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Identity and Otherness in the Rahab Story: Analysis of the Rahab Speech (Josh 2:9–11)

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Abstract: The biblical story of Rahab of Jericho was included in the Book of Joshua to serve a specific purpose in a remote historical context. This article focuses on a possible function of the Rahab story, which might have been employed by the author/redactor as a literary pattern for cross-cultural encounters between different groups, such as the Canaanite clan of Rahab and the Israelites. The Deuteronomistic Law demands the removal of "others" and separation from them, while Rahab, "the outsider," is saved and protected by the Israelites. This fact may not only prove the benevolence of the Israelites but also be evidence of a recurring literary pattern of constructing national and religious self-identity first through retelling and eventually rewriting stories. Since the Rahab story has been read/heard by ancient audiences and by many readers through the centuries, this pattern may also prove relevant for contemporary readers by providing grounds for intercultural dialogue in the modern world.

Keywords: Deuteronomistic History, Book of Joshua, Rahab of Jericho, otherness in the Bible, biblical storytelling

In Hebrew tradition, the Book of Joshua is part of the second main section of the Tanakh called Nevi'im (Prophets). In the Christian Canon, it also opens, after the Pentateuch, the second main section: the Historical Books. The importance of the Book of Joshua arises from the fact that it provides an account of the conquest of Canaan. One of the fundamental events in this conquest was the capture of Jericho and the role of the prostitute Rahab in achieving this goal (Josh 2:1–24; 6:17, 22–23, 25). Hence, the Book of Joshua provides a broader literary context for the Rahab story. Rahab's speech relaying Israel's story to the spies on the roof of her house constitutes the salient point of the story itself.

This study examines the relationship between the biblical text, specifically the Rahab speech to the Israelite spies (Josh 2:9–11), and the readers. Although some allusions will be made to the immediate and broader context of the story, they will not be methodologically analysed as Rahab's speech to the spies on the roof of her house for two reasons. Firstly, such a study would go far beyond the limits of one article. Secondly, and most importantly, Josh 2:9–11 is the climax of the story that reveals an important thread of the Rahab story, namely "the power of storytelling," which will be the leading argument in supporting the main idea of this study.

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The communication paradigm has been chosen as the hermeneutical approach in analysing this story.[1] In short, the communication paradigm presupposes the necessity of three essential components in the interpretation, which may be roughly labelled as the author, the text, and the reader. Consequently, this approach allows focusing on both the internal literary analysis of the sample text and the external historical analysis (reception history), which registers the readers' interaction with this text.[2]

1. Audience or Audiences?

The question of the audience for an ancient text is highly complex and problematic and, in the case of Rahab's story, continues to be a matter of conjecture. Certainly, each text is created or edited to assist a specific audience. However, that audience passes away over time, while the texts continue to influence subsequent generations.[3] Despite the constant efforts of biblical scholars, the origins of the Rahab story remain unclear and complex. For example, Gene M. Tucker suggests at least three stages in the editorial process: (1) a popular profane story (2) was transformed by a cult tradition of the conquest (cf. Josh 6) and then (3) adopted by the Deuteronomist as a vehicle for his theological principles.[4] On the other hand, Thomas C. Römer believes the Rahab story is one of the post-Deuteronomistic additions, which was inserted "to counter the Deuteronomistic ideology of segregation."[5] Regardless of the scenario one accepts, it is indisputable that the story has undergone several re-adaptations to new contexts and demands. This process would inevitably take a long time, perhaps from pre-exilic times, through the exilic, and into the post-exilic (Persian) period.

Moreover, the investigation of the origins of the Rahab story confronts the reader with the editorial process, involving the re-elaboration(s) and the adaptation of the pre-existing form, be it a popular tale or an aetiological saga, to a new target. This creative process takes the actual story out of the standard pattern and presupposes various socio-historical

1 For example, see J.K. Brown, *Scripture as Communication. Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic 2007); P.L. Danove, *The End of Mark's Story. A Methodological Study* (BibInt 3; Leiden: Brill 1993).

2 My ongoing research on this topic builds upon his proposals in previous publications, such as A. Toczyski, *The 'Geometrics' of The Rahab Story. A Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Joshua 2* (LHBOTS 664; London: Clark 2018); A. Toczyski, "Rahab of Jericho: The Power of Storytelling," *The Bible and Interpretation. News and Interpretations on the Bible and Ancient Near East History* (2018) https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/2018/07/toc428017 [access: 22.07.2018].

3 Cf. T.R. Elßner, *Josua und seine Kriege in jüdischer und christlicher Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Theologie und Frieden 37; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2008).

4 Cf. G.M. Tucker, "The Rahab Saga (Joshua 2): Some Form-Critical and Traditio-Historical Observations," *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays. Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring* (ed. J.M. Efird) (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1972) 70.

5 Cf. T.C. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History. A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: Clark 2007) 134, n. 54, 182.

contexts, as Trent C. Butler explains: "The growth of the story represents a manifold theological interpretation. Each generation of Israelites has learned something new about itself and its God through telling and retelling the story of Jericho's favourite prostitute."[6]

Given such modest evidence about the story's origin, the author would like to pose the following questions: What might the author/redactor wish to convey to his community by embedding the Deuteronomistic tradition into a profane story of a local prostitute from Jericho? And how can contemporary readers engage with this story?

2. Rahab: Insider or Outsider?

Before focusing on the story, we must examine its literary and canonical context. The broader literary context of the Rahab story makes it possible to note a disturbing tension: the survival of foreigners such as Rahab and the Gibeonites (cf. Josh 9:3–16) despite the Deuteronomistic ban. In short, the question is why Rahab and the Gibeonites were allowed to live among the Israelites, contradicting the command of *ḥērem* clearly expressed in, for example, Deut 7:2; 20:16–17 and Josh 6:17–18. This contrast is rendered even more explicit by the story of an Israelite named Achan, to whom the law was strictly applied (cf. Josh 7:1–26). In fact, the comparison of Rahab's and Achan's stories illustrates the process by which Rahab (an outsider) became an insider while Achan (an insider) became an outsider. In the context of the story alone, the rescue of Rahab can be explained by the proverb *do ut des* (I give so that you might give). However, in the broader context, the reader realises that saving Rahab is against the Deuteronomistic Law. Hence, as rightly noted by Robert M. Polzin, one of the functions of this story could be to open the dialogue towards a new understanding of the Mosaic Law.[7] Therefore, it is clear that "Rahab is the archetype of the outsider who becomes an insider, and the authors of her story wanted their readers to pay close attention to both her words and her deeds and how she negotiated the terms of her survival."[8] That said, it is now time to see how it was crafted by the redactor.

3. *Fides ex Auditu:* Rahab's Confession

In narrative theory, a literary device that includes a story within a story is called embedding. In Joshua 2, the embedded story is at the peak of the unit, commonly referred to as Rahab's profession of faith (cf. Josh 2:9–11).

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6 T.C. Butler, *Joshua* (WBC 7; Waco, TX: Word Books 1983) 34.

7 Cf. R.M. Polzin, *Moses and the Deuteronomist. A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History*. I. *Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges* (New York: Seabury Press 1980) 84–91.

8 J.L. Wright, *War, Memory, and National Identity in the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020) 108–109.

The Rahab story is arranged into ten dialogue-based scenes of varied lengths, joined by narrative sections and introductory formulas. The narrative sections, however, are important only in that they move the plot forward, while the dialogue scenes invite the readers to pause and ponder the main conflicts in the story. The climax of the unit, Rahab's speech, in the form of a short monologue, reveals her deepest motivations and explains her subsequent endeavours. On the roof of the prostitute's house, two sleepy scouts could expect many surprises, but probably not the professing of their most cherished religious beliefs by a prostitute. Thus, what is the function of Rahab's profession in the story as a whole?

First and foremost, Rahab's speech sheds light on her previous, unexpected decision to hide two enemy scouts and possibly incur the wrath of the king and citizens of Jericho. In literary terms, it is the climax and turning point of the entire story and the start of a series of resolutions. At this point, it also becomes clear that Rahab was motivated not by speechless and passive spies but by the story of the mighty deeds of the Israelite God, about which all citizens of Jericho had somehow heard. This story allowed her to make a key decision, which later became a platform for further negotiations leading to the alliance with the Israelites. At this point, it is useful to note the well-construed structure of Rahab's confession (Josh 2:9–11) beginning with the introductory formula (v. 9a), which presents a concentric arrangement of information as A–B–C–**D**–C′–B′– A′.

A:	I know: that the Lord has given you the land, (v. 9b)	יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־נָתַן יְהוָה לָכֶם אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
B:	and that your terror has fallen on us, (v. 9c)	וְכִי־נָפְלָה אֵימָתְכֶם עָלֵינוּ
C:	and that all the inhabitants of the land melt in fear before you. (v. 9d)	וְכִי נָמֹגוּ כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ מִפְּנֵיכֶם
D:	For we have heard the fact that the Lord dried up the water of the Sea of Reeds before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites that were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, namely that you utterly destroyed them. (v. 10)	כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ אֵת אֲשֶׁר־הוֹבִישׁ יְהוָה אֶת־מֵי יַם־סוּף מִפְּנֵיכֶם בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם וַאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם לִשְׁנֵי מַלְכֵי הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן לְסִיחֹן וּלְעוֹג אֲשֶׁר הֶחֱרַמְתֶּם אוֹתָם
C':	and when we heard it our hearts melted, (v. 11a)	וַנִּשְׁמַע וַיִּמַּס לְבָבֵנוּ
B':	and there was no spirit left in any man because of you, (v. 11b)	וְלֹא־קָמָה עוֹד רוּחַ בְּאִישׁ מִפְּנֵיכֶם
A':	because as for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth below.[9] (v. 11c)	כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם מִמַּעַל וְעַל־הָאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת

9 The English translation is from: Toczyski, *The 'Geometrics' of The Rahab Story*, 51–52.

The entire speech is in the central part of the chapter, which sheds light on Rahab's motivation and further requests. First, she is shown to be profoundly engaged by the story that will soon change her life. The above structure shows that her arguments derive from personal deliberation: A) "I know" → A') "the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth below." Therefore, the praise of the Israelite God seems to derive from her personal reflections on life in light of the story she has heard. Her personal deliberation is also highlighted by personal pronouns: "**We** have heard" but "**I** know." Above all, it is important to reiterate that at the heart of Rahab's allocution is a reference to the story/rumour that had a devastating impact on the morale of the people, starting with the king. On first reading, it seems a simple story, a retelling of the two most glorious events of the Israelite past: the Crossing of the Sea and the defeat of the Amorite kings. However, as John L. McKenzie argues: "Rahab is quoted as being rather well read in the Deuteronomistic tradition of the Exodus and the wilderness."[10] And Yair Zakovitch astutely notes that "Rahab's words reveal that she, a small-time prostitute from Jericho, knows better than Joshua how great and powerful is Yahweh, the God of Israel."[11] Hence, Rahab's recollection of these memories, couched in a solemn Deuteronomistic style, creates a certain degree of irony. The Canaanite woman and prostitute invites the chosen people of God to remember and learn about the God who revealed himself in their past. Many perceive this as a powerful metaphor for Israel itself. According to William L. Moran, "One may ask if the image does not go still deeper, and functioning as a symbol of Israel suggests the deepest truth of the Conquest ahead: the people so passive, contributing so little, achieving what it does only through the intervention and protection of the God of the exodus, be it found in a spectacular crumbling of walls or in the quiet miracle of a Rahab's faith."[12]

Consequently, Rahab's confession results in a treaty with the spies.[13] The particle עַתָּה "now then" (v. 12a) highlights a necessary connection between her previous action in favour of the spies and her present request of an oath from them: הִשָּׁבְעוּ־נָא לִי "now swear to me" (v. 12a). Rahab's request marks the turning point of the narrative. Thereafter, the story (vv. 12–24) depicts a detailed negotiation between her and the spies, which eventually results in an oath between them ensuring the protection of Rahab and her family.[14]

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10 JL. McKenzie, *The World of the Judges* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall 1966) 48.

11 Y. Zakovitch, "Humor and Theology or the Successful Failure of Israelite Intelligence: A Literary Folkloric Approach to Joshua 2," *Text and Tradition. The Hebrew Bible and Folklore* (ed. S. Niditch) (SemeiaSt; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1990) 90.

12 W.L. Moran, "The Repose of Rahab's Israelite Guests," *Studi sull'Oriente e La Bibbia offerti al P. Giovanni Rinaldi nel 60° Compleanno da Allievi, Colleghi, Amici* (ed. G. Buccellati) (Genova: Studio e Vita 1967) 284.

13 On the covenant form of Josh 2:9–21, see K.M. Campbell, "Rahab's Covenant: A Short Note on Joshua II 9–21," *VT* 22/2 (1972) 243–244.

14 According to Josh 6:22–23, they were saved but placed outside the camp of Israel. As Péter Jenei ("Strategies for Stranger Inclusion in The Narrative Traditions of Joshua–Judges: The Cases of Rahab's Household, the Kenites and the Gibeonites," *OTE* 32/1 [2019] 138) explains: "This liminal position could be understood as a temporal asylum-status... Instead of the standard verb גור, the text uses ישב to describe Rahab's dwelling in Israel. However, ישב is a supporting and substituting verb in the OT narratives to denote the phenomena of sojourning and being a resident in the midst of another community."

Incidentally, the inclusion of others is an ongoing motif in the Bible. It suffices to recall Ruth, a Moabite who becomes an "insider" despite the law expressed in Deut 23:3, but also Tamar (Gen 38:1–30) or Hagar (Gen 16:1–14). Interestingly, in Matthew's genealogy, Rahab becomes Ruth's mother-in-law (cf. Matt 1:5).[15]

Thus, what is the function of the Rahab story, especially her confession, in the conquest narrative of the Book of Joshua? Undoubtedly, Rahab's words and actions foreshadow the outcomes of the conquest of the Land. The spies come and meet Rahab, from whom they learn that the Land lies open before them. As a result, Carey Walsh argues: "She is acclaimed in Israel's memory as foundational to the nation. Rahab, the triple Other to her own people, then becomes a remembered hero of another people, Israel, the outsiders to this Promised Land."[16] However, there is another side to and function of this story. Perhaps the true purpose of employing the perspective of an undesirable "other" was also to challenge the internal struggles of the community to whom the story was addressed initially. It is entirely plausible that the redactor consciously used the story of the undesirable "other" to address several issues concerning his audience/community. This somehow mirrors the praxis of Herodotus, who was less interested in conveying information about "others" (barbarians) than in using their stories "because they provide a means of thinking about Greek identity."[17] Because the Deuteronomistic Law demanded the removal of "others" to ensure total separateness, introducing Rahab—the outsider—who is praising the God of Israel, was clearly meant to challenge the ideology of segregation and national exclusivity.[18]

Furthermore, the resolute portrayal of a woman as an external critic of internal values and practices must have been challenging for the patriarchal community. As a woman, Canaanite, and prostitute, Rahab was ostensibly powerless in the face of the male-dominated laws and customs of the Israelites. Yet, she demonstrated a new dimension of femininity: one that was not only strong and self-confident but, in a certain sense, also "prophetic" in that she could hear, understand, and re-interpret her social standing in a turbulent new world. Jacob L. Wright argues that "Her actions presage the hope that inspires the prophets, who respond to the devastation of their societies by discerning a new dawn on the horizon."[19]

Thus, the story of Rahab tells the reader as much about the Israelites as about Rahab herself. Including Rahab's story in the Book of Joshua, therefore, provides a glimpse into some internal struggles of the community. Presenting their culture and religion as superior was not unusual in such a remote context. On the other hand, the Rahab story exposes

15 L.D. Hawk, *Joshua in 3-D. A Commentary on Biblical Conquest and Manifest Destiny* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Book, 2010) 323–333.

16 C. Walsh, "Women on the Edge," *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelite Identity in the Early Second Temple Period* (eds. E. Ben Zvi – D.V. Edelman) (LHBOTS 456; London: Clark 2016) 130.

17 K. Vlassopoulos, "The Stories of the Others: Storytelling and Intercultural Communication in the Herodotean Mediterranean," *Ancient Ethnography. New Approaches* (eds. E. Almagor – J. Skinner) (London – New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2013) 49.

18 Cf. Römer, *The So-Called Deuteronomistic History*, 134, n. 54, 182.

19 Wright, *War, Memory, and National Identity in the Hebrew Bible,* 108.

not only the submissive character of the outsider but also the problematic character of Israelite customs (e.g. the "ban") and perhaps even their insecurity in a multicultural world. In other words, the Rahab story also ridicules the Israelites when it portrays the supposedly skilled male spies as puppets in the hands of a Canaanite harlot. In fact, it is worth noting that in the Rahab story, the outsider's perspective was used not only to taunt others or display them as inferior but as an external critique of several practices and weaknesses of their community. The awareness of such structural complexity within the story may offer to any reader (also to present-day communities) a powerful image for cross-cultural conversations in which one's values are reviewed from an outsider's perspective.

The author/redactor uses the story of a despised outcast to provide an internal critique. In this way, the Rahab story appears to be a "creative oxymoron" which portrays a collision of opposites forced to engage in dialogue to coexist. When people enter into alliances, they usually need to negotiate agreements, which inevitably lead to compromises (cf. Josh 2:12–21). Consequently, the Rahab story has become a broad, open space for a universal conversation that leads to many new and fresh interpretations. Interestingly enough, the meaning of Rahab's name (רחב) implies a "wide" and "opened" space.[20] Thus, her name, together with her profession, is clearly endowed with sexual connotation and may be perceived as an "ironic provocation."[21] Hence, as it was for Israelites in the Persian Imperium, it is a provocative oxymoron which directly addresses individuals and communities, presenting them with many questions. Considering all the socio-cultural aspects of that conversation, it is crucial to remember the most important question asked by Rahab is: how do I/we relate to the Lord our God, who is God in Heaven above and on earth below?

Conclusion

In sum, this paper argues that the relevance of Rahab's story consists not only in foreshadowing the outcomes of the conquest of the Promised Land but also in challenging the theology of national exclusivity, providing a glimpse into some internal struggles of the community, which had to learn something new about their God and their sacred traditions in a turbulent world. In this way, the Rahab story became a means that helped Israelites examine their enduring values and customs in a world where ethnic encounters with others were not only inevitable but also necessary. The fact that the Israelites incorporated a story that challenged their laws into their traditional collections urges all its readers to examine their attitude towards others. As L. Daniel Hawk rightly points out: "the biblical text ... prods today's Christian readers to examine their own attitudes and perspectives. Who are the 'others' in our thinking? What stereotypes do we hold? What demanding attitudes and

20 See "רחב," *HALOT* III, 1210–1211.

21 Cf. N. Winther-Nielsen, *A Functional Discourse Grammar of Joshua. A Computer Assisted Rhetorical Structure Analysis* (ConBOT 40; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1995) 117, n. 13.

perceptions should be disposed and discarded? Are we willing to make space for others in our hearts and in our churches?"[22] The present author could not agree more with his assertion.

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22 Hawk, *Joshua in 3-D,* 36.

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Pit, Spirit, Necromancer or Instrument Used in Necromancy? The Problem of Finding the Correct Meaning of the Hebrew Word אוב (*ʾôḇ*)

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Abstract: Various meanings are attributed to the word אוֹב: pit, spirit, necromancer, instrument for divining the future with the help of the dead. Thus, in some cases, it is difficult to decide on the right word to translate it. This article attempts a diachronic analysis of biblical texts and, based on it, traces the potential semantic development from the original sense of "pit," "instrument used in necromancy" (1 Sam 28:7–8), through the sense of "spirit of the dead" (Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4) to the post-exilic use in the sense of "necromancer/medium" (Lev 19:31; 20:6, 27). Deuteronomistic narratives (2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24) and the later list of forbidden practices in Deut 18:10–11 may indicate the timing of this semantic transformation.

Keywords: pit, spirit, medium, necromancy, אוֹב

The Hebrew noun אוב (*ʾôḇ*) appears 17 times in the Old Testament. It always occurs in the context of mantic and necromantic practices. In 11 cases, it is associated with a noun ידעני (*jidᵉʿōnî*), sometimes translated as "spirit of divination; someone in whom this spirit resides, a fortune teller."[1] As regards the word in question, one use (Job 32:19) is particularly interesting because the context suggests the meaning of "(leather) wineskin,"[2] and it is the only case when it takes on this meaning. Hence, on the one hand, the lexicographers distinguish it as meaning I (*hapax legomenon*) of אוב (*ʾôḇ*) and treat it as separate from meaning II of אוב (*ʾôḇ*), the more frequently used one, related to necromancy that is of interest here; on the other hand, they consider the former an example of a possible derivation of the second meaning (a device used to mimic the voice of the dead/spirit; cf. Greek ἐγγαστρίμυθος, "ventriloquist," but Vulg. *magus*).[3]

1 KBL, I, 372; *HAWAT* 133. Cf. albeit *DCH* IV, 113: "familiar spirit...sometimes medium, necromancer"; *Ges*[18] II, 445: "Wissende...kleine Figuren mit unklare Funktion in Zauber- und Orakelwesen...Beschwörungsmittel das vorwiegend zu Wahrsagerei benutzt wird...kollektive 'Person', 'Ausübende die Wahrsagerei."

2 On this interpretation see D.J.A. Clines, *Job 21–37* (WBC 18A; Nashville, TN: Nelson 2006) 688, n. 19c.

3 J. Tropper, "Spirit of the Death," *DDD*[2] 806, 809. Tropper notes that later translations move the term *ʾôb* from a cultic/necromantic context into the context of divination and magic (809). More in H. Rouillard – J. Tropper, "Vom kanaanäsichen Ahnenkult zur Zauberei," *UF* 19 (1987) 235–254.

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Dictionaries usually give two or three possible meanings of the word אוב (*ʾōḇ*) II: "spirits of the dead; pit";[4] "instrument (used) when addressing the dead (bullroarer, turndun)";[5] "spirit – a word used in the context of seeking an oracle, medium, necromancer – someone who consults ghosts";[6] "a means of conjuring/invoking (spirits)," "a sacrificial pit" (Sumerian: *ab*; Hittite: *a-a-bi* [*ajubi*]; Acadian: *apu*; Ugaritic: *ʾēb* [also transcribed as *ʾajb* or *åb*] – "hole in the ground");[7] "wineskin, medium, spiritist, necromancer, wizard, spirit of the dead, ghost."[8] According to lexicographers, the noun אוב (*ʾōḇ*), broadly speaking, means something or someone granting access to and contact with the world of the dead. However, most commentators and translators find it difficult to choose the right word when translating specific texts. It results from the fact that three major trends emerge in analyses of the meaning of this word:

1) אוב (*ʾōḇ*), a means/ritual for invoking/conjuring the spirits of the dead, analogous to the Ugaritic *ʾēb* and syllabic cuneiform *a-a-bi/apu*. Generally speaking, it refers to something providing access to the world of the dead[9] or, more specifically, an instrument used to contact the dead. It is also often assumed, as already mentioned, that the term might be etymologically related to the noun אוב (*ʾōḇ*) I, "(leather) wineskin" (cf. Job 32:19).[10] In the latter case, the word in question may have started as an onomatopoeia imitating the sound heard when opening such a leather wineskin.[11]
2) אוב (*ʾōḇ*) "spirits of the dead" or "divinised ancestor"[12] represented by the spirit of the dead (אוב [*ʾwb*] derived from Egyptian *3bwt* meaning "family" but also "form," "figure," analogous to Hebrew תרפים [*t*^{e}*rāp̄îm*], "statuettes representing dead ancestors").[13]

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4 *HAWAT* 9.
5 KBL, I, 19–20.
6 *DCH* I, 148.
7 *Ges*[18] I, 22.
8 M.V. Van Pelt – W.C. Kaiser Jr., "אוב *ʾōb*," *NIDOTTE* I, 303–304.
9 M.M. Vieyra, "Les noms du 'mundus' en hittite et en assyrien et la pythonisse d'Endor," *RHA* 19 (1961) 47–55; C. Rabin, "Hittite Words in Hebrew," *Or* 32 (1963) 113–139; J. Ebach – U. Rüterwörden, "Unterweltsbeschwörung im Alten Testament. Untersuchungen zu Begriffs- und Religionsgeschichte des *ʾōb* I–II," *UF* 9 (1977) 57–70; 12 (1980) 208–220; O. Loretz, "Ugaritisch *åp* (III) und syllabisch-kelischriftlich *abi/apu* als Vorläufer von hebräsch *ʾab/ʾôb* '(Kult/Nekromantie) Grube': Ein Beitrag zu Nekromantie und Magie in Ugarit, Emar und Israel," *UF* 34 (2002) 481–518, particularly 508–509.
10 Cf. T. Podella, *Ṣôm-Fasten. Kollektive Trauer um den verborgenen Gott im Alten Testament* (AOAT 224; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker – Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Velag 1989) 103–105; KBL, I, 20–21.
11 This is the suggestion of Rabbi Ibn Ezra, which was quoted by Naftali Herz Tur-Sinai in his commentary on the Book of Job (1957) and later developed by Herman Wohlstein, "Zu den altisraelitischen Vorstellungen von Toten- und Ahnengeistern," *BZ* 5 (1961) 30–38, particularly 32.
12 J. Tropper, *Nekromantie. Totenbefragung im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (AOAT 223; Kevelaer – Neukirchen-Vluyn: Butzon & Bercker – Neukirchener Verlag 1989) 223–225; Tropper, "Spirit of the Death," 806–809; and differently from his previous opinion T. Podella, "Nekromantie," *TQ* 177 (1997) 120–133; T. Podella, "Ahnenverehrung III," *RGG* I, 227–228; T. Podella, "Totenrituale und Jenseitsbeschreibungen – Zur anamnetischen Struktur der Religionsgeschichte Israels," *Tod, Jenseits und Identität. Perspektiven einer kulturwissenschaftlichen Thanatologie* (eds. J. Assmann – R. Trauzettel) (Veröffentlichungen des „Instituts für Historische Anthropologie e.V." 79; Freiburg – München: Alber 2002) 530–561, particularly 535–538; T. Römer, "Das Verbot magischer und mantischer Praktiken im Buch Deuteronomium (Dtn 18:9–13)," *Diasynchron.*

3) אוב (*ʾôḇ*), the practice of asking questions to the spirits of the dead (Assyrian influence).[14]

This article aims to consider the state of debate on the etymology and meaning of the word in question and then, if possible, chronologically analyse Old Testament texts in which the word appears. The authors of this paper believe that such an approach may enable finding a way to develop its semantic scope in the context of the Hebrew Bible and clarify the difficulties associated with its proper translation.

1. Etymology

There are several suggestions. However, none has been definitively proven to satisfy all researchers. An unquestioned authority on research into the etymology of the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*), Harry A. Hoffner,[15] points out three basic directions in the search for the etymology of this biblical term. The first is the already mentioned Job 32:19 and the sense mentioned therein, i.e. "(leather) wineskin." The second is Arabic *ʾāba,* which means "return." The third is a possible borrowing from a non-Semitic cultural circle (Sumerian, Hurrian, Hittite via Acadian and Ugaritic), in which similar words denoted sacrificial pits. According to Hoffner, the first option is related to the skill of ventriloquism (LXX: ἐγγαστρίμυθος). In his opinion, the second should be ruled out, as there is no evidence of such a connection in ancient Semitic languages. According to Hoffner, the third option is best.

Today, based on his view, the sources for uncovering the original meaning of the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) are often sought in the practice of using pits in the ground as places for offering sacrifice to chthonic deities. It was believed that they were also places of contact with the spirits of the dead. The latter could return from the afterlife (cf. the mentioned Arabic *ʾâba,* "return").[16] In particular, Hoffner points to examples from the Hittite culture, where there were pits for conjuring/evoking spirits (*a-a-bi*) and special rituals for summoning chthonic deities to cleanse houses.[17] From Neo-Assyrian texts, the concept of *apu,* "sacrificial pit," is known (*CAD* 2.201), which was the place for offering sacrifices to chthonic deities (e.g. texts related to the *Akitu* festival; cf. *KAR* 146 III 9–11.20; IV 24–28; K 164;

Beiträge zur Exegese, Theologie und Rezeption der Hebräische Bibel. Fs. W. Dietrich (eds. T. Nauman – R. Hunziker-Rodewald) (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2009) 311–327.

13 C.B. Hays, *Death in the Iron Age II and in First Isaiah* (FAT 79; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2011) 171.

14 B.B. Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead. Ancestor Cult and Necromancy in Ancient Israelite Religion and Tradition* (FAT 11; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1994) 286.

15 H.A. Hoffner Jr., "Second Millennium Antecedents to the Hebrew ʾôb," *JBL* 86 (1967) 385–401; H.A. Hoffner Jr., "אוב *ʾôḇ*," *TDOT* I, 131.

16 Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 151.

17 Cf. also H. Otten, "Eine Beschwörung 131 RS III, 14–18 der Unterirdischen aus Bogazköy," *ZA* 20 (1961) 114–157; B. Janowski – G. Wilhelm (eds.), *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testament.* Neue Folge. IV. *Omina, Orakel, Rituale und Beschwörungen* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Velagshaus 2008) 206–217.

RS 39–39).[18] In Ugarit (a potential transmission route to Hebrew), the word *ʾēb* also means a sacrificial pit or a pit used for necromantic practices. One of the texts (*KTU* 1.16 I 2–3) reads as follows:

> We howl loudly like dogs in thy palace,
> Like puppies in the pit (*ʾēb*) of thy sanctuary for the dead (*ḫštk*).[19]

Oswald Loretz[20] is convinced that the Hebrew word אוב/*ʾa/ôḇ,* "pit," comes from the Ugaritic *ʾēb*, and he believes it to be related to the already mentioned Old Assyrian, Canaanite, Hurrian-Hittite and Akkadian words. In his opinion, all of them represent a *terminus technicus* and denote a sacrificial pit allowing access to both chthonic deities and the dead.[21] Rüdiger Schmitt,[22] in turn, notes that אוב (*ʾôḇ*) in 1 Sam 28 is located in the "house" of a woman referred to as בעלת–אוב (*baʿălat ʾôb*) (1 Sam 28:7), and this term could mean a waste pit or a water tank – places that fit well with the ideas about the location in (the pit of) the world of the dead. However, he also admits that there are no examples of using such places in the Old Testament mantics. The only potential archaeological example comes from Tell Mozan/Urkeš, where a palace installation that may have been used for such rituals was found.[23] Nonetheless, Hoffner[24] believes that אוב (*ʾôḇ*) is an old word known already in the second millennium BC. He also points to toponyms associated with it (cf. Num 21:10–11; 33:43–44: אבת [*ʾōḇōṯ*]). Although the place with this name is difficult to identify, some scholars translate it as "leather wineskin" (cf. Job 32:19) or "necromancers."[25]

Other source suggestions indicate something dangerous and hostile (from אבת [*ʾōḇōṯ*] "being an enemy") or a derivative of the Hebrew word אב (*ʾāb*), "father," understood as "dead ancestor."[26] The arguments regarding the last proposal, often cited by Joseph Tropper, may indeed also suggest such a source of the word. According to Tropper:

- the cult of dead ancestors was well-known in the ancient Near East;
- in the Old Testament, אבות (*ʾābôt* then as *defective plural* – *ʾōbôt*) often means dead ancestors;

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18 Texts cited in Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 118–122.

19 Loretz, "Ugaritisch åp (III)," 502; own translation based on the text quoted in R. Schmitt, *Mantik im Alten Testament* (AOAT 411; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag 2014) 93.

20 Loretz, "Ugaritisch åp (III)," 509.

21 Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 117.122.

22 Schmitt, *Mantik*, 93.

23 Schmitt, *Mantik*, 93, n. 18 with reference to M. Kelly-Buccellati, "Ein hurritischer Gang in die Unterwelt," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft zu Berlin* 134 (2002) 131–148, https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.8294051; see also Loretz, "Ugaritisch åp (III)," 501–502.

24 Hoffner, "אוב *ôḇ*," 131.

25 K.M. Penner, "Oboth," *NIDB* IV, 318.

26 J. Lust, "On Wizards and Prophets," *Studies on Prophecy* (VTSup 26; Leiden: Brill 1974) 133–142; Tropper, "Spirit of the Death," 807.

- parallel applications also indicate that persons, not objects, are involved (cf. already mentioned 11 times ידעני [*jidd^{e}ʿōnî*] with אוב [*ʾôḇ*]; מתים [*mētîm*], "the dead"; אטים [*ʾiṭṭîm*], "spirits" [Isa 19:3]; תרפים [*t^{e}rāp̄îm*] → אלהים [*ʾĕlōhîm*], "gods" [Isa 8:19]; אלילים [*ʾelîlîm*] גללים [*gillûlîm*], "[false] gods" [Isa 19:3]; גלולים [*gillûlîm*], "idols"; שקצים [*šiqqûṣîm*], "abominations" [2 Kgs 23:24]);
- although אוב (*ʾôḇ*) is a specifically Hebrew word for dead ancestors, it has equivalents in other languages: Eblaite ***dingir**-a-mn*,[27] Old Acadian *ilabu*;[28]
- In Mesopotamia and Ugarit, the dead were worshipped (*KTU* 1.161);
- there are "obvious" ideological connections between Hebrew אוב (*ʾôḇ*) and the words for the dead in other languages, such as Ugaritic *rpum*; Phoenician *rp'm*; Hebrew רפאים (*r^{e}p̄āʾîm*) and between Acadian *eṭemmū* (Hebrew *ʾiṭṭîm*; cf. Isa 19:3). In Mesopotamia, there were also many spells called *gidim-ḫul* = *eṭemmū lemnūtu.*[29] All were used to cleanse the house/expel the evil spirits of the dead.

According to Tropper, those examples are a "convincing" argument for the idea that the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) should be understood as "divinised ancestors." However, such a conclusion is easily undermined if one looks at the pericope of 1 Sam 28:3–25, which is crucial for research on this issue, where the spirit of Samuel conjured in Endor is not the ancestor of Saul. Here, the dead is/are referred to as אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm*; 1 Sam 28:13), and אוב (*ʾôḇ*) which more likely means the necromancer's instrument (vv. 7–8), one who has access to the world of the dead, or even power over the spirits of the dead, or who possesses powers enabling such practices (cf. v. 7: בעלת–אוב [*baʿălat ʾôḇ*]) or the necromancers themselves (vv. 3, 9). While other statements such as Isa 8:19; 19:3 (in conjunction with the verb דרשׁ [*drš*], "to seek") or Isa 29:4 (אוב [*ʾôḇ*] coming מארץ [*mēʾereṣ*], "out of the earth") may indeed point to the sense of "spirits of the dead" (there is no mention of dead ancestors!), Lev 19:31//Deut 18:11; 2 Kgs 21:6//2 Chr 33:6; 2 Kgs 23:24 (parallel to each other אבות [*ʾōḇōt*] and ידענים [*jidd^{e}ʿōnîm*]) more likely relate to people engaged in divination practices and necromancers.[30]

2. Use in the Old Testament

Of the 17 uses of the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*), nine appear in narrative texts (1 Sam; 2 Kgs; 1–2 Chr), four in legal texts (Lev; Deut), three in the Book of Isaiah and one in the Book of Job. Most concern practices related to the worship of foreign gods/idols or practices

27 P. Xella, "Aspekte religiöser Vorstellungen in Syrien und den Ebla und Ugarit Texte," *UF* 15 (1983) 279–290.

28 W.G. Lambert, "Old Akkadian Ilaba = Ugaritic Ilib?," *UF* 13 (1981) 299–301.

29 J. Bottéro, "Les morts et l'au-delà dans le rituels en accadien contre l'action des «revenants»," *ZA* 73 (1983) 153–203.

30 R. Schmitt, *Magie im Alten Testament* (AOAT 313; Münster: Ugarit-Velag 2004) 339–347; Schmitt, *Mantik,* 91–93.

forbidden in Yahwism. In those cases, the word is usually used in the plural, nine of which in parallel to the aforementioned ידעונים (*jidd*^{e}*ʿōnîm*). Here, one can find phrases such as פנה אל (*pānâ ʾel*), "to turn to" (Lev 19:31; 20:6); בקשׁ אל (*biqqēš ʾel*), "to seek before/at" (Lev 19:31); דרשׁ אל (*dāraš ʾel*), "to refer to" (Isa 8:19; 19:3); זנה אחר (*zānâ ʾaḥar*), "to practice fornication" (Lev 20:6) related to אוב (*ʾôḇ*). In some cases, reference is made to something that can be performed עשׂה (*ʿāśâ*; 2 Kgs 21:6//2 Chr 33:6) or destroyed הסיר (*hēsîr* in 1 Sam 28:3), הכרית (*hikrît* in 1 Sam 28:9); בער (*biʿēr* in 2 Kgs 23:24). Therefore, it is a vocabulary typical of idolatry.[31] The Deuteronomistic narrative (1 Sam 28:3, 7, 9: Saul; 2 Kgs 23:24: Josiah) refers to the need to eliminate this practice and related installations, as their promotion is also mentioned (2 Kgs 21:6: Manasseh), which is considered טמא (*ṭāmēʾ*), "cultically impure" in later law (Lev 19:31). In five cases, אוב (*ʾôḇ*) (singular) clearly refers to necromantic practices and posing questions to the spirits of the dead. In such cases, it appears only once together with a singular or plural term ידעני (*jidd*^{e}*ʿōnî*).

Now, let us have a closer look at the most important of the uses to reveal their potential meaning and possible development of the semantic scope of the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*).

2.1. Narrative Texts

The word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) (singular/plural) appears mainly in Deuteronomistic texts, and its use clearly shows links with the legal formula in Deut 18:10–11. A potentially older meaning can be found in the pre-Deuetronomistic literary layer of 1 Sam 28. The Book of Chronicles, in turn, clearly reflects the completely negative attitude of post-exilic Judaism towards necromancy.

2.1.1. Female Necromancer/Lady (1 Sam 28:3–19)

> And Samuel died, and all Israel mourned for him. They buried him in his city Ramah. And Saul removed (סור *sûr* hifil) evoking the spirits of the dead (האבות *hāʾōḇôt*) and the soothsayers (ואת–הידעונים *wᵉʾet-hajjiddᵉʿônîm*) from the land. Meanwhile, the Philistines gathered together and set up a camp in Shunem. Saul assembled all of Israel and they encamped in Gilboa. Upon seeing all the Philistines gathered for the attack, Saul became concerned and fearful. Saul sought (שׁאל *š ʾl*) YHWH, but YHWH did not answer him (ענה *ʿnh*) neither in dreams, nor through *Urim*, nor through the prophets. So Saul said to his servants: "Find for me a woman who is a medium (בעלת–אוב *baʿălat-ʾôḇ*), so that I may go to her and inquire [contact] through her (דרשׁ + בה *drš* + *bāh*)." His servants said to him: "Behold, there is a woman who is a medium in Endor (בעלת–אוב *baʿălat-ʾôḇ*)." Then Saul disguised himself by putting on other clothes, and went, he and two men with him. When they came to the woman at night, he said: "Conjure up for (קסם *qsm* qal) me please through the spirit of the dead (באוב *bāʾôḇ*) and bring up for me (*imperativus* hifil עלה *ʿlh,*"to ascend, to go up") whom I shall name to you." The woman said to him: "Surely you know what Saul has done: How he has cut off (כרת *krt* hifil) the mediums (האבות *hāʾōḇôt*) and (הידעני *hajjiddᵉʿônî*) the necromancer from the land. Why then are you laying a trap for my life to bring about my death?" And Saul vowed to her by YHWH: "As the YHWH lives, there shall no punishment come upon you for this thing!" So the woman said: "Whom do you want me to bring (up; עלה *ʿlh* hifil)?" And he said: "Bring (עלה *ʿlh* hifil) me Samuel." When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out in a loud voice

31 Tropper, "Spirit of the Death," 808.

and said to Saul: "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!" The king said to her: "Do not be afraid. What do you see?" And the woman said to Saul: "I see a divine being (אלהים *'ĕlōhîm*) coming up from the earth (עלה *'lh* + מן–הארץ *min-hā'āres*)." He said to her: "What form is he of?" And she said: "An old man cometh up (עלה *'lh* qal *participium*) covered with a robe." And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and worshipped him. And Samuel said to Saul: "Why have you disturbed me by calling me up (עלה *'lh* hifil)?" Saul replied: "I'm in deep trouble, the Philistines are making war against me and God has deserted me and has not answered me yet, either through a prophet or in dreams, so I have called on you to tell me what to do?" Samuel replied: "Why do you ask me since YHWH has turned away from you and has become your enemy?" YHWH has treated you as he foretold through me. YHWH has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbour – David. As you did not listen to the voice of YHWH and did not execute his burning anger on Amalek, therefore YHWH has done this thing to you this day. YHWH will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons [will be] with me, YHWH will also hand Israel over to the Philistines.

In the whole pericope (1 Sam 28:3–25), vv. 3–19 are the most relevant to the issue under consideration here. This is undoubtedly the most important text to the research area of this paper. The context is clearly necromantic here. However, the very dating of the pericope is disputed. For some researchers, it is compositional, and the younger literary layers overlap the older core of the story (compared to DtrH), while others consider it a later, integral composition.[32] In early Judeo-Christian exegesis, the prevailing opinion was that the entire scene was historical.[33] Today, it is more often assumed that some pre-written oral tradition is contained in the necromancy scene, which gives us insight into that ritual during the early monarchical period.[34] According to Walter Dietrich,[35] at that stage, there was a tradition about Saul consulting his dead ancestor (Kish?). However, it can no longer be reliably reconstructed.[36] Two subsequent literary elaborations of that tradition, the so-called "Saulide narrative arc" (vv. 4–5, 7–8, 11, 12a, 13–14, 15–16a$_1$, 19a^{2}b, 20a$_1$, 21ab$_1$, 23b–25) and the so-called "court narrative," less sympathetic towards Saul (vv. 6, 15b, 16a^{2}b, 20b, 23a), turn it into a story, but only the last, Deuteronomistic redaction (vv. 3, 9,

32 I. Fischer, *Gotteskünderinnen. Zu einer geschlechterfairen Deutung des Phänomens der Prophetie und der Prophetinnen in der Hebräischen Bibel* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2002) 131–157; P. Johnston, *Shades of Sheol. Death and Afterlife in the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2002) 154–158, particularly 157; W. Dietrich, *Samuel. 1 Samuel 27 – 2 Samuel 8* (BKAT 8.3; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2019) 43–44. Dietrich (*ibidem*, 44–45) considers the pericope to be a literary complex text, due to the noticeable numerous tensions, contradictions, repetitions and gaps in it. He also proposes various options for the development of that text (*ibidem*, 45–48).

33 K.A.D. Smelik, "The Witch of Endor: 1 Sam 28 in Rabbinic and Christian Exegesis till 800 A.D.," *VC* 33 (1977) 160–179, https://doi.org/10.2307/1583267.

34 R. Schmitt, "Totenversorgung, Totengedenken und Nekromantie. Biblische und archäologische Perspektiven ritueller Kommunikation mit den Toten," *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt* (eds. A. Berlejung – B. Janowski) (FAT 64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2009) 501–524, particularly 502.

35 Dietrich, *Samuel*, 52–53.

36 Dietrich, *Samuel*, 49.

12b, 17–19, 21b$_{2.3}$), viewed Saul's act in a decidedly negative light, treating it as disobedience to the word of God and transgression against the Law (cf. Deut 18:10–11).[37]

Looking at the distinguished stages of pericope editing, one can notice that the crucial moments where the word under study appears (vv. 3b, 7, 8, 9) and other elements related to necromancy (especially vv. 8, 13–14) represent this alleged oral tradition, first included in the context of the pre-Deuteronomistic tradition about Saul (vv. 7–8, 13–14: the night visit to the necromancer and the description of the creature coming out of the earth), and then viewed negatively by the Deuteronomistic redaction (vv. 3b, 9). From that perspective, the meaning assigned to the words בעלת-אוב (*baʿălat-ʾôḇ* v. 7) and קסם (*qsm* qal) + באוב (*bāʾôḇ* v. 8b) in the pre-Deuteronomistic version and (vv. 3b, 9a) in the editorial work done by the Deuteronomistic community may be interesting. To the mentioned verb קסם + באוב (*qsm* qal + *bāʾôḇ*) from the first literary version of the narrative describing various forms of divination and predicting the future (v. 8b), from casting lots, through hepatoscopy (divination by liver inspection), to prophesying (in this case, Saul asks to consult the spirits of the dead for that purpose in 1 Sam 28:8),[38] we should also add the verb שׁאל (*šʾl* v. 6a), "to seek (advice)" (2nd edition: the so-called courtly), (דרשׁ *drš* + "through her," v. 7), as well as the often repeated verb עלה (*ʿlh*), "to go (up), to go out (upwards)" (vv. 8b, 11bis, 15: hifil; vv. 13–14: participle qal), describing the direction in which the spirit called from the earth moves (מן–הארץ v. 13: *min-hāʾāreṣ*), referred to in the oldest literary version as אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm* v. 13).

Having experienced God's silence while using traditional practices (v. 6: dreams, *Urim*, prophets), Saul looks for a "new" form of consultation with Him to dispel his doubts (1 Sam 28:3a). He wants to hear the opinion of the prophet who died (cf. 1 Sam 25:1) and needs a competent person to "bring out" the spirit of the late Samuel. He "comes out of the earth" (1 Sam 28:13: a synonym for Sheol[39]) and informs him that he and his sons would be "with him" the next day, that is, they would die (1 Sam 28:19). The pre-Deuteronomistic version mentions a woman (אשׁת *ʾĕšet*) additionally referred to as בעלת–אוב (*baʿălat-ʾôḇ* v. 7), consulting (קסם *qsm* qal) the dead using (ב *bā*) אוב (*ʾôḇ* v. 8b). In this case, אוב (*ʾôḇ*) may be both an instrument and an installation[40] used by the woman, or the spirit of the dead Samuel.

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37 Similarly B.T. Arnold, "Necromancy and Cleromancy in 1 and 2 Samuel," *CBQ* 66/2 (2004) 199. See also C.L. Nihan, "1 Samuel 28 and the Condemnation of Necromancy in Persian Yehud," *Magic in the Biblical World. From Aaron Rod to the Ring of Solomon* (ed. T.E. Klutz) (JSNTSup 245; London: Clark 2003) 23–54.

38 KBL, II, 179.

39 W.L. Holladay, "'Ereṣ – "Unterworld": Two More Suggestions," *VT* 19 (1969) 123–124; N.J. Tromp, *Primitive Conception of Death and the Death and Nether World in the Old Testament* (BibOr 21; Roma: PIB 1969) 23–46, 85–91, 98; M. Ottosson, "ארץ *ʾereṣ*," *TDOT* I, 388–405, particularly 398–400; KBL, II, 584.

40 "mistress of the (bottle-shaped) pit", cf. Vieyra, "Les noms," 51–53; Hoffner, "Second Millennium," 401; already suggested earlied by C.J. Gadd, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East* (The Schweich Lectures on Biblical Archaeology 1945; London: Oxford University Press 1948) 89, https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.73601/page/n99/mode/2up [access: 1.09.2023].

The phrase בעלת–אוב (*baʿălat-ʾôḇ*) means here a representative of a certain professional group,[41] a necromancer, a medium, comparable to the Hittite *ḫaššawa/SALŠU.GI,* "wise/old woman."[42] However, some researchers believe it to be a combination of two separate terms for this profession: אשׁת אוב (*ʾšt ʾwḇ*), a "ghostwife" and בעלת–אוב (*bʿlt ʾwḇ),* a "ghostmistress,"[43] while others understand the word אשׁה (*ʾiššâ*) as "the conjurer of the spirits of the dead," and the apposition as a term indicating the one she serves: the lady, i.e. a solar goddess having power over the afterlife.[44] Grammatically, it is also possible for the preposition ב (*bᵉ*) to function as an accusative (cf. Gen 25:22: ב [*bᵉ*] + YHWH), but the spirit charmer and the spirits are not consulted in the same way as deities according to Dietrich, who translates the whole phrase as "a woman, who is capable of (conducting) a spell/consultation of ancestors."[45]

After performing the necromantic ritual, the woman achieves her goal and describes to Saul what she sees (vv. 13b–14a). It is not known how Saul recognises that the "old man covered with a robe" (v. 14a; cf. 2 Kgs 2:13–14) is the dead Samuel (v. 14b), but much more intriguing in that description is the identification of the figure emerging from the ground as אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm*) (v. 13b). Both the Masoretic text and the LXX retain the plural form of the verbs in this case. The latter translates the word as "gods." Some exegetes retain that meaning, considering it a description of "many dead" (cf. Isa 8:19)[46] or many chthonic deities accompanying the dead.[47] However, the context of the description does not make it possible to prove the validity of such an understanding of the word. This is why it is usually considered the reference exclusively to the spirit of the dead Samuel. The first and last cases could exemplify the fact that the ancient Israelites, like other peoples in the area, idolised their dead ancestors over time.[48] In recent years, however, another opinion has begun to prevail, according to which the term אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm*) means only "something divine," "divine

41 Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 227.

42 R. Schmitt, "Divination, Media of," *Encyclopedia of Material Culture in the Biblical World. A New Biblisches Reallexikon* (ed. A. Berlejung) (Tübinen: Mohr Siebeck 2022) 239.

43 P.K. McCarter, *1 Samuel* (AB 8; New York: Doubleday 1980) 418; R.W. Klein, *1 Samuel* (WBC 10; Waco, TX: World Book 1983) 268; T.J. Lewis, *Cult of the Dead in Ancient Israel and Ugarit* (HSM 39; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1989) 107.

44 D.T. Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2007) 621, 630–631.

45 Dietrich, *Samuel*, 32: "Frau, die der Ahnenbeschwörung mächtig ist" + n. 35 to v. 7. Similarly, already A. Caquot – P. de Robert, *Les livres de Samuel* (Genéve: Labor et Fides 1994) 331: "femme expert en évocation que j'aille chez elle la consulter."

46 Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 219–220; M. Kleiner, *Saul in En-Dor. Wahragung oder Totenbeschwörung? Eine synchrone und diachrone Untersuchung zu 1 Sam 28* (ETS 66; Göttingen: Benno 1995) 134–135.

47 M. Hutter, "Religionsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zu *ʾlhym* in 1 Sam 28,13," *BN* 21 (1983) 32–36; B.B. Schmidt, "The 'Witch' of En-Dor. 1 Samuel and Ancient Near Eastern Necromancy," *Ancient Magic and Ritual Power* (eds. M. Meyer – P. Mirecki) (RGRW 129; Leiden – New York – Köln: Brill 1995) 120–127.

48 More on the matter cf. J. Lemański, "*Sprawisz, abym ożył! (Ps 71,20b). Źródła nadziei na zmartwychwstanie w Starym Testamencie* (Rozprawy i Studia 532; Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe US 2004) 93–94.

beings," beings that do not come from the world of the living.[49] Bill T. Arnold[50] believes that the demarcation line between the being from this world and the divine one was less clear in ancient times than today, and the noun אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm*) has an attributive meaning of "divine," "extraordinary" in this case. The dead are described as "gods" but only to emphasise their existence other than earthly (*preternatural* but not *supernatural*). According to the scholar, it is also possible that it does not concern only the broadly understood "shades of the dead" but "ancestral preternatural beings" (Arnold also points to a similar meaning in Mic 3:7).[51] However, as was already noted, Samuel is not Saul's relative, and one can only speculate as to who the dead was in the alleged oral version of that tradition.

Still, if the dead/spirit is referred to as אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm*), then the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) used by the female necromancer in the older version of the tradition about the events in Endor may, in fact, be an instrument for conjuring it or an object (e.g. a hole in the ground imitating/allowing access to the afterlife). Because one can use it to consult the spirits (דרשׁ *drš* v. 7; קסם *qsm* v. 8b) and cause them to come out of the earth/Sheol (עלה *ʿlh* hifil vv. 8b, 11b, 15; qal vv. 13–14).

In the early development stage of the ancient Israel religion, referred to as "vorkanonische Vorstellungen,"[52] the coexistence of belief in YHWH and the world of the dead ruled by the chthonic deity Mot was not yet a major issue. That situation changed radically with the religious reforms attributed by biblical authors to Hezekiah (cf. Exod 22:17, 28) and later intensified in the times of Josiah (Deut 18:11; 2 Kgs 23:24). In any case, in the late 8th and early 7th centuries BC, there were bans on practising necromancy and the cult of dead ancestors,[53] treating such practices as contrary to orthodox Yahwism. The narrative in 1 Sam 28 describes a practice originating from the "pre-canonical" period, which is then overlaid by a clear, canonical correction in the approach to necromancy.

In the corrected Deuteronomistic version, the phrase האות ואת–הידענים (*hāʾōḇôt wᵉʾet-hajjiddᵉʿōnîm*) (vv. 3b, 9) is a description of a profession (necromancers and fortune tellers) or items used to perform the practice. This time, choosing one of those two possible meanings is more difficult. Dietrich[54] notes that the verb סור (*swr* hifil), "to dismiss, to remove,"[55] does not indicate something abstract, such as conjuring the dead (Fritz Stolz),

49 Lewis, *Cult of the Dead*, 49–50, 112–116; P. Johnston, "The Underworld and the Dead in the Old Testament," *TynBul* 45 (1994) 415–419; K. van der Toorn, "God (I): ʾlhjm," *DDD*² 363; Dietrich, *Samuel*, 36.

50 Arnold, "Necromancy," 202–203.

51 Arnold, "Necromancy," 203 with reference to H. Niehr, "Ein unerkennter Text zur Nekromantie in Israel," *UF* 23 (1991) 301–306, particularly 304.

52 B. Lang, "Leben nach dem Tod (I). Altes Testament," *Neues Bibel-Lexikon* (eds. M. Görg – B. Lang) (Zürich – Düsseldorf: Benziger 1995) I, 599–602, particularly 599.

53 E. Gönke, *JHWH und die Unterwelt* (FAT 23.2; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2007) 17. Cf. also several articles in the collective monograph *Tod und Jenseits im alten Israel und in seiner Umwelt* (eds. A. Berlejung – B. Janowski) (FAT 64; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2009).

54 Dietrich, *Samuel*, 32, 33, 34 + n. cc: "Ahnenfiguren und Allewissenden" with reference to Klein, *1 Samuel*, 267: "The (images of) ancestral spirits and ghosts"; Troppe, *Nekromantie*, 224: "Requisiten des Ahnenkultes (=Ahnenbilder)."

55 KBL, I, 701–702.

nor the spirits of the dead (Robert Alter), nor those involved in their invocation (Pete Kyle McCarter; Antony F. Campbell), but something more precise; an item used by necromancers – statuettes of the dead (ancestors). In fact, combined with the pronoun מן (*min*), it can have such a meaning. As was already established, the current canonical version of 1 Sam 28 does not mention an ancestor of Saul. Moreover, the semantics of that verb also includes the meaning of "to leave,"[56] which in the hifil conjugation can also take the meaning of "to dismiss/make go away" and refer to those practising necromantic rituals. What is intriguing in this case (vv. 3b, 9) is the presence of the preposition ואת (*w^{e}t*). It is not found in front of the first noun האות (*hā'oḇôt*) in v. 3b but appears before it in v. 9. Then again, הידענים (*hajjidd^{e}'ōnîm*) can be found in v. 3b in the plural and in v. 9 in the singular. This may be a trace of editorial activity, which turned the instrument(s) used for necromancy (the original version of v. 3b) into a profession (definitely in v. 9).

As noted by Tropper,[57] when it comes to choosing the meaning of אוב (*'ôḇ*), scholars are usually of different opinions and go for the personal sense (spirits of the dead, malevolent spirits, spirits of ancestors) or the instrumental sense (empty vessel, pit/hole; intestine or leather wineskin[58]). In younger texts, as will be discussed shortly, there is clearly the possibility of choosing a third meaning: necromancers/spirit conjurers.[59] Therefore, there may have been some evolution in the word's meaning, and the plural form may be a sort of simplification. Over time, those who gave voice to the spirits were referred to by the word describing spirits.[60]

In fact, the second term (הידענים *hajjidd^{e}'ōnîm*) occurs only together with אוב (*'ôḇ*), and Tropper[61] also interpreted it differently: enchanters, fortune tellers or figurines representing the dead. Indeed, the noun is derived from the stem ידע (*jd'*), "to know," and may be associated both with the knowledge of the future attributed to the dead and with the spirit enchanters who are able to extract that knowledge from them.[62] It seems less likely that it denotes the spirits of the dead themselves.[63] As noted by David Toshio

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56 J.A. Thompson – E.A. Martens, "סור *sur*," *NIDOTTE* III, 238–239.

57 Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 189–200.

58 The last two examples are from A.G. Auld, *I and II Samuel* (OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 2011) 325.

59 S. Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel. Ein narratologisch-philologischer Kommentar* (BWANT 176; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2007) 353.

60 As Bar-Efrat (*Das Erste Buch Samuel*, 353) explains it: "vielleicht wegen des Glaubens, dass die Totengeister in sie hineingehen und aus ihrer Kehle spechen (vgl. Lev 20:27)."

61 Tropper, *Nekromantie*, 200–201.

62 Bar-Efrat, *Das Erste Buch Samuel*, 353. Cf. F. Schmidtke, "Träume, Orakel und Totengeister als Künder der Zukunft in Israel und Babylonien," *BZ* 11 (1967) 240–246; L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger, "Saul bei der Totenbeschwörerin von En-Dor (1 Sam. 28), " *BL* 61 (1988) 264–267, particularly 265.

63 This is what Christoph L. Nihan ("1 Samuel 28," 31) suggests: "(the spirits of) the ancestors, the one who knows." Cf. also S. Fischer, "1 Samuel 28. The Woman of Endor – Who is She and What Does Saul See?," *Old Testament Essays* 14 (2001) 26–46, particularly 30–31, https://www.academia.edu/30933041/1_Samuel_28_The_woman_of_Endor_who_is_she_and_what_does_Saul_see_OTE_14_1_2001_pdf [access: 5.08.2023].

Tsumura,[64] the word is used twice to refer to necromancy (2 Kgs 21:6; 2 Chr 33:6) and nine times to those who practise it, but never to describe the spirits. Therefore, the phrase האות ואת–הידעני (*hā'ōḇôt wᵉ'et-hajjiddᵉʿōnîm*) means, in the younger editorial layer, those specialised in gaining knowledge of the future: necromancers and diviners/interpreters of signs. Whether the second profession was also related to consulting the dead is no longer certain unless it is a *hendiadys*.[65] However, not all researchers accept such an interpretation of the whole lexeme. Yet, Dietrich[66] maintains that the phrase describes instruments (figurines representing ancestors) and not representatives of a specific profession. Still, such a meaning is only possible in the older narrative version. It should also be noted that there is a word for such items in Hebrew, תרפים (*tᵉrāp̄îm*).[67] Adopting the interpretation proposed by Dietrich, a question should be posed: Why was it not used here?

2.1.2. To Make אוב הידעני (*'ôḇ* and *jiddᵉʿōnîm*) (2 Kgs 21:6//2 Chr 33:6)

> He (i.e. Manasses) made his son pass through the fire, he practised witchcraft (ענן *ʿānan* I)[68] and divination (נחשׁ *nāḥaš* I),[69] he did/established (practised/turned to?) אוב הידעני (*'ôḇ* and *jiddᵉʿōnîm*). He did much evil in the eyes of YHWH, angering Him (2 Kgs 21:6; cf. 2 Chr 33:6).

The text of 2 Kgs 21:3–9 is considered a Deuteronomistic construct, which refers to the list of offences against YHWH in Deut 18:10–11.[70] Nevertheless, vv. 2b, 6 might come from a slightly later period (the so-called *revision royal focus*).[71] The allegations, as they are referred to now, relate to the religious transgressions of King Manasseh, a ruler viewed negatively by the Deuteronomistic historiographer. The pair of words of interest here אוב הידעני (*'ôḇ* and *jiddᵉʿōnîm*) (cf. Lev 20:27) may indicate some installation or necromantic practice and not the people involved in it.[72] However, the use of אוב (*'ôḇ*) in

64 Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 619 with reference to J. Tropper, "Wizard," *DDD*² 907–908.

65 Tsumura, *The First Book of Samuel*, 619.

66 Dietrich, *Samuel*, 54. Cf. Caquot – de Robert, *Les livres de Samuel*, 331: (v. 3): "instruments d'évocation (des morts)"; (v. 9) "praqtique la divination avec l'instrument."

67 F. Tryl, "Twarzą w twarz z przodkami. O znaczeniu *massēbôt, bāmôt i tĕrāpîm* w religii ludowej Ugarit i Izraela," Gloriam praecedit humilitas *(Prz 15,33). Księga pamiątkowa dla Księdza Profesora Antoniego Troniny w 70. rocznicę urodzin* (ed. M. Szmajdziński) (Częstochowa: Regina Poloniae 2015) 757–790.

68 KBL, I, 798.

69 KBL, I, 649

70 V. Fritz, *Das zweite Buch der Könige* (ZBK 10.2; Zürich: TVZ 1998) 128.

71 A.F. Campbell – M.A. O'Brien, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History. Origins, Upgrades, Present Text* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress 2000) 454. Also other proposals (vv. 3, 5–7) take into account the later addition of v. 6; more in: M. Nobile, *1–2 Re* (Milano: Paoline 2010) 447, n. 9.

72 With reference to Lev 20:27 M. Cogan – H. Tadmor, *II Kings* (AB 11; New York: Doubleday 1988) 267, but both translate the text (265): "dealt with person who consult ghosts and spirits." Similarly E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: 1.Kön.17– 2.Kön.25* (ATD 11.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1984) 441. A bit different P.R. House, *1, 2 Kings* (NAC; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman 1995) 376; L.M. Wray Beal, *1 & 2 Kings* (ApOTC 9; Nottingham: Apollos – Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 2014) 489: "...consulted mediums and spiritist"; J.B. Łach, *Księgi 1–2 Królów* (PŚST 4.2; Poznań: Pallottinum 2007) 544: "allowed the evokers of the spirits of the dead, fortune tellers, to act."

the singular and ידעני (*jidd^{e}ʿōnî m*) in the plural is noteworthy. Thus, Marvin A. Sweeney[73] translates the entire phrase as "conjured ghost and multiplied sorcerers." Such translation, however, does not reflect the difference adequately, although he interprets the word אוב (*ʾōḇ*) not in the sense of a necromantic ritual but as a "spirit (of the dead)." Volkmar Fritz[74] probably captures the sense of the whole phrase better, translating it as "er förderte die Totengeistbefragung und Zeichendeuter." In his translation, אוב (*ʾōḇ*) again denotes the practice of necromancy while ידעני (*jidd^{e}ʿōnî m*) refers to those explaining signs (omens).

The verb עשה (*śh* qal), in its broadest sense, means "to make, to do,"[75] which could suggest some installation for practising necromancy, perceived here as an act of infidelity towards YHWH. In this case, however, the noun ידעני (*jidd^{e}ʿōnî m*) is more difficult to interpret similarly. Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor,[76] following Arnold B. Ehrlich's[77] suggestion, believe that the verb should be understood as "to address" (cf. 1 Sam 8:15), not as "establish"[78] (cf. 2 Kgs 17:32). Still, it is sometimes used to describe holiday celebrations or practising specific rituals.[79] Therefore, the allegation in question could be that Manasseh practised[80] necromancy and consulted through unauthorised divination rituals, which fits well with the whole list of allegations against him. In this case, deciding what is the proper meaning of the word אוב (*ʾōḇ*) is indeed difficult. For Manasseh could just as well have "made" some installation for necromancy as he could have "addressed the spirit (of the dead)."

The parallel, later version presented by the Chronicler does not help much in understanding the Deuteronomistic account. There is a list of condemned practices from Deut 18:10–11 in its background. In addition to the allegation of "leading children through fire," the Chronicler also mentions the practice of various forms of divination and magic. The singular "son" is replaced only by the plural form "sons," and the list of magical practices (Deut 18:10) is expanded by the practice of witchcraft (אוב וידעני [*ʾōḇ* and *jidd^{e}ʿōnî m*]).[81] The Chronicler does not, in any way, correct the analysed phrase. Thus, it is not clear what he means by either term. Perhaps the most accurate meaning would be that "(Manasseh) addressed a dead person (through a necromancer) and those interpreting signs/diviners."

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73 M.A. Sweeney, *I & II Kings* (OTL; Louisville, KY – London: Westminster John Knox 2007) 424.

74 Fritz, *Das zweite Buch*, 127. Similarly, although in the second case rather incorrectly, also T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13; Waco, TX: Word Books 1985) 298: "and practiced necromancy and wizardry."

75 H. Ringgren, "עשה *ʿāśâ*," *TDOT* XI, 388; KBL, I, 826–829.

76 Cogan – Tadmor, *II Kings*, 267.

77 A. Ehrlich, *Randglossen zum hebräischen Bibel* (Hildsheim: Olms 1914; reprint 1968) VII, 316: "und bediente sich…"

78 For example G. Hentschel, *2 Könige* (NEchtB; Würzburg: Echter 1985) 102–103: "bestellte Totenbeschwörer und Zeichendeuter."

79 Ringgren, "עשה *ʿāśâ*," 392.

80 Hobbs, *2 Kings*, 298: "practised necromancy and wizardry."

81 S. Japhet, *2 Chronik* (HThKAT; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 2002) 447.

2.1.3. Enchanters תובוא (*ʾōḇôt*) and Diviners (2 Kgs 23:24)

> And Josiah got rid of (בער *bʿr* piel) the mediums (את–האבות *et-hāʾōḇôt*), the spiritualists (ואת–הידענים *wᵉʾet-hajjiddᵉʿônîm*), the household gods, the idols and all the other abominable objects in Judah and Jerusalem so that he might fulfil the requirements of the law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had discovered in the temple of YHWH.

The phrase is part of the Deuteronomistic account of the religious reforms and renewal of the Covenant by King Josiah (2 Kgs 23:1–27).[82] Interests (list of offences) may suggest a later origin of v. 24 in relation to the rest of the account,[83] and the entire description of the so-called Josiah's reforms (2 Kgs 22–23) means, in practice, a transition from cult religion to the religion of the book.[84] It mainly concerns the practices indicated as the cause of the fall of the Kingdom of Israel (2 Kgs 17:17), which were brought to Judah by Manasseh later on (2 Kgs 21:6). Thus, Josiah is presented as a reformer removing them from his kingdom (cf. Deut 12:29–13:19). The expression וגם (*wᵉgam*), "moreover/and also," brings attention to details not yet mentioned in the description of the reforms and introduces a list of practices related to religious abuses that Josiah removed from Judah. It mentions two practices forbidden in Deut 18:11. Cogan and Tadmor[85] translate the phrase describing them as "those who consult *ghosts* and *spirits*"). Ernst Würthwein[86] translates it as "the conjurers of the spirits of the dead and diviners" (German: *Totengeistbeschwörer und Wahrsager*), and Józef B. Łach:[87] "he removed the conjurers of the souls of the dead, diviners..." In this case, scholars agree to the interpretation of האבות (*hāʾōḇôt*) as a medium (plural) facilitating contact with the dead.

2.1.4. Consultation Through the Spirit/Medium (1 Chr 10:13)

> So Saul died because of his unfaithfulness to YHWH, which he committed against the word of YHWH, which he disobeyed and even consulted a spirit/medium (באוב *bāʾôḇ*) to seek [advice] (דרשׁ *drš* qal).

Scholars agree that vv. 13–14 represent the Chronicler's contribution (the commentary refers to 1 Sam 13:15), in which he justifies the reasons for the complete rejection

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82 W. Dietrich *et al.* (eds.), *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (Theologische Wissenschaft 1; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2014) 282 (Walter Dietrich): "2Kön22f: Eine eigene Quelle mag auch ein Berich über kultische Reformen des Königs Joschija sein."

83 Campbell – O'Brien, *Unfolding*, 464.

84 K. Schmid – J. Schröter, *Die Entstehung der Bibel. Von den ersten Texten zu den Heiligen Schrift* (München: Beck 2019) 74–80.

85 Cogan – Tadmor, *II Kings*, 290.

86 Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige*, 454. Similarly Fritz, *Das zweite Buch der Könige*, 139: "Totengeistbefrager und die Zeichendeuter"; Sweeney, *I & II Kings*, 437: "necromancer, the soothsayers..."; Wray Beal, *1& 2 Kings*, 498: "mediums, spiritist..."

87 Łach, *Księgi 1–2 Królów*, 566.

of Saul.[88] The general terminology seems to support their opinion (מעל *m'l,* דרשׁ *drš,* שׁמר את–דבר *šmr [ʾet-]dᵉḇar*).[89] The allegation against Saul is based on the account in 1 Sam 28, but it is not entirely consistent with the Deuteronomistic version,[90] in which Saul sought a prophecy from God, even if through a medium. This allows us to assume that it is not a chronicler's shorthand based on 1 Sam 28; 31, but the biblical author's attention is instead focused on the theological justification of the legitimacy of the royal authority of the House of David. The final statement in v. 13 clearly refers to 1 Sam 28, but the syntactic links to that pericope are quite tenuous; hence, the last words in that verse may be a later gloss.[91] The phrase וגם–לשׁאול באוב (*wᵉgam lišʾôl bāʾôḇ*), although not a quotation from 1 Sam 28, is based on the phrases used there (cf. vv. 6, 16). At the same time, it is also an intentional wordplay with Saul's name (לשׁאול *lišʾôl*). The second lexeme used to describe consulting through necromantic practices – לדרוֹשׁ (*ldrwš*) – "to seek, to consult," is the Chronicler's favourite word for seeking answers from God and an opportunity to worship Him.[92] However, this time, he consults the dead through necromantic practices. So, according to the Chronicler, was Saul no longer seeking information from the words of God (as in 1 Sam 28) but from the spirit of the dead? In 1 Sam 28, Saul also seeks contact with God, but when "traditional" methods fail (cf. 1 Sam 28:6), he tries to make contact with the help of a necromancer. The clearest reference to the above situation is expressed by the word באוב (*bāʾôḇ*) (1 Sam 28:7–8).[93] Again, a modern translator has a dilemma here: whether to interpret this phrase as "through/with the help of a spirit," "through a medium," or "through a tool used by a necromancer to consult the spirit of a dead person"? However, the focus is now solely on why God rejected Saul. A loose reference to the events in 1 Sam 28 may, therefore, retain the original meaning of the phrase in 1 Sam 28:8 (the spirit of the dead/instrument/installation), or as understood by the Chronicler, have a new meaning: "medium/spirit charmer."

2.2. Prophetic Texts

In this case, there are only three uses, all of which occur in the Book of Isaiah and in texts that may form part of the oldest legacy preserved from this prophet (Isa 8:19; 19:3; 29:4).

2.2.1. Spirit/Medium (Isa 8:19)

> And when they say to you, "Look for (דרשׁ *drš*) (the summoners of) the spirits of the dead (אל–האבות *ʾel-hāʾôḇôt*) and wizards (ואל–הידעני *wᵉʾl-hajiddᵉʿōnîm*), who whisper and mutter (צפף *ṣpp* pilpel + הגה

88 S. Japhet, *1 Chronik* (HThKAT; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 2002) 235: "Zusatz."

89 P.B. Dirksen, *1 Chronicles* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters 2005) 166; T. Willi, *Chronik. 1 Chr 1–10* (BKAT 24.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukichener Verlag 2009) 330: "rein chronistisch."

90 "These lines have no parallel in Samuel and are filled with phrases typical of the Chronicler, but the syntax is rough" (G.N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 10–29* [AB 12A; New York: Doubleday 2004] 519).

91 Dirksen, *1 Chronicles*, 166–167.

92 Japhet, *1 Chronik*, 235; Willi, *Chronik. 1 Chr 1–10*, 331.

93 Willi, *Chronik. 1 Chr 1–10*, 332.

hgh hifil)." Should not the people consult their gods, consult (דרשׁ *drš*) on behalf of the living with the dead (אל–המתים *'el-hammētîm*)?

It is the unanimous opinion of scholars that Isa 6:1–9:6 contains the core of Isaiah's preaching between 735/732-701 BC. Although the complex was eventually developed during exile in its present form, the passage of interest is usually considered to be originally Isaiah's.[94] Even though the argument that necromancy was not popular during the so-called Second Temple period can hardly be disregarded,[95] one cannot ignore the fact that it was also practised later on.[96] The statement is an element of the so-called epilogue (Isa 8:19–9:6), and its origin is marked by the change of the speaking subject. But where does it occur (v. 19 or v. 20)? Indeed, the question in v. 19 can be put into the mouths of both his opponents and the prophet.[97] However, the content of v. 19b would be difficult to attribute to the prophet of YHWH. It appears to be an encouragement, a suggestion from pagans at the time when the inhabitants of Judah experienced the lack of the voice of the prophets/YHWH (cf. 1 Sam 28:6–19).[98] Later on, is the reference made to the spirits of the dead (in the role of divinised ancestors?[99]) and divination spirits or rather those who can contact them (mediums)? Finding the answer is not easy. The verbs "whisper and murmur" are used to describe the sounds made by both the spirits and those who consult them and represent them to "the seekers." The description of the method of communication reflects ideas about the world of the dead, in which the latter are "shadows" of themselves[100] (hence the weak, indistinct voice!). Both concepts may indicate personification of אבות (*'ōḇôt*) (צפף *ṣpp,* "to chirp, squeak," about birds cf. Isa 10:34; 38:14; הגה *hgh,* "to coo, purr," about animals and people cf. Isa 16:7; 31:4; 38:14; Jer 48:31; "mumble"; cf. Isa 33:18). Willem Beuken[101] believes that this use concerns the spirits of the dead, and not the medium who contacts them. However, one cannot definitively rule out that the prophet means the way in which the dead were made present during necromantic practices (behaviour/voices made by the medium!).[102] The verb דרשׁ (*drš* cf. Deut 19:3) may refer to consultation with a deity (similarly to שׁאל *š'l* in 1 Chr 10:13) but does not necessarily mean a reference to "divinised ancestors" (אבות *'ōḇôt* as a "distorted" form of the word *'āḇôt*). The methods

94 See the discussion in Dietrich, *Die Entstehung*, 327–330.

95 J. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday 2000) 244.

96 T. Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza. Rodziały 1–12* (NKB.ST 22.1; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2010) 490 (the time of the Babylonian crisis).

97 W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja 1–12* (HThKAT; Feiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 2003) 235.

98 Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza 1–12*, 491.

99 As suggested by Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 245. Cf. also B.S. Childs, *Isaiah* (OTL; Louisville, KY – London – Leiden: Westminster John Knox 2001) 70, 76: "ghosts and familiar spirits," "ôv refer to familiar spirits."

100 J. Lemański, "Hebrajski szeol na tle wyobrażeń eschatologicznych sąsiednich kultur," *Scripta Biblica et Orientalia* 3 (2011) 67–97; cf. also K. Less, "Tod," *Wörterbuch alttestamentlicher Motive* (eds. M. Fieger – J. Krispenz – J. Lanckau) (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2013) 397–402, particularly 399–401 (*Totenexistenz*).

101 Beuken, *Jesaja 1–12*, 242; similarly Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 245.

102 Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza 1–12*, 491–492.

of "removal"(אבות *ʾōḇôt*) described elsewhere (1 Sam 28:3b, 9; 2 Kgs 23:24) could also suggest that some figurative representation (idols) is involved this time too.[103] Still, the use of והידענים (*wᵉhajiddᵉʿōnîm*) seems to rule out such an interpretation because, as already mentioned, it never denotes an instrument/object. Therefore, the spirits of the dead or the medium contacting them appear to be better options here.[104]

2.2.2. Necromancers/Ghosts and Diviners (Isa 19:3)

> Egypt's spirit will be disturbed within it, and I will frustrate its plans. Then they will seek (דרשׁ *drš*) idols and wizards, necromancers/spirits of the dead (אל–האבות *ʾel-hāʾōḇôt*) and diviners (ואל–הידענים *wᵉhajiddᵉʿōnîm*).

This passage belongs to the collection known as Proto-Isaiah A (Isa 5–10; 14–20; 28–32), the final editing of which took place at the time of the Babylonian exile.[105] It is difficult to date it more precisely as there are no reference points, and the process of compiling the collection was quite complex. Isa 19:1–4 may have some historical background, but it is difficult to determine.[106] One possibility is the Israel-Assyrian war of 724–721, when the Egyptians, despite their declarations, failed to provide adequate assistance to the Israelites (cf. 2 Kgs 17:4)[107] or the years 713–711 (the anti-Assyrian revolt of the Philistine cities) when the Egyptians disappointed their allies once again. In any case, the context of the narrative suggests an intellectual and spiritual crisis in Egypt (בקק *bqq* nifal: "to be desolate"; about the country in Isa 24:1; "to be troubled": about the spirit in Isa 19:3[108]) described in the style of a theophany and God's judgement.[109] The consequence of religious demoralisation is political and social chaos in the land of the Pharaohs.

Beuken[110] translates both terms of interest as "Gruben- und Wahrsagegeistern," i.e. ghosts. Similarly, John Blenkinsopp:[111] "they will consult the idols, the spirits of the dead, the shades and the ghosts," although the order and choice of words in the translation are somewhat surprising. The two words in question are plural, as are the two that precede them on this list. Blenkinsopp states that they "refer [to] the spirits of the dead rather than their human manipulators."[112] However, the list as a whole should be coherent, and the announcement may, in this case, concern those "manipulators," i.e. necromancers and

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103 Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza 1–12*, 491.
104 Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza 1–12*, 491.
105 Dietrich, *Die Entstehung*, 327–330.
106 W.A.M. Beuken, *Jesaja 13–27* (HThKAT; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 2007) 179–180.
107 M.A. Sweeney, *Isaiah 1–39 with an Introduction to the Prophetic Literature* (FOTL 16; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1996) 271–272.
108 KBL, I, 143.
109 Childs, *Isaiah*, 143.
110 Beuken, *Jesaja 13–27*, 173.
111 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 312.
112 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 315.

soothsayers. Yet, it cannot be ruled out that consulting "spirits (of the dead) and diviners" is meant here.

2.2.3. Spirit (of the Dead) (Isa 29:4)

You will speak from the ground (i.e. Sheol)
your speech will mumble out of the dust;
your voice will come ghostlike (אוב *ʾōḇ*) from the earth (i.e. Sheol),
out of the dust your speech will whisper.

Isaiah 28–32 are chapters concerning the events of 701 BC and describe the fate of those who stood in the way of the Assyrians – the great humiliation of Zion (Isa 28:7–15, 18–19; 29:1–4; 30:1–7; 31:1–3).[113] Isa 29:1–4 is usually dated to the 8th century BC.[114] To understand Isa 29:4, it is necessary to note the fact that the previous verse mentions a siege and battle (v. 3), so v. 4a may refer to those killed in battle or taken prisoners (the initial ו [*waw*] serves as a *circumstantial indicator*[115]). Feminine verb forms made the older exegetes believe that the subject could be the daughters of Jerusalem sitting in the dust (cf. Isa 3:26; 47:1; Jer 6:26; 48:18; Mic 1:10; Lam 1:2; 2:10, for instance, Ferdinand Hitzig). Others saw fugitives taking shelter in caves from the advancing enemy (Josephus, *B.J.* 7.1; Campegius Vitringa). However, looking at it from the perspective of the "Isaiah code" suggests that it may refer to those who boasted before YHWH (cf. Isa 2:10–11) and were humiliated (Lothar Ruppert).[116] The second part of the line (v. 4b) is sometimes understood as a later editorial addition, but there are also opinions that it is a logical progression and the original climax of the entire statement. Those who fell to the ground in the battle (v. 4a) cry out (as if) from Sheol now.[117] Ground is its synonym here (ארץ+עפר *ʾereṣ* + *ʿāpār*, "dust").[118] The voice of the still living, but defeated and humiliated,[119] sounds like that of the dead. Therefore, the phrase would not concern necromantic practices but serve only as a comparison.[120] Although Beuken[121] translates אוב (*ʾōḇ*) as the "spirit (of the dead)," he adds a comment that it is more often understood as a tool for communicating with the dead (hole in the ground) or an exorcist. This time, however, the noun in question clearly needs to be understood as "the spirit (of the dead/fallen),"[122] who asks for mercy like a defeated war-

113 Dietrich, *Die Entstehung*, 326, 331.
114 Dietrich, *Die Entstehung*, 328.
115 J.N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah. Chapters 1–39* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1988) 524, n. 3.
116 Opinions cited in W.A.M. Beuken, *Isaiah*. II.2. *Isaiah 28–39* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters 2000) 83.
117 J. Werlitz, *Studien zur literarkritische Methode. Gericht und Heil in Jesaja 7,1–17 und 29,1–8* (BZAW 204; Berlin: De Gruyter 1992) 262–268.
118 H. Wildberger, *Jesaja*. III. *Kapitel 28–39* (BKAT 10.3; Neukichen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1982) 1107.
119 Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, 528.
120 Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1107.
121 Beuken, *Isaiah,* 69, 71.
122 K. Spronk, *Beatific Afterlife in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient near East* (AOAT 219; Kevelaer: Butzon & Bercker – Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1986) 252–256.

rior or to whom the weak/moaning/chirping voice of the defeated is compared (pilpel; cf. Isa 8:19*)*. If it is a comparison, although the text does not tell much about the realm of the *post-mortem*,[123] it makes it possible to assume that, after all, in the ancient imaginations a man did not quite die but continued to exist in some form in the underworld and could sometimes be contacted (cf. Isa 8:19; 19:3). Here, it is about Jerusalem defeated by the enemies, whose inhabitants did not so much suffer death as experienced humiliation comparable to the situation of the dead (cf. Ezek 37:11). They have been reduced to an existence reminiscent of the fate of wraiths and ghosts. It is not the dead who are described here, but the experience of the living, whose fate resembles that of the dead.[124] Nevertheless, אוב (*ʾôḇ*) in this statement clearly means the "spirit (dead person)" and not a necromancer. More precisely, the point is that the voice of the city (Jerusalem) is weak, like the voice of the "spirit" coming out from "the ground."

2.3. Legal Texts

In this case, there are three statements in Leviticus and one in Deuteronomy. It is good to start with the latter as it is potentially older.

2.3.1. Prohibition of Necromancy and Divination (Deut 18:10–11)

> There shall not be found among you anyone that makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire; or that uses divination, prophecy, witchcraft or sorcery, engaging in conjuring and contacting a necromancer/spirit (וּשׁאל אוב *wᵉšōʾēl ʾôb*) or spiritualist/interpreter of signs (וידעני *wᵉjiddᵉʿōnî*) or addressing the dead (ודרשׁ אל–המתים *wᵉdōrēš ʾel-hammētîm*).

Eckart Otto[125] classifies the text as "nachexilische Fortschreibung." In the context of that statement (Deut 18:9–22), the principles relating to the last of the offices functioning in the society of ancient Israel are described: prophets. However, it is not presented as an institution but as a function of a charismatic nature established by YHWH.[126] The law concerning the prophetic office (Deut 18:13–22) assumes that direct contact between God and people is no longer possible; hence, it is preceded by a list of pagan practices (Deut 18:10–12a)[127] that were sought to be eradicated. The last passage in question concerns motives (mantic and magical practices) that have nothing to do with prophetism and have already led to the fall of Samaria (cf. 2 Kgs 17:17 + negative assessment of Manasseh, the king of Judah from 2 Kgs 21:6). Deut 18:10–11 is an extended and more precise

123 Tak Beuken, *Isaiah*, 84.

124 Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1–39*, 401; T. Brzegowy, *Księga Izajasza. Rozdziały 13–39* (NKB.ST 22.2; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2014) 537.

125 E. Otto, *Deuteronomium 12,1–23,15* (HThKAT; Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: Herder 2016) 1495. More generally (Deut 16:18–18:22), the so-called Laws of Offices are treated as additions from the period of exile and after the Babylonian Exile also by Thomas Römer in: Dietrich, *Die Entstehung*, 159.

126 S. Paganini, *Deuteronomio* (Milano: Paoline 2011) 289.

127 E. Nielsen, *Deuteronomium* (HAT 1.6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1995) 177.

reception of that older tradition.[128] The closer context clearly indicates that this is necromancy known before the exile (cf. Isa 8:19; 19:3) and practised long after the Babylonian Exile (cf. Isa 57:69; 65:4), the fullest testimony of which is the final, post-exilic version of the narrative in 1 Sam 28:3–25.[129] The list covers activities related to divination and foretelling the future – practices that were common and well-known in ancient times but, at the same time, unknown to the classic prophetism found in the prophetic books of the Bible. What or who is meant in that statement by the term אוב (*ʾôḇ*) used in the singular parallel to the one appearing immediately after it (ידעני *jiddᵉʿōnî*), also used in the singular? As was already noted, the noun אוב (*ʾôḇ*) often occurs alone (1 Sam 28:7, 9 [= 1 Chr 10:13]; Isa 29:4; Job 32:19), whereas ידעני (*jiddᵉʿōnî*) only appears with it (Lev 20:6, 27; Deut 18:11; 1 Sam 28:3, 9; 2 Kgs 21:6; 23:24; Isa 8:19 19:3; 2 Chr 33:6). Here, Otto[130] is right to reject the interpretation of אוב (*ʾôḇ*) in the sense of "pit" and suggests "spirit of a dead ancestor"[131] instead. Still, the parallel word indicates a practitioner of necromancy/diviner rather than the spirit of the dead.[132] Otto himself translates that phrase as "keiner, der den Geist eines Ahnen, eines Wissenden, befragt..."[133] Jack R. Lundbom,[134] Richard D. Nelson[135] and Simone Paganini[136] also understand it similarly, i.e. as a medium.

2.3.2. (Conjuring) Spirits of the Dead and Ritual Impurity (Lev 19:31)

> You shall not contact (אל–תפנו *ʾal- tipnú*) spirit conjurers/spirits (אל–האבת *ʾel-hāʾōḇōt*) or necromancers (ואל–הידענים *wᵉel-hajjiddᵉʿōnîm*). You shall not seek them out (אל–תבקשו *ʾal-tᵉbaqšú*) and make yourselves unclean by them...

The so-called Holiness Code (Lev 17–26) includes three subsequent laws, written just after the Babylonian Exile and later supplemented with numerous additions.[137]

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128 Otto, *Deuteronomium 12,1–23,15*, 1457–1458.

129 See Schmidt, *Israel's Beneficent Dead*, 201–219.

130 Otto, *Deuteronomium 12,1–23,15*, 1496.

131 Also Nielsen, *Deuteronomium*, 175, 186: "Totengeister und Wahrsagegeistern."

132 Hence the translation "to evoke spirits and ghosts" (M. Baranowski, *Księga Powtórzonego Prawa* [NKB.ST 5; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2022] 440–441) seems unconvincing; cf. other Polish translations: "...questioning the spirits of the dead and those having visions and necromancers" (J. Lemański, *Księga Powtórzonego Prawa* [BLub; Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2022] 113); "who would perform spells, invoke spirits and interrogate the dead" (S. Łach, *Księga Powtórzonego Prawa* [PŚST 2.3; Poznań – Warszawa: Pallottinum 1971] 206).

133 Otto, *Deuteronomium 12,1–23,15*, 1431.

134 J.R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy. A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 2013) 552: "One who consult a ghost."

135 R.D. Nelson, *Deuteronomy* (OTL; Louisville, KY – London: Westminster John Knox 2002) 226: "or consults ghost or spirits." Although in the comment (233), he hesitates whether the first word should be understood as "ghost or the pit utilised to communicate with one."

136 Paganini, *Deuteronomio*, 286: "uno che pronunzierà un esorcismo e che farà domande a uno spirito dei morti e uno spirito di visione ultraterrene e che porrà domande ai morti."

137 Cf. J. Lemański, *Prawo Pana doskonałe – krzepi życie (Ps 19,8a). Kilka refleksji na temat istoty prawa i sprawiedliwości w Starym Testamencie* (Rozprawy i Studia 54; Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe US 2019) 111–114.

The general prohibition of practising magic and divination appeared already in Lev 19:26. This law supplements it with necromantic practices related to the cult of foreign deities (an interpretation of the first commandment of the Decalogue). However, no specific practices are indicated. Commenting on that prohibition, Rashi gave several examples of conjuring spirits, including taking a bone of a dead person into a mouth and "reading" it.[138] In this case, the plural of אבת (*ʾōḇōt*) is used and a parallel use of the plural in the expression ידעני (*jiddᵉʿōnîm*). Again, it is difficult to say whether it denotes the spirits of the dead or those who invoke/conjure them. Thomas Hieke[139] also does not rule out the possibility that it could be an "instrument" allowing access to the dead (pit/hole). However, the plural and the verb פנה (*pnh*), "to address,"[140] suggest that only the first two options are possible. In practice, Jacob Milgrom[141] notes that the precise meaning of the two words used here is "disputable," and they can be understood both as spirits of the dead, in the sense of consulting them about the future, or necromancers, i.e. specialists in that kind of consultation. The mentioned threat of contracting ritual impurity "through them" (לטמאה בהם *lᵉṭāmᵉʾâ bāhem*) may suggest the meaning "spirits of the dead," as contact with the dead was most often the cause of it.[142] Nevertheless, the biblical author may also have in mind the person who makes such a contaminating contact possible. Despite the "poetic" elements present in the style of the Holiness School, the mentioned tandem does not, according to Milgrom, function as a *hendiadys*, and each term denotes a separate practice. Therefore, ו (*waw*) cannot be understood as "or."[143] The verb form with the negation אל–תפנו (*ʾal-tipnú*), "not to address," is somewhat surprising. One would rather expect a permanent prohibition לא (*lōʾ*) than a negation suggesting an ad hoc, temporary prohibition אל (*ʾal*). Then, too, the verbs דרשׁ (*drš*) or שאל (*šʾl*) (both in the sense of "to seek") would be more expressive. However, the choice here may be stylistic (inclusion with v. 4a). Still, such a justification cannot be used in the case of Lev 20:6, which may indicate a different editor of the second statement.[144]

138 Quoted after T. Hieke, *Levitikus 16–27* (HThKAT; Freiburg – Basel – Vienna: Herder 2014) 752.

139 Hieke, *Levitikus 16–27*, 752.

140 In a cultic and theological sense, the verb indicates a spiritual orientation, such as turning to idols (cf. Lev 19:4) or towards the path one has chosen (Isa 53:6; 56:1; Job 36:21; cf. Moses' warning against turning away from YHWH in Deut 29:17); J.A. Thompson – E.A. Martens, "פנה *pnh*," *NIDOTTE* III, 636–637.

141 J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22* (AB 3A; New York: Doubleday 2000) 1701.

142 More on this subject in, e.g. J. Lemański, "'Woda oczyszczenia' i jej parakultowe zastosowanie (Lb 19,1–22) jako problem egzegetyczny i teologiczny," *Colloquia Theologica Ottoniana* 36 (2020) 221–260; J. Lemański, "'Dead Souls' and 'Open Vessel.' Is There a Need for a 'New' Meaning of the Hebrew Word nefeš?," *Verbum Vitae* 40/3 (2022) 661–674.

143 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1701.

144 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1701.

2.3.3. Penalisation: Exclusion (Lev 20:6)

> And anyone who turns (פנה אל *pnh 'el-*) to those who invoke spirits/ghosts (האבת–אל *'el-hā'ōḇōt*) and/or to fortune tellers (הידענים–ואל *w^e'el-hajidd^e'ōnîm*) commits fornication with them. And I will set my face against him and will cut him off my people.

This statement also places spirit conjurers and fortune tellers in the context of religious customs unknown to Yahvism ("fornication" is a metaphor for the religious betrayal of YHWH). It contains sanctions for offences mentioned in Lev 19:31. Why was it placed here and not right next to Lev 19:31? Perhaps it was the desire to create an inclusion or a later addition placed – as the Romans were wont to do later on – not where it would logically fit but at the end of the body of law (cf. *Lex Aquila* approx. 287 BC).[145] Also, in this case, there is a problem with determining the meaning of the word אבת (*'ōḇōt*) – necromancers or spirits of the dead?[146] Both can be addressed in this way (פנה אל *pnh 'el*). However, since reference is made to "betrayal" of a religious nature here, of which the aforementioned "fornication" is a metaphor (cf. 5: likewise about the worship of Moloch),[147] this may be an accusation related to the worship of dead ancestors. Yet, this is the case when one consults the dead (directly) or turns to those who make such a consultation possible. When it comes to the word אבת (*'ōḇōt*), it is certainly not an "instrument" for such practice ("hole in the ground").

2.3.4. Penalisation: Death (Lev 20:27)

> And a man or woman, when there is a familiar spirit in them (אוב *'ōḇ*) or who are wizards (או ידעני *'ô jidd^e'ōnî*), shall be put to death; they shall be stoned to death. Their blood shall be upon them.

Here, it is an even later addition, perhaps even from the Hellenistic period, when a community concerned about the lack of classical prophets was looking for other ways to find answers to the question about the future.[148] In this case, explicit reference is made to "a man or woman" fulfilling the role of a medium or diviner (cf. "if it be in them," כי–יהיה בהם *kî-jiheje^h bāhem*). It certainly does not concern אוב (*'ōḇ*) intended to mean an instrument because חדעני (*jidd^e'ōnî*) – as already mentioned – never denotes an instrumental role.[149] Hieke argues that[150] the "mixed translation" in this case should also be considered incorrect

145 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1764–1765.

146 Hieke, *Levitikus 16–27*, 787.

147 Cf. also Exod 34:15, 16; Lev 17:7; Deut 31:16; Judg 8:33; similar vocabulary in Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1736.

148 Rouillard – Tropper, "Vom kanaanäsichen," 239. However, the arguments for such a dating of this interpolation (there was no belief in a medium before that time) are *ex silentio* according to Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1765. In turn, Thomas Hieke (*Levitikus 16–27*, 808) agrees with that.

149 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1765.

150 Hieke, *Levitikus 16–27*, 787.

("spirit of the dead and a fortune teller") and renders the entire phrase as: "Und wenn in einem Mann oder einer Frau ein Totengeist oder ein Wahrsagegeist (ist)...," i.e. "and if in some man or some woman there is a spirit of the dead or a spirit of divination."[151] Milgrom[152] translates it similarly using the words: "A man or a woman who is a medium for a ghost or wizard-spirit..."

3. אוב (*ʾôḇ*) – from Pit to the Spirit of the Dead (Ancestor) and the Necromancer?

Let us now sum up the above analysis. Among etymological suggestions, two are the most popular today. One views the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) as a borrowing from neighbouring languages and translates its original meaning as the "pit/hole (in the ground)," and the other one sees it as an alternative version of the word אב (*ʾāḇ*), "father," originally meaning a dead ancestor. The above suggestions can be expanded by the *hapax legomenon* from Job 32:19, where אוב (*ʾôḇ*) means a leather wineskin. In the latter case, however, there is no certainty as to the actual connection between אוב (*ʾôḇ*) I and II.[153] However, returning to the first two suggestions relevant to the analysed biblical texts, none seems to apply explicitly to the biblical texts. In 1 Sam 28, Saul's consultation with some dead relative is only implicit. In the available canonical version, Saul consults the late Samuel, who is not his ancestor but a dead prophet respected during his lifetime. In the Isaiah texts, which could potentially be the original legacy of that prophet, in two instances, it is uncertain whether the more appropriate sense is "spirit" or "medium" who consults it (Isa 8:19; 19:3). However, the issue can be clarified by the third text (Isa 29:4), which explicitly mentions "the spirit of the dead person/its voice" coming "out of the earth." If the previous two texts come from the same period, then it follows (especially in Isa 8:19: the spirits whisper and hiss) that they deal with the spirits of the dead rather than necromancers summoning them and giving them their voice. Nevertheless, here, there is no indication of the ancestors but only of the dead in general.

Does the same sense of אוב (*ʾôḇ*) also apply to the oldest version of the story in 1 Sam 28? In this case, the phrases בעלת אוב (*baʿălat-ʾôḇ*) (v. 7) and קסם (*qsm* qal) +באוב (*bāʾôḇ*; v. 8b) may contain both an instrumental sense (an object used to conjure a spirit, e.g. a bull-roarer or an installation: a pit) and a personal sense (the spirit of the dead). In the latter case, however, it is important to note that the necromancer from Endor sees a figure coming "out of the ground" אלהים (*ʾĕlōhîm*; v. 13b), rather than אוב (*ʾôḇ*). If the aforementioned etymological suggestion of a foreign borrowing of the word is correct, the oldest, pre-Deuteronomistic version would be a potential example of the use of that noun in

151 Hieke, *Levitikus 16–27*, 772.

152 Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1301, 1701.

153 As in the cases of stem ברך (*brk*) I and II ("to kneel" and "to bless," respectively; cf. KBL, I, 150–152), where the originally suggested connection (kneeling to receive a blessing) was eventually undermined.

the suggested sense of "a pit/hole in the ground" treated as an installation for consulting the dead. Still, such an interpretation is only implicit, although highly probable at this point. The meaning "medium/necromancer" is possible only in the later (post)Deuteronomistic redaction (vv. 3b, 9).

In Dueteronomistic texts, the oldest statements are set in the context of practices forbidden in the Yahwist religion, which Manasseh introduced (2 Kgs 21:6), and Josiah abolished (2 Kgs 23:24). In those two cases, the choice between the instrumental and personal meaning is more difficult. Admittedly, Manasseh "made" אוב (*ʾôḇ* in the singular), but the used verb (ישה *śh* qal), as some exegetes suggest, can also be understood as "to address." In the second case (plural), it is rather about practitioners of necromancy. Today, the legal text (Deut 18:10–11) is considered to be an even later reception of the negative assessment of such practices. The form שׁאל אוב + ידעני + דרשׁ אל–המתים (*šʾl ʾôḇ* + *jiddᵉʿônî* + *drš ʾel-hammētîm*) clearly suggests that the reference is made to practitioners of various forms of necromancy. The word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) has a definitely personal meaning in texts from the so-called Holiness Code, and it undoubtedly means people practising necromancy (Lev 19:31: prohibition; Lev 20:6, 27: penalisation).

The diachronic approach to the interpretation of texts in which the word אוב (*ʾôḇ*) (singular/plural) is used makes it possible to assume some semantic evolution from the objective sense (pit/hole or some unknown instrument) to the personal sense (spirit of the dead → necromancer).

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"Look not thou upon the wine…" Wine Drinking in Proverbs 23:19–35 in Light of the Book of Sirach: A Literary Motif Reflecting Ancient Israelite Society

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Abstract: This article examines the motif of wine drinking in didactic biblical wisdom literature from a synchronic perspective, using an analogy between two textual units in the Book of Proverbs in light of the Book of Sirach. The complex literary and social functions of the motif of wine drinking and its significance for ancient Israelite society are examined. The first part of the article focuses on Prov 23, which presents the didactic wisdom approach to drinking wine, consisting mainly of warnings and cautions to youth regarding wine and its consequences for the community. The second part compares this didactic approach to the hybrid approach of the Book of Sirach, where didactic precepts appear beside a cultural portrayal of wine drinking as a joyful and accepted tradition. The author of this article claims that this complex attitude is rooted in using the wine-drinking motif in biblical wisdom literature to reflect the social reality in ancient Israel.

Keywords: wine drinking, The Book of Proverbs, biblical wisdom literature, The Book of Sirach, biblical Israelite society

1. Literary Background

A parallel term used in biblical studies for practical wisdom is didactic wisdom, borrowed from the Mesopotamian literary genre of practical wisdom. The Books of Proverbs and Sirach are examples of biblical practical wisdom literature engaging in practical education for the well-being and success of its addressees. Both books guide youths of ancient Israelite society in proper conduct in the family and community.[1]

The article was inspired by one of the chapters of the author's doctoral thesis, defended at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. Part of it was presented at the International Online Conference: "Biblical Anthropology – A Message for Contemporary People" organized by the Pontifical Biblical Commission and the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, October 20-21, 2021.

1 A. Rofé, *An Introduction to the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature in the Bible* (Tel Aviv: Carmel 2004) 126; N. Shupak, *No Man Is Born Wise – Ancient Egyptian Wisdom Literature and Its Contact with Biblical Literature* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute 2016) 7 [Heb].

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While wisdom is attributed to God as its source (1 Kgs 3:28; Jer 51:12–15), and wisdom itself is considered to be a divine quality inherent in every human since the beginning of creation (Exod 31:6; Prov 2:6; 3:19–20), biblical wisdom literature provides practical wisdom that can be defined in terms of a mental capacity to examine the gifts of God.[2] It is also understood as the ability to expand one's learning and gain experience and skills. Thus, didactic wisdom includes technical and artistic skills (Exod 28:3; 1 Kgs 7:14) along with political thinking (1 Kgs 2:6; Isa 10:13). Texts that belong to the didactic wisdom literature address everyday practices, ranging from thinking and reflection to assertions and advice.[3] This wisdom literature also focuses on human nature concerning daily necessities and routines.

The Book of Proverbs is a typical didactic text that is not reducible to moral preaching but establishes what is appropriate social behaviour, focusing on relations between individuals and connections inside the family (Prov 17:6; 27:11). This is evident in several passages portraying a father giving orders (Prov 13:1; 23:12) and advice (Prov 22:6) to his son, with allusions to corporal punishment (Prov 23:31–35), whereas the son obeys and respects his parents (Prov 13:1; 15:5; 23:18). In Proverbs, a respectable person protects his own name and family and has an impact on his community (Prov 15:29; 24:27), while shameful conduct involves inappropriate behaviour with women or inciting men (Prov 1:11; 16:26). As a didactic text, Proverbs acknowledges the conscience (Prov 12:52; 15:31; 17:22) and the significance of confession (Prov 31:5). Proverbs clearly implies a wealthy population, with reference to leadership and travel (Prov 27:1; 31:1); the author is sensitive to society, public opinion, and one's good name (Prov 1:9; 17:20; 21:1–29).[4]

Unlike Proverbs, focusing on practical wisdom and moral wisdom, Sirach draws its ideas from those two, but the idea of wisdom presented here is a divine gift (Sir 24:3–4). This concept of wisdom is passed on by tradition that draws upon fear of the divine and the ruler's authority. This means that it is legitimate for wise men to study and acquire the power of wisdom (Sir 24:1).[5] Thus, Sirach, as the author, refers to desirable conduct through familiarity with the Torah and its principles but distances himself from it to a certain extent.

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2 *HALOT* III, 3135; A. Hurowitz, *Proverbs 1–9. Mikra Le'israel Series* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved-Magness 2012) 40 [Heb]; Rofé, *An Introduction to the Psalms and the Wisdom Literature in the Bible,* 147–149; M.Z. Segal, *Introduction to the Bible* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer 1967) III–IV, 592, 612 [Heb]; Shupak, *No Man Is Born Wise,* 7; N.H. Tur-Sinai, "Wisdom, Wiseman," *Biblical Encyclopedia* (eds. M.D. Cassuto *et al.*) (Jerusalem: Biyaliḳ Institute 1965) III, 129–130.

3 Y. Cohen, "The Scribal School at Emar," *Beit Mikra* 57/1 (2012) 65–85 [Heb]; W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 1996); J.J.A. van Dijk, *La sagesse suméro-accadienne. Recherches sur les genres littéraires des textes sapientiaux, avec choix de textes* (Leiden: Brill 1953); N. Wasserman, "Weisheitsliteratur (Wisdom Literature)," *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* (eds. A. Bramanti *et al.*) (Berlin: De Gruyter 2017) XV, 51.

4 Segal, *Introduction to the Bible*, 594; J. Stiebert, "The Inculcation of Social Behavior in Proverbs," *OTE* 17/2 (2004) 282–293; W.R. Domeris, "Shame and Honor in Proverbs: Wise Women and Foolish Men," *OTE* 8 (1995) 86–102.

5 The Book of Sirach was created in the second century BCE. It draws its ideas from the Book of Proverbs and the prophets. M.V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven,

Wine was an important element in biblical Israelite economy and culture. It was used both in social gatherings and for religious purposes. Despite this positive role of wine, the problem of drunkenness was not ignored, as mentioned by the prophets (for example, Amos 4:1; Hos 4:11) and in the Book of Proverbs.[6]

In biblical wisdom literature, the literary motif of wine is used as a symbol of divine retribution (Deut 32:33; Jer 25:15) and a metaphor for disaster, such as a brawl (Prov 20:1), violence (Prov 4:17), revenge (Ps 78:65), and poisoning (Ps 60:5). Some metaphorical expressions refer to the wisdom of drinking (Isa 55:1; Jer 25:15; Prov 9:5), while others condemn drinking to excess (Isa 5:22; 22:13; 28:1, 7; Prov 23:20–21) and the consequences of drunkenness (Jud 12:20–13:2) or refer to intoxication as punishment for the people of Israel (Ps 60:5) and as a symbol of anger or of God's wrath: "the cup of His fury" (Isa 51:17).[7]

In addition, Arnold A. Wieder also finds other uses for wine in biblical wisdom literature in blessings and medicine. He compares versions of Sirach from the Cairo Genizah and Prov 23 to rabbinic literature. Weider characterizes Sirach as providing a dual view of wine, including positive statements (Sir 31:27), calling for wine to be drunk in moderation (Sir 31:29), while a completely negative attitude is also evident immediately after (Sir 31:29–31).[8]

Similarly, Nili Shupak, Avigdor Hurowitz, and Moshe Zvi Segal note that both Proverbs and Sirach recommend moderate drinking (Prov 31:6; Sir 9:13–14), both rejecting excessive wine drinking, giving examples of personal and social consequences for the habit (Prov 20:1; Sir 9:10).[9]

CT: Yale University Press 2010) 957; M. Kister, "The Wisdom Literature in Qumran," *Qumran Scrolls. Introductions and Studies* (ed. M. Kister) (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Ztvi 1999) I, 299–300 [Heb]; G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon 1974) 291–295.

6 S.O. Ademiluka, "Proverbs 23:29–35 in the Light of the Role of the Church in Nigeria in Curbing Alcoholism," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 41/1 (2020) 1–8; B.K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2005) 2.

7 Biblical citations in English throughout this article rely on the ESV because it is a literal translation close to Hebrew. According to Esther Agmon (*The Vineyard in v as a Reality and a Metaphor. Growing Vines in a Metaphorical Vineyard* [Diss. Bar Ilan University; Ramat Gan 2007] 99–100 [Heb]), images of vineyards are presented in prophecies and poetry as negative and positive metaphorical symbols. H. Beinart, "Yain (Wine)," *Biblical Encyclopedia* (eds. M.D. Cassuto et al.) (Jerusalem: Biyaliḳ Institute 1965) III, 675–676; BDB, "שכר," 1016; L.C. Field, "The Wines of the Bible," *Methodist Review* 64 (1882) 301, 306; M.Z. Kaddari, "Wine, Liquor, Tirosh," *Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (Alef-Taw)* (Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University 2006) 424; T. Krzeszowski, "A Tract about Wine in the Bible," *Friendly Metaphors. Essays on Linguistics, Literature and Culture in Honour of Aleksander Szwedek* (eds. E. Wełnic – J. Fisiak) (Frankfurt am Main: Lang 2008) 61, 63–64, 66, 69; L. Ryken – J.C. Wilhoit – T. Longman III (eds.), "Wine; Drunkenness," *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press 1998) 3024–3025, 3203–3205.

8 Sirach adapts words and phrases from Proverbs (such as "The fear of the Lord" in Prov 9:10, 23:17; Sir 1:11–16). J. Corley, "Searching for Structure and Redaction in Ben Sira. An Investigation of Beginnings and Endings," *The Wisdom of Ben Sira. Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (eds. A. Passaro – G. Bellia) (Berlin: De Gruyter 2008) 23; A.A. Wieder, "Ben Sira and the Praises of Wine," *JQR* 61/2 (1970) 155–166.

9 N. Shupak (ed.), *Book of Proverbs. Bible World Series* (Tel Aviv: Davidson-Atty 1996) 79–81, 135, 156–159, 209–210, 259 [Heb]; A. Hurowitz, *Proverbs 10–31. Mikra Le'israel Series* (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved–Magness

Wisdom literature encourages moderate drinking by noting the consequences of excessive wine drinking. On the one hand, wine symbolizes the blessing of God and is a cultural component of every meal. On the other hand, it is a curse and is considered harmful when consumed to excess. This complex attitude towards wine drinking requires a thorough study.[10]

2. Method

This study suggests a combined synchronic and analogical reading of Prov 23 in light of the Book of Sirach to reveal the symbols of wine drinking in biblical Israelite culture. A typical example of a didactic biblical text, the Book of Proverbs shows the moral etiquette required in biblical Israelite society. Wine drinking is examined in view of this motif in two themes: family and community.[11]

A synchronic approach to biblical literature examines texts, observing textual allusions obtained in implied interactions between the reader, text, and author.[12] In addition, an analogical approach would consider the relationships between texts.[13] For this study, analogy will be used to examine the motif of wine drinking in two texts in Prov 23 and compare them with Sirach.[14]

2012) 408, 469, 472–473, 477, 586–588 [Heb]; M.Z. Segal, *The Complete Ben-Sira Book*, 4 ed. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute 1997) [Heb].

10 Ṭal Ilan ("'Trinkt eine Frau vier Becher Wein, so fordert sie einen Esel auf Der Straße auf': Der Babylonische Talmud über Frauen und Wein," *Wein und Judentum* [ed. A. Lehnardt] [Berlin: Neofelis 2014] 40) claims that the Bible shows an ambivalent attitude towards wine drinking, unlike the Talmud, in which wine drinking has a negative connotation in the context of women. Krzeszowski, "A Tract about Wine in the Bible," 70–71; T. Sutzkover, "The Space and Its Meaning in the Story of Navot's Vineyard," *Beit Mikra* 60/1 (2015) 91–65 [Heb].

11 E. van Wolde, "Intertextuality: Ruth in Dialogue with Tamar," *A Feminist Companion to Reading the Bible. Approaches, Methods and Strategies* (eds. A. Brenner – C. Fontaine) (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1997) 430.

12 A. Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2005) 111; F. Polak, *Biblical Story. Design and Art Exams* (Jerusalem: Biyaliḳ Institute 1994) 345 [Heb]; P.R. Noble, "Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches to Biblical Interpretation," *Literature and Theology* 7/2 (1993) 132; A.G. Ramat – C. Mauri – P. Molinelli, "Synchrony and Diachrony: Introduction to a Dynamic Interface," *Synchrony and Diachrony. A Dynamic Interface* (Amsterdam: Benjamins 2013) https://attach.matita.net/caterinamauri/GIACALONE%20et%20al_introduction.pdf [1–5]; M. Weiss, "The Work of the Story in the Bible," *Molad* 169/170 (1963) 402 [Heb].

13 Perry, M. – Sternberg, M., "The King through Ironic Eyes: Biblical Narrative and the Literary Reading Process," *Hasifrut*, 1/2 (1986) 288. [Heb]; M. Grasiel, *The First Book of Samuel. A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat Gan: Revivim 1983) 17 [Heb]. For an intertextual approach see van Wolde, "Intertextuality: Ruth in Dialogue with Tamar," 430.

14 I used three different translation books for Sirach: Segal, *The Complete Ben-Sira Book*; P.W. Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira. A New Translation with Notes* (ed. A.A. Di Lella) (AB 39; New York: Doubleday 1987); G.A. Rendsburg – J. Binstein, "The Book of Ben Sira" (Rutgers University; New Brunswick, NJ 2013) www.bensira.org, because it is based on all the manuscripts found and united together.

The study will unfold as follows:

1. Each text's outline will be determined.
2. Each text's linguistic traits, form, and content will be examined.
3. An analogical comparison between the two text units will be undertaken to demonstrate a similar functional approach to wine drinking and similar textual characteristics.
4. The meaning of wine drinking in both texts will be identified in relation to accepted social behaviour.
5. A comparison with Sirach will help to gain further insights into the significance of drinking wine in the social messages of Proverbs.
6. The meaning of wine drinking will be considered with regard to cultural elements and social messages in the texts.

In this comparative study of Proverbs and Sirach, further issues will be examined, such as the nature of the characters in the text and its addressees, the purpose and effects of drinking, relationships between wine-drinking proverbs; terms that might refer to wine drinking; differences in ideas of wine drinking in wisdom literature; and allusions to the social significance of drinking.

3. Proverbs 23:19–35

Proverbs 22–24 contain a collection of short sayings, commonly called warnings or precepts.[15] This study focuses on Prov 23:19–21 and 23:24–35, which deal only with wine drinking. The motif of wine drinking appears in a similar context in both passages.

3.1. Proverbs 23:19–21

As the first step, the boundaries of Prov 23:19–21 will be defined. This proverb is part of a larger unit of chapters 22–24. The text begins "Hear, my son, and be wise," a typical beginning in the Book of Proverbs (for example, Prov 1:1; 4:4 or, in slight variation, 2:2–3; cf. 22:17; 23:15; 23:22). The direct address to the son (vv. 15, 19, 26) is a clear sign of a didactic text, such as in the prologue in chapters 1–9.[16] In addition, the following text unit begins with the words "Listen to your father," which marks the beginning of a separate proverb.

Another word marking a division between the units of the text is כִּי, which can be observed elsewhere in chapters 22–24 (for example, 22:23; 23:1, 21, 27; 24:6) and marks the link between segments. In other cases, it is used as a conditional conjunction with "if," opening the first clause of a complex sentence in a grammatical form frequently used in

15 Hurowitz, *Proverbs 10–31,* 452–488.

16 A similar address can be found in Mesopotamian and Egyptian texts (as in the *Instructions of Amenemopet*). It can include a positive warning, negative advice, or orders in the imperative.

laws (Prov 22:18, 23:1, 7).[17] In Prov 23:21, "for" marks the second clause, functioning as a conjoining element shared by both parallelism clauses, indicating the results of drinking. The shifting theme (23:15–18) marks a further reason for defining the limits of the unit discussed. The previous text mentions righteous speaking and lack of envy; the present one speaks of wine drinking and riotous eaters; and the following (23:22–25) refers to acquiring truth and wisdom.

The choice of words in vv. 24–25 might seem related to the wine drinking of vv. 19–23. Verses 14–25 explicitly discuss acquiring wisdom. The repetition of verbs denoting joy and delight ("greatly rejoice" and "be glad"), alongside mentions of avoiding the company of foreign women, may imply an allusion to wine.

A broad textual unit is discernable in 23:19–35, with much of its vocabulary relating to wisdom (v. 19), truth and understanding (v. 23), and wisdom and righteousness (v. 24), which appear near each other in both verses but are not present in the third part. In addition, the linguistic traits of these verses could define them as a separate unit, such as the common combination of *flesh* (=meat) and *wine* or the repetition of the roots זל"ל (*zll*) and סב"א (*sb'*), present only in vv. 20–21. These examples might be recognized as a rhetorical buildup that creates a seemingly homogenous sequence among the three units, i.e. vv. 19–21; 22–28, and 29–31. Separating the first and third units can enable a comparative discussion of wine drinking.[18]

At this point, the structure and content of the first unit, vv. 19–21 will be presented. The opening proverb (v. 19) presents a personal appeal, a wise father's or teacher's advice and warning to his son, beginning with the words "Hear, my son," (like Prov 23:15). He warns him not to follow the path of the wicked and wine drinkers to keep him from losing his way (like Prov 23:6–11). This is confirmed in the expression "direct your heart in the way," a metaphorical expression for walking in a groove.[19] In addition, verbs in the imperative that admonish, "Hear," "be wise," but do not convey a negative tone. The verse is built from a synonym: "son" stands for the two sides and connects them, creating the impression of completeness relative to the next verses.

Verse 20 begins with the negation אל (not) and the verb תהי (be), followed by other imperatives related to hearing and attending. Verse 20 continues with the father's or teacher's words, imploring his son not to be an excessive winebibber or eater of flesh. The combination of the words "flesh" and "wine" is common in biblical literature (cf. Isa 22:13;

17 Cf. Lev 11:39; 13:31; 19:35; Deut 7:17; 18:21. A. Aejmelaeus, "Function and Interpretation of Khy in Biblical Hebrew," *JBL* 105/2 (1986) 193.

18 Michael V. Fox refers to vv. 19–21 as the scattering of thought. In his opinion, these are warnings to prevent evil in a uniform structure of a long instruction (vv. 22–23, 25–35 preventing drunkenness) like Prov 9:1. Hurowitz (*Proverbs 10–31*, 469) divides the passage into small units whose idea is similar to that of the opening, a negative imperative in sentences of reason, for example, 23:19–21 (opening v. 19, negative imperative v. 20 and the reason in v. 21). Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 741.

19 The phrase means to choose the path of compliance, to follow one's heart rather than following bad influences, and to avoid impediments such as alcohol, vanity and arrogance (for example, Deut 21:18–21). Malbim, however, points to two possible paths a person might choose: wisdom or foolishness.

Hag 2:12; Dan 10:3), unlike "gluttonous eaters of meat," a hapax legomenon, although the root זל"ל (*zll*) itself is common in Proverbs.[20] The root סב"א (*sb'*) also occurs in Isa 1:22 and 56:12 and Hos 4:18, referring to wine and ineffective wordplay on insatiable drinking in Nah 1:10.

Verse 20 seems to correspond to Deut 21:20, which discusses the law for "a stubborn and rebellious" son. In this text, the boy's parents bring their rebellious son to the city elders and say, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard." The son is sentenced to stoning. Though the punishment is radical, the message conveyed protects the family, community, and the body. Excessive desire causes corruption, not only in food but also in an individual's health and conduct towards others. Proverbs relate to this text in that it encourages the norm of obeying parents to prevent adverse consequences. It might be wondered: was this instruction book written when this law was inactive? Was Proverbs a response to drunkenness incidents? Or is this a metaphorical expression denoting general obedience?[21]

Verse 20 features the archaic form למו (from singular to plural) commonly seen in ancient Hebrew poetry, a form of "to them" (here plural) in a negative context with the vine and of wine, meaning enemies and destruction. The verse features a parallelism, where both clauses share the phrases "be not" and "them" and refer to wine drinkers and meat eaters.[22] The admonition concerning drunkenness is clear, and the warning probably concerning meat eaters concern feasts rather than the meat of ritual offerings. Deut 12:20, for example, shows that the desire for meat was not viewed favourably, although Exod 16:3 describes the desire for meat and the habit of eating well among the Israelites in Egypt. The reader is also told of the sons of Eli, who craved meat (1 Sam 2:11–17), although Malbim believed that this was a figurative expression: a drunkard is so intoxicated that he eats his ritual meat.[23]

The warning in vv. 20–21 takes the form of cause and effect: "Be not among drunkards... For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty." The alliteration in verse, where the consonant ל (L) is repeated, mimics the state of bafflement, emphasizing the intoxication obtained by excessive drinking and eating. The verse includes two hapax legomena, יִוָּרֵשׁ and נוּמָה. Gersonides relates יִוָּרֵשׁ to a state of poverty (from רשׁ) caused by laziness

20 See Prov 28:7, 20, and metaphorically Jer 15:19; Lam 1:11–gluttons are like winebibbers. Hurowitz, *Proverbs 10–31,* 469.

21 Roger N. Whybray and Bruce K. Waltke interpret the verse: A glutton who drinks to oblivion will become poor because addiction drains the mind and deprives him of his ability to work. According to Hurowitz (*Proverbs 10–31,* 469), the proverb rejects revelry that involves buying wine, causing poverty and disobedience towards one's parents. W. Kynes, *The Oxford Handbook of Wisdom and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press 2021) 32–36; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 256; R.N. Whybray, *Wealth and Poverty in the Book of Proverbs* (Sheffield: JSOT 1990) 154–160.

22 D. Altschuler, *Metzudat David* (Yavorov, Poland 1740–1780) https://www.sefaria.org.il/Proverbs.1.23?lang=he&with=Metzudat%20David&lang2=he.

23 Alshikh and Gersonides refer to excess pleasures and feasting beyond the holidays in which meat was customarily eaten. According to *m. 'Abot* 2:7, he who eats plenty of meat, whether a man of a large body or a glutton, will also abound in other kinds of misconduct (*Mishneh Torah*, *Hilchot Shabbat*, *m. Beṣah* 6:18). Sefaria Organization, "Sefaria: The Book of Proverbs" (2022) https://www.sefaria.org.il/Proverbs.23 [Heb].

or by excessive drinking. נוּמָה is a nap (a shortened form of תנומה), depicting drunkards and gluttons who lose the ability to stay awake.[24] The sinking sound brings out a sense of disorder and heaviness due to excessive eating and drinking. The middle of v. 20 is linked to the beginning of v. 21, as "drunkards" is echoed by "the drunkard," and "gluttonous [=riotous] eaters of flesh," are echoed by "glutton," and "slumber," referring to a general group of people and signifies an individual with a general pattern of behaviour. The move from group to individual emphasizes the call to avoid immoral examples such as immoderate eating, drinking, and sleeping habits of unwise and unrighteous people.[25]

Thus, the caution or warning in Prov 23:19–21 indicates a social code opposed to wine drinking and gluttony. Similar to Prov 9:2, 5, the motifs of wine and food, specifically meat, are intertwined, signifying wealth and gluttony.

3.2. Proverbs 23:29–35

The second unit is 23:29–35. It resumes the theme of the previous proverb (23:19–21), although it is not contiguous with it. The author of this article takes vv. 29–35 as a sufficiently related unit from the motif of wine drinking.

The following section (from v. 36) speaks of envy, wisdom, and stratagems of war. Verses 22–28 may have appeared after v. 35. Their location could be an interpolation following the theme of honouring elderly parents (23:22), alluding to the fifth commandment in Exod 20:12 or a reference to the benefits of wisdom and morals that must never be sold (v. 23). These verses are a prologue to 23:29–35, which discusses wine drinking and the forgetfulness of moral conduct. However, they are thematically related to 24:1. A unit can be suggested ending at 24:18 because "joy" and "rejoice" are echoed in 24:17. Repetition seems to play a unifying role. However, the theme is not wine but rather human ploys and conspiracies. Nevertheless, this unit refers to the influence of wine on the individual, with no reference to social interactions.[26]

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24 Malbim and Rashi interpret "slumber will clothe them with rags" as likened to a person whose clothes are stripped off, and he will have a miserable end, as Hurowitz adds. Hurowitz (*Proverbs 10–31*, 469) interprets יִוָּרֵשׁ (from רוּשׁ) as a person who is dispossessed of his parents' property. E. Ben Shlomo – M.L. Ben Yechiel Meachal (Malbim) – Rashi, *Proverbs. With the Interpretation of the Gerah, Yonatan, Rashi and Malbim* (Jerusalem: Yefe Nof 2005) 196 [Heb]; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 256–257.

25 According to the Vilna Gaon, a glutton is a person who eats, sleeps, and cannot study regularly, and a drunkard does not study at all. Hence the contrast with the father who teaches the Torah, and the mother who teaches oral tradition. Richard J. Clifford (*Proverbs. A Commentary* [OTL; Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox 1999] 213) suggests a more radical interpretation of the pair of words: a son who refuses to obey his parents when he pretends to be rich, eats and drinks, is doomed to poverty and, therefore, deserves to die. Waltke interprets "glutton" as representing contempt for riches, whereas סובא as a drunkard who is addicted to wine, as those who are wasted for the sake of meat and wine. Hurowitz mentions the two-part parallelism and compares סובא to the Akkadian word *Sābû*, in the sense of getting drunk (*Sabû* = tavern keeper). The verb סב"א is used for mixing wine and water (Isa 1:22) or cooked grape juice: when water is added, alcohol is produced. Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs*, 196; Hurowitz, *Proverbs 10–31,* 469; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 2, 256.

26 Clifford (*Proverbs,* 213) adds vv. 22–23 to this unit, and it has been suggested that v. 24 should follow v. 22.

Another element defining this unit is words sharing a common semantic field, such as "deep pit...a narrow well" (v. 27), "sea" (v. 34), referring to depth and liquid, and "mixed wine" (vv. 30–31). While these link units 23:22–28 and 23:29–35, the connection to the metaphors of the entire unit, such as "Those who tarry long over wine" (v. 30), "bites like a serpent" (v. 32), and "lies down in the midst of the sea," (v. 34), allude to a flowing or twisting motion.

Wine is specifically mentioned across the entire unit of Prov 23:29–31, like 23:20–21, which specifically refers to drunkenness and drinking to oblivion (vv. 33–35). The unit ends, therefore, in v. 35, with a combined tone of hope and despair: "When shall I awake, I must have another drink?" This alludes to the drunkard's fate, that is, the fate of sleep or death (Prov 9:18; 23:21).

3.3. Motif of Wine Drinking in Proverbs 23:29–35

The analysis of units 23:29–35 will focus on the motif of wine. Verse 29 contains a seemingly mocking rhetorical interrogation composed of six questions: "Who has woe?" "Who has sorrow?" "Who has strife?" "Who has complaining?" "Who has wounds without cause?" "Who has redness of eyes?" All six questions begin with the abbreviation of the direction word "to" (ל) and the interrogative pronoun "who," creating a sixfold anaphora. All six questions melded into one rhetorical and ironic phrase, beginning with a vague hint and gradually becoming almost explicit, with mockery of or anger at drunkenness. These ironic questions are posed to the drunkard who fails to understand the consequences of his immoral conduct.[27]

In the first two questions, the word אוֹי (*woe*) is a cry of grief, followed by a possessive pronoun (examples: Num 21:29; 1 Sam 4:8; Isa 5:5; 24:16; Lam 5:16) and in *m. Yoma* 86, 1:12, while the word אֲבוֹי (sorrow) is a hapax legomenon. Both words allude to the mother's (אמא-אוֹי) and father's (אבא-אֲבוֹי) sorrow.[28]

In the third question, מדונים (complaints, contentions, quarrels) in *ketiv* (*qere*: מְדָנִים – Midianite or litigants, in the hiphil stem) refers to many, and therefore this should be מִתְדַּיְנִים (Hitpael; a similar use of the word can be seen in Prov 6:14; 18:18, 19; 21:9, 19; 26:21; 25:24; 27:15).[29] The allusion to a discussion or an argument between people is notable. The question here refers to arguing people: who are they?

The fourth question is, "Who is complaining?" The root שִׂיחַ (*śyḥ talk*) also occurs in Prov 6:22 (תְּשִׂיחֶךָ, will talk with you) and other biblical texts in various contexts

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27 Fox and Waltke claim that these six questions mock the drunkard's daze and object to it. Waltke thinks that vv. 29–30 function as a prologue to the following text in a question-and-answer form. Every question features a recurring sound, an interrogative word, an anaphora, and an onomatopoeia. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31,* 741; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 262–263.

28 Rashi points out that these are cries of woe. The word אוי is common in later texts, such as Tisha B'Av lamentations, for example, in Elazar Kalir's במכת אהלה יש פליטה, 24–35, line 8. Rashi – L. Fredman, *Rashi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (Jerusalem: The World Union of Jewish Studies 2019) 197 [Heb].

29 Rashi, like other commentators, interprets it as a reference to conflict or crime, while Malbim interprets it as דינים, i.e., transgressing laws or arguments. Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs*, 198.

(50 occurrences, including wisdom literature). This might be an ironic reference to symposiums, which were considered futile by the author.[30]

The fifth question refers to "wounds," in a biblical hapax legomenon, frequently used in *m. Šabb.* 7:2, and 17:2. However, the root פצ"ע (*pṣ*ʿ, "wound") occurs in Gen 4:24, Exod 25:25, and Isa 1:6, meaning "bruise." The present context is of a person injured for no reason. Ibn Ezra interprets this as the affliction people bring upon themselves by their behaviour, specifically regarding sores caused by drunkenness.

The final question, "Who hath redness of eyes?" is noted by commentators specifically in the context of wine drinking. "Redness" as a feminine noun is a biblical hapax legomenon (cf. in the masculine, Gen 49:12). The reference is clearly to כחל, a red substance used for eyelid painting. *Seder Ha'Avodah* of Yom Kippur reports that this colour is produced from grapes. Could it mean blue or red eyes due to lack of sleep or injury? The sequence of rhetorical questions depicts the drunkard who does not sleep, fights, babbles idly, and has red eyes.[31]

Verse 30 answers the question with a warning with the preposition ל (those), which occurs twice, "those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine." The repetition emphasizes prohibition and anger towards the drinkers, but also the irony of addiction to drink.[32]

A parallel continuation of the warning against drinking wine is in v. 31, using the negative word "do not" and twice using the word of reason "when" to explain the reason. The first clause indicates that drinking may cause intoxication, producing red eyes and illness (losing consciousness or dying). The second clause refers to spending money (keeping an eye on his pocket) because the drunk keeps buying wine. The correction of the pocket in *qere* to the cup preserves the double meaning when the drunk looks at the cup (putting his eye in

30 For Rashi, these words refer to futile conversation. Malbim recommends curbing any discourse that lacks limit or involves tongue slips.

31 Rashi interprets watering or red eyes as caused by excess drinking. Ibn Ezra notes the rhyming play of wine and eye. According to Malbim and Tova Forti, the rhetorical question forms a staccato, onomatopoeic sound, using phrases from the semantic field of quarrel and contention. Yair Zakovitch points out that this parable constitutes an equivocal puzzle. On the one hand, the wise man documents the consequences of drinking wine by looking at the drunkard. On the other hand, he supposedly lets the drunkard win. In other words, the wise man realizes that drinking is not necessarily bad in a complex, varying reality. T. Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs* (VTSup 118; Leiden: Brill 2008) 37; Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs*, 198; Clifford, *Proverbs,* 213; Rashi – Fredman, *Rashi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, 197; Y. Zakovitch, "'Who Has Woe, Who Has Sorrow?' – Proverbs 23: 29–35: Warning Wise Men against Drinking Wine?," *A Variety of Opinions and Views in Israeli Culture 9* (ed. D. Kerem) (Jerusalem: Ministry of Education 1999) 21–22 [Heb].

32 Moshe Zaidel and Forti note the influence of Ps 5:12, where heroes and warriors are portrayed in a feast-like scenario, drinking wine and acting like they were drunk. Rashi states that mixed wine is addicting (Lev 25:14) and regards the "searchers" as those seeking good wine or ways to pour it. Ibn Ezra refers to those seeking different-tasting wines, while Malbim sees both clauses as a whole: after drinking all night, the drinkers look for what wine tastes like and who pours it better. Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs,* 37; Rashi – Fredman, *Rashi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, 197; M. Zaidel, "From the Birth of Book of Proverbs in the Mouth of Isaiah," *Moshe Seidel, Biblical Studies* (Jerusalem: Rabbi Kook Institute 1998) 99 [Heb].

the cup) and in his pocket (in the pocket). The expression "goes down smoothly" means "go on a straight path": the drunk believes his path is right and loses the distinction between right and wrong.[33]

In v. 32, further reasons are noted for attraction to drinking, using wordplay based on the root אח"ר (*ʾḥr*): אחריתו (in the end it), echoing the previous verse, למאחרים (that tarry). Those who drink until dawn are destined to horrible ends like from a serpent's bite, i.e., death. The words "the end it," shared by both clauses of the complementary parallelism, emphasizes the dire warning of a drunkard's future. The same with the word "like" used twice, recalling snake venom and the drunkard's future destruction.

Using two synonyms for snake – "serpent" is a general word, and "adder" is a specific snake. The serpent mentioned in Gen 3:1, 2, 4 is a sneaky animal. However, in Gen 49:17, the blessing of Dan, mention is made of another type of snake, "viper," signifying Dan's ability to ambush an enemy. References to serpents warn those who do not obey God (Num 21:6; Jer 8:17). However, in Num 21:9, a bronze serpent set on a pole is used for healing (Exod 4:3; 7:15). The root נח"ש (*nḥš* snake) refers to sorcery (Num 23:23; 24:1). צפעוני (ESV uses "adder") is unique to Proverbs, but a shorter form צפע, appears in Isa 14:29 and in the 4Q266 f 3ii, 2; 6Q15 f2,1 (*The Book of Covenant of Damascus*) and with the word "cobra" (Isa 11:8; 59:5) as a symbol for the punishment of the enemy or sinners within Israel. The verb "stings" refers to the venom excreted by a snake that penetrates the human body, just as wine or witchcraft spreads in the body. Therefore, the use of the general term "snake" and the use of a specific word is a double strike of the snake, like poison, emphasizing the prohibition against wine. Thus, both snakes signify the ultimate punishment for a drunkard: death.[34]

Unlike the previous verse, which provides a general statement, v. 33 addresses a specific person. Synonymous parallelism appears here, referencing the eyes and heart (v. 26)

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33 Ibn Ezra interprets this as a concrete warning because wine reflects the drunkard's condition. Malbim regards this verse as a symbolic warning against the desire to drink wine: While the red colour of wine might seem a sign of health, one might become sick when one sees the colour of wine in the glass (according to *qere*), though one will imagine there is nothing bad in the path one is walking. Fox interprets: It looks like good-tasting mixed wine, but it is, in fact, poison. The word eye, in the sense of being seen, refers to the drunkard examining the wine with his eyes and seeing himself reflected in it (Eccl 1:7). Rashi holds that even as the drunk sees his glass, the wine-seller sees his pocket full of coins. For Forti, v. 31 is a sarcastic description of a drunkard mixing drinks in response to the rhetorical questions of v. 29; Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs*, 197; Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs*, 38; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31,* 741; Sefaria Organization, "Sefaria – the Book of Proverbs."

34 Ibn Ezra and Malbim remark that אחריתו means the wine will bite you like a snake, and you will excrete poison, or bad urine, just as snakes excrete venom. Waltke finds a pun in vv. 31–32, with the words פרש, ישך, נחש, כיס, ממסך – displaying a catalogue of wine-drinking effects, from the very first taste of wine to the point of the irreversible vortex. According to Forti, a snake's venom represents evil people's malicious intentions. She argues that the interpretation of snake as the ultimate enemy of man is a later concept and is therefore anachronistic. Verse 31 relates to the illusion of pleasure followed by a cruel awakening as a snake-bitten person, although the injured person does not learn his lesson. A similar picture can be seen in Isa 5:11; 7:41, and Ps 74:6; Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs,* 36, 124; "Sefaria – the Book of Proverbs"; Rashi – Fredman, *Rashi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*, 197; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 264, 266–267.

as signifying wisdom. The clause "your heart utter perverse things" refers to the opposite of normal speech caused by excess drinking. The author seems familiar with Deut 32:20, which alludes to the fate of an unreliable, rebellious generation. Furthermore, in Prov 6:14, the phrase "utter perverse things" appears in parallels to "strange things" and near "strife," alluding to v. 29. Elsewhere in Proverbs, "utter perverse things" is used to describe a rebellious youth or acts of rebellion: 8:13; 16:28, 30.[35] Prov 23:32–33 are parallel in concept and theme, describing the concept of drinking, similar to a serpent's bite and making a man talk unreasonably.

Verse 34 continues to present the image of an idle person lying in the sea. The phrase "on the top of a mast" can also be read as "hit in the head," a hint anticipating the explicit phrase "They struck me" in the next verse. The image alludes to a drunk man, unaware of his surroundings, lazy, hit on the head, and unknowingly hurting others. This verse uses a synonymous parallelism with vv. 31, 33. The words "heart" and "your eyes" are echoed metaphorically by "in the midst of the sea" and "on the top of a mast," thus alluding to the body parts involved in thinking: heart, eye, and head. In addition, the double use of the word "lies down/on" is echoed by legs, emphasizing the damage by drinking, like how wine impairs judgment, damages physical condition beyond repair, and leads to isolation, as emphasized by the metaphoric phrases.[36]

The negative particle בַּל (was not) appears twice in v. 35. In other biblical texts, it is used as a warning (Isa 14:24; 26:14; 33:21), but here it is a negation: "I was **not** hurt"; "I did **not** feel it." The negation in the first clause seems puzzling, but the second clause is reasonable in the case of wine drinking because an intoxicated person does not even notice being harassed.[37]

While vv. 33–34 speak to a general (masculine) addressee, v. 35 is in the first person, portraying the drunkard himself using his own words, finally realizing his problem in hindsight. The drunkard does not know when he will wake up or what will happen if he resumes drinking. The question "When shall I awake?" is not rhetorical. It expresses a state of bafflement, although the speaker knows what will happen when he awakes: "I will seek it yet again." The text speaks with the words of one who cannot discern right from wrong,

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35 According to Tg. Ps-J., "eyes shall behold strange women" means that drunkenness leads to bad habits. Rashi further adds that drunkenness "burns in a man," making him look at prostitutes. Therefore, commentators see Prov 23:22–28 as a textual unit concerned with women and wine. Fox remarks that wine causes unreasonable talk. Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs* 198; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31,* 741; Rashi – Fredman, *Rashi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs,* 198.

36 According to Rashi, a strike on the head is caused by the ship's mast, which is why a wise person always travels with others to avoid danger at sea. Malbim and Fox describe this as drowning in a mirage created by man's imagination. Waltke points out that according to v. 34, quoting the father's words to his son, he forces him to acknowledge the hallucinations of a man sleeping in the middle of the sea, with no horizon and mobility, to illustrate the consequences of drinking wine for the drunk. According to Forti, this complements the image of the drunkard, which depicts a man sleeping on a rocking vessel in the middle of nowhere on a high mast. Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs,* 198; Forti, *Animal Imagery in the Book of Proverbs,* 38; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 741; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 265.

37 According to Malbim, the negation "was not" indicates a warning. Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs*, 198; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31,* 264.

unable to quit drinking. This rhetorical personal speech is used to convince the reader of the consequences of drinking.

The first-person singular here portrays the speech of a drunkard mumbling to himself and his message that anyone can find themselves in this mishap; one must be cautious about drinking. The word "have another" (add=אוֹסִיף) echoes the word "among" (תּוֹסִיף) in v. 28, closing the proverb with a feeling of a man who is walking in circles, like a drunkard, contrary to the opposite phrase "goes down smoothly" (v. 31).[38]

Thus, this proverb is a warning parents give their sons about excessive wine drinking. At first, drinking is mocked, describing people who drink (vv. 29–32). Then, the son himself is addressed (vv. 33–34), and finally, a speech from the mouth of a drunkard himself follows (v. 35). This implies that the parents desire their son to walk the straight path and avoid dire consequences of drinking. Likewise, one must obey one's parents and avoid the temptation to drink in excess. It should be noted that it is not complete abstinence that is recommended, but merely avoiding addiction.[39]

Prov 23:19–21 reveals the balance. A person who understands the effects of wine and refrains from excess will be considerate of his parents, while the drunkard loses his head, eyes, and sense of judgment (Prov 23:34–35).

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38 Ibn Ezra sheds further light on the question, "When shall I awake?" with the following answer: I will continue my pursuit of wine. Fox follows Rashi in interpreting this verse: When a drunkard wakes up in the morning, he will not realize the reason for his mishaps and will continue drinking. Fox compares this verse to an Egyptian text, Anii 17.6–11, which forbids drinking, specifying some of the consequences of excessive drinking: confused speech, health problems, and abuse of other people (Prov 31:1–9). Both Clifford and Waltke regard vv. 31–35 as a text that mocks a drunkard, portraying him as a naive boy, unlike the sober man; Ben Shlomo – Ben Yechiel Meachal – Rashi, *Proverbs,* 198; Clifford, *Proverbs*, 213–214; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31,* 741; Rashi – Fredman, *Rashi's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs,* 198; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31,* 266–267.

39 Andrew, in contrast to Whybray, believes that this is a riddle (v. 29), and the answer (v. 30) continues with the warning of the wise teacher (v. 31) about the consequences of a headache after a night of drinking (v. 32) as well as other consequences of turning directly into a drunkard (vv. 33–34). He calls the scene in v. 35 a "comic tragedy," in which the drunk man says he was not hurt when others beat him as he is unable to realize his condition. However, Waltke and Hurowitz frame this unit as a ridiculous poem that mocks the negation of enemies and warns against drunkenness and hidden traps (Isa 4:11; Sir 19:2). On the other hand, Fox and Duane A. Garrett see vv. 29–35 as a lament for the drunkard's terrible fate. However, Waltke identifies two modes of behaviour in Prov 23—wrong and right. The author describes the pathetic descent into a physical and emotional abyss caused by alcohol. The author advises his readers to avoid drinking but empathizes with people who drink. M.E. Andrew, "Variety of Expression in Proverbs XXIII 29–35," *VT* 28/1 (1978) 102–103, https://doi.org/10.1163/156853378x00329; D.A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs* (Nashville, TN: Broadman 2003) 157; Hurowitz, *Proverbs 10–31*, 472–478; Fox*, Proverbs 10–31,* 740; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 3–4, 10, 264.

4. Proverbs and Sirach

The following analogical comparison between Prov 23:19–21 and 23:29–35, parallel to Sirach, deals with the central theme of social behaviour while drinking wine. First, the comparison deals with phrases related to the motif of drinking wine, continues to present the authors' messages, and finally, discusses the social meaning of the strictures against drunkenness.

The motif of wine drinking is explicitly thematized in Proverbs and Sirach. Proverbs use verbs in the negative imperative to warn the reader of the consequences of drinking: "Do not mix ..." (Prov 23:20), "Do not despise..." (Prov 23:22). This entails a negative attitude towards wine drinking, due to its dire consequences. Sirach also uses negative imperatives, such as "And do not go around with her when you are drinking" (Sir 9:9a); "Do not abandon an old friend...," (9:10a); "Where listening is in order, do not pour out discourse, and flaunt not your wisdom at the wrong time." (32:4), depicting the consequences of wine drinking for others.[40] Sirach also uses the prohibitive פֶּן "Lest you hand over" (Sir 9:9b), describing how a wine drinker might humiliate himself (cf. "Do not" [Prov 23:20]).

For both negative and positive contexts, the future tense that is used in Sirach marks the possibility of preventing or avoiding an unpleasant future event. Future-tense verbs may relate happiness and joy: "...Does one really live who lacks the wine which was created from the first for his joy?" (Sir 31:27; 40:18–22). However, a positive aspect of wine drinking is given in the present tense, for example (Sir 9:13–14); "More and more wine is a snare for the fool; it lessens his strength and multiplies his wounds" (Sir 31:30); "listening is...singing when the wine is served" (Sir 32:4–5).

In Proverbs, description of these positive aspects can be divided into verbs of action and verbs of learning, including "tarry long over" (Prov 23:30), "goes down" (23:31), and "utter things" (23:33), which place drinking in a self-learning or socializing process, which is contrasted to the passivity of the individual: "lies down (twice)...struck me...beat me...I did not feel it" (Prov 23:34–35). By contrast, the use in Proverbs of common verbs of action, such as "Hear... be wise" (v. 19–20), "will see" (23:33), and "will say" (23:35) emphasizes the biblical idea of drinking wisdom representing a link between the two texts. Sirach also employs active verbs concerning study, albeit not often, using words such as "examine" (31:26), "will carry wisdom" (32:2–3), "find a treasure" (40:18), and "his memory" (49:2), all of which may imply learning. Sirach knows the didactic means used in Proverbs, but he disagrees with their use, as seen mainly in the frequent use of the words "jealous" (9:12, 15) and "joy" (cf. 18:32; 31:27–28; 40:20), presenting a realistic attitude through education that strives for the ideal.

In Prov 23 and in Sirach, most verbs in the imperative and the future in the context of drinking refer to drinking being the cause of harm to drinkers and those around them.

40 J. Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship* (BJS 316; Providence, RI: Brown University 2002) 20–21, 84, 86, 89, 94, 96.

In contrast, verbs in the present and some in the future describe how wine can be enjoyed in a way that escapes its negative outcomes (Sir 31:31). It is, therefore, reasonable to infer that Prov 23 assigns to the parents of youths their training regarding drinking. Sirach encourages drinking as a customary social practice and is able to discern the difference between drunkenness and drinking for pleasure.

A comparison of the vocabulary used to refer to drinking in Proverbs and Sirach may shed light on the root שת"ה (*šth* drink), which does not appear in Prov 23, where the expressions "They that tarry long at the wine... go to seek mixed wine" (v. 30) or "it is red... in the cup" (v. 31) are found. The verb for "drink" is largely used ironically, showing defiance of social injustice (cf. Prov 31:1). For its part, Sir 31:27b demonstrates a positive attitude towards drinking: "Gladness of heart and joy and merriment is wine [drunk in its right time]. What does the one lacking in wine live for? For the beginning it was apportioned to bring joy" (cf. Sir 9:14; Ps 104:15).[41]

In Proverbs, a range of expressions relating to the central semantic field are used to describe wine drinkers (cf. Prov 9:17). The word "drunk" itself does not appear in the parables given in Proverbs, but it is given conceptually, in periphrases, with references to "Those who tarry long over wine" or "those who go to try mixed wine" (Prov 23:30), "strong drink" (Prov 20:1), "drunkards" (Prov 23:20). Nevertheless, in Prov 23:20–21, 30, in addition to the description on a drunkard's behaviour as immoral or heartless, lacking right judgement and betrayal (v. 28), he is presented as drinking and eating immoderately falling into a ditch (v. 27) and becoming involved in conflict (v. 29). Two phrases used to depict drinkers in a negative light are found in Sirach: "drink intoxicants" (Sir 9:9) and "drunkard and a glutton" (Sir 18:33). Sirach notes the relevance of contention as well, using the expression "wine drunk amid anger and strife" (Sir 31:29). Both phrases bear the stamp of the educational tone found in both Proverbs and Sirach, whereby they denounce excess drinking.

The noun "feast" (or "symposium" or "banquet") appears several times in Sirach (Sir 31:31; 32:5–6; 49:2), as the expression "a place of wine," in the same sense (Sir 32:1–3), and משׂתה היין (wine feast) "a company singing when wine is served" in Sir 32:5 (see Esth 7:7). A symposium is a term that denotes a ceremonial encounter for drinking and philosophical discussions or a religious encounter, and it is commonly accompanied by the presence of music and women. One should note the equal status of men and women in symposia (Prov 9:2, 5; 23:25; cf. Job 1:13). Sirach 31 gives little in the way of advice or warnings concerning proper conduct at a symposium. This may teach us something about the mindset of upper-class Jews, who attended and organized symposia (see Esth 1:4–5; 8:2; John 2:8–10). Prov 23:30–31 also hints at the phrase: "They that tarry long at the wine..." However, although the word "feast" is commonly seen in the Bible (Isa 5:12; Esth 5:6; 7:2, 7, 8; Dan 1:5, 8, 16), the authors of Proverbs omit it. This is done to prevent any connection

41 Segal. *The Complete Ben-Sira Book,* 57; Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 390.

to the era in which the book was written and to recommend that all young people avoid drinking in every generation.[42]

The combination of meat and wine is depicted in a symposium setting in Prov 23:20 (similar to Prov 9:4, 17 but in contrast to Prov 31). When wine is present together with meat, it may connote a positive or negative feast. It is possible to present a picture of a high, noble society that is capable of holding symposia with food and drink, excluding the simple rustic crowd. Sirach's reference to wine and meat is implicit in the same phrase but with the opposite meaning from the reference in Proverbs: the "drunkard and the glutton" (Sir 18:33). Perhaps there was no meat at this symposium, or Sirach, although he knew the connection, deliberately ignored it. However, Sirach uses the combination of "bread" and "wine" (31:17, 23–25), similar to Prov 20:1; 31:4, as well as the combination of "wine and liquor" (40:18–20) and "honey" (49:1), thus referring to the same customary food common at the feast. Both sources refer to feasting, but Sira sees it as a positive, balanced place, contrasting with the reticence of Proverbs.[43]

Another word appearing in the semantic field of wine is מֶמְסָךְ, which refers to wine mixed with another substance in a negative context (see Ps 75:9), although one would expect that such a beverage would be milder. In Prov 23:30, this word refers to gathering and drinking within the context of drunk people, contrasting with the wise woman who poured (מסכה) the wine in Prov 9:2. In Sirach, this word is absent, which may mean that the word was no longer used or that its meaning had changed.[44]

Sirach 31:37–40 employs rhetorical devices that resemble those used in Prov 23:29. While Sirach presents an inverted message, its author betrays knowledge of Prov 23:29. Sirach asks for whom and with what purpose wine was invented, answering that it was made for joy, expressing that it should be drunk at the right time and in moderation. Both sources seek to teach young boys good manners by rhetorical questions. As in Proverbs, in Sirach, the questions are ironic: "What is life to a man who is without wine" (Sir 31:27–28). Sirach also mentions slurred speech due to drinking (Sir 32:4), providing an answer to the rhetorical question "Who hath babbling?" in Prov 23:29. The sage or teacher employs these questions to pique learners' curiosity to bring them to discuss the positive and negative

42 Patrick W. Skehan and Fox suggest that although Sirach is not comparable with Proverbs, Sirach must have been acquainted with the Hellenistic symposium (Sir 6:23–25; 32:1–13). In Ugaritic, a symposium was called Marza'u (Hebrew מרזח), a meal accompanied by drinking, like the one mentioned in Amos 6:4–8, or the wise men's symposium alluded to in Prov 9:1–11. The Hellenistic symposium included philosophical or religious discussions and was a notable part of the Jewish symposium. The Letter of Aristeas describes a seven-day symposium to which wise Jewish men were invited to discuss philosophical issues (vv. 186–294); Fox, *Proverbs 10–31,* 305–306; Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira,* 389–390.

43 Corley, *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship,* 97–98.

44 Mixed wine was normal in those days, and drinking "pure" wine would have been an exception. See the word in modern Greek for wine: not "oinos" (οίνος), but a "krater" (κεράννυμι for wine mixing bowl). Isa 65:11 uses the same phrase in a warning against drunkenness. Waltke suggests that it is the fermentation of grapes, already mentioned in Gen 9:21, where the context is the effects of wine. J.P. Brown, "The Mediterranean Vocabulary of the Vine," *VT* 19/2 (1969) 153–155, https://doi.org/10.1163/156853369x00419; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31*, 2.

consequences of wine drinking. The theme of young people vs. parents, where the experienced parents educate youths, is common in Proverbs (1:8; 2:1; 4:1; 13:1; 23:19; 31:1–2).[45]

Sirach acknowledges Prov 23 as well, referring to it in the context of terms and rhetoric that are in common. In addition, he plays with the word "pocket," going from an empty pocket (18:33) to one full of gold (32:4) while spending time at a wine feast, but this does not necessarily imply a glass of drink, in contrast to Prov 23:31. Sirach uses "joy" in the context of drinking also as a warning: "Do not rejoice...," (18:31), in an ironic tone as well: "From the beginning joy was created" (31:27) but also when intended for pleasure in a moderate amount, becoming "joy of the heart" (31:28), "let the heart rejoice" 40:20. The echo of the Proverb in the text of Sirach has a didactic function because he disclaims the required social norms and allows drinking, albeit in a limited and appropriate manner, he obliges the partner in dialogue with the wise teacher to face reality and endure compromise. Proverbs focus on the personal consequences of drinking instead of on its effects on the people who surround the drinker. Sirach also emphasizes the social consequences of drinking (esp. Sir 9:11–16; 31:34–46; 18:32–33; 32:4), providing clear instructions for which behaviour should be avoided in drinking. Both sources strenuously warn their readers of the dangers of drinking. These admonitions constitute socially normative advice.

Sirach and Proverbs refer to similar body parts when discussing the drinking of wine, such as the head and heart. Sirach speaks of the heart when it comes to drinking with women in this way: "lest your heart be inclined to her" (9:12; and the same idea in 19:2). He understands the heart as an organ that shows the deviation of the emotion towards evil but also in the same balanced tone that he takes in mentioning the "joy of the heart" (31:28). By contrast, Proverbs refers to the heart as the organ of thought with the ability to control actions (Prov 23:16, 19, 34). Sirach makes mention of the head in two ways as well: first implicitly as an "examiner" (Sir 31:26), and then explicitly as an organ that must be protected from pain following drinking "headache of wormwood and shame" (31:29). Proverbs refers to the head in the same way (that is, implicitly, 23:23) as well as explicitly regarding the consequences of drinking (23:35), where the head complements and emphasizes the eyes that investigate and criticize actions (23:31, 33). Sirach highlights the balanced educational approach of Proverbs, while also considering results but not losing pleasure.

In Proverbs, the drinking of wine is an important motif, becoming a social symbol. The discussion of wine begins with a warning against inappropriate behaviour (23:29–35), such as getting drunk (23:20; 31:4, 8–9), and speaks of a leader's improper conduct (Prov 31:4–7), ending with the exploitation of the poor (Prov 31:5). However, Proverbs does not entirely prohibit wine (Prov 23:20, 30) but merely warns against its excessive use. This is emphasized and echoed in Sirach, defining situations where a person should not drink: when one is accompanied by a wife of another man (Sir 9:9), when one is unable to pay (Sir 18:33), when one is spending too much (Sir 32:4–5), when drinking "wine is a snare for the fool" (Sir 31:30), and when it causes drunkenness, loss of consciousness, forbidden

45 Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira,* 389.

or otherwise negative behaviour (Sir 31:26), anger (Sir 31:29, 31), an unintentional revelation of secrets (Sir 31:31–32), medical problems (Sir 9:9; 31:29–30, cf. Prov 23:30–35), or being mocked (Sir 32:5).[46]

Both Proverbs and Sirach refer to the consequences of wine drinking. However, Sirach defines certain dangers of drinking in more specific times: fornication and murder (Sir 9:12), intense jealousy (Sir 9:15–16), despicable behaviour in the company of fools (Sir 31:35–36), and degradation (Sir 31:45–46). Sirach gives the impression of drawing on his knowledge and experience and using a more social tone (31:31–32).

Nevertheless, Sirach mentions some benefits of wine (Sir 32:4–5), including encouraging songs (Sir 9:14, 31:27; 32:4–5). The wine songs presented towards the end of Sirach attest to his positive inclination towards wine drinking, despite all the caveats (Sir 31:38–40; 32:4–5; 40:18–22; 49:1). Overall, a balance is struck between positive and negative statements about wine in Sirach. Sirach's message, therefore, is complex, consisting of almost contradictory approaches to wine: a serious one, providing an educational perspective, and a light, pleasure-seeking one (Sir 31:41–46; 40:18), albeit giving two warnings against wine (Sir 31; 39–40). In Sirach, although warnings are given regarding the damage that can be caused by irresponsible drinking, one might conclude that wine is foremost a source of pleasure, while Proverbs adheres strictly to a didactic orientation and a negative perspective on drinking.[47]

As noted, the texts in Prov 23:19–21, 29–35, as in Sirach 18:33; 31:22–52 emphasize moderation in drinking and warn drinkers against uncontrolled drinking. The themes of drinking and abstaining from it form a keystone of morality, in light of which Proverbs outlines essential social instructions for its addressees. Prov 23:20 describes a wise person who does not drink wine and is not a riotous eater of flesh, i.e., one who refrains from excess (in contrast with Prov 9:5), and Sirach mentions bread together with wine (Sir 31:17, 23–26) for the balance of drunkenness, to reinforce the idea.[48]

Sirach sheds additional light on the complexity of the educational approach to drinking wine in Proverbs. Sirach notes the positive side of wine drinking as a habit that does not need to be abandoned (Sir 9:13–14). While it calls for wine to be drunk moderately (Sir 31:27, 29; 49:1), it recommends that it be drunk with joy and wisdom (Sir 31:27–31;

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46 According to Waltke, the reader should understand the irony here. The purpose of a dialogue between a sage and a pupil or between a parent and a child is to reveal the truth. Carolyn J. Sharp notes that silence, or defiance, challenges the reader to confront adverse opinions. G. Bellia. "An Historico-Anthropological Reading of the Work of Ben Sira," *The Wisdom of Ben Sira. Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (eds. A. Passaro – G. Bellia) (Berlin: De Gruyter 2008) 66; A.A. Di Lella, "Ben Sira's Doctrine on the Discipline of the Tongue. An Intertextual and Synchronic Analysis," *The Wisdom of Ben Sira. Studies on Tradition, Redaction, and Theology* (eds. A. Passaro – G. Bellia) (Berlin: De Gruyter 2008) 241; C.J. Sharp, "'How Long Will You Love Being Simple?' Irony in Wisdom Traditions," *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 2009) 187–238; Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira,* 390; Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs Chapters 15–31,* 267.

47 Fox, *Proverbs 10–31,* 740; Skehan, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira,* 389.

48 Hurowitz, *Proverbs 10–31,* 266.

40:20–21), describing wine drinking with the image of finding a treasure (wisdom) (Sir 40:18–19, and cf. Prov 9:5–9). However, the educational tone of Proverbs is echoed in Sirach when it is indicated that unwise behaviour in drinking can cause social damage (Sir 9:12, 15–16; 31:30–31; 32:4). Unlike Prov 23:19–21, Sirach does not use parents as agents to warn youths. The author sees his audience as adults who are experienced in drinking and himself as someone who can guide them.

One might surmise from this that the writers of Proverbs and Sirach experienced drinking occasions (Prov 23:20, 30–31; Sir 18:33; 32:4–5; 40:19–20). Sirach presents things from a personal point of view, expressing an interest in restrained drinking. Prov 23 speaks of the social problems that arise from unrestrained drinking at a feast and refers to the serious consequences of that.

The text in Proverbs is more coherent than Sirach and tends to be more earthly, practical, socially oriented, and with implicature. Proverbs is an educational text addressed to a young person. Sirach, by contrast, refers to a dual audience: youths who are only entering adult society and need guidance on the one hand, and responsible adults on the other.

Regarding Sirach, Prov 23 presents a complex attitude towards wine drinking. On the one hand, the text presents drinking in moderate amounts as an example of wisdom. However, the text refers continually to excessive drinking and the lack of moderation, with the serious consequences entailed for people, parents, and the society in which they live. Therefore, both texts in Prov 23 discussed in this paper convey a similar message: drinking is allowed and even provides pleasure, although it requires moderation and balance. As Sirach sums it up, "Wine is very life to humans, if taken in due measure" (31:27).

Conclusions

In ancient Israelite society, wine was an integral part of any meal, and it was an important element in social and agricultural events. It is reasonable to assume that Prov 23 is addressed to members of a high social class. This context is associated with unlimited quantities of wine and food, while poverty and laziness are treated as a mishap. The author of Proverbs, therefore, puts forward a complex approach: strictly prohibiting drinking could lead to injustice and defiance. At the same time, gentle instruction and presentation of consequences in an understanding manner can lead to the cultivation of moderate drinking. Sirach takes this same approach and strengthens this position, allowing for the enjoyment of wine and, at the same time, distinguishing this and his teaching from intoxication.

Prov 23 refers to the drinking of wine as a symbol of the ideal education of a young person whose soul is highly complex. Sirach, following Proverbs, uses wine drinking as a symbol of social warning for all ages, although he is not as firm in his educational approach. This topic could be explored through the examination of additional passages from the wisdom books.

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The Significance of Joseph's Posthumous Remains in Sir 49:15

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Abstract: *The Praise of the Fathers* (Sir 44–49) presents the most outstanding heroes of biblical Israel's history. The final poem of this praise shatters the historical sequence by returning to the beginning of history. Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth (Enos in H) and Adam are mentioned in Sir 49:14–16. The article focuses on presenting the figure of Joseph (49:15) and understanding the significance of mentioning his posthumous remains. The question of the presence and location of this important character in the context of the entire praise and in connection with the other characters of 49:14–16 is first raised. The content of Joseph's praise in its textual versions (G, H, S) is then analysed, and an attempt is made to interpret their differences. Both the "bones" (49:15 G) and the "flesh" (49:15 H/S) of the patriarch Joseph play an important role in the presentation of this character, indicating his importance in the history of posterity, both in relation to the biblical tradition and comparing Joseph with Alexander the Great.

Keywords: *Praise of the Fathers*, Sir 44–49, Sir 49:15, patriarch Joseph

The laconic mention of Joseph (Sir 49:15) in *Praise of the Fathers* (Sir 44–49) has not received much attention from researchers.[1] Commentators on the Book of Sirach generally and briefly interpret the astonishing record of the patriarch's posthumous remains, considering it the fulfilment of the foretold carrying of Joseph's bones from Egypt to Canaan (cf. Gen 50:25–26; Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32).[2] Why does the sage draw attention precisely to this? The story of Joseph of Egypt spans substantial chapters of the Book of Genesis (37–50) and is an important link to the subsequent history of the Hebrews in Egypt.

1 C.T.R. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo: Ben Sira's Portrayal of the Patriarch Joseph," *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit* (eds. J. Corley – V. Skemp) (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America 2005) 185–200; M. Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," *Auf dem Weg zur Endgestalt von Genesis bis II Regum* (eds. M. Beck – U. Schorn) (Berlin – New York: De Gruyter 2006) 139–156.

2 Cf. W.O.E. Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach or Ecclesiasticus. Revised Version with Introduction and Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1912) 336; V. Hamp, *Sirach* (EB 13; Würzburg: Echter 1952) 136; J.G. Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach* (The Cambridge Bible Commentary on The New English Bible; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1974) 248; A. Minissale, *Siracide (Ecclesiastico). Versione – Introduzione – Note* (Roma: Paoline 1980) 235–235; P.W. Skehan – A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York – London – Toronto: Doubleday 1987) 545; G. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach / Ben Sira* (ATD Apokryphen 1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2000) 335. Only B.M. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51. Kommentar zum AT mit der Einheitsübersetzung* (NEchtB 39; Würzburg: Echter 2010) 373, based on an article by Markus Witte ("Die Gebeine Josefs") expands the possibilities of interpretation, as discussed below.

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Joseph himself, on the other hand, is a model example of the biblical sage, a man faithful to God in the midst of adversity and in foreign lands; therefore, one would expect extensive praise of him in the Book of Sirach. The sparse mention of this distinguished character, according to Georg Sauer, is due to Sirach's ignorance of the life and significance of this patriarch.[3] However, it is difficult to agree with this, given that the Torah was a fundamental point of reference in the life and teaching of the sage of Jerusalem. Perhaps the way Joseph is portrayed in *Praise of the Fathers* was deliberate by the sage, who knew best which element of this long history to include in his work.

1. Joseph's Presence in the *Praise of the Fathers* (Sir 44–49)

In the introduction to the *Praise of the Fathers*, Sirach lists twelve categories of characters in general, which he will continue to write about in detail.[4] The introduction is intended to show who deserves praise and why. In Sir 44:3–6, the sage presents twelve (which may refer to the tribes of Israel) descriptions of characters from the past that can be attributed to specific individuals from history (e.g. traits) or even books (especially wisdom books when it comes to teachings). Although no names are referenced here, one can presumably place the patriarch Joseph among certain categories such as dominion, counselling or rulership of nations (cf. Sir 44:3).[5] Naturally, a more in-depth analysis leads to an exploration of the various features of the characters in more detail; however, their belonging to the categories mentioned turns out to be incomplete. There has also been an opinion that these synthetic descriptions refer to pagan characters.[6] This is not excluded, as the sage of Jerusalem skilfully drew on the rich and positive elements of Hellenism.

Sir 44:3 contains a reference to political functions.[7] The first two categories evoke the motif of earthly power, dominion and strength. Sir 44:3a refers to rulers: "those who ruled (H: over the earth) in their kingdoms." The Greek term κυριεύω ("to rule") refers to both Israelite rule (cf. Gen 37:8; Isa 3:12) and foreign rulers (cf. Judg 14:4; Jdt 1:14; 1 Macc 6:63). Therefore, according to Burkard M. Zapff, these words of praise could

3 Cf. Sauer, *Jesus Sirach / Ben Sira,* 335.

4 Cf. Skehan – Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira,* 499; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51*, 316.

5 Cf. Skehan – Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 500–501; C. Mopsik, *La Sagesse de ben Sira. Traduction de l'hébreu, introduction et annotation* (Collection "Les Dix Paroles"; Lagrasse: Verdier 2003) 274–275; J. Corley, "Sirach 44:1–15 as Introduction to the Praise of the Ancestors", *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira. Papers of the Third International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Shime'on Centre, Pápa, Hungary, 18–20 May, 2006* (eds. G.G. Xeravits – J. Zsengellér) (JSJSup 127; Leiden – London: Brill 2008) 164–168.

6 Cf. I. Lévi, *The Hebrew Text of the Book of Ecclesiasticus* (Semitic Study Series 3; Leiden: Brill 1904) 82; Renzo Petraglio (*Il libro che contamina le mani. Ben Sirac rilegge il libro e la storia d'Israele* [Teologia 4; Palermo: Agustinus 1993] 25–32) proposes the following division: In version H, 44:1 refers to the Israelites, 44:2–9 to the Gentiles, and 44:10–15 to the Israelites. In version G, however, 44:1a refers to the Gentiles, 44:1b to the Israelites, 44:2–9 to the Gentiles, and 44:10–15 to the Israelites.

7 Cf. A. Minissale, *La versione greca del Siracide. Confronto con il testo ebraico alla luce dell'attività midrascica e del metodo targumico* (AnBib 133; Roma: Biblical Institute Press 1995) 127.

refer to David and Solomon or even Alexander the Great.[8] The Hebrew participle רודי derived from the stem רדה ("to rule"), probably due to an incorrect spelling, was changed to the phrase דורי ("my generation" or "my dwelling").[9] The term רדה appears in Gen 1:26–28 in the command of man's dominion over creation and in 1 Kgs 5:4 of Solomon's reign.[10] Thus, the general introduction to *Praise* and the references to the exercise of dominion present in it implicitly direct towards various manifestations of dominion.

However, these are very general, introductory mentions, while the description of the individual characters begins with the figures of Enoch (Sir 44:16) and Noah (44:17–18). Further on, Sirach praises the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (44:19–23abcde) before moving on to another character (44:23fg), whose name does not appear from the beginning. The phrase "the Lord brought forth" (καὶ ἐξήγαγεν) refers to the person and action of God himself, who here acts as the implied subject.[11] "From his descendants" (ἐξ αὐτοῦ) refers explicitly to the previously praised Jacob, from whom this figure is derived. The sage thus emphasises the connection between the individual stages of history in which God acts. Next, Sirach speaks of man (ἀνήρ). The sage does not immediately reveal the name of the glorified character but offers his description. Sir 45:1 G calls him a man of mercy (ἀνὴρ ἔλεος), which is not included in the Hebrew version (איש; man).[12] The hallmark of this man is that he "found favour in the sight of all flesh" (εὑρίσκοντα χάριν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς πάσης σαρκός). One might have expected Jacob to be followed by the figure of Joseph, whom the story of Gen 37–50 gives a prominent role, but who is surprisingly omitted here. Roderick A.F. MacKenzie suggests that Joseph's praise may also have been initially present in this description but was then attributed to Moses. According to the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* to Gen 39:4, the expression "find favour in the eyes" applies specifically to Joseph: וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חֵן בְּעֵינָיו ("Joseph found favour in his eyes").[13] This patriarch, however, only appears by name near the end of the *Praise of the Fathers*, only in Sir 49:15.

2. Context of Sir 49:15

The passage in Sir 49:14–16 seems to be the conclusion of earlier texts that dealt with biblical characters of the past in the *Praise of the Fathers* (Sir 44–49). The chronological sequence ends after the introduction of Nehemiah (49:13), and in verses 14–16, there is

8 Cf. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51*, 317.

9 Cf. N. Peters, *Das Buch Jesus Sirach oder Ecclesiasticus. Übersetzt und erklärt* (EHAT 25; Münster: Aschendorff 1913) 375; R. Egger-Wenzel (ed.), *A Polyglot Edition of the Book of Ben Sira with a Synopsis of the Hebrew Manuscripts* (CBET 101; Leuven – Paris – Bristol, CT: Peeters 2022) 584.

10 Cf. Corley, "Sirach 44:1–15 as Introduction to the Praise of the Ancestors," 164.

11 Cf. Petraglio, *Il libro che contamina le mani*, 102.

12 Cf. J. Pudełko, "Użycie terminu éleos («miłosierdzie») w *Pochwale ojców* (Syr 44–49)," *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* 29/1 (2016) 72.

13 R.A.F. MacKenzie, "Ben Sira as Historian," *Trinification of the World. A Festschrift in Honor of F.E. Crowe* (eds. T.A. Dunne – J.M. Laport) (Toronto: Regis College Press 1978) 318.

a surprising return to the beginning. Enoch, previously mentioned in 44:16, appears, followed by the first mentions of Joseph, Shem, Seth, Enos (in the H text) and Adam.[14] Theophil Middendorp pointed out that some passages in the Book of Sirach (e.g. about Elijah: 48:10–11) may be later additions because of overdeveloped ideas.[15] Hence, John G. Snaith expressed a similar idea about Sir 49:14–16: "These verses were probably added to do justice to certain early heroes whose reputations grew in later teaching outside the Bible."[16] A similar view is presented by Burton L. Mack, who maintains that Sir 49:14–16 is not part of the original text.[17] It represents a later addition that does not allow one to see a direct parallel between the figure of Nehemiah (49:13) and the high priest Simon (50:1).[18]

On the other hand, it is worth asking what role verses 14–16 play and what might justify their presence in the text. Perhaps it is a kind of conclusion of some part, both of the text and the story being told. The story of the "fathers of the past" comes to an end, so the narrative returns to the beginning to take up a new stage.[19] The juxtaposition of the final characters, however, is astonishing. While Enoch, Seth, Enos and Adam feature in the biblical stories before the Flood, Shem is the forefather of the Semites after the Flood, and Joseph is part of the story of the Patriarchs. However, one can try to find links between them.

The figure of Enoch appears at the beginning of the text of *Praise* (44:16), and his renewed presence points to an inclusio (49:14). Enoch's friendship with God and his mysterious departure (Gen 5:24) became the reason for Jewish tradition to attribute to him special wisdom and visions. These are also important aspects of the figure of Joseph, who was recognised as a sage thanks to his ability to interpret dreams (cf. Gen 41:38–39). Shem was the forefather of the Semites (Gen 9:26), and Joseph was respected as the one who saved the children of Israel from death (Gen 41:57; 42:1–2). Seth was a "replacement," born after the death of Abel (Gen 4:25). Thanks to Joseph's "mission" in Egypt, further generations of the sons of Israel can be born, and their "posterity in the earth" will appear (Gen 45:7). The mention of Enos in Sir 49:16 H recalls the issue of prayer, as then the name of the Lord began to be called (Gen 4:26). The actions of Joseph in Egypt, his wisdom and skills were seen by all as a sign of his special relationship with God (Gen 39:2; *T. Jos.* 3:3).

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14 Cf. T.R. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44–50* (SBLDS 75; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press 1986) 10–11.

15 T. Middendorp, *Die Stellung Jesu Ben Siras zwischen Judentum und Hellenismus* (Leiden: Brill 1973) 135.

16 Snaith, *Ecclesiasticus or The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach*, 248; cf. J. Marböck, "Structure and Redaction History in the Book of Ben Sira. Review and Prospects," *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research. Proceedings of the First International Ben Sira Conference 28–31 July 1996 Soesterberg, Netherlands* (ed. P.C. Beentjes) (BZAW 255; Berlin – New York: De Gruyter 1997) 79; Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 185.

17 "The mention of Enoch in 44:16; the description of Elijah in 48,9–11 and the section on Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth, Enos, and Adam in 49:14–16 in my opinion, all three of these passages are additions to the original hymn that occurred in the course of the exceedingly rich and complex history of the manuscript tradition" (B.L. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic. Ben Sira's Hymn in Praise of the Fathers* [Chicago, IL – London: University of Chicago Press 1985] 199).

18 Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic*, 197.

19 Cf. Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44–50*, 11; A. Goshen-Gottstein, "Ben Sira's Praise of the Fathers: A Canon-Conscious Reading," *Ben Sira's God. Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference, Durham – Ushaw College 2001* (ed. R. Egger-Wenzel) (BZAW 321; Berlin: De Gruyter 2002) 260.

The perfection of Adam, created by God himself (Gen 5:1), is reflected in the spiritual beauty of Joseph.[20] The juxtaposition of these characters is the sage's own compilation, who chose and juxtaposed them to create a new text combining characters from Israel's history with more universal ones. However, these characters also feature in the Book of Genesis as a contrast to other characters, including those outside the Bible.

Gen 5 contains a genealogy of Adam's descendants, the line of Seth, including Enos (Gen 5:1–11). Enoch and a mention of his mysterious departure are featured (5:21–24). The final link in this description is Noah and his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. By this, the biblical author wished to show the connection between Noah and his sons and Adam, the father of mankind. As stated earlier, the poem in Sir 49:14–16 presents the following successively: Enoch, Joseph, Shem, Seth (Enos in H) and Adam. Thus, Joseph is juxtaposed with the characters of the Gen 5 genealogy. The vertical line of the genealogy runs from God-created Adam, through Seth, Enos, and Enoch to Shem, from whom Abraham is descended. Alongside the vertical line of the "chosen" ones, there are also "horizontal" genealogies, lateral lines of other inhabitants of the land. There is even some tension emerging. The descendants of Seth are shown in some contrast to the line of the Cainites (Gen 4:17–24). This division is not ethnic, nor does it concern lifestyle or place of residence. The contrast stems from moral choices. The biblical author does not deny the significant contributions to civilisation made by the descendants of Cain (building cities, musical skills, metalworking, cf. Gen 4:17–22). What comes to the fore, however, is the despicable act of Cain, which finds its reflection at the end of the genealogy in the vengeful attitude of Lamech (cf. Gen 4:24). The descendants of Seth are the answer, the first among them being Enos, who brings hope for the renewal of humanity as he "began to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen 4:26). Another sign of hope is Enoch, who, despite the progressive corruption of mankind, becomes known as a man who "walked with God" (Gen 5:22). "Shem," which means "name, position, reputation," is probably the firstborn son of Noah. This name somewhat foreshadows and anticipates his special role in the family and biblical history.[21] Similarly, the lineage of the Semites is clearly distinguished from the descendants of Ham and Japheth. It is on him and his offspring that a special blessing is to rest because of his reference to God and his upright attitude towards Noah (cf. Gen 9:26).

Therefore, the showcased characters constitute a model of behaviour in relation to the inappropriate attitude of others. In the praise of Sirach, Joseph, the character of the later story, also appears in such a context. Will Joseph also stand out as a hero in this case, in contrast to the others? Will Joseph stand out from his brothers, those who sold him to Egypt? Surprisingly, the sage of Jerusalem does not refer to such significant achievements of Joseph as his appointment as the ruler of Egypt, who saved his brothers and others from

20 Cf. Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," 142–143.

21 Cf. V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis. Chapters 1–17* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1990) 259; K.A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26* (NAC 1A; Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman 2001) 319; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* (WBC 1; Dallas, TX: Word 2002) 129.

starvation. Only the translator of the Greek version adds a reference to Joseph's rule and position among the brothers.

At the same time, the form of Sir 49:14–16 draws attention. In both the G and H texts, passive voice verb forms appear. Enoch (49:14) "has been created/formed" (ἐκτίσθη/נוצר) and "was taken up" (ἀνελήμφθη/נלקח). Joseph (49:15) "was born" (ἐγεννήθη/נולד), and his bones(G)/body(H) "were/was taken care of'" (ἐπεσκέπησαν/נפקדה). Shem and Seth (H: and Enos) "were glorified/honoured" (ἐδοξάσθησαν/נפקדו). This indicates a special divine intervention, *passivum divinum*.[22] God "visits" the bones of Joseph as He "visits" Shem, Seth, and Enos (49:16 H), meaning He remembers them, and He is faithful, which is manifested in the covenant with Abraham, maintained during the life of successive patriarchs and Joseph.[23] The ending of the former narrative by returning to the beginning, to Adam, suggests the idea of a "new creation." What follows next (Sir 50) is the description of the high priest Simon II and the temple, which, according to 50:1 H, is also "visited" (נפקד), and the high priest is described to possess, like Adam, extraordinary beauty (תפארת).[24] Sirach thus performs a synthesis, combining the ancient heroes of the Bible with a figure contemporary to his time. Thus, Joseph and his specific portrayal in the *Praise of the Fathers* may allude to times near Sirach's own lifetime, highlighting the special action of God in history, both ancient and the times of the sage.

3. Sir 49:15 and Its Textual Versions

The Book of Sirach poses many textual problems. It was written in Hebrew, but only the Greek version survived in its entirety and forms the canonical text. For this reason, the Greek version of the Book of Sirach will be the main, but not the only, text studied for this article.[25]

Thanks to the discoveries of the 19th and 20th centuries, the modern exegete also has access to the Hebrew fragments of the Book of Sirach. These provide important testimony relating to the original version of the book and the sources of the Hebrew books from which its author may have drawn. For this reason, the study of the Hebrew version by Pancratius C. Beentjes[26] and Renate Egger-Wenzel[27] will be used in the analysis for support. However, it must be emphasised that the Hebrew text of the Book of Sirach also sheds new light on the Greek version, as it allows us to understand the approach of the translator, who,

22 Cf. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51*, 373.
23 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 191.
24 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 187.
25 Cf. J. Ziegler (ed.), *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach*, 2 ed. (Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis Editum XII.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1980).
26 Cf. P.C. Beentjes (ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew. A Text Edition of all Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of all Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* (VTSup 68; Leiden – New York – Köln: Brill 1997).
27 Egger-Wenzel, *A Polyglot Edition of the Book of Ben Sira,* 660–663.

after all, had to interpret the Hebrew text.[28] The ancient Syriac rendition, an early Semitic translation of the original Hebrew, offers help in cases where the Greek and Hebrew versions differ significantly.[29]

The Greek text of Sir 49:15 reads: οὐδὲ ὡς Ιωσηφ ἐγεννήθη[30] ἀνὴρ ἡγούμενος ἀδελφῶν στήριγμα λαοῦ καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ αὐτοῦ ἐπεσκέπησαν, "nor has any man been born like Joseph, a leader of his brothers, a support for the people. They took special care even of his bones."

The Hebrew text of Sir 49:15 (H) is derived from Manuscript B, twelfth-century fragments containing Sir 30:11–33:3; 35:11–38:27b; 39:15c–51:30, found in the Cairo Geniza, written in columns, without spaces between words and sentences (stichometry).[31] The version of Sir 49:15 H differs from G and is as follows: כיוסף אם נולד גבר וגם גויתו נפקדה, "Was a man like Joseph born? Even his dead body was provided for."

Both versions refer at the outset to the birth, the beginning of Joseph's life, indicating his uniqueness among men: "nor has any man been born like Joseph" (G); "was ever a man born like Joseph?" (H). While version G is a statement, version H suggests a question, introducing a comparison and juxtaposition of Joseph with other heroes.[32]

This is followed by an addition in G absent in H: "a leader of his brothers, a support for the people." The verse ending in both versions refers to the hero's posthumous status, but there is a certain difference. The G text mentions Joseph's bones: "his bones were honoured," while the H version refers to the body: "even his dead body was provided for."

The Syriac version of the text differs from the others:
ܘܐܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܝܘܣܦ ܠܐ ܝܠܕܬ, ܘܐܦ ܦܓܪܗ ܐܬܩܒܪ ܒܫܠܡܐ, "No mother has borne [one] like Joseph, and his body was buried in peace." It is likely that the translator of the S text understood אִם as אֵם ("mother").[33] A clear difference between H and G is the use of two different terms: "bones" (G) and "body" (H). Although different from the others, the Syriac text confirms H's lesson: "his body" (ܦܓܪܗ).

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28 A great help is the online platform that includes scans of the available Hebrew manuscripts of the Book of Sirach, their transcription and an English translation: https://www.bensira.org/ [access: 9.06.2023].

29 Text based on the Codices Ambrosiani. Cf. A.M. Ceriani (ed.), *Translatio Syra Pescitto Veteris Testamenti ex codice Ambrosiano sec. fere VI photolithographice edita* (Milano: Pogliani 1883) II. N. Calduch-Benages – J. Ferrer – J. Liesen (eds.), *La Sabiduría del escriba. Edición diplomática de la versión siriaco de libro de Ben Sira según el Códice Ambrosiano, con traducción española e inglesa. Wisdom of the Scribe. Diplomatic Edition of the Syriac Version of the Book of Ben Sira according to Codex Ambrosianus, with Translations in Spanish and English* (Biblioteca Midrásica 26. Estella: Verbo Divino 2003; 2 ed. 2015).

30 In Sir 49:15, according to the Joseph Ziegler version based on the Sinai, Vatican, and Alexandrian codices, ἐγενήθη ("became," "was") appears. A. Rahlfs – R. Hanhart (eds.), *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta interpretes* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1979; 2 ed. 2006) 466 chooses the reading ἐγεννήθη ("was born"), which corresponds to the H version.

31 Skehan – Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 52. The evaluation of manuscript B is presented by Alexander A. Di Lella in *The Hebrew Text of Sirach. A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (Studies in Classical Literature 1; London – Paris: Mouton 1966) 148: "Unless the contrary is demonstrated, the Geniza Mss contain the original text or something very near to original of Ben Sira."

32 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 194.

33 Cf. V. Morla, *Los manuscritos hebreos de Ben Sira* (Asociación Bíblica Española 59; Estella: Verbo Divino 2012) 335–336.

The question then arises as to the purpose of this very representation of Joseph. Why does the sage refer to the beginning and end of the patriarch's life and link his bones/body to the visitation? What significance does the expansion of the text in the G version have?

4. The Portrayal of Joseph in Sir 49:15 G

The text of Sir 49:15 G begins with a mention of Joseph's birth, indicating his uniqueness among other men. Whereas the H text posed a rhetorical question ("was ever a man born like Joseph?"), the G version has an affirmative statement ("nor has any man been born like Joseph").[34] Verse 15 is a continuation of the earlier one, describing Enoch. One can note the parallels between Enoch (49:14: "no one was created on the earth who was like Enoch"; οὐδεὶς ἐκτίσθη) and Joseph (49:15: "nor has any man been born like Joseph"; οὐδὲ ἐγεννήθη). Enoch's uniqueness was primarily associated with the wisdom attributed to him and his contact with the spiritual world, to which God mysteriously brought him (cf. Gen 5:24). This is mentioned by Sirach in both 44:16 and 49:14.

Joseph came into the world after a long wait by his mother, Rachel. His conception and birth are described in Gen 30:22 as a special intervention of God: "Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive." This fact highlights God's presence and intervention in Joseph's life. He was no more than the eleventh son of Jacob. However, when the reference to the "family line" (תּוֹלְדוֹת) of Jacob appears in Gen 37:2, the biblical author begins to tell the story of Joseph and his name appears: "This is the account of Jacob's family line. Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks." At the beginning of the story, there is no indication of Joseph's uniqueness. This will only be unveiled by the further narrative of the Book of Genesis, showing his extraordinary, God-given wisdom and his mission as the saviour of his brothers. The chronicler, however, in presenting the sons of Jacob, noted that, due to the sin of having intercourse with his father's wife (cf. Gen 35:22), Reuben was removed from his position of primacy among his brothers (cf. Gen 49:4), and his place was taken by Joseph (cf. 1 Kgs 5:1–2). The prominence of the figure of Joseph and the authority of the ruler of Egypt (cf. Gen 41:41) found expression in the Greek version of Sirach. The translator expanded the rather laconic Hebrew text by adding: ἡγούμενος ἀδελφῶν στήριγμα λαοῦ ("a leader of his brothers, a support for the people"). The text of Sir 50:1 H, which inaugurates the praise of the high priest Simon II, contains the expression גדול אחיו ותפארת עמו ("the greatest of his brothers and the pride of his people"), which is absent in 50:1 G. One notes the link of the Greek addition 49:15 G with 50:1 H in the protagonist's reference to "brothers" and "people."[35] The text of 49:15 G indicates Joseph's special position among the brothers (ἡγούμενος ἀδελφῶν – a leader of his brothers)

34 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 194.

35 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 195; H. Langkammer, *Księga Syracha. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz, ekskursy* (Pismo Święte Starego Testamentu 8.5; Poznań: Pallottinum 2020) 427.

and among the people (στήριγμα λαοῦ – a support for the people). This may be a suggestion that, for the Greek translator, Joseph's special position is reflected in the mission of the high priest Simon, the visible sign of Israel's covenant with YHWH.

Although it is Judah, specifically chosen among the sons of Jacob, who is given the honourable title of "ruler" (ἡγούμενος, Gen 49:10), in Jacob's blessing addressed to Joseph, LXX version contains a term that alludes to ἡγούμενος ἀδελφῶν, namely ὧν ἠγήσατο ἀδελφῶν ("brothers of whom he took the lead" [Gen 49:26 LXX]). The Masoretic text reads here: "a Nazirite of his brothers" (נְזִיר אֶחָיו). One is puzzled, then, by the LXX translation of the term נָזִיר, meaning someone "consecrated to God" as a "ruler" (ἡγούμενος). This may be because the noun נֵזֶר means "crown, tiara or headband," which may also refer to a particular blessing.[36] In the *Targums* (*Neofiti* and *Pseudo-Jonathan*) to Gen 49:26, the phrase appears: כליל דרבו ("crown of glory").[37] This may, therefore, explain the use of the term ἡγούμενος in Gen 49:26 LXX.

The verb ἡγέομαι means "to go in front, to pave the way, to direct, to lead, to reign"; in the Bible, it describes the leadership function of both the king (cf., for instance, 1 Sam 25:30; 2 Sam 5:20; 7:8; 1 Kgs 1:35; 1 Chr 17:7) as well as a military leader (cf., for instance, 1 Kgs 16:16; 2 Kgs 1:9.13; 1 Macc 5:6; 9:30; 13:53).[38] The Book of Acts uses this term to introduce the character of Joseph by calling him ἡγούμενος ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον ("ruler of Egypt" [Acts 7:10]). "Ruler" is also present in the Book of Sirach. The sage points out the necessary qualities of a good leader, such as wise speech (9:17), prudence (10:2, 20), humility (32:1), and in the introduction to the *Praise of the Fathers*, the sage enumerates the category of leaders (44:4). The aforementioned Gen 49:10 LXX, which referred to Judah as ἡγούμενος, had a strongly messianic character. Thus, its use by the translator of the Book of Sirach in relation to Joseph may indicate that God, through his intermediaries, can also act outside the promised land. The Greek version of Joseph's praise thus emphasises his leadership function in Egypt while remaining a faithful follower of the One God. The recipients of the Greek version of the Book of Sirach were Jews living in the Diaspora in Alexandria, subjected to Hellenisation processes. Joseph was thus able to serve as an example and inspiration for them to live a life of faithfulness to the Torah in exile. "Leading his brothers" was manifested by Joseph's care for their well-being, saving them from famine, as well as in forgiveness and the restoration of family bonds damaged by the sale of their brother. Joseph may thus have become, for Alexandrian Jews, a kind of "patron saint" for building a life in exile.

Sir 49:15 G also refers to Joseph as στήριγμα λαοῦ ("the support for the people"). The term στήριγμα ("support, prop") appears outside the analysed text 16 times in the LXX, including 3 times in the Book of Sirach. It can mean reliance on God (Sir 34:15–16) and His sanctuary (Ezra 9:8), reliance on the rest of the people (2 Sam 20:19; 2 Kgs 25:11),

36 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 196.
37 Cf. Hayward, "Multum in Parvo," 196.
38 Cf. F. Büchel, "ἡγέομαι κτλ.," *TDNT* II, 907–909.

reliance in times of danger (Sir 3:31), a husband's reliance on his wife (Tob 8:6), military support (1 Macc 2:43; 6:18; 10:23), reliance of an unrighteous man (Ezek 7:11), and supply of bread[39] (Ps 71:16 LXX; Ps 104:16 LXX; Ezek 4:16; 5:16; 14:13). According to the Book of Genesis narrative (cf. Gen 41:49, 53–57; 42:1–3) Joseph, on Pharaoh's instructions, gathered supplies for the famine and then sold the grain. Thus, he possessed provisions that became a support for the people – not only for his brothers but for the inhabitants of Egypt and other peoples. He was, therefore, a universal hero.

The praise of Joseph ends with the mention of his bones: καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ αὐτοῦ ἐπεσκέπησαν ("and his bones were visited"). The word "bones" (עַצְמוֹת/ὀστᾶ) denotes both single bones and the entire skeleton. The noun עֶצֶם has two plural forms: עֲצָמִים, denoting the bones of the limbs, and עַצְמוֹת, denoting the bones joined to form the skeleton. Bones were the most solid part of a man's body, something left after all his mortal remains are gone, so figuratively, bones signify the "essence, core" and even the man himself (cf. Ps 51:10; Prov 3:8; 15:30).[40] The Book of Sirach also uses bones to mean the person (Sir 26:13; 28:17).

In the *Praise of the Fathers,* there are two more (in addition to 49:15 G) uses of the word "bones." When the sage praises the Judges (46:12) and the Twelve Prophets (49:10), referring to them collectively, he expresses a wish: "May their bones send forth new life from where they lie." Like in the case of Joseph, the bones refer to the dead heroes. Here, however, Sirach awaits their coming alive. This can be viewed as an allusion to the resurrection of a man through contact with Elisha's bones (cf. 2 Kgs 13:20–21).[41] In this case, the bones demonstrated the ability to "prophesy," i.e. communicate God's message of life.[42] Thus, even if the prophet was physically dead, he could pass on life through his message. This message, then, can be applied to both the Judges (cf. Sir 46:12) and the Twelve Prophets (cf. Sir 49:10). Although the message of the Twelve Prophets was varied, it ultimately led to the announcement of Israel's renewal. Therefore, Sirach must have been familiar with the message of the prophets and the announcements of renewal, which usually appeared in the final editions of the books. The bones of Judges and prophets can also flourish again by emulating their deeds and interpretations of their messages, which become relevant in new times and even yield fruit in new writings inspired by the teachings and lives of biblical heroes.[43] Therefore, does the mention of Joseph's bones in version G signify the relevance of Joseph and his mission in the Hellenistic era?

The reference to Joseph's bones appears three times in the Bible during significant events in the history of the people of Israel. The first event is associated with the death of

39 "Staff of bread" (στήριγμα ἄρτου) is a translation of לֶחֶם-מַטֵּה ("stick of bread"). The expression derives from the custom of preparing breads with a hole in the middle, which were held on sticks. However, the stick not only indicates the fact of hunger, it is something used for support. "Breaking of the staff of bread" signifies the loss of stability, of a point of support, which resulted from the failure to secure food.

40 The idiom בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה means "on that very day" (Gen 7:13). K.M. Beyse, "עצם," *TDOT* XI, 305–308.

41 Cf. Skehan – Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 520; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51,* 371.

42 Cf. Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus,* 328–329; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51,* 361.

43 Cf. J. Pudełko, *Profetyzm w Księdze Syracha* (Studia Biblica Lublinensia 21; Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL 2020) 344–347.

this patriarch. In his final words, he announced a special care, grace and intervention from God: וֵאלֹהִים פָּקֹד יִפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם/ἐπισκοπῇ δὲ ἐπισκέψεται ὑμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ("God will surely visit you" [Gen 50:24]).[44] This signifies the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and their return to the promised land of their fathers. When this happened, the descendants of Jacob's sons were obliged to take Joseph's bones from Egypt as well (Gen 50:25).[45] The Book of Genesis concludes with the information about Joseph's death and the embalming and placement of his body in a coffin in Egypt (Gen 50:26). When the Exodus of the sons of Israel from Egypt is described in the Book of Exodus, Joseph's bones are referenced again. Moses takes Joseph's bones with him, fulfilling the earlier obligation. The author of the Book of Exodus recalls the promise of "God's visitation" conditioned on the transfer of Joseph's bones to Canaan (Exod 13:19). This story resurfaces at the end of the Book of Joshua, where Joseph's bones are mentioned for the third time. Taken from Egypt by the sons of Israel, they are buried in Shechem (Josh 24:32).

All three references are very significant and not coincidental. The first one marks the conclusion of the Book of Genesis and Joseph's life (110 years); the second is associated with Moses and opens a new stage for the chosen people – the journey through the desert; and the third appears at the moment of the ultimate fulfilment of God's promises, as the Israelites take possession of Canaan, and Joshua concludes his life, having lived, like Joseph, for 110 years (cf. Gen 50:26; Josh 24:29).[46] The transfer of Joseph's bones thus signifies the fulfilment of God's promises, the realisation of His salvation. The Greek text of Sirach uses this term to recall these important events and make them relevant. However, why does a different term, namely "body/remains," appear in Sirach 49:15 H in describing the transfer of the patriarch's remains?

5. The Term גְּוִיָּה (Sir 49:15 H) and *Translatio Alexandri Magni*

The Hebrew version (Sir 49:15) is shorter than the Greek one. The core message of this laconic text is to draw attention to Joseph's uniqueness. The question that the text suggests may aim to compare Joseph with someone else: גבר כיוסף אם נולד ("was ever a man born like Joseph?").[47] In Sirach 49:15 H, there is no mention of "bones" in reference to their transfer from Egypt to Canaan and burial in Shechem (Gen 50:25; Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32).

44 Cf. Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus*, 336.

45 2 Kings 23:30 mentions the transportation of the body of King Josiah from Megiddo to Jerusalem on a chariot and his burial there. However, it is not precisely explained how the "relocation of Joseph's bones" occurred.

46 Cf. Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," 149.

47 The Mishnah (*Sotah* 1:9) juxtaposes Joseph with Moses: "We have no one as great as Joseph, for only Moses took care of his [bones]. Moses had the merit of burying the bones of Joseph, and no one in Israel was greater than he, for it is said: *Moses took the bones of Joseph with him* (Exod 13:19)." Cf. S.J.D. Cohen – R. Goldenberg – H. Lapin (eds.), *The Oxford Annotated Mishnah. A New Translation of the Mishnah with Introductions and Notes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2022) I–III. According to this tradition, Joseph gives way to Moses. Perhaps this is an explanation why Moses is mentioned instead of Joseph in the *Praise of the Fathers* after Jacob (cf. Sir 45:1).

Instead, the phrase וגם גויתו נפקדה ("even his dead body was provided for") appears. So why does the sage deviate from the standard way of presenting the transfer of Joseph's remains?

The term גְּוִיָּה appears 13 times in 11 texts in the Hebrew Bible and can have various meanings: "body, living being, celestial being" (Gen 47:18; Ezek 1:11; 1:23; Dan 10:6; Neh 9:37), "corpse, dead body" (1 Sam 31:10.12[2x]; Ps 110:6; Nah 3:3[2x]), "carcass" (Judg 14:8; 14:9).[48] When describing a living person, the term emphasises their weakness and shortcomings. It signifies someone who experiences oppression, troubles, or even the agony of bondage. They find themselves in a situation where they "only" have their body left, which can also become the property of others. In Sir 47:19 H, this term is reversed. It describes the powerful King Solomon, who ultimately became enslaved to women: they seized his body (בגויתך).[49] Conversely, Joseph, experiencing the oppression of slavery, managed to keep his body from the temptation of sin (cf. Gen 39:7–10). In Sir 49:15 H, the term "body" refers to the dead body, the remains of Joseph, which were embalmed (cf. Gen 50:26) and thus buried according to the custom used for Egyptian rulers and dignitaries.

Sirach had a knowledge of Greek customs and culture. During his lifetime, they permeated the Jewish world peacefully. The Jewish sage recognised the value of Greek achievements, but they were to remind his Jewish disciples of the greatness of the covenant and the Torah that Israel received. Presenting covenant heroes, Sirach used a well-known Greek literary genre of *encomium*.[50] And the patriarch Joseph combined the reality of the covenant with YHWH with his rule in Egypt. His death and burial could have provided Sirach with an excellent opportunity to confront them with another great historical figure – Alexander the Great.[51] His death in 323 BC under mysterious circumstances is not without significance. After the ruler's death, there was unrest among the Macedonian notables and soldiers. Disputes erupted over the succession to the throne, the division of state offices and satrapies, the inheritance of Alexander's legacy and the takeover of control over his remains. The transfer of his body and his funeral were both extremely important and problematic. The propaganda value of the king's body was too high to make a snap decision about the monarch's burial.[52]

Claudius Aelianus (second/third century AD), a Roman rhetorician writing in Greek, described the trials and tribulations concerning the transfer of Alexander the Great's remains and burial in the twelfth book of *Varia Historia* (Ποικίλη ἱστορία).[53] The remains of Alexander are referred to as σῶμα ("body"). The historian mentions that the monarch's body remained unburied for 30 days while his associates quarrelled over ruling the kingdom.

48 For more information on the subject, see H.J. Fabry, "גויה," *TDOT* II, 433–438.

49 Cf. Fabry, "גויה," 435.

50 Cf. Mack, *Wisdom and the Hebrew Epic,* 128–129; Lee, *Studies in the Form of Sirach 44–50*, 82–103.

51 Cf. Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," 146; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51*, 373.

52 Cf. J. Piątkowski, "Wóz pogrzebowy Aleksandra – arcydzieło sztuki orientalno-klasycznej," *Almanach Historyczny* 19 (2017) 12.

53 Cf. Claudius Aelianus Praenestinus, *Varia Historia* (Ποικίλη ἱστορία) XII.64, http://penelope.uchicago.edu/aelian/varhist12.xhtml#chap64 [access 8.09.2023]; cf. K. Juszczyk, "Tajemnica grobowca alabastrowgo," *Wiadomości Konserwatorskie* 17 (2005) 30–31.

This changed after Aristander of Telmessos, Alexander's court soothsayer, predicted eternal prosperity and invincibility to the land that would receive the "body" in which the dead monarch's soul had previously dwelled. The late king's will was to be buried in the Siwa Oasis because it was home to the Zeus-Ammon oracle, which meant to confirm that Alexander's father was Zeus. However, the Macedonian general of Alexander, Perdiccas, intended to bury the king in his homeland, in the family tomb of the royal necropolis in Aegae. Diodorus Siculus, a Greek historian from the first century BC who lived in Alexandria between 60 and 56 BC, drew attention to the extraordinarily elaborate coffin and hearse to transport the body of the dead king.[54] The convoy set out after preparing this impressive hearse, which took two years. It was considered a temple on wheels.[55] Led by Arrhidaeus, it moved towards Damascus. In Syria, it was met by Ptolemy I, the satrap of Egypt, who persuaded Arrhidaeus to disregard Perdiccas's orders. This way, Ptolemy I abducted the hearse with Alexander's body to bury it in Egypt.[56] Perdiccas pursued him, but despite his efforts to "recapture" the stolen remains, he had to settle for a likeness of Alexander that Ptolemy I had made to deceive his opponent.[57] However, Alexander was not buried in the Siwa Oasis but was to be entombed in the city named after him – Alexandria.[58] It was, however, still under construction, and Memphis was still serving as the capital. Therefore, it is likely that the first burial of Alexander was to take place there.[59] It was only Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the successor of Ptolemy I, who transported Alexander's body to Alexandria, where Ptolemy IV erected a new tomb called the *Soma* ("Body") in 215 BC. Alexander's tomb was revered as divine for centuries and was visited by distinguished guests who came to Alexandria. The Ptolemies thus became the undisputed heirs of Alexander.[60]

The remarkable story of transporting Alexander's remains shares some common features with the narrative about Joseph.[61] Perhaps the question posed in Sir 49:15a H ("was ever a man born like Joseph?") is a starting point for comparing and juxtaposing Joseph

54 Cf. Diodorus Siculus (Diodor Sycylijski), *De Aetate Diadochorum. Bibliotheca Historica XVIII (Czas Diadochów. Biblioteka Historyczna XVIII)* (trans. A. Pawlaczyk) (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza 2020) 26.

55 Cf. K. Nawotka, *Aleksander Wielki* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2004) 512; R. Waterfield, *Dzielenie łupów. Wojna o imperium Aleksandra Wielkiego* (trans. N. Radomski) (Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis 2019) 92–93.

56 Diodorus Siculus omits the fact that Ptolemy abducted Alexander's body against the will of Perdiccas, and only informs about his decision to bury him in Alexandria. Diodorus Siculus, *De Aetate Diadochorum*, 28. Cf. Nawotka, *Aleksander Wielki*, 515.

57 Cf. Claudius Aelianus Praenestinus, *Varia Historia* (Ποικίλη ἱστορία) XII.64.

58 Cf. Juszczyk, "Tajemnica grobowca alabastrowego," 28.

59 Cf. Waterfield, *Dzielenie łupów. Wojna o imperium Aleksandra Wielkiego*, 93–94.

60 Cf. Nawotka, *Aleksander Wielki*, 515–516; Waterfield, *Dzielenie łupów. Wojna o imperium Aleksandra Wielkiego*, 94.

61 Cf. Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," 146; Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51*, 373. The Jewish Apocrypha from the first century AD, *Vitae Prophetarum* (*Lives of the Prophets*), states that Alexander of Macedon was to carry the remains of the prophet Jeremiah and place them in a tomb in Alexandria with due honour (*VitProph* 2:5). Cf. D.R.A. Hare, "The Lives of the Prophetes," *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.* II. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament. Expansions of the «Old Testament» and Legends, Wisdom, and Philosophical*

with another great hero – Alexander. This is all the more so given that the transfer of the king's body from Memphis to Alexandria took place during Sirach's lifetime. Both cases involve outstanding rulers. Joseph was embalmed and buried in Egypt, and the same was done with Alexander. In both cases, there is a promise of exceptional prosperity associated with the presence of the dead "body." Although the Hebrew and Greek texts use the term "bones" (עֲצָמוֹת/ὀστᾶ), referring to the transfer and burial of Joseph in Canaan, the Hebrew version of Sirach does not seek coherence with this account. It chooses the term גויה ("body, remains"), which is most often translated in the LXX as σῶμα ("body").[62] Indeed, the author was referring to embalmed remains. However, while the Hellenistic world extolled the significance and extraordinary prosperity associated with the presence of the dead king's "body," and his tomb was also called σῶμα ("body"), the Jewish sage reminds us of another "body." While the pagans admire the solemn procession with Alexander's body placed in an impressive hearse, Sirach draws attention to something else. Joseph's body is not "divine," nor does it have magical powers to bring prosperity. The sage refers to an event associated with a particular, salvific action of God, who was to "visit" Israel.[63] Joseph's "body," taken from Egypt, was therefore to become a "witness" to the salvific events: crossing the sea, the covenant, miracles in the desert, and finally, taking possession of the promised inheritance. Successive generations of the sons of Israel were to remember the constant value and relevance of the covenant, the faithfulness of God, whose silent witness remains the "body" of Joseph. Therefore, the Jews contemporary to Sirach considered themselves spiritual heirs of Joseph, just as the Ptolemies considered themselves heirs of Alexander. At the same time, Joseph achieved prestige during his lifetime by ruling and saving the mighty empire of Egypt and the peoples living nearby during the famine. But Joseph achieved another spectacular success – he brought about reconciliation with his brothers and reunited the family. The Israelites were the descendants of Jacob's sons, who were very different from one another. Joseph set out to find his brothers in Shechem (cf. Gen 37:11–12), where he experienced violence and was sold into Egypt. However, his life experience in a foreign land and culture led to reconciliation. Joseph, or rather his "body," with the help of Moses and Joshua, returned to Shechem, receiving special respect from his descendants. Therefore, the introduction of the term "body," while the biblical tradition mentions the "bones" of Joseph, has both a polemical and educational character. In concluding the *Praise of the Fathers*, Sirach once again explains, using outstanding figures, that Jews do not need to worry

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Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works (ed. J.H. Charlesworth) (New York – London – Toronto: Doubleday 1985) 387.

62 He translates גויה as σῶμα ("body"): Gen 47:18; 1 Sam 31:10, 12; Ezek 1:11, 23; Nah 3:3; Dan 10:6; Neh 9:37); as πτῶμα ("carcass, corpse, carrion"): Judg 14:8; Ps 110(109):6 LXX. Cf. Fabry, "גויה", 438.

63 "Sir 49,15 scheint mir hier nun eine frühe Form der *interpretatio Judaica* des Auftretens Alexanders zu sein, insofern der Siracide der *translatio Alexandri* die *translatio Josephi* gegenüberstellt: Mögen die Heiden den Leichenwagen Alexanders und dessen Grabmal bestaunen, so können die Juden auf die Fürsorge Gottes selbst um die Gebeine Josefs verweisen." (Witte, "Die Gebeine Josefs," 146–147).

in the face of Hellenistic hero worship but instead should turn to their own, who not only accomplished great and famous deeds but also enjoyed God's special blessing.[64]

So why does the term "bones" appear in Sir 49:15 G? It seems fundamentally more natural when referring to the fate of Joseph's remains. Therefore, the Greek translator directly refers to the account in Gen 50:25; Exod 13:19; Josh 24:32, omitting the suggestion conveyed in the Hebrew text of Sir 49:15. Perhaps for the Jewish inhabitants of Alexandria in the late second and early first centuries BC,[65] Alexander the Great's tomb was no longer seen as a significant, current issue, and the reference to the Torah and the tradition of the fathers, which required constant reminding, appeared more important. This is confirmed by the subtle change in the first line of the statement about Joseph. While the H version contained a question, the G text has a statement: "nor has any man been born like Joseph" (49:15a G), and therefore there is no need to compare or juxtapose him with other figures. The Jews living in Egypt may have become a sign of the "vitality" of Joseph's bones, strengthening themselves in the faith of their fathers.

Conclusions

The entire mini-poem Sir 49:14–16, and especially 49:15, the praise of Joseph, indicates that the *Praise of the Fathers* is not another and obvious lecture on the history of biblical Israel. The sage has not only made a selection of the characters portrayed and a selection of the content. The structure of the praise, especially its conclusion, is an example of a highly thoughtful concept of interpreting scriptures and instructing future generations. The composition of 49:14–16, particularly the presence of passive verbs (*passivum divinum*), highlights the most important message of the entire *Praise*: the presence and intervention of God in history. The praise of Joseph is even more indicative of this. It is not a lack of knowledge of the history of this patriarch that prompted Sirach to make such a perfunctory, laconic statement. It is so startling that it forces one to ask fundamental questions about its meaning and placement in the text as a whole. It appears that the sage of Jerusalem did not want to merely list Joseph's outstanding achievements, which went beyond his own people's interests. Joseph became a universal figure to the extent that he could serve as an invitation to change thinking and values.

While it may have been in Sirach's interest to encourage his fellow countrymen to emulate Joseph's successes, something else becomes more important. Joseph's impact proved unimaginably more significant after his death than during his lifetime. The promise associated with his remains led to the realisation of the salvific action, the "visitation" of God: the exodus, the covenant and taking possession of the promised land. However, the key

64 Cf. Zapff, *Jesus Sirach 25–51*, 373.

65 The Greek translation of the Book of Sirach may have been completed around 117 BC. Cf. Skehan – Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, 38.

to changing one's thinking is the ability to read and interpret the Scripture that confirms the minor detail about Joseph's remains (cf. Gen 50:26; Exod 13:19; Josh 24:29). The differences in textual variants here can be a great help in discovering the continued freshness and vitality of Scripture for its audience. It was Scripture that became the vehicle for the memory of the promise connected with Joseph's remains. This great inheritance given to Israel continues to be a life-giving source that not only tells history but interprets the present and shapes the future. The descendants of the illustrious fathers are not so much to reminisce with nostalgia about history and splendour but to learn present cooperation with YHWH, the creator and main protagonist of the covenant that lasts. God's model of shaping history is so attractive that it infinitely surpasses Alexander's spectacular achievements and power. The heirs to his empire cannot compare with the power of YHWH, whose presence and faithful action in Israel's history is continually affirmed by the Holy Scriptures.

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Making Sense of Fragmentary Qumran Aramaic Texts: Two Case Studies on Contradictory Grammatical vs. Content or Genre Considerations

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Abstract: Fragmentary ancient texts are notoriously difficult to interpret. In this article, I offer case studies on two short sections of Qumran Aramaic texts. Part 1 analyses the various possible syntactic parsings of 4Q242 1–3, 4 and assesses the extent to which they conform to the grammar of Qumran Aramaic. Based on this assessment, I present my interpretation of the line and offer a potential reconstruction for the end of the preceding line 3. Part 2 shows how methodological decisions of the modern editors of 4Q560 1 I, 3; 5 on the text's similarity to later Jewish incantations (or lack thereof) have yielded completely different interpretations. In this respect, I argue that the Aramaic is ambiguous, allowing for at least two different coherent readings.

Keywords: Dead Sea Scrolls, Aramaic, 4Q242 *Prayer of Nabonid*, 4Q560 *Magical Text*, syntax, genre, incantation

Reading is a complex and multi-faceted mental task. It involves identifying letters, relating them to sounds, and interpreting these in accordance with the grammar of the language, i.e., deciding how the graphically represented strings of phonemes combine into words (and which words), and how these form sentences, and finally, a coherent text. Even under ideal circumstances—say, when all graphemes are discernible and the reader is a competent, perhaps even a native speaker of the written language—reading remains a demanding task, though constant training helps to perform it swiftly and successfully. Unfortunately, when it comes to Qumran Aramaic texts we, modern readers, are very far removed from these ideal circumstances across all stages of the reading process. The elementary task of identifying letters is often complicated by smears, stains, or broken letters, and our knowledge of the Qumran Aramaic grammar—and even more so the lexicon—is partial at best.[1]

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1 The deficiencies in our knowledge of the grammar are most evident in the syntax, where the small corpus size complicates such things as establishing word-order rules, at least for the rarer types of sentences, while also affecting the morphology; see e.g., E.M. Cook, "The Causative Internal Passive in Qumran Aramaic," *AS* 8/1–2 (2010) 5–12. For a discussion on how the limited corpus size impacts our knowledge of the lexicon in particular, see E.M. Cook, "Qumran Aramaic, Corpus Linguistics, and Aramaic Retroversion," *DSD* 21/3 (2014) 356–384, esp. 358–367.

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To make matters worse, the ravages of time have, in most cases, left us with only fragments of the original compositions, with broken sentences and a lack of context being further impediments for the modern reader of the Qumran Aramaic texts. Any meaningful reading of such fragmentary texts involves hypothesising about the relationship, syntactic and content-wise, between the surviving words and what may have preceded and followed them. Filling in the gaps, i.e., forming an opinion about the parts of the original composition that were lost to time, is therefore an integral part of parsing, understanding, and translating fragmentary Qumran Aramaic texts. In a circular move that hopefully brings us closer to the long-lost historical truth, we take our clues from different fields: From our imperfect knowledge of the language and from what we understand to be the text's genre and general content, and perhaps its intention. Since we can only work with educated guesses, our understanding—even of the surviving bits of the text—is inevitably tentative, even if it is almost universally accepted or finds its way into a standard edition. It is imperative to remember the interpretative ambiguity of most strings of letters in fragmentary texts that do not lend themselves unequivocally to an interpretation as complete Qumran Aramaic sentences.

This article presents two case studies of specific parts of the *Prayer of Nabonid* (4Q242) and the so-called *Magical Text* (4Q560). In both cases, reconstructing the immediate and broader context of the preserved text is challenging as the grammar, genre, and content are not easily reconciled. The modern reader's choice of which hints to prioritize during reconstruction affects the reading of the preserved string of letters, which in turn affects the general interpretation of the text.

1. *Prayer of Nabonid* 4Q242 1–3, 4

The four fragments of 4Q242 contain less than eighty words (or parts of words) from a literary composition that centres on the Babylonian king Nabonid.[2] Here, I provide the combined (yet still fragmentary) text of fragments 1–3, lines 3–4, from the beginning of the work:[3]

3 כתיש הוית שנין שבע ומן [די] שוי א[
4 וחטאי שבק לה גזר והוא יהודי מ[

2 For a general overview of the composition and material aspects of the scroll, see D. Machiela, *A Handbook of the Aramaic Scrolls from the Qumran Caves. Manuscripts, Language, and Scribal Practices* (STDJ 140; Leiden: Brill 2022) 256–259. R.G. Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," *Babylon. Wissenskultur in Orient und Okzident* (eds. E. Cancik-Kirschbaum – M. van Ess – J. Marzahn) (Berlin: de Gruyter 2011) 253–720 offers a thorough synthesis of previous research and discusses the main textual and interpretational cruces.

3 The material reading of these two lines is not contested. I follow the official edition: J.J. Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus ar," *Qumran Cave 4.XVII. Parabiblical Texts, Part 3* (eds. G. Brooke *et al.*) (DJD 22; Oxford: Clarendon 1996) 83–93.

That line 4 is difficult to interpret is readily admitted by many, and various suggestions have been made over the years as to how the six preserved words combine into sentences.[4] The only unambiguous syntactical break is marked by the conjunction <ו> 'and' in the string והוא.[5] In other words, והוא יהודי 'and he is a Jew' is an independent sentence, which might originally have comprised more constituents, now lost to a lacuna. The syntactical parsing of the four preceding words is contested. The function of the conjunction <ו> in וחטאי 'and my sin(s)' is ambiguous due to the preceding lacuna at the end of line 3. It could coordinate two noun phrases ('[something] and my sin(s)'), which would imply that וחטאי was the last word of a sentence that is now lost (or perhaps mostly lost) along with the end of line 3.[6] Alternatively, the conjunction could mark the beginning of a new sentence, in which חטאי would be the direct object. This sentence could either comprise all four remaining words, i.e., וחטאי שבק לה גזר 'and my sin, a diviner remitted (it)', or just three: 'and my sin, he remitted (it)'.[7] The latter interpretation was adopted by John J. Collins in the official edition and is followed in almost all recent publications.[8] Let us now examine it in more detail.[9]

Reading line 4]מ יהודי והוא גזר לה שבק וחטאי as 'and as for my sin, he remitted it. A diviner – he was a Judaean fr[om ...' has two advantages.[10] On the lexical level, it interprets the two words וחטאי שבק as a collocation that is also known from other Qumran Aramaic

4 See, e.g., the following overviews: F. García Martínez, "The Prayer of Nabonidus. A New Synthesis," *Qumran and Apocalyptic*, 2 ed. (STDJ 9; Leiden: Brill 1994) 116–136, esp. 125–126; Collins, "4QPrayer," 90–91; Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," 257–258; B. Pascut, "Jesus and the Jewish Diviner. The Use and Misuse of 4Q242," *Authoritative Texts and Reception History. Aspects and Approaches* (eds. D. Batovici – K. de Troyer) (BibInt 151; Leiden: Brill 2017) 141–153, esp. 144–148. A.D. Knight-Messenger, *The Place of the Court Tales in Early Jewish Literature. Form, Development, and Function* (Diss. McMaster University; Hamilton, Ontario 2022) 115, n. 229.

5 This is because <ו> 'and' cannot be interpreted as coordinating two noun phrases in this case.

6 Thus, e.g., J.T. Milik, "«Prière de Nabonide» et autres écrits d'un cycle de Daniel. Fragments araméens de Qumrân 4," *RB* 63 (1956) 407–415; K. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer. Samt den Inschriften aus Palästina, dem Testament Levis aus der Kairoer Genisa, der Fastenrolle und den alten talmudischen Zitaten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1984–2004) I, 223, II, 139.

7 A. Dupont-Sommer, "Exorcismes et guérisons dans les écrits de Qoumrân," *Congress Volume Oxford 1959* (eds. G.W. Anderson *et al.*) (VTSup 7; Leiden: Brill 1960) 246–261 was the first to advocate the former reading, and P. Grelot, "La prière de Nabonide (4 Q Or Nab). Nouvel essai de restauration," *RevQ* 9 (1978) 483–495 established the latter.

8 Collins, "4QPrayer," 89; Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," 256; E. M. Cook, *Dictionary of Qumran Aramaic* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns 2015) 81; Pascut, "Jesus and the Jewish Diviner," 149 (by implication); A.B. Perrin, "Symptoms and Symbols, Prayers and Portents. Diagnostic Physiognomy and the Diviner in the Aramaic Prayer of Nabonidus (4Q242)," *Science in Qumran Aramaic Texts* (ed. I. Fröhlich) (Ancient Cultures of Sciences and Knowledge 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2022) 43–64, esp. 45–46.

9 The respective arguments are often repeated in many different publications. The references provided are limited to recent representative studies.

10 Moreover, a psycholinguistic explanation can be provided for why contemporary readers favour this interpretation. Indeed, this is arguably preferable when reading the fragment (and not the original, complete text), since it interprets its first word as sentence-initial and thus constitutes a maximalist interpretation that leaves no loose ends, no syntactically unintegrated words (from the end of the preceding sentence).

texts and other Aramaic dialects.[11] On the level of the content (and the underlying theology), it avoids assigning the role of remitting sins to the diviner and rather reserves it to God, which fits what we know about the contemporaneous Jewish approach.[12] However, this interpretation presupposes two unusual and marked syntactical constructions whose grammatical problems and pragmatic implications are not always acknowledged and have not been discussed comprehensively. One set of difficulties revolves around the clause]מ יהודי והוא. There is no doubt that this is a circumstantial nominal clause, i.e., a sentence that is syntactically independent but logically subordinate, which provides background information on the noun גזר 'diviner'. The circumstantial clause is a marked construction that stresses the Jewish identity of the diviner, much more so than possible alternatives such as an attributive adjective (**גזר יהודי 'a Jewish diviner') or a relative clause (**גזר די יהודי הוה 'a diviner, who was a Jew' or **גזר די מן בני יהוד 'a diviner, who was one of the Jews'). Since the information on the diviner's Jewishness was hardly trivial with respect to a man performing such a function, and probably contrary to the reader's expectations, the use of a marked construction is easily explained. However, not only is the construction marked, but it also constitutes a parenthetical phrase, i.e., the clause interrupts the sentence to which it is attached.[13] The circumstantial clause follows the subject (גזר) and separates it from the rest of the main sentence (including the predicate) that is now lost in the lacuna at the end of the line. A circumstantial clause that is parenthetically inserted into its host sentence is highly unusual and unattested in Qumran Aramaic (and all its predecessors). Rather, circumstantial clauses usually follow the main clause to which they relate.[14] This is not to say that the interpretation as parenthesis is impossible (parenthesis being disruptive by definition), but it should be stressed that the alternative, which takes the noun גזר as the subject of the preceding sentence (e.g.,וחטאי שבק לה גזר 'and my sin, a diviner remitted [it]') is much more in line with what we know about the grammar of circumstantial clauses in Qumran Aramaic and other ancient Aramaic dialects.

11 E.g., Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," 256; Pascut, "Jesus and the Jewish Diviner," 144; H. Gzella, "שבק," *ThWAT* IX, 740–742, esp. 742.

12 E.g., É. Puech, "La prière de Nabonide (4Q242)," *Targumic and Cognate Studies. Essays in Honour of Martin McNamara* (eds. K.J. Cathcart – M. Maher) (JSOTSup 230; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1996) 208–227, esp. 216–217; Pascut, "Jesus and the Jewish Diviner," 146, 148–149. J.A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Language and the Study of the New Testament," *JBL* 99 (1980) 5–21, esp. 15–16 takes the middle ground by interpreting the diviner as a mediator for God's forgiveness, a concept with New Testament parallels.

13 In modern translations, this is often made explicit by the use of dashes (e.g., Collins, "4QPrayer," 89) or parentheses (e.g., Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," 256).

14 For Qumran Aramaic: T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* (ANESSup 38; Leuven: Peeters 2011) 255–256; for Biblical Aramaic: H. Bauer – P. Leander, *Grammatik des Biblisch-Aramäischen* (Halle a.d. Saale: Niemeyer 1927) 352–353; for Imperial Aramaic: T. Muraoka – B. Porten, *A Grammar of Egyptian Aramaic*, 2 ed. (HdO I.32; Leiden: Brill 2003) 321–322; for Old Aramaic: R. Degen, *Altaramäische Grammatik der Inschriften des 10.–8. Jh. v. Chr.* (AKM 38; Wiesbaden: Steiner 1969) 128. The same is also true for Biblical Hebrew, with its larger corpus: T. Zewi, *Parenthesis in Biblical Hebrew* (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 50; Leiden: Brill 2007) 64–101.

The interpretation adopted by Collins in the official edition is unlikely in light of Qumran Aramaic language use.

A second set of difficulties revolves around the interpretation of the first three words וחטאי שבק לה 'and as for my sin, he remitted it'. Here, too, the interpretation implies a marked construction with the direct object in a sentence-initial position.[15] It highlights the sin, which has not been mentioned before (but might be contextually implied). In this case, it is more difficult to offer a possible rationale for the marked construction, but foreshadowing would seem to be a good candidate. The sin is promoted to the sentence-initial position to stress its relevance for what is to follow.

While the marked nature of the sentence-initial direct object is obvious, the syntax of the sentence is ambiguous, and two parsings have been offered. The exact function of לה is the crux of the sentence.[16] Some have interpreted the word as a direct object marker with a pleonastic pronoun and, consequently, deemed it a *casus pendens* construction with the object dislocated and moved to sentence-initial position: 'and my sin, he remitted it'.[17] To evaluate this reading, it is helpful to contrast the use of the direct object marker <ל> with its Qumran Aramaic alternatives. For pronominalized objects, the synthetic construction with object suffixes is the default way of expressing the direct object of verbal forms other than participles. I could find only two examples in which the preposition <ל> with a pronoun designates a direct object.[18] The construction in 1QapGen XIII, 16 probably results from attraction to the preceding participle, while the analytic construction in 1QapGen XIX, 19 enables fronting and thus serves a pragmatic purpose.[19] None of these factors applies to 4Q242 1–3, 4. Parsing לה as a direct object marker not only assumes a rare analytic construction, it also presupposes an atypical function for it. Moreover, the choice of the direct object marker <ל>, not ית, is not intuitive for a verb that also takes dative complements (e.g., 11QtgJob XXXVIII, 2–3, with the same collocation).[20] The interpretation of לה as a direct object marker, and the whole sentence as a *casus pendens* construction, is somewhat unorthodox in light of what we know about Qumran Aramaic.

Others have opted for an alternative parsing of לה as a *dativus ethicus*, a co-agentive dative construction with a pronoun referring to the grammatical subject.[21] This enables the sentence to be read without the *casus pendens* but with a fronted object retained: 'my

15 E.g., Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," 258.

16 I disregard the suggestion by E. Lipiński, "גזר," *ThWAT* IX, 162–166, esp. 165 to interpret שבק לה as a defective spelling of the eastern Aramaic *qtīl lē* construction.

17 E.g., Grelot, "La prière de Nabonide," 485; Collins, "4QPrayer," 89; Kratz, "Nabonid in Qumran," 256.

18 The two examples (4Q196 6,1; 11, 2) mentioned by Muraoka, *Grammar*, 213 are misclassified and the preposition rather expresses a dative relation. Muraoka, *Grammar*, 215 also provides three examples of the direct object marker ית with pronominal suffixes.

19 Muraoka, *Grammar*, 213 points to the function of the latter example. The very fragmentary 4Q201 14, 2 (H. Drawnel, *Qumran Cave 4. The Aramaic Books of Enoch, 4Q201, 4Q202, 4Q204, 4Q205, 4Q206, 4Q207, 4Q212* [Oxford: Oxford University Press 2019] 131) could be a third attestation, also with a fronted object.

20 Cf., e.g., H. Gzella, "שבק," *ThWQ* III, 833 for the dative complement.

21 E.g., Dupont-Sommer, "Exorcismes," 259.

sin(s) he remitted'. The *dativus ethicus* reading fits the word order of the fragment, since this construction always follows the verb immediately.[22] Yet, in Qumran Aramaic—as in other early Aramaic dialects—the *dativus ethicus* is employed mainly with verbs of motion and sometimes with stative verbs.[23] It is not used with transitive verbs such as שבק.[24] Hence, the *dativus ethicus* reading can be easily disregarded. What implications should these grammatical considerations have for the interpretation of the fragmentary line 4? First, it is unlikely that these six words comprised two highly marked constructions with a disruptive syntax—a *casus pendens* in the first sentence, and a parenthetical sentence in the second. While it is impossible to avoid all grammatical oddities outlined above, the line's interpretation should (as far as possible) conform to common Qumran Aramaic usage. Arguably, this is best achieved by dividing the words into sentences as follows: וחטאי שבק לה גזר והוא יהודי מ['](and my sin. A diviner remitted it. And he was a Judaean fr[om ...' This reading dispenses with the *casus pendens*, parenthesis, and also the *dativus ethicus*. Of the grammatical problems discussed above, only the unusual analytical construction with the direct object marker לה (without an obvious pragmatic function) remains. Additionally, this reading implies the theological oddity of a diviner, and not God, remitting sins.[25]

This grammatically plausible reading of line 4 also offers a starting point for speculating on possible reconstructions of the preceding lacuna at the end of line 3. I propose the following:

3 כתיש הוית שנין שבע ומן [די] שוי א[להא עין עלי ועל צלתי
4 וחטאי שבק לה גזר והוא יהודי מ[

3 I was stricken for seven years. But after G[od] had considered [me, my prayer]
4 and my sin (benevolently), a diviner remitted it, and he was a Jew fr[om

This reconstruction is roughly identical in length to the one offered in the official edition.[26] It incorporates Klaus Beyer's idea to read a temporal clause followed by the main sentence, which accounts nicely for the lack of a conjunction at the sentence break (שבק and not **ושבק).[27] In reconstructing the predicate and subject as שוי א[להא עין, I have modified

22 S.E. Fassberg, "The Ethical Dative in Aramaic," *AS* 16 (2018) 101–116, esp. 103.

23 Muraoka, *Grammar*, 223 ('centripetal lamed'); Fassberg, "Ethical Dative," 108, 109; R. Contini, "Considerazioni sul presunto dativo etico in aramaico pre-cristiano," *Études sémitiques et samaritaines offertes à Jean Margain* (eds. Ch.-B. Amphoux – A. Frey – U. Schattner-Rieser) (Lausanne: Zèbre 1998) 83–94, esp. 89–92.

24 The Qumran Aramaic collocation חזו לכון 'observe!' is rather a *dativus commodi* (Muraoka, *Grammar*, 223; *pace* Contini, "Considerazioni," 90), comparable to the German 'seht euch [direct object] an'. Fassberg, "Ethical Dative," 108 erroneously recorded the use of the *dativus ethicus* with the transitive verb √tbr 'to break' in Christian Palestinian Aramaic (for √twb 'to return', which is intransitive).

25 A similar reading (albeit with *casus pendens*) was recently proposed by Moshe J. Bernstein, Edward M. Cook, and Aaron Koller, *apud* A. Koller, "The Prayer of Nabonidus and Lost Books: Reconstructing the Aramaic Library of the Persian Period," *Mallephana Rabba. Aramaic Studies in Honor of Edward M. Cook* (eds. S.M. Coleman – A.D. Gross – A.W. Litke) (Perspectives on Linguistics and Ancient Languages 15; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias 2023) 161–177, esp. 169–170.

26 Collins, "4QPrayer," 88, following Grelot, "La prière de Nabonide," 485.

27 Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, II, 139.

Pierre Grelot's idea to reconstruct שוי אנפין, a Targumic collocation that calques on Hebrew שם פנים ב- and is also attested in Qumran Aramaic.[28] The negative connotation of the underlying Hebrew collocation makes this an unlikely candidate in the present context, which is why I reconstruct an equivalent of the Targumic rendering שוי עין of the positive Hebrew counterpart שם עין (e.g., Gen 44:21; Jer 39:12; 40:4).[29] By necessity, this reconstruction remains hypothetical. It has no bearing on the syntactic parsing of the surviving words in line 4.

2. *Magical Text* 4Q560 1 I, 3; 5

The text of the fragmentary scroll 4Q560 is *sui generis* in the Qumran corpus. It uses collocations that are indicative of the genre of incantation or exorcism as we know it from Jewish sources from Late Antique Babylonia and Palestine.[30] Presumably, this scroll was a compendium that contained various magical texts for use by practitioners. While the genre of the texts is uncontested and the material reading is clear, the fragments contain words and sentences that are difficult to interpret. This particularly applies to fragment 1, column I, lines 2–5:[31]

2]לילדתה מרדות ילדן פקר באיש ש[
3]עלל בבשרא לחלחיא דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא
4]ברא עואן ופשע אשא ועריא ואשת לבב
5]ה בשנא פרכ דכר ופכית נקבתא מחתא די

The interpretation of these fragmentary lines, and particularly the individual words in lines 3 and 5, is far from self-evident. Indeed, the readings that have been suggested are contingent on the modern readers' decision on which hints to prioritize in establishing a coherent interpretation of the fragmentary text. The interpretations can be divided into two groups, according to the different weight the modern readers assign to cues from genre considerations. Let us start by sketching the line of reasoning in which genre considerations play a prominent role, as adopted by most editors.[32]

28 Grelot, "La prière de Nabonide," 485; Cook, *Dictionary*, 231.

29 For שם פנים ב-: W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, 18 ed. (eds. D.R. Meyer – H. Donner) (Berlin: Springer 1987–2010) 1061 [*s.v.* פנים I 1. g): "im Zorn und strafweise"]. For שם עין: *ibidem*, 956 [*s.v.* עין I e): "jemanden gnädig anschauen"]. Note that the Qumran Aramaic attestation of the collocation שוי אנפין in 4Q556 1, 3 is followed by references to 'burning' and 'bad fire' in line 4 and 'captivity' in line 6, which fit the negative connotations of the corresponding Hebrew expression.

30 This was already noted by the first editors, D.L. Penney – M.O. Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub. An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran (4Q560)," *JBL* 113 (1994) 627–650, esp. 628. For a general overview of the composition and material aspects of the scroll, see Machiela, *Handbook*, 315–317.

31 I follow the official edition: É. Puech, "4QLivret magique ar," *Qumrân grotte 4.XXVII. Textes araméens, deuxième partie* (ed. É. Puech) (DJD 37; Oxford: Clarendon 2009) 291–302.

32 Penney – Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub"; J. Naveh, "Fragments of an Aramaic Magic Book from Qumran," *IEJ* 48 (1998) 252–261; Puech, "4QLivret magique."

The phrases פרכ דכר ופכית נקבתא and לחלחיא דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא in lines 3 and 5 are the cruces of this part of the text. Forms that can be parsed as the adjectives דכר/דכרא '(the) male' and נקבתא 'the female' are easily recognizable in both lines. These have been interpreted as referring to pairs of male and female entities. Scholars have noted the resemblance between the heads of these phrases (לחלחיא and חלחלית in l. 3; פרכ and פכית in l. 5), linking it to the fact that pairs of male and female demons of the same kind are often named in Jewish magical texts from Late Antiquity, most notably in the Babylonian incantation bowls,[33] i.e., in later texts of the same genre as 4Q560. This reference to the phraseology of Late Antique magical texts underlies the prevalent interpretation of the phrases לחלחיא דכרא and וחלחלית נקבתא and פרכ דכר ופכית נקבתא in lines 3 and 5 as noun phrases that designate pairs of male and female demons. But in contradistinction to the Late Antique magical texts, the heads of the supposed noun phrases in 4Q560, are not identical. They only resemble each other. Hence, it is usually assumed that the spelling of at least one of the heads of each pair was corrupted, and various emendations have been proposed.[34] Joseph Naveh's interpretation is representative of this approach, and it is arguably the most balanced (at least for lines 3 and 5) since it necessitates relatively few emendations. Naveh emends לחלחיא to חלחלא (l. 3) and פכית to פרכית (l. 5) and renders the pairs of noun phrases as 'male and female poison' and 'male and female crushing', respectively.[35] Once the connection with the Babylonian incantation bowls is firmly established, they are also adduced in order to explain the linguistic features of 4Q560 that do not easily align with Qumran Aramaic grammar, e.g., the otherwise extraordinary feminine nouns with the *-yt* ending, which would be morphologically construct in Qumran Aramaic.[36]

Thus, this prevalent approach to 4Q560 takes a limited number of lexemes and collocations as a starting point and uses them to determine its genre. In a second step, comparable texts of the same genre (but half a millennium younger) inform the interpretation to such an extent that they warrant substantial emendations, yielding the various coherent readings that have been proposed. I have discussed them in some detail to emphasize the prominent role played by genre considerations and comparisons to later texts of the same genre in establishing these readings. Methodologically, the recourse to later texts in particular is, of course, external to 4Q560; it constitutes a conscious decision of the modern readers and one that significantly affects their reading of the text.

Let us now turn to the alternative interpretation. There is one editor of 4Q560 whose reading differs radically from the approach presented above. Instead of allowing the knowledge of later specimens of magical texts to influence, and in fact interfere with, the reading

33 E.g., Penney – Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub," 639; Naveh, "Fragments," 258.

34 Penney – Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub," 631; Puech, "4QLivret magique," 297, 299; Naveh, "Fragments," 258–260. These emendations are informed by the different etymologies the editors assign to the respective forms. Cook, *Dictionary*, 84 (*s.v.* חלחלי) and 194 (*s.v.* פרך) concisely presents the different hypotheses.

35 Naveh, "Fragments," 259.

36 Naveh, "Fragments," 259.

of the Qumran text, Beyer offers an interpretation of the attested letters, irrespective of whether the result resembles Jewish incantation texts from Late Antiquity.[37]

2] וילדתה מרדות ילדן פקר באיש ש[
3] עלל בבשרא ל{ח}לחיא דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא
4]רא עואן ופשע אשא ועריה ואשת לבב
5]ה בשנא פרכ דכר ופכית נקבתא מחתורי

2] and his/her girls, obstinacy of girls, evil shamelessness [
3] enters the body, in order to erase the penis and the innards of the female
4]... sin and wrongdoing, fever and chill, and coronal ague
5]... asleep he crushes a penis and the receptacle of the female. The digging into

To be fair, Beyer, too, assumes one scribal error: a dittography (לחלחיא for intended ללחיא). This allows him to parse ל{ח}לחיא (l. 3) and פרכ (l. 5) as verbal forms, a D-stem (paʿʿel) infinitive of the root √lḥy and a G-stem (pəʿal) participle of the root √prk, respectively.[38] The following three words in each of the lines, דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא (l. 3) and דכר ופכית נקבתא (l. 5), are then read as coordinated noun phrases that function as direct objects of the verbal forms and designate the male and female reproductive organs, respectively. While the male organ is designated by the common lexeme דכר 'penis', the text—as read by Beyer—uses figurative language to refer to the female womb. The suggested etymologies of the two feminine nouns חלחלי and פכי point to a hollow space and a container, respectively, and the lexemes are employed in construct with the *nomen rectum* נקבתא 'the female'.[39]

While Beyer's reading is not without problems, these do not pertain to the morphology and syntax of the text, but rather to the lexicon, making them arguably less serious than in the prevalent approach.[40] The lexical weak points of Beyer's interpretation are as follows: the lexeme פכי and its root √pkk are unattested in Aramaic, and Beyer suggested a Hebrew etymology.[41] Since numerous Hebrew loanwords are attested in Qumran Aramaic, including עואן and פשע in the preceding line 4, this is not an unreasonable hypothesis.[42] Further, an Ugaritic cognate *bk* of Hebrew פך, and the possibility that the underlying root is onomatopoetic, would even warrant the speculation that the word was genuinely Aramaic, albeit unattested.[43] The other two issues pertain to the attestation of a particular form or usage alone: Neither the D-stem of √lḥy nor the figurative use of חלחלי and פכי are attested elsewhere in Aramaic.[44] Yet, this lack of attestation of the particular form or usage

37 Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, II, 168.
38 Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, II, 427, 464.
39 Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, II, 397, 462.
40 In the latter, emendations or assuming unattested morphemes are necessary to achieve grammatical concord.
41 Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, II, 462.
42 C. Stadel, *Hebraismen in den aramäischen Texten vom Toten Meer* (Schriften der Hochschule für Jüdische Studien Heidelberg 11; Heidelberg: Winter 2008) 127–128 (overview of loanwords), 104 (loanwords in 4Q560).
43 For the cognate and onomatopoetic etymology, cf. Gesenius, *Handwörterbuch*, 1050 (*s.v.* פך).
44 The verbal root √lḥy is attested in the G-stem in Syriac, and in an ambiguous form (G- or D-stem) in Imperial Aramaic, with the meaning 'to delete, destroy, erase', cf. Beyer, *Die aramäischen Texte*, II, 427 (*s.v.* לחי);

does not render the interpretation impossible, since the synonymy or partial synonymy of the D- and G-stems of the same root are common throughout Aramaic, as is figurative language.

The main advantage of Beyer's interpretation has already been mentioned: It offers a grammatically coherent reading without necessitating numerous emendations or recourse to linguistic features from the later corpus of the Babylonian incantation bowls.[45] On the face of it, Beyer pays a price (in textual coherence) for the grammatical coherence of his reading. Indeed, while Beyer agrees with the basic supposition that the text belongs to the incantation genre, his reading is far less aligned with the Late Antique Jewish incantation texts than the prevalent interpretation (which has been explicitly informed by them). But does it actually yield a less coherent text, and not just one that is dissimilar to later Jewish incantations? Arguably, Beyer's reading offers advantages at the content and text levels as well. According to the prevalent interpretation, lines 3 to 5 all mention various ailments, but in different forms: In lines 3 and 5, one ailment is represented by a pair of male and female demons, respectively, whereas line 4 lists three different non-demonized kinds of fever.[46] Beyer's interpretation differs substantially as, according to his understanding, lines 3 and 5 mention body parts that are or could be affected by the disease, and only line 4 identifies the ailments themselves (and presumably their causes: 'sin and wrongdoing'). Hence, overall, the terminology of Beyer's reading is more unified. Moreover, since the affected body parts are identified as the male and female sexual organs, one can arguably connect lines 3 and 5 to the forms ילדתה and ילדן from line 2. If (*pace* Beyer) one or both of these words represent forms of the lexeme *yallādā* 'woman in childbed', line 2 can then be interpreted as referring to women afflicted by the diseases mentioned in line 4, due to the effects they have on the sexual organs (lines 3 and 5).[47] However, it is highly unlikely for a definite form of a lexeme (ילדתה) to be followed immediately by its indefinite counterpart (ילדן). The two forms probably represent different lexemes. Following the reading לילדתה established by Émile Puech, I suggest to parse this form as a D-stem infinitive with an object pronoun: 'to act as midwife for her, help her give birth'.[48] This would give us the following reading and interpretation:

S.A. Kaufman, *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon*, *s.v.* lḥy vb., *s.v.* lḥy adj., https://cal.huc.edu/ [access: 29.02.2024] also offers a fine discussion of the etymological and semantic connection of the common Old to Qumran Aramaic adjective *lḥy* 'bad wicked' to the verbal root √lḥy 'to erase, delete'.

45 Penney – Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub," 631 suggested as many as six emendations. For 'Qumran-external' solutions to the morpho-syntactical problems with the nouns ending in *-yt*, cf. Naveh, "Fragments," 259; Puech, "4QLivret magique," 297, 299.

46 This is spelt out, e.g., by D. Hamidović, "Illness and Healing through Spell and Incantation in the Dead Sea Scrolls," *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early-Modern Period* (eds. S. Bhayro – C. Rider) (Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity 5; Leiden: Brill 2017) 97–110, esp. 99.

47 The interpretation 'woman in childbed' was already put forward by Penney – Wise, "By the Power of Beelzebub," 632 and has also been adopted by Puech, "4QLivret magique," 296. It is also possible that one of the occurrences of *yallādā* refers to 'midwives' rather than to 'women bearing a child'.

48 The defective spelling of the feminine ending of the infinitives of derived stems is attested elsewhere in the Qumran Aramaic corpus, Muraoka, *Grammar*, 143.

2]לילדתה מרדות ילדן פקר באיש ש[
3]עלל בבשרא ל{ח}לחיא דכרא וחלחלית נקבתא
4]ברא עואן ופשע אשא ועריא ואשת לבב
5]ה בשנא פרכ דכר ופכית נקבתא מחתא די

2] to act as midwife for her. Obstinacy of girls, evil shamelessness [
3] enters the body, in order to erase the penis and the innards of the female
4]... sin and wrongdoing, fever and chill, and coronal ague
5]... asleep he crushes a penis and the receptacle of the female. The digging into

While the text is of course highly fragmentary (which makes the reconstruction of sentence boundaries extremely difficult), the lexemes that survive in these four lines lend themselves to a coherent interpretation. The incantation addresses cases of fever (presumably identified with demonic forces, and ultimately caused by human sin) that affect the sexual organs and, subsequently, childbirth.

I readily admit that this interpretation is necessarily hypothetical, but this is true for the prevalent interpretation as well. In the end, the fragmentary nature of the text does not permit an unequivocal interpretation. Beyer's interpretation, which I have adapted and explained in this section, and the one adopted by most editors and aptly laid out by Puech in the official edition, both constitute valid and reasonable readings of this fragmentary text. Yet, they are completely different at the word level and in terms of the overall understanding. This difference hearkens back to a methodological decision of the modern reader: Naveh and Puech favour an interpretation that is aligned with genre conventions of comparable texts that postdate 4Q560 by half a millennium and resort to several emendations to achieve this. Beyer, on the other hand, favours a grammatically coherent interpretation of the attested strings of letters according to what we know about Qumran Aramaic, even though the resulting text is dissimilar to later specimens of the same genre. Since the different interpretations of 4Q560 are shaped considerably by the methodological decisions of the modern reader, both alternatives should be given due consideration by scholars studying the text in question. Naturally, the translation adopted by the editors of very fragmentary texts in the official edition can only reflect one of the interpretations. However, the fact that such an edition offers one interpretation does not absolve the reader from considering the alternative, or else we risk expounding a modern translation, and not the precious—albeit often frustratingly ambiguous—Aramaic original.[49]

49 Thus, e.g., T. Guerra, "Writing Science, Writing Magic. Possible Functions for the Act of Writing; Scientific Knowledge Reflected in 4Q560," *Science in Qumran Aramaic Texts* (ed. I. Fröhlich) (Ancient Cultures of Sciences and Knowledge 1; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2022) 131–141, esp. 136–139. It is worth stressing that the potential problem lies with the user of the official edition. Puech's extensive commentary section ("4QLivret magique," 296–300) amply stresses the ambiguity of the Aramaic.

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Judas' Proskynesis

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Abstract: The present article starts from an observation that Mark (14:43–46) and Matthew (26:47–50) use two different, though cognate words for Judas' kiss (φιλεῖν and καταφιλεῖν). Καταφιλεῖν is omitted from Luke's passion narrative (Luke 22:44–48), while Judas' kiss as such is absent from John (18:2–8a). A closer look is offered at the verb καταφιλεῖν in Classical contexts, where it may be synonymous with προσκυνεῖν ('to perform a ritual prostration'). It is suggested that what Judas actually performed at Gethsemane was technically *proskynesis*. Judas' gesture, perhaps imitated by some of his armed accomplices, was rendered as an unwilling act of reverence to Jesus by some of Judas' companions in John. It is further argued that the Gethsemane *proskynesis* was orchestrated in collusion with the temple elites that needed firm evidence of Jesus' revolutionary activity to obtain the Roman governor's consent to put Jesus to death (they previously had tried to entrap him in the taxation discourse). As a Roman military unit was present at the arrest of Jesus, Pilate had now several Roman witnesses of the royal style of Jesus, and was forced to act together with the temple elite. This reconstruction speaks for complementarity of the passion narratives in spite of differing highlights of the four evangelists.

Keywords: Judas' kiss, *proskynesis* (ritual prostration), Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:43–52; Matt 26:47–56; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:2–11), Jesus' Roman trial (Mark 15:2–20a; Matt 27:11–31a; Luke 23:2–25; John 18:28b–19:16a)

Judas' treacherous kiss at Gethsemane is the most recognisable scene of the arrest of Jesus. The very sense of that gesture is fiercely debated, and even its historicity is often questioned. Certainly it was a very special kiss. What follows is an attempt to show that, technically, Judas' kiss was not just a kiss. It is possible that a kiss was not a normal greeting gesture between Jesus and his followers and therefore was a surprise to other disciples.[1] Yet, this kiss was pivotal in the intrigue plotted by the chief priests and the scribes to eliminate Jesus. The deceitful nature of the action planned against Jesus is implied by ἐν δόλῳ in Mark 14:1–2 and δόλῳ in Matt 26:4.[2] The kiss is described or at least alluded to in

1 A. Cane, *The Place of Judas Iscariot in Christology* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2005) 43, notes that "nowhere else in the Gospels are Jesus and his disciples recorded as exchanging a kiss." Still, the spread of the kiss as a symbol of peace in the early Christian communities may undermine that conclusion, see: W. Klassen, "The Sacred Kiss in the New Testament: An Example of Social Boundary Lines," *NTS* 39 (1993) 122–135; E. Sutcliffe, "Kiss – Christianity," *EBR* XV, 362–364.

2 The exact nature of this deceit is not sufficiently explained – certainly the noun δόλος could have referred to Judas' treason introduced by the two first evangelists later (Matt 26:14–16; Mark 14:10–11) as well as to

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the synoptic Gospels (Matt 26:49 and Mark 14:45 contain the kiss; Luke 22:47 refers to Judas' failed attempt at kissing Jesus), while it is absent from John's account of Jesus' arrest (John 18:2–8a). The author of this article believes that the differences between the accounts of the synoptics and John are not hopelessly irreconcilable, but reflect different perspectives of the evangelists.[3] As a consequence, each of them emphasises a different element of the entire scene. Put together, the evangelists' versions can help in understanding what had really happened at Gethsemane that night, and what was the actual place of Judas' kiss in the above-mentioned plot against Jesus.

1. Verbs for Judas' kiss in the Synoptics

According to Mark 14:44 and Matt 26:48, the kiss was a previously agreed sign for identifying Jesus (the same idea is implied by Jesus' question in Luke 22:48 asked after Judas kissed him). Both Mark and Matthew use two different verbs for the planning of the kiss, and the act of kissing itself (φιλεῖν and καταφιλεῖν, respectively). Καταφιλεῖν, though obviously stemming from φιλεῖν (meaning generally: 'to love' or 'to show love,' and hence: 'to kiss') has a slightly different connotation. One has suggested that the compound implied intensification of a kissing, whether externally perceived[4] or emotional.[5] It has been also noted that the prefix κατα- may well refer to "a kiss 'down' on a lower part of the body, as on the hand or feet, rather than on the face" (based on Luke 7:38, for which see the next paragraph), but as this thesis has not been supported by a sufficient number of analogies,[6] it does not prevail today.[7] In most interpretations, a difference between

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the attempt to entrap Jesus through verbal provocations as the tribute controversy in Mark 12:13–17; Matt 22:15–22; Luke 20:20–26 (for the last-mentioned, see below n. 20). It should be understood that the temple leaders needed a deceit to catch and execute Jesus, most likely since the right to condemn anyone to death was reserved to the Roman governor (for this, see below n. 21).

3 As will be clear from the reconstruction below, it is not necessary here to take position on the composition and time of the individual Gospels, as well as on their relation to the genres of history or biography.

4 C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Mark* (CGTC 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1959) 437: "The compound perhaps indicates a prolonged kissing designed to give all the ochlos- a chance to see which person is to be seized and to be ready to seize him at once"; or W.F. Albright – C.S. Mann, *Matthew. Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (AB 26; Garden City, NY: Doubleday 1971) 329: "The verb is a compound form of the one used in the previous verse […], and it is possible that it indicates a repeated or emphatic action." It has been proposed, too, that a prolonged kiss was to leave "no room for error," see: C.S. Mann, *Mark. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday 1986) 596.

5 F.W. Belcher, "A Comment on Mark xiv.45," *ExpTim* 64 (1952–1953) 240, makes Judas repenting his treason already during the kissing and hence trying to show his love in the intensified kiss.

6 R.H. Gundry, *Mark. A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1993) 859. Although Robert H. Gundry admits that Judas' kiss may have been a sign of reverence ("Judas' feigning humility"), he still does not connect it with the formal *proskynesis*.

7 See: M. Lamas, "Kiss of Judas," *EBR* XV, 364–365.

φιλεῖν of the initial plan and καταφιλεῖν of the very act is understood as an attempt to make the narrative smoother.[8]

Luke utilising only the verb φιλεῖν for Judas' kiss departs from the usage of the other Synoptics. Still, it must be stressed that he knows and utilises καταφιλεῖν in his Gospel (Luke 7:38 and 45 on a sinful woman kissing and anointing Jesus' feet; Luke 15:20 on father embracing and kissing the Prodigal Son) and in Acts (20:37 on Paul's farewell in Ephesus). In the story of Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman, Luke contrasts both of the analysed words with the sinner's kiss to be understood as an "act of devotion described hyperbolically."[9] The juxtaposition of a standard kiss (φίλημα) with an engaged one (καταφιλεῖν) shows that Luke was well aware of possible overtones of the latter, and his decision not to follow the usage of Mark (and Matthew) in the Passion narrative resulted from a conscious reflection and exposes his vision of the scene of the arrest. Luke simply believed that Judas' attempted gesture looked like but a kiss of greeting on the cheek.

His vision of this scene may be explained by the remaining two occurrences of καταφιλεῖν in his works, both kisses (of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:20 and of Paul leaving Ephesus in Acts 20:37) are preceded by embracing the neck – a visualisation of both scenes would demand that at least the kissing person is in an upright position. Still, the episode of the sinful woman proves that Luke was perfectly aware of another possible overtone of καταφιλεῖν and its derivative καταφίλημα as *kissing downwards*. Perhaps Luke's omission of καταφιλεῖν from his depiction of the arrest may be ascribed to a generally weaker stress on the issue of Jesus' kingship in the Lucan passion narrative – of note, his treatment of the post-trial mockery royal homages to Jesus in 23:11 and 23:36–37 cannot compare to the detailed, still varying descriptions in Mark and Matthew.[10] It is also possible that Luke's relatively good understanding of subtleties of Classical Greek barred him from using καταφιλεῖν as he thought that in this place it could have indecent connotations.[11]

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8 E.g. comments by Lamas, "Kiss of Judas" (see the previous note); G. Stählin, "φιλέω, καταφιλέω, φίλημα, φίλος, φίλη, φιλία," *TDNT* IX, 140–141; R.E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah* (ABRL; New York: Doubleday 1994) I, 253–254.

9 φίλημά μοι οὐκ ἔδωκας· αὕτη δὲ ἀφ' ἧς εἰσῆλθον οὐ διέλιπεν καταφιλοῦσά μου τοὺς πόδας. – "You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet." For the opposition between *no kiss* from the Pharisee and the sinner's devotion, see: C.F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (TPINTC; London: SCM Press – Philadelphia, MA: Trinity Press 1990) 363–364.

10 The accounts of mock tributes in Mark and Matthew, though slightly divergent, comprise a number of elements corresponding with actual homages to the royals; Luke omits most of them, and distorts others (e.g. he has a "splendid robe" put on Jesus instead of a purple one of the other evangelists, including John). Cf. below n. 26.

11 Such facets of καταφιλεῖν are evident from examples presented below, see n. 13.

2. καταφίλημα as a Sign of Reverence Outside the Gospels

In the Septuagint, καταφιλεῖν recurs 20 times, usually with an indication of the object of action, and being translation of the Hebrew verb נָשַׁק *nāšaq* ('to kiss').[12] Both the verb καταφιλεῖν and the noun καταφίλημα are commonly used for kissing hands or feet in Classical authors. The most important dictionary of Classical Greek (*LSJ*, s.v. καταφιλέω) offers the meaning 'to kiss, caress' as the main one. It also refers to 'an amorous kiss' (with Lucian, *Amores* 13 cited as the only reference). What is special in such 'an amorous kiss' may be deduced from a wider group of connotations implied by the prefix κατα-, especially ones suggesting an action directed *downwards* and *throughout*. The latter meaning is well attested in scholia and lexica to Classical authors, where καταφιλήματα serve as an explanation of καταγλωττίσματα ('tongue kisses').[13]

The other facet of κατα- suggesting an action directed downwards would bring καταφιλεῖν close to προσκύνησις, i.e. to an act of prostration in a ritual or political context (literally also meaning: 'kissing towards').[14] This meaning of καταφιλεῖν is registered neither in *LSJ* nor in Franco Montanari's *Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*. Still, it is attested in a valuable ancient lexicon by Apollonius the Sophist, roughly contemporary to

12 Gen 31:28; 32:1; 45:15; Exod 4:27; 1 Kgs 20:41; 2 Kgs 14:33; 15:5; 19:40; 20:9; 20:14; 3 Kgs 2:19; 19:20; Ruth 1:9; 1:14; Ezra 4:47; Eccl 29:5; Tob 7:6; 10:13; 3 Macc 5:49; Ps 84:11. At the same time, προσκυνεῖν is a usual Septuagint translation of the Hebrew הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה *hištaḥᵃwāh* ('to bow down'), except for 3 Kgs (LXX) 2:19 where King Solomon bowed down to Bathseba prior to sitting down on his throne (with κατεφίλησεν used in the Saptuagint version). It should be noted that this is a very formal occasion in which Solomon's royal status is solemnly stressed by adding royal title to his name, see: S. Devries, *1 Kings*, 2 ed. (WBC 12; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan 2015) 37–38.

13 Thus, καταγλωττίσματα (literally: downwards-oriented actions with tongue) are explained as τὰ ἐρωτικὰ καὶ περίεργα φιλήματα ("sexual and throughout kisses" – I. Cunningham [ed.], *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*. II.2. *Kappa – Omicron* [Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter 2020] s.v. καταγλωττίζειν), as καταφιλήματα (scholia anonyma recentiora in Aristophanes, *Nub*. 51 [ed. J.W.J. Koster]) or as εἶδος αἰσχροῦ φιλήματος ("a kind of disgraceful kiss" – scholia vetera in Aristophanes, *Nub.* 51 [ed. D. Holwerda]). Cf. also: F.W. Sturz, *Etymologicum Graecae linguae Gudianum et alia grammaticorum scripta e codicibus manuscriptis nunc primum edita* (Leipzig: Weigel 1818) s.v. Καταγλωττίζει, περιεργῶς καταφιλεῖ and Lex.Seg. s.v. καταγλωττίσματα: τὰ περίεργα φιλήματα (ed. L. Bachmann). Clearly, in the Greek-speaking world there was a widespread understanding of καταφίλημα as a particularly carnal kiss employing tongue during the act.

14 Of the immense literature on *proskynesis*, see esp.: E. Badian, "The Deification of Alexander the Great," *Ancient Macedonian Studies in Honor of Charles F. Edson* (ed. H.J. Dell) (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies 1981) 48–52, 64–65; M.L. Bowen, "'They Came and Held Him by the Feet and Worshipped Him': Prokynesis before Jesus in Its Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Context," *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 5 (2013) 63–89; C. Materese, "*Proskynēsis* and the Gesture of the Kiss at Alexanders Court: The Creation of a new Élite," *Palamedes* 8 (2013) 75–86 and H. Bowden, "On Kissing and Making Up: Court Protocol and Historiography in Alexander the Great's Experiment with *Proskynesis*," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 56 (2013) 55–77. Cases of *proskynesis* before Jesus mentioned in New Testament are now analysed Gospel by Gospel in R.M. Lozano, *The Proskynesis of Jesus in the New Testament. A Study on the Significance of Jesus as an Object of "Proskuneo" in the New Testament Writings* (London – New York: Clark 2019).

the composition of the Gospels.[15] Along with the translation of הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה *(hištaḥ^{a}wā^{h})* in Septuagint's 3 Kgs 2:19 (see above n. 12), the oldest attestation of the direct synonymity of the two words is a report of the negotiations held at Carthage before the battle of Zama in 202 BC in Polybius, who is one of the most important Greek historians of the Hellenistic age.[16] There are more examples of juxtaposing καταφιλεῖν and προσκυνεῖν in Greek authors ranging from the Classical period well to the Roman Imperial era, yet in most of them, the two terms seem to be near-synonymous and complementary rather than identical.[17] A possible relation of near-synonymity between those two notions (or similarity of two ways of prostration) was visible to the Christian circles of the 2nd century AD, too.[18]

In the Septuagint (where, as stated above, the use of καταφιλεῖν is very generic except for 1 Kgs 2:19) one may indicate an example where it refers to the closing element of the *proskynesis* ritual: the reciprocation of the kiss by the adored ruler or official.[19]

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15 Apollonius Sophista, *Lex.hom.* 65,20 (ed. I. Bekker): <ἔκυσεν> κατεφίλησεν τῷ στόματι· ἀφ' οὗ καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ προσκυνῆσαι λέγομεν – "(he) kissed: (he) kissed with mouth, hence we say 'to have made an act of prostration.'"

16 Polybius, *Historiae* 15.1: The Roman envoys boldly reminded to the Carthaginians that: πρῶτον μὲν ἀναμιμνήσκοντες ὡς οἱ παρ› ἐκείνων πρεσβευταί, παραγενηθέντες εἰς Τύνητα πρὸς σφᾶς καὶ παρελθόντες εἰς τὸ συνέδριον, οὐ μόνον τοὺς θεοὺς ἀσπάσαιντο καὶ τὴν γῆν **προσκυνήσαιεν**, καθάπερ ἔστιν ἔθος τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις, ἀλλὰ καὶ πεσόντες ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἀγεννῶς τοὺς πόδας **καταφιλοῖεν** τῶν ἐν τῷ συνεδρίῳ, κτλ. – "Their ambassadors who had come to the Roman camp at Tunes, on being admitted to the council of officers, had not been content with appealing to the gods and **prostrating** to the Earth, as other people do, but had thrown themselves upon the Earth, and in abject humiliation **had kissed** the feet of the assembled officers etc." (LCL 159). Perhaps a picture of King Prusias of Bithynia kissing down the walls of the Senate House at Rome and offering *proskynesis* to the Roman senators in Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 20.69.1 may be taken from Polybius who thus would have employed the same wordplay more than once (otherwise, the Punic War episode cited above is the only proven Polybian use of the word), see: A. Mauersberger, *Polybios-Lexikon*, 2 ed. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag 2006) I.3, 1364.

17 Greek observers (erroneously) thought that the Persians differentiated between showing respect to gods and royals, see: Xenophon, *Cyr.* 7.5.32: Γαδάτας δὲ καὶ Γωβρύας ἦκον· καὶ θεοὺς μὲν πρῶτον προσεκύνουν, ὅτι τετιμωρημένοι ἦσαν τὸν ἀνόσιον βασιλέα, ἔπειτα δὲ Κύρου κατεφίλουν καὶ χεῖρας καὶ πόδας, πολλὰ δακρύοντες ἅμα χαρᾷ [καὶ εὐφραινόμενοι]. – "Gadatas and Gobryas came up and first of all they did homage to the gods, seeing that they had avenged themselves upon the wicked king, and then they kissed Cyrus's hands and his feet with many tears of joy" (LCL 52). A more complex, triple gradation of greeting (a prostration, an excessive kiss and barely a kiss) in the Persian context may be found in Ps.-Plutarch, *Alexandrian Proverbs* (*Plutarchi de proverbiis Alexandrinorum libellus ineditus* [eds. O. Crusius] [Tübingen: Fues 1887]), fr. 10: Πέρσαι [...] τοὺς βασιλεῖς ἑαυτῶν ὡς θεοὺς προσκυνοῦσι, καὶ οἱ μὲν ἴσοι ἀλλήλους καταφιλοῦσιν, οἱ δὲ ταπεινότεροι τῶν παρειῶν τῶν μειζόνων μόνον θιγγάνουσι. – "The Persians [...] worship their kings as gods, while kiss equals of their own excessively and those of lower status barely touch cheeks of their superiors."

18 *Acta Iohannis* 7.10 (eds. E. Junod – J.-D. Kaestli): Καὶ ὁ Ἰωάννης πρὸς αὐτὸν εἶπεν· Δίκαιον τὴν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πρώτοις προσκυνεῖν, καὶ οὕτως τὸ στόμα τοῦ βασιλέως καταφιλεῖν· γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς βίβλοις· Καρδία βασιλέως ἐν χειρὶ θεοῦ. – "And John told him 'It is just to revere the hand of the God first, and likewise to kiss the mouth of the king – it is thus written in the Sacred Books: The king's heart is in the hand of the God.'"

19 2 Sam 15:5: καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐγγίζειν ἄνδρα τοῦ προσκυνῆσαι αὐτῷ (Absalom) καὶ ἐξέτεινεν τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπελαμβάνετο αὐτοῦ καὶ κατεφίλησεν αὐτόν – "Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him" (NIV). It is worth mentioning that in this passage, the act of *proskynesis* is preceded by the verb ἐγγίζειν ('to approach, come nearer') – exactly as Judas' attempt at kissing Jesus in Luke 22:47. Matt 26:49 and Mark 14:45 both use nearly synonymous προσέρχεσθαι for Judas' movement prior to the kiss.

3. Judas' καταφίλημα in the Context of Political Charges Against Jesus

The above-mentioned examples of synonymity, near-synonymity or interchangeability of καταφιλεῖν and προσκυνεῖν in both Greek and Christian settings have inspired the present author to consider whether Judas' kiss could possibly be a *proskynesis*-like act of adoration involving kneeling and kissing one of lower parts of Jesus' body (a hand or feet). As will be argued below, more premises can be adduced in favour of this theory.

1. Since Judas was to give a sign for the armed group sent to arrest and escort Jesus, this sign should be characteristic and visible to the gathered witnesses. A hug and a kiss on the cheek might have been noticeable, but an act of *proskynesis* (involving a genuflection or a bowing and a kiss on the hands or the feet) would last longer and would be much easier to notice.

   On the one hand, it could be meant to facilitate an unmistakable identification of Jesus in darkness. On the other hand, we should realise that in Jerusalem numerous people were at the same time hostile to Jesus and able to recognise him. Judas was not the only one to confirm his identity. Therefore, one could venture to say that Judas' sign was meant to have a different sense (not an identifying sign or not simply that). Perhaps it was meant to mark the re-launch of "Operation Jesus" rather than to identify Jesus in front of the armed escort.
2. Judas' kiss is absent from the Johannine account. Here, it is Jesus who reveals his identity (*I am* – ἐγώ εἰμι of John 18:5) and actively offers himself to the soldiers and armed temple attendants (John 18:4–8a) – this is no surprise in the Gospel preoccupied with Jesus' kingship more than the Synoptics. During the arrest scene according to John, Judas was standing with the arresting party (John 18:5). Still, the first attempt to approach Jesus after he had confessed his identity ended up in the crowds' falling to the ground (John 18:5–6: ὡς οὖν εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ἐγώ εἰμι, ἀπῆλθον εἰς τὰ ὀπίσω καὶ ἔπεσαν χαμαί – "When Jesus said, 'I am he,' they drew back and fell to the ground" [NIV]). This scene was included in John to show that even the unwilling and hostile Jewish crowd felt induced to bow before Jesus using the very name for God for himself. It has been also proposed that the arrest's depiction in John may be an ironic response to Jesus himself falling to the ground in Mark 14:35 during the prayer directly prior to the arrest.[20] The latter suggestion seems somewhat far-fetched since Jesus had been kneeling voluntarily and in a situation of prayer. Rather, it can be put forward that in the Johannine account Judas' kneeling down (deducible – as argued in the present article – from Mark and Matthew) was shared by his armed companions (or at least by some of them). What for John is a sudden act of respect towards Jesus by his enemies, appears to have been another element of a pre-arranged monarchical provocation intended to pour scorn on Jesus in the eyes of the Romans.

20 For Old Testament analogies to the falling to the ground, and possible polemics with the Synoptics in John, see: Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 261–262.

If one accepts that Judas' kiss and bow were elements of an orchestrated public *proskynesis* (and that perhaps some of Judas' companions repeated his bow), it will be easier to understand how the Judean accusers pushed the Roman prefect of Judea to act without delay. Rumours of Messianic (and *eo ipso* monarchical) self-allusions in Jesus' teaching and in attitudes of his disciples towards him were widespread in Judea and contributed the rise of both his popularity and the temple elites' anxiety about Jesus' possible actions. It is clear that they observed Jesus' activity with apprehension and feared that especially his public entrance to Jerusalem might undermine their leadership for a time. So, the Judean leaders decided to eliminate Jesus for good. It is likely that they were not authorised to condemn to death anyone,[21] so they had to convince the governor to put Jesus to death. In order to persuade Pilate to join hands with them in what hitherto appeared to the Romans as a purely Jewish religious conflict, they needed to find proofs of a serious crime. They decided to build up a story of Jesus plotting against the existing order and declaring himself the king of Jews. However, they had no convincing evidence, at least in the eyes of the Roman governor. Untrustworthy and randomly chosen witnesses repeating gossips about Messianic self-declaration of Jesus and the disciples' extravagant reverence to him would have not been sufficient to prompt Pilate to act. Thus, as they needed more unequivocal substantiation of their charges against Jesus to be presented to the Romans, they decided to fabricate proofs of a royal usurpation by Jesus. Judas' bow and kiss, almost an ideal *proskynesis*, perhaps imitated by some of his Jewish companions that night (registered and taken as a sign of reverence to Jesus' divine power in John 18:6) were to corroborate a charge of rebellion brought against Jesus to Pilate. Perhaps the Judean leaders knew it would be not easy to convince the governor through Jewish witnesses, so asked him to send a Roman unit nominally to support the temple police in case of rioting.[22] In actual fact, the Roman escort

21 The only author writing about that restriction of the *synhedrion's* right to impose death penalty sentences is John 18:31. Accuracy of this remark is highly debated. There are examples of executions of the Christians at Jewish hands that may be understood as examples of lynch-law or undue usurpations of power. (Stephanus in Acts 7; James "the Lord's brother" in Josephus, *Ant.* 20.200; a dissolute priestly daughter in Sanh. 7:2 (Str-B I, 1026); see: R. Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HThKNT IV.3; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 1975) III, 280. As a matter of fact, the Roman norm was to preserve *ius gladii* for the Roman provincial authorities, and this was also a case of unruly Judea, in which all crimes involving harder punishment were reserved for the governor, see: A.N. Sherwin-White, "The Trial of Christ," *Historicity and Chronology in the New Testament* (Theological Collections 6; London: SPCK 1965) 99. For accuracy of the Johannine account of the trial in spite of its deviations from the generally acceptable synoptic accounts, see also A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon 1963) 46–47; cf. R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (AB 29A; New York: Doubleday 1970) 848–849. F. Millar, "Reflections on the Trials of Jesus," *A Tribute to Geza Vermes. Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (eds. P.R. Davies – R.T. White) (JSOTSup 100; Sheffield: JSOT Press 1990) 355–381, argues for a strictly ritual and temporary explanation of Jews' self-imposed inability to condemn Jesus to death during the festival of Passover in John 18:31 (an argument too fragile in light of handing Jesus over to be executed by Jewish authorities in John 19:16a).

22 The presence of Roman soldiers during the arrest of Jesus is another debated issue. As such it is attested in in the Johannine account only. In John 18:3, Judas takes to Gethsemane a twofold military unit combined of the σπεῖρα (commonly used in Greek texts for Latin *cohort* or *manipulus*) on the one hand, and "the policemen (ὑπηρέται) from the chief priest and the Pharisees" on the other. John 18:12 demonstrates that the Roman

was needed by the Jewish elite as a collective witness of Jesus' royal pretences attested to by his acceptance of Judas' *proskynesis*. It is generally agreed that the evangelists' versions of the trial of Jesus are all marked by Pilate's skepticism towards the charge. Perhaps the evangelists tried to show that he was aware of the ploy of the Jewish elite and tried to distance himself from interfering in what he thought was yet another Jewish conflict about spiritual matters. Still, once he had given the chief priests and the scribes the Roman unit to support the temple police, he was caught in their intrigue. Thus he found himself forced to comply with their demand to put Jesus to death: the Jewish anti-Jesus conspirators agreed to build up a complex political accusation (best visible in Luke 22:3)[23] which Pilate could have seen as overstated. Still, he could not ignore the fact that now many Roman witnesses (perhaps hyperbolically equated with *cohors* or *manipulus* in John[24]) saw the performance by Judas and perhaps by some of ὑπηρέται that looked like a regular *proskynesis*. Thus, he felt himself forced to desist from rejecting the Jewish accusation against Jesus, especially under threats of reporting the case to Rome. Perhaps this is why he decided to express his dissatisfaction with the result of the trial and lack of confidence in the accusation brought by the Jerusalem elite in the ironically formulated trilingual notice (τίτλος) he ordered to nail on the cross (John 19:19–20). On the other hand, Pilate's Roman soldiers performed a mock coronation and royal proclamation of Jesus (Matt 27: 27–31 and Mark 15:16–20 with putting a purple robe and a thorn crown on him). The soldiers very likely reflected the atmosphere of those days in Jerusalem, perhaps in a less critical way than their superior.[25] During the coronation, soldiers "were spitting on him and made kneeling and prostration

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unit was present at the arrest saying that ἡ οὖν σπεῖρα καὶ ὁ χιλίαρχος καὶ οἱ ὑπηρέται τῶν Ιουδαίων συνέλαβον τὸν Ιησοῦν καὶ ἔδησαν αὐτὸν ("Thereupon the cohort and the tribune and the attendants of the Jews took Jesus and bound him" – translated by Raymond E. Brown [*The Death of the Messiah*, 398]). The argument that σπεῖρα may refer here to Jewish soldiers does not seem to be a compelling one – for this possibility, see esp.: J. Blinzler, *The Trial of Jesus* (Westminster MA: Newton Press 1959) 64–70, accepted e.g. in C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of John. A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson 2003) 1078–1079. Indeed, in the Septuagint and in Flavius Josephus, σπεῖρα might refer to non-Roman soldiers and it was sometimes necessary to identify Roman units with ethnic descriptions (as in *Jewish War* 2.224; 5.244); but here, in John, σπεῖρα is clearly different from the ὑπηρέται sent directly by Jewish authorities.

23 This tripartite accusation in Luke is expanded from the Markan tradition that only implicitly refers to the nature of the Jewish elites' charge against Jesus. Although the text of 23:2 is clearly an authorial elaboration by Luke, full of typically Lukan utterances, it does agree with the ancient Jewish tradition about Jesus, so see: G. Schneider, "The Political Charge Against Jesus (Luke 23: 2)," *Jesus and the Politics of His Day* (eds. E. Bammel – C.F.D. Moule) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1984) 403–414 (esp. 409–412 on Lukan words of the passage; and 414 on conformity with the Jewish tradition). The second element of the Jewish elites' charge against Jesus, the one about tribute to the emperor, alludes to a trap prepared for Jesus by his Jewish adversaries in Luke 20:20–26 (and in Mark 12:13–17; Matt 22:15–22, although two first evangelists' passion narratives do not come back to that talk about taxes due to the Romans), see: J.B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (NICNT 3; Grand Rapids, MI – Cambridge: Eerdmans 1997) 800. The "tribute" trap as such was a failure, and the temple elites needed more substantiation of their charge against Jesus. It is with Judas' *proskynesis*, they first could revive the taxation element of their complaints against Jesus.

24 Cf. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah*, 248–249.

25 J.D.G. Dunn, *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence* (London: SPCK 2010) 9; Lozano, *The Proskynesis of Jesus in the New Testament*, 37, n. 12.

before him" (Mark 15:18–19: καὶ ἐνέπτυον αὐτῷ, καὶ τιθέντες τὰ γόνατα προσεκύνουν αὐτῷ). While Mark was careful to link kneeling with mock *proskynesis*, Matt 27:29 introduces kneeling without a reference to formal prostration. Matthew was more aware of the role of the reed as a false sceptre in mocking Jesus,[26] but generally failed to notice all subtleties of the Roman soldiers' performance. Both Mark and Matthew put stress on spitting, which may have been a reverse of kissing as a part of *proskynesis*.[27]

Conclusions

Given all above, understanding that Judas' kiss was a very special type of kiss, actually the most important and best-visible part of the *proskynesis* performed by Judas in front of Jesus, must strengthen one's belief in historicity of the entire Gethsemane episode and in complementarity of the passion narratives, including the trial's depictions and the temple elite's intrigue, even if the individual evangelists decided to highlight different moments or elements of the arrest and trial of Jesus.

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26 For Matt 27:29, a reed put in Jesus' hands as a mock scepter, see: R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2007) 1060–1062.

27 W. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1974) 560.

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Reinterpreting the Participle ὁ αἴρων in John 1:29. A Proposal for "who carries"

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Abstract: In John 1:29, John the Baptist, upon seeing Jesus, exclaims: ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. Most prominent English translations render the Greek participle ὁ αἴρων in John 1:29 as "who takes away." However, the authors of this article present evidence that John 1:29 contains an intertextual reference to the figure of the Servant of YHWH from Isa 53:7. In light of this, the proper interpretation of the participle ὁ αἴρων is better understood as "who takes up and bears." Therefore, the proposed translation of John the Baptist's words in John 1:29 is: "Behold, the Lamb of God who carries the sin of the world."

Keywords: Lamb of God, Jesus, John the Baptist, Gospel of John, Isaiah, the Suffering Servant

1. "Who takes away" or "who takes up and bears"?

In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, we read about an encounter between John the Baptist and Jesus, who comes to be baptized. Upon seeing him, the former cries out: ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (John 1:29).[1] All major English translations render the Greek αἴρω in the discussed verse as "to take away," emphasizing the dimensional aspect of the action. This interpretation underscores that the role and meaning of Jesus' sacrifice is to remove sin.[2] Meanwhile, in some translations into other languages, Jesus is described rather as one who "carries" or "bears" the sin.[3] This rendering appears to concentrate on the nature of the act mentioned in the text instead of merely describing its final effect. According to *LSJ*, the verb αἴρω can denote *taking away/removing*, but it can

1 The Greek text here and below is according to NA[28].

2 E.g. NRSV: "...who takes away the sin of the world;" NKJV: "...who takes away the sin of the world;" NLT: "... who takes away the sin of the world."

3 E.g. Luther: "trägt;" RST: "берет на Себя;" EIB: "bierze na siebie."

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also refer to the actions of *taking up* and *bearing/carrying* ("*take up and bear*, as a burden").[4] Both of these meanings are present in John.[5] It follows, then, that the problem cannot be resolved solely on philological grounds.[6] Even though in certain contexts these two meanings may be treated as synonymous, they do differ significantly when it comes to the semantic components emphasized in the definition. The question arises: is the Johannine Jesus described as the one who "takes away" the sin or as the one who "takes up and bears" it? The purpose of this article is to provide an unequivocal answer to this question.

2. Criteria of the Lamb's Identification

The characterization of Jesus as ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (John 1:29) is reiterated in John the Baptist's second statement, which the text places on the morrow of the first encounter: ἴδε ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (John 1:36). Why a lamb, and what does this metaphor point to? One may ask along with Origen: τί δήποτε ὑπὸ τοῦ Ιωάννου ὁ σωτὴρ 'ἀμνὸς' λέγεται;[7] The comparison to a lamb is directly linked to two features of Jesus, the neutralization of sin: ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (John 1:29) and his paradoxical origin: οὗτός ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὗ ἐγὼ εἶπον· ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν (John 1:30). We may expect that this comparison, "die erste Christuserkenntnis,"[8] encapsulates, to some extent, Jesus' fate and identity as described in the Gospel.[9] The above constitute criteria of identification, which we shall use to answer Origen's question. Below, we will examine texts that might have served as the origin of John's metaphor.[10]

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4 LSJ, *s.v.* "ἀείρω."

5 The first meaning of "taking away/removing" is most common in John and is present in: 2:16; 11:39–41; 15:2; 17:15; 19:15; 19:31, 38; 20:1, 13, 15. It also appears with a nuance of taking away something *from somebody* in 10:18; 11:48; 16:22. The meaning of taking up and bearing is visible in 5:12 (ἆρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου). Furthermore, in 8:59 the verb denotes the act of picking up without connotations of bearing. Apart from that, *airo* is used one time in a metaphorical sense of keeping in suspense (ἕως πότε τὴν ψυχὴν ἡμῶν αἴρεις, 10:24).

6 Unless we consider the appearance of the combination of the verb αἴρω with ἁμάρτημα in 1 Sam 15:25 LXX: νῦν ἆρον δὴ τὸ ἁμάρτημά μου as an argument in favour of the first translation. Obviously, since Saul is addressing these words to Samuel, the context does not allow this expression to be translated as "take my sin upon yourself." This parallel is noted by K. Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium*. I. *Kapitel 1–10* (ThKNT 4; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2004) 83. The author also mentions a possible connection to the scapegoat carrying sins in a description of the Yom Kippur ritual in Lev 16:21sqq. Here, however, the one carrying the sin is explicitly a goat, rather than lamb.

7 Origenes, *Comm. Jo.* 6.51.264.

8 Cf. H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*. I. *Kommentar zu Kapitel 1,1–9,50* (HThKNT 3; Freiburg – Basel – Wien: Herder 2001) 67.

9 "The seer reveals the mystery of the person's mission" (R.E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John I–XII. Introduction, Translation and Notes* [AB 29; New Haven, CT – London: Yale University Press 1966] 58).

10 Scholars have considered some less probable explanations, such as 1) the Yom Kippur scapegoat; 2) the apocalyptic lamb motif in the Enochic literature; 3) the general idea of a sacrificial lamb from the Hebrew Bible; 4) the lamb that was provided by God to be offered instead of Isaac in Gen 22:5; 5) the gentle lamb of Jer 11. See W. Loader, *Jesus in John's Gospel. Structure and Issues in Johannine Christology* (Grand Rapids, MI:

3. Paschal Lamb

Since ancient times, interpreters have proposed that it is the Paschal lamb to which John's comparison refers. This view is visible among Church Fathers[11] and has been repeated in modern scholarship.[12] It is true that the Johannine depiction of Jesus does picture him as a Paschal lamb[13] and that this identification is also visible in other New Testament writings.[14] However, in the Tanach, the Paschal lamb does not have an expiatory role and as such does not neutralize sin in any way.[15] The Paschal lamb is also nowhere described as having a paradoxical origin. Consequently, the Paschal lamb does not seem appropriate as the first interpretative choice nor does it offer a solution regarding the specific meaning of the verb αἴρω.

4. Lamb and the Servant of YHWH

In search of John's lamb, the obvious direction is the Deutero-Isaiah, who introduces a well-known figure of the Servant of YHWH mentioned in four separate songs.[16] Of interest to us is the Fourth Song (Isa 52:13–53:12). Along with the interpretation presented above, since the first centuries of Christianity, various authors have associated John's wording with a picture of a "lamb being led to the slaughter," a description appearing in Isa 53:7: ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἀμνὸς ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ.[17] This was also the conviction of many Johannine scholars.[18] However, the hitherto scholarly considerations on the reference in John 1:29 to Isa 53:7 and the Fourth Song lacked systematic organization and logical structure, ultimately making

Eerdmans 2017) 156–157; S.E. Porter, *John, His Gospel, and Jesus. In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2015) 207–208.

11 E.g. Origenes, *Comm. Jo.* 28.25.237; Didymus, *Fr. Ps.* 533.

12 E.g. "Probably John's primary reference is the Paschal lamb" (C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John. An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2 ed. [London: Westminster John Knox 1978] 176); cf. J. Zumstein, *Das Johannesevangelium* (KEK 2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2016) 98–99; Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 61–63.

13 E.g. John 19:33, 36.

14 E.g. 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Peter 1:18–19.

15 "In Judaism the lamb sacrificed at Passover does not take away sins" (Barrett, *The Gospel*, 176). Some claim, however, that all sacrifices prescribed in the Pentateuch are expiatory in one way or another, see L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 1971) 144–145.

16 Isa 42:1–9; 49:1–9; 50:4–11; 52:13–53:12.

17 E.g. Clemens Alexandrinus, fr. 27 (GCS 17, 216); Theodorus Mopsuestenus, *Commentarii in Joannem (e catenis)*, fr. 13; Eusebius, *Comm. Isa.* 2.42.

18 E.g. J. Beutler, *A Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans 2017) 59; Zumstein, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 99; R. Schwindt, "'Seht das Lamm Gottes, das hinwegnimmt die Sünde der Welt' (Joh 1,29). Zur Frage einer Sühnetheologie im Johannesevangelium," *TTZ* 119 (2010) 202–203; Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 60–63; C.H. Williams, "Isaiah in John's Gospel," *Isaiah in the New Testament* (eds. S. Moyise – M.J.J. Menken) (NTSI; London – New York: Clark 2005) 104–105.

them inconclusive.[19] Nevertheless, this is the right interpretative track. Below, we will outline arguments in a manner that conclusively suggests that the author of the Fourth Gospel, attributing those words to John, had Isa 53:7 in mind.

4.1. Isaiah as John's Intertext

In John, Isaiah is the only Old Testament prophetic author mentioned by name, and it is stated that Isaiah "saw Jesus' glory and spoke about Him" (John 12:41). Explicit quotations from Isaiah, in John 1:23 and 12:37–41, inclusively frame the beginning and end of John's narrative about Jesus' public ministry (John 1:19–12:50). Based on this evidence, as well as numerous other allusions and references to Isaiah,[20] we can reiterate Catrin H. Williams' assertion that "Isaiah occupies a prominent, if not the highest, position among the scriptural texts that have contributed to the shaping of John's gospel"[21] as well as "several expressions, themes and motifs point to the profound influence of Isaiah, especially Deutero-Isaiah, on John's narratives and discourses."[22] Therefore, the idea that there is a reference to Isaiah in John 1:29 is by no means improbable.

4.2. Neutralization of Sin by the Servant of YHWH and His Mysterious Genealogy

In the Fourth Song, the Servant of YHWH is consistently described as one who neutralizes the sin: οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται (Isa 53:4); τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει (Isa 53:11); αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη (Isa 53:12). This is feature is exceptional in the Tanach since it is animal sacrifices and not individuals that atone for sin.[23] Moreover, the Servant is described as having a paradoxical genealogy: τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται; (Isa 53:8).

4.3. Parallels Between Johannine Jesus and the Servant of YHWH

There are objective similarities between the fate of the Servant of YHWH and the fate of Johannine Jesus. The Servant suffers, gets dishonoured, tortured and killed. Subsequently, he is revived by God. Paradoxically, his suffering is simultaneously viewed as a revelation of glory and, as a consequence, he gets exalted and lifted up. This depiction is arguably unique in the Tanach, as no other text explicitly associates suffering and even death with glory. Furthermore, the Servant's comparison to the "lamb that is led to the slaughter" parallels John's description of Jesus as the Lamb of God and aligns with the general narrative of the Fourth Gospel, which portrays Jesus as an innocent man led to death.

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19 "This is possible. But there is nothing in the context that points to it" (Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 144); cf. "Eine eindeutige traditionsgeschichtliche Herkunft des ersten positiven christologischen Titels im JohEv ist nicht auszumachen" (D. Rusam, "Das 'Lamm Gottes' [Joh 1,29.36] und die Deutung des Todes Jesu im Johannesevangelium," *BZ* 49 [2005] 68).

20 In John, according to NA[28] *Loci citati vel allegati*, we find allusions to 36 different passages from Isaiah.

21 Williams, "Isaiah," 101.

22 Williams, "Isaiah," 101.

23 See A.W. Day, *Lifted Up and Glorified. Isaiah's Servant Language in the Gospel of John* (Diss. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Louisville, KY 2016) 140.

4.4. Jesus as the Servant of YHWH in John 12:37–38

The character of the Servant of YHWH fulfils the required criteria. There is, however, another reference which serves to support this argument. In John 12:37–38 we read: οὐκ ἐπίστευον εἰς αὐτόν, ἵνα ὁ λόγος Ησαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πληρωθῇ ὃν εἶπεν· κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων κυρίου τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη; this is an obvious quote from the Fourth Song: κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων κυρίου τίνι ἀπεκαλύφθη; (Isa 53:1). Therefore, the author of the Gospel explicitly connects Jesus with the figure of the Servant of YHWH from the Fourth Song.[24]

4.5. Identification of Jesus with ἀμνός from Isa 53:7 in Acts 8:32

In Acts 8, during Philip's interaction with the Ethiopian eunuch, Jesus is not only identified as the Lamb from Isaiah but also explicitly connected to the broader context of the Fourth Song of the Servant of YHWH. Let us quote this passage in full (where the emphasized text represents a quotation from Isa 53:7–8):

> προσδραμὼν δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος ἤκουσεν αὐτοῦ ἀναγινώσκοντος Ησαΐαν τὸν προφήτην καὶ εἶπεν· ἆρά γε γινώσκεις ἃ ἀναγινώσκεις; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· πῶς γὰρ ἂν δυναίμην ἐὰν μή τις ὁδηγήσει με; παρεκάλεσέν τε τὸν Φίλιππον ἀναβάντα καθίσαι σὺν αὐτῷ. ἡ δὲ περιοχὴ τῆς γραφῆς ἣν ἀνεγίνωσκεν ἦν αὕτη· ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἀμνὸς ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος, οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. Εν τῇ ταπεινώσει [αὐτοῦ] ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἤρθη· τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγήσεται; ὅτι αἴρεται ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ. ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ εὐνοῦχος τῷ Φιλίππῳ εἶπεν· δέομαί σου, περὶ τίνος ὁ προφήτης λέγει τοῦτο; περὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἢ περὶ ἑτέρου τινός; ἀνοίξας δὲ ὁ Φίλιππος τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ τῆς γραφῆς ταύτης εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ιησοῦν. (Acts 8:30–35)

We observe, therefore, that the association of Jesus with the figure of the Servant of YHWH, which centred on the comparison to the Isaian lamb led to slaughter, was a motif known among first-century followers of Jesus.[25]

5. Jesus as Isaiah's Lamb

The evidence provided above strongly suggests that John the Baptist's identification of Jesus as ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου should primarily be understood as a reference to the Fourth Song of the Servant of YHWH. The identification of Jesus with Isaiah's lamb by no means excludes a simultaneous secondary reference to the Paschal lamb.

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24 For further references to the Isaian Servant in John, see C.A. Evans, "Isaiah 53 in the Letters of Peter, Paul, Hebrews, and John," *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53. Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology* (eds. D.L. Bock – M. Glaser) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel 2012) 160–167.

25 See also 1 Pet 2:22–24. Craig S. Keener raises the possibility that these texts "hark back to Jesus' self-definition as presented in Mark 10:45 and 14:24," where "an allusion to Is 53 is present, albeit not in its LXX form." As he points out, traditions reflected in these texts would have been widely accepted by the time of the Fourth Gospel (C.S. Keener, *The Gospel of John* [Peabody, MA: Baker Academic 2003] I, 453).

Such a two-dimensional symbolism is attested in John, who, for instance, pictures the cross as a sign of both exaltation and humiliation (John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32).[26]

6. Conclusion: ὁ αἴρων in John 1:29 as "who carries"

Having established that John's metaphor should be understood mainly as an intertextual reference to the Fourth Song of the Servant of YHWH, we can now come back to the main issue of this article – the meaning of the verb αἴρω in John 1:29. As Raymond E. Brown aptly stated: "If the Lamb is the Servant, then John's phrase is patterned after the Servant of Yahweh."[27] The Servant is described as: οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται (Isa 53:4); τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει (Isa 53:11); αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη (Isa 53:12). It is evident that the way in which the Servant of YHWH neutralizes the sin is by "taking it upon himself." Thus, if we have to choose between two meanings of the verb αἴρω, we should opt for the meaning "to carry," and the phrase ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου (John 1:29) should be translated not by "who takes away the sin of the world" but "who carries the sin of the world." This conclusion may be particularly important for those interested in the liturgy of the Holy Mass.

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26 "A polyvalent symbol pointing not only to elements of the Paschal lamb in his death but also to his role as a servant who goes to his death as a lamb led to slaughter" (R.E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah. From Gethsemane to the Grave*. I. *A Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1998] 416). Cf. Keener, *The Gospel of John*, 451 – who likewise points out the Fourth Gospel's "penchant for *double entendres*."

27 Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 55.

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Reviews

THE BIBLICAL ANNALS 14/4 (2024) 671–674

Dariusz Dziadosz, *Gilgal. Biblia – Archeologia – Teologia. Studium historyczno-krytyczne deuteronomi(sty)cznych tradycji o podboju Kanaanu* (Biblioteka Szkoły Dabar 4; Rzeszów: Bonus Liber 2022). Pp. 696. PLN 55. ISBN: 978-83-67230-21-6

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Monograph by Fr. Prof. Dariusz Dziadosz *Gilgal. Biblia – Archeologia – Teologia. Studium historyczno-krytyczne deuteronomi(sty)cznych tradycji o podboju Kanaanu* [Gilgal. Bible – Archaeology – Theology. A Historical-Critical Study of the Deuteronomi(sti)c Traditions about the Conquest of Canaan] is an attempt to synthesise two scholarly approaches – archaeological and exegetical-theological – to provide an interdisciplinary, comprehensive study of both the location and the cultic-theological role of Gilgal in the pre-monarchic and monarchic periods of the Old Testament, and it is, by all means, a successful attempt. It is a constant challenge for biblical scholars to confront biblical data with those from archaeological research to arrive at answers about the relationship of the biblical editor's theological concept of epochs, places and persons to historical and geographical data obtained through empirical research. The dissonance that is often discovered is a warning light for the professional biblical scholar and an impulse initiating an investigation of the phenomenon in question, which, if its aim is a comprehensive and holistic analysis of the research problem, takes the form of a painstaking and meticulous analysis not only of the available material but also of the interpretative proposals available in the academic world. These are the features that characterise the entire scholarly work of Dziadosz and which undoubtedly pertain to the reviewed publication. The book has already found a wide positive resonance in the Polish circle of biblical scholars, becoming also an outstanding scientific achievement that has earned its author promotion to the academic title of professor.

The author, who holds the position of Head of the Department of Historical, Prophetic, and Sapiential Books of the Old Testament at the Institute of Biblical Studies of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, is already well-known in Polish biblical studies as the author of monographs on the Pentateuch and the historical books of the Old Testament, especially the Book of Genesis (*"Tak było na początku..." Izrael opowiada swoje dzieje. Literacka i teologiczna analiza wiodących tradycji Księgi Rodzaju* ["So It Was in the Beginning..." Israel Tells Its History. Literary and Theological Analysis of the Leading Traditions of Genesis] [Przemyśl: Wydawnictwo Archidiecezji Przemyskiej 2011]) and

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the Deuteronomi(sti)c work, including two volumes of commentary on the Book of Judges (*Księga Sędziów. Rozdziały 1–5* [The Book of Judges. Chapters 1–5] [Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Stary Testament 7.1; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2019]; *Księga Sędziów. Rozdziały 6–12* [The Book of Judges. Chapters 6–12] [Nowy Komentarz Biblijny. Stary Testament 7.2; Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła 2019]). It should be emphasised that there has been no monograph on Gilgal in the world literature so far, as well as that the author masterfully combined the exegetical-hermeneutical skills with the analysis of archaeological material, diachrony and synchrony. This methodological choice is reflected in the structure of the book. It consists of two main parts, the first of which is hermeneutical and archaeological in nature, while the second is exegetical and theological.

In the first part, entitled "W poszukiwaniu biblijnego Gilgal" (In Search of Biblical Gilgal) (pp. 29–158), the author begins with a semantic analysis of the *gl* and *gll* roots, moving on to passages in which the name "Gilgal" occurs in the Old Testament, analysing them geographically, before closing with an extensive exposition and critical evaluation of the archaeological evidence. The reader's attention is particularly drawn to the latter, which is presented in the last chapter of the first part of the study, together with numerous conclusions. The author critically assesses the results of the archaeological research carried out so far, as well as points out that

> in the absence of definitive results in the field of archaeology that would shed light on the biblical sources and encourage further exploration, more and more exegetes are inclined to the hypothesis that the Old Testament description of Gilgal is largely the product of an ideological and theological reworking of local oral and written traditions about the place, which in fact did not play as significant a role in the history of pre-monarchic Israel as was assigned to it by the sources included in the historical and prophetic books of the Hebrew Bible (p. 146).

Such optics brought to the forefront the main objective of the work, namely the reconstruction of the theological military, socio-political and religious role that Gilgal played in the eyes of the (post)Deuteronomi(sti)c editor.

The term "Gilgal," which occurs 41 times in the Hebrew Bible, can refer to many homonymous geographical locations. The author deliberately narrowed the scope of the exegetical-theological analysis to the three books of the Old Covenant – Deuteronomy, Joshua and Judges – and thus to the 14 occurrences of the name "Gilgal," noting that the unity of the chronology and topology provided by the editors of these books implies a unity of the location and theological significance of Gilgal in these texts, which cannot be said with equal certainty about the Gilgal mentioned in the other Deuteronomistic books, as well as the "Gilgal" mentioned in Josh 12:23 and 15:7. This is reflected in the structure of the second part of the monograph, entitled "W poszukiwaniu biblijnej koncepcji Gilgal w przedmonarchicznej historii Izraela" (In Search of the Biblical Concept of Gilgal in Pre-Monarchic Israelite History) (pp. 159–525), which consists of six chapters, being an exegetical and theological analysis of the occurrences of the name "Gilgal" in the following passages: (1) Deut 11:30; (2) Josh 4:19–20; (3) Josh 5:9–10; (4) Josh 9:6 and 10:6, 7, 9, 15, 43;

(5) Josh 14:6; (6) Judg 2:1a and 3:19a. The evidently annotative nature of the mention of Gilgal in Deut 11:30 makes it, in the present arrangement of the Hebrew Bible, a preparation for a theological reading of the meaning of Gilgal, which reaches its peak in the section Josh 3:1–10:43, while Judg 2:1a marks its twilight, due to the Israelites' idolatry and departure from the worship of YHWH. In particular, the reference in Judg 3:19a may indicate the original Canaanite character of the place and the significance of its transformation, which occurs in the context of the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. The entire monograph is complemented by resources that aid the reader in exploring the subject: a collection of maps and illustrations, a bibliography and indexes.

The research carried out leads the author to note the already mentioned important difference between the historical and the exegetical-theological perspectives. The theological significance derived from the analysed texts is attributed by the author to the activities of the (post)Deuteronomi(sti)c and (post)priestly editorial circles of the Deut–Judg complex, who, after the Babylonian captivity, wished to introduce the contemporary generation to the idea of a logistical and military centre associated with monotheism, Yahwism, the cult of the Ark of the Covenant and the theology of the land and covenant. The choice of Gilgal was linked to later acts of worship attested by other occurrences of the term in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, the author is aware of the complexity of the issue and the multiplicity of proposals for solving this historical and exegetical problem, and an analysis of the available sources leads to the overly correct, though not very optimistic, conclusion:

> It is still unclear whether this biblical Gilgal should be regarded as an inhabited and civilisationally developed space taken over by the Israelites, [...] or as a military base (encampment) established by Joshua, which [...] subsequently developed into a well-known socio-religious centre (p. 536).

The great merit of the reviewed monograph is its comprehensiveness. On the one hand, the author has made a very solid analysis encompassing multiple levels of the topic, starting from etymology and ending with interpretation in a theological key, on the other hand, extensively and exhaustively touching on all the biblical traditions about Gilgal, as well as a great number of interpretative theses and hypotheses, as evidenced both by the consulted bibliography and the critical evaluation of scholars' positions in the text of the monograph. Extensive footnotes, which for the author are an opportunity to present the positions of other researchers or to announce parallel research problems related to the topic – which make the work, despite its integrity, "open" and inspiring for further research – are a remarkable feature of the book, characteristic of the works of Dziadosz. The author combines the classical tools of exegetical-theological work based on the historical-critical method with innovative solutions. From the methodological point of view, one of them – another characteristic feature of the analyses found in Dziadosz's works – is the use of the Masoretic division of the text.

Another strength of the work is its clarity. Not only the clear compositional structure but also the already mentioned order of presentation of the material and the supplementing

of the analyses with relevant introductions and conclusions, guide the reader step by step both through the individual stages in the method of exegetical analysis and through the juxtaposition of the various concepts (this is especially true of Chapters II and III of Part One). In this way, despite the subject matter of the monograph being so particularised and requiring interdisciplinary knowledge of the subject matter and tools due to the methodology used, even a recipient with a fragmentary knowledge of archaeology and/or exegesis can benefit from the book. Probably the same motive underlies the transliteration of the Hebrew and Greek texts used by the author (as in his other works), which enables the original text to be read also by a reader unfamiliar with the ancient alphabets.

The monograph by Dariusz Dziadosz is an important voice in the scholarly discussion on Gilgal, both from the substantive and methodological perspectives. The author's diligence and care expressed in the compilation of such an ambitious work attest to his outstanding competence in philological, historical, ethnological, archaeological and exegetical-theological analysis. All this makes the reviewed work a valuable reference book for understanding not only the geography of ancient Syro-Palestine, but also the history of Israel at the stage of the conquest of the Promised Land and the period of the judges and their theological significance for the religious, social and national consciousness of the Chosen People.