין can be found in Isa 5:11-14, commented on in a *peshet* on Isaiah (4Q162).<sup>113</sup> Isa 5:11-14 condemns those who get drunk at wine feasts. Ben Sira's attitude to wine (in moderation) as vital to society and happiness is found throughout his text.<sup>114</sup> The phrase משתה היין is found in Est 5:6. Here in Sir 49:1d, the משתה היין is pleasant and includes music. To further demonstrate Ben Sira's familiarity with wisdom expression in the Hebrew Bible, in Sir 40:18-20 life is sweetened (מתק) by wine and strong drink (שכר), and wine and music are paired and compared with wisdom, which is better than both. The fact that Ben Sira mentions music at feasts is interesting for the meanings of שיר and מזמר for Ben Sira and his period. As noted in Clines, Sir 49:1 is the only case of מזמר outside a worship context; all other uses in Classical and Late Biblical Hebrew are for songs of praise.<sup>115</sup>

#### *Sir 49:2*

Sir 49:2 makes an allusion to 2Kgs 22:11, as argued by Smend, Segal, and Di Lella,<sup>116</sup> when Josiah tears his clothes after hearing from the 'Scroll of the Law.' Di Lella, and Segal draw comparisons with Isa 53:5, which reads והוא מחלל מפשעו ('he was grieved with

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<sup>113</sup> Clines, 5:567.

<sup>114</sup> Sir 9:9-10; 34:12; 35:5; 39:26. Sir 39:26 is a list of necessities of life. He is negative about the excess of wine: Sir 19:2; 34:25-31.

<sup>115</sup> See other uses of מזמר not attached to worship in Sir 35:4-6 (both שיר and מזמר at a משתה היין), 44:5, and 47:9. The word שיר is used in worship with Sir 40:21, 47:9, 17, 50:18. Clines, 5:210; 8:339. Ben-Hayyim, 196; 289.

<sup>116</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 543. Segal, *השלים*, 337. Smend, *Erklärt*, 469.

our transgressions’).<sup>117</sup> Di Lella and Segal note that משובתינו (משובה) and הבל תועבות are references to idolatry in Josiah’s reign before his reforms.<sup>118</sup>

Segal, Smend, and Di Lella agree that נחל (a defective spelling of *niphal* of חלה as in Amos 6:6) here can be compared with a similar statement by Jehoshaphat in 2Kgs 22:11, comparable with 2Chr 35:23,<sup>119</sup> both using the *hophal* of חלה. These two passages usually translate ‘wounded,’ but they would be the only examples of this meaning. Nevertheless, Sir 49: 2a could also allude to Josiah’s death, not just his grieving over idolatry.<sup>120</sup> That being said, the closeness of Ben Sira’s phrase על משובתינו נחל to Isa 53:5 מחלל מפשעו points to Ben Sira’s understanding of the meaning of חלה as ‘to grieve’ for Isa 53:5.

### Sir 49:3

Ben Sira continues the narrative chronologically. Sir 49:3a refers to 2Kgs 22:19 and 2Chr 34:27; the textual reuse here is again in paraphrase rather than quotation. In 2Kgs 22:19 and 2Chr 34:27—which share nearly the same wording—Josiah’s heart is רך (רכך, ‘to be tender, penitent’). In both passages, God spares Josiah from living to see the Exile *because* he had torn his clothes and wept (נחל על משובתינו, Sir 49:2) after hearing from the Scroll of the Law and realizing how corrupt Israel had become. While Ben Sira does not quote directly from 2Kgs 22:19 / 2Chr 34:27, he paraphrases it with ויתם אל אל לבו.

The use of תם with the preposition אל is not found in Classical or Late Biblical Hebrew, but Ben Sira writes אל אל in a number of places.<sup>121</sup> Segal explains that Sir 49:3a implies that Josiah made his heart perfect with God, different from Skehan’s translation,

<sup>117</sup> To help understand the meaning of חלה in Isaiah 53 as ‘grieve’ not ‘pierced’ as found in many English translations, this servant in Isa 53:3 is called איש מכאבות וידוע חלי (a man of sorrows and who knows grief). Other uses of חלה as ‘grief’ are to be found in the Hebrew Bible. Smend and Segal refer to Amos 6:6 for this as a defective *niphal*, and Segal adds Jer 12:13. Smend, *Erklärt*, 469. Segal, *השלים*, 337.

<sup>118</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 543. Segal, *השלים*, 337. In the other versions, instead of ‘grieved’ the Greek and Latin read ‘directed,’ and the Syriac reads ‘hid himself.’ Likewise the Greek ‘kept straight’ may derive from the *hophal* הנהה. Perhaps there was confusion over the root of the word נחל, as Skehan notes. Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 541.

<sup>119</sup> Di Lella, Smend, and Parker and Abegg agree that נחל (*qal* form is חלה) means ‘grieved’ here. Skehan and Di Lella, 540; 543. Parker and Abegg, *bensira.org*. Smend, *Hebräisch*, 88, ‘grämte sich.’

<sup>120</sup> It does not seem prudent that a king announce a wound on the battlefield, so perhaps a better meaning is actually a euphemistic ‘made weak/tired.’ Egger-Wenzel and Beentjes connect this verb also to Josiah’s death in battle. So Egger-Wenzel, “Josiah and His Prophet(s),” 237-38; Beentjes, “Sweet is his Memory,” 162. A connection with חלל is rejected by Beentjes, “Sweet is his Memory,” 161.

<sup>121</sup> Sir 7:17; 37:15; 38:4, 9, 14; 46:5, 16; 47:15; 48:20; 49:3. Ben-Hayyim, 85-86.

‘fixed’, and similar to the Greek.<sup>122</sup> It is better to render יהם into English following the Hebrew more closely, with ‘he perfected his heart with God.’<sup>123</sup>

In the blessing for the priesthood in Sir 45:26, Ben Sira asks that the descendants of Aaron and Phinehas be given חכמת לב. Earlier in Sir 45:23, Phinehas offers up his heart (נדבר לבור).

Finally in Sir 49:3b, Ben Sira uses paraphrase again to express how Josiah removed sin from Israel. For this we can compare with Sir 46:7 on Joshua. The word חסד in this case should mean ‘piety’ in this case, in agreement with Smend, which would be more relevant to the removal of idolatry, which Ben Sira refers to with the word חמס (violence or lawlessness).<sup>124</sup>

### *Summary of Findings*

As with Hezekiah-Isaiah, Ben Sira’s treatment of Josiah relies on textual reuse in the form of paraphrase and harmonization of sources. When Ben Sira uses words that appear closer to quotation, he draws from the conventions and expressions of the Hebrew Bible, such as psalms or wisdom language, rather than from a key passage in 2 Kings or 2 Chronicles. This tendency indicates paraphrase and a familiarity with the language—idioms and phrase—of the Hebrew Bible. Again, as with Hezekiah-Isaiah, there is no clear preference; one source does not significantly outweigh the other in textual reuse. These findings continue to reflect the physical material limitations of textual reuse in the ancient world, a scenario in which prior research, lifelong familiarity with the texts, editing drafts, and perhaps the use of notebooks or florilegia would have been aides for Ben Sira during

<sup>122</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 540. Di Lella also offers the translation, ‘gave his heart perfectly.’ See Skehan and Di Lella, 543. The Syriac follows the Hebrew closely with ‘perfected,’ *ܠܒܗܘܢ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ*, while the Greek reads *κατευθύνεν* ‘directed’ (found also in Sir 49:2a, *κατευθύνθη*). Segal, Smend, and Di Lella all cite Gen 20:5 (בתם-לבבי) for the combination of חמס with לב(ב); Di Lella adds 1Kgs 19:2 and Ps 101:2. Segal, *קשלים*, 337. Smend, *Erklärt*, 469. Skehan and Di Lella, 543.

<sup>123</sup> Hence my translation in §3.c.1. It is possible that יהם prepares for the cognate noun in 49:4 חמס. Beentjes, “Sweet is his Memory,” 163.

<sup>124</sup> This is a difference picture Parker and Abegg, who translate חסד as ‘kindness’ (bensira.org); and Skehan, who translates it as ‘virtue,’ interpreting עשה as ‘practised’ rather than ‘worked/made,’ Skehan and Di Lella, 540. For עשה, compare Isa 45:7, עשה טוב ובורא רע (Skehan and Di Lella, 540). Smend translates ‘Frömmigkeit’ (piety), Smend, *Hebräisch*, 88.

composition, resulting in mental harmonization of sources, and in this case the significant use of paraphrase in order to retell long narratives.

One theme that comes out of Ben Sira's Josiah is the importance of Temple-worship, which does not necessarily imply the downplay of leadership. Wright's argument that Ben Sira actively downplays the importance of kingly rulers in favour of an ideal priestly ruler partly in response to Ptolemaic and Seleucid royal king-cults.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, the only blessings that appear in the Praise of the Fathers appear with Phinehas and Aaron (Sir 45:25-26), both priests not kings. And Ben Sira does attribute qualities of piety to Josiah with the 'incense' metaphors, as well as Sir 49:3, עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד. These attributions do not distinguish between kingly ruler and priestly ruler, or imply that a good king is like a priest: rather, Ben Sira values piety in rulers. For Ben Sira, the good ruler is a pious ruler actively involved with the Temple. Thus David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Josiah were good (Sir 49:4) *because* these kings had active roles in the building, maintenance, or restoration of the Temple and its worship.

The remaining questions are why Josiah is compared to Temple incense, and why the pious acts of Israel's kings are emphasized. Perhaps the kings in the Praise of the Fathers tend to receive 'priestly' treatments because Ben Sira has dedicated the Praise to Simon II. As the local ruler and High Priest, Simon played both administrative and priestly roles.<sup>126</sup> Simon's primary role as High Priest is probably why Josiah is compared to sacrificial incense. Another suggestion is that a tendency towards priestly and sacrificial metaphors is predictable of Ben Sira's work as a scribe, teacher, and administrator within the Temple of Jerusalem, as well as his potential priestly family connections or connection with Simon. Ben Sira, when using Temple-centred and worship-centred language, is then predictably speaking from his own most easily recalled reference point of the Temple.

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<sup>125</sup> Wright, 'Kingship,' 86-87. As mentioned, however, human deification in the Mediterranean world rose in popularity for all types of notable humans, not particularly kings. Potter, 'Hellenistic Religion,' 416-19.

<sup>126</sup> It may be that priestly-kingly qualities emerge because of Simon's local administrative leadership, not because of messianic hope. Corley, 'Messianism,' 310-11. Olyan, 'Priesthood,' 284-85.

### 3.c.3. *Josiah and Other Sources*

Josiah receives little attention from Second Temple literature, except for 2 Esdras which purports to be written during the reign of Josiah. Josiah in Josephus does not receive much space either (*A.J.* 10.48-80). Overall, Josephus gives brief space to the minor kings of Judah. Ben Sira likewise only mentions Hezekiah, Josiah, David, and Solomon, relegating all the others into a category of wicked kings not worth mentioning by name (*Sir* 49:4). Josephus is writing the history of the Jewish people in *Antiquities*, thereby including even the wicked kings such as Manasseh (*A.J.* 10.36-47). By contrast, Ben Sira dedicates his *Praise of the Fathers* to the High Priest of his time, affecting the way he treats ‘history.’ As a result, Ben Sira relegates fair space to the righteous kings, David and Solomon receiving more space due to their long narratives in the Hebrew Bible, and Hezekiah and Josiah merit inclusion due to their virtue and qualities as leaders. Hezekiah protects and improves his city, and Josiah conducts religious reforms. Both of these are good qualities to include in a poem directing attention to the deeds of Simon II.

Second Temple literature relegates little attention to Hezekiah and Josiah in historical literature. By comparison, David and Solomon receive much special attention and authority: *Wisdom of Solomon* and apocryphal psalms.

Likewise Isaiah was an important figure in Second Temple literature as shown above (§3.b.4). Even so, the space dedicated to Josiah is about equal to that dedicated to Isaiah, while Hezekiah is even longer than both. The Book of Isaiah’s popularity in Second Temple times is second only to Deuteronomy and Psalms. Ben Sira’s familiarity with Isaiah is demonstrated by frequent allusions and quotations of Isaiah throughout his Hebrew text. So why does Isaiah not receive a longer section if he was so influential to Ben Sira’s teaching? It cannot simply be because the Hezekiah and Josiah stories are longer, so long they require paraphrase since the importance of a patriarch bears weight on the length (Aaron; David; Simon). The most plausible explanation of the length is that Hezekiah and Josiah—as good rulers—are worth setting space to in an historical poem dedicated to his contemporary local ruler and High Priest. Hence Ben Sira places emphasis upon infrastructure, religious reform, and leadership in times of turmoil. These deeds are

much more stage-setting for the Praise of the Fathers, than Isaiah with his role as advisor and prophet to a king.

### 3.d. *Ben Sira's Multiple Source Handling Compared with Other Sources*

Ben Sira's handling of multiple sources with Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah bears good comparison with how Kings and Chronicles treated their sources. The complex relationship between Kings and Chronicles was discussed above (§3.b.1). Both refer regularly to other writings about the kings of Israel and Judah, and treat their sources in various ways: sometimes with changes (the death of Josiah), paraphrase, or added agenda.<sup>127</sup> Yet Ben Sira does not make changes to the story, or expand it. Instead he harmonizes and paraphrases in order to tell a single story. As the source(s) of Kings and Chronicles are unknown (Chronicles may have used an earlier version of Kings), their use of harmonization of sources are unknown, but plenty of examples from later Jewish (Josephus) and Classical texts can be good examples of the same strategy.

Second Temple literature bears more fruitful comparison. Ben Sira's harmonization and paraphrase fit well with one aspect of Second Temple literature, which is that apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and other post-biblical writings do not seek to change or contradict their sources. While texts such as Jubilees, ALD, and 1 Enoch expand the stories of the patriarchs (unlike Ben Sira), the expansions add to, rather than disagree with, the story: indicating elevated respect for scripture and the biblical figures represented in scripture.<sup>128</sup>

Josephus, Jerome, and Luke, as with many other accomplished ancient writers such as Pliny the Elder, Herodotus, or Thucydides, all read many texts before composition. Chapter Two discussed the ancient method of reading before composition, the use of notebooks for quotations and thoughts, and the lack of tables and desks to support reading from open scrolls while writing. These physical limitations help explain why Josephus, Jerome, Paul, and the authors of the Gospels sometimes confused their sources.<sup>129</sup> Source confusion can indicate different versions of sources used, but most often suggest the

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<sup>127</sup> Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1-9*, 118.

<sup>128</sup> Najman, *Mosaic Torah*.

<sup>129</sup> For example, Mark 1:2 identifying a quote as being from Isaiah when quoting Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3, mentally harmonizing the two.

physical limitations of composition in the ancient world. Ben Sira's use of harmonization and paraphrase can be viewed within the light of these wider scribal habits. What is interesting is that Ben Sira could be using paraphrase because of the size of his sources compared to the few lines he wished to dedicate to Hezekiah, Isaiah, and Josiah. Alternatively, he could also be harmonizing because he is in fact aware of contradictions in the text. He might be doing both, in fact. It is unclear that Ben Sira would have seen them as contradictions at all, but it is apparent that he recognized they were long and distinct texts that needed careful treatment. The way in which he treated them as one story suggests he saw them as complementary.

### 3.e. Chapter Three Conclusions

There were two main aims for this chapter: 1) to gather more data in order to better characterize Ben Sira's scribalism, particularly about how he handles multiple large sources, 2) to explore issues of Temple-focus and leadership in Ben Sira's portrayals of Hezekiah and Josiah. Specific textual findings have shown Ben Sira's acquaintance with a copy of Isaiah perhaps closer to the MT than the type represented by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, and an even and balanced use of all three major sources for Ben Sira's Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah due to a high proportion of paraphrase (making detecting one source over the others more difficult) and harmonization. In the case of Sir 48:17-25 and Sir 49:1-3, Ben Sira harmonized and condensed long varying narratives into a short few lines.

Ben Sira's harmonization of sources is less detectable when the sources agree and have very similar passages (such as Sir 48:22ab), but much more noticeable when they disagree (Sir 48:20cd). Since the focuses of 2 Chronicles (Temple and ritual) and 2 Kings and Isaiah (Sennacherib and Hezekiah's illness) are so distinct, these results tell us much about Ben Sira's scribal method: that he tended towards harmonization and paraphrase as his tools of textual reuse in cases where 1) his sources were too long and large compared to the few lines he wished to dedicate to their subjects, and 2) his sources vary between each other significantly. In the second case, this use of paraphrase is needed only in one known example here (Sir 48:20cd). Both of these are predictable results of habits of composition. Therefore this chapter finds that Ben Sira readily uses paraphrase and harmonization for either or both of these cases, though the exact reasons why cannot always be isolated. Ben Sira's creativity and text reuse is primarily through these two techniques, but he does not expand or contradict his sources.

The source handling evident in Ben Sira's Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah is clearly not a process of writing while copying directly from multiple scrolls laid out on a table. Rather, Ben Sira's process requires some degree of internalization, with writing unaccompanied by scrolls *during* the exact moment of compositional activity. This process is compatible with literary and material culture evidence of ancient literacy covered in Chapter One. On the other hand, we cannot prove by harmonization alone that Ben Sira never consulted these works at any point in time before or after composition. In

other words, a sole dependence on memory alone cannot be proved either. Harmonization and paraphrase do not by themselves indicate a total dependence on memory. Alternatively, these strategies can still be the result of careful reading and thought prior to composition, and continue into the editing process. Like Virgil, Ben Sira may have composed freely from memory in the mornings and spent the afternoon and evening editing his drafts. Alternatively, he might have done his reading before composition like Pliny the Elder. We know that scribes did not use desks or tables, since this practice did not arrive in Western civilization until late antiquity. Thus this chapter's findings on Ben Sira's scribalism match what we know already about ancient composition habits.<sup>130</sup>

The second aim of this chapter was to explore Ben Sira's focus on Temple activities in a section about Judah's kings. This study concludes that qualities of rulers (infrastructure, leadership, *piety*) are emphasized because Ben Sira is directing focus on Simon the High Priest. These considerations add a sociocultural sphere of operation in Ben Sira's Hezekiah-Isaiah and Josiah: Ben Sira's political awareness of Simon's role as a ruler and a priest turns his focus towards infrastructure (Sir 48:17) and Temple-worship metaphors (Sir 49:1ab). It is not clear that Ben Sira would have distinguished between kings and priests in terms of leadership qualities, given Simon's leadership duties or those of his predecessors under the Ptolemies and Seleucids before him. Thus, Ben Sira feels comfortable including kings and attributing their virtues and piety to point towards Simon.

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<sup>130</sup> See Chapter One for initial discussion of scholarship. Final remarks on this area are covered in Chapter Seven.

## Chapter Four

### Ben Sira's Use of Job and Psalms in Sir 43:11-19: Literary Models and Textual Quotation

#### 4.a. Introduction

This chapter explores Sir 43:11-19, selected from Ben Sira's Hymn to Creation (Sir 42:15-43:33). The Hymn, a psalm of nature (or creation), is worth attention since it is the second largest unit besides the Praise of the Fathers. In the Hebrew Bible, poems and psalms that list God's created works of nature (collectively termed here as nature-lists) can be found in Job 36:24-37:24; 38-41 and Psalms 104, 147, and 148.<sup>1</sup> Previous studies have focused on the sun, moon, and stars section (Sir 43:1-10) of the Hymn.<sup>2</sup> Therefore this chapter will direct attention to a different part of the Hymn that has not received as much scholarly attention, Ben Sira's words on weather (Sir 43:11-19). Some scholars regard Sir 43:13-19 as a unit, or Sir 43:13-20,<sup>3</sup> although Reymond regards Sir 43:1-26 as the main unit of the Hymn. We will pay attention to the textual reuse in Sir 43:11-19 rather than sub-division.

Smend and Di Lella each interpret Ben Sira's weather patterns as phenomena acting directly on God's commands, with God as ruler of nature.<sup>4</sup> This theme is in Sir

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<sup>1</sup> Calling these poems and psalms nature-lists instead of either nature psalms or nature poems prevents misclassification of poems as psalms or vice versa: psalms of nature would be sung in liturgy—and poetic writings of nature should not be confused with psalms.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, 'Ecclesiasticus,' 105. Collins does, however, focus attention on the scriptural allusions in Sir 42:13-43:33 on Job 26, 38-41 and Psalms 104 and 148 ('Ecclesiasticus,' 104). Argall, *1 Enoch*, 142-65, focuses discussion on whether Ben Sira also divides creation into opposites like 1 Enoch, and concludes they come from a common framework while favouring different calendars. Núria Caldach-Benages, 'The Hymn to the Creation [Sir 42:15-43:33]: A Polemic Text?' in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*, eds. Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 119-38.

<sup>3</sup> For Sir 43:13-19 see Smend, and for Sir 43:13-20 see Segal, מלשון, and E.D. Reymond, *Innovations in Hebrew Poetry: Parallelism and the Poems of Sirach*, Atlanta: SBL, 2004, 69-70.

<sup>4</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 395. Skehan and Di Lella, 493.

39:12-35,<sup>5</sup> which focuses on elements of nature as instruments of God's wrath. Like Sir 43:11-19, Sir 39:12-35 also mentions God's storehouse (Sir 39:30: באוצר, באוצרו in B<sup>mg</sup>) and likewise praises God's works. By comparison, however, the tone of Sir 43:11-19 draws attention to the ways in which nature speaks of God's power of creation, like Psalm 148 or Job 37-41. Ben Sira asks the reader to 'behold' nature and praise the Creator through the beauty and wonders of nature.

Job 38-39 has been likened to Egyptian onomastica, or scribal lists of occupations, places, or nature.<sup>6</sup> Much smaller lists of nature are also found in the Hebrew Bible, for example Nah 1:2-10; Isa 40:21-24 or Job 9:4-10. Small nature-lists are also in Second Temple literature such as 1 En. 69:16-24, 2 Bar. 59:5, and 4 Ezra 4:5, 5:26.<sup>7</sup> Ben Sira's Hymn of Creation will be compared with these and other nature lists in Chapter Four. Lists can thus help characterize Ben Sira's place as a scribe in the ancient world, but the categorization is itself too ambiguous to tell us much more about Ben Sira's individual method of composition. The way in which Ben Sira uses lists, though, is best seen in light of the texts he directly uses.

The selection of Sir 43:11-19 presents useful data of textual reuse outside the Praise of the Fathers. Di Lella has argued that Sir 43:11-19's literary form is drawn from Psalm 29 with reference to Psalm 104 and 147, Gen 9:13, and Isa 29:6, with some similarities to Job 37-41<sup>8</sup> and P.Insinger.<sup>9</sup> Smend directs attention mainly to Psalm 29, and to Psalm 147 only in reference to Sir 43:17-19.<sup>10</sup> Another underappreciated source of nature-lists are Isa 40:21-24 and Nah 1:2-10. The use of prophetic literature will be discussed in detail. The case of Sir 43:11-19 is thus important because there are these many examples of long nature-lists for Ben Sira to use in Job and Psalms, but also some echoes of prophetic literature. Ben Sira is thus calling on a range of different texts across

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<sup>5</sup> CUL Or. 1002 (MS B, IXr.-IXv.), which is badly damaged and faded.

<sup>6</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 491, citing R.J. Williams, 'Wisdom in the Ancient Near East,' *IDB Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), 950 (949-52). Williams also mentions Gen 1, Prov 30:15-16, 18-20, and 24-31.

<sup>7</sup> M.E. Stone, 'Lists of Revealed Things in the Apocalyptic Literature,' in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and Archaeology in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, eds. F.M. Cross, W.E. Lemke, and P.D. Miller, Jr.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 414-52.

<sup>8</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 493-94.

<sup>9</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 79. Cited also in Skehan and Di Lella, 492-95.

<sup>10</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 406; 408.

the Hebrew Bible. It should be noted that the Syriac version leaves out Sir 43:11-33 entirely, so comparison can only be made with the Greek and Latin.<sup>11</sup>

The key aim of this study is to better understand a piece of Ben Sira's text which has both 1) strong direct textual reuse in quotations or allusions and echoes, and 2) sustained use of a literary convention such as nature-lists as a literary model. The relationship between which texts are direct reused in quotations and allusions, and which texts are used as literary models, will be a different case from the other chapters so far. Chapter Two looked at textual reuse in short sections of text, Chapter Three handling of multiple large texts in harmonization and paraphrase. Therefore Chapter Four will follow by looking at the relationship between a pervasive popular theme and the textual reuse of multiple large texts.

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<sup>11</sup> Calduch-Benages, Ferrer, and Liesen, *Sabiduría*, 240-41. Smend, *Erklärt*, 404. Skehan and Di Lella, 489.

## 4.b. Primary Texts for Sir 43:11-19

Mas1 <sup>h</sup> VI, l. 4-13 <sup>12</sup>	MS.Heb.e.62 <sup>13</sup>
(VI l. 4) ראה קשת וברך עשיה כי מאד נהדר[ה כבודו] חוג [הקיפה] בכבודה [ו]יד אל גטתה בג[בורה] גערתו [תתו]ה ברד ותנצח זיקות משפט למענו פרע אוצר ויעף עבים כעיט גבורתו חזק ענן <sup>14</sup> ותגדע אבני ברד קול רעמו יחיל ארצו ובכחו יניף הרים אמרתו תחריף תימן על עול סופה וסערה כרשף יפרח שלגו וכארבה ישכן רדתו תור לבנו יהג עינים וממטרו יתמיה לבב [וגם] כפור כמלח ישפך ויצמח כסנה צצים	43:11 ראה קשת וברך עושיה כי מאד נארדה [ ] : נהרדה 43:12 חוק הקיפה בכבודו ויד אל גטתה [ ] לא 43:13 גבורתו תתוה ברק ותנצח זיקות [ ] ח זיקים 43:14 למענו למענו ויעף [ ] 43:15 [ ] [ ] 43:17a קול [ ] חול ארצו <sup>15</sup> 43:16a זלעפר [ ] סופה וסערה : 43:17c [ ] רשף יניף שלגו 43:17d וכארבה ישכון דר 43:18 תואר לבנה יגהה עינים וממטרו יהמה לבב : 43:19 וגם כפור כמלח ישכון יציץ כספיר צצים :

<sup>12</sup> Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>: IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>'; IAA, 'Mas VI,' bensira.org. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 206-7; 222-23.

<sup>13</sup> MS.Heb.e.62, 5b (MS B XIIv.) l. 13-18 to 6a (XIIIr.), l. 1-3.

<sup>14</sup> A preposition ב should be here, as in Greek and Latin, so that verb and noun are both masculine.

<sup>15</sup> B<sup>mg</sup> on three vertical lines: : על עול סופה וסערה | אימות תהרף תימן | ובכחו יזעים הרים | קול רעמו יחיל ארצו | וממטרו יהמה לבב :

Translation of Mas1<sup>h</sup>

- 43:11 Behold the rainbow and bless its Maker | For it is exceedingly majest[ic in His glory]<sup>16</sup>
- 43:12 The sphere (of the sky) [it encompasses] in its glory, | [And] the hand of God extends her in p[ower].
- 43:13 His rebuke mark[s out] the hail, | And makes bright the flashes of (His) judgement.
- 43:14 For His purpose he lets loose the storehouse,<sup>17</sup> | And he causes the dark-clouds to fly about like birds of prey.
- 43:15 (By) His might he strengthens rain-clouds, | And He hews hailstones.
- 43:17a-16a The sound of His thunder anguishes His earth, | And with His power He agitates the mountains.<sup>18</sup>
- 43:16b-17b His word causes the south wind to be angry, | Against injustice: the storm-wind and the tempest.
- 43:17cd Like sparks His snow scatters, | And like locusts it settles (in) its descent;
- 43:18 The beauty of its whiteness makes the eyes amazed, | And its raining causes the heart to be astounded.
- 43:19 [And also] the hoarfrost He pours like salt, | And it sprouts like a thorny-bush of blossoms.

## Greek

- 43:11 ἰδὲ τόξον καὶ εὐλόγησον τὸν ποιήσαντα αὐτὸ  
σφόδρα ὠραῖον ἐν τῷ ἀγάσματι αὐτοῦ·
- 43:12 ἐγύρωσεν οὐρανὸν ἐν κυκλώσει δόξης,  
χεῖρες ὑψίστου ἐτάνυσαν αὐτό.

<sup>16</sup> I have reconstructed the Hebrew here as כבוד in light of the Greek αὐτοῦ, against B<sup>text</sup> כב[ב].

<sup>17</sup> The verbs in Sir 43:14 can theoretically be *piel* or *qal*. *Piel* makes the most sense because the tone is that God, or his aspects are the subject. These aspects are God's glory (Sir 43:11), rebuke (Sir 43:13), purpose (Sir 43:14), might (Sir 43:15), power (Sir 43:16a), and word (Sir 43:16b).

<sup>18</sup> Note that the unusual verse ordering in Mas1<sup>h</sup> is due to the Greek and Latin versions changing the order of verses. The Hebrew numbering reflects this so that the verses can be more easily compared between versions.

43:13 Προστάγματι αὐτοῦ κατέσπευσεν χιόνα  
 καὶ ταχύνει ἀστραπὰς κρίματος αὐτοῦ·  
 43:14 διὰ τοῦτο ἠνεόχθησαν θησαυροί,  
 καὶ ἐξέπησαν νεφέλαι ὡς πετεινά·  
 43:15 ἐν μεγαλείῳ αὐτοῦ ἴσχυσεν νεφέλας,  
 καὶ διεθρύβησαν λίθοι χαλάζης·  
 43:16 καὶ ἐν ὀπτασίᾳ αὐτοῦ σαλευθήσεται ὄρη,  
 ἐν θελήματι αὐτοῦ πνεύσεται νότος.  
 43:17 φωνὴ βροντῆς αὐτοῦ ὠνείδισεν γῆν  
 καὶ καταίγισ βορέου καὶ συστροφή πνεύματος.  
 43:18 ὡς πετεινὰ καθιπτάμενα πάσσει χιόνα,  
 καὶ ὡς ἀκρις καταλύουσα ἢ κατάβασις αὐτῆς·  
 κάλλος λευκότητος αὐτῆς ἐκθανμάσει ὀφθαλμός,  
 καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὑετοῦ αὐτῆς ἐκστήσεται καρδία.  
 43:19 καὶ πάχνην ὡς ἄλα ἐπὶ γῆς χέει,  
 καὶ παγεῖσα γίνεται σκολόπων ἄκρα.

### Latin

43:12 vide arcum et benedic qui fecit illum |  
 valde speciosus est in splendore suo  
 43:13 gyravit caelum in circuitu gloriae suae |  
 manus Excelsi aperuerunt illum  
 43:14 imperio suo adceleravit nivem |  
 et adcelerat coruscationes emittere iudicii sui  
 43:15 propterea aperti sunt thesauri |  
 et evolaverunt nebulae sicut aves  
 43:16 in magnitudine sua posuit nubes |  
 et confracti sunt lapides grandinis  
 43:17 in conspectu eius commovebuntur montes |  
 et in voluntate eius adspirabit notus  
 43:18 vox tonitruī eius exprobravit terram  
 tempestas aquilonis et congregatio spiritus  
 43:19 sicut avis deponens ad sedendum aspargit nivem

et sicut lucusta demergens descensus eius  
43:20 pulchritudinem coloris eius admirabitur oculus  
et super imbrem eius expavescet cor  
43:21 gelum sicut salem effundet super terram  
et dum gelaverit fiet tamquam cacumina tribuli

Note: The Syriac lacks Sir 43:11-19.

#### 4.c. Textual Commentary on Sir 43:11-19

##### *Sir 43:11*

The use of קשת and ראה together (Sir 43:11a) echoes Gen 9:13-14, 16<sup>19</sup> and Ezek 1:28, the latter of which reads מראה הקשת. Ezek 1:28 may be alluded to since Ezekiel 1 describes the vision of the רוח סערה (see Sir 43:16b). The usual meaning of קשת in the Hebrew Bible is the archer's bow apart from Genesis 9 and Ezek 1:28. When קשת means 'rainbow' in Second Temple non-biblical literature, it is in allusions to Genesis 9, such as 4QAdmonFlood (4Q370) 1.7, which reads קשתו נתן [בענן ל]מען יזכור ברית.<sup>20</sup> The rainbow in Jubilees by comparison offers the author's interpretations of Genesis 9. Jubilees links the date of the rainbow's appearance to the Festival of Shavuot (Jub. 6:15-17) and the creation of the solar calendar (Jub. 6:29-32). However, Ben Sira in Sir 43:11 and 50:7 mentions the rainbow without clear allusions to Genesis 9.<sup>21</sup> Compare for instance, Sir 44:17-18, his lines on Noah, which mention the Noahide covenant but not the rainbow.<sup>22</sup> Sir 50:7 describes Simon II, וכקשת נראתה בענן. Ben Sira's careful attention to Noah and the post-flood covenant in Sir 44:17-18 suggests that the Flood and Noahide covenant were important to Ben Sira, just not the rainbow as a symbol.

The title Maker<sup>23</sup> for God in Sir 43:11 is well-founded in the Hebrew Bible, and is elsewhere in Ben Sira (Sir 32:13). God is called עֹשֶׂה in Job 35:10; 4:17, and עֹשֶׂהוּ in Isa 17:7; Ps 78:4, 12; 98:1. In the introduction to the Hymn (Sir 42:15a, 15c, and 16b), God's work is described as His מעשה three times, which can be compared with פעלו in the introductory line of Elihu's nature-list speech in Job 36:24.

<sup>19</sup> The Greek reads τοξος, also found in the LXX of Gen 9:13, 14.

<sup>20</sup> DJD XIX, 85-97. Carol Newsom, '4Q370: An Admonition Based on the Flood,' *RevQ* 13 (1988): 23-43.

<sup>21</sup> Sir 50:7 might be argued to be a reference to Gen 9:14 or Ezek 1:8. However, Sir 50:1-7 demonstrates Ben Sira's scribal abilities and is better understood as an echoing of language from the Hebrew Bible, rather than actual references as presented in Skehan and Di Lella, 552.

<sup>22</sup> Ben Sira mentions מבול once (Sir 44:17), and כלה as a euphemism for the Flood in Sir 40:10 (see Chapter Two).

<sup>23</sup> Mas<sup>h</sup> reads עשיה, B<sup>text</sup> עושיה, and B<sup>mg</sup> עושה.

The final word of the line in Sir 43:11b might be reconstructed as הוד rather than כבוד,<sup>24</sup> which would more closely echo Ps 104:1 and the typical pair of הוד and הדר.<sup>25</sup> This is also likely because of ברך and the use of מאד as modifier in both Sir 43:11 and Ps 104:1. On the other hand, a synonymous quotation of Psalm 104:1 is not lost with כבוד. Furthermore, the Greek reads δόξῃς. These passages are compared below.

SIR 43:11 (MAS1 <sup>h</sup> )	Ps 104:1
ראה קשת וברך עשיה   כי מאד נהדר [ה כבוד]	ברכני נפשי את־יהוה יהוה אלהי גדלת מאד הוד והדר לבשת

In the Hebrew Bible, nature-lists typically begin by mentioning the glory and majesty of God: Job 36:24 (זכר כי־תשגיא פעלו אשר שררו אנשים),<sup>26</sup> Job 37:22-23 (אתה and הוד), Ps 29:1 (כבוד ועז), and 104:1 (מאד הוד והדר). Nature-lists can also begin with the request to praise God for his power and majesty, such as Job 36:24, Ps 29:1-2, and Ps 148:1-6. Ben Sira does both in mentioning the glory and majesty of God as well as requesting the reader to bless God for his work. Sir 42:15-17, similarly, declares God's works, glory, and majesty to introduce the Hymn. The convention suggests as well that Sir 43:11 begins a new sub-section distinct from that of the sun, moon, and stars.

#### *Sir 43:12*

In Mas1<sup>h</sup>, the final word in this line appears to be בגב[ורה].<sup>27</sup> Most scholars read this final word as 'in power.'<sup>28</sup> The Greek and Latin versions both leave out this word. The letter following בג could be a square-ish ע or a ב, but ב seems more likely, as most scholars

<sup>24</sup> B reads וד[.]. Yadin and others reconstruct the word as כבוד. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 189. Ben-Hayyim, 51.

<sup>25</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 125-26. For example Sir 43:9, הוד שמים והוד כוכב. The reason for my suggested reconstruction is also due to the deterioration of Mas1<sup>h</sup> VI, which has room for הוד, while כבוד would be a squeeze. In B, however, the trace of ב can be seen, which could be construed as a mistake for כ.

<sup>26</sup> 'Remember to magnify his work, which men have sung about.'

<sup>27</sup> Smend, *Hebräisch*, 46; 2:405.

<sup>28</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 51, reads בגב[ורה] for Mas1<sup>h</sup> and ...בג for B. Skehan and Di Lella, Yadin, and Beentjes read ...בגב. Skehan and Di Lella, 489. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 222. Beentjes, *Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 119; 171.

argue.<sup>29</sup> Another possibility would be [בגנע]רה, which is how Smend reads the first word of the next line, Sir 43:13.<sup>30</sup>

The word חוג means the circle or vault. There are only three occurrences of the word in the Hebrew Bible: Isa 40:22 (חוג הארץ),<sup>31</sup> Prov 8:27 (חוג על-פני תהום), and Job 22:14 (חוג שמים). Isa 40:22 is important to note since Isa 40:22-24 describes the heavenly abode of God from where he stretches out the heavens (נטה, found in Sir 43:12b) and sends forth his סערה (found in Sir 43:17b). Job 22:14 also describes the heavenly location of God.<sup>32</sup>

Sir 43:12a remains the only extant use of חוג in Ben Sira, but another may be in Sir 24:5a (Greek only).<sup>33</sup> In both Ben Sira means a vault of heaven, like the ‘expanse’ (רקיע) of heaven of Genesis 1 and Ezek 1:22-26. Interestingly, חוג is also found in 1QM 10:13 (חוג ימים), which is another short nature-list only a few lines in length.<sup>34</sup> The *hiphil* of נקף is also found in Sir 24:5 (the vault of heaven), 45:9 (Aaron encircled with pomegranates), and 50:12 (Simon surrounded by his priests).<sup>35</sup>

The use of נטה in Ben Sira is always found in *qal* with יד, and here in Sir 43:12b נטתה is *qal*.<sup>36</sup> Smend notes that the use of נטה further signifies it is a rainbow since the verb נטה is not used with archer’s bows.<sup>37</sup> As noted above, נטה can equally echo language in Isa 40:22 or Job 9:8, two small nature-lists. God stretching out the heavens is a recurring phrase in Isaiah (Isa 40:22; 42:5; 44:24; 51:13, 16).<sup>38</sup> In each of these cases, the phrase is used to reassure the reader by illustrating God’s power over creation. Isa 40:22 is part of a short-nature list, but the consistent use of the phrase נטה + שמים in Isaiah is

<sup>29</sup> IAA, ‘Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>.’

<sup>30</sup> Smend, *Hebräisch*, 46; 2:405.

<sup>31</sup> הישב על-חוג הארץ וישביה כהגבים הנוטה כדק שמים וימתחם כאהל לשבת: (Isa 40:22 MT)

<sup>32</sup> Eliphaz replies to Job that God sees and judges all affairs of man from the heavens fairly.

<sup>33</sup> γῶρον οὐρανοῦ ἐκύκλωσα μόνη. Smend, *Index*, 44.

<sup>34</sup> 1QM 10:12-16. See §4.e for further discussion.

<sup>35</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, נקף is used in the context of battles (Josh 6:3, 11; 2Kgs 6:14, 11:8). This is the case in the Qumran non-biblical texts as well (such as 1QpHab 4:7). Clines, 5:754. BDB, 668-69. Ben-Ḥayyim, 223.

<sup>36</sup> Ben-Ḥayyim, 218.

<sup>37</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 405.

<sup>38</sup> Note also that Isa 51:9 mentions Rahab (Sir 43:23). Collins, ‘Ecclesiasticus,’ 105, also suggests Sir 45:23 should read ‘Rahab’ instead of ‘Great’ (the ‘great deep’), in light of Isa 51:9 and Job 26:1.

perhaps more significant. Therefore the use of the verb here might not be a direct quotation but perhaps an awareness of the language used throughout Isaiah to describe God's control over the heavens. It should be noted that both Isa 40:22 and Job 9:8 use נטה for God stretching the heavens out (שמים), while Ben Sira uses it to describe not the sky but the rainbow. Job 9:4-10 lists God's control of the mountains, constellations, and other aspects of nature. Another possibility is Ps 104:2 (again נטה with שמים).<sup>39</sup> Likewise in the Qumran non-biblical texts, the verb נטה is conventionally reserved for stretching the heavens, as in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> 26:14, 1QH 9:9, and also 11QPs<sup>a</sup> Hymn 8 (see below on Sir 43:13 and §4.e). Ben Sira remains alone in using נטה for the rainbow and not for the heavens.

### *Sir 43:13*

There is a scribal error in MS B in Sir 43:13a of גבורתו for גערתו. By comparison, the Greek reads προστάγματι αὐτοῦ, and the Latin *imperio suo*. As mentioned, גערה is also in Ps 104:7. It is also in Nah 1:4, one of the shorter nature-lists in prophetic literature. Later, Ben Sira switches from גערתו to אמרתו, in all cases making the weather patterns listen to God's spoken command. This idea is found plainly in Job 37:1-6 (see below on Sir 43:16b-17b).

Another reconstruction problem, past scholarship agrees generally with the reading of Sir 43:13a in B as ברק, instead of ברד as in Mas1<sup>h</sup>. The Greek version also might have read ברק since it translates χλόνα.<sup>40</sup> The use of תהוה is unusual as a way to describe either hail or lightning.<sup>41</sup> Mas1<sup>h</sup>, by comparison, however, has ברד.<sup>42</sup> Conversely, the Latin translates by *nivem* (snow). Thus B and the versions have made distinct choices that do not completely agree either, and thus cannot be easily attributed to a scribal error in Mas1<sup>h</sup>.

The next term זיקות משפט requires unpacking. It is interesting that of the three occurrences of 'firebrands', in Isa 50:22 (twice) the word is feminine, while in Prov 26:18 it is זיקים, the form found in B<sup>mg</sup>.<sup>43</sup> In 1 En. 8:3, 14:8 there is an angel called Ziqel who is in charge of the shooting stars. However, none of these passages help contextualize 'firebrands' in nature and only show that Ben Sira uses the feminine. The solution here is

<sup>39</sup> עטה-אור כשלמה נוטה שמים כיריעה (Ps 104:2)

<sup>40</sup> These editions go with ברק: Smend, *Hebräisch*, 46, 2:405, 3:244; Segal, *השלים*, 296; Ben-Hayyim, 51; 112. The Greek for hail is χάλαζα. Skehan and Di Lella, 485, translates 'hail' at Sir 43:13.

<sup>41</sup> The verb תהוה is in *hiphil* (from תהה) meaning 'to mark.' Another possibility is *piel*, as in 1Sam 21:14.

<sup>42</sup> IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>.'

<sup>43</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 405.

to look for synonymous language, particularly with other weather patterns. We find that Sir 39:29 mentions ‘fire and hail’ (אש וברד) as instruments of God’s wrath. In the Hebrew Bible, ברד is found compared with thunder (Exod 9:26, 28), fire (Exod 9:22, 24; Ps 148:8), and with fiery-bolts אש להבות (Ps 29:7; Isa 29:6, 30:30, 66:15). In Ps 18:13, God sends forth hail and coals of fire (גהלי־אש) from his clouds. Ps 29:7 also matches well with Ben Sira’s emphasis on God’s command bringing forth the weather patterns (קולי־יהוה חצב להבות) (אש). Equally, however, Job 38:22 mentions storehouses of snow and storehouses of hail (more below). The closest match with the sequence of weather patterns in Sir 43:1-19 overall, however, is with Ps 148:8: ‘fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command.’ From these examples, we can better understand how Ben Sira understood זיקות משפט.<sup>44</sup>

The examples presented demonstrate that ‘firebrands’ refers to lightning. The pairing of hail and lightning is also in Sir 32:10, לפני ברד ינצה ברק (‘Before hail, lightning flashes’). Note that in Sir 32:10, נצה is used with ברק, just as with זיקות in Sir 43:13b. The word נצה can also mean ‘to be glorious’,<sup>45</sup> which might be why he chose the verb, as well.<sup>46</sup>

To compare Ben Sira’s language with Qumran non-biblical texts, ברד is paired with שלג in 4QapPs<sup>b</sup> (4Q381) frag. 14:2.<sup>47</sup> Another mention of lightning and heavenly storehouses (Sir 43:14) is in the Hymn to the Creator (11QPs<sup>a</sup> Hymn) 8-9, which is a quotation of Ps 135:7. The most substantial example of ‘storehouses’ in Second Temple literature is 1 En. 69:16-24, narrated by Enoch, on the oath by which God controls the natural universe.<sup>48</sup> Enoch lists storehouses of the sound of thunder, lightning, hail and hoarfrost, mist, rain, and dew.

#### *Sir 43:14*

<sup>44</sup> Outside the Hebrew Bible זק is found in 1QH 1.12 paired with ברק. In 1QM 6:3, though זיקות describes blood. Clines, 3:129.

<sup>45</sup> BDB, 663-64.

<sup>46</sup> There will be a range of verbs with appropriate double meanings throughout Sir 43:11-19.

<sup>47</sup> Text: [...].... לאון [...] 4 [...] בש[...]. 3 [...] 3 [...] 2 [...] 1 Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998), 2:755.

<sup>48</sup> There are ‘storehouses of blessing’ in 1 En. 11:1-2.

In Sir 43:14, this is the only use of למענו in Ben Sira; all others are למען.<sup>49</sup> The word עבים should be distinguished from ענן (Sir 43:15a) in translation, as ענן is generally a nimbus rain-cloud<sup>50</sup> and עב is a dark-cloud, a distinction which is held in the Latin (*aves | nubes*) but not the Greek (*νεφέλη* only).

The אוצר draws from a variety of sources. As mentioned, Job 38:22 mentions storehouses of snow and of hail (אצרות שלג ואצרות ברד). Moreover, Job 37:9 describes the chamber (חדר) from which come the storm-wind (סופה) and cold north-winds (ממזרים קרה). In Ps 135:7, God brings forth lightning for the rain, and brings forth wind from His storehouses.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Ps 104:3, 13 mention divine עליות (chambers) from which God waters the mountain. Also, in Ps 33:7, God puts the deep in storehouses (אצרות). Ben Sira's אוצר is similar to these contexts. Significantly, Ben Sira only mentions a single אוצר and does not mention what the storehouse contains precisely.

The storehouses of heaven are also found in other Second Temple literature, in two examples already mentioned above (Sir 43:13): 11QPs<sup>a</sup> Hymn 8-9 (quoting Ps 135:7) and in 1QM 10:12. In Mesopotamian mythology, there were storehouses of the seven winds.<sup>52</sup>

The use of פרע for God physically setting loose is unusual since the verb is almost always reserved for moral unrestraint or moral revolt.<sup>53</sup> The double meaning cannot have been missed since elsewhere Ben Sira only uses the 'revolt' meaning.<sup>54</sup> 'Revolts' in my translation conveys the violence of loosening heavenly storehouses.

Sir 43:14b shows strong assonance: ויער עבים כעית.<sup>55</sup> Ps 104:3 and Isa 19:1 both describe עבים as God's chariot, while עבים described as עית is in Isa 18:6.<sup>56</sup> The swaying of

<sup>49</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 203-4

<sup>50</sup> Except for the pillar of cloud: Exod 13:21-22 (see also Num 10:34, 14:14), and for incense: Ezek 8:11 and Lev 16:13.

<sup>51</sup> (Ps 135:7). עלה נשאים מקצה הארץ ברקים למטר עשה מוצא־רוח מאוצרותיו:

<sup>52</sup> Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, 3rd ed, AB 15 (London: Yale University Press, 2008), 281.

<sup>53</sup> BDB, 828-29.

<sup>54</sup> Sir 10:3, 34:1-2, 38:20, 47:23; 1QS 6.26; CD 8.8; 4QInstr<sup>a</sup> 2.2.4. Clines, 6:772-73.

<sup>55</sup> Note: the word עבים is a collective singular.

<sup>56</sup> In Isa 60:8 עב and עוף (*qal*) occur together. Clines, 6:311, records the use of ויער in Sir 43:12b as *hiphil*.

dark clouds is found in Job 37:16 (מפלשיי־עב). With these considered, it is only in Ben Sira that clouds fly about.<sup>57</sup>

Ben Sira pairs עבים with rain-clouds (ענן) in Sir 43:15a. The parallelism of עבים with ענן occurs many times in the Hebrew Bible—many occurrences of which are in nature-lists (Job 37:11, 15-16; Ps 104:3).<sup>58</sup> There are other examples of the pairing in Ben Sira<sup>59</sup> and Qumran non-biblical literature.<sup>60</sup> This frequency implies that the parallelism is not an echo of one particular source. Instead, the use of the pair demonstrates Ben Sira's familiarity with the literary convention and with the language of nature-lists.

While they are found in several nature-lists in the Hebrew Bible, clouds might also belong because of their role in prophetic literature. Some clouds in prophetic visions describe God's approval or disapproval (ענן in Zeph 1:15, Ezek 30:3, and elsewhere; עב in Isa 18:4). A prophetic tone of revelation and divine justice would be appropriate considering גערה and משפט in the previous line, Sir 43:13. Furthermore, the place of קשת in Ezek 1:28 would also fit in to this theme of nature as revelations of God's power.

#### *Sir 43:15*

The two verbs in this line הזק and גדע, do not have any usage or straightforward equivalents in the nature-lists of the Hebrew Bible. The word גדע (hew) is used by Ben Sira to emphasize a word play on hail-stones. Ben Sira uses גדע once elsewhere (Sir 32:23, B): ומטה רשע גדוע יגדע, 'And the staff of the wicked person (i.e., ruler) he will indeed chop up.' To compare, in the Hebrew Bible גדע is only used as 'to tear down' idolatry and to punish,<sup>61</sup> for example at Ezek 6:6 and Zech 11:10.<sup>62</sup> Another interesting choice is that Ben Sira does not use here the more common word for cutting rock, חצב. The creative choice shows that Ben Sira chose גדע instead because of its connections with punishing idolatry

<sup>57</sup> Birds are mentioned in Ps 104:12 (עוף) and Ps 104:17 (צפריים). Ben Sira uses עוף elsewhere only in Sir 11:3, 20, to describe 'flying creatures' and not of clouds. Ben-Hayyim, 235.

<sup>58</sup> Elsewhere, for example Job 26:8-9. Note that Job 38:37 mentions clouds, as well, except they are שחקים.

<sup>59</sup> Sir 32:20-21; 50:6-7. Ben-Hayyim, 231. The example of Sir 50:6-7 is part of a list of nature metaphors describing Simon, another literary convention found in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>60</sup> For the nominal pair עב / ענן, see Clines, 6:208. For example, 4Q286 3:4; 1QM 10:12, 12:9; 4Q381 14:2.

<sup>61</sup> Usually of stone, but also of wood in Ps 74:5.

<sup>62</sup> The word continues to be found in the other Minor Prophets, Isaiah, and Chronicles in the context of idolatry. BDB, 154.

and prophetic literature. With *נצח*, *פרע*, *הדר*, and now *גדע*, Ben Sira's connotations of glory, divine justice, and prophetic revelation is beginning to emerge.

The phrase 'hail-stones' (*אבני ברד*) is only found once in the Hebrew Bible at Josh 10:11.<sup>63</sup> This is notable because the only other mention of hailstones in Ben Sira is in the lines on Joshua in the Praise of the Fathers (Sir 46:5). Normally hail is *ברד*, as in Sir 43:13a. Ezekiel contains a similar phrase *אבני אלגבייש* (Ezek 13:11, 13; 38:22).<sup>64</sup> Sir 46:5c-d (Heb) reads *אבני ברד וא[ל]גבייש*, which is interesting to compare with *אבני אלגבייש* in Ezekiel.<sup>65</sup> While Ben Sira later in Sir 45:6 quotes vocabulary from Josh 10:11, here *אבני ברד* could echo either Joshua or Ezekiel. Both of these, crucially, are instances where God uses hail as divine punishment. Another case of hail as divine punishment (with fire) is Sir 39:29. This evidence again suggests divine revelation as a theme: elements of nature being used as instruments of God's power, justice, and majesty.

*Sir 43:17a-16a*

Ben Sira's description of the movements of the earth and mountains (Sir 43:17a-16a) should be compared with Ps 104:32, in which the earth shakes and mountains smoke (*המביט לארץ ותרעד יגע בהרים ויעשנו*).<sup>66</sup> Once again, the biblical order or sequence of phenomena plays a stronger role than Ben Sira's choice of description, verbs, or metaphors.

The phrase *קול רעם* in this line, Sir 43:17a, closely resembles Ps 104:7 (*קול רעמד*). The phrase also should be compared with similar vocabulary in Job 37:2-3 (*ישאג; רגז קולו*) (*קול ירעם בקול גאונו*). There is another possible source in Isa 29:6, which resembles Ben Sira's order of catastrophes in this line and the next (thunder, earthquake, storm-wind, and tempest).

<sup>63</sup> Note the effort of the Greek: *λίθοι χαλάζης*. The words are also found once in Rabbinic Hebrew (Mikw. 8:1). Jastrow, 190.

<sup>64</sup> The word *אלגבייש* by itself is found in 4QJub<sup>a</sup> (4Q216) 5.7 together with *ק[ר]*, *[טל]*, and *[ברד]* listing the order of creation as found in Genesis 1. Note the next verse: 4QJub<sup>a</sup> 5.8: and the angels of the winds (*רוחות*) ... *לכחום ולחרף ולקיץ*.

<sup>65</sup> The Greek reads *ἐν λίθοις χαλάζης δυνάμεως κραταιᾶς*.

<sup>66</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 406, mentions Ps 65:7. Skehan and Di Lella, 494, mentions Ps 18:8, 16 and 2Sam 22:8, 16 only, which are also useful to compare with the connection between Sir 43:13a, 15b and Josh 10:11 earlier.

SIR 43:17A-16B (MAS1 <sup>H</sup> )	ISA 29:6 (MT)
<p>קוֹל רַעַם יַחִיל אֶרֶץ   וּבְכַחַּו יִנִּיף הַרִים אִמְרָתוֹ תַּחֲרִיף תִּימָן   עַל עוֹל סוֹפָה וְסַעֲרָה</p>	<p>מֵעַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת תִּפְקֵד בְּרַעַם וּבְרַעַשׁ וְקוֹל גְּדוֹל סוֹפָה וְסַעֲרָה וְלֵהֵב אֵשׁ אוֹכְלָהּ</p>

A third comparison may be made with the nature-list in Nah 1:2-10. Nah 1:5 mentions the mountains quaking and the hills melting. Nah 1:2-10 lists elements of nature that demonstrate God's wrath, beginning with whirlwind and tempest (see Sir 43:17b).

The order of these verses in Mas1<sup>h</sup> is Sir 43:17a|16a, 16b|17b. This ordering is because B, the Greek, and Latin switched the order of the lines. The order of phenomena in Isa 29:6 above also reinforces the Hebrew verse order in Masada and MS B, against the order in the Greek and Latin. Additionally, the use of similar phrases in Sir 16:19 further suggests the sequence in Sir 43:17a-17b is drawn from Isa 29:6. Ben Sira only uses the noun רַעַם here in Sir 43:17a.<sup>67</sup>

The use of חִיל (*hiphil* in Sir 43:17a) can be also seen in light of Ps 29:8, קוֹל יְהוָה יַחִיל, קוֹל יְהוָה מְדַבֵּר קָדֹשׁ, מְדַבֵּר יַחִיל יְהוָה מְדַבֵּר קָדֹשׁ, considering that Ps 29:7 also mentions אֵשׁ לְהַבּוֹת, as does Isa 29:6. The אֵשׁ לְהַבּוֹת in these passages are similar to Sir 43:13 above. Ben Sira only uses חִיל rarely (Sir 3:27, 48:19).<sup>68</sup> However, in the Qumran non-biblical literature, the *hiphil* of חִיל is found in, for example, 1QH 3:8 and 4Q393 3:8, employed in the context of God's wrath.<sup>69</sup> Nah 1:2-10, as mentioned, also describes God's wrath through a list of nature.

The verb נוּף continues the trend of verbs in Sir 43:11-19 that do not normally find inclusion in nature-lists in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>70</sup> Elsewhere in Ben Sira, נוּף is used of waving hands (Sir 12:18, 33:3, 37:7, 46:2, 47:4), the same as its meaning in the Hebrew Bible. In Judg 9:9, however, נוּע ('to shake' or 'to wander') may be translated as either 'to shake' or 'to rule.'<sup>71</sup> Sir 43:16a is therefore the only extant example of נוּף in reference to

<sup>67</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 281.

<sup>68</sup> That is, חִיל. Ben-Hayyim, 140.

<sup>69</sup> Clines, 3:212.

<sup>70</sup> Here in *hiphil* (יַנִּיף).

<sup>71</sup> The olive tree refuses to either sway (shake) or hold sway (rule) over the other trees in Judg 9:8-9. BDB, 631.

mountains, implying earthquake.<sup>72</sup> In fact, whenever Ben Sira mentions mountains, they are shaking or moving in some way, such as Sir 16:19 (MS A reads קצבי הרים), 39:28 (B<sup>text</sup> [הר]ים יעתי[קו]),<sup>73</sup> 43:4 (B<sup>text</sup> ידליק הרים; B<sup>mg</sup> שלוה), and 43:21 (B יבול הרים).<sup>74</sup> By contrast, in the Hebrew Bible verbs describing moving or shaking of the earth or mountains are typically רעש, געש, נוט, or רגז. Only one of these verbs Ben Sira uses in the second half of Sir 16:19: בהביטו אליהם רעש ירעשו. It is therefore a surprising and significant find that Ben Sira actively resists using these same typical verbs used for earthquakes, not just here but throughout his entire text.

### *Sir 43:16b-17b*

In past scholarship, the first letters of Sir 43:17b are transcribed without exception as עלעול, that is without a space. Smend reads this as a word found in the Targumim, עלעול,<sup>75</sup> but the word is regarded by later commentators as a scribal error for גלגל (whirlwind).<sup>76</sup> The Greek (Sir 43:17b Gr) and Latin (Sir 43:18b Lat) witnesses both have only the equivalent of סופה וסערה, without an added whirlwind. When inspecting Mas1<sup>h</sup>, I found that the entire line of Sir 43:16-17b suffers from a lack of spaces between words.<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, the phrase על עול should be clearer in light of Job 36:33, a passage from of the nature-lists,<sup>78</sup> which includes the phrase על-עולה in reference to lightning.<sup>79</sup> This makes the only case of על עול in Ben Sira. However, Job 36:33 has similar language which Ben Sira is likely echoing here.

<sup>72</sup> Note B<sup>mg</sup> reads יזעים הרים ('He makes the mountains angry'). By comparison, the Greek, by translating ἤρη, makes the meaning of an earthquake clear.

<sup>73</sup> Just before אש וברד in Sir 39:29. Smend reconstructs [צור]ים [as ..]ים, however, but the Greek does not mention hail. Ziegler, *Sapientia*, 304. Smend, *Hebräisch*, 37; 2:365.

<sup>74</sup> With one exception: when Hezekiah digs a channel through the mountains for the spring in Sir 48:17 (ויחסום הרים מקוה, B).

<sup>75</sup> Smend, *Erklärt*, 407. The word עלעול is found several times in the Targumim. Jastrow, 137. I suggest this is due to the reception history of Ben Sira since there are no examples of this word in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>76</sup> Yadin, *Masada VI*, 190. Skehan and Di Lella, 486; 490; 494.

<sup>77</sup> IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>.'

<sup>78</sup> Job 36:32-33 concerns God commanding *lightning*, jealous with anger 'against iniquity.'

<sup>79</sup> B<sup>mg</sup> also displays a space in between these words. I therefore disagree with Smend, *Hebräisch*, 46; Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*, 233, which records B<sup>mg</sup> as עלעול as well. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 223; and Skehan and Di Lella, 486; 490, translate 'whirlwind, hurricane and tempest,' arguing it is not על עול but גלגל. B, conversely, reads סופה וסערה [זלעפ]ת צפון. 'Raging heat of the north-wind,' however, does not make sense either because the north wind should be cold.

Ps 147:15, 18 (השלה דברו, השלה אמרתו) is a possible source for ‘God’s word’ (אמרתו) in Sir 43:16b. In other nature-lists, Ps 104:7 reads that the waters obey God’s rebuke (גערתך), while God commands (צוה) weather in Ps 148:5, Job 9:7 (האמר), and 37:1-6 (יאמר).

The use of the *hithpael* of חרף in this line is identifiable as another verb with connotations of prophetic revelations (divine wrath) and other ranges of meaning that are also not typically found in nature-lists in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>80</sup> There is a possibility, suggested in Clines, that here תחרף could be *piel* imperfect (‘to make cold’).<sup>81</sup> While the south wind (תימן) in the Mediterranean and Levant occurs in the autumn and early winter, it is in fact a hot wind. In the Eastern Mediterranean, the south wind seasonally brings warm storms in the autumn and early winter. This explains its association with storms in Ben Sira.

The תימן (southern wind) is found together with סערה in Zech 9:14, but with צפון in Ps 89:13 (צפון וימין). As mentioned earlier (Sir 43:14), in Job 37:9 the חדר releases the סופה and the cold north-winds (וממזרים קרה). The winds (רוחות) are also described in Ps 104:3-4. By comparison, the south-wind brings heat and calm in Job 37:17 (דרום instead of ימין/תימן).<sup>82</sup>

This line is also Ben Sira’s only use of תימן, which makes sense in a wisdom text.<sup>83</sup> Significantly, the Qumran non-biblical texts do not ever mention תימן, even in the short nature-lists discussed above. Instead, רוח is the usual term for wind, and צפון is sometimes found.<sup>84</sup>

As noted above the sequence of thunder and earthquake (Sir 43:17a-16a) followed by storm-wind and tempest (Sir 43:16b-17b) is drawn from Isa 29:6. The inclusion of the winds, however, draws more broadly from the literary convention of nature-lists. The parallelism of סופה וסערה is found in many places in the Hebrew Bible, including Isa 29:6 and Nah 1:3. These two have already been mentioned previously in this commentary. The

<sup>80</sup> BDB, 357. The *hiphil* of חרף means ‘agitate,’ while the *piel*, found regularly also in Qumran non-biblical literature, means ‘reproach,’ such as in 4QapLam<sup>b</sup> (4Q501) 5. In Ben Sira, Sir 43:16b is the only *hiphil* case of חרף; all others are *piel* (Sir 34:21, 41:22, 42:14). Clines, 3:320.

<sup>81</sup> Clines, 3:321. The noun חרף (harvest | autumn | winter—that is, after Rosh HaShanah) is found once 4QapLam<sup>a</sup> (4Q179) 1.2.8: ‘the sons are desolate *because of the winter* when their hands are weak.’ Note that Clines’ *Dictionary* records 4QapLam<sup>a</sup> 1.2.6, but it is 1.2.8. ‘Winter’ as חרף is not found in Ben Sira.

<sup>82</sup> It probably refers to the south-eastern Sirocco wind, which brings warmth and calm from the Sahara.

<sup>83</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 305.

<sup>84</sup> Clines, 7:146; 428-30.

use of nature as metaphor in prophetic literature is a vast topic. Here we are more interesting in how Ben Sira uses prophetic texts as well as the sources in Psalms and Job, demonstrating familiarity with these texts. The similarities with language in Isaiah (stretching the heavens in Sir 43:11) and Nahum (the wrath of God in weather) could also indicate Ben Sira's tone.

There are several other relevant examples of these words *סופה* and *סערה*, significant because they come from texts already mentioned thus far in this study. There are two genres these are most located: prophetic literature and nature-lists. Isa 40:24 describes God blowing out the *סערה*, which is significant since Isa 40:22 includes the *חוג הארץ* (see Sir 43:12). Besides Isaiah, Amos 1:14 mentions the *יום סופה*, while in Jer 23:19, 30:23 *סופה וסערה* again occurs, and Jon 1:4,12 *סער* (n.m.). The storm-winds of the south wind, *סערות תימן* also appear in Zech 9:14, out of which God will march. Zech 9:13-14 includes references to the rainbow (*קשת*), lightning (*ברק*), as well. In the nature-lists, the *סופה* in Job 37:9 comes forth from the heavenly *הדר*, and in Ps 148:8 *סערה* together with 'fire and hail, snow and frost' all fulfil God's command. Another possibility from the nature-lists is from the two divine introductions out of the 'whirlwind', which are in fact the storm-wind *סופה* (Job 38:1) and the tempest *סערה* (Job 40:6). The likeliest source remains Isa 29:6 because of the order of weather mentioned in the verse, indicating the presence of a quotation.<sup>85</sup> Yet it would appear that the *סופה וסערה* clearly play an important role in prophetic metaphor as well as in nature-lists.

#### *Sir 43:17c-d*

Ben Sira changes tone in these next few lines from the divine wrath and justice of hail, storms, thunder, quakes, and winds, turning back to majesty and beauty (as with Sir 43:11-12). In fact, Sir 43:18-22 cover weather patterns that have both good and bad sides.<sup>86</sup> Perhaps what holds these weather patterns together: the majestic and the wrathful, is not

<sup>85</sup> The only use of *סופה* in Ben Sira is here. By comparison, *סערה* is found as well in Sir 36:2 and Sir 48:9 (Elijah). Ben-Hayyim, 228; 229. In Sir 47:17 the form is actually the *hiphil* of the verb *סער*. In Sir 39:28, winds are made by God to punish the earth, *πνευμα* in the Greek. Smend, *Index*, 193. In the Qumran non-biblical texts, neither *סערה* nor *סער* are found with *סופה* (4QInstr<sup>d</sup> (4Q418) 34:2 *סער בלע* (storm of slander), 1QH fr. 3.6 *רוח סע[רה]* (rushing storm). Clines, 6:135.

<sup>86</sup> It is surprising that Ben Sira does not include discussion of *מטר* itself anywhere in Sir 42-43, although he mentions the raining (*ממטר*) of snow in Sir 43:18. It is also surprising that given the themes of Sir 43:18-22 as renewal of the earth that Ben Sira does not quote from the Shema (Deut 6), let alone elsewhere in Deuteronomy at Deut 32, which refers to rain (Deut 32:2) and plague (*רשף*) (Deut 32:24).

their respective moods or tones, but that through their creation, the weather can be considered revelations of divine judgement.

In Sir 43:17c רשף as a metaphor requires some unpacking. In Deut 32:24 רשף means ‘plague,’ though it can also mean ‘sparks.’ In Rabbinic Hebrew, רשף means ‘bird,’ which explains the choice of the Greek (πτερουα) and Latin (*avis*).<sup>87</sup> The meaning ‘bird’ works because then the line would contain two animal metaphors: bird and locust. Furthermore, the meaning of פרה (the line begins, כרשף ירה) is ‘flies away,’ often used for birds and insects.<sup>88</sup> In Ps 147:16, God scatters (פרה) hoarfrost like ashes (see Sir 43:19).<sup>89</sup>

There are three occurrences of רשף in the Hebrew Bible: Job 5:7, Cant 8:6, and Hab 3:5. The context of Job 5:7 gives another clue as to possibilities of ambiguity: the רשף in Job 5:7 fly upwards (עוף). Along the same lines, Cant 8:6 uses רשף as ‘sparks’ with עוף in the context of fire. The line in Sir 43:17c makes sense with snow described as either: sparks scattering or birds flying upwards.

The ambiguities over רשף continue in Qumran non-biblical literature.<sup>90</sup> There is no strong evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls of רשף without a doubt meaning ‘bird’, but there are examples of ‘plague’ and ‘sparks.’ The other use of רשף by Ben Sira is in a verbal form in Sir 16:6, with fire being kindled, which again suggests ‘sparks.’<sup>91</sup> Indeed, there would be a good juxtaposition of metaphor in contrasting hot sparks and snow. Therefore this kind of deliberate ambiguity would be a form of wordplay, akin to the unusual verbs thus far.

Snow is included not just because it is part of the climate in Israel, especially in the mountains, but also because it too is typically incorporated in the nature-lists, as well. In

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<sup>87</sup> Jastrow, 1502.

<sup>88</sup> BDB, 827. Ezek 13:20.

<sup>89</sup> Another small possibility for translation could be: ‘Like a plague his snow breaks out.’ Since רשף can be plague (Deut 32:24, 4QInstr<sup>d</sup> 127.3, 4QJub<sup>d</sup> 21:20), and פרה can mean ‘to break out’ in the context of a plague. Yet this meaning is not likely, since all other uses by Ben Sira and Qumran non-biblical texts mean to sprout or flourish. Ben Sira has five other uses of פרה as ‘to sprout’ or ‘to flourish.’ Ben-Hayyim, 258. In Qumran, פרה is similarly ‘to sprout’ (4Q185 1.1.10; 1QH 14.15; 16.6,10; 18:31; 4QJub<sup>s</sup> fr. 3.2; 4QInstr<sup>c</sup> 4.2.3). Clines, 6:762-63. Ben-Hayyim, 258.

<sup>90</sup> In 4QInstr<sup>d</sup> (4Q418) 127.3, רשף means plague by which the body is eaten up. 4QBeat (4Q525) 15:5, more ambiguously, can be either plague of death or sparks of death (רשפי מות), though the following verse 15:6 סודי מותי להבי גו[פ]רית (‘flames of sulphur are his foundation’) suggests ‘sparks.’ Clines, 7:563-64. Snow in the Qumran literature is rare, found just in 4QTheTwoWays (4Q473, 1QS III:13- IV) frag. 2.6: וירקון שלג קרה וברד. Clines, 8:363-64.

<sup>91</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 284.

Ps 147:16, snow is ‘given like wool.’ In addition, Ps 148:8 snow fulfils God’s command, and in Job 37:6, God commands the snow to fall to the earth.

Locusts are not found in the nature-lists in the Hebrew Bible or Second Temple examples. This is Ben Sira’s only use of ארבה, but he does use the word in a typical fashion by using it with שכן, which is the verb most used to describe the movement of locusts.<sup>92</sup>

For the behaviour of locusts in nature, we may note Nah 3:17, which compares the military guards and marshals of the enemies of Israel to locusts (ארבה): החונים בגדרות ביום: קרה שמש זרחה ונוודד ולא-נודע מקומו אים.<sup>93</sup> This behaviour—that locusts become dormant in the cold—is probably why Ben Sira associates the cold snow with locust activity.

Likewise, רדתו (from ירד) in Sir 43:17d echoes vocabulary in Psalm 104. In Ps 104:8 the waters descend (ירד). Most significantly, however, snow is described as falling in Job 37:6, albeit with the verb הוא.

#### *Sir 43:18*

In Sir 43:18 תור can mean either ‘form’ or ‘beauty’ (from תאר).<sup>94</sup> The same word, spelled תואר, is seen earlier in the Hymn of Creation in Sir 43:1, with a meaning ‘form.’

There are several cases of the metaphor ‘white as snow,’ such as Ps 51:9 and Isa 1:18. Snow is mentioned in the nature-lists (Job 36:6, 38:22; Ps 148:8). However, snow is given a larger description in Ben Sira—two whole lines. Ben Sira describing snow as

<sup>92</sup> BDB, 1014-15 (entry on שכן, *piel* 4.b).

<sup>93</sup> My translation: ‘which settle on fences on a frosty day, when the sun comes they flutter off, and where they are nobody knows.’ Ancient armies would indeed have to be inactive during winter months, when it was colder and sea travel was unsafe. John P. Cooper, ‘No Easy Option: The Nile Versus the Red Sea in Ancient and Mediaeval North-South Navigation,’ in *Maritime Technology in the Ancient Economy: Ship-Design and Navigation*, ed. William V. Harris and K. Iara (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2011), 189-210.

<sup>94</sup> Yadin suggests it should be תאור. See, Yadin, *Masada VI*, 222. There are two possible explanations for תור in Mas1<sup>h</sup>, which in B is תואר. The problem is whether תור should be spelled תואר, or whether it means ‘to extend/to search’ תור, a verb found in Sir 51:14. Skehan translates תור/תואר לבבו as ‘its shining whiteness,’ reading יהג in Mas1<sup>h</sup> as יקה, in Skehan and Di Lella, 490, ‘dazzles (lit. ‘pierces’)’ although יגיה is also possible. When Ben Sira uses תואר he sometimes spells it תור, for example in Sir 43:9, though it is much more common in Mas1<sup>h</sup> to find תאר. This means there are *two* occurrences of תור in Sir 43:9, 18 in Mas1<sup>h</sup>, suggesting they are variant spellings. By contrast, MSS B and C (such as Sir 36:27) consistently spell it תואר. The Greek and Latin both read ‘beauty’ with καλλος and *pulchritudinem*. Conversely though, תור is a possible construct form of תאר/תואר, so it could be correct but were considered to be in the construct, which is possible for both Sir 43:9 and 43:18. Orthography is not always perfectly consistent even throughout a single scroll. Tov, *Scribal Practices; Textual Criticism*.

white is not at all unusual by itself, but the ways in which he gives attention to snow (below) is distinct from sources in the Hebrew Bible.

There is some disagreement in translation over the meaning of יהג, from הגה, which in scholarship of Ben Sira is translated as ‘astounded’ or ‘dazzled.’<sup>95</sup> The other cases of the verb הגה in Ben Sira mean ‘ponder,’<sup>96</sup> and the verb appears many times in Qumran literature, also as ‘ponder.’<sup>97</sup> This would then be the exception, but this exception is possible for two reasons. Firstly, the Greek here uses ἐκθαυμάσει (‘marvels exceedingly’).<sup>98</sup> And secondly, considering the nature-lists as sources, הגה is also found in Job 37:2, in which it implies more than casual pondering in respond to thunder.<sup>99</sup> Job 37:1, the verse before it, describes the heart quaking.

In the second half of Sir 43:18, Ben Sira describes snow as raining, which is seen best in light of several examples in the Hebrew Bible. In Exod 9:23 hail is said to ‘rain.’ In the nature-lists, snow and rain are often paired together in the same line, for example Job 37:6 and over several lines Job 38:28-29, albeit with קרה and כפר שמים. Ben Sira is the only case anywhere in BH or non-biblical Second Temple texts of ממטר being used to describe snow fall specifically, and it is Ben Sira’s only use of the metaphor, too.<sup>100</sup> Perhaps because of including ממטר here, Ben Sira does not later mention rain by itself in his Hymn of Creation.

Ben Sira normally uses תמה only two other times at Sir 11:13, 21.<sup>101</sup> This leaves two verbs employed to describe appreciating nature, one of which does not feature in nature-lists and the other which does (הגה in Job 37:2). In the nature-lists such as Job 36-41 or Psalms 29, 104, 147, 148, and in Ben Sira’s two nature-lists (Sir 42:15-25, 43:27-33) the reader is invited at beginning and end to appreciate the works of God. Hence, the appreciation of the snow is part of the literary convention and stream of tradition.

<sup>95</sup> Smend, *Hebräisch*, 77; 2:407. Skehan and Di Lella, 486; 490.

<sup>96</sup> Sir 6:37, 14:20, and 50:28. Clines, 2:488, records Sir 43:18 as the only case of it meaning ‘to dazzle,’ which would be the only case of its kind.

<sup>97</sup> CD 10:6, 13:2, 14:8, 1QH 11:21, 4Q418 43:4, 4Q525 3.2.6, and others. Clines, 2:487.

<sup>98</sup> The verb ἐκθαυμάσω has a strengthened meaning of θαυμάζω.

<sup>99</sup> שמעו שמעו ברעז קלו והגה מפיו יצא: (Job 37:2).

<sup>100</sup> Ben Sira uses ממטר only once elsewhere in Sir 40:16, in which the reeds—the children of the ungodly (Sir 40:15)—by the bank of a river will be dried up before any rain.

<sup>101</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 306.

*Sir 43:19*

Sir 43:19 mentions hoarfrost (כפור/כפר), a noun found only three total times in the Hebrew Bible, two of these times in the nature-lists.<sup>102</sup> In Job 38:29, hoarfrost (כפר שמים) is used in comparison with קרה. In Ps 147:16 hoarfrost is scattered like ash. The likelihood of Ben Sira's direct dependence on these sources is also probable because in the Qumran non-biblical texts כפור is never used; instead קרה is used.<sup>103</sup> Ben Sira also mentions hoarfrost one other time in Sir 3:15; in MS A 'hoarfrost' is כפור but C reads קרה.<sup>104</sup>

The second example, Ps 147:16, reads כפור כאפר יפזר. In contrast, Ben Sira says it is scattered like *salt*.<sup>105</sup> Ben Sira compares hoarfrost to salt instead of ash because, perhaps, it is already described as ash in Psalm 147 and a different metaphor. His familiarity with the psalm has been so strongly demonstrated that the possibility of a lapse of memory seems insufficient as a reason. Rather, Ben Sira's creativity appears here in his choice of words, which does not stop with 'ash.' Ben Sira continues, likening frost's growth to a thorny-bush of blossoms.

Interestingly, the word for blossoms, צצים, is found usually with פרה, as in Num 17:23 or 1QH 14:15.<sup>106</sup> Earlier, פרה was found above in Sir 43:17c (יפרה שלגו). Here instead, Ben Sira uses צמה, which significantly is found צמה in Job 38:27, Ps 104:14, and Ps 147:8. These three cases all refer to sprouting grass. Yet Ben Sira uses צמה for frost because, perhaps, of the metaphor of blossoms. The multiple contrasts of frost and snow with verbs that refer to green things growing indicates the juxtaposition is intentional.

<sup>102</sup> In Exod 16:14, manna is as thin as hoarfrost (דק ככפר).

<sup>103</sup> Clines, 7:322.

<sup>104</sup> 'As hoarfrost in fair weather, your sins will melt away.'

<sup>105</sup> The verb here in Mas<sup>1h</sup> is written ישפך, while B is ישכון. The form ישפך may be *qal*, though *niphal* ישפך is also possible, although though the verb is active in Greek and the verb in the second half of the line יצמה (B is יציץ) is either *hiphil* with God as subject or *qal* ('it sprouts'). Ben-Hayyim, 263.

<sup>106</sup> See Sir 40:4 and 45:12, both times as 'shining thing,' that is, a crown. Ben-Hayyim, 262. However, most cases in the Hebrew Bible are 'blossoms.' BDB, 847.

#### 4.d. *Summary of Textual Findings*

This section summarizes the key findings of the textual commentary with some added analysis concerning overall theme and issues. Because of the long length of Sir 43:11-19, this section will be useful for gathering together data before moving on to comparisons with other sources in the ancient world.<sup>107</sup>

The main aim of the study is to discern any relationship between literary models and direct textual use (quotation and allusion). Sir 43:11-19 reveals much about the way in which Ben Sira treats quotation, allusion, and style when he has several literary models in the Hebrew Bible upon which he draws. A second issue underlying Sir 43:11-19 is the balance of harmonizing these multiple nature-lists.

Overall, consistent textual reuse of Job 36-41 and Psalms 29, 104, 147, and 148 was found throughout. There were also many echoes of language in prophetic literature in Isaiah (stretching the heavens) and Nah 1:2-10. Hail and hail-stones in Sir 43:13a, 15b echo God hurling stones at the retreating Amorite kings in Josh 10:11. This episode in Joshua, demonstrating God's use of weather for divine wrath, is alluded to again in Sir 46:6.

Ben Sira's ability to harmonize texts is accompanied by a strong tone of prophetic revelation through weather patterns as signs of God's judgement, positive and negative. This is interesting because in Isaiah, God's control of creation reassures the reader of God's power, while in Nah 1:2-10, God's control of creation is employed for divine wrath. In Sir 43:17a-17b, the order of weather patterns are drawn from Isa 29:6 primarily, but also can be seen in Ps 29:8, Ps 104:7, and Job 37:2-5. Ben Sira's use of *וּסְעָרָה וּסְעָרָה* echo the nature-lists in Psalms and Job but also Zech 9:13-14, Nah 1:3, and Isa 29:6.

The metaphors for snow in Sir 43:17cd-19 are unusual. There is a synonymous quotation with hoarfrost (Ps 147:16). In Sir 43:18, snow's movement is imagined as raining, perhaps echoing Job 38:25-26 or Job 37:6, especially while Ben Sira does not mention rain in his nature-list.

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<sup>107</sup> Chapter Five will also have a section of this kind, but not Chapter Six. Despite its length, the textual reuse to examine in Chapter Six is not as extensive as Chapters Four and Five.

Throughout Sir 43:11-19, a heavy use of metaphor can be detected. Ben Sira uses many more metaphors than can be seen in the nature-lists of Job or Psalms; he has at least one metaphor for more than half of the weather items in Sir 43:11-19, while in Job and Psalms metaphors are much more sparse.

The pattern to be noticed is that while the nature-lists in Psalms 29, 104, 147, 148 and Job 36-41 are used as a literary model, there is a consistent echo of weather patterns and unusual verbs with connotations in Isaiah and the other prophets or else not typically found in nature-lists. These literary features set Ben Sira's tone as one of a nature-list of divine revelation, strongly influenced by the roles that weather elements (in poetic metaphor, prophecy, and miracles) play in the Hebrew Bible as indicators of divine pleasure or displeasure.

The use of Psalms 29, 104, 147, 148 and Job 36-41 is throughout the Hymn of Creation, not just Sir 43:11-19.<sup>108</sup> This has been illustrated with two tables. Table 1 shows the textual reuse of these texts in Sir 43:11-19. The order remains as found in these nature-lists in order to show how Ben Sira uses variety. One should not look for matching elements across rows in order, but for overall textual reuse. Shading indicates shared elements of nature in both tables.

TABLE 1: SIR 43:11-19 COMPARED TO JOB AND PSALMS						
NATURAL WORKS IN ORDER IN SIR 43:11-19	DESCRIPTIONS APPLIED IN SIR 43:11-19	JOB 36:24-37:24	JOB 38:1-41:26	Ps 104	Ps 147	Ps 148
קשת	ראה קשת וברך עשיה (43:11a) כי מאד נהדרה כבוד (43:11b) הוג [הקיפה] בכבודה (43:12a) [ו]יד אל נטתה בגב[און] (43:12b)	-	-	-	-	-
ברד	גערתו [תתו]ה ברד (43:13a) ותנצח זיקות משפט (43:13b)	-	ואצרות ברד תראה (Job 38:22) אשר-השכתי	-	-	אש וברד שלג וקיטור רוח וסערה עשה דברו

<sup>108</sup> For example, ships are mentioned in Ps 104:25-26.

			לעת־צר   ליום קרב ומלחמה (Job 38:23)			(Ps 148:8)
אוצר	למענו פרע אוצר (43:14a)	מִן־הַחֹדֶר תְּבוֹא סוּפָה (Job 37:9)	הַבָּאֵת אֶל־אֲצֵרוֹת שֶׁלֵג וְאֲצֵרוֹת בְּרֵד תִּרְאֶה (Job 38:22)	-	-	-
עבים	ויעף עבים כעיש (43:14b)	אֶף אִם־יִבִּין מִפְּרִשֵׁי־עֵב תִּשְׂאוֹת סִכְתּוֹ (Job 36:29) אֶף־בְּרֵי יִטְרִיחַ עֵב יִפְיֵץ עֲנַן אֹרֹר (Job 37:11) הַתְּדַע עַל־מִפְּלִשֵׁי־עֵב (Job 37:16)	הַתְּרִים לַעֵב קוֹלְךָ (Job 38:34)	הַשֵּׁם־עֲבִים רִכּוּבוֹ (Ps 104:3)	-	-
ענן	גבורתו חזק ענן (43:15a)	אֶף־בְּרֵי יִטְרִיחַ עֵב יִפְיֵץ עֲנַן אֹרֹר (Job 37:11) וְהוֹפִיעַ אֹר עֲנָנוֹ (Job 37:15)	בְּשׁוּמֵי עֲנַן לִבְשׁוֹ (Job 38:9)	-	-	-
אבני ברד	ותגדע אבני ברד (43:15b)	-	-	-	-	אֵשׁ וּבְרֵד שֶׁלֵג וְקִיטּוֹר רוּחַ וְסַעֲרָה עֹשֶׂה דְבָרוֹ (Ps 148:8)
קול רעמו <sup>109</sup>	קול רעמו יחיל ארצו (43:17a)	שָׁמְעוּ שְׁמוֹעַ בְּרָגוֹ קֶלֶד   וְהִגַּה מִפִּי יֵצֵא (Job 37:2) אֲחֵרָיו יִשְׂאֵק קוֹל   יִרְעַם בְּקוֹל גְּאוֹנוֹ (Job 37:4) יִרְעַם אֶל בְּקוֹלוֹ נִפְלְאוֹת (Job 37:5)	הַתְּרִים לַעֵב קוֹלְךָ (Job 38:34) וּבְקוֹל כְּמֹהוּ תִרְעַם (Job 40:9)	מִן־קוֹל רַעֲמֶךָ יִחְפְּזוּן (Ps 104:7)	-	-
הרים	ובכחו יניף הרים (43:16a)	-	-	עַל־הַרִים יַעֲמְדוּ־מֵיַם (Ps 104:6) יַעֲלוּ הַרִים יִרְדּוּ בְּקַעֲוֹת	-	הַהַרִים וְכָל־עַץ גִּבְעוֹת   עֵפְרַי וְכָל אַרְזִים (Ps 148:9)

<sup>109</sup> However, see also Psalm 29 mainly. Also Ps 147:15, 19.

				(Ps 104:8) משקה הרים מעליותיו (Ps 104:13)		
תימן	אמרתו תחריף תימן (43:17a)	-	המבינתך יאברר נץ   יפרש כנפו לתימן (Job 39:26)	-		-
סופה	על[*] עול סופה וסערה (43:16b)	מְהִיָּדָר תְּבוֹא סופה (Job 37:9)	ויענה' את־איוב מג הסופה ויאמר (Job 38:1)	-	-	
סערה	על[*] עול סופה וסערה (43:17b)	-	ויענה' את־איוב מג הסערה ויאמר (Job 40:6)	-	-	אש וברד שלג וקיטור רוח וסערה עשה דברו (Ps 148:8)
שלג	כרשף יפרח שלגו (43:17c) וכארבה ישכן רדתו (43:17d) תור לבנו יהג עינים (43:18a) וממטרו יתמיה לבב (43:18b)	כי לשלג יאמר הוא ארץ   וגשם מטר וגשם מטרות עזו (Job 37:6)	הבאת אל־אצרות שלג ואצרות ברד תראה (Job 38:22)	-	-	אש וברד שלג וקיטור רוח וסערה עשה דברו (Ps 148:8)
כפור	[וגם] כפור כמלה ישפך (43:19a) ויצמח כסנה צצים (43:19b)	-	-	-	כפור כאפר יפור (Ps 147:16)	-

The significance of Ben Sira's echoing of Psalms 104, 147, and 148 *in particular* thus far has not been fully set in context. Ben Sira's use of these three psalms has a notable impact on how we understand the textual history of the Psalms. The debate over the Psalms Scroll is over whether the different order of Psalms 91-150 in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is evidence of 11QPs<sup>a</sup> not being a Psalms Scroll but something secondary, or whether it is evidence of a separate textual tradition of the Psalms.<sup>110</sup> Using manuscript evidence of many different

<sup>110</sup> M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, 'The Psalms Scroll (11QPs<sup>a</sup>). A Problem of Canon and Text,' *Textus* 5 (1966): 22-33. Menaḥem Haran, '11QPs<sup>a</sup> and the Canonical Book of Psalms' in M. Brettler and Michael Fishbane, eds., *Minḥah le-Nahum* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1993), 193-201. Manfred R. Lehmann, '11QPs<sup>a</sup> and Ben Sira,' *RevQ* 11:2 (1983): 239-251. Shemaryahu Talmon, 'Pisqah Be'emsā' Pasuq and 11QPs<sup>a</sup>,' *Textus* 5 (1966): 11-21. Patrick W. Skehan, 'Qumran and Old Testament Criticism,' in *Qumrân: sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, ed. M. Delcor (Paris: Duculot; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978), 163-82. Emanuel Tov,

Psalms scrolls, Flint conclusively shows that in the mid-first century BCE, the order of Psalms 91-150 was still not as close to being fixed as Psalms 1-90.<sup>111</sup>

The order of the relevant psalms as found in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is **104 (or 103), 147, 105, 146, 148.**<sup>112</sup> The last lines of Psalms 103 and 104 are the same, so the psalm preceding 147 could be either. In the rearrangement of the 11QPs<sup>a</sup> edition of Psalms, it is immediately clear that at least Psalm 147 and 148 remain in close proximity, even if Psalm 104 is actually 103. This is why it is important to corroborate with other manuscripts. 4QPs<sup>d</sup> contains Psalms 106, 147, and 104 only.<sup>113</sup> This means that in at least 4QPs<sup>d</sup>, Psalm 104 was found next to 147, and in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, Psalms 147 and 148 were close together. The textual history of Psalms is complex, and scholarship has sought to explain this complexity with a number of theories. What remains is that in variant Psalms editions, these psalms tend to appear near one another.

The placement of Psalm 106 near these nature-lists is also significant because, if Col 1, line 5 of 4QPs<sup>d</sup> is in fact Ps 106:48,<sup>114</sup> it would provide a good reason why Ben Sira places the Praise of the Fathers and the Hymn of Creation directly beside one another. Psalm 106 is a list of patriarchs and the protective actions of God in the history of Israel. By comparison, the Praise of the Fathers is also a list of patriarchs, albeit more complete

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*Textual Criticism*, 109; 190n; 220. Ulrich Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption im Frühjudentum: Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Struktur und Pragmatik der Psalmenrolle 11QPs<sup>a</sup> aus Qumran* (Leiden: Brill, 2003). Eva Jain, *Psalmen oder Psalter? Materielle Rekonstruktion und inhaltliche Untersuchung der Psalmenhandschriften aus der Wüste* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Dahmen concludes that 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is a completely detached separate redaction of the MT-Psalter. Dahmen, *Psalmen- und Psalter-Rezeption*, 315. Jain also maintains 11QPs<sup>a</sup> is a secondary collection, arguing that the manuscripts themselves are far too diverse to maintain a hypothesis which would encompass them as a whole. Jain, *Psalmen oder Psalter*, 300. However, Wilson has shown that editorial choices do not themselves demand a collection is secondary. Gerald H. Wilson, 'The Qumran Psalms Manuscripts and the Consecutive Arrangement of Psalms in the Hebrew Psalter,' *CBQ* 45 (1983): 377-388; 'Evidence of Editorial Divisions in the Hebrew Psalter,' *VT* 34 (1984): 337-352; 'The Qumran Psalms Scroll Reconsidered: Analysis of the Debate,' *CBQ* 47 (1985): 624-42; *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985); 'The Qumran Psalms Scroll (11QPs<sup>a</sup>) and the Canonical Psalter: Comparison of Editorial Shaping,' *CBQ* 59 (1997): 448-464.

<sup>111</sup> Flint, *Psalms Scrolls*, especially 136-149; 213-14. Note that not all of the Qumran Psalms manuscripts follow the 11QPs<sup>a</sup>-Psalter edition order, such as 4Q84 which follows the MT order for Psalms 91-118. Flint shows that there are two separate traditions and both can be found at Qumran.

<sup>112</sup> DJD IV, 5. Abegg, Flint, and Ulrich, *Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*, 553-54.

<sup>113</sup> DJD XVI, 65-71.

<sup>114</sup> The note in DJD XVI, 66, gives several convincing reasons why the line cannot be the other options of Ps 146:10 (the final ך is where in Ps 146:10 ךׁ would be, and it is clearly not a ך) or the final line of Psalm 134 (Psalm 134 does not have הללויה). Psalm 106 is not found in the surviving text of 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, in which Psalm 104(?) is preceded by Psalm 102. See DJD IV, 20; Plate III. IAA, 'Multispectral and Infrared Images of 4QPs<sup>d</sup> Frag C' (Courtesy of the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library; Israel Antiquities Authority; Photo: Shai HaLevi, Image taken 24 April 2015).

and focusing attention on priests (Aaron and Simon II), yet still running through Israel's history chronologically.<sup>115</sup> The fact that Psalm 106 is thought of together with our nature-list psalms shows why Ben Sira placed his nature-list next to the Praise. The placement is therefore another example of rationality behind the structure underlying the text of Ben Sira.

The orders found in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> and 4QPs<sup>d</sup> can suggest two possibilities. The first option is that Ben Sira knew an edition of Psalms that looked similar to those found at Qumran, which would have aided his research before composition and encouraged him to think of them together. The other possibility is that Ben Sira could have simply read these psalms separately in a proto-MT edition and conceptually thought of them as belonging together. 11QPs<sup>a</sup> and 4QPs<sup>d</sup> demonstrate that other people besides Ben Sira also thought of these psalms *together*, and thus did in some editions of Psalms place them together. Ben Sira's use of these psalms is thus new evidence besides the Psalms Scrolls themselves that can be brought to the debate.

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<sup>115</sup> Though Ben Sira mention Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth, and Adam again at the end (Sir 49:16), this in fact is a literary strategy of making comparisons between patriarchs (Sir 45:25, 48:22) and does not necessarily mean he is interrupting the chronological order.

#### 4.e. *Sir 43:11-19 Compared with Other Sources*

##### *Second Temple Sources*

While list-making is a fundamental scribal strategy since the earliest Akkadian vocabulary lists, the nature-lists in the Hebrew Bible (Psalms 29, 104, 147, 148 and Job 36-41) play a strong textual role at the forefront of Ben Sira's Hymn of Creation, with direct quotations or allusions, similar order, and literary features such as metaphor.

There are much smaller catalogues of nature comprising a single verse or several lines in 1 En. 69:16-24, 2 Bar. 59:5, 4 Ezra 4:5, 5:26, Wis 7:17-21, 11QPs<sup>a</sup> Hymn 1-9, 1QM 10:11-16. The most relevant comparison is with 1 Enoch since it predates Ben Sira (1 Enoch 1-36, 72-82, and probably 83-90), apart from the Book of Similitudes (1 Enoch 37-71) which is absent from Qumran and is thought to be first century BCE to first century CE.<sup>116</sup> The prominence of the storehouses and the sequence of thunder, lighting, hail, hoarfrost, rain and dew (as in Job 37-41) is indeed very significant as evidence of a literary pattern which is clearly based on the nature-lists in the Hebrew Bible. Thus 1 Enoch and Ben Sira are clues of a common stream of tradition in imitating the genre of nature-lists, which is continued in later Second Temple texts.<sup>117</sup> Significantly, for example, 2 Baruch and Wisdom both echo Job.<sup>118</sup> The other examples tend to allude to Isa 40:22 and other

<sup>116</sup> G.W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2001), 7.

<sup>117</sup> Also mentioned Sir 43:13, 4QapPs<sup>b</sup> (4Q381) frag. 14:2. Next, as in Sir 43:14, 4QBer<sup>a</sup> (4Q286) frag. 3:4 (the angels ... 'ע[נ]ג[נ]י מטר [נ]ערפלי מים עבי' and frag. 5 (the earth, living things, produce, and the abyss), and 1QM 12:9 (army of spirits, our horsemen are כעננים וכעבי טל לכסות ארץ 'like dark-clouds and like clouds of dew that cover the earth.' Additionally, as in Sir 43:15: Jub 5:7-8. For אלגביש by itself = 4QJub<sup>a</sup> (4Q216) v 7 with [ק]ר[ה], [טל], (dew), and [ברד]. And 5.8 'and the angels of the [winds], לכהום ולחרף ולקיץ (רוחות)'. In this reference, it is just the list of what God created. Finally, in 4QTheTwoWays (4Q473) frag. 2:6 God will destroy you if you walk upon the evil way, וירקון שלג קרה וברד. Hebrew and English from García Martínez and Tigchelaar, *Dead Sea Scroll Study Edition*, 1:132-33 (1QM), 460-61 (4Q216); 2:644-47 (4Q286), 754-55 (4Q381), 954-55 (4Q473). Also note in the New Testament: the sun, moon, and stars are listed in that order in Matt 24:29.

<sup>118</sup> M.E. Stone, 'Lists of Revealed Things,' 431-35, compares 2 Baruch 59:5 and Sir 1:1-3 (cannot number the raindrops) with Job 28:23-26, and 2 Bar 48:4 and 4 Ezra 4:5, 5:36 (the order of fire, wind, and

shorter nature-lists from prophetic literature. Therefore a main distinction in Ben Sira's nature-list is his use of the Psalms, Job, and prophetic literature harmonized together, and the much longer length of his nature-list comparatively. With his Hymn of Creation and his other nature-list at Sir 39:12-35, Ben Sira has mastered the nature-list far beyond his literary contemporaries.

Another key difference between Ben Sira and the non-biblical literature, mentioned briefly above, is tone. The tone of divine revelation is a resounding message. Another element of Ben Sira's tone in the Hymn, however, is also human *wisdom*. Wis 7:17-21 stresses how much Solomon has learned already about nature and the universe. Conversely, Ben Sira addresses the knowledge of the universe as something only God knows, along the lines of God and Elihu in Job 36-41. Ben Sira concludes in Sir 43:32, saying, 'Many things greater than these lie hidden, for we have seen few of his works.'

#### *Sources from the Near East, Egypt, and Mediterranean*

Second Temple literature, including Ben Sira, appears to be alone in generating such an established genre of nature-lists. To some extent the Greek and Roman interest in geography and natural history can be seen as an appreciation of nature.<sup>119</sup> Much later, in Greek and Roman literature there are Virgil's *Georgics* 1.393-423 and Lucretius' *De rerum natura* 6.495-534.

In Egypt and the Near East, there are many lists of medicinal plants and catalogues of elements of nature for vocabulary purposes. Again, here comparisons with Near Eastern and Egyptian examples can be made only at the lowest common denominator of list-making—by comparison, there are several long nature-list poems in the Hebrew Bible which are much better comparisons with Sir 42:15-43:33. One example of an Egyptian nature-list are the four *Hymns of Isidorus*, but the *Hymns* are dated to the first-century BCE.

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abyss/raindrops) with Job 38, but he does not mention Sir 43. He concludes that there are no direct parallels, and that thematically apocalyptic lists are different from the biblical as the former are 'primarily of the declarative type' while Job's lists are 'interrogative in formulation.'

<sup>119</sup> Aristotle, Plato, Herodotus, Eratosthenes (the 'Father of Geography,' author of 'Geographikos' ca. 276-194 BCE, Alexandria), Scymnus (180s BCE), Pliny the Elder (77 CE), and Ptolemy (first to second centuries CE).

There are no known direct textual parallels with the Hymns.<sup>120</sup> Another possibility, discussed above in the commentary, are suggestions by Sanders of overlapping sentiments in P.Insinger.<sup>121</sup> These are Sir 43:6 with P.Insinger 32:2 and Sir 43:22 with P.Insinger 32:6. In fact, the tone of P.Insinger 32 is concerned with things that are made for man's survival, similar to the *Hymns of Isidorus*, and is not a praise of nature's creator. It does not resemble other nature-lists. Rather, these overlaps should be compared more with Sir 39:26, which indicates a wider literary pattern of listing the necessities of human life. These overlaps are also not strong enough evidence of direct textual use as much as overlapping common streams of tradition in ancient wisdom literature, since by comparison Ben Sira in his nature-list draws on Psalms and Job with such consistent familiarity.

#### *Weather in Geographic and Historical Context*

Just like today in Israel, late third-century BCE Judea had many occurrences of hail and earthquakes. Hail is dangerous particularly from April to May and October to November, but occurs throughout the winter season. The order of Ben Sira's weather phenomena is seasonally ordered, not random or based entirely on literary models (which themselves could be based on seasonal order, too). Beginning with Rosh HaShanah in September-October, the rainy season begins, as do hail, thunder, seasonal winds, snow, and ice (Sir 43:20). The summer months bring fires and heat (Sir 43:22) as well as safe travel on the sea (Sir 43:23-24). Ben Sira also mentions the cold north-wind (Sir 43:20). Cold north winds reach Israel from the northwest from the Mediterranean. From Greece, these winds first come from the Alps.<sup>122</sup> In the Mediterranean region, the north wind was equivalent with to Greek god Boreas, which arrives in the winter. In sum, there is therefore a good

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<sup>120</sup> The text can be compared easily. V.F. Vanderlip, ed., *The Four Greek Hymns of Isidorus and the Cult of Isis* (Toronto: A.M. Hakkert, 1972). The *Hymns* (I and IV especially) sing of Isis' and Horus' power over the earth, sky, Nile, and various nations of the world. The emphasis is on elements of nature that provide for man's livelihood, and divine control of nature as an expression of power. The tone is distinct from Hebrew nature-lists which emphasize examining how divine glory is visible within the natural elements (Ps 104:1; Ps 147:1-7; Ps 148:1-12; Job 36:24-24; Sir 42:15-16; 43:2, 9; 43:11, 28-33).

<sup>121</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 79.

<sup>122</sup> Viewable at <http://earth.nullschool.net/>.

possibility that in Sir 43:11-19, Ben Sira cycles seasonally through the weather. A cycle from summer to winter can be seen to some extent in Ps 147:1-17.

The south wind is found parallel with the storm-wind and tempest (Sir 43:17b-16b). In Greek mythology, the god Notus, the south-wind equivalent to the modern Ostro, was the bringer of storms and the warm south-wind. In Israel and Middle East, the Khamsin wind (which blows south and southeast, biblically referred to as the רוח קדים) brings terrible storms, sand-storms, and warm air. In dry arid regions of North Africa, the Levant, and Near East, sand storms are common and are caused by seasonal winds, such as the Sharav wind in Israel. Israel's weather and winds are unpredictable and changeable year-round. Thus the reasons why Sir 43:11-19 has such a tone of divine revelation of judgement (winds and storms) or benevolence (rainbows, snow)—and perhaps why storms and winds appear so frequently in the Hebrew Bible's prophetic literature is emphatically shown by the features of the region's climate.

#### 4.f. *Chapter Four Conclusions*

This study has demonstrated several new findings for characterizing Ben Sira's scribalism, for underlying structure behind the arrangement of Ben Sira's whole text, and presented some possibilities concerning Ben Sira's edition of Psalms.

The aim of this chapter was to examine the relationship between literary convention or genre with direct textual reuse by quotation, echo, allusion, or similarity of vocabulary and phrases. We have found there is indeed a strong association between direct textual reuse and the literary models used in Sir 43:11-19. Where Ben Sira closely imitates nature-lists, he also has a high proportion of direct textual reuse of those same nature-lists through direct textual reuse.

Secondly, as shown by previous chapters, Ben Sira's creativity has a distinct role in the selection of his sources, and in his use of synonymous quotations and echoes rather than, for instance, a use of 'copy and paste' quotation. This study's results from Sir 43:11-19 show that in order to set a particular tone Ben Sira employs his creativity in his unusual choices of verbs. This chapter also shows that Ben Sira utilizes a prophetic tone by listing miraculous weather (Josh 10:11) and weather elements that function as symbols or metaphors in prophetic literature (Ezek 1; Isa 40:21-24; Nah 1:2-10; Hab 3:5).

The next finding was that comparison with other Second Temple sources sets Ben Sira apart from his contemporaries in composing such a long nature-list so full of metaphor, allusions, and echoes of Job and Psalms. This is also shown by his shorter nature-list in Sir 39:12-35. The importance of the Psalms in the first century BCE is shown by the high number of manuscripts found near Qumran. Despite this, Ben Sira uses the nature-list psalms extensively, and he is alone in doing so, compared to the use of Isaiah and Job by other Second Temple sources. Ben Sira's harmonization of these sources together is also evident.

Additionally, a glimpse of what Ben Sira's version of the Hebrew Bible looked like was discovered from his attention to Psalms 104, 147, and 148. These findings help us understand the text Ben Sira was using in preparation of his composition.

Yet another discovery was that with the order of Psalms, the closeness of Psalm 106 to the nature-list psalms as they are found in 4QPs<sup>d</sup> illustrates why Ben Sira placed the

Praise of the Fathers and Hymn of Creation next to one another in his text. The orders in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> and 4QPs<sup>d</sup> show that Ben Sira either had a similar edition of Psalms or at least conceptually thought of these nature-lists and Psalm 106 as belonging together. The possibilities exist but textual reuse cannot prove definitively that Ben Sira had an arrangement in his edition of Psalms that was similar to 11QPs<sup>a</sup> and 4QPs<sup>d</sup>, since the reuse could be the result of mental arrangement. This evidence can therefore offer these new considerations to the Psalm Scroll debate, and tell us more about the possible shape of Ben Sira's Hebrew Bible. These issues and their implications for Ben Sira and the Psalms Scroll Debate are discussed in an article by the present author.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Lindsey A. Askin, 'The Qumran Psalms Scroll Debate and Ben Sira: Considering the Evidence of Textual Reuse in Sir 43:11-19,' *Dead Sea Discoveries* 23:1 (2016): 1-24. The Psalms Scrolls and MT-Psalter texts are compared to Ben Sira's textual reuse in cases where quotation may be from Psalms 104, 147, or 148, and the study concludes that we cannot yet rule out either MT or 11QPs<sup>a</sup>-Psalter in the case of his edition of Psalms.

## Chapter Five

### Sir 41:1-15: Echoes of Job, Qohelet, and Ancient Perspectives on Death and the Body

#### 5.a. General Introduction

This chapter will explore textual reuse present in Sir 41:1-15, and explore what Sir 41:1-15 tells us about Ben Sira's relationships with his contemporary world. The key issue of this exploration is how to make precise distinctions between sociocultural ideas held in common in the ancient world and direct textual connections between texts. There is also the problem of describing how these two spheres, sociocultural and textual, work together in Ben Sira. Schwartz argues that Ben Sira's concern for glory and a lasting name (found also in Sir 41:1-15) is evidence for Ben Sira's adoption of Mediterranean society values.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, Di Lella sees Sir 41:8-10 as an attack on Hellenized Jews, and thus a reaction against contemporary Mediterranean culture.<sup>2</sup>

Popular ideas about death in the ancient world can be explored through the evidence of funerary stelae and vases, inscriptions, tombs, and funerary rites. Comments and proverbs on death are also found throughout Mediterranean and Near Eastern literature, epigraphy, and philosophy. Beginning in fifth-century BCE Athens, funeral orations became a more common practice in the Greek world, such as the works of Pindar.<sup>3</sup> Thus analysis of Sir 41:1-15 is more complicated than identifying textual parallels in wisdom literature or Classical high philosophy (such as Epicureanism), since there are many types

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<sup>1</sup> Schwartz, *Mediterranean*, 66-74. Schwartz cites Sir 14:10-13, also on death, but not Sir 41:1-15. Schwartz, *Mediterranean*, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 474.

<sup>3</sup> See §5.f.

of expressions of death: public, material, and literary. This wider evidence will be discussed in §5.f-g.

The present study will also address debates on the structure of Sir 41:1-15, which has been seen for a long time as actually composed of several smaller units. Scholars divide Sir 41:1-15 into smaller units because it treats two themes that do not seem related on first inspection: death and the fate of the wicked.<sup>4</sup> This issue will be explored through consideration of Ben Sira's textual reuse.

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<sup>4</sup> Sir 41:1-4, 5-13, 14-15 (Smend, *Hebräisch*, 40-41; 72, and Lévi, *L'Écclesiastique*, 32-39); Sir 41:1-4, 5-15 (Skehan and Di Lella, 464-65; 469; 477-78; 480); Sir 41:1-4, 5-9, 10-15 (Jeremy Corley, 'Searching for structure and redaction in Ben Sira' in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology*, eds. Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), 39 (21-47)); Sir 40:3-41:1-13 (Collins, 'Ecclesiasticus,' 103).

### 5.b. *Introduction to Death and the Body in Ben Sira*

Ben Sira's attitudes to death are a valuable insight into Second Temple understanding of the Hebrew Bible's references to death, Sheol, and attitudes to the body during life and after death. Sir 41:1-15 refers to death as the fate of all, Sheol as the fate of the wicked specifically, and having a good name and good children as opportunities of surviving death. These ideas are all explored in the Hebrew Bible, as well, and many of them share strong similarities with ideas in Mediterranean world and the Near East.

In his study of death and afterlife in the Hebrew Bible, Johnston shows that while Sheol is sometimes portrayed as the fate of all, it is *primarily* known as the fate of the wicked.<sup>5</sup> Thus Sheol is lamented and feared in psalms particularly when the subject is in distress or fears judgement.<sup>6</sup> An afterlife for the righteous and wise in some form of communion or rest with God is referred to with ambiguity in Psalms 16, 49, and 73.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Matthewson argues that Job has a wide range of attitudes towards death: death is justice, a test, and relief for the weary.<sup>8</sup> Ben Sira, too, has similar opinions. Death is rest for the old and good (Sir 41:1cd-2ab) with one's ancestors (Sir 41:3b) but also judgement for the wicked (Sir 41:5-11). The fear of death (Sir 41:3a) also resonates with Psalm 23. Another text is Hezekiah's writing after his illness (Chapter Two). Isa 38:18 reads, 'Sheol cannot thank you, death cannot praise you, those who go down to the pit cannot hope for your faithfulness.' The following verse Isa 38:19 juxtaposes the silent dead with the living and the passing of pious knowledge from father to children (cf. Sir 41:5-9; 14-15).<sup>9</sup>

Ben Sira remains close to examples in Hebrew prophetic literature of individual resurrection (Sir 48:9), particularly cases of resurrection in prophecy as a powerful

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<sup>5</sup> P.S. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol: Death and the Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002), 81-85.

<sup>6</sup> Ps 6:5; 28:1; 69:15; 88:3; 130:1; 143:7. Cited in Johnston, *Sheol*, 88; discussed 88-97.

<sup>7</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 199-217.

<sup>8</sup> Don Matthewson, *Death and Survival in Job* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 17. Matthewson is responding to Zuckerman's claim that the rhetorical value of death in Job is for parody. Bruce Zuckerman, *Job the Silent: A Study in Historical Counterpoint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 118-35.

<sup>9</sup> See textual commentary below on Sir 41:1, 4, 14-15.

metaphor of the power of God over life and death (Sir 48:5).<sup>10</sup> Corley notes that although Ben Sira does not believe in an afterlife, he leaves some openness to the cases of Enoch and Elijah.<sup>11</sup> For the rest of humanity, Ben Sira's afterlife for the good is rest and reunion with one's ancestors.

Attitudes to the body in Ben Sira are critical and negative, which sounds similar to physical suffering in Job. Erickson argues that Job rejects his physical body as part of a legal metaphor to prove his innocence,<sup>12</sup> although it must be noted that many mentions of Job's body is due to symptoms of his illness. However, Job also wishes for justice in this life (Job 19:25-27), that is, with his body intact,<sup>13</sup> and Job's health is restored to him at the end (Job 42:10-17). With Ben Sira, the body is criticized because it is impermanent and becomes old, sick, and tired. Ben Sira focuses on the body's shortcomings, the finality of death, and divine justice (Sir 8:7; 10:9-18; 14:11-19; 38:16-23). Sir 10:9a reads, 'How can he who is dust and ashes be proud?' in comparison to God.<sup>14</sup> Sir 38:1-15 advises sacrifice and ritual purity before seeking medicine (see Chapter Six), and Sir 38:16-23 offers reasons why mourning for the dead (beyond burial responsibilities) is useless since death is universal.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 221-28, discusses both national (Hosea 6, Ezekiel 37) and individual resurrections in prophecy (Isaiah 26, 53; Daniel 12; Psalm 16).

<sup>11</sup> Corley, 'Sir 44:1-15 as Introduction to the Praise of the Ancestors,' in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira*, ed. József Zsengellér and Géza G. Xeravits (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 180-81 (151-182). Klawans finds Ben Sira a common ancestor to Sadducean thought (universal death, free will) that may have been read with approval by later Sadducees. Jonathan Klawans, 'Sadducees, Zadokites, and the Wisdom of Ben Sira,' in *Israel's God and Rebecca's Children*, eds. David B. Capes et al. (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007), 261-76.

<sup>12</sup> Amy Erickson, "'Without My Flesh I Will See God": Job's Rhetoric of the Body,' *JBL* 132:2 (2013): 295-313.

<sup>13</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 209.

<sup>14</sup> MS A.

<sup>15</sup> MS B.

## 5.c.1. Primary Texts for Sir 41:1-15

Hebrew<sup>16</sup>

Mas1 <sup>h</sup> II, l. 24-25 to III, l. 1-17 <sup>17</sup>	MS.Heb.e.62, 1b (MS B XV.) l. 7-18 to 2a (XIr.) l. 1-7
(II, l. 24) ר הו[י] ל[מות מה מר ז] כרד <sup>41:1</sup> לאיש שקט על מכונתו [איש] שלו ומצליח בכל עוד בו כח לקבל תענוג	(Ib, l. 7) חיים למות מה [מ]ר יברך <sup>21</sup> לאיש שוקט על מכונתו : איש שליו ומ[צ]ליח <sup>22</sup> בכל ועוד ב[ו]חיל לקבל תענוג :
(III, l. 1) הע למות מה טוב ח[קך] <sup>41:2</sup> [ל] אין אוינים <sup>18</sup> (!) וחסר עצמה	חוק חזק חוקו האח למות כי טוב חקך לאיש אונים וחסר עצמה :

<sup>16</sup> Mas1<sup>h</sup> and MS B are both in dual hemistich layout in the manuscripts but are shown side by side in single stitches for easier comparison. Mas1<sup>h</sup> will be consulted alongside the Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions. Masada is damaged in places and is also not free of some scribal errors, but due to its antiquity it is still preferable to B. This chapter's suggested reconstructions in MS B largely follow Mas1<sup>h</sup>. This is the case except in lines where the medieval manuscript differs significantly from Mas1<sup>h</sup>, such as 41:1d, 2d, 12b, or 15a. Most of MS B's marginal readings align with Mas1<sup>h</sup> (Sir 41:1a, 2a, 2c/d, 6a, 9a/b, 9d, 11a, 12b, 13b, 14a/b), though not all (Sir 41:4d, 5a, 6a, 9d, 10a, 13b). MS B's main text differences here are synonymous variants, such as Sir 41:3b, 4a. There is also חיל for כח (Sir 41:1d), and סרב for אפס המרה (Sir 41:2d). Other changes are orthographic: חק for Masada's חוק, עולם for עלם. There are some other changes, such as חיים (B) for הוי (Mas1<sup>h</sup>) at Sir 41:1a and חאה (B) for the scribal error of הע (Mas1<sup>h</sup>) at Sir 41:2a. Peters, *Liber Iesu*, 98, actually transcribes הוי for Sir 41:1 B<sup>text</sup> instead of חיים, based on the Greek and Syriac. Note that B uses the *plene* spelling in חוק (Sir 41:3a) while Mas1<sup>h</sup> uses חק, and elsewhere Mas1<sup>h</sup> uses the shorter spelling of עלם (Sir 41:9c). Tov has observed that, while stressing a lack of universal consistency, the scribal tendencies of the Qumran scrolls (as with others of the Second Temple period) is towards the inclusion of *matres lectiones*. See Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 222-28.

<sup>17</sup> Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>: IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>'; IAA, 'Mas II'; 'Mas III,' bensira.org. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 198; 200. Critical editions consulted: Yadin, *Masada VI*, 227-31, and notes on the reading by Qimron in Yadin, *Masada VI*, 228; Smend, *Hebräisch*, 40-42; Skehan and Di Lella, 462-81; Ben-Hayyim, 44-46; Beentjes, *Ben Sira in Hebrew*, 71-72; 114-15; Eric Reymond, 'Transcription of Mas II-III,' bensira.org.

<sup>18</sup> As found in Mas1<sup>h</sup> there is a missing space, labelled here by (!).

<sup>21</sup> Segal, *השלט*, 273, reads זכרך.

<sup>22</sup> Note that Lévi, *Hebrew Text*, 50-51 reports no damage at Sir 41:3 (ומצליח), 41:

<sup>23</sup> Peters, *Liber Iesu*, 98, reports no deterioration in this line a century ago.

איש כשל וינקש ב[כל]	וינקש איש כושל ינקש בכל <sup>24</sup>
אפס המרה ואבוד תקוה	סרב ואבד תקוה :
אל תפחד ממות חקך	אל תפחד ממות חוקיך
זכר קדמון ואחרון עמך	ז[כ]ר כי ראשנים ואחרנים עמך
זה קץ כל [בשר מאלו]ה	זה חלק כל בשר מאל
[ומה תמאס בתורת] עלי[ו]ן	ומה תמאס בתורת עלי[ו]ן
לעשר מאה ואלף שנים	לאלף שנים מאה ועשר
[אין תוכחות בשאול חיים]	איש תוכחות בש[או]ל חיים : אי <sup>25</sup>
נין נמאס ת[לד]ות רעים	נין נמאס דבר רעים
[ונכד אויל במגורי ר]שע	ונכד אויל [במדור רש]ע :
[מבן עו]ל תאבד ממש[ל]ה	מבן עול ממשלת רע
[ועם זרע] תמי[ד] חרפה	[ועם] זר[ע] תמיד חרפה <sup>26</sup>
[אב רשע] יקב ילד	אב רשע יקו[ב] יל[ד]
[כי ב]גללו היו בוז	כי [בג]ללו היו בוז <sup>27</sup>
[הוי לכם] אנשי עו[לה]	[הוי] ל[כם] אנשי עולה
עזבי תורת עליון	עזבי תורת עליון
[אם תפרו ע]ל [יד אסון]	אם [תפרו מעל] ידי אסון <sup>28</sup>
ואם תולידו לאנחה	[ואם ת]ולידו אנחה :
[אם תכשל]ו לשמחת עלם	[א]ם תכשלו לשמחת עלם (2a, l. 1)
ואם תמותו לקללה	אם תמותו לקל לקללתה
[כל מ]אפס אל אפס ישוב	כל מאפס אל אפס ישוב <sup>30</sup>
כן חנף מתהו אל תהו	כאן חנף מתהו אל תהו :
הבל [בני אדם בגוית]ם	הבל אדם בגויתו בני
[אך] שם חסד ללא <sup>19</sup> יכרת	אך שם חסד לא יכרת :
פחד [ד] שם כי הוא ילוך	פחד על שם כי הוא ילוך
מאלפי [שימות] חמדה (?)	מאלפי אוצרות חכמה : חמדה סומות
[וטו]בת חי [מ]ספר ימים	טובת חי מספר ימים
וטו[בת] שם ימי אין מספר	וטובת שם ימי אין מספר טוב
[ח]מכה טמונה ושימה מסותרת <sup>20</sup>	חכמה טמונה ואוצר מוסתר וסימה מסותרת

<sup>19</sup> Note that footnotes appear in present order due to column layout. Although ללא is perhaps a scribal error, in the MT ללא is found eleven times. Elisha Qimron suggests that the ל in ללא is part of the preceding word because there is a space between both *lameds*. The facsimile of the manuscript (Page III of Mas<sup>1</sup>) does not show clearly the space between *lameds* that Qimron claims. See notes by Qimron in Yadin, *Masada VI*, 228.

<sup>20</sup> Qimron notes this is a *plene* spelling of מסותרת. See notes by Qimron in Yadin, *Masada VI*, 228.

מה תעלה בשתיהם 41:15 טוב איש מטמ[ן] אולתו מאיש [מ] צפן חכמתו	תעלה מה תועלה בשתיהם : 41:15 טוב א[י]ש מצפין אולתו מאדון מאיש מצפין חכמתו :
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### Translation of Mas1<sup>h</sup>

- 41:1ab Alas, Death, how bitter is the remembrance of you | For one who is at rest on his estate.
- 41:1cd One who is at ease and successful in everything | And still has strength to receive dainties.
- 41:2ab [Behold,] Death, how good is your statute | For him without vigour and lacks strength,
- 41:2cd One who stumbles and trips over everything | Having lost sight and hope destroyed.
- 41:3ab Do not dread Death, your destiny | Remember, those who came before and who will come after are with you.
- 41:4ab This is the end of all flesh from God | And how can you reject the law of the Most High?

<sup>24</sup> Vertically along the left-hand bottom corner of MS B 2a (Xv.) are two lines: איש נוקש ומושל בכל אפס המראה :ואבד תקוה: איש כושל ונוקש בכל אפס המראה ואבד תקוה:

<sup>25</sup> B<sup>mg</sup>: כי כן נמאס דבת ערים

<sup>26</sup> Segal reconstructs as: [ור]יש עם זרעו תמיד]:, judging the ור/זר letters to be the start of the hemi-stitch. Yadin and Beentjes rightly propose there were missing characters before it was scratched out. Yadin reconstructs based on the Greek and Syriac. Yadin, *מגילת בן־סירא ממצדה*, (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and the Shrine of the Book, 1965), 18.

<sup>27</sup> Segal reconstructs as: [בג]לל[ו] יחרף]:. Peters interestingly transcribes [ינאין] בגלל[ו] ינאין, *Liber Iesu*, 100, showing deterioration of B over time. This is why Peters, Smend, Lévi, Schechter, Cowley and Neubauer are still important for transcriptions and reconstruction of text, since small holes of damage will deteriorate larger over time and small fragments will disintegrate completely, as was devastating to observe that Sir 44:17 is no longer extant in Mas1<sup>h</sup> (IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>').

<sup>28</sup> Vertically, to the left of the other vertical marginal note is: אם תפרו אל יד אסון ואם מולידו לאנחה:

<sup>29</sup> Illegible marks here, possibly deliberate.

<sup>30</sup> B<sup>mg</sup>: כל מאונים אל אונים מאונם א' אונם.

<sup>31</sup> There are scratch marks for correction between כ and ך. Beentjes reads this as כן in B. From viewing the manuscript, I argue that Mas1<sup>h</sup> has כן here (IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>').

- 41:4cd For ten, a hundred, or a thousand years | There are no discourses in Sheol (about) life.<sup>32</sup>
- 41:5ab The progeny of the rejected are the generations of the evil ones, | And foolish offspring are in the homes of the wicked.
- 41:6ab From a son of iniquity, (his) dominion will perish, | And with his seed will continually be contempt.
- 41:7ab A child will curse a wicked father, | For on his account they will be an object of contempt.
- 41:8ab Alas to you, men of iniquity | Forsakers of the law of the Most High.
- 41:9ab If you reproduce (it is) by the hand of mischief | And if you bear children, (it is) for groaning.
- 41:9cd If you stumble, (it is) for continual joys. | And you die (it is) as a disgrace.
- 41:10ab All that is from nothingness to nothingness returns | Thus too the impious from emptiness to emptiness.
- 41:11ab The breath of the sons of Adam (is) in their bodies | Surely a pious name he will not destroy.
- 41:12ab Fear a name, for it will stand (with) you | (Worth) more than thousands of delightful treasures.
- 41:13ab A good life is numbered (in) days | But a good name for days without number.
- 41:14ab Hidden wisdom and concealed treasure,<sup>33</sup> | What advantage is there in their two things?
- 41:15ab Better is one who hides his folly, | Than one who treasures up his wisdom.

### Greek

41:1 ᾧ θάνατε, ὡς πικρόν σου τὸ μνημόσυνόν ἐστιν  
ἀνθρώπων εἰρηνεύοντι ἐν τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν αὐτοῦ,

<sup>32</sup> Yadin does not propose a reconstruction for Masada based on the Greek or Syriac here, probably because the entire line is missing. However, it is safe to suggest the line originally resembled what survives in MS B in light of the Greek: οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ᾧδου ἐλεγμὸς ζωῆς. The ויא for יא is perhaps a mistake of repetition from the preceding lines.

<sup>33</sup> Corley writes that שימה (or סימה) is a Persian loanword to Aramaic, but an Aramaic loanword to Ben Sira's Hebrew, and lists several examples of actual Persian loanwords in Ben Sira (זמן, זן, זר, פתגם, שימה/סימה). Corley, 'Jewish Identity,' 8.

ἀνδρὶ ἀπερισπάστῳ καὶ εὐοδομένῳ ἐν πᾶσιν  
 καὶ ἔτι ἰσχύοντι ἐπιδέξασθαι τρυφήν.  
 41:2 ὦ θάνατε, καλὸν σου τὸ κρίμα ἐστὶν  
 ἀνθρώπῳ ἐπιδομένῳ καὶ ἐλασσομένῳ ἰσχύι,  
 ἐσχατογήρῳ καὶ περισπωμένῳ περὶ πάντων  
 καὶ ἀπειθοῦντι καὶ ἀπολωλεκότι ὑπομονήν.  
 41:3 μὴ εὐλαβοῦ κρίμα θανάτου,  
 μνήσθητι προτέρων σου καὶ ἐσχάτων·  
 41:4 τοῦτο τὸ κρίμα παρὰ κυρίου πάση σαρκί,  
 καὶ τί ἀπαναΐνη ἐν εὐδοκίᾳ ὑψίστου ;  
 εἴτε δέκα εἴτε ἑκατὸν εἴτε χίλια ἔτη,  
 οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄδου ἐλεγμὸς ζωῆς.  
 41:5 Τέκνα βδελυρὰ γίνεται τέκνα ἀμαρτωλῶν<sup>34</sup>  
 καὶ συναναστρεφόμενα παροικίαις ἀσεβῶν·  
 41:6 τέκνων ἀμαρτωλῶν ἀπολεῖται κληρονομία,  
 καὶ μετὰ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτῶν ἐνδεδελεχθεὶ ὄνειδος.  
 41:7 πατρὶ ἀσεβεῖ μέμψεται τέκνα,  
 ὅτι δι' αὐτὸν ὄνειδισθήσονται.  
 41:8 οὐαὶ ὑμῖν, ἄνδρες ἀσεβεῖς,  
 ὅτινες ἐγκατελίπετε νόμον ὑψίστου·  
 41:9 ἐάν γὰρ πληθυνθῆτε, εἰς ἀπωλείαν,  
 καὶ ἐάν γεννηθῆτε, εἰς κατάραν γεννηθήσεσθε,  
 καὶ ἐάν ἀποθάνητε, εἰς κατάραν μερισθήσεσθε.  
 41:10 πάντα, ὅσα ἐκ γῆς, εἰς γῆν ἀπελεύσεται,  
 οὕτως ἀσεβεῖς ἀπὸ κατάρας εἰς ἀπώλειαν.  
 41:11 πένθος ἀνθρώπων ἐν σώμασιν αὐτῶν,  
 ὄνομα δὲ ἀμαρτωλῶν οὐκ ἀγαθὸν ἐξαλειφθήσεται.  
 41:12 φρόντισον περὶ ὀνόματος, αὐτὸ γάρ σοι διαμενεῖ  
 ἢ χίλιοι μεγάλοι θησαυροὶ χρυσοῦ·  
 41:13 ἀγαθῆς ζωῆς ἀριθμὸς ἡμερῶν,  
 καὶ ἀγαθὸν ὄνομα εἰς αἰῶνα διαμενεῖ.

<sup>34</sup> Ziegler makes critical section divisions at 41:6, 11, 14, *Sapientia*, 317-19. These divisions are also in Skehan and Di Lella, 464-65; 476.

- 41:14 παιδείαν ἐν εἰρήνῃ συντηρήσατε, τέκνα·  
σοφία δὲ κεκρυμμένη καὶ θησαυρὸς ἀφανής,  
τίς ὠφέλεια ἐν ἀμφοτέροις ;
- 41:15 κρείσσων ἄνθρωπος ἀποκρύπτων τὴν μωρίαν αὐτοῦ  
ἢ ἄνθρωπος ἀποκρύπτων τὴν σοφίαν αὐτοῦ.

### Latin

- 41:1 o mors quam amara est memoria tua  
homini pacem habenti in substantiis suis
- 41:2 viro quieto et cuius viae directae sunt in omnibus  
et adhuc valenti accipere cibum
- 41:3 o mors bonum est iudicium tuum  
homini indigenti et qui minoratur viribus
- 41:4 defecto aetate et cui de omnibus cura est  
et incredibili qui perdit sapientiam
- 41:5 noli metuere iudicium mortis memento quae ante te  
fuerunt et quae superventura sunt tibi  
hoc iudicium a Domino omni carni
- 41:6 et quid superveniet in bene placita Altissimi  
sive decem sive centum sive mille anni
- 41:7 non est enim in inferno accusatio vitae
- 41:8 filii abominationum fiunt filii peccatorum  
et qui conversantur secus domos impiorum
- 41:9 filiorum peccatorum periet hereditas  
et cum semine illorum adsiduitas obprobrii
- 41:10 de patre impio queruntur filii  
quoniam propter illum sunt in obprobrio
- 41:11 vae vobis viri impii qui dereliquistis legem Domini  
altissimi
- 41:12 et si nati fueritis in maledictione nascemini  
et si mortui fueritis in maledictione erit pars vestra
- 41:13 omnia quae de terra sunt in terram convertentur





### 5.c.2. Debates about the Structure of Sir 41:1-15

The section markers in Mas1<sup>h</sup> help us more fully appreciate how Ben Sira was understood by his earliest readers in the text's original language. In Mas1<sup>h</sup>, two ך markers divide Sir 41:1-15b from the end of Sir 40 and Sir 41:16 (Sir 41:14a מוסר בשת). The marker above Sir 41:1 is intact and the marker above Sir 41:16 is partially visible yet clear (Mas1<sup>h</sup> col. III, line 18).<sup>37</sup> These section markers are viewable in other leaves of the manuscript (Sir 40:18; 42:9).<sup>38</sup> This encourages us to think of Sir 41:1-15 as a single poem or structure. Tov says that Hebrew *paragraphos* markers, like those in Mas1<sup>h</sup>, were possibly influenced by Greek method which designated divisions in the text. Tov's 'fish-hook' markers in Hebrew resemble those of Mas1<sup>h</sup> and the shape of the Greek διπλη marker.<sup>39</sup> Paragraph markers also exist in the Qumran scrolls but examples are few.<sup>40</sup> It is reasonable to argue, then, that at least the copyist of Mas1<sup>h</sup> understood Sir 41:1-15 as a unified structure.

Corley identifies Sir 41:1-15 as one structure based on the closing lines Sir 41:14-15.<sup>41</sup> However, he then divides Sir 41:1-15 into two themes: 'death' in Sir 41:1-4 and 'concern for honourable descendants' in Sir 41:5-13.<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, Skehan and Di Lella include Sir 40:28 with Sir 41:1-15, but end the lines on death at 41:13 or 41:10.<sup>43</sup> Di Lella also divides Sir 40:28-41:4 from Sir 41:5-13.<sup>44</sup> Although Skehan's translation is of the Hebrew, Skehan and Di Lella's divisions match Ziegler more closely than Mas1<sup>h</sup>.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>37</sup> IAA, 'Images of Mas1<sup>h</sup>'; IAA, 'Mas II'; 'Mas III'; 'Mas IV,' bensira.org. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 198; 200; 202.

<sup>38</sup> Pages II and IV, respectively.

<sup>39</sup> Tov, *Scribal*, 184.

<sup>40</sup> Tov, *Scribal*, 151; Appendix 1.

<sup>41</sup> Corley, 'Searching,' 39.

<sup>42</sup> Corley, 'Searching,' 43.

<sup>43</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 464-65; 473.

<sup>44</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 469.

<sup>45</sup> Ziegler's critical edition divides Sir 41:1-4; 5-10; 11-13; 14-15. Ziegler, *Sapientia*, 317-19.

The section divisions in Greek manuscripts also vary. Codex Sinaiticus has paragraph markers (ρ-ω combination sign) projecting onto the left margin at Sir 41:1; 12 and ‘+’ signs at 41:7, 10. Another ‘+’ occurs at 41:12b. A final supralineal dot ‘·’ and a new line demarcate each verse.<sup>46</sup> While the Hebrew witness may have seen Sir 41:1-15 as dealing with the same topic, it is clear that over time history and transmission altered the way Sir 41:1-15 was presented and understood.

As a result of all these variations, it is most useful to take the divisions of Mas1<sup>h</sup> as a starting point, since it is the earliest manuscript evidence of Ben Sira. It will be up to this chapter’s analysis of textual reuse in Sir 41:1-15 to explore this point further.

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<sup>46</sup> Codex Sinaiticus’ two scribes A and D vary in frequency in their paragraphing choices, and even in their use of the name of God. Dirk Jongkind, *The Scribal Habits of Codex Sinaiticus* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007), 95; 74. Codex Sinaiticus Project, ‘Codex Sinaiticus.’ Compare Greek manuscripts found near Qumran. See Tov, *Scribal*, 303-15.

#### 5.d. Textual Commentary on Sir 41:1-15

##### *Sir 41:1a*

Sir 41:1a begins with הוֹי as found in Masada and B<sup>mg</sup>, while B<sup>text</sup> has הַיִּים.<sup>47</sup> Ben Sira only uses הוֹי once elsewhere in the extant Hebrew (Sir 37:3).<sup>48</sup> The refrain הוֹי לִי is not too common in BH or LBH; only here and in Ezek 13:18 is הוֹי לִי found. Biblical Hebrew combines הוֹי with על, אל, כי, or alone as an interrogative.<sup>49</sup> In Isaiah, הוֹי refers to judgement (for example Isa 17:2; 28:1), although most commonly it introduces a victim; the case in Sir 41:1 is judgement. The similar אוֹי, however, is regularly combined with the preposition ל, as in לִי אוֹי (Isa 6:5) and לְמִי אוֹי (Prov 23:29). In the Qumran non-biblical literature, the word הוֹי is used a number of times, although never with לִי.<sup>50</sup>

It is clear both by הוֹי and the זָכַרְךָ in Sir 41:1a that the first line addresses death directly, although the rest of the poem addresses the reader, not death. In Classical Greek literature, Homer (*Il.* 16.681) and later writers (Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Aristarchus) death was personified as Thanatos, brother of Hypnos.<sup>51</sup>

In B<sup>text</sup>, הַיִּים may be due to text corruption mistaking הוֹי for הוֹיָה, but such a meaning would be unclear.<sup>52</sup> Alternatively, מַר was misinterpreted as ‘master’ as in Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew.<sup>53</sup> Here, מַר is most likely ‘bitter’ in light of the other quotations in Sir 41:1-4 from Job (below) and in light of the Greek. Sir 4:1 also reads מַר נִפְשׁ.

Concerning מַר, in Job the phrase מַר (י) נִפְשׁ is found (Job 3:20-21; 7:11; 10:1; 21:25). In Job 3:20-21 the מַרִי נִפְשׁ long for death. In Job 21:25, one who never tastes goodness dies

<sup>47</sup> Agreeing with Masada and B<sup>mg</sup>, there is ὦ in the Greek and ܐ in the Syriac.

<sup>48</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 126.

<sup>49</sup> BDB, 223.

<sup>50</sup> Clines, 2:503-4.

<sup>51</sup> Sophocles, *Ajax* 854; *Philoctetes* 797. Aeschylus, *Fragmenta (Mette)* Tetralogy 36 play B. Aristarchus, *Fragmenta*, 3.1.

<sup>52</sup> Feminine participle of הוֹיָה, as in Exod 9:3.

<sup>53</sup> Jastrow, 834.

בנפש מרה. In Isa 38:9-20, Hezekiah's writing concerning his illness and recovery, Hezekiah refers to resigning himself to Sheol and being sleepless in his desire for health. Isa 38:15 reads, *אדדה כל־שנותי על־מר נפשי*.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, 1Sam 15:32 contains the phrase *מר המות*. By comparison, 3 Maccabees describes Hades as bitter and lamentable (3 Macc. 6:31).

*Sir 41:1bcd*

In the Hebrew Bible, *מכונה* (Sir 41:1b) refers to a fixed foundation or pillar of the Temple (1Kgs 8:39) or the basis of something (Ps 89:15, 104:5; *תכונה* in Job 23:3).<sup>55</sup> The Syriac has 'dwelling-place', while the Greek has *ὑπάρχοντα* (possessions / existing circumstances). In Psalms 89:15 and 97:2, *מכון* refers to an inner foundation or inner centre. In this case we may translated *מכונה* as 'estate' or 'dwelling-place' owing to the context of the line: death would be a bitter reminder more to the person who is comfortable with the material things—one at peace with his inner self would not be troubled by death. Past scholarship has translated Ben Sira's *מכונה* as 'possessions' in light of the Greek. The word *מכונה* is found only twice in Ben Sira's vocabulary, and *מכון* twice as well,<sup>56</sup> and is not found in other Second Temple literature.<sup>57</sup>

Sir 41:1b-d resembles language in Proverbs, Qohelet, and Job (as do Sir 41:2b-d below). For example, *לאיש* or *איש* beginning a line is also found in Prov 17:27-29; 18:24.<sup>58</sup> Words with the roots *שקט*, *שלו*, and *צלה* are found numerous times in Proverbs and Job, and in prophetic literature (Isaiah and Ezekiel); these overlaps are cases of Ben Sira using conventional language to match the appropriate subject and style. One example may be slightly more a case of echo of Qoheleth's thought rather than overlapping vocabulary: *שלו* in Sir 41:1c also occurs in Job 21:23, *זה ימות בעצם תמו כלו שלאנן ושליו*.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> See also commentary on Sir 41:4, 14-15.

<sup>55</sup> Ps 104:5 is significant to note since Ben Sira uses Psalm 104 in Sir 43:11-19 (Chapter Four).

<sup>56</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 198.

<sup>57</sup> Clines, 5:267-68. In Rabbinic Hebrew *מכונה* is an animal-coop. Jastrow, 781.

<sup>58</sup> Sir 41:1-2 in the Greek switches between *ἀνθρώπων* and *ἀνδρῶν*.

<sup>59</sup> Sir 41:1d in Mas<sup>1h</sup> reads *ועוד כה לקבל תענוג* while B<sup>text</sup> reads *חיל* instead of *כה*. Both words can mean either wealth or strength. The word *תענוג* is found frequently in Ben Sira as well as in the Hebrew Bible and Qumran non-biblical literature. The Greek has *τροφή* (food) for *תענוג*, but Ziegler emends to *τρυφή* (luxury, delicacy) to match *תענוג*. Smend, *Index*, 229.



use of חוק implies mental or unaided compositional process in using a synonym (חוק) instead of מקרה.

Sir 41:1-3 states that death is the universal fate of all men, using ideas drawn mainly from Job (18 and 21) and Qohelet (Qoh 6:6, 7:2, 9:2-5).<sup>68</sup> In Sir 41:4c, Ben Sira reads ‘a thousand years’, also found in Qoh 6:6.<sup>69</sup> The universality of death is found in other places in Ben Sira, such as Sir 8:7: ‘Remember that we must all die.’<sup>70</sup>

*Sir 41:2b-d*

There is another scribal error in Masada here: הע appears to be an error for הא (behold).<sup>71</sup> The pair of words אונים and עצמה in Sir 41:2b refer to Isa 40:29,<sup>72</sup> the only place in the Hebrew Bible where אין אונים and עצמה found together in the same passage: ולאין אונים עצמה.<sup>73</sup> The words אונים and עצמה or עצמות are found in Job (Job 7:15; 18:7; 12; 40:16; 20:10)<sup>74</sup> and in Prov 11:7, but they are not found paired together as they are in Isa 40:29.<sup>75</sup>

In Sir 41:2d, we might expect Ben Sira to use עור, the more common verb for blindness, but instead he uses the unusual periphrastic אפס המר(א).<sup>76</sup> By comparison, the verb הסר in this line is found numerous times in Ben Sira’s vocabulary.<sup>77</sup> Yet the periphrastic אפס המר(א) is not a known Biblical Hebrew phrase.

<sup>68</sup> Also Psalm 39. See section on Sir 41:5 below.

<sup>69</sup> (Qoh 6:6 MT) ואלו חיה אלף שנים פעמים וטובה לא ראה הלא אל־מקום אחד הכל הולך: Also see below on child mortality (Qoh 6:3) in the section on Sir 41:4cd.

<sup>70</sup> See also Sir 14:17b; 38:21.

<sup>71</sup> Reymond, *Innovations*, 40 (n.45). If it is not in fact a scribal error but a strange alternative spelling, phonetically אפס המרה would match with death as מר(ה) earlier in the poem, but this is unlikely. Yadin noticed this scribal error, since the Greek interprets this line as ἀπαιθοῦσται. Yadin, *מגילות*, 17.

<sup>72</sup> The scribal error of אונים with Mas1<sup>h</sup> is clear in light of the MS B, Greek, and Syriac on this line, as well as context (‘one without woes’ and ‘one lacking strength’ do not agree with each other).

<sup>73</sup> Jeremy Corley, ‘An Intertextual Study of Proverbs and Ben Sira,’ in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit: Essays in Honor of Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.* (Washington: CBAA, 2005) 166 (155-82).

<sup>74</sup> In particular, Job 7:15 reads that Job would rather choose מות over his עצמות.

<sup>75</sup> See תקוה in commentary on Sir 41:4cd below.

<sup>76</sup> The words עור and כשל are found together in Lev 19:14, but in this case Ben Sira is not echoing Lev 19:14, due to a lack of context similarity, but arguing that humans with failing bodies (blindness, stumbling, etc.) and ill health welcome death.

<sup>77</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 145.

Interestingly, Ben Sira chooses to use the unique המר(א)ה as '[power of] sight.' In Biblical Hebrew המראה usually means 'appearance', with three exceptions. Crucially these exceptions are in Qohelet and Job. Qoh 6:9; 11:9 both call the power of sight מראה, and likewise Job 41:9 has מראיו (his sight). Ben Sira's attention to these books in this section may explain the use here. Nevertheless, אפס המר(א)ה is still a unique phrase in surviving examples of BH, LBH, and RH.

Lastly, the second phrase in Sir 41:2d, אבוד תקוה, recalls Job 7:6, which describes Job's own days as swift and lacking hope, ימי קלו מני־ארג ויכלו באפס תקוה. The word תקוה is found often in Proverbs and Job, as well as Isaiah and Ezekiel. The phrase אבוד תקוה, though, is related most closely to Job 7:6 by synonymous expression.

#### *Sir 41:3a-b*

Sir 41:3a advises the reader not to fear death because it is the fate of all men, which recalls certain psalms (§5.b). Ben Sira's construction מן + מות in Sir 41:3a is also found only in Ben Sira.<sup>78</sup> Sir 9:13 advises to keep far from a man with the power to kill and 'you will not fear the fear of death' (ואל תפחד פחדי מות). The fear of death (or distress about dying) does appear in the Hebrew Bible (Psalm 23:4, 39:4-6; Isa 38:9-20). Sir 41:3a advises that death is not to be feared because it is the fate of all men (Job 14:1, 21:23-26; Qoh 6:6, 7:2, 9:2-5). On the fear of death see also Sir 40:5.

In Sir 41:3b, קדמון and אחרון refer to Job 18:20. Ben Sira uses קדמון to mean 'former ones', a meaning also in Aramaic and 4QInstr<sup>d</sup> 148.ii.6.<sup>79</sup> Kister writes that in 7QMysteries and other texts, uses of קדמוניות (fem.) are interpreting Isa 43:18-19.<sup>80</sup> In LBH, קדמון had largely been replaced by ראשון.<sup>81</sup> In Job 18:20, קדמון and אחרון are together: על־יומו נשמו ראשון וקדמנים וקדמנים אחזו שער. This verse can be translated, 'With his day they are appalled, the western ones, and the eastern ones are seized with horror.'<sup>82</sup> However, given the context of

<sup>78</sup> Clines, 5:202.

<sup>79</sup> Clines, 7:188.

<sup>80</sup> Menahem Kister, 'Wisdom Literature and Its Relation to Other Genres: From Ben Sira to *Mysteries*,' in *Sapiential Perspectives*, eds. J.J. Collins, G.E. Sterling, and R.A. Clements (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 46 (13-47).

<sup>81</sup> Although the plural קדמין is found only in Targum Onqelos, only refers to 'former days,' not 'former ones.' Yet the changing meaning of קדמון and ראשון in Rabbinic Hebrew may be why B opted for ראשון.

<sup>82</sup> BDB, 31, translates אחרנים in Job 18:20 as 'they that come after' but קדמנים in Job 18:20 (BDB, 870) as 'Easterns.' Eastern/western ones is the translation in for example the ESV, RSV, NASB, and NIV. The KJV, NKJV, and ASV retain the sense of those who came before and after.

Sir 41:3b, Ben Sira clearly understood קדמון in the sense of ‘former.’ He may have also therefore understood Job 18:20 as speaking about ‘latter ones and former ones’ rather than western and eastern. This reading makes sense of other statements about Ben Sira’s beliefs concerning the afterlife of the righteous. In Sir 8:7, 40:28, the righteous die and are reunited with their ancestors.<sup>83</sup>

The words אחרון and קדמון are also perhaps chosen because they have a neat balance: those who come after and those who go before. Both have a ‘procession’ sense or order. It is unclear what is exactly meant by the reassurance that ‘those who come after and who came before you are with you.’ It could be a reassurance that when people die they join their ancestors in Sheol. The meaning of the ‘latter ones’ is unknown in this context.

#### *Sir 41:4ab*

With Sir 41:4a, Ben Sira may be echoing Gen 6:3, 13, Job’s pronouncement on the fate of all men alike (Job 21:26), or the ‘end of all men’ in Qoh 3:19-20; 7:2; 9:9. Sir 41:4b speaks of the limitation of the human lifespan, which is delineated by God in Gen 6:3. Furthermore, כל בשר is a distinct refrain in the Noah account, Gen 6:3-9:15 (see §2.b.1-4).<sup>84</sup> It may also be noted that Hezekiah refers to God bringing his life to completion (תשלימני) in Isa 38:12, 13.

In Sir 41:4b Ben Sira refers to the תורת עליון restricting the human lifespan, perhaps recalling Gen 6:3. In either case, תורת עליון refers to law, either written Torah or divine statute (as in Sir 41:2a; 3a).<sup>85</sup> The ‘law of the Most High’ is also found in Sir 41:8, 42:2, and 49:4. The phrase מאס תורת אל is also found in the Qumran non-biblical literature (for example 1QpHab 1:11, CD 8:18, 19:32),<sup>86</sup> while in Mas1<sup>h</sup>, עליון is used instead of אל, but this difference may be cursory.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 33.

<sup>84</sup> The phrase כל בשר is also found in the Qumran non-biblical scrolls as a term for humanity or all living things (for example, CD 1:2 and 1QS<sup>b</sup> 3:28). However, קץ כל בשר, echoing Gen 6:13, is found only in Ben Sira. Clines, 2:277-80. Abegg, Bowley, and Cook, *Concordance*, 1:164-65.

<sup>85</sup> There should not be confusion with Jubilees here, however, because Jubilees explains how the written Torah came to be through heavenly tablets.

<sup>86</sup> Abegg, Bowley, and Cook, *Concordance*, 1:423. Clines, 5:121.

<sup>87</sup> The Greek has κύριος in Sir 41:4a, and θεοῦ ὑψίστου in Sir 41:8b. By contrast, Mas1<sup>h</sup> has עליון in both places.

Ben Sira may have picked up on the meaning of עֲצָמָה as ‘substance (of self)’ from Job 21:23, which describes one who dies בְּעֵצָם תָּמוּ כָּלֹו. Besides this, שָׁלוֹ is found with עֲצָם in Job 21:23 (discussed above). Moreover, in Job 21:24, מִה עֲצָמוֹתָיו יִשְׁקָה is found. Instead of עֲצָמָה, Ben Sira uses שָׁקַט עַל מִכְנֹתוֹ to describe being at peace with one’s own self. Job (Job 21:26) and Ben Sira (Sir 41:4a, 10a) both conclude that they all eventually lay down in the dust.

*Sir 41:4cd*

Sir 41:4d is damaged in Mas1<sup>h</sup> but can be supplemented by B<sup>text</sup>, B<sup>mg</sup>, Greek, and Syriac.

The numbers of years mentioned in Sir 41:4c reflect Qoh 6:6.<sup>88</sup> Considering the quotation of Gen 6:3, 13, Ben Sira could also be referring to the longevity of the antediluvian patriarchs. Longevity is found also in Jubilees.<sup>89</sup>

The first number עָשָׂר (ten) is worth noting.<sup>90</sup> In a similar context of life and death, Qoh 6:3 refers to the stillborn child or miscarriage (הַנֶּפֶל),<sup>91</sup> while Job 3:11, 16, where Job laments that he did not die in infancy.<sup>92</sup> Child mortality was extremely common in the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, perhaps as high as one in four. Jewish epitaphs of children aged between one and five survive from Greco-Roman Egypt.<sup>93</sup>

The word תּוֹכַחֹת is mentioned in Proverbs (6:23, 1:25, 1:30, 27:5, 29:15),<sup>94</sup> Qoh 9:10, and Job 13:6; 23:4.<sup>95</sup> That Sheol is a place without knowledge, thought, or action is clear in Qoh 9:10b.<sup>96</sup> Sir 41:4d is most similar to Qoh 9:10 and Prov 6:23. There is a change in

<sup>88</sup> The Greek and Syriac follow the order of years of Mas1<sup>h</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> D.N. De Jong, ‘The Decline of Human Longevity in the Book of Jubilees,’ *JSP* 21 (2012): 340-65.

<sup>90</sup> In Sir 41:4c, B reads לעֲשָׂר מֵאָה וְאַלְפֵי שָׁנִים (decreasing order) while Mas1<sup>h</sup> reads לעֲשָׂר מֵאָה וְאַלְפֵי שָׁנִים (increasing order).

<sup>91</sup> ‘If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with life’s good things, and he also has no burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he’ (Qoh 6:3 ESV).

<sup>92</sup> Though much later than Ben Sira, Wis 14:15 also mentions child mortality.

<sup>93</sup> JIGRE inscriptions 35, 40, 79(?), 87(?), 93, 96, 102, 103, 104, 132. For child mortality, see JIGRE 35, 102-104 (all dated mid-second century BCE) from Tell el-Yehoudieh (Leontopolis), which note the children as ‘untimely dead’ (ἄωρος), as does JIGRE 132 (uncertain origin, third century CE).

<sup>94</sup> ‘For a lamp is the commandment and the law is a light, and the way of the living are arguments of discipline’ (Prov 6:23 ESV).

<sup>95</sup> Job can be called a collection of תּוֹכַחֹת between Job, his friends, and God.

<sup>96</sup> (Qoh 9:10b). כי אין מעשה וחשבון ודעת וחכמה בשאול אשר אתה הלך שמה:

development of the meaning of תוכחות in LBH from a two-way discussion to a one-way chastisement (for example 1QH 17:24).<sup>97</sup> In Proverbs and Job, תוכחות are two-way discourses.<sup>98</sup> Here, Ben Sira's meaning appears to be closer to the two-way discourse תוכחות found in the Hebrew Bible because of Ben Sira's textual reuse of Job and Proverbs. This meaning is also due to the context of the line implying discussion on a topic, not chastisement for a wrong done. This meaning affects our reading of the line: that the dead are not implied to have a lack of arguments and chastisement in Sheol in a negative fashion, but rather they have no philosophical discussions about life.

Sheol is a sombre place of silence and sleep (Job 3:13, 7:11, 14:12; Isa 38:18-19). Middendorp also suggests Job 20:29 as particularly influential in Sir 41:4.<sup>99</sup> According to Ben Sira, there are no joys to seek in Sheol (Sir 14:12) and no luxury (Sir 14:16; Sir 14:11-19). No one praises God in Sheol (Sir 17:27-28),<sup>100</sup> and there is no hope of return from death (Sir 38:21), except with Elijah's resurrection of the widow's son (Sir 48:5; cf. 1Kgs 17:17-24). These views are similar to comments about death made in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>101</sup>

#### *Sir 41:5*

Sir 41:5 does not begin a separate poem but carries on the larger theme of death. The two topics in Sir 41:1-15, death and wicked children respectively, seem unrelated on the surface, but make sense when Ben Sira's textual reuse of Job is considered.

First, נין ונכד from Job 18:19 is found in Sir 41:5a (נין); 5b (ונכד).<sup>102</sup> In the Hebrew Bible the words נין (Sir 41:5a) and נכד (Sir 41:5b) are only found in combination with each other (Gen 21:23, Isa 14:22, Job 18:19). The most relevant passage is Job 18:19, which concerns death as the fate of the wicked: the wicked are not remembered after death. Job

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<sup>97</sup> The one-way meaning of תוכחות survives into Rabbinic Hebrew (such as Arakh. 16b.), meaning *chastising* one-way, not arguing back and forth. Jastrow, 1652.

<sup>98</sup> Clines, 8:603-4.

<sup>99</sup> Middendorp, *Stellung*, 76.

<sup>100</sup> Also cf. Isa 38:18.

<sup>101</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 28-33.

<sup>102</sup> B<sup>mg</sup> reads next to Sir 41:5a כִּי כֵן נִמְאָס דַּבַּת עֲרִים. Sir 41:5b is mostly destroyed in Mas1<sup>h</sup> but the Greek and Syriac both support B and the visible traces in Mas1<sup>h</sup>. Ben Sira writes נין ונכד once elsewhere in Sir 47:22cd.

18:19 is therefore significant for the cohesion of Sir 41:1-15.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, as mentioned above, Sir 11:28; 16:3 also associate survival of death with producing children.

Likewise, the word מגורי (במגורי) proposed for Sir 41:5 lacuna) is also in Job 18:19, which indicates further that the quotation is with Job 18:19 and not Isa 14:22 or Gen 21:23, the two passages which also have בין ונכד.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, מגורי is rare in Ben Sira's vocabulary, found at only one other place (Sir 16:8) besides Sir 41:5. It is, however, found in Qumran non-biblical literature (1QS 6.2; 4QD<sup>b</sup> 2.12; 1QH 5.8), which indicates it might be a part of his contemporary vocabulary.<sup>105</sup>

In the Hebrew Bible, the word תלדות is found in genealogies, though it also is the opening line of the Flood narrative Gen 6:9, זוה תלדות נה. In this case the word means births and deaths, of progeny carrying on one's name.<sup>106</sup>

The theme of foolish children and how the wicked take root and produce offspring is found elsewhere in Job (Job 5:3, 9:22-24, 10:3, 18:5-21, 20:29) and Proverbs (Prov 1:7, 16:22). Here, though, it is clear that Job 18:5-21 (especially Job 18:21) are at the fore in Sir 41:5ab, because the משכנות of the wicked men is also found in Job 18:21. There is therefore a connection between במגורי רשע in Ben Sira, and the משכנות עול in Job 18:21. Job 18, a speech by Bildad the Shuhite, is not just about wicked men and their children, but the threat that they will fall into snares and they will not be remembered after their death (see table below).

TABLE: QUOTATION OF JOB 18:19, 21 IN SIR 41:5AB	
SIR 41:5AB	JOB 18:19, 21
Sir 41:5a <u>בין נמאס ת[לד]ות רעים</u>	Job 18:19 <u>לא בין לו ולא-נכד בעמו ואון שריד במגוריו:</u>
Sir 41:5b <u>[ונכד אויל במגורי ר]שע</u>	Job 18:21 <u>אך-אלה משכנות עול וזה מקום לא-ידע-אל:</u>

<sup>103</sup> A different view is found in Skehan and Di Lella, 469; 474.

<sup>104</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 474, cite Isa 14:22 only.

<sup>105</sup> Clines, 5:133 (מגורי I).

<sup>106</sup> Additionally, this is the only case of Ben Sira using the word תלדות in the extant Hebrew text. Ben-Hayyim, 304.

Above, the final phrase of Job 18:21 is also found as an idea in Sir 41:9, with those who forsake the law of the Most High, and Job 18 is referred to again with Sir 41:10 (see commentary below).

#### *Sir 41:6-7*

In Sir 41:6 a wicked father will destroy his own authority as a parent by producing an unrighteous son. With his children will come תמיד חרפה.<sup>107</sup> Sir 41:6-7 is drawn largely from Job 18:5-21 and Prov 18:3. Other sources could be Isa 38:19, Exod 20:5, or Prov 18:3. Prov 18:3 contains the words חרפה and בוז (cf. Sir 41:7b) as the fate of the wicked, who are also רשע (Sir 41:7a).<sup>108</sup> The full verse of Prov 18:3 reads בבוא־רשע בא גם־בוז ועם־קלון חרפה.<sup>109</sup> The root of קלון (Prov 18:3) is קלל, which is found in Sir 41:9d. Equally, as shown, Isa 38:9-20 bears strong similarities of theme and beliefs about Sheol with Ben Sira.

The vocabulary of Sir 41:6-7 contains both words common in Ben Sira's vocabulary and in Qumran non-biblical literature. In the case of בגלל, however, which is used numerous times in Ben Sira. The word גלל is also attested in the Hebrew Bible but only once in the Qumran non-biblical literature (4QMMT<sup>e</sup> 1.4.79). Then, the verb קבב (יקב) in Sir 41:7a) is found in Job 3:8, 5:3; Prov 11:26, 24:24. Outside Job and Proverbs its other major occurrence is in Numbers 22-24. The verb קבב was replaced in use by קלל in LBH.<sup>110</sup> In Job 5:3, Job curses the dwelling-place of the wicked.

#### *Sir 41:8-9*

Ben Sira's preoccupation with the wicked is found also in both Job 18:5-21 and Prov 18:3. The theme of the wicked's fate is strongly linked with the universality of death. Ben Sira agrees with Job 18, 22, 27, Prov 18:3 and other places in the Hebrew Bible where a discussion of the wicked involves lamenting their earthly prosperity, speaking about their deserved death, and discussing the fate of their children.

<sup>107</sup> B<sup>mg</sup> here has מבין ערב for B<sup>text</sup>'s מבן עול and רישם for B<sup>text</sup>'s רע. Ben-Hayyim, 45. Mas1<sup>h</sup> has ממש[ל]ה. Yadin, *Masada VI*, 200-1; 216. The upper traces of a ל for ממשלה can be clearly seen on Mas1<sup>h</sup> Page III, l. 7 (Sir 41:6). The Greek (τέκνον) indicates the Hebrew is בן not בין, and my translation of 'authority' follows Mas1<sup>h</sup> with ἀληθινότητα, not 'poverty' as in B<sup>mg</sup> or 'evil authorities' as in B. 'Authority' in Mas1<sup>h</sup> is supported by the Latin and Syriac.

<sup>108</sup> The Greek uses ὄνειδος for both חרפה and בוז in Sir 41:6, 7.

<sup>109</sup> 'When wickedness comes, also contempt, and with dishonour reproach' (emphasis added).

<sup>110</sup> Neither is קבב common in Ben Sira's vocabulary. Ben-Hayyim, 265.

In Sir 41:9c the combination of כשל and שמח recalls צלע and שמח in Ps 35:15, a passage which contextualizes the inclusion of celebration at the wicked father's stumbling. Carrying on, Sir 41:9d remarks that if the evil man dies it is לקללה,<sup>111</sup> which calls to mind the judgement on a hanged man (Deut 21:23).<sup>112</sup> As noted above, Sir 41:9d also shares vocabulary and ideas with Prov 18:3. Moreover, Sir 4:8b uses the same expression in its normal sense of the Torah. Thus it cannot be narrowly stated that the first forsakers of the law of God are all humanity and that the second are only Hellenized Jews.

As argued above, Job 27:7-16 (especially verses 14-16)<sup>113</sup> provide the model for Sir 41:9. In the table below, the comparison between Sir 41:9 and Job 27:14-16 is summarized. In both cases, the subject is the same: the wicked and their fate.

TABLE: SHARED SYNTAX IN SIR 41:9 AND JOB 27:14-16	
SIR 41:9 (MAS1 <sup>H</sup> )	JOB 27:14-16
[אם תפרו ע] ל [יד אסון]	אם-יירבו בניו למורחרב וצאצאיו לא ישבעו-לחם:
ואם תולידו לאנחה	שרידו במות יקברו ואלמנתיו לא תבכינה:
[אם תכשל] ו לשמחת עלם <sup>114</sup>	אם-יצבר כעפר כסף וכחמר יכין מלבוש:
ואם תמותו לקללה	

In this case the condemnation of the wicked is part of themes found in Job and Proverbs on the ultimate fate of the righteous and wicked. Compared to other polemical Jewish texts such as 1 or 2 Maccabees or Jubilees,<sup>115</sup> Ben Sira lacks comparable polemical agenda and language, as Jubilees does.<sup>116</sup> There are two examples of Ben Sira's polemical language: Sir 50:25-26, against Shechem, and Sir 36:1-17, his nationalistic prayer.<sup>117</sup> Yet

<sup>111</sup> In ethical dative.

<sup>112</sup> The Greek and Syriac both leave out Sir 41:9c in the Hebrew, but include 9d.

<sup>113</sup> Lévi, *L'Ecclésiastique*, 36. Middendorp, *Stellung*, 77.

<sup>114</sup> The scribal error or shortened spelling in Sir 41:9c of עלם is the only case of its kind in the Hebrew manuscripts of Ben Sira. In B it is spelled עולם.

<sup>115</sup> Milka Rubin, 'The Language of Creation or the Primordial Language: A Case of Cultural Polemics in Antiquity,' *JJS* 49:2 (1998): 306-33.

<sup>116</sup> Ben Sira is not secretive or subversive in his vocabulary as seen in Jubilees, 1 Enoch, or 1QM, and constantly praises his contemporary political establishment and the Jewish leaders (Simon II) associated with them. Aitken, 'Seleucid,' 191-208. Argall, *1 Enoch*, 249-55.

<sup>117</sup> Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:137; 152-53.

Ben Sira's polemic is sparse and careful compared to texts such as Jubilees. In the case of Sir 41:1-15, Ben Sira's concerns speak of a more universal condemnation of the wicked and their offspring with strong echoes of Job 18 and 27.

*Sir 41:10*

Sir 41:10 expands upon Qoh 3:19-20. The structure of the two bicola: כל מאפס אל אפס ישוב in Sir 41:10a and תהו מתהו אל תהו in Sir 41:10b closely resemble Qoh 3:20, which reads הכל היה מין העפר והכל שב אל-העפר. Moreover, in Qoh 3:19 the word for humanity is בני-האדם, which can be compared with בני אדם in Sir 41:11a. The phrase בני אדם is not common in Ben Sira when compared to איש or אדם.<sup>118</sup> Ben Sira's association of the term בני אדם with death's universality may be due to Job 14:1, the beginning of Job's speech on man (אדם) who is born of woman. Another word from Qoh 3:19-20 is הבל (also Qoh 1:2; 6:12; 9:9; 12:8). This word is found only twice in total in Ben Sira, again strongly suggesting this is a quotation of Qoh 3:19-20. The meaning of הבל in Sir 41:11a is translated here as 'breath' rather than 'vanity', in light of the context of 'in their bodies', though it can also be wordplay. The quotation in the Hebrew is also likely because of ישוב in Sir 41:10a (שב in Qoh 3:20). In §5.g, Ben Sira's attitudes towards the physical body will be compared with other contemporary sources.

The verb אפס is found in Job 7:6: 'My days are swifter... and come to their end lacking hope.'<sup>119</sup> Sir 41:10a would again echo Qoh 3:20 with two uses of אפס to match עפר (table below).<sup>120</sup> By comparison, the Greek version has a closer quotation of Qohelet, removing אפס and using γῆς.<sup>121</sup>

Ben Sira calls the afterlife of the wicked אפס and תהו. In this line, Ben Sira strongly echoes the 'dust' sayings of Qoh 3:20 and Gen 3:14. Job 15:31 associates שאול with תהו, and Job 6:12, 18; 26:7 also give similar afterlife meanings for תהו.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, Ben

<sup>118</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 74-75; 81-82.

<sup>119</sup> The noun אפס again is not commonly found in Ben Sira. Ben-Hayyim, 96. Its presence here is as a synonym for תהו.

<sup>120</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 465; 468; Ben-Hayyim, 96; 247.

<sup>121</sup> Overall, Wright found that the grandson does not have a systematic approach to making quotations closer to scripture. B.G. Wright III, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), 173-74.

<sup>122</sup> Also a rare plural form of תהו is in Ps 71:20, תהומות הארץ, referring to Sheol. Note that תהומות is the plural of תהום. BDB, 1062.

Sira's use of תהו is different from the Qumran literature, which use תהו to refer to idolatry and waste, not a void or emptiness. This is because in Qumran literature, אפס is more often used to mean emptiness.<sup>123</sup> In Job, Job's friends argue that the wicked will always perish. In many of these cases, these doomed wicked are described as הנף (Job 8:13, 36:13-14), another word which Ben Sira has used here. That it is drawn from Job is likely because again הנף is not frequently used by Ben Sira, nor is הנף used frequently in the Qumran non-biblical literature except for 4QJub<sup>d</sup> 21:19 (*hiphil*) and 4Q424 1.12 (הנף adj.).<sup>124</sup> Therefore there is a mix of both Job (Sheol as emptiness) and Qohelet (all return to nothingness/dust) in Sir 41:10.

### Sir 41:11

In Sir 41:11, Mas1<sup>h</sup> is partially damaged (including הבל). The Greek changes הבל to 'the mourning [πενθος] of men is in their bodies.' B<sup>text</sup> reads הבל אדם בגויתו with B<sup>mg</sup> adding בני.<sup>125</sup> Altogether, Qoh 3:19-20 is reflected in Sir 41:10-11 as illustrated in the table below.

TABLE: SIR 41:10-11 (MAS1 <sup>H</sup> ) COMPARED WITH QOH 3:19-20			
Sir 41:10a	כל מ[אפס אל אפס ישוב]	Qoh 3:19	כי מקרה בני־האדם ומקרה הבהמה ומקרה אחד
Sir 41:10b	כן חנף מתהו אל תהו		להם כמות זה כן מות זה ורוח אחד לכל ומותר האדם מן־
Sir 41:11a	הבל [בני אדם בגוית]ם		הבהמה אין כי הכל הבל:
Sir 41:11b	[אך] שם חסד ללא <sup>126</sup> יכרת	Qoh 3:20	הכל היה מן־העפר והכל שב אל־העפר:

Job 18:17 and Qoh 7:1 are drawn upon for the idea of a lasting good name (Sir 41:11b), as well as Prov 10:7; 18:3: the name of the wicked not lasting. Sanders argues that one of the things which separates Ben Sira from Proverbs, however, is his attention to the immortality of a person's name.<sup>127</sup> It is clear from all these examples, however, that the

<sup>123</sup> Clines, 1:359 (אפס).

<sup>124</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 144-45. Clines, 3:276-77. By Rabbinic Hebrew, הנף means 'to flatter/deceive.' Jastrow, 485.

<sup>125</sup> Yadin's reconstruction of this line in Mas1<sup>h</sup> as בני אדם is also supported by Qoh 3:19-20 here.

<sup>126</sup> See notes on primary texts above for scribal errors.

<sup>127</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 18-19.

immortality of a good person's name (and a bad name being forgotten) are indeed recurring themes in Job, Qohelet, and Proverbs.

Another reason Job 18:17 may be echoed is because Job 18:17-21 was already quoted above in Sir 41:5-9, and אָךְ (Sir 41:11b) is in fact also in Job 18:21. Job 18:17-21 has resurfaced again multiple times, showing how important this passage is for Sir 41:1-15.

#### *Sir 41:12*

Earlier the fear of death was פָּחַד מָוֹת (Sir 41:3), and elsewhere in Ben Sira it is called פָּחַד מוֹת (Sir 9:13). Here in Sir 41:12a is fear of a name, again with פָּחַד where יִרָא might be expected. While פָּחַד seems more appropriate for death, Ben Sira actually reserves יִרָא exclusively for fear of the Lord. This is due to a development in LBH between פָּחַד and יִרָא, visible also in the Qumran non-biblical literature.<sup>128</sup>

In Sir 41:12b, שִׁימָה (שימה) in Mas<sup>h</sup> is אוֹצֵרוֹת in B<sup>text</sup>, while B<sup>mg</sup> agrees with Masada. Other commentaries have compared שִׁימָה to the silver and gold in Prov 3:14 (value of wisdom) or שֵׁם in Qoh 7:1 (value of a name).<sup>129</sup> The word שִׁימָה, however, is also in Job 17:3, with an emphatic imperative שִׁימָה-נָא.<sup>130</sup> By LBH שִׁימָה means 'treasure,' for example 4QTobit<sup>c</sup> 2.9 and 4QDibHam<sup>a</sup> 7.9.<sup>131</sup> This contemporary LBH meaning is the way in which Ben Sira is using שִׁימָה.<sup>132</sup> The reason for its appearance may also be wordplay, שֵׁם | שִׁימָה. Proverbs frequently uses אוֹצֵר, which is the reading in B<sup>text</sup>.<sup>133</sup>

#### *Sir 41:13*

In Sir 41:13, there are two occurrences of מִסְפָּר. The reference or allusion here is to counting days (Job 14:1). Ben Sira writes that a good name lasts forever (Sir 41:13b). Sanders and Middendorp suspect parallels between Greek literature and Sir 41:12-13 here.

<sup>128</sup> Clines, 6:673-74; 4:276-81.

<sup>129</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 475. Middendorp, *Stellung*, 24. Also worth mentioning, though, is Job 28:18.

<sup>130</sup> A Greek loanword. Corley, 'Jewish Identity,' 8.

<sup>131</sup> Clines, 8:146.

<sup>132</sup> It also supports Yadin's reconstruction, besides the evidence of B<sup>mg</sup>, and LBH language developments of שִׁימָה are both considered too.

<sup>133</sup> Another case of B<sup>text</sup> making the text closer to Hebrew Bible, despite the resulting repetition of אוֹצֵר in B<sup>text</sup> in this case.

Middendorp calls attention to Euripedes (*Oedipus frag.* 734) and Xenophon (*Mem.* 11, 33).<sup>134</sup> Likewise, Sanders compares Ben Sira here to P. Insinger 20:1.<sup>135</sup> Another parallel can be found with Pliny the Younger.<sup>136</sup> However, while these concerns exist in Greek and Roman literature, they are not exclusive to one society. Furthermore, Ben Sira's ideas are by far closer to statements made in Job, Qohelet (for example Qoh 7:1), and Proverbs, as mentioned.

#### *Sir 41:14-15*

In Sir 41:14-15, comparison can be made with Prov 3:14 and Job 28:18, and Isa 38:19. In addition, Prov 2:4 asks the reader to search for wisdom *ככסף וכמטמונים* ('as silver and as hidden treasures') and Prov 10:14 mentions wise men treasuring up their knowledge (and includes the word *צפן*, also in Sir 41:15b). There are a number of possibilities for what Ben Sira refers to exactly by hidden wisdom: *הכמה טמונה* may refer to pseudepigrapha and lost ancient wisdom, but it is more likely a reference to the immortality of a man's name due to the context. Ben Sira could be referring to Prov 10:14, to pseudepigraphal claims to antediluvian knowledge (as is more likely in Sir 3:22), or to Deut 29:29, the 'secret things that belong to the Lord', as found also in CD.<sup>137</sup> Any or some combination of these things is possible. For Ben Sira however, his concern in mentioning stored-up wisdom is probably not esoteric, due to verse 15. Sir 41:15 says that treasured up wisdom (wisdom that is not told or written down—is worse than a silent fool. This echoes the fool who keeps silent in Prov 17:28 (cf. Sir 37:26).

The importance of expressing one's wisdom while alive is clear elsewhere in Ben Sira too. For instance, Ben Sira says that wisdom is known through speech (Sir 4:24).<sup>138</sup> Sayings like these demonstrate the connection Ben Sira made between the shortness of life and the necessity of writing down and teaching wisdom; his advice in the face of death is

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<sup>134</sup> Middendorp, *Stellung*, 24.

<sup>135</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 84-85. cf. Skehan and Di Lella, 475.

<sup>136</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 9.27, '*liber tamen ut factum ipsum manet manebit legeturque semper.*'

<sup>137</sup> Campbell, *Damascus Document*, 58; 77; 179.

<sup>138</sup> For another similar sentiment: Plutarch also wrote that a man's character is known through speech. Plutarch, *Mor.* 801a.

that one must speak while one is alive, because no one talks in Sheol (Sir 14:12, 16; 17:27-28; 41:4d). Furthermore, Sir 41:14-15 can be compared with Sir 20:30-31 (C).<sup>139</sup>

The feminine שתייהם in Sir 41:14b is due to the two preceding feminine subjects (wisdom and treasure). The use of ‘two things’ echoes either Job 13:20; 40:5 (about death) or Prov 30:7 (‘two things before I die’).

There is wordplay with צפן in Sir 41:15b. One who treasures up his wisdom is contrasted with the one in Proverbs or Job who searches for wisdom as hidden treasures. The contrast between storing-up and treasures is the wordplay here, also marked by the synonymous uses of טמן and צפן in verse 15. The verb טמן is only found in Ben Sira here.<sup>140</sup>

In Isa 38:19, the living are contrasted with the silent dead in Sheol who cannot praise God. By comparison, living fathers may pass on knowledge of God’s faithfulness to their children. This sentiment resounds in Ben Sira, who is very concerned with surviving death through having pious children; this is particularly shown by the lament over *evil* children in Sir 41:5-9. Since Isa 38:9-20 is concerned with Hezekiah and used by Ben Sira in Sir 48:17-25, it is a significant section bearing weight on Ben Sira’s expressions of death.

A final passage worth noting in this context is Job 3:21, which speaks of bitter souls who long for death more than hidden treasures. Earlier, Sir 41:1-4 describes death as bitter but welcome to those in bad health. A lasting name, written wisdom not kept to oneself, and righteous children are Ben Sira’s advice to master the fear of death’s universality.

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<sup>139</sup> Shulamit Elizur, ‘Two New Leaves of the Hebrew Version of Ben Sira,’ *DSD* 17:1 (2010) 28-29 (13-29).

<sup>140</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 152. Another possible case while not in the extant Hebrew is Sir 20:31. Smend, *Index*, 26.

### 5.e. Analysis of Textual Findings

#### *A Lasting Good Name*

The lasting memory of a good name is one of Ben Sira's greatest concerns and shows his use of the Hebrew Bible and his sociocultural sphere of operation in the Mediterranean world.<sup>141</sup> By comparison, Sanders argues Ben Sira's concern as evidence of the direct use of Hellenistic texts by Ben Sira.<sup>142</sup> Ben Sira, however, advises that survival of death comes through both having a good name and having righteous children.<sup>143</sup> In this light, Ben Sira is similar to Job 18 and 21, Isa 38:9-20, and Qoh 9:1-12.

Middendorp suggests that Sir 41:1-4 is Stoic in origin, arguing that Ben Sira suggests that death is neither good nor bad, but neutral.<sup>144</sup> However, this relegation to Stoic literature requires strong textual evidence of Stoic texts. There is a large difference between parallel streams of tradition and the presence of intertextual dependence. Ben Sira's direct use of Stoicism is also unlikely because of the textual history of Qohelet (§5.f). This is a different picture to that of Collins, who claims Stoic influence, especially with Sir 43:27, arguing Ben Sira was likely 'influenced by Stoic notions, even if they were imperfectly grasped.'<sup>145</sup> Collins ascribes Ben Sira's view of universal opposites (Sir 33:14-15; 42:24-25) to the teaching of the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Schwartz, *Mediterranean*, 66-74.

<sup>142</sup> See Sir 38:20, 23; 40:19; 44:9, 13; 45:1, 11; 46:2, 11; 49:1, 13. Sanders argues the survival of one's name is not a concern of Proverbs, but it is clearly important in Ben Sira. Sanders, *Demotic*, 18-19.

<sup>143</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 86.

<sup>144</sup> The neutral things are called ἀδιάφορα. Middendorp, *Stellung*, 24; 30.

<sup>145</sup> Collins, 'Ecclesiasticus,' 105.

<sup>146</sup> J.J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 85.

*Job 21:23-26 in Sir 41:1-4*

The sustained allusion of Job 21:23-26 in Sir 41:1-4 is worth bringing together. Matthewson calls Job 21 a shift to the generalized death lament, since in Job 1-20 all death speeches were personal.<sup>147</sup> A sustained quotation of Job 21:23-26 in Sir 41:1-4 is demonstrated by the proximity and quantity of vocabulary and phrases used by Ben Sira, and by his use of Job 21's themes here and later in Sir 41:1-15.

In Job 21, Job describes the fate of the wicked and their offspring as part of his speech on death (especially Job 21:7-8).<sup>148</sup> This inclusion of the wicked in a speech on death is another reason why Sir 41:1-15 is one poem. To modern readers, the subject seems to change from death to wicked children, but when compared with the range of themes in Job 21 (and Job 18, 22, 27), it is not the case that the theme has changed at all. Ben Sira's attention to wicked children as a theme is also found in Sir 16:3, 'To die childless is better than to have ungodly children.' Using the term אהרית Sir 11:28 likewise argues a man is known through his children.<sup>149</sup>

The interspersed allusion through Sir 41:1-4 is mapped below:

TABLE: QUOTATION OF JOB 21:23-26 (EXCERPTED) IN SIR 41:1-4 AND THEMATIC OVERLAP	
SIR 41:1-4	JOB 21:23-26
Sir 41:2b [ל] אין אוינים וחסר <u>עצמה</u>	Job 21:23b זה ימות בעצם תמו כלו שלאנן ושליו:
Sir 41:1c [איש] שלו ומצליח בכל	21:24b עטיניו מלאו חלב ומח <u>עצמותיו</u> ישקה:
Sir 41:1a מה מר ז' כרך	21:25 וזה ימות בנפש מרה ולא-אכל בטובה:
THEMATIC OVERLAP (DEATH AS UNIVERSAL)	THEMATIC OVERLAP (DEATH AS UNIVERSAL)
Sir 41:2a טוב ח[קך]	Job 21:26b יחד על-עפר ישכבו ורמה תכסה עליהם:
Sir 41:3a ממות חקך	
Sir 41:4a קץ כל בשר	

<sup>147</sup> Matthewson, *Death and Survival*, 120.

<sup>148</sup> As does Bildad in Job 18.

<sup>149</sup> Greek; cf. Sir 16:3; Ps 37:37-38, although אהרית can be read as 'ending' instead of 'children' (cf. Sir 11:25-27, 7:36; Job 8:7, 42:12. Segal, *השלם*. A man is also known through his speech (Sir 4:24).

Psalm 39 also emphasizes how all men must die. Due to the vocabulary in use in Ben Sira here in such a short space, it is clear that while Psalm 39 may have impacted Ben Sira in familiarity and thematic overlaps, the textual quotation itself is drawn from Job 21:23-26. The intertextuality of Psalm 39 and Job has been explored in Kynes, so Psalms in this case may be another silent partner, like Proverbs: having an overall supporting role to play forming Ben Sira's education, but not being directly used in this part of the text.<sup>150</sup>

The commentary has also shown the significance of Isa 38:9-20, Hezekiah's writing after his illness, and Qoh 9:1-12. Other textual findings include the continued importance of Proverbs language in Ben Sira, indicating Ben Sira's familiarity with Proverbs.<sup>151</sup>

### *Ben Sira's Afterlife for the Righteous*

Ben Sira's quotation of Job 21:23-26 indicates that he wishes to emphasize a peaceful passing for the righteous and a bitter end for the wicked—both in Sheol. The righteous, consoled in Sir 41:1-4 that they should not fear death, are reminded that the 'former and later ones are with you' (Sir 41:3b) i.e. in Sheol, a theme also in Sir 8:7 and 40:28.<sup>152</sup> Even while warnings surround Sheol (Sir 41:4d), Ben Sira does appear to make a juxtaposition between the rest of the righteous and old (Sir 41:3ab-4ab) and that of the wicked (Sir 41:4cd-10).

### *Structure*

The textual findings have shown strong evidence to support the Mas1<sup>h</sup> section markers which delineate Sir 41:1-15 as one section. Moreover, Sir 41:16 (Sir 41:14a) begins a

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<sup>150</sup> Kynes dates Psalm 39 as older than Job and particular overlaps with Psalm 39 are in Job 6-7 and throughout Job. Will Kynes, *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping: Job's Dialogue with the Psalms* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 122-41. The situation may not be textual dependence (Kynes, *Psalm*, 123; 125), which is difficult pin down given the similarity of theme, in which case an overlap of vocabulary becomes more likely. However, Kynes' argument demonstrates the scribal training (familiarity with literary convention and relevant texts) of the composer of Job.

<sup>151</sup> Corley, 'Intertextual Study of Proverbs and Ben Sira,' 155-82.

<sup>152</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 28-33.

section called מוסר בשת in B. By comparison, Sanders argues that Sir 41:12-13 summarizes the main point of the book, again focusing on Ben Sira's attention to names. He argues that after Sir 41:13, the main points of the previous forty chapters are reiterated in a digested form from Sir 41:14-42:8.<sup>153</sup> Wisdom reverberates as a solution in Ben Sira, and in this case, thematically passing on wisdom forms part of the survival of death that Ben Sira advises in order to have pious children, along with having a good name.

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<sup>153</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 13. Citing J. Haspecker, *Gottesfurcht bei Jesus Sirach: Ihre religioese Struktur und ihr literature* (Rome: Pontifical Institute, 1967), 185.

### 5.f. *Death in Sir 41:1-15 and Other Sources*

Concerns about death - the fear of death, the universality of death, and search for immortality - are as old as *Gilgamesh*. The Hebrew Bible contains many references to these concerns about death, chiefly in Job, Qohelet, and Proverbs, as found above. The search for immortality, it must be remembered, is connected with the concern for honour or fame. Schwartz argues how Ben Sira's focus on fame is due to his Hellenistic setting, but this argument still presents a problem: how and why does Ben Sira pick up on what is already present in the Hebrew Bible and how does that relate to his place in Mediterranean culture during the Hellenistic period (323-31 BCE), a culture which also values honour.<sup>154</sup>

Middendorp argues that death as universal fate (though not the fear of death) in Sir 41:3a can be matched by Theognis' *μοῖρα θάνατου* in *Theog.* 819-820,<sup>155</sup> but that it is also simultaneously a reference to the wicked man's *קלקל* in Job 20:19.<sup>156</sup> Theognis writes on the subject of death numerous times,<sup>157</sup> but Sanders suggests another alternative: that death as universal fate has parallels in *Onchsheshonqy* (or *Ankhsheshonq*). *Onch.* viii.8 states there is no man who does not die.<sup>158</sup> In both cases, these are not sentiments exclusive to these texts. Neither are these suspected quotations on same level as those of Job, Qohelet, and Proverbs. Therefore, no convincing *Ochsheshonqy* or Theognis quotations are found in Sir 41:1-15.

The universality of death stretches back as far Ancient Egypt. *The Maxims of Anij* (Any) also speak about the inevitability death for the old and young alike:

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<sup>154</sup> Schwartz, *Mediterranean*, 1-20; 32-33. To some degree, ancient Israelite thought appears to be a rejection of honour and reciprocity, but actually this makes ancient Israel itself part of mediterraneanism as Mediterranean counterculture, as argued by Schwartz (*Mediterranean*, 29-30). The situation appears slightly different (less counterculture) with Ben Sira as the first ancient Jewish author to sign his own name to his own work, as compared to apocrypha or pseudepigrapha. We can further nuance this to say Ben Sira was the first Judean Jewish writer, since Ben Sira was contemporary or just before Aristobulus in Alexandria (175-170 BCE). Date of Aristobulus: Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:164.

<sup>155</sup> Middendorp, *Stellung*, 24.

<sup>156</sup> Middendorp, *Stellung*, 54.

<sup>157</sup> Weeks, *Ecclesiastes*, 134. *Theognis* 133-42, 425-28; 1007-11; 1179-80.

<sup>158</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 104.

Your messenger (Death) will come and reach for you. Don't say, 'I am too young to be carried away by you,' for you know not your hour to die. He comes and carries away both the old man and the infant still in its mother's womb.<sup>159</sup>

Studies of Qohelet<sup>160</sup> have also compared Qohelet with Greek gnomic wisdom (Theognis and Hesiod, among others) and Ancient Egyptian literature.<sup>161</sup> There would therefore be a difficult case for direct Theognis influence in Ben Sira if Ben Sira already extensively and consistently uses Qohelet throughout his text. As Newsom has argued, parallels alone are not evidence of influence, especially if there are already Hebrew Bible parallels.<sup>162</sup>

Rudman argues that Stoic influence on Qohelet is only at a thematic popular level, not direct textual dependence.<sup>163</sup> The same should be said of Ben Sira: there are no convincing textual parallels with Theognis or *Onchsheshonqy* besides general statements that are also found across ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern literature. These sociocultural ideas are too well-known across cultures to justify limiting them to a single text, since texts are products of their sociocultural worldview and thus often reflect popular ideas of their time.<sup>164</sup>

Texts that in reverse impact the expression and popular views of a period in history are far fewer. These texts are central to school curriculum, have many more surviving copies than other texts, and have been used as models for other texts. These texts are: Homer for the Mediterranean, *Gilgamesh* for the Near East, and much of the Hebrew Bible

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<sup>159</sup> Boris de Rachewiltz, *Maxims of the Ancient Egyptians*, trans. Guy Davenport (Milan: All'Insegna del Pesce d'Oro, 1954).

<sup>160</sup> On the basis of Greek loanwords, Schoors, *Pleasing Words*, 501-2, dates Qohelet to the post-Alexander Hellenistic period.

<sup>161</sup> Weeks, *Ecclesiastes*, 134.

<sup>162</sup> Carol Newsom, 'Job and Ecclesiastes,' in *Old Testament Interpretation Past, Present, and Future: Essays in Honor of Gene M. Tucker*, ed. J.L. Mays, D.L. Petersen and K.H. Richards (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 185 (177-194).

<sup>163</sup> Rudman, *Determinism*, especially 30-31.

<sup>164</sup> More on this below in the example of Epicureanism.

(Torah, Isaiah, and wisdom books) for Second Temple non-biblical literature. Homer was so popular that phrases entered speech.<sup>165</sup>

There are distinct cultural shifts that suggest sociocultural ideas during Ben Sira's day. Greek epigraphic and literary evidence shows that death and personal immortality became increasingly popular concerns from the fourth century BCE onwards, as the structure of Greek society shifted from the *polis* to the Hellenistic empire.<sup>166</sup> The dating of Qohelet to the mid-third century BCE indicates the increasing concern about death and mortality within Jewish society.<sup>167</sup> These contemporary shifts would explain why Ben Sira has concerns about death and the name, and why he pays attention to the texts about death in the Hebrew Bible. This he would do, then, as a product of his time, but again, these shifting concerns in the Hellenistic world indicate sociocultural ideas and are not the same as a case for direct literary dependence.

In Greco-Roman Egypt, Jewish tomb inscriptions call on the living to mourn at their graves. Two inscriptions from Leontopolis, dateable from between the mid-second century BCE to first century CE, quote Qoh 9:10 and 12:5. (JIGRE 38 and 34, respectively).<sup>168</sup> In Judea, mainly Jerusalem and Jericho, funerary inscriptions rarely allude to scripture.<sup>169</sup>

For the likelihood of direct textual use of Greek and Hellenistic literature (or late Egyptian), there should be convincing direct quotations. However, we find there are no convincing Greek quotations in Sir 41:1-15 which are at all comparable to those from the Hebrew Bible. Familiarity with Greek literature would require training. Before the late second century BCE even a high-rank Jerusalem scribe and teacher,<sup>170</sup> would not have

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<sup>165</sup> Morgan, *Popular Morality*.

<sup>166</sup> Shannon Burkes, *Death in Qoheleth and Egyptian Biographies of the Late Period* (Atlanta: SBL, 1999), 243-48, citing F.W. Walbank, *The Hellenistic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 209-210; 220.

<sup>167</sup> The most convincing dating is to the mid-third century BCE. Rudman, *Determinism*, 13-27. Burkes, *Death*, 41, puts it fifth to third centuries BCE, citing Persian and Egyptian influences, but Rudman's arguments due to Greek language, monetary shifts, and spice trade are more convincing.

<sup>168</sup> JIGRE 74-78; 90-94.

<sup>169</sup> Hachlili, *Funerary*, 164 (Qoh 12:5).

<sup>170</sup> There is evidence from outside Sir 51:23-30 that Ben Sira likely owned his own school. In Mesopotamia only the highest-ranking administrative scribes had schools. Giuseppe Visicato, *The Power and the Writing: The Early Scribes of Mesopotamia* (Bethesda, MD: CDL, 2000), 233; 236; 240. Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, argues that connections, wealth, and situation all affected whether a teacher had a school in a good location such as a temple or the forum. If they were unfortunate or unconnected in circumstances, their school was held in their home.

needed intimate knowledge of Greek literature as an Egyptian scribe in Ptolemaic Egypt would have done.<sup>171</sup> This is because the Seleucids at the beginning of the second century BCE continued to operate officially in both Aramaic and Greek. Archaeological and epigraphic evidence does show widespread trade and business use of Greek in Judea in the mid-second century, not literary use.<sup>172</sup> By comparison, native scribes in Phoenicia and Philistia rapidly switched to Greek,<sup>173</sup> which is reflected in other fundamental changes such as architecture, epigraphy, and coin styles: these changes were all much slower in Judea, not complete until the late second century BCE.<sup>174</sup>

As a much earlier text, *Gilgamesh* is the quest for fame and immortality.<sup>175</sup> Gilgamesh seeks fame and physical immortality in his journey to the Forest of Cedars. In the Standard Version (SV) of *Gilgamesh* (1200-1100 BCE) Ut-napištim<sup>176</sup> laments the mortality of all men but cannot offer anyone else the immortality that the gods gave him (*Gilg.* X.185-XI.320, SV).<sup>177</sup> Likewise, death's universality is the topic of Sidduri the Barmaid's advice to Gilgamesh at the ends of the earth (*Gilg.* X.1-105, Old Babylonian Version 1700 BCE).<sup>178</sup> These examples show that death and immortality through fame were popular themes for a very long time in the Near East, long before Theognis, *Onchsheshonqy*, or Ben Sira.

Another example of concerns in the Mediterranean world is Epicureanism, which is too large an area of study to be examined in depth here. Epicureanism is, however, a good

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<sup>171</sup> Ptolemaic law dictated from 145 BCE that all official documents should be in Greek. Until then administrative documents are a mix of demotic and Greek. Dorothy J. Thompson, 'The Multilingual Environment of Persian and Ptolemaic Egypt: Egyptian, Aramaic, and Greek Documentation' in *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology*, ed. R.S. Bagnall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 395-417.

<sup>172</sup> Lester L. Grabbe, *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period, Volume II: The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE)*, vol. 2 of *A History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period* (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 2:125-135.

<sup>173</sup> Grabbe, *History of the Jews and Judaism*, 2:138-39.

<sup>174</sup> Thompson, 'Multilingual,' 405. Meshorer, *מטבעות דיהודים*, 118-36, shows coins continued to be in Hebrew until the end of the second century BCE.

<sup>175</sup> W.G. Lambert, 'The Theology of Death' in *Mesopotamia 8: Death in Mesopotamia: XXVI<sup>e</sup> Rencontre assyriologique internationale*, ed. Alster Bendt (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1980), 53 (53-66).

<sup>176</sup> Atrahasis in *Atrahasis Epic* (1700-1600 BCE).

<sup>177</sup> Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), 83-87.

<sup>178</sup> George, *Gilgamesh*, 75-79. Note that the SV gives much of Sidduri's speech to Ut-napištim; in the Old Babylonian Sidduri's speech on death is longer.

example of the relationship between popular ideas and written texts. Epicurus (341-270 BCE) wrote that the removal of fear was necessary for the enjoyment of life's pleasures, and that the two chief fears of mankind were fear of the gods and fear of death (*Ep. Men.* 124-25; *Ep. Hdt.* 81). Epicurus calls death 'the most frightening of evils' (*Ep. Men.* 124).<sup>179</sup> The Epicurean philosopher Philodemus, almost a century after Ben Sira in 110 BCE expressed similar ideas (*On the Gods* XVI.18, 20-34), as did Lucretius (*DRN* 3.870-93).<sup>180</sup> The question is how many people would have had contact with these statements.

In the third to first centuries BCE, there is very little evidence—due to the small number of surviving texts compared to Homer or Hesiod—that the language of high Greek philosophy such as Epicureanism, including catchwords of Stoicism and Epicureanism, entered popular morality.<sup>181</sup> Furthermore, broad issues and concerns in high philosophy were drawn from popular morality.<sup>182</sup> Morgan writes that the use of Epicurean thought in gnomic collections suggests that some popular sayings in Epicurean writing were 'close to popular culture, if they were not derived from it.'<sup>183</sup> Looking for direct parallels in Ben Sira with Greek philosophy becomes very difficult if the sayings and vocabulary of Stoics and Epicureans did not frequently trickle down into popular morality. In other words, Epicureanism was not encountered by many literate people, and the filtration of Epicurean ideas into popular morality did not happen like it did for texts of Homer or Hesiod, the two cornerstones of Greek-language education from elementary to advanced. This evidence tells us that the likelihood of Ben Sira encountering Epicurean literature (or Theognis) is even smaller, even if he had a basic knowledge of Greek.<sup>184</sup> Not many copies of Theognis survive at all from the ancient world compared to those of Homer or Hesiod.<sup>185</sup> Therefore, the sociocultural sphere of operation—ideas held in common across cultures or within a

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<sup>179</sup> Epicurus, *Men.* 124-127 is mentioned in Collins, 'Ecclesiasticus,' 103, but Collins also compares Ben Sira's views on death to P. Insinger without further comment ('Ecclesiasticus,' 104).

<sup>180</sup> Classical references from: James Warren, 'Removing Fear,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, ed. James Warren (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 234-48.

<sup>181</sup> Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 334. By 'popular morality' Morgan means written traces (literary or epigraphal) of wisdom sayings and fables.

<sup>182</sup> Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 298.

<sup>183</sup> Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 285.

<sup>184</sup> Corley, 'Identity,' 8.

<sup>185</sup> Three papyri of Theognis survive: LDAB 178, 3864, 4013, and he is quoted by Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Xenophon, and Epicurus.

single culture—is the most viable option for how Ben Sira encountered texts that overlap with his ideas but do not present convincing literary or historical evidence for direct dependence.

In sum, Ben Sira is drawing from popular concerns about death which were common in his day and already part of the language about death in the Hebrew Bible (Isa 38:9-20; Psalm 39; Job 18, 21; Qoh 9:1-12). Therefore, in this case Ben Sira's sociocultural sphere best explains these suspected 'parallels.'

### *Impact on Hellenism Debate*

The evidence of Sir 41:8-9 as anti-Hellenistic was put forward first by Pfeiffer and Hengel.<sup>186</sup> Middendorp claims further that Sir 41:8-9 are cloaked references to the Tobiads<sup>187</sup> and Antiochus Epiphanes,<sup>188</sup> as does Hengel. Hengel writes that Ben Sira 'could not express his criticism directly, but had to clothe it in the form of wisdom discourse to protect himself... At one point he does express his view openly [Sir 41:8,9].'<sup>189</sup> Di Lella argues that the wicked and ungodly mentioned in Sir 41:5-10 all refer to Hellenized Jews, especially Sir 41:8ab, which resembles 1 Macc 1:52.<sup>190</sup> Di Lella argues that 1 Macc 3:5-8 also has a similar description of the Hellenizers who are destroyed by Judas Maccabeus. The absence of opinions clearly against Mediterranean thought in Sir 41:1-15 comes primarily from his historical setting (pre-175 BCE). However, the political situation under Simon II and pre-175 BCE Seleucid administration was different to the situation under Antiochus IV. Furthermore, recent scholarship is favouring an interpretation of the Maccabean Revolt as a political embroilment between two warring priestly families, and not primarily a religious revolt.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> R.H. Pfeiffer, *History of New Testament Times* (New York: Harper, 1949), 371. Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:138-39.

<sup>187</sup> Middendorp, *Stellung*, 66.

<sup>188</sup> Middendorp, *Stellung*, 163.

<sup>189</sup> Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:151.

<sup>190</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 474.

<sup>191</sup> Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 12-13.

### 5.g. *The Body in Sir 41:1-15 and Other Sources*

Ben Sira's attitudes towards the body are linked with his attitudes to death. In Sir 33:10, every man is a clay vessel since Adam was formed from the dust. Sir 10:11 reads, במ[ו]ת, <sup>192</sup> and Sir 41:11 reads, הבל [בני] אדם בגויתו, <sup>193</sup> Ben Sira regularly advises his readers that death is universal and does not delay (Sir 8:7; 14:11-19; 41:1-15), and that life is short (Sir 17:2; 41:13). Neither does anyone return from death (Sir 38:21; 41:4). The breath departs from the body upon death (Sir 34:23; 38:23). The final verse of Ben Sira's text, Sir 51:30, advises the reader to 'do your work in righteousness, and he will give you your reward in His time,' but this is likely during one's lifetime, as it is in Isa 38:20.<sup>194</sup> And, echoing Sir 41:13, Sir 44:14 reads that the bodies of the famous Fathers rest in peace while their name lives on. Names last, but bodies do not.

Ben Sira's attitude to the physical body is overwhelmingly negative: the body has strength (Sir 17:3), but all other references to the body are concerned with illness (Sir 31:22; 38:9, 13-15), staying young (Sir 31:1), and decrepitude in old age (Sir 3:12-13; 41:1-2). However, Sir 39:26, 33 state how God has provided for man, and how little the body needs to survive.

Ben Sira even pits the body against the name as opposites. In Sir 44:14, Ben Sira writes, 'Their bodies were buried in peace, but their name lives to all generations.' This is very similar to Sir 41:13, which contrasts a good life versus a good name. The appearance of הבל in Sir 41:11 may therefore be explained in light of Ben Sira's negative attitudes to the body. The word הבל can also be seen as 'breath,' which clearly has a metaphorical sense in Qohelet, but also is a grim reminder of mortality (Qoh 1:3-4). The contrast of bodies as mortal (or lives as short) with names as immortal is significant. Ben Sira sees the name as inherently at odds with the perishable body and the shortness of life.

<sup>192</sup> MS A as reconstructed in Ben-Hayyim, 12. 'When a man dies, he will inherit maggots and worms, gnats, and creeping things.'

<sup>193</sup> B<sup>text</sup> with B<sup>mg</sup> for 'sons of.'

<sup>194</sup> This also depends on how בעתו, 'in his time,' is interpreted.

In the Hebrew Bible, there are similar sentiments to those of Ben Sira on the body (Prov 5:11).<sup>195</sup> Job includes laments of physical pain and suffering (Job 3 and 7) and, as discussed above, the fate of the wicked (Job 18 and 21). Other beliefs about death and resurrection were discussed above. There is no resurrection of the physical body for Ben Sira.

There are similar statements in Wis 1-2:5 and 1 Cor 15:12-58. Wis 2:1-5, especially, includes some of the same concerns as Job and Ben Sira about death: that life is short and a man's name is soon forgotten. That being said, while they speak about death, they are not self-contained poems on death either.<sup>196</sup> Finally, Philo wrote that there were two kinds of death, by divine punishment and by the laws of nature,<sup>197</sup> and, commenting on Gen 15:15, he argues for the migration of souls, and links old age to honour.<sup>198</sup> In *de Sacrificiis Abelis et Cain*, Philo argues that the mind is immortal because of the honour God gave to Moses.<sup>199</sup> Philo's concerns are the survival of souls, while for Ben Sira, death is universal, and Sheol is the gloomy, final destination of all. In comparison with other texts of the Second Temple and early Judaism and Christianity, Ben Sira stands out with a focus on survival of death through good children and a good name, a theme which he shares with Qohelet and Proverbs.

Theognis advises an early death due to the painful, short duration of living. However, Weeks has also found parallels with Theognis in Qohelet on death (*Theognis* 133-42, 425-28; 1007-11; 1179-80).<sup>200</sup> As argued above (§5.d), there is little solid evidence for Ben Sira's use of texts of Classical Greece or the Hellenistic world in Sir 41:1-15. Thematic parallels and agreeing opinions do not necessitate direct textual dependence. This is the same case made by Rudman for Stoicism in Qohelet.<sup>201</sup> To summarize the case, the justification for Ben Sira's sociocultural thematic overlaps with

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<sup>195</sup> 'And at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed.'

<sup>196</sup> They also both date after Ben Sira, and Wisdom of Solomon makes use of Ben Sira. Moreover, Wis 3 and 1 Cor 15 express a belief in a resurrection, which is lacking in Ben Sira.

<sup>197</sup> Philo, *Leg.* 1.33.107.

<sup>198</sup> Philo, *Her.* 56.275-57;292.

<sup>199</sup> Philo, *Sacr.* 3.8-10.

<sup>200</sup> Weeks, *Ecclesiastes*, 134.

<sup>201</sup> Rudman, *Determinism*, 198-99.

Greek and Hellenistic (or late Egyptian) themes is because the sentiments cannot be called exclusive one text or society. Furthermore, Ben Sira's historical context and the very limited circulation of these texts restrict the likelihood of familiarity. In addition, quotation in ancient literature is an indication of the high esteem with which a source was held, which can be said for Ben Sira and the Hebrew Bible, but not convincingly enough for these other texts which happen to write on the same universal subject.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> For a New Testament example of quotation reflecting high esteem and non-quotation reflecting a low esteem (or lack of familiarity?) of other texts, see Loveday Alexander, *The Preface to Luke's Gospel: Literary Convention and Social Context in Luke 1.1-4 & Acts 1.1* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

### 5.h. Chapter Five Conclusions

There are two main conclusions from this study: (1) specific textual findings, and (2) further characterization of Ben Sira's scribal culture. First, the textual findings have shown textual reuse and echoes of Job, Qohelet, and Proverbs which also deal with death and names, as well as similar sentiments in Isa 38:9-20. In addition, Job 18 and 21 provide a literary convention model for Ben Sira's death poem, and these wisdom sources also serve as a strong indication that Sir 41:1-15 is not to be divided up into smaller poems of death and the fate of the wicked. It was also found that there is little textual evidence for Sir 41:3a being a direct quotation of Theognis, Epicurus, or *Onchsheshonqy*.

The main challenge with this chapter has been how to distinguish between popular ideas and direct textual use. Once textual reuse has indeed been identified, the challenge is also to consider Ben Sira's context in late Ptolemaic and early Seleucid Judea. It has been found that Stoic and Epicurean vocabulary and quotations had limited circulation and did not trickle down into Greek popular morality. We should also consider the case of Qohelet, which also shares concerns with Stoicism in general but not direct dependence. This chapter found that there was strong material and literary evidence that sociocultural concerns about death increased by the third century BCE in the Mediterranean and Judea. The limited audience and circulation of Epicurus and *Onchsheshonqy* suggest that Ben Sira's thematic overlaps with these texts (and as well, Theognis and P. Insinger) can only show that they were *all* similarly influenced by wider concerns about death which were known to have increased in the Mediterranean.

This chapter has found that even when a theme is increasingly popular for literature in the Mediterranean, Ben Sira draws on the Hebrew Bible for textual reuse and imitation of literary conventions or genres. This is partly because the concern over death is found to have also increased within Jewish literature too (Qohelet), or perhaps was already long present (Job, Psalms, Proverbs).

Additionally, this chapter provides a case study of what the interaction between Ben Sira's textual and sociocultural spheres of operation looks like in action. In this case, on a theme increasingly popular in his time, the sociocultural sphere is at work through his attention to texts in the Hebrew Bible about death and the body. These findings therefore

show Ben Sira's scribalism to be oriented towards textual reuse of the Hebrew Bible, to make use of literary convention models when available in the Hebrew Bible (Job and Qohelet), and to lack sources from outside the Hebrew Bible. Ben Sira's creativity as a scribe presents itself in the selection of these texts, recognizing that death is written about in the Hebrew Bible and echoing it in his own composition, and in responding to popular concerns of his time.

## Chapter Six

### Sociocultural Perspectives and Textual Reuse: The Physician and Piety (Sir 38:1-15)

#### 6.a. Introduction

Sir 38:1-15, Ben Sira's Physician poem, addresses how piety affects the effectiveness of medicine.<sup>1</sup> The themes of honour, piety, and wisdom are found throughout the poem. Ben Sira first states that physicians are honoured by both God and king (In Sir 38:1-8), declaring that all medical wisdom originates with God. Then, he links illness explicitly with impiety and iniquity (Sir 38:9-15).

In scholarship of ancient Jewish medicine, Crenshaw, Noth, Hengel, and Harrison state that Ancient Israel and Second Temple Judaism largely rejected medicine.<sup>2</sup> In their studies, these scholars viewed almost all of ancient Jewish medicine as magic or mantic-magic medicine.<sup>3</sup> Their view which is mostly drawn from the belief that the Hebrew Bible is seen as having no medical literature in it except examples of folk medicine, which is understood as magical superstition, such as in the case of Essene medicine.<sup>4</sup> The theory also stems from rabbinic interpretations of 2Chr 16:12. The history of Ancient Israelite medicine is generally seen as full of folk superstitions and magic—no physicians or medical literature, nothing compared to Classical Greece or Ancient Egypt.

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<sup>1</sup> Medicine is defined here as any actions taken to prevent or cure illness, including prayer, magic, objects, ritual, prescribed food and drink, and herbal remedies.

<sup>2</sup> Crenshaw, *Education*, 153n; 273. Martin Noth, *Leviticus* (London: SCM, 1977), 105. Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:207, 240-41; 2:162. R.K. Harrison, 'Medicine,' *IDB*, 331-34. Harrison contrasts Ben Sira's positive attitude to medicine with Ancient Israelite folk medicine which he describes as 'superstition,' and includes for this argument Gen 30:31, 1Kgs 1:1-4, Ps 121:6, and others passages in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>3</sup> See discussion in §6.d.

<sup>4</sup> For example, Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:240-41.

Thus many scholars on Ben Sira have argued that Sir 38:1-15's intended reader does not trust medicine and needs to be convinced of its effectiveness.<sup>5</sup> Bickerman argues that by Ben Sira's time, these negative attitudes to medicine were changing, and that court physicians appeared in Judea beginning with the Macedonians.<sup>6</sup> Bickerman sees Ben Sira's positive attitudes to medicine entirely as part of Hellenistic influence.<sup>7</sup> However, by reminding his reader of the origins of medicine and prescribing sacrifice and repentance (Sir 38:9-12) before treatment, Ben Sira's main concern is clear: impious people take medicine without first attending to their spiritual purity.

Before Ben Sira, the scholars above argue, there was very little that could be called ancient Jewish medicine.<sup>8</sup> Other studies by Jacobs, Taylor, and Bohak help dispel this misconception. Jacob analyses medical knowledge in the opaque periods of Ancient Israelite and Second Temple medicine, contextualizing herbs and materials in the Hebrew Bible with Near Eastern and Egyptian medical ingredients.<sup>9</sup> To help complete the picture, Bohak corrects the unhelpful dichotomization of magic vs. rationality,<sup>10</sup> while Taylor examines evidence of sophisticated medical plant production in the Dead Sea.<sup>11</sup> These studies present a rich heritage of ancient Jewish medicine well long before and during Ben Sira's time. Therefore, the entire dynamic of Ben Sira's relationship with medicine and Hellenistic views on medicine deserve fresh scrutiny in light of these more recent studies on ancient Jewish medicine. This issue will be discussed in full below (§5.f).

Comparing Sir 38:1-15 with other sources of ancient medicine—Jewish and non-Jewish—will also help explain why the Physician poem is placed where it is in Ben Sira. The preceding poem, Sir 37:27-31 concerns with gluttony's effect on health, and the

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<sup>5</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 441-43. Di Lella (Skehan and Di Lella, 441) comments, 'Ben Sira probably had in mind those who on religious grounds refused or were reluctant to consult a physician in their illness' or 'were sceptical of doctors.' An idea also found in Smend, *Erklärt*, 338-40.

<sup>6</sup> Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 161.

<sup>7</sup> Bickerman, *Greek Age*, 161.

<sup>8</sup> Bickerman, *Greek Age*, 161. Harrison, 'Medicine,' 331-34.

<sup>9</sup> Walter Jacob, 'Medicinal Plants of the Bible—Another View,' in *The Healing Past: Pharmaceuticals in the Biblical and Rabbinic World*, eds. Irene Jacob and Walter Jacob (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 27-46. See discussion in §6.d.

<sup>10</sup> Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 37-41. See §6.d.

<sup>11</sup> Joan E. Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 239-40; 304-40. See §6.d.

subsequent verses 38:16-23 muse on death.<sup>12</sup> Gluttony was seen in the ancient world as a cause of disease and illnesses (see §6.d). The progression from food, to illness, to death, is a natural one in Ben Sira's terms and mirrors the content orders of ancient medical texts. This is a wider issue that will also be returned to later in this chapter (§6.d).

This chapter will explore Ben Sira's textual reuse and sociocultural ideas in a text (Sir 38:1-15) on a topic which has many other literary sources and sociocultural perspectives to explore. Sir 38:1-15 has no close literary precedent in the Hebrew Bible, Second Temple literature, or non-Jewish sources. While scholarship sees Hellenism as the reason Ben Sira approves of medicine, no Greek or Hellenistic texts have been cited as textual precedents: medical poetry does not seem to be a genre. Therefore, at the outset we might hypothesize that textual reuse in Sir 38:1-15 is less concentrated, and predict that creativity of expression and sociocultural perspectives might play a larger role.

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<sup>12</sup> John E. Rybolt, *Sirach* (Collegeville Bible Commentary: Old Testament 21; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1986), 80.

## 6.b. Primary Texts for Sir 38:1-15

Hebrew<sup>13</sup>

(VIIIr, l. 7)	כִּי	גַם אֶתְּו חֶלֶק אֵל: <sup>14</sup>	רְעִי רוּפָא לְפָנַי צָרְכֹו	צָרְכֹו	38:1
		וּמֵאֵת מֶלֶךְ יֵשָׁא מִשְׁאוֹת:	מֵאֵת אֵל יַחֲכֵם רוּפָא		38:2
	מִלְכִים	דַּעַת רוּפָא תְרִים רֵאשׁוּ וּלְפָנַי נְדִיבִים יִתְיַצַּב:			38:3
		וּגְבַר מִבֵּין אֵל יֵמָאס בָּם:	אֵל מֵאַרְצָּ מוּצִיאַ תְרוּפוֹת	בְּרֵא שְׁמִים	38:4
	כְּזִים	בַּעֲבוּר לְהוֹדִיעַ כָּל אֲנוּשׁ כְּחֹו:	הֲלֵא בְעֵץ הַמְתִּיקוּ מִים	מֵעֵץ	38:5
		לְהַתְפָּאֵר בְּגִבּוֹרָתוֹ:	וַיִּתֵּן לְאֲנוּשׁ בִּינָה		38:6
	קִרַח	וְכֵן רוּקֹחַ עוֹשֶׂה מִרְקַחַת: <sup>15</sup>	בְּהֵם רוּפָא יֵנִיחַ מִכְאוּב		38:7
		וּתוֹשִׁיָּה מִבְּנֵי אֲדָם:	לְמַעַן לֹא יִשְׁבֹּת מַעֲשֶׂהוּ	יִשְׁכַח	38:8
	פֶּלֶל	הַתְפַּלֵּל אֵל אֵל כִּי הוּא יִרְפָּא:	בְּנֵי בְחֹוּלֵי אֵל תִּתְעַבֵּר <sup>16</sup>	בְּמַחֲלָה	38:9
		וּמְכַל פְּשָׁעִים טַהַר לֵב:	[סֹוֹר מ] עוֹל וּמְהַכֵּר פְּנִים		38:10
	עֵרֵךְ   הֵנֵךְ	וּדְשַׁן עֵרֹךְ בְּכַנְפֵי הַוּנִיךְ:	הַגִּישׁ נִיחֹוּחַ [אֲזַכְרָה	אֲזַכְרָתָהּ	38:11
		וְאֵל יִשְׁמַשׁ מֵאַחַ   כֻּנֵּב צָרְכִיךְ:	וְג[ם] ל[רְפָא תֵן] מְקוֹם		38:12
(VIIIv., l. 1)		כִּי גַם הוּא אֵל אֵל יַעֲתִיר:	כִּי יֵשׁ עַת אֲשֶׁר בִּידוֹ מִצְלַחַת		38:13

<sup>13</sup> T.S. 16.312 (MS B VIIIr.) l. 7-18 to (VIIIv.) l. 1-3. This selection is the only use of B which does not come from MS.Heb.e.62 (Oxford) but from the Schechter-Taylor Genizah Research Unit (CUL). Images of B used come from: Schechter, *Facsimiles*; bensira.org (Copyright of CUL), and Friedberg Genizah Project. Note that MS B is the only Hebrew witness for Sir 38:1-15 apart from part of Sir 38:1 in MS D, Iv. (BAIU, Paris), which reads, . . . רעה רועה רופא לפי. For MS D see Israel Lévi, 'Fragments de deux nouveaux manuscrits hébreux de l'Écclésiastique,' *REJ* 40 (1900): 1-30.

<sup>14</sup> B<sup>mg</sup>. רעה רועה רופא לפי צרכך כי גם אותו חלק אל. Above צרכך also in B<sup>mg</sup> is רעה.

<sup>15</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 39, lists Sir 38:7b as 38:8a on a separate line despite being in stichometric format on the same line in MS B. This is also done at Sir 38:13, where Ben-Hayyim lists Sir 38:13b as 38:14a. Same in Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, xliv. My transcription is based on the layout as found in MS B.

<sup>16</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, xliv, rightly suggests תתעכר. Greek: μη παράβλεπε.

<sup>17</sup> B<sup>mg</sup>. יסיר מי | והכר. Concerning מי here in B<sup>mg</sup>, Schechter notes the copyist might have intended מוור (cf. Syriac). Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61.

<sup>18</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61, says this should read ימוש מאתך (cf. Greek).

<sup>19</sup> B<sup>mg</sup>. עת אשר בידו מי | כי הוא אל אל יעתיר.

ורפאות למען מחיה:	אשר יצלה לו פשרה <sup>20</sup>	ימנה	38:14
יסתוגר   על ידי	יתגבר לפני רופא:	אשר חוטא לפני עושהו	38:15

### Translation of Hebrew<sup>21</sup>

- 38:1ab Honour the physician before *your* need,<sup>22</sup> | Him also God apportioned.
- 38:2ab From the part of God, the physician becomes wise, | And from the part of the king he carries his duties,
- 38:3 The knowledge of the physician will exalt his head, and before nobility he will minister.
- 38:4 ab God brings forth medicines from the earth, | And the discerning man will not reject them.
- 38:5ab Did not the waters become sweet with wood? | For the sake of making known to all of humanity His strength.
- 38:6ab And he gave to humanity discernment | To glory in His might.
- 38:7ab By means of them<sup>23</sup> the physician will give rest from pain | And thus the perfumer makes unguents.
- 38:8ab Therefore his work will not cease | Nor efficacious counsel *from the face of the earth*.<sup>24</sup>
- 38:9ab My son, in sickness do not *be negligent*,<sup>25</sup> | Pray to God that He will heal,
- 38:10ab Depart from iniquity and *cleanse the hands*<sup>26</sup> | And of all transgressions, purify the heart.

<sup>20</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61, suggests a connection with כום של פושרים of the Talmud, corresponding then with שקוי (Prov 3:8).

<sup>21</sup> With considerable consideration of the other versions.

<sup>22</sup> Following B<sup>mg</sup>, Peters, *Liber Iesu*, 86, and Smend, *Hebräisch*, 34. Compare Greek ‘before his need of his honorarium,’ Latin *necessitate*, and Syriac ‘he is needed by you,’ and B<sup>text</sup> צרכו. Thanks to James K. Aitken for noting that τυμαῖς may also mean *honorarium*, which explains the Greek αὐτοῦ.

<sup>23</sup> That is, medicine.

<sup>24</sup> Following ‘from the face of the earth’ in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions. Compare with B<sup>mg</sup> ‘from the face of his earth.’ All agree against B<sup>text</sup> ‘from the sons of Adam.’

<sup>25</sup> Agreeing with Schechter’s suggestion for תתעכר, in the note on the Hebrew transcription above.

- 38:11ab [Bring a soothing-odour,] a memorial-offering | And fat arranged to the extent of your wealth.
- 38:12ab And also [give] to [the physician] (his) place | And let him not depart because (your) need is also in him,
- 38:13ab For there is a time in which success is in his hand, | For also he will plead unto God,
- 38:14ab That he will succeed in diagnosis, | And in medicine for the sake of the living.
- 38:15ab Whoever is a sinner before his Maker | *Will be delivered into the hands of the physician.*<sup>27</sup>

## Greek

- 38:1 Τίμα ἰατρὸν πρὸς τὰς χρείας αὐτοῦ τιμαῖς αὐτοῦ,<sup>28</sup>  
καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔκτισεν κύριος·
- 38:2 παρὰ γὰρ ὑψίστου ἐστὶν ἴασις,  
καὶ παρὰ βασιλέως λήμψεται δόμα.
- 38:3 ἐπιστήμη ἰατροῦ ἀνυψώσει κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ,  
καὶ ἔναντι μεγιστάνων θαυμασθήσεται.
- 38:4 κύριος ἔκτισεν ἐκ γῆς φάρμακα,  
καὶ ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος οὐ προσοχθιεῖ αὐτοῖς.
- 38:5 οὐκ ἀπὸ ξύλου ἐγλυκάνθη ὕδωρ  
εἰς τὸ γνωσθῆναι τὴν ἰσχὺν αὐτοῦ;
- 38:6 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν ἀνθρώποις ἐπιστήμην  
ἐνδοξάζεσθαι ἐν τοῖς θαυμασίοις αὐτοῦ·
- 38:7 ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐθεράπευσεν καὶ ἦρεν τὸν πόνον αὐτοῦ,  
38:8 μυρεψὸς ἐν τούτοις ποιήσει μεῖγμα,  
καὶ οὐ μὴ συντελεσθῆ ἔργα αὐτοῦ,

<sup>26</sup> Following B<sup>mg</sup>, Greek, Latin against B<sup>text</sup> פנימ and Syriac ‘lying,’ which is another scribal error in B<sup>text</sup> as in Sir 38:8b.

<sup>27</sup> Agreeing with B<sup>mg</sup>, גגר in a rare *hithpael*, Greek, Latin, and Syriac against B<sup>text</sup>. The text of Sir 38:15b B says: ‘will be bold/stubborn before the physician.’

<sup>28</sup> Codex Sinaiticus (f.177b) contains a paragraph marker at Sir 38:1 and crosses at Sir 38:3, 4.

καὶ εἰρήνη παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ προσώπου τῆς γῆς.  
 38:9 Τέκνον, ἐν ἀρρωστήματί σου μὴ παράβλεπε,  
 ἀλλ' εὗξαι κυρίῳ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἰασεταί σε·  
 38:10 ἀπόστησον πλημμέλειαν καὶ εὐθυνον χεῖρας  
 καὶ ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας καθάρισον καρδίαν·  
 38:11 δὸς εὐωδίαν καὶ μνημόσυνον σεμιδάλεως  
 καὶ λίπανον προσφορὰν ὡς μὴ ὑπάρχων.  
 38:12 καὶ ἰατρῶ δὸς τόπον, καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἔκτισεν κύριος,  
 καὶ μὴ ἀποστήτω σου, καὶ γὰρ αὐτοῦ χρεία.  
 38:13 ἔστιν καιρὸς ὅτε καὶ ἐν χερσὶν αὐτῶν εὐοδία·  
 38:14 καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ κυρίου δεηθήσονται,  
 ἵνα εὐοδώσῃ αὐτοῖς ἀνάπαυσιν<sup>29</sup>  
 καὶ ἴασιν χάριν ἐμβιώσεως.  
 38:15 ὁ ἁμαρτάνων ἔναντι τοῦ ποιήσαντος αὐτὸν  
 ἐμπέσοι εἰς χεῖρας ἰατροῦ.

#### Latin

38:1 honora medicum propter necessitate  
 etenim illum creavit Altissimus  
 38:2 a Deo est omnis medella  
 et a rege accipiet dationem  
 38:3 disciplina medici exaltabit caput illius  
 et in conspectus magnatorum<sup>30</sup> conlaudabitur  
 38:4 Altissimus creavit de terra medicinam  
 et vir prudens non abhorrebit illi  
 38:5 nonne a ligno indulcata est amara aqua  
 38:6 ad agnitionem hominum virtutis illorum<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Segal says this must be an error for ἀναλυσιν. Segal, *דְּלִשָׁת*, 246.

<sup>30</sup> Vattioni, *Ecclesiastico*, 198, corrects this to *magnorum*.

<sup>31</sup> Sir 38:5b Heb.





### 6.c. Textual Commentary on Sir 38:1-15

#### *Sir 38:1*

The first four lines of the Physician poem (Sir 38:1-4) praise the physician. In Sir 38:1a, the physician is to be honoured before the reader's need of him, that is, before illness.<sup>34</sup> In this context, רעה may refer to the ancient physician's *honorarium*, payment before treatment (τιμή) in Sir 38:2 (Greek). The unusual use of רעה creates alliteration with רופא.<sup>35</sup> Honour is given other humans in Sir 7:31, 10:24, and to patriarchs in Sir 44:7.

In Sir 38:1b, חלק אל is drawn from wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>36</sup> Ben Sira חלק אל three times total in the extant Hebrew, and one case of חלק עליון.<sup>37</sup> Ben Sira also refers to the mortal portion of days in Sir 17:2; 37:25-26; 41:13.<sup>38</sup> The portion of days is expressed in Qoh 9:9 as חלקך כי הוא חלקך.<sup>39</sup> Job 31:2 has חלק אלוה, and a repeated refrain of Job is about how unfair is his mortal חלק from above. In sum, Ben Sira's חלק אל is a concept known from Hebrew wisdom literature and not a particular quotation of one source alone.

<sup>34</sup> The term צרך increases in use in LBH (for example 11QT 47:9) and Rabbinic Hebrew. The word is found only once in the Hebrew Bible in 2Chr 2:15. Clines, 7:162. Ben-Ḥayyim, 264-65. Jastrow, 1302-3.

<sup>35</sup> Here the meaning of רעה is the *qal* III meaning (BDB, 953), derived from רצה, and one exception to the *qal* I in Hos 12:2 gives the meaning of רעה as 'honour' rather than befriend. Jastrow, 1486, reports רעה as both 'tend a flock' and 'to befriend.' Most cases in Ben Sira's vocabulary use the 'befriend' meaning of רעה, and this is the only exception. Ben-Ḥayyim, 280-81. The Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions all support the reading of 'honour.' The context also supports this meaning. Another possibility is that the Hebrew should read צר, as in 'your time of distress (צר).'

<sup>36</sup> Compare the Hebrew חלק אל to the Syriac: 'God created' and Greek: 'the Lord created.'

<sup>37</sup> The phrase חלק אל is found in Sir 16:16 (A) and Sir 34:13 (B<sup>ms</sup>), and חלק עליון in Sir 40:1 (B). Ben-Ḥayyim, 142-43.

<sup>38</sup> Ben-Ḥayyim, 143.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Sir 17:2; 37:25-26; 41:13. Qohelet 9 is unfortunately not extant in 4QQoh<sup>a</sup>; making it impossible to determine if a possible textual variant in Qohelet 9 (or Job 31:2 which is also not extant in the Qumran scrolls) is why Ben Sira has the form he does.

*Sir 38:2*

It is significant that the verb *הכח* is found in Sir 38:2, since this links wisdom to the knowledge of physicians. One of the aims of advanced scribal education is to learn wisdom,<sup>40</sup> so attributing wisdom to physicians is powerful.

Rybolt argues that the reasons to consult the physician are dual: sacred and secular.<sup>41</sup> Yet, we may argue instead that Ben Sira may not have seen a distinction between the two. He might not be giving two separate reasons but encompassing the secular reason within the sacred.

The word *משאות* in its LBH meaning is a general duty or a burden, while its later meaning in MH is specifically worldly affairs and worldly burdens. In Gen 43:34, *משאות* is Benjamin's food portion from Joseph (*μερίς* in LXX)—given to him when Joseph is second in power in Egypt, and in 2Sam 11:8 King David's gift to Uriah's house is referred to as *משאות המלך* (*ἄρκος* in LXX).<sup>42</sup> In Sir 38:2, *משאות* is likewise from someone in a position of power. The Greek *δόμα*, Latin *dationem*, and Syriac *ܐܘܪܘܟܐ* all agree with the meaning of *משאות* in Sir 38:2 as *gift*, that is a payment, not a duty or burden as in LBH. The context of rulers in Sir 38:2-3 (the king in 38:2 and nobility in 38:3) indicates that *משאות* implies royal or high-status clientele for the physician.<sup>43</sup> Sir 38:1-2 so far demonstrates high status, divine endorsement, and wisdom for the physician. Finally, another indication from Sir 38:2 is that it may have been costly to go to the physician in Ben Sira's time.

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<sup>40</sup> Sir 38:24-39:11; 51:23-30.

<sup>41</sup> Rybolt, *Sirach*, 80.

<sup>42</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 18. Schechter notes Gen 43:34 and 2Sam 11:8. Also in Skehan and Di Lella, 441.

<sup>43</sup> Sir 38:2's phrasing *ישא משאות* consists of two words both from the root *נשא*. It is also unusual that Ben Sira only uses *נשא* one other time in the extant Hebrew at Sir 4:21 (shame 'carries' iniquity). Despite these two considerations, which normally indicate quotation, the contexts of these passages are so unrelated that is unlikely they are cited specifically. In the other versions, the Hebrew wordplay (verb and noun from the same root) is lost: *λήμψεται* | *accipiet* | *نصفد*. In all versions, however, the sense of Sir 38:2 is that the physician gets medicinal learning from God and is under royal and aristocratic patronage. The *נדיבים* in Sir 38:3 are in B<sup>mg</sup> *מלכים* and Syriac *ܡܠܟܝܗ*, but the Greek has *μεγιστάνων* and Latin *magnatorum*.

*Sir 38:3*

Sir 38:3 contains another example of alliteration with the sequence רופא תרים ראשו.<sup>44</sup> The opening words דעת רופא recall דעת רופא יחכם in Sir 38:2, further cementing the theme that the physician is wise and learned.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to being wise, the physician is in service to nobility,<sup>46</sup> much like in Mesopotamia (the physician in *The Tale of the Poor Man in Nippur*), and Egypt (the archaeological evidence of Egyptian physicians who served in courts and held court-titles).<sup>47</sup> Later by Roman times, the courtly physician was far less common, since most physicians in the Roman period were Greek and slaves—Galen being an exception as the physician of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.<sup>48</sup> In Ben Sira's time, though, the physician still held a high value and held places at court in the Mediterranean world. In Ptolemaic Egypt, for example, physicians had a high status in the Museion of Alexandria (§6.d).

While there is not a clear textual quotation in Sir 38:3, there are linguistic clues about Ben Sira's views on the status of physicians in Ptolemaic or Seleucid Jerusalem. Ben Sira's other uses of יצב (found in Sir 38:3 in the form of יתיצב) show that יצב has a strongly court meaning for him. In Sir 8:8, שרים are ministered to (יצב); in Sir 11:1, the humble man's wisdom will lift up his head and seat him among the גדיבים. This sentiment is very similar to the physician raising his head and ministering to the nobility in Sir 38:3.<sup>49</sup> Sir 8:8 and 11:1 both advise on court-behaviour. This context places the physician in Sir 38:3 solidly in a court setting.

In effect, Ben Sira praises court physicians, the type Ben Sira and his prospective scribal reader would have most likely encountered, rather than local self-employed physicians or midwives who may not be associated with the court. Ben Sira's attention to the court-physician sheds light on Ben Sira's social class and his expectations of his intended audience.

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<sup>44</sup> The root of תרים is רום.

<sup>45</sup> The phrase דעת רופא is unattested elsewhere in BH or LBH.

<sup>46</sup> The verb יצב is combined with לפני in BH (for example Gen 50:2) and LBH (1QS 11:16, 1QH 11:13) to mean 'to stand before,' meaning to present oneself to or to minister to someone in their court.

<sup>47</sup> See §6.d.

<sup>48</sup> See §6.d. Sanders, *Demotic*, 82, compares the bee in Sir 11:3 to P.Insinger 25:2.

<sup>49</sup> Other uses of 'noble' נביד include Sir 7:6; 8:2,4; 13:9.

The Greek ('in the presence of the great he will be wondered at')<sup>50</sup> and Syriac<sup>51</sup> read that the physician has honour in the *presence* of nobles, but the Hebrew suggests physicians should be honoured because they *serve* nobles. The Greek is perhaps an interpretation of 'standing before' without the full force of the Hebrew combination יצב לפני, which indicates an act of service.

Thus far, Sir 38:1-3 has not demonstrated any concentration of textual reuse. Rather, these verses are an insight into Ben Sira's historical context.

#### *Sir 38:4*

The word תרופות (medicine) is found only once in the Hebrew Bible at Ezek 47:12. Whether Ben Sira's use of this word suggests textual reuse might depend on the context of Ezek 47:12.<sup>52</sup> Ezekiel 47 is the vision of the river flowing from the Temple and the division of the land. In Ezek 47:12, trees grow up around the riverbanks with fruit for eating and leaves for medicine. In both Ezek 47:12 and Exod 15:25 (see below on Sir 38:5), water plays a strong role in healing, which is significant since healing waters are a feature mentioned in Greek literature such as Herodotus (see §6.d). Later in the Physician poem, Sir 38:14 mentions רפאות, the more common word for medicine in BH and MH.

Caution should be taken in determining whether the choice of תרופות over its alternative רפאות bears any consequence. The more common word for medicine רפאות is found several times in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>53</sup> In Ezek 30:21 and Jer 30:13; 46:11, medicine is found in curses and proclamations of doom. Conversely, the vision in Ezekiel 47 centres on the river with its trees of vitality, which is more suitable for Ben Sira's tone about medicine being a gift from above. Therefore it may be that תרופות evokes a sense of the promise in Ezek 47:12.

For the phrase מארץ מוציא, Segal refers to Gen 1:12 in which God brings forth plants from the earth.<sup>54</sup> By comparison, however, Ezekiel 47 is a stronger case for textual

<sup>50</sup> Instead of 'serve,' the Greek has θαυμάσθησεται (Latin *conlaudabitur*), while the Syriac reads 'before kings he will be given a place.'

<sup>51</sup> 'For his opinion they will exalt the physician.' Translation here from Caldusch-Benages, Ferrer, and Liesen, *Sabiduría*, 218.

<sup>52</sup> There are no examples of תרופות in other extant Second Temple sources.

<sup>53</sup> Although in Modern Hebrew תרופה is more common than רפואה.

<sup>54</sup> Segal, *השלים*, 245. The similarity to the blessing for bread is likewise because of Gen 1:12.

reuse; alternatively though, a general concept of God's creative powers would make sense in lieu of attaching too much weight to Gen 1:12.

Sanders argues that Sir 38:4 is reminiscent of P.Insinger 24:2 and 32:12.<sup>55</sup> P.Insinger 24:2 reads, 'Do not slight a small illness for which there is a remedy; use the remedy.' However, while this seems striking on its own, the line is within a list of small things not to slight, including small gods and small scarabs.<sup>56</sup> In this case, the advice to take medicine cannot be narrowed down to P.Insinger or even to Egyptian Demotic wisdom alone. As Goff argues, such parallels should be seen as emerging from common wisdom thought and not from direct dependence.<sup>57</sup>

The other claimed parallel, P.Insinger 32:12, reads, 'He [the god] created remedies to end illness, wine to end affliction.' The context of P.Insinger 32:12 is likewise not in a series of sayings about medicine or healing. Instead, it is a single line on healing plants within the 24<sup>th</sup> Instruction, which is about the creation of things useful for man to survive.<sup>58</sup> Without sustained quotation and textual reuse, however, it is difficult to argue for influence as Sanders does.<sup>59</sup> Similarity of advice is simply not enough unless it is so specific and unusual and traceable to a single origin. General advice to take medicine found in the wisdom literature of two civilizations—Ben Sira's Judea and Egypt—in which medicine was made and there was a profession of physicians, is not compelling evidence of direct parallels.

Furthermore, the case of textual reuse of P.Insinger in Sir 38:4 is also weak because there are stronger correlations with the Hebrew Bible: in this case, with Gen 1:12

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<sup>55</sup> Sanders, *Demotic*, 75. Also in Skehan and Di Lella, 441. Sanders cites Paul Humbert, *Recherches sur les sources égyptiennes de la littérature sapientiale d'Israël* (Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1929), 138-39.

<sup>56</sup> Text of P.Insinger from Lichtheim, *Egyptian*, 3:204; 210. For discussion of P.Insinger, see Miriam Lichtheim, *Late Egyptian Wisdom Literature in the International Context* (Freiburg; Göttingen: Universitätsverlag; Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1983), 107-234.

<sup>57</sup> Matthew J. Goff, 'Ben Sira and Papyrus Insinger,' in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality: Volume 1 Thematic Studies*, ed. C.A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias (London: T & T Clark, 2009), 64 (54-64).

<sup>58</sup> The 24<sup>th</sup> Instruction does not resemble Ben Sira's Hymn of Creation (Sir 42:15-43:33), either, because it lists concerns of man and society like water, wealth, work, social status, dreams, and other earthly concerns rather than Ben Sira's list of sun, moon, stars, and weather phenomena. Besides this, Lichtheim says P.Insinger is datable (in ms) only to the first century CE and determined to have been written in the 'latter part of the Ptolemaic period.' Lichtheim, *Egyptian*, 3:184.

<sup>59</sup> Both societies also had similar beliefs in the divine gift of medicinal plants and medicinal knowledge to mankind: in Egypt, it was Thoth. In Jubilees, it is the angels who teach Noah medicine.

and Ezek 47:12, both of which themselves share a common perspective about medicine being a divine gift. The view that medicine came from a divine origin was shared in the ancient world.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, the גבר מבין in Sir 38:4 is matched by the echoes of בינה and בגגורתו in Sir 38:6.<sup>61</sup> The choice of מבין may reflect semantic variation, since Ben Sira has already used חכם and דעת.<sup>62</sup> The poetic repetition and variation of words occur throughout Sir 38:1-15.

### Sir 38:5

Sir 38:5a reads that God sweetened waters with wood, which is speaking of the miracle of water in Exod 15:25. This line has been argued by many as a quotation in Sir 38:5.<sup>63</sup> It is the first clear interspersed quotation in the Physician poem. It is also the largest quotation (three words) in the Physician poem. The miracle in Exod 15:25 by itself is not explicitly a healing miracle, but one of water for thirst in the desert. Yet it is the mention of God as Healer in Exod 15:26—the only title of God as Healer in the Hebrew Bible—that makes Exod 15:25 the most appropriate miracle for Ben Sira to allude to. Sir 38:5 is perhaps the first known quotation and interpretation of Exod 15:25 as a medicinal miracle. Sir 38:5a shares three words with Exod 15:25: מתק, עץ, and מים, as shown in the table below.

TABLE: SIR 38:5A COMPARED WITH EXOD 15:25	
SIR 38:5A (B <sup>TEXT</sup> )	Exod 15:25 (MT) <sup>64</sup>
הלא בְּעֵץ הַמַּתִּיקוּ מִיִּם	וַיִּצְעַק אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּרְחוּ יַי עֵץ וַיִּשְׁלַךְ אֱלֹהֵי־הַמַּיִם וַיִּמְתְּקוּ הַמַּיִם שֵׁם שֵׁם לוֹ חֵק וּמִשְׁפַּט וְשֵׁם נִסְהוּ:

<sup>60</sup> For example, 1 En. 7:1, 8:3. For the rest of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East, see §6.d.

<sup>61</sup> The phrase גבר מבין is not found in the Hebrew Bible or LBH, and only once here in Ben Sira. Alternatively, the phrase גבר חכם is found in the Hebrew Bible (Job 34:34; Prov 24:5; Ps 18:26), as well as איש חכם. The combination is always with חכם rather than מבין. The noun מבין is common in wisdom literature (for example Prov 17:10, 24). The phrase in Ben Sira here is a variation on מבין, חכם, גבר חכם, or איש חכם.

<sup>62</sup> Note also Sir 10:25.

<sup>63</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61. Skehan and Di Lella, 441-42. Middendorp, *Stellung*, 59. Segal, *השלים*, 246. Smend, *Erklärt*, 339.

<sup>64</sup> Exod 15:25 does not survive in the Dead Sea Scrolls fragments of Exodus for comparison.

Ben Sira is the first known interpretation of Exod 15:25 in a medical context. Ben Sira is also the first extant quotation of this passage in Second Temple texts. In later times, Exod 15:25-26 became important in Rabbinic Judaism. Thus, Ben Sira is also evidence that the verses have had a long continuous use in Judaism.<sup>65</sup> In Ben Sira's time, these verses may have been in use by Jewish physicians or priests within liturgy for healing, such as the rituals found in Leviticus 13-15 (§6.d).

#### *Sir 38:6*

Both the גבר (Sir 38:5) and אנוש (Sir 38:6) are the recipients of the gifts of medicine and knowledge of medicine.<sup>66</sup> Ben Sira's terminology is universal, especially in comparison to Jub. 5, which limits the gift of medical knowledge to Noah. God's power in Sir 38:5b, בעבור להודיע כל אנוש כחו, is thus also for all humans to see, not just Jewish people. Despite the miracle in Exodus 15:25 being witnessed only by the Israelites in the wilderness, Ben Sira's interpretation of the passage applies it to all of mankind.

As mentioned, בינה and בגבורתו reflect גבר מבין in Sir 38:4. Moreover, אנוש appears in both Sir 38:5 and 38:6. Hence there is a substantial repetition of phrasing: בינה/מבין in v.4, 6, בגבורתו, גבר/בגבורתו in v.4, 6 and אנוש/אנוש in v.5, 6.<sup>67</sup>

Discernment (בינה) in Sir 38:6 is the third wisdom word in the poem. The theme of wisdom is strong in the Physician poem, as shown. The physician's skill is wisdom and knowledge, and likewise the use of medicine is the natural conclusion of the גבר מבין. With this line, Ben Sira again impresses that God gave the discernment, בינה, to glorify His mighty works, namely, the medical miracle of Exod 15:25. Thus far, a strong theme of wisdom unifies the poem, which will continue in the next few lines.

#### *Sir 38:7*

Ben Sira states in Sir 38:7 that medical wisdom and medicine are both gifts from God, strengthening medicine's dependence upon God.<sup>68</sup> This statement comes to its climax with

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<sup>65</sup> Bohak, *Magic*, 299.

<sup>66</sup> In Sir 38:6 the Greek ἐν τοῖς θαυμασίοις αὐτοῦ and Latin *mirabilibus suis* differ from the Hebrew and Syriac. This is most likely due to a misreading of the Hebrew גבורתו for גבהותו (from גבה, 'wonder'). Since the Syriac has 'His might' as well, the scribal error may have been within the Hebrew copy it used or in transmission.

<sup>67</sup> Schechter reports wordplay in Sir 38:6-7 between the words רופא and להתפאר. Earlier in Sir 38:2 is a much stronger example of wordplay with ישא משאות.

Sir 38:12-15, which stresses how the physician's success is also dependent on God. Ben Sira's emerging argument is that *everything* in medicine begins and ends with God.

The main problem of this line in Ben Sira scholarship is that רוקה is translated as apothecary, druggist, or pharmacist, severing the link with the word's context in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>69</sup> In the Hebrew Bible, the רוקה/רקח (perfumer) and מרקחת (unguents, ointments, or perfume) are firmly associated with the Temple. Perfumers are found preparing products and oils for different liturgical needs: funerary, sacrificial, and anointing rituals.<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, in the other versions of Ben Sira, the μύρεψος, *unguentarius*, and صفتح are not strictly pharmacists or druggists, but unguent makers or perfumers.<sup>71</sup> If the רוקה by Ben Sira's time or his grandson's time implied a profession limited to medical products, not a perfumer who also made drugs, perhaps a word like μυγματοπόλης or φαρμακοπόλης would have been used in the Greek version. Therefore while the רוקה (and the μύρεψος) may make products for medicinal purposes, they are still primarily *known as* ointment-makers or perfumers with a variety of ritual-centred applications. In other words, the ancient perfumer made healing remedies and ritual products.

The primary place of the רוקה in the Hebrew Bible is in sacrificial and funerary contexts. These indicate a Temple environment for the רוקה, in addition to the רופא. Therefore the perfumer and the physician both have very respected work locations in the Temple, perhaps set up in market areas on the Temple Mount, much like the same

<sup>68</sup> Schechter and Segal note there is a rabbinic quotation of this line in Gen. Rab. 10. Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61. Segal, *גשלת*, 246. Solomon Schechter, 'The Quotations from Ecclesiasticus in Rabbinic Literature,' *JQR* 3 (1890-91): 693 (682-706). Jenny R. Labendz, 'The Book of Ben Sira in Rabbinic Literature,' *AJS Review* 30:2 (2006): 373-74 (347-92).

<sup>69</sup> Pharmacist: RSV; NRSV; Skehan and DiLella, 438. Apothecary/pharmacist/chemist: Clines, 7:552. Druggist: NAB. 'Der Apotheker': Smend, *Hebräisch*, 65; apothecary: Rendsburg and Binstein, *bensira.org*; druggist/apothecary: Jastrow, 1496. Out of interest, CEB has 'those who prepare ointments,' and the Wycliffe Bible 'ointment-maker.' In all cases it is clear that these English versions of Ben Sira, as well as the scholarly translations, make a distinction between Ben Sira's רוקה and any רוקה in the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>70</sup> For example, Exod 30:25 mentions a מרקחת, a 'blend of ointment' for the Temple. In Exod 30:33 the רוקה is a perfumer who makes the Temple anointing oil. 2Chr 16:14 refers to spices 'blended by the perfumers' work' (מרקחים במרקחת מעשה) for funerary preparations. Isa 57:9 refers to perfumes for Temple sacrifice. Perfumers are also in Qoh 10:1 making oil, Neh 3:8 as a profession, and in 1Sam 8:13 there are female perfumers. Exod 30:33 is referenced in Segal, *גשלת*, 246.

<sup>71</sup> As noted, some translations have 'pharmacist.' Further, the Greek version's μύρεψος is a maker of perfumes and unguents (skin products). The Greek version clarifies by μείγμα 'mixtures,' meaning drugs, perfumes, or pigments. The רוקה and the μύρεψος made balms for healing (ointments and unguents) as well as spices, oils, and perfumes for a variety of purposes: sacrificial, funerary, and dermal. Likewise, the Latin *unctiones* and Syriac صفتح also have similar varied meanings to μείγμα.

practices evidenced in Near Eastern and Mediterranean temples which housed schools, markets, and famously tables for money-changers (Matt 21:12-13; John 2:15). Ben Sira's attention is centred around the Temple in Jerusalem. For him ointment-making is not a separate profession, nor is it distant from the Temple hub, but part of the job of a maker of spices and oils.

The perfumer's range of applications is also clear because many of the same spices and oils that were used for funerary, sacrificial, and anointment rituals were also used for medicine. Frankincense was used to treat a variety of illnesses in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. As Jacob writes:

stomach problems, as a purgative, as a stimulus to take food, to treat liver and bladder ailments, for coughs, worms, poison, skin diseases, pains in the arms, sores, and to stimulate menstruation. Externally... for stiffness, pain in the legs, demons, pus, stomach problems, pressure in ear, body odor and to stimulate birth...various diseases of the eyes, as well as toothaches and tongue problems... infection of the birth canal.<sup>72</sup>

The perfumer used the same ingredients for whichever application was needed. In the perfumer's case, there may have been little distinction between the application of medical products and that of funerary, anointing, and sacrificial products, since medical application may have involved a ritual too, such as those described in Leviticus 13-15.

The physician is able to give actual pain relief, which is a good indication of the efficacy of medicine in Ben Sira's day.<sup>73</sup> Sir 38:7 also indicates that the place of patient treatment would have been within the Temple, and that perhaps there was a strong working relationship between physician and perfumer, especially since the ancient perfumer made a variety of unguents (skin products). Skin diseases were a common medical ailment in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, which helps explain the prominence of skin ailments in Leviticus 13-14.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Jacob, 'Medicinal Plants of the Bible,' 35.

<sup>73</sup> Ben Sira refers to the physician giving relief from pain using a combination of words (יניח מכאב) not found in extant Dead Sea non-biblical literature or the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>74</sup> Robert D. Biggs, 'Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Mesopotamia,' *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 19:1 (2005): 8 (1-19).

*Sir 38:8*

In Sir 38:8, the theme of divine wisdom is returned to a fourth time. This is Ben Sira's only use of the word תושיה in the extant Hebrew, and his use of the word here is similar to the biblical passages which refer to God's gift of תושיה to humanity, or God's supply of תושיה.<sup>75</sup> In effect, Sir 38:8 says that the physician's (and thus the perfumer's) work will never cease, meaning illness will never end, but fortunately the divine wisdom which enables medicinal knowledge will never cease either. The continuity of medical knowledge is dependent upon God's wise counsel.

Ben Sira concludes his advice on the divine origin of medicine (Sir 38:1-8). He next turns to the patient's and the physician's dependence upon God for healing through piety, sacrifice, and prayer (Sir 38:9-15). He firmly roots all medicine and healing in God in two key ways: the wisdom of the physician (Sir 38:1-8) and the piety of the patient (Sir 38:9-15).

*Sir 38:9*

Moving onto Sir 38:9, Ben Sira advises the reader to pray first for healing from God.<sup>76</sup> With Sir 38:9-15, Ben Sira shows how wisdom and prayer go hand in hand with healing. The defined line of action is in this order: prayer, cleansing of sin, and sacrifice (Sir 38:10-11), before finally seeking the physician (Sir 38:12-13), who will also pray (Sir 38:12-15).<sup>77</sup> Still, Sir 38:1 and 38:12 give advice to seek the physician, which makes it clear Ben Sira strongly supports both: he believes firmly in a cause of illness being iniquity (and therefore healing through sacrifice and upright behaviour), but he also clearly defends the inherent efficacy of medicine. The language of this line stresses supplication and pleading for deliverance in prayer, such as for cases where iniquity causes illness.<sup>78</sup> The 'problem'

<sup>75</sup> Wisdom gives it to humanity in Prov 8:14, God has a supply of תושיה in Prov 2:7 (storing it), and Job 12:16 God has power and תושיה. The word תושיה is also in Job, and in Dead Sea non-biblical texts (1QS 10:24, 11:6; 4QTime 1.2, 11; CD 2:3). Clines, 8:617.

<sup>76</sup> See notes above in §6.b: Schechter argues it should read תתעבר not תתעכר.

<sup>77</sup> See §6.d for more information about the medical 'line of action' in Hippocratic medicine. Note also that 'pray to God' in Sir 38:9b can be compared with Hezekiah's prayer for his illness in 2Chr 32:24.

<sup>78</sup> The language's context is for healing: Phinehas stands up and pleads with God to intervene, and thus the plague was restrained. The word פלל is sometimes used for healing, but also for deliverance and other problems (Gen 20:17). BDB, 813. The syntax of אל אל, 'unto God,' is found again in Sir 38:13b, with another

of the poem, therefore, cannot be simply that the patient does not use medicine at all. Rather, the patient's 'problem' is the state of piety before taking medicine which Ben Sira believes to have an effect on the efficacy of medicine taken. Once again, this marks out the same key theme: the importance of the patient's piety in addition to the physician's wisdom.

*Sir 38:10*

Ben Sira agrees with the Deuteronomistic view of medicine's causes in Sir 38:10. Skehan and Di Lella refer to illness being a punishment from God in Deut 28:21-29 and Prov 3:7-8.<sup>79</sup> Sir 38:10 reads [סור מ]עול, which echoes a phrase in Prov 3:7, סור מרע. Skehan and Di Lella are therefore right in directing attention to Prov 3:7-8, perhaps more than Deut 28:21-29. Here Ben Sira's [סור מ]עול is a case of synonymous quotation or echoing of Prov 3:7-8. In this regard, he would not be at all different from beliefs in Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, or pre-Hellenistic Greece. The question is whether Ben Sira thinks that the only cause of illness is iniquity. The recommendation to sacrifice before visiting the physician shows that piety alone does not cure illness; hence, Ben Sira's cause of illness cannot *only* be punishment from God for iniquity.

The meaning of Sir 38:10 requires detailed unpacking owing to the problems presented by MS B when compared to the Greek, Latin, and Syriac versions. First, ומהכר כפיים, as it has been reconstructed (כפיים instead of פניים) by Schechter, Segal, and Smend.<sup>80</sup> There might be a second underlying error, since if the phrase were הבר כפיים, 'to purify/clean one's hands', it would agree with the Greek version and make more sense in the context of moral purity (טהר לב in 10b).<sup>81</sup> Another reason is that B<sup>mg</sup>, והכר, could then easily be ותבר. Thus, the Hebrew should be reconstructed as ותבר כפיים.

A further reason we should reconstruct ותבר כפיים is because of the second half of the line (Sir 38:10b), which is reminiscent of the 'clean hands and a pure heart' (נקי כפיים)

verb meaning to supplicate, עתר (Sir 38:13b: אל אל יעתיר). Schechter cites Ps 106:30 for the form of התפלל here. Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61. This same verse Ps 106:30 is quoted in Sir 45:23d with Ps 106:23 (see §2.c.3).

<sup>79</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 442.

<sup>80</sup> Schechter and Segal have both recognized that פניים in 10a should read כפיים. Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 18; 61. Segal, *השלים*, 246. Smend, *Erklärt*, 340.

<sup>81</sup> This is entirely possible since the Greek and Latin reflect 'straighten/correct' which is one of the senses of ברר. The range of meaning of ברר may be: to examine, purify, clean, or select (BDB, 140-41).

ובר־לבב) in Ps 24:4. Furthermore, the word כפים is found four other times in Ben Sira (Sir 38:10; 40:14; 48:20; כפי in 51:20), while there are dozens of cases of ידיים.<sup>82</sup> Ben Sira uses כפים always in the context of prayer and liturgy: Sir 40:14 (of a generous man), 48:20 (Israelites), and 51:20 (Simon). Therefore Sir 38:10 may be either a direct textual quotation, or an example of Ben Sira's familiarity with psalms language, as seen in the rest of his text.<sup>83</sup>

SIR 38:10 COMPARED WITH PS 24:4	
SIR 38:10 (RECONSTRUCTED) [סור מ]עול והבר כפים ומכל פשעים טהר לב	Ps 24:4 נקי כפים ובר־לבב אשר לא־נשא לשוא נפשי ולא נשבע למרמה:

The phrase 'pure heart' is found in the literature of Qumran,<sup>84</sup> for example 4QBark<sup>c</sup> 1.10.<sup>85</sup> The central issue behind the use of psalms language in this line, however, is the fact he is using psalms phrases to describe how to heal oneself of illness. The use of psalms phrasing thus stresses the centrality of liturgy and prayer for the effectiveness of medicine in Ben Sira's day.

### *Sir 38:11*

Ben Sira's first priority of actions to take for healing is prayer (Sir 38:10), which is followed by sacrifice (Sir 38:11). Segal's reconstruction of Sir 38:11 agrees with the Greek and Latin versions, though we may argue that by looking at B more closely, ערוך has been incorrectly read by scholars as ערון.<sup>86</sup> The practice referred to by Ben Sira in this verse is a

<sup>82</sup> Ben-Hayyim, 153-54; 179.

<sup>83</sup> The other phrase found in Ps 24:4, is 'purity of the heart.' Sir 38:10 is the only mention of לב טהר in Ben Sira, while טהרה alone is in Sir 51:20 (Simon) and Sir 43:1 ('purity' of the shape of the world). However, Ps 24:4 is not the only place 'purity of heart' is found: see טהור־לב in Prov 22:11, לבי טהרתי in Prov 20:9, and טהרה לבב in 2Chr 30:19. 2Chr 30:19 concerns purification rites (טהרה) in the Temple, as in Neh 12:45 or Leviticus 13-15. For similarities between Leviticus 13-15 and Egyptian and Mesopotamian medical texts, see §6.d.

<sup>84</sup> Also in first-century CE Judea in the Beatitudes (Matt 5:8). For Qumran, this is 4Q525 3.2.1, 'Blessed is he who walks with a pure heart.' For Matt 5:8 and 4Q525 3.2.1 see: Craig A. Evans and Peter W. Flint, *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 95.

<sup>85</sup> Clines, 4:504 (לב and adjectives). Part of this phrase became part of the Amidah: וטהר לבנו לעבדך באמת.

<sup>86</sup> Ben-Hayyim and Beentjes transcribe this word as ערון, as if it is a scribal error for ערוך, but in fact I argue that the ן in B<sup>text</sup> appears to be a ך.<sup>86</sup> Schechter transcribes B<sup>text</sup> here as ערוך. The reading ערוך is found in

burnt-offering for a soothing-odour (as in Leviticus 2).<sup>87</sup> The *אזכרתה* of flour for a soothing-odour, *ניחה* (Lev 2:2, 9), includes oil and frankincense (2:1, 4-7, 15; 24:7). The Hebrew of Sir 38:11 does not explicitly specify flour, but the Greek and Latin do. Meat-offerings are also for a soothing-odour, but the addition of oil (Sir 38:11b) indicates it would be flour. The Temple flour-offering could also be a form of payment if the physician is also a priest, since only some of the flour-cakes are burnt (Lev 2:3; 24:5-9). Sir 35:2 also mentions the grain offering, as Sir 35 describes how right mentality and piety are necessary for efficacious sacrifice and prayer (Sir 35:2, 7, 16; compare Isa 1:11-17). Ben Sira repeats this idea several times in Sir 38:9-15.

As with recommendations in Leviticus (Lev 5:7-13, 12:8), Ben Sira suggests the presenter spend as much as financially possible for that individual (Sir 38:11b). He finishes Sir 38:11 with an unusual phrase, *בכנפי הוויך*.<sup>88</sup> The word means ‘edge’ in the Hebrew Bible, usually of garments and the earth, but Ben Sira uses it with wealth.<sup>89</sup> With this line, Ben Sira reminds the reader to give offerings for healing, a practice similar to that of Roman temples to Aesculapius (Asclepius in Greek), anatomical ex-voto offerings for healing from Asclepius.<sup>90</sup> Earlier, temple offerings were the practice.<sup>91</sup> While the Temple

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Segal, *השלם*, 243; Skehan and Di Lella, *Ben Sira*, 442. B<sup>text</sup> looks unclear but actually reads ערוך, B<sup>ms</sup> has ערך ‘to arrange,’ and Greek reads *πρὸςφοράν* (brought). The Syriac version does not include this verse, perhaps because it refers to Temple sacrifice.

<sup>87</sup> Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61; Segal, *השלם*, 247; Skehan and Di Lella, 442. Skehan and Di Lella also list Ps 20:2-6 as a textual reference. The verb in Sir 38:11a is *נגש* in *hiphil*, which is used often of sacrifice (BDB, 620-21). There is wordplay with ‘oil’ *דשן* in Ps 20:4 (*ידשנה*), but there is no convincing argument through further vocabulary distinct to Psalm 20. I argue it is unlikely to be a quotation, since because the *subject* is similar, some vocabulary will necessarily overlap. Likewise, flour-offerings are found in Leviticus 2, and this again indicates similarity of subject and Temple practice rather than an explicit textual quotation.

<sup>88</sup> Schechter suggests it might be an error for *ככפני*. Schechter and Taylor, *Wisdom*, 61; Beentjes, *Ben Sira*; and Ben-Hayyim, 39, all transcribe *בכנפי*.

<sup>89</sup> Either way, ‘to the edge (extent) of your wealth’ is not a biblical expression, nor is it found in LBH. In Biblical Hebrew and LBH, ‘wings’ may be used in the meaning of ‘corners’ or ‘edges’ in the context of garments: Num 15:38, Deut 22:12, or of the earth as in: Isa 11:12, 24:16; Ezek 7:2; Job 37:3, 38:13. One possible example of *כנף* as ‘edge’ for something else besides the above could be Dan 9:27, which reads: *ועל עד-כלה על-שמם כנף שקוצים משמם ועד-כלה ונהרצה תתך על-שמם* (MT). Potentially here, *על כנף* (‘to the edge’) functions with *עד-כלה* (‘to the completion’) as a parallelism. Another sense in which *כנף* means something other than wing or edge is in a military sense, which could be an interpretation of Dan 9:27 or a linguistic development of the word, is 1QM 9:11, in which a *כנף* is an army flank. Ben Sira would be the only example of *כנפי* in a description of wealth. Clines, 4:438-39. In Rabbinic Hebrew, *כנף* means ‘wing,’ ‘protection,’ or ‘lap.’ Jastrow, 651. Finally, it is unlikely to be related, but Lev 1:17 (Lev 1:1-17 concerns meat burnt-offerings) describes the priest tearing birds open by their wings (*בכנפיו*).

<sup>90</sup> This practice began in during the Roman Republic and had stopped by the first century BCE. Before this famous practice, general offerings were common in the Near East and Mediterranean. See Lesley Adkins and Roy A. Adkins, ‘anatomical ex-voto, ancient Roman,’ in *The Dictionary of Roman Religion* (New York: Facts On File Inc., 1996), 8, and the Asclepieum (Adkins, ‘Asclepieum,’ *Dictionary*, 20-21).

in Jerusalem would not have had anatomical ex-voto, the idea of an offering for healing is comparable. While frankincense is found as an ingredient of flour-offerings in Lev 2:2, 15 and 24:7, it is not mentioned in Ben Sira. However, the ‘extent of your wealth’ certainly suggests an expense such as frankincense being added to the offering if it could be afforded.<sup>92</sup>

*Sir 38:12*

Sir 38:12 advises that the reader needs the physician in illness.<sup>93</sup> The physician has a set ‘place’ and time (Sir 38:13) within healing, an idea which is slightly reminiscent of עת לרפא in Qoh 3:3.<sup>94</sup> This is not a textual quotation, however, as with Exod 15:25 earlier. Rather, the concept of an arranged ‘time and place’ in Qohelet 3 agrees more broadly with Ben Sira’s wisdom and the tenor of Sir 38:1—the physician being assigned a place by God.<sup>95</sup> In this example, however, the context of Qoh 3:3 is not distinct enough to reveal direct textual dependence. Rather, since it is a common stream of tradition to assign times and places to things in life, the order developed in Sir 38:11-12 is that the time and place of the physician comes *after* the time and place of prayer and sacrifice.

Another meaning of מקום, however, might be a separate offering (payment) given to the physician in the Temple for his services, since the remaining portion of the flour-offering is a payment to the priests. The likeliest meaning, though, is that Ben Sira is dispensing advice to give an established place for the physician following the patient’s prayer and sacrifice. With this line then, Ben Sira completes his ‘priorities of action’ in healing: prayer, sacrifice, and finally a visit to the physician. Understanding מקום as place

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<sup>91</sup> For another Roman example, the cult of Apollo Medicus, founded in 433 BCE, corresponding to the Greek Apollo Iatros. Vivian Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London: Routledge, 2004), 107.

<sup>92</sup> Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, AB 3 (London: Doubleday, 1991), 196. The flour-offering in Lev 2:1-16 is argued by Milgrom to be the offering of the poor. However, Lev 2:4-10 may be read as a separate kind of flour offering pre-baked without frankincense as contrasted to offering flour and oil to be baked Lev 2:1-3, although Lev 2:15 again suggests flour-offerings must have frankincense. Ben Sira’s advice in Sir 38:11 suggests the offering might cost as much as one could afford.

<sup>93</sup> The reconstruction of the Hebrew is from Segal, and fits in the destroyed space of B. The Greek and Latin add that the physician is created by God. ‘Your need’ (צורך) is discussed above in Sir 38:1. Segal, *השלים*, 243.

<sup>94</sup> Qoh 3:3 is noted in Skehan and Di Lella, 442.

<sup>95</sup> As stated earlier, Ben Sira’s Physician poem does not have any direct equivalents in Jewish and non-Jewish ancient literature, though it resembles the wider genre of praising professions.

rather than a payment therefore makes sense of Ben Sira's insistence on prayer and sacrifice in the preceding lines.

The curious phrase 'let him not depart' in Sir 38:12b may be appropriate if the physician is also a priest or at least located in the Temple.<sup>96</sup> Having made a flour-offering at the Temple, the priest or physician (or patient) may leave before the physician has prayed. The reason for the patient not leaving is clarified by Sir 38:13b-14, the physician's 'pleading unto God.' These lines suggest that the physician's medical services include prayer.

### *Sir 38:13*

Sir 37:13 contains the sentiment that prayer helps in making wise decisions about medicine, which recalls the physician becoming wise (Sir 38:2a) and the discerning man's intelligence to use medicine (Sir 38:4).<sup>97</sup> Therefore the pious physician prays for medical wisdom.

With this line, Ben Sira begins another list of three items. The first list was the priority of action for the reader when ill: pray, sacrifice, and visit the physician. Now, the physician prays for three things: success in diagnosis, the effectiveness of medicine given, and finally that the sinful patients the physician treats may be healed.

In sum, not only must the patient be wise (to use medicine) and pious (to resolve causes of illness from iniquity), but the physician is also expected to be both wise and pious. Sir 38:1-15 begins with wisdom and the origin of medicine with God, and soon transforms into a discussion on piety - of patient and physician each. The 'piety before healing' principle is outlined in the summary of Sir 38:1-15 in the table below.

TABLE: 'PIETY BEFORE HEALING' IN SIR 38:1-15	
Sir 38:1-3	Respect is due to physicians, because they are sanctioned by God and become wise through God
Sir 38:4-8	Respect is due to medicine and medical wisdom, since they come from God

<sup>96</sup> See above note on Sir 38:12, that it should read ולא ימוש מאתך.

<sup>97</sup> To consider the phrase אל אל יעתיר ('he will plead unto God'), אל + עתר ('unto') is found in Biblical Hebrew, (for example Exod 10:18). BDB, 801. It is also in Sir 37:15 תעתר אל אל. Both Greek and Latin leave out Sir 38:13b (Hebrew only).

Sir 38:9-12	Prayer and sacrifice are necessary <i>before</i> visiting the physician (meaning illness from impiety will then be ruled out)
Sir 38:13-15	The physician's success is guided by God through piety

*Sir 38:14*

In Sir 38:14, the word ‘interpretation’, פשרה, is an indication that there was not a separate word in Ben Sira’s Hebrew for what is called today medical diagnosis.<sup>98</sup> The word, normally in the form פשר, refers to an interpretation of texts, such as in the Pesharim of the Dead Sea Scrolls.<sup>99</sup> Ben Sira’s use is the only extant case of this word for a medical diagnosis, an ‘interpretation’ of illness, unless, perhaps, Ben Sira means the interpretation of medical texts. This may be an indication that in Ben Sira’s time the same word was used for medical diagnosis and textual interpretation.

In both the Near East and Mediterranean, ancient medical literature is concerned with the initial diagnosis. In this framework, it is therefore very significant that Ben Sira mentions diagnosis. In the Hebrew Bible, much of Leviticus 13-15 is preoccupied with the diagnosis or interpretation of the disease (for example: Lev 13:2-3, 9-10; 14:2-3, 48). As with other ancient diagnostic texts, such as Babylonian prognostic texts or the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus, in Leviticus the diagnosis often concludes with a decision of *non-treatment*.<sup>100</sup> For Ben Sira, too, the diagnosis does not necessarily entail treatment, since treatment is mentioned separately in Sir 38:14b.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Further, Ben Sira does not use the word פשר or פשרה anywhere else in the extant Hebrew, not even in discussions of advice or understanding.

<sup>99</sup> In Rabbinic Hebrew, פשרה is a legal dispute/arbitration. Jastrow, 1249.

<sup>100</sup> Babylonian prognostic texts advised prognoses such as pain relief or rituals which would not violate the non-treatment recommendations. Specific examples from Babylonian texts: AOAT 43.200, 202, 255, 256; SpTU 1.34:29; TDP 42 r. 34, 104 iii 12, 111 i 35, JoAnn Scurlock and Burton R. Andersen, *Diagnoses in Assyrian and Babylonian Medicine* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 529; 530-48 (texts).

<sup>101</sup> In Sir 38:14b, I read the final Hebrew word as a collective noun, ‘the living/survivors,’ as in 1QM 13:8. However the Greek reads, ‘Behold their success rests, And healing grace for the maintenance of life,’ as in Gen 45:5, Ezra 9:8-9. There is resonance between מצלחת (Sir 38:13) and יצלח (Sir 38:14). Medicine רפאות may be compared with תרופות in Sir 38:4.

*Sir 38:15*

The physician must pray owing to his responsibility to heal sinful patients. These patients are sinners, since they have fallen ill, and presumably have not offered prayer and sacrifice. It is a final reminder that illness may be due to iniquity.<sup>102</sup> There is evidently high risk associated with medicine in Ben Sira's day, but it may also suggest that prayer and liturgy on the part of the physician were normal and routine aspects of medical treatment during this period. Ben Sira thus does not give room to medicine not working, but instead lays the blame on the patient not being pious enough for medicine to work when it is applied to the patient.

Skehan and Di Lella argue that there is a final *inclusio* of רופא in Sir 38:1, 15.<sup>103</sup> Ben Sira creates *inclusio* elsewhere. On the other hand, רופא is repeated a number of times in the Physician poem, which might make it not be an *inclusio*. However, since רופא is the final word of Sir 38:15, however, the *inclusio* is plausible.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> The line in B<sup>text</sup> is corrupt, B<sup>mg</sup> has על ידי, and the Greek and Latin have 'fall into the hands of the physician.' Likewise the Syriac: 'will be given into the hands of the physician.'

<sup>103</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 443.

<sup>104</sup> This line may be a case of B<sup>text</sup> biblicizing Ben Sira with יתגבר instead of על ידי רופא. In Job 36:9, God declares the sins of the sinners 'because they are arrogant' (כי יתגברו).

#### 6.d. *Ben Sira and Ancient Medicine*

##### *Introduction*

Ben Sira's depiction of the physician and medicine is best understood through the lens of his wider historical and literary context. Harrison argues that by Ben Sira's time there must have been some Hellenistic influence on Jewish medicine because Ben Sira honours the physician, raising the status of physicians in contrast to folk medicine in Ancient Israel.<sup>105</sup> However, scholarly understanding of Jewish medicine before and during Ben Sira's time deserves a fresh recourse to other civilizations, particularly the Achaemenid Persian Empire, rather than just the testimony that Ben Sira himself gives. A wider historical context helps address questions about Ben Sira's attitudes to medicine that cannot be answered from his text alone or from the current consensus on Ancient Israelite and Second Temple Jewish medicine.

Ben Sira and other Second Temple Jewish texts,<sup>106</sup> share many similarities between Second Temple Jewish medicine and with Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and Greco-Roman medicine.<sup>107</sup> Ancient medical literature includes prayers for the admission and repentance of sins, praise of the divine, requests for healing, and exorcisms,<sup>108</sup> which are remedies advised in Ben Sira. Owing to mixed sacred and secular causes of illness, the boundaries between priest and physician are blurred in Second Temple medicine, too, as seen in Ben Sira.

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<sup>105</sup> Harrison, 'Medicine,' 331-34.

<sup>106</sup> These include Genesis Apocryphon, Tobit, Wisdom of Solomon, T. 12 Patr., 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and Testament of Job, among others. Most of these textual excerpts reveal a belief in divine punishment for illness or injury. The specific passages are analysed in Larry P. Hogan, *Healing in the Second Temple Period* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1992).

<sup>107</sup> Against: Hogan, *Healing Past*, 5. See Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*. See also JoAnn Scurlock, *Sourcebook for Ancient Mesopotamian Medicine* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014); E.D. Phillips, *Aspects of Greek Medicine* (London: Croom Helm, 1973).

<sup>108</sup> Biggs, 'Medicine,' 2-3.

This section will first approach medicine in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Judaism. Second, aspects of Ben Sira's views of medicine and physicians will be contextualized by theme in the wider historical and literary framework. The current model in Ben Sira scholarship treats Ancient Israelite medicine as non-existent except for folklore and herbal remedies, without reference to geographical or cultural circumstances as to why this would be. Ben Sira's wider historical context will fill in the blank spaces that characterize the current state of scholarship on Sir 38:1-15, and, to a large extent, on ancient Jewish medicine.

### *Medicine Elsewhere in Ben Sira*

Ben Sira writes about healing and medicine several other times besides Sir 38:1-15. In Sir 3:28, and 28:3, the wicked cannot be healed. Sir 18:19, 21 advises the reader to take care of his sins or risk illness. These examples all agree with Ben Sira's primary cause of illness as iniquity, as in Sir 38:1-15.

Plague in Ben Sira is interpreted within a common historical framework. Ben Sira sees plagues as a result of human wickedness (Sir 40:9-10), like the Athenians in Thucydides (Thucyd. 2:7; 47), the Babylonians,<sup>109</sup> and the Hebrew Bible.

More clues about medicine in Ben Sira's Jerusalem are revealed from the following verses. Sir 27:21 writes of a wound bandaged, showing medical treatment other than herbal remedies. Sir 10:10 writes, 'a long illness baffles the physician.'<sup>110</sup> Elsewhere Ben Sira recommends eating slowly (taking a break) and working industriously throughout your life to avoid illness, since idleness and gluttony cause illness (Sir 31:21-22). Sir 30:15-17 advises that death is better than illness.<sup>111</sup> Finally, Ben Sira also mentions mental distress after nightmares of battles (Sir 40:6).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> A. Leo Oppenheim, 'Mesopotamian Medicine,' *BHM* 36:2 (1962), 97-108.

<sup>110</sup> Note that Gregory argues that the fallen king in Sir 10:10 might be Alexander the Great. Bradley C. Gregory, "Historical Candidates for the Fallen King in Sirach 10,10," *ZAW* 126 (2014): 589-91.

<sup>111</sup> The Greek reads 'long illness,' and the Hebrew 'a whisper of an illness.'

<sup>112</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 470.

*Medicine in the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Literature*

Contrary to popular assumption, there is much evidence of professional medicine in the Hebrew Bible. It is often assumed that only herbal remedies from folklore and superstitions or magic are found in the Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel. It is also suspected that Ancient Israel did not have physicians, rejected medicine, or that they inherited the profession from Greece.<sup>113</sup> However, there is much evidence to the contrary.

Scholarship mainly covers the idea of illness as a divine punishment (Deuteronomistic History) and the rejection of רפאים (2Chr 16:12).<sup>114</sup> However, other perspectives about medicine are often hiding in the Hebrew Bible in unlikely places. For example, the ‘land of milk and honey’ has an underlying medical context, used as carriers in medicine by medieval Jewish physicians, and perhaps earlier.<sup>115</sup> Butter, honey, and milk were often used as a carrier for other ingredients to be ingested together in a liquid mixture to neutralize poison.<sup>116</sup> Another ancient medical ingredient from Ancient Egypt, honey (bee or date palm), was farmed in Judea in the Second Temple period including in the Dead Sea and Jericho region.<sup>117</sup> Ancient Egyptian and Greek medical products were edible plants and animals—in other words, food.

The Deuteronomistic view of illness, that illness is caused by divine punishment as a result of sin, is shared with Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Greek medicine. In Judaism, texts that promote this idea of iniquity causing illness include Ben Sira, Jubilees, 1 Enoch, Twelve Patriarchs, Testament of Job, and several others.<sup>118</sup> Second Temple medicine in Second Temple pseudepigrapha included appeals to Divine Name and to angels, and the use of curses, astrology, and herbal medicine.<sup>119</sup> Qumran literature especially is concerned

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<sup>113</sup> Bickerman, *Greek Age*, 161.

<sup>114</sup> The most comprehensive is Bohak, *Magic*, while a good overview of the various references to healing in the Second Temple Jewish literature is Hogan, *Healing*. Also Jacob and Jacob, eds., *Healing Past*. Earlier studies include Harrison, ‘Medicine,’ and B. Barry Levy, *Planets, Potions and Parchments* (London: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1990).

<sup>115</sup> Fred Rosner, ‘Pharmacology and Dietetics’ in *Healing Past*, 10 (1-26).

<sup>116</sup> Maimonides also mentions this. Maimonides, *Treatise on Poisons and Their Antidotes*, 1:6; 2:2. Rosner, ‘Pharmacology,’ 20.

<sup>117</sup> Joan E. Taylor, *Essenes*, 318.

<sup>118</sup> A wide range of Second Temple sources are surveyed for perspectives on healing in Hogan, *Healing Past*.

<sup>119</sup> Bohak, *Magic*, 119-35.

with angelology and astrology. Taylor stresses that Qumran interest in these areas should not be separated from wider Jewish interest in astrology or angels.<sup>120</sup> Taylor is correct because the Second Temple pseudepigrapha discussed above were not created by the Qumran community; many of them predate the Qumran community.

There are several cases in the Hebrew Bible where we get a glimpse of how medicine was practiced. Miriam is healed of a skin disease through prayer by Moses in Num 12:10-13, appealing to the Divine Name (Num 12:13), just as practiced much later in Second Temple pseudepigrapha. Then, Isaiah heals Hezekiah in Isaiah 38. As with Ben Sira's advice regarding illness, the first action Hezekiah takes upon falling ill is pray. Once he has prayed and justified his morality, Isaiah tells him he will be healed and God will defend Jerusalem from Assyria. Then, finally, Isaiah applies a fig cake as medicine to Hezekiah (Isa 38:21). Ben Sira's order of action (Sir 38:1-15) may not come directly from Isaiah 38, as it is not quoted explicitly. Yet Isaiah 38 supports the idea of a longstanding practice of medicine with which Ben Sira would have been familiar, that is, to seek prayer and ensure righteousness before taking physical medicine.

Exod 15:26 is the only time God is called 'Healer' in the Hebrew Bible. This title of God as Healer can be compared with other divine titles in the Levant. The Phoenician god Ba'lu was also called Ba'lu the Healer. Ugaritic sources have titles of Baal and Ugaritic kings as *rapi'u* (healer).<sup>121</sup>

In the case of 2Chr 16:12, Asa did not seek the Lord first but instead the רפאים. MT vocalizes this word as 'physicians', even though in the Hebrew Bible and in Ben Sira, physician (a participle) is spelled רופא. The other reading could be shades or ghosts, רפאים. Thus, it is possible that Asa consulted not the Lord but shades, in a form of ancestor worship.<sup>122</sup> Alternatively, if רפאים is an alternative spelling of רופאים, then the issue could be that Asa did not seek the Lord first (prayer and piety) but solely consulted the physicians.

The range of passing references to actual medicines and medical practices in the Hebrew Bible are wide: binding battle wounds (Ezek 30:21; 2Kgs 8:29, 9:15; 2Chr

<sup>120</sup> Joan E. Taylor, *Essenes*, 335-36.

<sup>121</sup> Hogan, *Healing*, 8, citing Johannes C. de Moor, 'Rapi'uma-Rephaim,' *ZATW* 88:3 (1976), 329 (323-45).

<sup>122</sup> Asa is of course a pun-name, meaning 'physician' in Aramaic, as in Tg. Onq. Exod 15:26. Alexander Sperber, ed., *תרגום אונקלוס לתורה*, כרך א. כתבי הקודש בארמית. (Brill: Leiden, 1959).

22:6)<sup>123</sup> mandrake, midwifery,<sup>124</sup> balms such as hyssop oil (Num 19:18; Jer 8:22), wine and fat (Ps 104:15), quarantine (Lev 13:46),<sup>125</sup> amulets (Ezek 13:18; 2 Macc 12:40), and ancestor-worship (רפאים as in Isa 26:14; Ps 88:11; or the cases in 1Sam 28:7-25; 2Kgs 21:6).<sup>126</sup> Ben Sira, by contrast, actually proscribes ancestor-worship, or perhaps belief in ghosts, by insisting on the powerlessness of the dead (Sir 38:32-23, 41:4). Ben Sira's proscription might mean it was still practiced by many people. Some practices did change over time, though. Bohak shows that written amulets declined as a practice in Judea in the Second Temple period, though some Jews used pagan amulets.<sup>127</sup>

In sum, Ben Sira is not alone in viewing a primary cause of illness as divine punishment for iniquity. Upon investigating further, iniquity is not the only cause of illness in either Ancient Israel or the Second Temple period. It is also clear that some practices evolved over time, such as the decline in written amulets. As noted above, the Hebrew Bible refers to herbal medicine in many places, and the high production of herbal and mineral ingredients for medicine in the Second Temple period show the same picture as Ben Sira with his מרקחת: Jewish medicine promoted both ritualistic and herbal remedies.<sup>128</sup> We should consider that among life's necessities Ben Sira includes items with medical as well as dietary uses: salt, flour, milk, honey, wine, and oil (Sir 39:26).

The longest set of texts that are concerned with bodily matters is within the Purity Laws (Leviticus 11-15). Levite priests act as physicians for leprosy and other medical

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<sup>123</sup> Also practiced to a smaller extent by Egyptian physicians, and much more by Roman times with the development of battlefield surgery. Mesopotamian physicians avoided surgery due to high risk of death

<sup>124</sup> Midwifery and menstruation are topics frequently found in Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Greek medical texts. Kent R. Weeks, 'Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health in Ancient Egypt,' in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East* (ed. Sasson; 4 vols.; New York; London: Scribners; Simon & Schuster and Prentice Hall International, 1995), 3:1787-98. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*. Helen King, *Greek and Roman Medicine* (London: Bristol Classical, 2001), 49. Biggs, 'Medicine.' Specific Hippocratic Texts: *Gynaikēia (Diseases of Women)*. Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*, 260, lists women's menstrual issues in *SpTU* 1.59:12, 14; 4.153:1, 17, and birth control in *BAM* 381 iii 21-22, 422 iii 5 (*Diagnoses*, 261).

<sup>125</sup> This practice also existed in Mesopotamia, as in the texts describing quarantine advised for contagion: *ARM/ITJ* 10.129:1-20 and *BM* 64526:26-31. There was also an understanding that some diseases appeared to be infectious while others had other causes, for example *TDP* 84:39-40 and *AOAT* 43:204. Texts: Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*, 17-18.

<sup>126</sup> Mesopotamian diseases could also be caused by neglected dead ancestors. Biggs, 'Medicine,' 4.

<sup>127</sup> Bohak cites 1 Macc 5:55-62 and Josephus, *A.J.* 12.350-52. Bohak, *Magic* 119-23.

<sup>128</sup> Joan E. Taylor, *Essenes*, 311-36. See also Maria Chrysovergi, 'Attitudes Towards the Use of Medicine in Jewish Literature from the Third and Second Centuries BCE' (PhD Thesis, Durham University, 2011), <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3568/>. Chrysovergi argues that there was a pluriformity to Second Temple Jewish medicine in the Hellenistic period, even different schools of medical thought.

issues. Dietary laws are established (Leviticus 11), and childbirth and menstruation discussed (Leviticus 12). Scholars have long argued that the Levite priests are merely diagnosticians and do not actually heal the sick, distancing them from the role of physicians, Milgrom, Hartley and Noth insist that Leviticus 11-15 is not concerned with healing but ritual purity.<sup>129</sup> However, there are numerous problems with this. The first is that Egyptian physicians were priests themselves and Mesopotamian physicians were closely linked to priests.<sup>130</sup> Second, the ancient Israelite rites of healing are mostly ritualistic and include offerings and sacrifices, prescriptions similar to Mesopotamian and Egyptian medicine.<sup>131</sup> Lev 14:1-57 includes a number of offerings and rituals in the Temple, including hyssop oil (Lev 14:4), a bird in blood (Lev 14:6), and ritual oil treatment (Lev 14:17, 28) given by the priest.<sup>132</sup> In fact, the diagnostic nature of Leviticus 13-15 is reminiscent of Mesopotamian and Egyptian medical texts, particularly the Edwin Smith Surgical Papyrus, in which the physician has three options for his patient depending on the likelihood of recovery: treat, treat with caution, or do not treat (no recovery expected).<sup>133</sup> Additionally, as stated above, food (Leviticus 11) is an important part of health (correct regimen in Greece) and served throughout the ancient world as medical ingredients.

The sick person is expected to quarantine himself or herself and will inevitably present themselves and their offerings for healing to the priest in the Temple.<sup>134</sup> Here again Leviticus 13-15 bears strong similarities to Mesopotamian and Egyptian medical prescriptions for diseases, which give combinations of advice: quarantine, animal-fat,

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<sup>129</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 817. John E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (Dallas: Word Books, 1992), 190. Noth, *Leviticus*, 105. Hogan, *Healing*, 24.

<sup>130</sup> Some Mesopotamian physicians also had the title of priest, but were mostly varying levels of physician, in an apprenticeship system, similar to how scribes designated themselves in levels. Markham J. Geller, *Ancient Babylonian Medicine* (London: Blackwell, 2010), 134.

<sup>131</sup> For example, onions were used as sacrifices for healing in Mesopotamia. Biggs, 'Medicine,' 3.

<sup>132</sup> Specific Mesopotamian rituals for fever include anointing the sick person, or recommending medicine such as diluted beer, in Marten Stol, 'Fever in Babylonia,' in *Disease in Babylonia* (ed. Finkel and Geller; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1-40. Witchcraft, gods, and demons are also causes of illness and their prescriptions are ritualistic. See Finkel and Geller, eds., *Disease in Babylonia*. Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*, 525-27

<sup>133</sup> Wilson, 'Medicine in Ancient Egypt,' 118. In Mesopotamian medicine: Oppenheim, 'Mesopotamian Medicine,' 102.

<sup>134</sup> Scholarship argues the reason for quarantine in Leviticus is primarily for the Temple sanctuary and not for the sake of the individual (Hartley, *Leviticus*, 190), even though quarantine is a form of medicine in Babylonian and Assyrian texts.

animal offerings, herbal remedies, priestly rituals, and/or incantations (prayers) for healing. Most of all, Levitical medicine prescribes priestly ritual and individual sacrifices for sins, similar to the Near East, Egypt, and Mediterranean (Asclepius). Quarantine was also practiced particularly in Mesopotamia.<sup>135</sup>

Moreover, as mentioned above, the Achaemenid Persian period saw the decline of recorded physician names and the stagnation of the creation of new medical texts in Mesopotamia. We have a shortage of medical texts from this period, and those that survive are old texts which continued to be copied by scribes.<sup>136</sup> This matches up chronologically with the development of the Hebrew Bible and would explain why there is no separate medical text in the Hebrew corpus of literature, the equivalent of the Hippocratic corpus or Edwin-Smith Papyrus. Instead, Leviticus 13-15 is included within the Purity Laws, since without a flourishing exclusive study of medicine like in pre-Persian Mesopotamia or fifth to fourth-century BCE Greece, priests and scribes were the most likely candidates to preserve medical knowledge, as they were in Egypt.

Taken altogether, the dietary laws in Leviticus 11, childbirth and menstruation rules in Leviticus 12 indicate that, taken together, Leviticus 11-15 may be classified as a medical ‘text’ of sorts *in addition to* a purity text with the following contents: food, childbirth and menstruation, and skin diseases. Menstruation is also in Lev 15:19-33, which is interesting since in Egyptian and Greek medical texts such as the Hippocratic Corpus, women’s medicine came at the end. The two concerns of purity and health are not distinguishable from each other in light of the evidence shown: food can be purity but also health—as can childbirth, menstruation, and skin diseases. The order of contents especially resembles Greek medicine and Egyptian medicine. The Hippocratic corpus begins with texts on food (and regimen), with diseases and treatments following, and usually concluding with women’s medicine,<sup>137</sup> while most medicine in Egyptian medical texts is food. The importance of food in ancient medicine and health has already been mentioned, as have the inclusion of childbirth and menstruation in ancient medical texts. Since the right food is the key to health and bad or immoderate amounts of food the cause of illness,

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<sup>135</sup> Biggs, ‘Medicine,’ 16. See above note specifying contagion quarantine texts.

<sup>136</sup> Cranz points out another convergence with (earlier) Babylonian practices: purity practices. Isabel Cranz, ‘Priests, Pollution and the Demonic: Evaluating Impurity in the Hebrew Bible in Light of Assyro-Babylonian Texts,’ *JANER* 14:1 (2014): 68-86.

<sup>137</sup> Phillips, *Aspects of Greek Medicine*, 29-119.

the dietary laws are in keeping with ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Mediterranean medicine.<sup>138</sup>

Set within this context, a priestly Temple setting for medicine and healing was a long-established location for Jewish medicine in Ben Sira's time.<sup>139</sup> Ben Sira's ritualistic setting for the physician and perhaps also the perfumer reflect this tradition as continuous. Like Egyptian and Mesopotamian physicians, most Jewish physicians were priests. Likewise, ancient Jewish medicine, as shown, did not develop within a vacuum or only in Hellenism. Instead, much of it was established long before the Hellenistic period and bore strong relationships to Mesopotamian and Egyptian medicine. Egyptian and Mesopotamian medicine share major features with what is found in Leviticus 11-15: priestly-location, food concerns, childbirth and menstruation, diagnostic rules, quarantine, illness as divine punishment, and both herbal and ritualistic medicine.

A mystery still surrounds why Leviticus 11-15 was subsumed into the Book of Leviticus if it was some kind of medical text. Why, in fact, would the Hebrew Bible lack any medical literature in this period if, as it has been argued, ancient Jewish medicine was much more alive than previously assumed? In the sixth-century BCE during the Achaemenid Empire, there was a distinct sharp decline in Mesopotamian interest in medicine. Old medical texts were copied, but new texts were not created in this period. Post-sixth century BCE Mesopotamia seemed to produce no recorded physicians. Oppenheim laments this decline,<sup>140</sup> but perhaps this explains why there is a similar opaqueness to medical texts and named physicians in ancient Jewish medicine.

### *Archaeological Evidence: Plant Remains*

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<sup>138</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus*, 649-50.

<sup>139</sup> One reason we know Leviticus had high status in the Second Temple period because many copies of it survive from Qumran. The biblical manuscripts number as follows: Psalms (36 copies), Deuteronomy (30), Genesis (20), Isaiah (21), Exodus (17), Leviticus (15), Numbers (8). James VanderKam and Peter W. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 150. Leviticus' importance can also be shown from works such as the Temple Scroll that are modelled after Leviticus, or texts like MMT and CD which quote Leviticus.

<sup>140</sup> Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 299-300. Oppenheim cites 2Chr 16:12 and Sir 38:2, 4 for evidence that there was a similar situation for Judea.

Archaeological plant remains from ancient Judea show how much and what kinds of medicine were grown. During the Herodian period, certain valuable and indispensable medicinal ingredients were grown and farmed in large quantities in the Jordan valley, around the Dead Sea, such as balsam, date palm, rue, bee honey, and mandrake. There is some evidence of these ingredients being harvested before the Herodian period, though large-scale production did not seem to start until the first century BCE. More importantly, though, these plants already had a long tradition of being medical ingredients in other civilizations and in Ancient Israel, as argued above.

The Dead Sea produced bitumen, sulphur, alum, and asphalt—these were all important ingredients for medicine at the time. Dead Sea water was famous for its medicinal qualities for curing leprosy. The Dead Sea valley around Qumran was therefore a hotbed of medicinal ingredients and healing, as attested by Josephus, Pliny, Herodotus, and several Greek writers.<sup>141</sup>

Bohak and Taylor present a picture of Second Temple Jewish medicinal practices that incorporates ritual and herbal remedies and has much in common with practices found in the Hebrew Bible. Second Temple Jewish pseudepigrapha also present this same picture. In Tobit, the remedy-dispensing angel who guides and advises Tobias to heal his father Tobit's eyes is named Raphael, 'God heals.' 1 Enoch reads that the angels taught the art of roots, or healing, to mankind (1 En. 7:1-3; 8:3; 67:8-13).<sup>142</sup> Similarly, Jubilees teaches that Noah is instructed in medicine by angels (Jub. 10:10-14). 4Q560 is an exorcism text for a demon of—of all things—toothache.<sup>143</sup>

In all cases, there is a close relationship between the divine and health, and an agreement that healing and medicine owe their origins to God. This resounds within Ben Sira. Hengel viewed the roots and plants sought out by the Essenes as part of their mantic-magic medicine, seeing them more as magic than medicine.<sup>144</sup> The modern distinctions between magic and medicine are unhelpful. Since the plants grown in the Dead Sea valley

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<sup>141</sup> Joan E. Taylor, *Essenes*, 311; 321; 335-37.

<sup>142</sup> Johnston, *Sheol*, 129.

<sup>143</sup> Bohak, *Magic*, 111-12.

<sup>144</sup> Hengel, *Judaism*, 1:240-41.

were widely used for medicine, the Essene use of roots and plants are better understood as part of medicine than sectarian esotericism.<sup>145</sup>

### *Knowledge of Anatomy*

This part of the study now moves on now to cover a few specific aspects of ancient medicine as they were treated in the ancient world, beginning with anatomy. Anatomical knowledge in medicine was limited in Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greek cultic medicine.<sup>146</sup> Physicians in all traditions, apart from Alexandrian Anatomists such as Erasistratus, avoided contact with dead bodies, which limited anatomical knowledge.<sup>147</sup>

In the century of Ben Sira's early life, the third century BCE, Ptolemaic medicine at Alexandria developed dramatically from Hippocratic (Coan school) and Cnidian schools of medicine. In the third century BCE, the soul was no longer thought to be attached in any way to the dead body, which allowed dissection and even vivisection at the Museion of Alexandria. These experiments resulted in astronomical leaps forward in anatomical knowledge and knowledge of hygiene's role in health. Another school, the Empirics, developed at Alexandria during the third century BCE, as well, and fixated on the diagnoses of observable symptoms. The Empirics used only those medicines previously trialled as effective for these symptoms by experience.<sup>148</sup> Their insistence on observing and compiling a list of symptoms to treat patients is reminiscent of Ben Sira's פשרה (Sir 38:14).

Sir 38:16-23 insists that the dead do nothing and there is nothing left in corpses, a development which Ben Sira writes around the same time as Ptolemaic physicians in the Museion of Alexandria begin espousing that souls are not attached to corpses in any

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<sup>145</sup> Joan E. Taylor, *Essenes*, 335-37.

<sup>146</sup> Mainly during the fifth- to third- centuries BCE in the cults of Asclepius and Apollo Iatros. King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 6. Before then, the literary sources for belief in the divine punishment of illness are in Homer's *Iliad* and Hesiod's *Works and Days*. King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 3.

<sup>147</sup> Embalmers, who would have had some knowledge of anatomy to remove organs, were priests of Anubis, at least in the Old Kingdom, and in Herodotus are called social outcasts, though this may be an exaggeration. In either case, Wilson argues they would have had little contact with physicians, who were priests of Sekhmet. Wilson, 'Medicine in Ancient Egypt,' 121.

<sup>148</sup> As opposed to dissection in the Anatomical school, or fixation on diseases and humours in the Hippocratic and Cnidian schools. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 149. King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 31.

way.<sup>149</sup> Ben Sira defends this idea for a different reason—rejecting ancestor-worship. Moreover, Ben Sira does not draw from the Anatomists directly. It is more credible that Ben Sira and the Anatomists are both part of a much wider thought development in Mediterranean society of the late third-century BCE Ptolemaic Empire. Ancestor-worship might explain the architecture of tombs. Second Temple Jewish tombs such as the Herodian tombs at Jericho were *loculi* tombs. These tombs were designed in the shape of a square mourning chamber designed with stone benches at which offerings for the dead were left.<sup>150</sup> This practice is the same as contemporary tombs in Jerusalem<sup>151</sup> and in earlier tombs in Ancient Israel, such as at Silwan (eighth century BCE).<sup>152</sup>

### *Causes of Illness*

Causes of illness have been covered above in ancient Jewish medicine, but here some further thoughts may be made through comparisons with the rest of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East. The idea of illness as a result of divine punishment was deeply set in Mesopotamia,<sup>153</sup> Egypt, and the Mediterranean. Thucydides records that the Athenians initially believed their devastating plague of 430-426 BCE was due to the gods' disfavour, until residents began dying even in the protection of the temples (Thucyd. II.7, 47).<sup>154</sup> Just as in Ben Sira, the non-biblical Qumran literature, and in the Hebrew Bible (particularly the prophetic literature), repentance was required for healing in Near Eastern, Egyptian, and Mediterranean cultic traditions.

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<sup>149</sup> The Museion of Alexandria should be emphasized as the Temple of the Muses, which included its famous library.

<sup>150</sup> The origin of this style of tomb is possibly Phoenicia but could also be Graeco-Roman Egypt. Rachel Hachlili, and Ann E. Killebrew, *Jericho: The Jewish Cemetery of the Second Temple Period* (Jerusalem: IAA, 1999), 58.

<sup>151</sup> Hachlili and Killebrew, *Jericho*, 50.

<sup>152</sup> Hachlili and Killebrew, *Jericho*, 57-58.

<sup>153</sup> Such as texts: *AMT* 76/1:4-7 (ghost), *TDP* 226:82 (the goddess Gula), or *TDP* 122 iii 7-9 (demon Kūbu). Scurlock and Andersen, *Diagnoses*, 501-28. Biggs, 'Medicine,' 3. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 291.

<sup>154</sup> King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 21.

Though fragmentary, *Ahiqar* 154 seems to assume that for there is no healing for those without God.<sup>155</sup> Ben Sira has a similar statement, saying that for the proud there is no healing because of his wickedness (Sir 3:28). These two statements are using healing as a metaphor ('there is no cure for stupid'), but the metaphor itself might express the connections people made between iniquity and illness in the ancient world.

Judea and surrounding civilizations regularly attributed both divine and/or non-divine causes to illness, and equally applied both divine and/or non-divine remedies.<sup>156</sup> In particular, studies of Mesopotamian and Egyptian medicine often repeat that 'magic' and 'rational' medicine were distinctions the ancients would not have made themselves.<sup>157</sup>

Even advances in anatomy and causes of illness (mostly diet) never disconnected professional Classical Greek medicine from religion. The archaeological and epigraphic evidence shows honours given to and from physicians in temples of Asclepius during the fifth and fourth centuries BCE into the Hellenistic period.<sup>158</sup> Medicine and worship complemented each other. Much of why Western society believes Greek medicine was separate from religion is due to modern interpretation of the Hippocratic text *The Sacred Disease*. However, Nutton points out that this text's author is very pious, believing that diseases are equally divine and non-divine—a normal claim to make in the ancient world. The only practices the author criticizes are fake charms and chants from charlatan

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<sup>155</sup> *Ahiqar* 154 reads ...אל עמה. ירפון המו להן זי אל עמה. James M. Lindenberger, *The Aramaic Proverbs of Ahiqar* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University, 1983), 79. By contrast, Cowley translates *Ahiqar* 154: 'one who is like him(self).' A.E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1923), 217. An Aramaic text of *Ahiqar* dating to 500 BCE was found in the Elephantine papyri, and its original language is now thought to be Aramaic. Lindenberger, *Ahiqar*, 16-17. Against Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri*, 206.

<sup>156</sup> Aramaic incantation bowls (sixth century CE) from Nippur are much later but reveal the the use of scripture and the title of God as healer in Jewish medicine, forming a link from Second Temple to rabbinic times. M103, M117, M119, M142, M155, M156. C.D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls* (SBLDS 17; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1975). Dan Levine, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). M156 reads הדין קמיעא יהי לאסו למהדוך ('This amulet will be to heal Mahadukh'). The closest incantation to Exod 15:26 is bowl M117, which mentions 'the Lord God of David healer of the sick,' רופא ההוילים. Levine, *Corpus*, 77-80. R. Akiba condemns the chanting of Exod 15:26 for healing. Sanhedrin 10a: 'R. Akiba says: Also he that reads the heretical books, or that utters charms over a wound and says, "I will put none of the diseases upon thee which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee."' Herbert Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 397. Bohak, *Magic*, 299, says that Exod 15:26 along with Zech 3:2, Psalm 91, and Num 6:24-27 are all verses shown to have a continuous stream of use from the Second Temple to the medieval period.

<sup>157</sup> Crenshaw argues the Ancient Israelite and Second Temple Jewish sages had little interest in magic and downplays its importance by contrast with the highly developed 'magic' of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Crenshaw, *Education*, 153n; 273; 280.

<sup>158</sup> Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 111.

peddlers, not temple votive offerings or prayers.<sup>159</sup> This is a sentiment Ben Sira shares in Sir 34:1-8, which condemns false dreams, divination, and omens.

Therefore while there are subtle differences in tradition, larger themes resound throughout with ancient Jewish medicine. Far more is shared than not. The causes and remedies of illness are charted below to illustrate this conclusion:

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<sup>159</sup> Nutton, *Ancient Medicine*, 111.

		CAUSES OF ILLNESS							
CIVILIZATION:	ANCIENT ISRAEL IRON AGE IIB-C & III (925 - 539 BCE)	SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH (515 BCE - 70 CE)	EGYPTIAN (C. 3100 - 332 BCE)	MESOPOTAMIA (MID-SECOND MILLENNIUM TO 550 BCE)	ACHAEMENID PERSIAN (550 - 332 BCE)	CLASSICAL GREECE (FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES BCE)	HELLENISTIC GREECE (323 - 31 BCE)	REPUBLICAN AND IMPERIAL ROMAN (509 BCE - 330 CE)	
GODS/INIQUITY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
SORGERY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
DEMONS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
FOOD/DRINK	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
WORMS			✓						
BAD HYGIENE							✓		
HUMOURS						✓		✓	
WINDS/OTHER EXTERNAL FORCES			✓			✓			

TYPES OF MEDICINE

CIVILIZATION:	ANCIENT ISRAEL IRON AGE IIB-C & III (925 - 539 BCE)	SECOND TEMPLE JEWISH (515 BCE - 70 CE)	EGYPTIAN (DYNASTIC TO 332 BCE)	MESOPOTAMIA (MID-SECOND MILLENNIUM TO 550 BCE)	ACHAEMENID PERSIAN (550 - 332 BCE)	CLASSICAL GREECE (FIFTH AND FOURTH CENTURIES BCE)	HELLENISTIC GREECE (323 - 31 BCE)	ROMAN (509 BCE - 330 CE)
PRAYERS/SPELLS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
RELIGIOUS OBJECTS/AMULETS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
FOOD (PLANT/ANIMAL)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SURGERY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WHOLE DIET /REGIMEN INCLUDING EXERCISE						✓	✓	

### *Opportunities and Fluidity of Roles*

Ancient scribes, like Ben Sira, in the Mediterranean and Near East inhabited a multiplicity of roles and responsibilities, depending on situation, time of life, family, politics, and opportunity. Ben Sira was scribe, ambassador, and an advanced teacher of wisdom. Physicians in Ancient Egypt were in fact priests of Anubis. Chiefs of Physicians in Ancient Egypt, part of the court, would have been educated in the scribal system along with the royal family. In Mesopotamia, the physician (*asû*) worked side by side with the priestly magician (*ašipu*).<sup>160</sup> Mesopotamian physicians also were unusually clean-shaven, as were Egyptian physicians and priests.<sup>161</sup>

The multiplicity of roles that the priests and physicians played in Egypt and Mesopotamia matches Ben Sira's information about the fluidity of roles that the physician and perfumer.<sup>162</sup> The perfumer is both a maker of incenses and of medical products, since more often than not the ingredients overlapped, such as frankincense (§6.c).

Additionally, Ben Sira describes the physician as wise and having a professional knowledge originating with God. The wise physician, in Ben Sira, consults God in prayer for wisdom about his diagnoses. The Hippocratic text *Decorum* (περὶ εὐσχημοσύνης) describes the ideal physician as a pious one, one who loves wisdom. *Decorum* states that medicine is a form of σοφίη, wisdom. The physician who loves wisdom is 'equal to a god.' *Decorum* writes that the gods honour medicine though they are the real physicians.<sup>163</sup>

Finally, Mesopotamian physicians, especially in the second millennium BCE, earned the most money working in the palace.<sup>164</sup> This location of work resembles Sir 38:2b-3: the physician will earn gifts from the king, and minister unto nobility. As mentioned above, with the Achaemenid Persian period, there was a distinct decline in the creation of new medical texts and the number of named physicians. One hypothesis is that Persian priests took on medical responsibilities.

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<sup>160</sup> Biggs, 'Medicine,' 1; 4.

<sup>161</sup> Oppenheim, 'Mesopotamian Medicine,' 100.

<sup>162</sup> Geller, *Medicine*, 130-40.

<sup>163</sup> Phillips, *Aspects of Greek Medicine*, 118-19.

<sup>164</sup> Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia*, 303.

Ben Sira's sacred-secular fluidity echoes the ancient world's fluidity and dynamic between the roles of priest and physician or scribe and priest. Skilled physicians likewise are wise (Sir 38:2-3). Ben Sira's physicians could be any combination of physician and scribe, priest, or teacher, depending on the situation, opportunity, and stage of life. The common factor is wisdom—scribal training—that enabled professional expertise in physicians, priests, and scribes.<sup>165</sup> Ben Sira's list of the wise includes civil administrators, judges, court officials, and wisdom teachers (Sir 38:33). By comparison, physicians are not included in the craftsmanship category of the unlearned (Sir 38:24-34) who make up a functioning society and produce goods for living (Sir 38:32). The education of physicians and their fluidity of professional roles could also be why Ben Sira begins his section on scribes and the trades (Sir 38:24-39:11) directly after the physician (Sir 38:1-15) and mourning for the dead (Sir 38:16-23).

### *Food and Gluttony in Medicine*

The final aspect of comparison to be discussed is the most common non-divine cause of illness: food. The Ancient Egyptians believed that overindulgence in food or drink putrefied into diseases in the bowels, and then travelled to invade other organs.<sup>166</sup> Greek medicine from the Hippocratic to the Alexandrian schools<sup>167</sup> and Roman medicine similarly proscribed overindulgence in rich foods.<sup>168</sup> Egyptian and Greek medicine therefore prescribed certain foods and holistic corrective diets as medicine.<sup>169</sup> Egyptian

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<sup>165</sup> There is some debate about whether or not Mesopotamian physicians were literate, especially with the diminishing of the role during the Achaemenid Persian period (550 - 332 BCE), but with Egypt, there is a large body of medical literature that makes it unlikely all physicians were unable to read these largely-Q&A form texts. Also, an Egyptian relief depicts Hesi-Re (Hesy-Ra), the Chief of Dentists and Physicians under Djoser, carrying a scribal kit. Wood panels of Hesi-Re (2650 BCE). Abeer El-Shahawy, *The Egyptian Museum in Cairo* (Dar al-Mushaf, 2005), 63. More on this in §6.d.

<sup>166</sup> Weeks, 'Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health,' 1788 (1787-98).

<sup>167</sup> Phillips, *Aspects of Greek Medicine*, 19; 29, while the Alexandrian Anatomist physician Erasistratus recommended both hygiene and food as remedies, Phillips, *Aspects of Greek Medicine*, 153. King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 44, explains the Hippocratic 'line of action': first consulting diet (regimen or lifestyle, including but not limited to food), then drugs, and surgery as a final resort.

<sup>168</sup> King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 47, cites Plutarch, *Tabletalk* 731d. and Seneca, *Epistle to Lucillus* 95.

<sup>169</sup> The one exception is Roman medicine, which was based more on local folklore, perhaps in reaction to Roman suspicion of Greek physicians. King, *Greek and Roman Medicine*, 33; 47. King cites Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, as saying that consulting physicians, who were normally slaves (and Greek) in the Roman Empire,

medicine was food. The food choices themselves were not always based on experiential practice, but frequently on what plants and animals were important to particular gods and the corresponding organs for which they cared.<sup>170</sup> Despite having their own developed thoughts on which foods were best (wet and dry, hot and cold, in the Hippocratic school),<sup>171</sup> Greek physicians also copied Egyptian food remedies.<sup>172</sup> Philo notes the longstanding feud between cooks and physicians, indicating a continuity of the tradition from Ben Sira that the abuse of food caused illness.<sup>173</sup>

As mentioned earlier (§6.a), Sir 38:1-15 is probably placed where it is—between a section on gluttony and death—because of this ancient belief about food and health. Sir 37:27-31 advises against gluttony. Gluttony in the ancient world caused illness, requiring a physician (Sir 38:1-15). Illness could result in death (Sir 38:16-23). Furthermore, Ben Sira advises that sorrow is physically draining and leads to death (Sir 38:18), another note on which his theory of illness may actually turn. Ben Sira praises robust health as a prevention of fatal illness, much like the more naturalistic causes of illness discussed such as regimens of food and exercise in Classical Greek medicine.

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upset the social order, and that they took responsibility of one's health away from the individual. King also cites Plautus, *Menaechmi* 875, for suspicion of the physician's skills, and that Galen, physician to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, was the exception to the rule. Most physicians in the Roman period were Greek slaves.

<sup>170</sup> Weeks, 'Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health,' 1795.

<sup>171</sup> Hipp. Corp., *Regimen*. An Alexandrian text is Diocles' *Diocles to King Antigonus*. Phillips, *Aspects of Greek Medicine*, 76-85; 134.

<sup>172</sup> Wilson, 'Medicine in Ancient Egypt,' 123.

<sup>173</sup> Philo, *Joseph* 11.62.

### ***6.e. Chapter Six Conclusions***

In sum, Sir 38:1-15 is underlined throughout with contemporary perspectives on medicine. Ben Sira's views on medicine are grounded firmly within a longstanding tradition of medicine in ancient Judaism. The originality of Sir 38:1-15 is in how Ben Sira assembles and arranges conventional wisdom and perspectives on medicine. Sir 38:1-15 is also distinct from other poems in his text such the Hymn of Creation since Ben Sira does not have a well-established 'medicine' poetry genre to draw upon. Indirectly, Sir 38:1-15 can be seen as a composition on the professional 'trades', but as stated above, poems about medicine do not survive from the ancient world, only medical texts.

The poem contains only two textual quotations: Exod 15:25-26 and Ezek 47:12. His use Exod 15:25-26 should be understood as being part of a larger convention of its citation in ancient Jewish medicine. Hence even his textual reuse is in fact deeply set within Ben Sira's historical context.

By contextualizing the Physician poem in a fresh survey of ancient medicine, this chapter has dispelled myths about changes in ancient Jewish medicine. In truth, Ben Sira's attitudes to medicine fit neatly within widely-held beliefs in the ancient world, and as I have shown, ancient Israelite and early Jewish worlds, too. While Ben Sira has a slightly novel theme by writing on the 'physician' as a profession and defending piety in medicine, this is where the difference begins and ends. Even with a low proportion of textual quotation, Ben Sira's attitudes expressed in the poem are entirely conventional and appropriate for his time period and Second Temple Judaism. Therefore, there is no correlation in this case between amount of textual reuse and unusual perspectives. His perspectives are entirely appropriate for his time.

This better context characterizes Ben Sira's scribalism in the Physician as far more conventional than previously thought. That is, it is not just textual reuse that makes Ben Sira conventional in his composition, but his espousal of conventional ideas of his time.

Second Temple Jewish physicians may have become more distinct as a specialized professional in the Hellenistic age as compared with Achaemenid Persian period when they were likely known primarily as scribes or priests. Still, the surfacing of this profession is not due to a change of attitudes to medicine. Neither do the attitudes expressed in Ben

Sira towards medicine do not indicate a major change in Jewish opinion from negative to positive. Instead, I have shown that past scholarship have underestimated the state of ancient Jewish medicine and the importance of medicine in the Hebrew Bible. Ancient Jewish medicine is better seen through the lens of Achaemenid Persia and a contextualized understanding of the Levitical Purity Laws.

The historical context of ancient medicine and ancient Jewish medicine has also made clear the importance of not limiting Ben Sira's attitudes to one civilization. We may conclude that it is far better to speak of Ben Sira's *contemporary* attitudes to medicine in a Mediterranean world (with a Persian heritage). In this case in particular, a narrow past understanding of Ancient Israelite and early Jewish medicine clouds the issue, mistakenly presenting Ben Sira's attitudes to medicine as Hellenistic *only* and thus implying a departure from Jewish attitudes when there is no evidence for such a conclusion.

The second conclusion drawn from this study is a note on the overall structure of Ben Sira. The placement of Sir 38:1-15 after a section on gluttony and followed by a section on mourning the dead is best seen in the lens of ancient medicine. This placement is therefore not random. Therefore, our comparison with ancient medicine sheds light on the structure of Ben Sira as a carefully arranged text.

Thirdly, the fluidity of roles in Ben Sira and his historical context is striking, particularly the physician as priest, and the perfumer as handling ingredients used for both temple rituals and medicine. Sir 38:1-2 firmly roots the physician's place in life as established by God and working in court. Sir 38:12b indicates that the physician's place of work is the Temple, which was also the court in the Ptolemaic and Seleucid eras. This aspect of Ben Sira's physician is contained within both the scribal cultural and sociocultural spheres.

Fourth, the wisdom of the physician is a strong note throughout the Physician poem. Ben Sira depicts the pious physician as one who prays for the correct diagnosis, consulting God for wisdom in his decisions. The physician must be wise and pious, and the patient must be pious too before seeking the treatment of the physician. The education of physicians also rationalizes the placement of Sir 38:24-39:11, his section on scribes and the value of education.

These findings also better explain Ben Sira's social-culture sphere of operation by showing that the addressee of the Physician poem should not be seen as someone who rejects medicine—another impression that has left scholarship arguing that Ben Sira is speaking against a tide of Jewish opinion that medicine was bad (and thus that Ben Sira is

espousing Hellenistic opinions). The Achaemenid decline of the physician class and new medical texts provides a background for ancient Israelite and early Jewish attitudes to medicine in the Hebrew Bible. The application of medicine was alive and well; it simply sprung out of a different framework from the Exile. The archaeological and literary evidence shows that medicine remained in use in the Second Temple period: astrology, angelology, and the growing of herbal and mineral ingredients for medicine. Sir 38:1-15 is not defending medicine against criticism, but defending the role of piety in medicine. The structure of Sir 38:1-15 outlines a priority of action to be taken: pray and expiate all sins, give offerings at the Temple, and do not leave the physician-priest. The actions lead towards the Temple. This order of action appears to be embedded in Ben Sira's knowledge from a longstanding Jewish practice, as may be detected from texts such as Isaiah 38 and Leviticus 11-15, texts which prescribe prayer and sacrifice as remedies for illness before the application of physical medicine.

The addressee of Sir 38:1-15 is not rejecting medicine, but neglecting to take care of sins before visiting the physician. The literary and archaeological data examined in this study show that Jewish medicine was alive and well during Ben Sira's day. The Achaemenid Persian model of medicine also explains some of the Hebrew Bible's opacity regarding physicians as a separate class and the placement of medical literature in a *priestly* text. Ancient medical roles in Egypt and Babylon (the priest as physician) provide a pre-existing model for Ben Sira's pious physician in the Temple, and parts of the Hebrew Bible such as Leviticus 11-15 and Isaiah 38. Ben Sira's perfumer is also likely within this domain, since as with other civilizations, perfumers created medical products and liturgical products alike.

Sir 43:11-19 showed strong textual reuse and imitation of a conventional genre in the Hebrew Bible (Chapter Four). Earlier in Chapter Three, Sir 41:1-15 showed strong textual reuse and conventional sociocultural ideas about death. By comparison, Sir 38:1-15 Ben Sira's perspectives on medicine are rooted firmly within his sociocultural framework - yet Sir 38:1-15 does not show high amount of textual reuse. Only indirectly with 'trades' advice like Sir 38:24-39:11 can we say Sir 38:1-15 fits within an established literary convention of writing about a profession (*Satires of the Trades*).<sup>174</sup> There are few direct textual comparisons to be made with Sir 38:1-15, no physician or medicine poetry. The originality of Sir 38:1-15 is contained within its topic and creativity as an original

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<sup>174</sup> Skehan and Di Lella, 449.

composition, yet it still echoes contemporary views on medicine common in ancient Judaism and in other societies. Furthermore, one of the two texts reused (Exod 15:25-26) is already known from other sources as important in ancient Jewish medicine already, making his quotation of Exod 15:25-26 appear to be less about literary effect and more a reflection of his society.

## Chapter Seven

### Conclusions

#### *Conclusions on Ben Sira's Scribalism*

Scribalism is a useful method of uncovering new meanings about Ben Sira's place in scribal culture. Scribal culture—when precise enough and focused on material and textual evidence rather than generalized assumptions about scribes—is therefore found to be a useful lens for understanding how Ben Sira wrote his text.

This thesis has found several key characteristics about Ben Sira's individual scribalism, his personal compositional style. These features present a more comprehensive picture of how Ben Sira wrote his text, how he used other texts, and how he interacted with his world. In this way we can more properly gauge Ben Sira's location within the spectrum of scribal culture, and we avoid taking his scribal identity for granted. That scribes are present as the authors of ancient texts in a manuscript culture is given; the aim has been to characterize the composition style of Ben Sira, in order to learn more about the way his text was written.

Textual reuse is the first key characterization. Where the subject is clearly drawn from the Hebrew Bible (Chapters Two, Three, and Four), Ben Sira's textual reuse is strong, perhaps as a way of demonstrating his learning for the benefit of his audience or potential students. When compared to other Second Temple texts, Ben Sira's own interpretation is present in his textual reuse, although textual reuse itself is his aim rather than interpretation. Another aim in his text is concern with glory and a lasting name. Ben Sira's sincere focus on textual reuse of the Hebrew Bible demonstrates more than just his scribal training; his textual reuse indicates he is aware of his audience's familiarity with his sources. His textual reuse is a point of contact between him and his reader during a period in which Torah became more important in Judaism. Ben Sira's scribalism can be

characterized as being not concerned with agenda but rather the use of his textual sources in a way recognizable to his readers.

Looking back at some of the examples of sociocultural ideas in the text (Chapter Five and Six), this thesis suggests that it is better to speak of Ben Sira operating within contemporary sociocultural ideas, certainly situated within the Mediterranean world but not to the extent that he is directly using texts from Greco-Roman Egypt or Classical Greece. While scholarship sometimes still repeats the claims that Ben Sira is ‘influenced’ by Stoicism or P. Insinger, the reasons for arguing ‘influence’ have not been strong. The concerns of Ben Sira and his contemporary world are encapsulated by his attention to certain general subjects (glory, names, death, and medicine), which results in overlapping parallels but not demonstrable direct influence.

A sociocultural sphere of operation that focused on priesthood and leadership is another feature of Ben Sira’s scribalism. In the studies on the Praise of the Fathers (Chapter Two and Three), Ben Sira’s trend is to focus on priesthood and leadership (not the criticism of kingship) as a way of highlighting these roles in Simon II. His orientation towards Simon indicates much about the value placed on the High Priest in Ben Sira’s time. It can also tell us about a personal relationship of patronage between Ben Sira and Simon. Additionally, the priestly leadership and Temple focus can also reveal Ben Sira’s sociocultural background to some extent, or his professional location. There is enough evidence<sup>1</sup> to propose with confidence that Ben Sira’s school might have been located in the Temple of Jerusalem.

Creativity is an inherent part of writing a new text, but originality (innovating or eschewing tradition) appears to be a medium-to-low priority for Ben Sira. Ben Sira does innovate on old traditions in certain situations. He does not strictly copy old themes or tones but can adapt an established literary convention for his own tone, as shown in Chapter Four (nature-lists). Elsewhere, he also adapts established literary genres for entirely original themes unattested in other ancient literature, as in Chapter Six (medicine). However, even with a highly creative theme in Chapter Six that has little textual reuse, Ben Sira still models his opinions on established views of ancient Jewish medicine. Even the textual reuse present in Sir 38:1-15 formed part of a long-established tradition in

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<sup>1</sup> To summarize: well-connected teachers had schools in temples, and Ben Sira speaks from a perspective which centres life around the Temple. Hengel writes that Ben Sira could have been a Jerusalem Temple scribe. Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, 1:133 (cf. 1:78).

Jewish medicine. The reason Sir 38:1-15 was previously seen as entirely innovative in terms of its opinions was because of misconceptions about ancient Jewish medicine.

One underlying feature concerns the physicality of Ben Sira's sphere of operation within scribal culture, largely consisting of his physical use of texts and aspects of his education, but also encompassing the sphere of direct textual reuse. Ben Sira's habits of physical composition are shown to agree with other evidence of scribal culture in the ancient world. Ben Sira uses paraphrase and harmonized multiple large texts together (Chapter Three), demonstrating that he did not copy and paste from different texts simultaneously while writing. In other places he has direct or interspersed quotations (Chapter Two). His scribal culture operation is also shown in how he engages with established literary conventions (or genre) as models for his text (Chapter Four).

### *Methodological Conclusions*

This thesis has approached the multilayered complexity of Ben Sira's writing by speaking of three intersecting spheres of operation: direct textual, sociocultural, and scribal cultural. These categories have indeed helped create a framework for the characterization of how Ben Sira wrote his text. The framework distinguishes how exactly ideas and texts function in Ben Sira.

Scholars such as Sanders have argued for extensive parallels from P. Insinger and Theognis. We have found that instead it is better to organize overlapping ideas and texts into categories. In this way we resist conflating textual dependence with common streams of ancient thought. It must be stressed that there are a number of possible ways in which Ben Sira still operated as part of the Mediterranean world in cases when direct textual links were in fact only from the Hebrew Bible. Not all of the ways in which a text operates within its contemporary environment are textual, a point which has been effectively shown in Chapter Five, for example. We showed in Chapter Five that limited circulation of elite literature challenges the methodology of searching for parallels as a way of establishing direct influence.

This thesis affects the vocabulary of scribal culture scholarship in Biblical Studies. The spheres of operation shift focus away from the challenges of parallelomania and dichotomization of oral versus literary, textual versus sociocultural. Scribal culture can be

useful as a lens for understanding ancient texts—but only after first exploring the features of a particular text on its own merit.

### *Specific Textual Findings: Conclusions and Impact*

There are several findings from the textual analysis which have major impact for Ben Sira scholarship. The findings in Chapter Four present the possibility, while not conclusive evidence, that the possibility is open that Ben Sira's Psalms might have looked like the tradition of 11QPs<sup>a</sup>-Psalter.<sup>2</sup> The structure of Ben Sira's Hymn of Creation followed by the Praise of the Fathers can be understood at least as showing that Psalms 104, 106, 147, and 148 in Ben Sira's time were thought of as belonging together. The variant of Isaiah 37:20 (concerning Sir 48:20cd) in Chapter Three shows that Ben Sira's textual edition of Isaiah perhaps agreed with the MT. Ben Sira's scrolls that he used might have been his personal collection, but ancient authors tried to use the best sources at their disposal. These findings on Ben Sira's sources therefore tell us about the editions of biblical books present in the Temple of Jerusalem. The use of Qohelet and Job in Sir 41:1-15 (Chapter Five) show that Sir 41:1-15 should be thought of as part of the same stream of thought about death, not separate poems. These findings affect how we understand the structure of Ben Sira.

Some of the textual findings also affect biblical scholarship. The comparative studies in Chapter Six indicate that Leviticus 11-15 is better understood as being about both purity and medicine. Chapter Six also highlights how vibrant ancient Jewish medicine was, and that Ben Sira was reflecting contemporary Jewish views on medicine—not reflecting a sudden change owing to Hellenization as previously thought.

Ben Sira's portrayal of Noah indicates that the Flood—not the rainbow—was not the most important symbol of Noah in Ben Sira's time. By comparison, Josephus and Philo are concerned with the rainbow. In Chapters Two and Three, Ben Sira pays close attention to covenant, but he does not select P material or themes, showing that perhaps he did not pay close attention to themes and statements which today are called P. Thus he might not have been part of a P school stemming from the post-Exilic period or else such a school was fading.

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<sup>2</sup> Askin, 'The Qumran Psalms Scroll Debate and Ben Sira.'

Another textual finding which affects biblical scholarship is Ben Sira's treatment of Isaiah. Isaiah was very important in Second Temple times, but receives a short (though positive) portrayal which relegates him to a secondary role as attached to Hezekiah, similar to Jeremiah being depicted as appearing attached to Josiah: both are the prophets of rulers. Placing Isaiah in a secondary role is unexpected because of the Second Temple popularity of Isaiah, including the extensive use of Isaiah quotations throughout Ben Sira's text. Instead, however, he overrides the popularity of Isaiah, perhaps to emphasize rulers over prophets.

### *Impact of Conclusions*

This thesis has shown why it is so important that future studies of scribal culture in biblical studies must take into account the complexity of physical composition in the ancient world. These have direct impact on text-critical and studies of textual reuse, particularly in rewritten scripture. Past scholarship has been limited by vocabulary and awareness of secondary literature which illuminate how scribes physically handled their sources. Many misconceptions still persist in biblical studies about scribes: the cost of writing and reading material, the physical writing and reading positions of scribes, and the cost of libraries.<sup>3</sup> This has led to incomplete pictures of how biblical texts were written and edited. It is vital to realize that biblical scholarship needs to widen the net cast on the material evidence of scribes.

There are two final insights to draw from this thesis that may generate new discussions for biblical scholarship. The first insight is that studies of scribal culture also require a precise vocabulary. The methodology of this thesis presents more nuanced categories in which we can speak of biblical and related literature as being part of scribal culture. Speaking of historical and literary context is useful but the exact ways in which scribes interacted with their texts and times requires precise categories of how they operated. The method presented labelled these various ways as spheres of operation. This vocabulary allows us to speak of ways in which Ben Sira operated at different social and

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<sup>3</sup> See Skeat, 'Papyrus,' for the cheapness of papyrus. For scholarship on libraries and private collections of books see: Houston, 'Papyrological Evidence;,' Casson, *Libraries*; Small, *Wax Tablets*.

textual levels instead of repeating older methodologies which equate cases of parallels to evidence of dependence.

The second insight is that studies of scribal culture can reveal new understandings of biblical and related literature if we begin with the text as primary evidence rather than selectively looking for evidence which suits general ideas modern scholarship has about scribes. The latter ends in narrow conclusions which only re-confirm assumptions about scribes. Instead we can get a fuller sense of the range of scribal features actually present by looking at the text as a whole instead in selectivity, which is why this thesis looked at a range of types of writing in Ben Sira on different themes, not just the Praise and not just cases of direct textual quotation.